The Authority of Morality and the Recognition of Persons

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The Authority of Morality and the Recognition of Persons

A dissertation presented by

Aleksy Tarasenko-Struc

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The Authority of Morality and the Recognition of Persons

Abstract

My aim in this dissertation is to vindicate morality by addressing the question of how others could have the authority to make claims on us even when we have no special concern for, or thick relationship to, them. My account purports to establish that others’ claims carry intrinsic motivational relevance and that acknowledging them in action is a matter of normative necessity.

I begin by pointing out that morality is connected to the possibility of wronging others rather than merely acting wrongly, and that many of our moral obligations are obligations to others. That implies that a vindication of morality must show that our moral duties to others are owed to the right party, in the right way. And I argue that certain moral theories fail on this score—either by not accommodating the authority of others, like versions of egoism, utilitarianism, and realism, or by accommodating it in the wrong way, like versions of Kantian constructivism.

To explain how the claims of other people could have intrinsic motivational relevance, I present an account of what it is to recognize others as persons with minds like our own. Recognizing someone as a person is an inherently motivating state, I propose, like recognizing someone as a friend. To see her as a person is to directly experience her power to make claims on our attitudes and will—a mode of awareness that implicates motives for treating her in proto-ethical ways.

To explain why acknowledging others’ claims is a matter of normative necessity, I advance a theory of the conditions of love so as to show that love is an ethical attitude. Love has this status because we must recognize in our beloved a value that is non-instrumental; independent of our love for, or
relationship to, her; and reflexive in that the value of her life consists in its value for her specifically. When we do so, we are committed to acknowledging that same value in other people as well. And since as human beings we have a basic need for the love of others, this ethical attitude is inescapable.
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For Annette,
my second mother
The basic word I-You can only be spoken with one’s whole being.

—Martin Buber
**Introduction**

Other people have claims on me. They give me reasons to act for their sake, and in all sorts of ways. This is a central fact of human life. You have a claim on me that I answer my front door when you ring for me, that I refrain from trampling the flowers you planted in our backyard, that I return the keys you unwittingly dropped on the sidewalk, and sometimes even that I save you from drowning. Sometimes you give me reasons to act for your sake by asking me, inviting me, or telling me to do things, in words or through non-verbal gestures; sometimes merely by choosing to do things with, or around, me; and sometimes even by doing nothing at all, as when you face a danger that I can prevent.

We normally do such things for other people, too, and often unhesitatingly—for our romantic partners and friends, family members, mere acquaintances, and even strangers, among many others. We act for their sake without much explicit reflection, let alone inner conflict. And not only are we often moved to respond to the claims of others. We also take it that we should do such things for them. We treat it as a matter of course that they have various claims on us and that these are sometimes valid. Of course, we may doubt that some of the claims others make on us actually give us a reason to act as they are calling for. For instance, perhaps it is not you ringing my doorbell but some children playing a prank on me—in which case there is no claim on me whatsoever that I come to the door. For most of us, however, the question of whether any of the claims of other people are genuine, whether others have the power to obligate us to act in any way at all, is seldom entertained seriously.

At the same time, it can seem puzzling that other people have this special power over us, that through their words, deeds, aims, and needs they can change our normative situation so drastically. For, it seems, your claim on me can also constitute an obligation to do certain things: not to kill you, beat you up, steal from you, or lie to you, but to help you in basic ways. Then we are in moral territory.
And, as is commonly pointed out, morality is distinctive among systems of practical norms in that the normative force of its requirements is, or purports to be, unconditional in some important sense. For one, moral requirements seem to enjoy a certain priority with respect to the other standards or values with which they might conflict. When they enjoin us to act in a way that would clash with the pursuit of our desired ends, they typically, maybe even always, override whatever claim these other things have on us. Morality also appear to bind all human beings, and possibly rational agents generally, in virtue of our shared personhood rather than our particular aims, interests, affections, or relations to others.

So, you have certain claims on me, and these have a quite unusual force. Your claims on me persist even though we happen to have no special concern or affection for each other, and despite the fact that we are not related as brothers, friends, lovers, or, really, in any intimate or substantial way. You have a valid claim on me that I alert you that a poisonous spider has started its descent down your shirt. That is true even if warning you about it doesn’t further my aims or otherwise promote my good, and even if we are unacquainted, perfect strangers to each other. You have a valid claim on me to be alerted to danger nevertheless—apparently, just because you are a fellow human being or person. And in such a case, again, you do not merely have a claim on my help: I am also obligated to warn you. This is a moral obligation, and were I in your place you would have a parallel obligation to warn me. We are therefore bound together, it seems, by the mere fact of our common humanity or personhood.

Other people make and have claims on us, then, and some of these count as moral obligations. Or so it seems to many of us. But if we reflect on this piece of common sense a little, we may start to wonder how others could do that. What gives them the power to make or have valid claims on us? Can this power really be held on such a seemingly mundane and slender basis? How could that be? And what if they do not? What if particular people are valuable to or for us, but humanity has no value in and of itself, and others do not have the authority to obligate us just because they are fellow people?
What can seem to make these questions more urgent is a familiarity with the many and various expressions of skepticism about morality’s authority, both in philosophical ethics and in everyday life. These skeptical challenges suggest that morality may be quite otherwise than it appears to us, often by alleging that the motives that sustain our commitment to morality are far from what they seem to be. A perennial theme of this sort of doubt about morality, for example, is that we only care about morality because we have been subject to an oppressive and deleterious regimen of social conditioning. Thus, Callicles and Nietzsche characterize morality as, ultimately, a device by which the weak seek to secure themselves against stronger, freer individuals, whereas—taking the opposite tack—Thrasy machus and Mandeville tell us that it is a fraud perpetrated by the powerful to keep the masses they rule docile. Maybe we are harmed by acting on moral requirements, or at least miss out on more good; or maybe we avoid immorality only because we lack the strength, cunning, or daring to flout them with impunity. Or perhaps, as Hume’s sensible knave supposes, moral requirements are not conclusively authoritative for us but are only, at best, convenient rules of thumb that are conducive to our general advantage: following them is typically good for us, true, but when it is not, we would do better in violating them. If we take these doubts seriously, we may start to worry that morality lacks authority altogether, for if any of them is sound, ethics is nothing more than ideology, and the claims of others are mere pressure.

The puzzle, then, is how other people could possibly have valid claims on me or obligate me. Specifically, it is how others can make or have valid moral claims on me just as one person to another. It is easy enough to see that people have valid claims on us when we have special concern or affection for them, or some thick relationship with them—when they are our friends, family members, or lovers. But it’s harder to see how, exactly, a stranger—just another person—can have a valid claim on us, too. Really, how could any person matter just as such, and, indeed, how could she matter in such a way that there could be universal, categorically binding restrictions on how everyone is to relate to her? Why should the fact that we are people, members of the same kind, make such a normative difference?
Yet if people cannot make or have claims on us just as fellow people, if we do not matter as such, morality is a sham. So, the puzzle concerns the value or status of people and the authority of morality.

My dissertation addresses this puzzle about how other people could make valid claims on us. Hence, I offer a vindication of morality, and I do it by, as it were, offering a vindication of humanity.

To vindicate a practical requirement, we must demonstrate that it can rationally motivate us: that we are such as to be moved to comply with it by our recognition that it is applicable to ourselves. The requirement must have immediate motivational or deliberative relevance and normative necessity. That is, it must engage our will directly—via the operation of a motive that we actually have. And because it must carry normative necessity, it cannot depend for its force on our having some ulterior or anyway contingent motive, a motive we may have or lack without error, irrationality, or pathology. It must be inescapable for us, in other words. Thus, for the requirement to be inescapable in this way, it must be applicable to us partly in virtue of a motivational condition that is universal, or nearly so.

What is needed in order to vindicate a practical requirement, then, is a fuller conception not just of the requirement itself but of ourselves as well, and of how our deeper nature ensures its inescapability. So, if morality is to be vindicated, we will need an account of our motivational capacities that supports the authority of its requirements, showing how the claims of other people are rationally motivating.

A vindicatory account of this kind is exactly what I am going to provide in this dissertation. Attempts to vindicate the value of humanity typically proceed by pointing to those natural properties of ours that supposedly make us people in the first place, then arguing that having those properties somehow makes it the case that we ought to accord other people basic forms of moral consideration. That will not be my strategy. My point of departure will not be what makes someone a person; instead it will be what it is for us to see or recognize someone as a person, a creature with a mind like our own. When we recognize others as persons, I will argue, we experience their power to make claims on our attitudes and will, and this kind of recognition is constituted by affective and practical dispositions.
So, in my view, recognizing others as persons is a state of mind that has a normative and motivational form, and this explains why their claims should have immediate relevance for practical deliberation, suggesting that their claims could be rationally motivating and that others have a special kind of value.

Yet what is it that makes acknowledging the claims of other people inescapable for us? That question must be answered by connecting this mode of relating to others with some deep feature of ourselves, with our nature as the kinds of creatures that we are. And the feature of us that I will appeal to, as a basis for a vindication of the value of humanity and of the authority of morality’s requirements, is our characteristically human propensity for love—more specifically, love for particular other people.

My strategy will be to examine the conditions of this interpersonal attitude to show that loving another person commits us to recognizing our beloved’s distinctive normative status—a status that she has regardless of whether she is useful to us or whether we have any thick relationship with her. In particular, love for another person by nature includes grasping a value that she has in and of herself. Love is therefore an ethical attitude, a stance with a kind of generalized ethical concern built into it, and this fact has implications for how we should regard others—implications favorable to morality. Ultimately, then, morality is practically inescapable because it is the upshot of a rather deep feature of human beings that is naturally inescapable: that it is our human plight to live in the light of others’ love. If my view is correct, then morality and love are much closer than many moral philosophers suppose.

This dissertation divides naturally into halves. The first half examines the general character of central moral obligations and of the authority that other people have to make valid claims on us. The purpose of this portion of the dissertation is to bring the contours of our puzzle into sharper relief by elucidating the structure of morality—or, less tendentiously, of common-sense morality—while also determining what form a vindicatory account should have in order to count as a solution to the puzzle. The second half of the dissertation contains my positive proposal, my attempt to vindicate morality.
In the first chapter, I present a conception of morality’s structure that emphasizes its link to the possibility of wronging particular other people, and then consider how our ethical theorizing should be amended in light of the fact that many moral requirements exhibit this special connection. My point of departure is the intuitive thought that in violating central moral obligations, we do not just act wrongly with respect to some requirement, value, or consideration; rather, we wrong others. The potential applicability of the notion of wronging another marks out a distinctive category of norm, that of an obligation to someone in particular—an other-directed obligation, as I will sometimes call it.

Many of our moral obligations are other-directed, I hold, particularly our obligations of justice. Obligations to others differ from undirected or merely monadic obligations, as Michael Thompson calls them, in that our having them implies a suite of accountability relations between us and others, for one. When I violate an obligation to you, normally my action expresses a kind of disrespect for you as a person, and you are entitled to certain accountability-seeking responses to me in light of it. As Stephen Darwall has pointed out, you are standardly authorized to blame me, to exhort me to comply with the obligation, to compel me to give you some kind of explanation or justification for my conduct, and even to call for apology or restitution for the wrong I have done you specifically.

On the conception of morality that I favor, the concept of a claim is treated as primitive. Claims are among the basic units of the relational portion of the normative realm, and obligations to others are constituted by the claims that we make, or have, on one another. I argue that a claim is valid partly in virtue of the nature and expectations of the relationship between the claim’s bearer and its recipient. Sometimes the grounding relationship in question is a personal tie—a friendship, marriage, or parent-child relationship, for example—and sometimes it is an institutional relationship, such as the normatively significant relation between an elected official and the members of her constituency. But, I contend, some of our claims on one another—our moral claims—are valid partly in virtue of a relationship that we have with one another just as fellow people: what I call the moral relationship.
Although moral relations are quite generalized, they nevertheless meet the criteria that make a relation between people a genuine relationship, and so there is no reason to exclude them from the category.

The fact that moral relations are personal relationships, however, naturally invites the question of how we should conceive of them, and for an answer I look to the phenomenon of wronging, particularly as it is presented to us in the experience of guilt for having wronged a specifiable person. Following Raimond Gaita, I argue that when we wrong another person and recognize the wrong in guilt, we do not primarily feel guilty for violating a requirement. Instead, we feel guilty for what we have done to the particular person we have wronged—and, importantly, not in the sense that we might feel guilty for having chopped down a particular redwood tree, for example. For a person is not just a concrete instantiation of personhood, a speck of humanity, but a distinct individual in her own right, and it is part of a sound moral attitude to other people that we regard them as distinct individuals.

Moreover, this fact about how we morally ought to regard others has a consequence for what we should understand moral relations to be. We should not take moral relations to be relations between ourselves and humanity at large, taken as a totality. Rather, moral relations are relations between one particular person and another—between ourselves and every individual in the world. The moral relationship is therefore, in the first instance, a vast network of relations, person to person. Thus, our puzzle should be revised accordingly. We should ask how it is possible for there to be a normatively significant relationship between fellow people, considered just as such—people who are to regard one another as capable of making, and having, claims on one another in virtue of our shared humanity or personhood. We should ask how the moral relationship is possible at all, in other words.

Morality’s connection to the possibility of wronging other individuals also places a substantial constraint on a vindication of morality, and one that is important for ethical theorizing more generally. According to it, a proposed vindication is adequate only if it grounds our moral obligations to others in a fact that does not rule out that these obligations are owed to the right party and in the right way.
I call this the *directedness constraint*, and in the second chapter I argue that certain prominent moral theories do not meet it—and that their failure reveals something important about the status of others.

I begin by motivating the directedness constraint and canvassing its consequences concerning the shape that a moral theory—and thus a vindication of morality—must have, on pain of inadequacy. Evidence for the constraint comes from the phenomenology of recognizing an obligation to someone. When I have a moral obligation to you, it seems that I stand in a peculiar normative nexus to you. Even though I may have qualitatively identical obligations to other people, that obligation is to you alone, and normally it appears to me as independent of whatever other requirements I may be under. From the constraint, it follows straightaway that a view is inadequate if it entails, or suggests, that what appear to be our obligations to others are, in fact, undirected obligations, obligations only to ourselves, or obligations to everyone. I show that simple versions of egoism, utilitarianism, and realism run afoul of the constraint, but in the bulk of the chapter I argue that certain versions of Kantian constructivism meet with a similar fate. The work of Christine Korsgaard constitutes the material for my case study.

According to Korsgaard, other people obligate us paradigmatically by engaging us in certain kinds of exchanges—*claim-making interactions*, as I call them—in which they share their reasons with us, calling on us to deliberate with them in order to reach a shared decision that is mutually acceptable. And since we are social creatures, it is our default stance to respond to others’ reasons as having normative force for us. But she also holds that we only have obligations to act in a particular way when, and partly because, we have obligated ourselves to act accordingly, by choosing to act for the sake of an end in a way that is inherently sensitive to our maxim’s suitability to serve as a universal law. In her view, because we are rational agents we originally have the authority to obligate ourselves.

Yet this raises a basic challenge for Korsgaard’s account: if my obligations are grounded in my obligating myself, as she says, how could others obligate me in a way that yields obligations to them?
If her view is correct, it seems that my other-regarding obligations are either obligations to myself alone or else they are grounded in self-directed obligations. Each of these possibilities is disqualifying.

I consider a response on Korsgaard’s behalf: that in claim-making interactions of certain kinds we grant others the authority to obligate us. This appeal to joint self-binding, as I call it, construes claim-making on the model of promissory obligation. When you make a claim on me, I cede my authority concerning whether to perform a certain action to you, and you, in turn, cede your authority to me—just as we cede our authority to one another when I promise you that I’ll drive you to the airport, say. I identify two problems with this proposal. The first is that it makes our obligations to others objectionably voluntaristic: your claims on me are valid only if I validate them through an act of will. The second is that, as I argue in the first chapter, we can make valid moral claims on one another only if we already stand in moral relations, for these relations are a condition of joint self-binding. Yet Korsgaard has not shown why we should (or already do) stand in such relations to other people. And one possible answer to this question—that we cannot choose not to engage in joint self-binding—only multiplies mysteries, for we can ask what aspect of our rational nature explains this activity’s inescapability, and it is positively unclear what the Kantian constructivist can appeal to at this point.

However, my ultimate aim in critiquing Korsgaard’s kind of Kantian constructivism is not merely destructive but constructive as well. Specifically, I think we can learn a lesson from her view’s incapacity to meet the directedness constraint: that its inadequacy derives from the egocentric conception of authority on which the view is predicated. According to her conception, we originally have the authority to obligate ourselves, and although other people have the authority to obligate us, they have this power only derivatively—because we extend it to them, validating their would-be claims on us. A Kantian constructivism that operates with this conception of authority does not take seriously the boundaries between self and other, thereby misrepresenting the nature of our obligations to others.
More positively, too, I allege that we can meet the directedness constraint by rejecting the egocentric conception and conceiving of the authority of others as *unmediated* by our own authority over ourselves.

My positive proposal begins with the idea that our recognizing someone as a person has intrinsic normative and motivational significance for us, that recognition of this kind is by its nature a practical state of mind. In that respect, it’s like recognizing someone as our friend or as a fellow citizen. When we see someone as our friend, that is normally sufficient to settle deliberation concerning whether to act on any of her friendship-specific claims, moving us to act accordingly without ulterior motive. Analogously, I propose, when we see someone as a person—or, I should say, as a *fellow* person—that is normally sufficient to settle deliberation concerning whether to act on any of her moral claims, moving us to treat her ethically regardless of whether doing so furthers our own good. Apprehending, however imperfectly, the power of other people to make claims on us is just part of what it is to recognize them as fellow persons. The authority of others is not granted to them by us, nor is it exactly a brute fact about them, grasped in practical reasoning, that they are endowed with it. That is part of the explanation for how the claims of others can rationally motivate us to act on them.

The third chapter is dedicated to making philosophical sense of this conception of recognizing other people as persons, or *interpersonal recognition*, and to providing a qualified defense of the view. Specifically, I motivate and defend an internalist view of interpersonal recognition—a view on which recognizing someone as a person by nature includes both a grasp of her power to make claims on us and also a motive for treating her as it is appropriate (or rationally intelligible) to treat other people. So, just as we might think that judging that an action is wrong can rationally motivate us, all by itself, to refrain from performing it, so too, I argue, can seeing someone as a person rationally motivate us, all by itself, to treat her as a person. In both cases, we need no independent reasons to arrive at the conclusion that we ought to act in a particular way, nor any independent motives to act in that way.
If we find it puzzling that interpersonal recognition could be normative and motivating, that may be because we are prone to think that to recognize someone as a person is to dispassionately classify her, by applying a folk-metaphysical concept to her that is, however, itself motivationally inert. That is, it may be because we are sympathetic to recognition-externalism, on which recognizing someone as a person does not imply that we have any particular motive, much less a motive for treating her as a person. By contrast, the view that I advocate does not conceive of interpersonal recognition as primarily a classificatory endeavor, like recognizing something as a water lily or as an igneous rock.

According to recognition-internalism of the sort that I favor, recognizing someone as a person is a matter of exhibiting certain forms of motivational and affective responsiveness to her perspective. It is an orientation of the will and of our emotions, particularly sympathy, pride, shame, resentment, and gratitude, among others. To see someone as a person is, in particular, to experience her power to move us to feel, think, and do certain things by her making claims on us through her attitudes and will, I maintain. And because interpersonal recognition is constituted by practical and emotional dispositions of these kinds, recognizing someone as a person does, in fact, imply that we have a certain configuration of motives, which explains how that mental state could have motivational relevance.

I am aware, of course, that recognition-internalism of this variety is bound to strike many readers as simply a non-starter, but I believe the view is far more plausible than it may initially appear. For one, I think it comports with the phenomenology of our encounters with other people better than its externalist counterpart. These experiences typically present themselves as practically and affectively laden: think of our sudden awareness that others are looking at us, which normally includes feeling the force of her perspective on us—of the attitudes that she appears to have towards us, or the aims that she seems to have with respect to us. An internalist position also fits, more specifically, with the phenomenology of experiencing others as having certain objectifying stances towards us, ignoring our
claims to consideration. It is common, for example, for people who have been subject to objectifying treatment to feel as if those who objectify them have not really seen them, as if they were invisible.

Still, there are powerful objections to recognition-internalism, and I end the third chapter by defusing the two challenges that seem most forceful. The first concerns the objectivity or cognitive status of interpersonal recognition: if seeing someone as a person is constituted by a susceptibility to certain affective and practical stances, as on internalism, how could it be knowledge that she is a person? And the second challenge is how recognizing someone as a person could move us to treat her as a person by itself, given that it is apparently compatible with deep indifference or hostility towards her.

In reply to the first challenge, I claim that seeing others as persons is world-guided because it is constituted by a non-intellectual mental act of identifying with them in light of their bodily and behavioral resemblance to us, which reveals to us that they have the same kind of mind that we do. That state depends on no classificatory belief, any more than hearing someone as speaking our native language requires no classificatory belief about the language they speak in relation to the one we speak.

And in response to the second challenge, I argue that when we are deeply indifferent to others, we can be characterized as not fully seeing them as persons—as having an incomplete or distorted view of their capacities for happiness and suffering, or indeed of their epistemic and evaluative faculties. And we can understand certain forms of hostility to other people, particularly those that might lead us to treat others with abject cruelty, as dependent on a sort of twisted awareness of their personhood.

If my description of our experiences of other people has been accurate so far, that suggests that when we encounter others we are subject to appearances of their power to make claims on us. We are, seemingly, subject to glimpses of their authority or standing. What we still need, however, is some philosophical confirmation that others do, in fact, have that authority over us, and to secure this conclusion I will show that acknowledging the authority of others is inescapable for us given the kinds of creatures that we are. That is the purpose of the fourth and final chapter of the dissertation.
My argument in this chapter will center on the nature and conditions of love for other people. Love of this kind, I contend, consists in an arresting and appreciative awareness of our beloved for herself. This awareness is informed by a kind of non-instrumental concern for the beloved in particular, and its natural home lies in reciprocal engagement with her in the context of a relationship. Briefly, I will argue that love of this kind is an ethical attitude. It is an attitude that essentially commits us to recognizing in other people a special kind of distinctively ethical standing—the value of what Kant would call an end in itself—and to acknowledging that standing by showing others consideration.

This conclusion may seem surprising, for it is common to assume that love and moral concern are opposed, or perhaps even that they systematically conflict with one another. After all, love and moral concern take different objects and appear to fundamentally diverge in spirit. While the object of love is an individual, moral concern is more generalized, and typically takes people in general as its object. And whereas moral concern for others is mandatory, our loving any given person is usually regarded as optional. In light of these apparent differences, how could love be an ethical attitude?

One feature of love for another person that makes it an ethical attitude, I contend, is that it is informed, essentially, by respect for our beloved. Respect of this form consists in regarding her as a limit to our will—as restricting the kinds of aims that we may pursue in the service of our good, her good, or, really, anyone else’s good. In respecting our beloved, we will tend to refrain from interfering with her pursuit of her good, and to defer to her own judgments about what her good consists in.

Nevertheless, affirming that respect is essential to love leaves open that the reasons we have for treating our beloved with consideration are contingent on our love or special concern for her, in the way that (we might think) our reasons for engaging in an activity for the sheer pleasure of it is contingent on our having an inclination for doing so. If that is so, an amoralist can reasonably think that he should treat his beloved with consideration but only because he loves her or cares about her.
Yet love and inclination are different kinds of mental states, I argue, making reasons of love unlike reasons of inclination in this respect. Specifically, love contains an element of appreciation that is analogous to aesthetic experience, as in an experience of the Atlantic Ocean’s beauty, for example. In love and aesthetic experience of this kind, we grasp a value that is not only non-instrumental but also independent both of our appreciative response and of our attachment to the object of the attitude. That is, unlike inclination, love for a person involves an apprehension of a value that she has in herself.

Yet for our love for someone to count as an ethical attitude and for her value to be an ethical one, that love must also be an apprehension of a value that makes the importance of her life and plight consist primarily in their importance for her. In other words, my love must have value of herself, too. And what shows that we must recognize the value that she has of herself when we love her is yet another feature of love itself: the element of emotional and motivational vulnerability to the beloved.

In viewing someone with loving appreciation, we are moved to merge our perspective with hers, enabling her to motivate us to feel, think, and do certain things for her own sake. In doing so, moreover, we must defer to her perspective concerning the importance of her life and her plight, regarding her existence and plight, in effect, as she does. We will therefore come to regard them as valuable because they are valuable for her, regarding her as valuable not just in herself but of herself, too. And regarding her in this way, through the lens of our love for her, commits us to acknowledging not just her value as an individual, but the value of the people she loves, and, ultimately, of all people. Our love for another person therefore places us, irrevocably, within the ethical point of view, and anyone who rejects ethical considerations completely is, in a profound way, alone in the world. And because we have a basic need, as human beings, for the love of other people, it follows that loving anyone in particular makes it inescapable for us to acknowledge the authority of everyone in general.

Our puzzle is solved, then, by showing that other people have the power to make claims on us both because recognizing them as fellow people can move us to act on those claims and because the
love that defines our nature as human beings makes acknowledging those claims inescapable for us. That explains how the claims of others rationally motivate us, though we have no special concern for them or thick relationship with them, and it explains why moral relations are possible in the first place. Moral relations between individuals are possible because love makes mutual recognition normative. Therefore, since others have the authority to make claims on us, morality has authority over us as well.

A terminological point: in what follows, I will be using the ordinary term ‘people’ rather than the (frankly unlovely) term ‘persons’, normally used to refer to rational agents generally. Exceptions are restricted to technical terms, such as ‘dignity of persons’ and the expressions I use to designate for interpersonal recognition: ‘seeing someone as a person’, ‘recognizing someone as a person’, et cetera.
1. Morality and the Possibility of Wronging Others

It is true that his victim might have been anyone, and that if it had been someone else and the circumstances were the same, then his moral response would have been the same. However, in remorse he is not haunted by everyman. He is not haunted by his principles. He is not haunted by the moral law. He is not haunted by the fact that he did what he ought not to have done (why should that drive anyone to despair?). He is haunted by the particular human being he murdered.

—Raimond Gaita

1. The Directedness of Moral Obligation

In this chapter, I articulate a conception of morality’s structure, identifying what makes it distinctive, and draw out the consequences of accepting it. On this view, central moral obligations are other-directed.

They are not obligations simpliciter, but obligations to others. Other-directed obligations are special, for in violating them we do not just act wrongly with respect to a norm; rather, we wrong someone. They are therefore unlike requirements, reasons, and values, as those are most commonly understood.

I first present a view on which core moral requirements are constituted by obligations to others and these obligations arise, in turn, from the various claims that we make, or have, on one another (§2). Claims and obligations to others are unique in that they join two parties in a nexus of accountability, thereby implying the possibility of wronging another or expressing related forms of disrespect for her. And claims that prescribe relationship-specific conduct are valid, I argue, partly in virtue of the normatively significant relationship between their bearers and recipients. Yet I hold that the point applies generally, for the same holds of moral claims: they, too, are valid in virtue of what I call the


2 I leave open that we have obligations to non-rational animals (or to certain animals), violation of which wrongs them. However, in this chapter, I focus on the connection between morality and wronging persons specifically, since traditional versions of moral skepticism have denied the value of persons, rather than the value of sentient creatures more generally.
moral relationship—an interpersonal relationship that people have with one another just as people (§3). So, moral relations are genuine relationships. Relational normativity is relationship-bound normativity.

Then, I address the question of how we should conceive of the basic structure of our moral relations to others, by considering what it is like to see that we have wronged a specifiable person (§4). Reflection on this paradigmatic moral phenomenon shows, I argue, that the one we have wronged should appear to us not as a concrete instantiation of personhood but rather as a particular individual. And this fact has important implications for how we should think of the character of moral relations (§5). Moral relations are normative relations not between every particular person and all people taken as a whole but between every particular person and every other particular person in the world. So, our puzzle should be reconceived as a challenge about how moral relations, in this sense, are possible.

2. Ground-Clearing: Morality, Relational Normativity, and Relationships

Contemporary ethical theorizing has tended to be so thoroughly dominated by the opposition between consequentialist and deontological views that one fact about morality has not always been properly acknowledged: that central moral requirements specify not just how we ought to act where other people are concerned but also, and more basically, which forms of treatment we owe to others. For example, intuitively, we normally owe it to others not to kill them or cause them suffering; not to coerce, manipulate, or deceive them; not to interfere with their discretionary projects; to keep the promises we have made to them; and to provide them with certain minimal forms of positive aid. These aren’t just obligations with regard to others, but obligations to others—other-directed obligations.³

³ These are also known as relational, directed, or bipolar obligations. I choose the term ‘other-directed’ over these alternatives, despite its clumsiness, for two reasons. First, ‘other-directed’ does not prejudge the debate over whether there are self-directed duties, whereas ‘directed’ does, since ‘directed’ is often used to refer to obligations to particular others. Second, due to the work of Stephen Darwall and Michael Thompson, the term ‘bipolar’ is caught up with the controversial view that it is essential to bipolar obligations that their violation supports individualized rather than generalized complaints. I discuss this matter in greater detail in §5, below. See Darwall (2006) and (2013a), essay 2, along with Thompson (2006).
Core moral requirements such as these are other-directed, at least if common sense is to be believed. These obligations seem to carry a special kind of normative force. Although they specify forms of treatment that we ought to or even must accord to others, they do not merely possess a higher priority than other kinds of practical consideration. They appear, rather, to be different in kind. For in violating an obligation to another person, we do not just act \textit{wrongly} with respect to a norm, value, consideration, or requirement. We \textit{wrong} a particular person (or, perhaps, animal), often the one to whom the obligation is owed. It is initially unclear just what it is to wrong another person. To wrong another person is more than just to harm her, though it plausibly includes that. To wrong another is to treat her in a way that expresses a special kind of objectionable stance towards her, which justifies corresponding reactions of personal affront on her part, including the reactive attitude of resentment.

The possibility of wronging others is linked to the complementary fact that we are \textit{accountable} to them for the way we treat them.\footnote{Darwall has highlighted, and illuminatingly theorized, the connection between what he calls second-personal obligations and reasons, on the one hand, and relations of accountability, on the other. I am deeply indebted to his work. See Darwall (2004), (2006), (2013a), and (2013b).} Accountability comprises a diverse class of relations that are, I suspect, unified more by family resemblance than by some feature common to all of them. Hence, for us to be accountable to others for the way we treat them is, variously, for them have the authority to demand certain forms of treatment from us, to blame us if we do not comply, to call for apology or reparations, to call on us to justify our conduct to them, or to simply convey the significance of our action to them. Many of our obligations to others even correspond to \textit{rights} that they have not to be mistreated in a variety of ways, and these collectively define the realm of interpersonal justice, or \textit{right}.

Obligations to others are special, in that they implicate relations between two: they are \textit{dual-agent-relative}, we might say.\footnote{Hence, a claim is not an agent-neutral reason: it is not a reason that can be specified without any reference to a particular agent. Nor is it agent-relative, which is normally taken to mean singular-agent-relative, for it is essential to it that it reference two agents. Perhaps, to borrow a term, claims and their ilk are agent-relative and patient-relative. See Hammerton (2016).} In that respect, they contrast with \textit{merely monadic obligations}—if there are any.
A merely monadic obligation is, quite simply, a requirement to act in a certain way. The term is due to Thompson (2006). See pp. 338-345. Every directed obligation has a monadic correlate. For every obligation to someone we can formulate a corresponding requirement that omits the stated directionality; for example, my obligation to you to drive you to the airport has a monadic correlate in the obligation to drive you to the airport, simpliciter.

Our having such an obligation does not implicate relations of authority or accountability between ourselves and another person, nor is anyone wronged when it is violated. For instance, it may be that we have an obligation not to destroy the natural environment yet, plausibly, no one owes it to the Earth not to pollute it and the planet isn’t wronged if we do so; hence, we might think that the obligation is merely monadic.

To be sure, a merely monadic obligation might very well be other-regarding, in that its content might reference other people, either explicitly or implicitly. Perhaps we ought to maximize the balance of pleasure over pain in sentient creatures generally, or perhaps the intrinsic value of humanity gives us impersonal reasons to treat people with consideration. While these requirements clearly concern others, our failure to maximize utility or to treat others with consideration would not wrong anyone. We would simply be acting wrongly with respect to the relevant requirement, reason, consideration, or value. In such cases, I will say that we have an obligation concerning other people, but not an obligation to them. It is not necessary for me to determine precisely the scope and limits of other-directed obligation in this chapter. But beyond, perhaps, our obligations to protect the natural environment, some obligations that may fall outside of this category include certain legal obligations (whose violation is said to be ‘victimless’); the obligation to do good for others beyond what justice requires; and maybe, though I am not sure, so-called obligations to ourselves (or self-directed obligations), such as our obligations to do things like avoid self-destructive actions or to refrain from self-abnegating conduct.

We have obligations to other people, including moral obligations, whenever they make, or have, certain claims on us. On my usage, it takes two parties to generate a claim; talk of the claim of

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6 The term is due to Thompson (2006). See pp. 338-345. Every directed obligation has a monadic correlate. For every obligation to someone we can formulate a corresponding requirement that omits the stated directionality; for example, my obligation to you to drive you to the airport has a monadic correlate in the obligation to drive you to the airport, simpliciter.

7 As a matter of fact, I doubt this can be true of our obligations not to destroy the natural environment. It is more plausible that these obligations are owed to all persons who share the planet with us, or perhaps to all persons and even to all animals, too. But the idea that these obligations are monadic, even if inaccurate, helps illuminate the contrast between other-directed obligations and obligations that are monadic. And that is enough for my purposes.
Reason is, at best, secondary. In what follows, I will take the idea of a claim as primitive. Any attempt to explain what it is for one person to make or have a claim on another seems to me to lead back to the same idea: for her to call on that person to take up a particular action or reaction towards her. Even though I am treating claims as indefinable, however, that does not mean that nothing illuminating can be said about them. I will make three further programmatic remarks about the idea of a claim before tracing its contours by marking out its place in a network of other normative notions.

First, we might distinguish between making a claim on someone and having a claim on her. The distinction is to be drawn in terms of how directly or deliberately the claim-bearer generates the claim. Plausibly, we make claims on one another through direct verbal address. We issue various speech acts to one another, thereby making a claim on our addressee that she act in the ways we are calling for; think of inviting someone to a party, demanding that she not step on our foot, asking her to pick us up from the airport, and promising her that we will come to her art opening. Relatedly, I would say that we make claims on one another through conventional forms of non-verbal expression: we nod at our waiter, motion to our friend to come over, kiss our lover, and cry to express grief to our sister.

However, we also have claims on each other. We have claims on each other when we pursue aims that others may be in a position to interfere with or to help realize. We may walk through a public park, take a photo of the Grand Canyon, or carry the groceries home, obliging others not to obstruct us (and sometimes to lend a hand). And we have claims on one another just when we are in certain bad conditions—such as pain, want, or peril—that others are able to prevent, alleviate, or mitigate.

Second, the term ‘claim’ has three senses, corresponding to more or less distinct perspectives on claim-making and -bearing, and it will be useful for our purposes to briefly distinguish these senses:

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8 What I am calling claims are also referred to as given reasons, in David Enoch’s sense, or shared reasons, in Korsgaard’s sense. Korsgaard’s discussions of shared or public reasons occupy Korsgaard (1996a) and (1996b), pp. 132-145, along with her (2007) and (2009), pp. 177-206. The giving of reasons is the topic of Enoch (2011), (2014).
(1) ‘Claim’ can simply refer to a particular act of claim-making (or fact of purported claim-bearing), considered apart from the question of whether it carries any normative force. For example, we call requests, invitations, and demands claims on our conduct, regardless of whether these acts have force. In this sense, a stranger who requests a heart from us because she wants a backup for herself makes a claim on us, even though her ‘claim’ is clearly invalid.

(2) ‘Claim’ can pick out the normative relation which claims in the first sense purport to generate between bearer and recipient. So, by communicating a reasonable request, invitation, or demand to us, we can say that someone has made a claim on us that we act in response to the speech act in question in the way that she is calling for. As it is defective, the stranger’s request for our heart, however, would yield no claim on our conduct, in this sense.

(3) ‘Claim’ can designate an act of claim-making (a claim in the first sense) that succeeds in its own terms, placing its recipient into a normative relation to its maker (a claim in the second sense). An acquaintance’s reasonable request that we tell her what time it is yields a normative relation to her to do so, and thus its normative success makes it a claim in this third sense.\(^9\)

In what follows, the context should make it relatively clear which sense of the term I have in mind.

The third programmatic remark I wish to make concerns the normative force of claims. A friend’s request that we pick her up from the airport has normative force, but a stranger’s request for our heart (so that she has a backup) lacks it. I will say that the first is \textit{valid}, while the second is \textit{invalid}.

\(^9\) We can call claims in these three senses ‘would-be claims’, ‘claims proper’, and ‘valid claims’, respectively.
We will consider the ground of the validity of claims in a moment. A valid claim has normative force. But it may nevertheless fall short of decisiveness: we might have a valid claim made on us but it may still be the case that we ought to do something else. My friend might have a claim on us that we drive her to the airport but we may also have promised our partner that we will go to her art opening, which is at the same time. I ought to go to my partner’s art opening rather than drive my friend to the airport, yet the latter claim is not normatively impotent as it stands; although it has a measure of force, it is defeated or outweighed by the former claim. I will call such a claim a mere claim, and the claim that is decisive in a situation a conclusive claim. An analogy may help: a mere claim is like a pro tanto reason to do something; a conclusive claim is comparable to a fact about what we ought to do.10 And when another person’s claim on us is conclusive, it is an obligation to her—an other-directed obligation.11

10 Because directed obligations can still conflict, they do not determine what we have decisive reason to do but merely what we ought to do.
11 There is a large and tricky issue here that I am deliberately skating over: the issue of whether claims and obligations to others are reducible to reasons of various kinds, either conceptually or just metaphysically. And one thing that favors a reductive account of relational normativity is that it may seem better able to make sense of the normative force of valid claims. What it is for a claim to have normative force—to be valid—is for it to constitute a reason for action, apart from any consideration of accountability, respect, or disrespect. By contrast, a non-reductive account provides no deeper account of the validity and defect of claims, it seems. What’s more, the explanatory priority of normative reasons over relational normativity is also revealed by the fact that ‘A has a claim on B that she φ’ entails ‘A has a reason to φ’ but not vice versa, and also by the fact that ‘A has an obligation to B to φ’ entails ‘A has reason to φ’ but not vice versa. It is not only possible but common to have a reason to do something without anyone’s having a claim on us that we do it or indeed without our having an obligation to anyone to do it—think of our undirected reason to pursue our own interests, say—and that suggests that the notion of a reason is more basic.

I grant that your having a claim on me that I perform a certain action entails that I have a reason to do so. The question is whether this admission constitutes evidence of explanatory priority. And by itself it does not: entailment is, at best, weak evidence in this context. For example, from the fact that a particular figure is an isosceles triangle it follows that it is a triangle, while from the fact that it is a triangle it does not follow that it is an isosceles triangle. But these considerations do not show that something’s being an isosceles triangle is grounded in its being a triangle. Indeed, if anything, it is the reverse: something’s being a triangle is grounded in its being an isosceles triangle. That’s because triangularity is a determinable and isosceles-triangularity is among its determinates (along with right-triangularity, scalene-triangularity, and so on), and the determinates of a determinable plausibly ground that determinable. To adapt a move of Thomas Nagel’s, we can point out that a figure’s being a triangle is a necessary condition of its being an isosceles triangle but only a logically necessary condition. (Nagel 1970, ch. 5.) Thus, to say that an agent who acted in a certain way wanted to act in that way is to mark out that action as intentional, for Nagel. Likewise, in my view, to say that a claim (in the descriptive sense) is reason-providing is to say that the relevant piece of claim-making is valid: that it in fact makes a claim on its recipient (in the normative sense) and, hence, that it succeeds in initiating a normative relation. And we do not need to appeal to the notion of a reason to cash out the validity or defect of claims. Our thinking about relational normativity is autonomous. It does not require the concept of a reason.
To help illuminate the nature of a claim, I propose that we examine claims that arise in the context of the thick relationships that we have with one another, like friendship and collegial relations. I will argue that where such claims are valid, they are valid partly in virtue of the character of the relationship between their bearers and their recipients. In particular, a claim’s validity is due both to the nature of the relationship between the two parties and to the expectations that define their relationship.

Take an example of David Enoch’s: you ask me to read and comment on a draft you are working on. Here it is plausible that you have a valid claim on me, maybe a mere claim, that I read your draft. Why? If someone asks me why I’m reading your draft, sceptical that I should, it is natural for me to respond: ‘Because we are colleagues’ or ‘That’s just what colleagues do for each another’ or some such. Likewise, if someone asks me why I’m driving you to the airport, sceptical that I should, I may respond: ‘Because we are friends’ or ‘That’s just what friends do for each another’ or some such. And if someone asks me why I’m taking care of my child, sceptical that I should, once again I might respond: ‘Because I am her father’ or ‘Because she is my child’ or ‘That’s just what a parent does for his child’ or some such. The same seems to apply to the claims made on us by our partners in normatively significant relationships, from personal attachments to more formal or official relations. We justify the claims that romantic partners on one another on their status as lovers or spouses; we justify the claims that an electorate has on a given politician by citing the relevant relation between representative and electorate or its defining expectations; we justify the claims that familial relations have on one another by pointing to the fact that they are members of the same family. The conclusion to draw from these and countless other examples is that whenever a person has a valid claim on another and they are partners in a normatively significant relationship, that claim is justified precisely by appeal to features of the relationship in question. The best explanation of the pattern is that claims

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are valid *in virtue of* the nature or expectations of normatively significant relationships. The validity of claims is thus to be explained by reference to the background relationship that is thereby implicated.

In justifying a relationship-dependent claim of this kind, we either appeal to the nature of that form of relationship or the expectations that define the particular relation between the two individuals. As my colleague, we can reasonably say, you have a valid claim on me that I read and comment on your work. That claim is valid because, all else being equal, it is an expectation of our particular collegial relation, and normally of other collegial relations, that we review and contribute to one another’s work. We can imagine collegial relations that are different. There may be an organization where colleagues simply work alongside one another instead of participating, in a deeper sense, in a common endeavor. And even in normal circumstances a pair of colleagues might never expect this kind of helpfulness of one another—if, say, they each take themselves to be writing works of genius that would be spoiled by the interventions of others. Expectations such as these about how two partners in a normatively significant relationship are to relate to one another are normally worked out by those individuals—not always deliberately, often indeed inchoately, and usually provisionally, subject to renegotiation.

As my colleague, you also have a valid claim on me that I refrain from plagiarizing your work. That claim is valid not in virtue of any expectation of our particular relation to one another but rather in light of the nature of the collegial relationship more generally. The ideal of collegial relations is one of partners engaged in a common project, with each making a distinct contribution to that pursuit, and my stealing your work plainly violates that ideal, since it effectively undermines your contribution. It is not merely an expectation of our particular collegial relation that I refrain from plagiarizing your work, then; that sort of conduct is a violation of the nature of the collegial relationship as a whole. Thus, the injunction against plagiarizing your work is not a matter for renegotiation or revision, as the expectation that I read and comment on your draft may be. It is, quite simply, a matter for reproach.
I said that such claims are partly grounded in facts about the relationship between the claims’ bearers and their recipients. What else do the grounds include? Here I want to remain agnostic. It is plausible to me that the ground of a valid claim is often some interest, aim, need, want, or aim. But it is often also a speech act, performed perhaps in light of some interest, aim, needs, want, or aim—a speech act either on the claim-bearer’s part (such as a command, demand, or request) or on the part of both (such as a promise). Compared with the expectations or nature of the relationship, still, facts such as these seem like a different kind of ground for the validity of claims. How do they fit together?

On the one hand, the ground of your valid claim on me that I φ can be that you need me to φ or want me to φ, on your own behalf or not, or that my φ-ing serves some interest of yours or someone else’s. On the other hand, the ground can be that you have asked me to φ, told me to φ, or invited me to φ; that I have promised you that I would φ; and so forth. Certainly, it can comprise facts from both categories, and perhaps that is the standard case. At any rate, my proposal concerning their relation is that facts such as these ground the validity of claims in virtue of the expectations and nature of the normatively significant relationship between claim-bearer and recipient. So, if we are friends and I ask you to drive me to the airport tomorrow, my claim on you will be valid in virtue of two distinct factors:

(a) the fact that I need to be at the airport tomorrow (or the fact that I intend to fly out then);
(b) the fact that I have made a request of you that you drive me to the airport;

I believe, however, that there is, in addition to those, a different sort of ground for my claim’s validity:

(c) the fact that as friends you and I are expected to help one another in basic ways.

Here, I maintain, (a) and (b) ground your claim on me that I drive you in virtue of (c). There needs to
be some explanation of what makes it the case that my request to you, made in light of my need to go
to the airport at a certain time, generates a valid claim on you that you drive me to the airport then.
And one particularly plausible explanation is that so helping one another is *what we do for each other as
friends*. This clarifies why I make a valid claim on my friend when I ask her to drive me to the airport,
whereas a stranger normally does not, even though she makes a request with the same content.

Interestingly, if I am correct, to determine whether a relationship-dependent claim of this kind
is valid we need to take into account more than the stringency of the need, the strength of the want,
the worthiness of the aim, or whatever else. We need to reflect on the expectations of the particular
relationship between the two parties and what it is for them to be related in that way to one another.
To explain why my claim on you to drive me to the airport is valid, for example, we would need to
bring to mind the peculiarities of our friendship and perhaps the nature of friendship more generally.
Identifying the validity-makers of particular claims is, of course, a task for a substantive theory of
relational normativity. But I am trying to suggest that it would proceed from an account of the nature
of different human relationships, of their good and how they normatively shape and limit each other.\textsuperscript{13}

We may wonder, however, why it is that some relationships systematically ground certain valid
claims (and hence obligations to others) while others do not. We can think of plenty of cases, in other
words, in which a claim on another person is invalid even though it accords with the expectations of
a relationship, because that relationship is not the sort that *could* support valid claims to begin with.
Claims that are grounded in abusive or exploitative personal relationships are plausibly invalid. Think
of a friendship that is consistently and mutually abusive. In such a friendship, one ‘friend’ may demand
of the other ‘friend’ that he stay up all night when he is sick in order to finish her homework for her.

\textsuperscript{13} It is worth noting that I am also officially agnostic, for the purposes of this section anyway, about what it is that makes
a relationship valid. In principle, then, as far as I’m concerned, relationships may be of the sort to make it the case that the
partners have valid claims on one another because they realize some impersonal value, because they accord with pure
practical reason, or relating to others in a certain way produces the greatest balance of happiness over suffering. In the
next chapter, I will supply and defend a criterion of adequacy for accounts of morality that rules certain accounts out.
Nevertheless, the claim so expressed is invalid. And one creditable explanation of the claim’s invalidity is that it is invalid because it is grounded in the expectations of a friendship that is bad as a friendship. While friendship is normally capable of supporting valid claims, the friendship of the mutually abusive ‘friends’ is not mediated by the respect that friends owe to each other, rendering these claims defective. One possibility, then, is that a particular relationship is a defective instance of a kind of relationship that would otherwise, and normally, ground the validity of those claims made in the context of it.

This cannot be the only possibility, however. For additionally there are inherently immoral kinds of relationships, and their particular instantiations seem not to support valid claims, either. Take the relationship between the person enslaved and his slave-master. That is not a bad instance of an otherwise sound claim-backing relationship but an unsuitable form of relations with another person. Hence if the slave-master orders the enslaved person to chop some wood, this claim will be invalid. In such cases, it seems as if not only the claims made by one partner on another are invalid but the kind of relationship they have with one another is invalid, too, and this because the latter is immoral. Thus, it seems that a relationship’s incompatibility with the moral claims we have on one another can inhibit its capacity to ground the validity of the claims made within the context of that relationship. And there might also be inherently worthless kinds of relationships, relationships that realize no good, such as the relation between the members of a social club devoted to counting blades of grass. Arguably, such relationships do not make any of their partners’ relationship-specific claims valid.

Yet what exactly is so special about our claims on one another? Do they have some distinctive character? Whether they are relationship-specific or moral, claims and obligations to others are tied to accountability. As I pointed out before, the category of accountability-seeking responses is wide and diverse. Accountability between people takes its particular shape from the kind of the relationship they have with one another. These forms of accountability can appear very different from another, though there are unifying threads between them. On the one hand, there is the kind of accountability
typically associated with moral relations between people. That is what I will call hard accountability. We inhabit this stance towards others when we exhort them to comply with or acknowledge a claim on them, censure them for not doing so, forgive them, and call for apology, restitution, or punishment, all of which implicates its own distinct suite of reactive emotions: resentment, indignation, and guilt.\textsuperscript{14} When other people violates their moral obligations to us, treating us with disregard that we take as an affront to our sense of self-respect, it is common for us to hold her accountable, in this first sense.

Stephen Darwall has argued that a link to hard accountability is what directedness consists in.\textsuperscript{15} According to this line of thinking, obligations to others are distinguished by the fact that they specify forms of treatment that we can demand of others and that we can reprimand them for denying us. Yet this idea is mistaken: there are obligations to others that do not naturally fit this mold. Duties of gratitude are one example.\textsuperscript{16} We have an obligation to acknowledge or to show appreciation for the benefits that we receive from other people, especially if those benefits are not owed to us. Not just that: we have obligations to our benefactors to express gratitude to them, and we wrong them if we fail to do so. Yet it would be inappropriate for a benefactor to demand an expression of gratitude from her beneficiary—to insist that he thank her, say. We can also arguably wrong our friend or lover by failing to respond sympathetically to her when she needs it, which suggests that in certain contexts we can have an obligation to others to sympathize with them. Here again, though, it seems plainly out of order, or even intrusive, for these people to demand our sympathy when we cannot muster it up. These examples suffice to show that a link to hard accountability does not define other-directedness.

But there is also a kind of accountability that is characteristic of personal attachments such as romantic love and friendship, which I will call soft accountability.\textsuperscript{17} While hard accountability emphasizes

\textsuperscript{14} For a classic account of blame that privileges the reactive attitudes, see Strawson (2003). For an expanded account in the same spirit, see Wallace (1998).
\textsuperscript{15} A feature of Darwall’s view of morality as equal accountability, articulated in his (2006), among other works.
\textsuperscript{17} Darwall appears to recognize the general point. See Darwall (2013b), essay 5.
demanding and reprimanding in response to actions seen as evincing a lack in respect for us as people, this second stance is triggered by actions seen as deficient in love or concern. We relate to others from this stance in a variety of ways, and what distinguishes this way of holding others accountable is that it does not consist in a mode of interaction whose aim is to compel our interlocutor to acknowledge our claim on her and, perhaps, to show us a modicum of respect. Instead, we practice this second form of accountability when we address someone in a way that summons her to a certain ideal of love or concern, and to treating us in ways that we could recognize as expressive of that love or concern.

The reactive emotions belonging to this second form of accountability are disappointment, hurt feelings, and sadness. Suppose that you and I are lovers but that you have been inexplicably cold to me for the past few weeks. In that case, it seems to me that I have no warrant to demand that you relate to me with evident warmth and friendliness, or to censure you for your lack of it, to call on you to apologize, and so forth. Yet, normally, it would not be out of place for me to point out that you have been distant, to ask you whether your affections have changed, to voice my sadness, worry, and regret about the way you are treating me, to explain the significance it has for me and our relationship. It is an invitation to confront the reality of your action or attitude, through my own view of them, as deficient in love. It is thereby also an invitation to confront me, as an object of your love. If you do, that confrontation could lead to reconciliation. Or to separation: reflecting on your cold treatment of me may lead you to realize that you have long ago fallen out of love with me. Again, my addressing you is an invitation, my calling on you to treat me lovingly: I leave open the possibility that you will not reciprocate the love I seek. That is because we can demand respect from others but not their love.

Our claims on one another are essentially linked to accountability of these two kinds. Certainly, conclusive claims are, as these just are obligations to others, but the point holds of mere claims, too. Even though you are not generally entitled to hold me accountable for failing to act on a mere claim of yours, my ignoring your claim is an occasion for accountability-seeking responses on your part,
normally. Ignoring your claim express a variety of disrespect for you that is of the same kind as the
disrespect expressed when I violate an obligation to you. That’s not to say that in wronging another
person, or ignoring her mere claim, we voice our actual, explicitly disrespectful attitudes towards her,
although we often do that. It is that an act of wronging (or ignoring a mere claim) carries a certain
interpersonal significance, and does so regardless of whether we have any such attitudes. That
interpersonal significance exists, so to speak, in social space itself, like the public meaning of a word.

I hasten to emphasize, however, that to say that claims are essentially linked to accountability
is not to say that there is a necessary connection between them, or that whenever we have an obligation
to another person (or she makes a valid claim on us) she is entitled to hold us accountable for violating
(or ignoring) it. To posit an essential link between the two is rather to make the point that
accountability in relationships informs, or defines, relational normativity, that a full specification of
the nature or essence of claims—and the other-directed obligations they constitute—would include
this dimension of accountability. That is compatible with thinking that the two sometimes come apart,
in marginal or deviant cases. But, of course, there needs to be some special story about those cases.

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18 And we can certainly imagine at least three such cases. First, hypocrisy (of one sort). Suppose that we are friends and
that you have failed to help me in the past when I’ve badly needed it, yet you refuse to acknowledge the wrong, much less
apologize or make it up to me. Now you ask me to help you in an hour of desperation, but I do not. In that case, it seems,
you are not entitled to seek accountability. Even if I have an obligation to you, you cannot blame me if I fail to meet it.
Second, complicity. It may also be inappropriate for you to hold me accountable for failing to help you when you are
complicit in creating the conditions that led to my failure—say, if I promise to drive you home after the party but you
pressure me to drink. Third, of course, relationships include all sorts of weaker expectations that provide reasons but the
failure to meet them does not warrant anyone in adopting accountability-seeking responses of any kind. Think of the
expectation that I have of you that you respond to me when I ask you a question, even if it is a trivial question. There
needs to be some story about these cases. A plausible story about the first case is that in failing to come to my aid before,
you have impaired our friendship. You are thus in bad standing, for in acting in the relevant way you inhibit us from
meeting the ideals of our relationship with one another; your previous offense inhibits me from sharing my life with you.
A claim is defective if made by a partner in bad standing because, in impairing the relationship in this way, she has made
it impossible for the other to act in such a way as to realize the relationship's ideals, and ignoring that claim can be a call
for the offending partner to recognize and mend these impaired relations. So, when I refuse to help you in light of your
earlier unhelpfulness, my doing so may have the force of protest, spurring you to acknowledge your wrong and apologize
or make it up to me. Generally, I have an obligation to you to help you but your bad conduct justifies me in infringing it.

Note: in this case the standard entitlement of a wronged party to adopt certain accountability-seeking responses
has been suspended because a fault in the relationship has disrupted the normal connection between the other-directed
obligation and accountability. Complicity is a much trickier matter. In the case I introduced above, you are not entitled to
hold me accountable for failing to drive you home after I promised because you did something that contributed to that
failure: you pressured me to drink. You violated a sincerity condition: you signaled that you would hold me to my promise.
So, claims and obligations to others are essentially linked to the possibility of wronging and related forms of disrespect, and to the forms of accountability that inform our dealings with others. And I have argued that claims which prescribe conduct that is specific to thick relationships are valid partly in virtue of certain facts about the relationship between these claims’ bearers and their recipients. I would now like to extend that argument by showing that all claims whatsoever are so grounded.

3. Moral Relations as Genuine Relationships

What is it, exactly, that explains the validity of the moral claims that we make and have on one another? Of course, sometimes our moral claims on one another are valid in virtue of our standing in concrete, familiar relationships of the sort we have been discussing: for example, our relationships with our friends, lovers, parents, children, colleagues, advisors, and political representatives. But not always. Even if we have no such relationships with other people, they can make or have certain elementary claims on us: claims on us that we not harm them, that we not block their way in the street, that we tell them the time or directions when they ask, that we come to their aid when they are in trouble. And these claims can rise to the level of obligations to other people, so that we owe these actions to them.

It is tempting, I think, to suppose that nothing else explains the validity of moral claims of this kind, beyond—perhaps—the mundane fact that the claim-bearer in question is a person. And it can seem plausible a fortiori that no further relationship can, or must, serve as their ground. Maybe the ground is that both the claim’s bearer and its recipient are people, but that hardly counts as a relationship, at least in the sense that implies that moral relations and personal relations belong to the same category.

But then, in insisting that I drink, signaled that you would not hold me to it, perhaps because you wanted us both to have fun and figure our exit plans out later. In blaming me, you show yourself to be of two minds, seeming to make inconsistent claims on me. That sort of story may not work for all cases of complicity. But my point is that, like hypocrisy, complicity results in a loss of standing in the relevant relationship, and I have managed to find plausible explanations of how losses of standing in the cases we have seen undermine the normal entitlement to seek accountability but leave the other-directed obligation intact, explanations that respect the unity between the two.
Nevertheless, my view is that our moral claims on one another, even those that do not arise in the context of considerably thicker relations, are indeed still grounded in some more basic relationship. This relationship makes the claims that we make, and have, on one another valid and determines the validity of the thicker relationships that we might have with one another as well. All people just as such are partners to this admittedly unique relationship.\(^{19}\) I call this relationship the *moral relationship*.\(^{20}\)

Support for the thesis that our moral claims are valid in virtue of the moral relationship comes from the fact that conceiving of our moral relations to others as relationships explains the significant similarities between these relations and thicker relationships such as friendship and romantic love.

First, both moral relations and personal attachments involve, and require, a recognition of the other partner which finds expression in *mutual concern*. With friends, it seems perfectly clear that mutual concern and a certain configuration of attitudes is an expectation or presupposition of the relationship: that, say, an uncaring friend is a bad friend—bad as a friend—if her lack of concern only manifests itself in a failure to delight in her friend’s successes and lament his defeats or miseries.\(^{21}\) Nevertheless, it may not be immediately obvious that the analogous point holds for our moral relations to strangers.

As T.M. Scanlon points out, we can and do expect others to have certain patterns of concern and other attitudes, independently of their bearing on conduct. We would be alarmed by someone whose mood was wholly unaffected by witnessing a violent car crash, even if he managed to rush to the scene to aid its victims. We would regard him as callous, and callousness is a moral fault. His

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\(^{19}\) This is a thesis that is found, in a different form, in Thompson (2006): that for it to be possible to morally wrong another person and thereby to commit injustice against him in particular, we must be bound by the same set of laws, and we must be able to recognize each other as falling under that set of laws by virtue of inhabiting some common practical identity.

\(^{20}\) A note about terminology: I will use the term ‘moral relationship’ to designate the collection of particular moral relations and the ideals stemming from the nature of that relationship, and the term ‘moral relations’ to refer to the relation that particular persons stand to others. Compare, on the one hand, the sense of friendship where the term is not potentially plural or preceded by an article, referring to friendship as a form of relationship; and, on the other hand, the sense of friendship that allows us to speak intelligibly of a friendship, this friendship, that friendship, and particular friendships.

\(^{21}\) See Scanlon (2008), pp. 141-141. The significance of the way persons affect us, emotionally, for an account of what it is to recognize another as a person is a perennial theme of Raimond Gaita’s work as well. See especially the last chapter of Gaita (2002) and his (2004), chs. 9-10.
inability to be happy for the victims in learning that they were unharmed would invite the same judgment, again, even if he helped them get out of the car, called a tow truck, or comforted them. These attitudes cannot really be demanded yet they can certainly be expected, and we do expect them. Moral relations do not just require treating others with respect for them as people, justifying our actions to them, demanding certain treatment from them, and blaming them if it is not forthcoming. These relations also require caring about others in particular ways, such as being happy or sad for them under certain circumstances, which is to say: they require a basic affective openness to others.\textsuperscript{22}

Second, like personal attachments, moral relations carry a presumption of \textit{reciprocity}. The friend who refuses to help you even though you have come to his aid in similar circumstances before is not just violating an expectation that you have for the friendship: that he help you when you need it. Rather, his refusal is a failure of reciprocity. He fails to accord you the same status as himself, treating your needs as if they do not give \textit{him} a reason to help you, but his own as calling for \textit{your} help. He thereby violates one of the structural features of friendship, which is a part of its mutual character: that one friend treat the other in the way that he would have the other treat himself.\textsuperscript{23} This is a moral ideal, and moral relations carry the same presumption of reciprocity, which is essential to the realm of interpersonal justice. For example, if you have helped me plow my field and I have encouraged in you the expectation that I will do the same for you, it is morally objectionable for me to refuse to help you plow your field when I simply do not feel like doing so, and this action, too, is a failure of reciprocity. We refuse to play our part in the cooperative scheme through which others have provided benefits to us. It is a clear instance of unfairness, and treating others with fairness is part of relating to them justly. In acting unfairly towards someone, we treat him as if he had no power to obligate us, as if his

\textsuperscript{22} In Chapter 3, I will present a view of recognizing another as a person on which it consists in a similar kind of orientation to other persons, which partly explains how their claims could get a normative and motivational grip on us.

\textsuperscript{23} Scanlon also draws this connection between friendship and mutuality. See Scanlon (2008), p. 133.
expectations of us were insignificant. We express the intention to take advantage of him for our gain. We apply expectations to ourselves that arbitrarily differ from the expectations we apply to others.\(^{24}\)

Third, \textit{co-deliberation} is central to personal attachments and moral relations alike. Partners to both kinds of relations must determine, either explicitly or implicitly, the joint decisions that are to structure their interactions with one another and the expectations that mediate these interactions. In the case of friendship, co-deliberation takes the form of working out, individually and collectively, what they will expect of one another where certain expectations are up for refinement, revision, or renegotiation. For example, friends are to settle for themselves the question of how much help they are to give one another, under what kinds of circumstances, and how much it is acceptable to sacrifice. But when strangers are caught up together in certain contexts they engage in co-deliberation as well: when I am helping you in some way (‘How much should I help?’), when I’ve accidentally harmed you (‘How great a risk can I impose on you?’) or broken a promise to you (‘Is restitution called for?’).\(^{25}\)

In personal attachments and moral relations, co-deliberation is in play when the partners justify their actions to one another and express certain accountability-seeking responses to one another. Both activities are involved in determining our expectations of the person to whom we are related. The process of defining the expectations of a particular personal relationship with someone is largely a tacit, even inchoate one, partly informed by our historically specific sense of what it is to be, say, a friend, romantic partner, or parent.\(^{26}\) But, notably, the same is true of the moral relationship as well.

\(^{24}\) The point might be modified to admit the possibility that personal relations involve a commitment to reciprocity unless some justification can be given for one partner treating another as he would not have himself treated.

\(^{25}\) Here I owe a debt to Kyla Ebels-Duggan. See Ebels-Duggan (2009), especially p. 17-18.

The point hints at a source of complexity for the account of the validity of claims that I have given. In some cases, I might be making a claim that is out of step with the expectations of my relationship with you, without my claim thereby risking invalidation. We want to leave room for permissible boundary-pushing: sometimes our making a claim that is not backed by the current expectations of our relationship should be interpreted as an attempt to make its recipient revise her understanding of the nature of this relationship. And if the relationship is changed, the claim may be valid.

\(^{26}\) I want to concede that it can sometimes be indeterminate which expectations one friend has of another till she finds herself blaming or resenting him, or merely strongly, stably disliking the way he has acted towards her. To see how this might be, think of someone’s hurt reaction to her friend’s declining to drive her to the airport because he was merely tired.
Our expectations of one another are embodied in our social practices and conventions, including our norms of politeness and decorum, all of which contributes to our sense of how to relate to others. These expectations may be altered, or made determinate, in various ways, by outspokenly protesting the traditionally acceptable behavior or by expressing negative reactions when we encounter it. Indeed, a central strand of moral reasoning just concerns what people can and should expect of one another.

Finally, as I have effectively mentioned, within personal attachments and moral relations, interactions between partners are mediated by a network of accountability-seeking responses when the expectations of our relationship are violated. The fact that we are friends with someone explains why, and on what basis, we hold each other accountable for not meeting the expectations defining our friendship. But if moral relations are structured by accountability-seeking responses and our entitlements to them, there must be something that explains why we hold people accountable for wrongdoing us and others, and why we are warranted, say, exhorting, resenting, or blaming others for these actions. When we stand in a moral relation, that relation precedes our wrongdoing one another and even our interacting with one another in the first place. And this is what explains both the fact that we exhort, resent, and blame others when we do, and the fact that these reactions are appropriate.

So, I am saying that what I call the moral relationship is a bona fide relationship: that moral relations belong to the same category as personal attachments and institutionally mediated relations, not just that these items are analogous in illuminating respects. We may be skeptical of that conclusion, perhaps—as Scanlon notes—on the grounds that to count as having a relationship with one another, we must have special attitudes towards one another or at least know of the other’s existence in particular. It can sound odd to say that we have a relationship though we have never interacted, indeed may never do so, and though we have no special concern for, or even awareness of, each other.

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27 See Scanlon (2008), 139-141.
Apart from the question of the moral relationship’s status, these constraints rule out too much. In light of them, co-citizenship cannot be a relationship. Co-citizens often do not know the individuals to whom they stand in this normative relation. Yet co-citizenship seems at to at least have the potential to be a normatively significant relationship, a distinct ground of claims. Not only that, however: co-citizens place all sorts of expectations on each other to which they would not hold non-co-citizens, expecting certain forms of treatment, along with certain general attitudes and patterns of concern. They may see one another and themselves as accountable for failing to meet these expectations, too, and they can be said to participate in co-deliberation via the mechanisms of electoral democracy. And co-citizenship can be the basis for distinctive forms of consideration for, and solidarity with, others.

Now the moral relationship certainly seems to share these distinguishing features with co-citizenship, even if the two are generalized relationships, the moral relationship especially: relationships that hold between individuals who do not have singular attitudes or thoughts about one another, and even who may never be in a position to identify them specifically. Friendship, on the other hand, is an individualized relationship. A given friendship holds between individuals who can identify each other in particular, who are acquainted with one another and hold certain special attitudes towards one another, such as appreciation, affection, and concern for the other specifically. But these features are not necessary for a relation between two people to count as a full-fledged personal relationship.

To constitute a personal relationship, a relation between people need not comprise special attitudes towards the other in particular, distinctive modes of regard for her, patterns of interaction with her, or even the ability to identify her specifically. Two individuals can be in a relationship just in virtue of the fact that they have the capacity to see each other as sources of claims that would be in force should they come to identify each other specifically, along with the fact that they are susceptible

28 I am open to the possibility that the difference between generalized and individualized relationships may be a matter of degree and not of kind, more suitable for representation via a spectrum than by drawing a bright line between them.
to accountability-seeking reactions and to forms of concern and regard for one another in particular. So, you and I can stand in moral relations in virtue of embodying a common nature—practical capacities of a complementary shape, forming the basis of a practical identity—and sharing a world.

It is therefore too restrictive to confine relationships to the individualized. We should admit generalized relations into the category of relationships, and if we do there is no reason to exclude moral relations. Moral relations with other people are generalized but genuine personal relationships. In the next two sections, I hope to clarify the basic structure of these relations by elucidating the phenomenon of wronging another, and then to re-examine our original puzzle in light of these results.

4. Wronging and Individuality

Guilt is, at least paradigmatically, a pained recognition of having wronged another (or others). It is what we feel when we acknowledge that, in light of our having violated an expectation of our relationship with another, the one we have wronged is entitled to hold us accountable for the violation. Let’s focus on the structure of the experience of guilt for having wronged a specific identifiable person.

This much seems clear: when we feel guilt of this sort, the object of our guilt is not the mere fact of the violation, the mere fact of having acted contrary to a requirement that we are under. In such cases, as Raimond Gaita points out in the epigraph, we don’t normally feel guilty only, or basically, for having acted as we ought not to have acted, or for having acted against Reason, the balance of reasons, some impersonal value, or indeed the moral law. Of course, we do or can feel guilty for having acted wrongly relative to some requirement or value, and I would not want to deny that. But I want to emphasize that is not the most fundamental description of the object of our guilt as it appears to us.

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29 Here I want to acknowledge a special debt to Raimond Gaita. I see myself as trying to defend a thought that is similar to the one for which he evocatively argues in Gaita (2004), chs. 4 and 9.
We feel guilty for having wronged a particular person.\textsuperscript{30} That formulation has the potential to mislead us, however. For it is likewise false, in a certain sense, to say that we feel guilty just, or more basically, for having wronged \textit{a person}, at least if she is seen as a concrete instantiation of personhood and so technically as a particular. Normally, we do not feel guilty for having wronged a particular person in the thin sense that we may feel guilty for needlessly destroying a redwood or stepping on a mound of ants by accident. The person we have wronged morally should not appear to us in this way. And the difference between these attitudes is not just that not wronging people is \textit{more} important than preventing deforestation, although that is obviously true. The difference is, rather, one of kind. Does it lie in the fact that people have intrinsic value whereas trees do not? Again, I doubt it: it is not obviously inappropriate to regard trees and human beings as both intrinsically valuable but it is clearly morally objectionable to regard wronging a person as structurally on a par with destroying a redwood. The difference between wronging a particular person and acting wrongly in other ways is that we cannot regard the person we have wronged as \textit{substitutable} by another in our act of wronging, reflected by the fact that it is morally objectionable for us to see her as substitutable as the object of our guilt.

When we feel guilty for having wronged another person, we seem to see ourselves as joined to that person in a nexus that is distinctive, not just an instantiation of a more general requirement. Someone could feel guilty for chopping down a redwood in order to hear it fall to the ground, but it is essential to the guilt he feels that it is all the same that he cut down \textit{this} redwood rather than \textit{that} one. It is not just that he would feel guilty to the same degree if he had cut this one down and not another one. His guilt would be indistinguishable \textit{whichever} one he had destroyed, for the loss of one tree would not just be equally bad as the loss of another, it would be the same in all relevant respects.

\textsuperscript{30} We can, of course, also feel guilty for mistreating the other animals. I want to lay aside the fraught issue of whether we can wrong other animals, since there are particular difficulties in the idea that we can wrong them. Briefly: non-rational animals cannot hold us accountable for the way we treat them; it is unclear what it is to express disrespect for an animal \textit{as an animal}; and because they have no obligations to us, the kind of normative relation we have to them must be different.
Wrongsing a particular person cannot be like that. If I have murdered Sylvia, it is not all the same to me whether I have murdered Sylvia or Philippa, although obviously I would feel guilty for murdering either of them, and if I had to choose which one lived or died I would be justified in flipping a coin. The relation I stand in is basically to her, even if I stand in qualitatively identical relations to others.

Guilt is not alone in this respect. Grief is similar, as is love, or at least a certain kind of love. When we feel grief for the loss of someone, we have in mourning a different experience of the death than if another person had died. The death does not present itself as potentially indiscernible from any other human death: as a this (rather than a that). When we grieve for her, it is not normally all the same to us whether she or another person has died, though we would be equally saddened by the loss of either of them. Gaita’s example is that of a mother who loses one of her children. The object of the mother’s grief cannot just, or basically, be one of my children in the same way that a wealthy person can regret the theft of one of my cars. Likewise, when we love someone, we cannot care about and appreciate him merely as a concrete instantiation of certain generic properties and thus in principle as replaceable, as the object of our love, with another person exhibiting a similar mosaic of properties. The experience of loving him cannot be indiscernible from the experience of loving someone else, in that it cannot be all the same to us whether we happen to love one person as opposed to another. We love others as the individuals that they are, just as we mourn for others as the individuals that they were. And in this sense, we also feel guilty for having wronged others as the individuals that they are.

It is not easy to state my thesis with care, so I want to pause another moment to disambiguate. My point is not that we can only feel guilty for wronging a particular person rather than Personhood. What I have argued is that when we feel guilty for having wronged a specific, identifiable person, we exhibit proper moral concern only if we are prepared to regard her as an individual, where that involves seeing the relation we stand in to her as basically distinct from any relation we may have to others.

Thus, we cannot see her as potentially substitutable as the object of our wronging and our guilt, in the way the person who destroyed the redwood regarded the particular tree he had cut down as potentially substitutable as the object of *his* wronging and *his* guilt. The guilty redwood-destroyer could see no difference between having chopped this one down rather than that one, between the loss of one and the loss of the other; his guilt, and the loss, would be indistinguishable in both cases. This is different than the point that we can only wrong, and feel guilty for wronging, particular people. The redwood-destroyer views redwoods as particulars, all right. But he does not view them as distinct individuals.

Proper moral concern for others does not require that we regard an individual as *just an individual*—as a bare particular, totally lacking in properties that could be instantiated in another person. So, I can agree that to fully appreciate the significance of wronging another person, we must see the specific, identifiable people whom we wrong as one person among others, and as valuable qua person. In principle, it is possible to show consideration for someone while taking it as an open question whether to also extend it to other people, but that sort of stance would not be a moral attitude at all. Yet what I protest is the idea that consideration for a person informed by this more generalized view is exhaustive of moral concern for her, or that this form of concern is, ultimately, nothing more than seeing her as one person among others, valuable only in virtue of partaking of personhood. If people only appeared to us as under this guise, we could not see ourselves as having wronged them, where, as I have emphasized, wronging them is distinct from having acted wrongly with respect to them.

Similarly, I do not reject the possibility that we can wrong groups of people, even humanity or the moral community at large, nor would I disagree that we can wrong individuals that we could only identify by a general description. Clearly, we can as individuals do things that wrong groups of people, as when we negligently speed during the snowstorm and hit a bus full of people. We can as a group of people wrong another group of people, as when we leave a polluted earth for our distant
descendants. (Indeed, in such a case, we may only be able to pick them out as whoever inherits the Earth.)

We can also, as individuals or as a group, wrong a collection of people as members of a particular group. For example, it is plausible that racial violence—Hitler’s nearly successful attempt to destroy the Jewish people, say—constitutes a wrong to members of the targeted group as a whole, even to those who are not directly affected by it, and so not just to the particular individuals in the group. But even in such cases, we are nevertheless expected to regard and relate to our victims as individuals. If one of our victims holds us accountable for our action, it is appropriate for us to feel guilt for its effect on her in particular, not simply on its wrongness or how it affected the group more generally. It is no accident, I think, that in such a case the acts of apologizing, expressing contrition, and offering restitution standardly have individual addressees: we perform these acts to other, nameable individuals as such, not just to her qua representative of the group in question, although we might also do that.

In fact, we might distinguish two different kinds of cases, corresponding to two different kinds of groups. There is, I suppose, some sense in which we can say that the victims of a massive terrorist attack constitute a group. But it seems more natural to say that the perpetrator of the attack wronged the individuals that constituted the group, not that she wronged them as members of the group. Talk of the group serves as shorthand, for prior to the attack there is nothing ethically significant binding them together into a group. There are other cases in which talk of a group is more substantial, however.

Arguably, Hitler and those who played important roles in the atrocities of the Third Reich wronged not just those Jewish individuals who were expelled from Germany or killed in concentration camps, but the Jewish people as a whole, even those who fled before the advent of the First Solution. Here there is something ethically significant binding the members together in a group: shared ethnic identity, constituted in part by a common historical struggle—for which its members were targeted. There are thorny issues here. But in such a case it seems to me that we can say that Hitler wronged

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32 I thank Chris Korsgaard for the example and for pressing me to clarify these issues.
individual Jews, considered severally and as particulars, and the Jewish people, considered as a group. It is just that when we recognize that he wronged the Jewish people as a whole that group figures in our recognition as not as a collection of individuals but in some way as an individual in its own right. So, in some cases, a group could figure as an individual in practical thought and the same act could constitute several wrongings, distinct violations of particular obligations to the individuals so wronged. Nevertheless, wronging a group taken as an individual is parasitic on wronging its individual members.

Thus, to count as exhibiting proper moral concern for another person, we need to have two conceptions: a conception of her as an individual and a conception of her as one person among others. That is reflected in the fact that wronging is fundamentally a relation not to a general requirement on action but to a particular party, where that part is either an individual or a group functioning as one. And that fact has implications for our understanding of the nature of moral relations to other people.

5. Individuality and the Character of Moral Relations

But now what exactly does this point show about the nature of moral relations between people? One view is that a moral relation is a normative relation between each particular person and people taken as a whole. On such a view, we stand in moral relations with humanity generally—the group of all people—and we must regard our obligations to others as more basically owed to all other people. Another view is that a moral relation is a normative relation between each particular person and every other particular person. Each of us stands in a distinct moral relation not with humanity generally, according to this line of thinking, but rather with every other person regarded as a specific individual.

The two views have their attractions. The first view captures the generality of moral concern: the fact that its scope includes all people, at least. It also receives apparent support from the fact there are certain forms of treatment that we owe to everyone and that anyone can hold us accountable for failing to accord someone. Our obligations to others not to kill them, say, support generalized
complaints in this way, but other obligations only support more individualized complaints. If I promise you that I will water your plants while you are away but I forget to do so, then my failure is not anyone else’s business; no one but you is in a position to hold me accountable for that violation. And it might be thought that when we violate an obligation to another which supports a generalized complaint, we wrong her not as the individual she is but simply as a member of the moral community of people. This suggests that the object of our obligations to others, and thus our moral relations, is humanity.

But the fact that we can wrong a particular person in a way that grounds an entitlement on everyone’s part to demand, complain, and blame does not show that in such cases we wrong this person as another instantiation of personhood, a speck of humanity, taken only or primarily as such. And thus, it doesn’t show that the ultimate object of our obligations to others is the totality of people. It is, of course, true that there are forms of treatment that we are obligated to provide to all people. It is also true that we can wrong a particular person and thereby ground the sort of complaint against us that could normally be made by anyone. But both of these prosaic facts are compatible with the possibility that we stand in moral relations to every other particular person regarded in principle as an individual. For one, the fact that there are forms of treatment that are owed to everyone does not show that we owe them to everyone taken as a whole. It could instead be that we owe these obligations to everyone taken as a collection of indefinitely many particular people, as on the second view.

Indeed, this strikes me as the more natural view. For one, it does not appear possible to hold humanity as a whole accountable for a wrong it has committed against us, and this suggests that we cannot be wronged by humanity as a whole, though we may be wronged by particular people. Wronging is essentially connected with the suitability of certain forms of interpersonal address on the

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33 For an argument for a similar conclusion, see Darwall (2013a), pp. 35-39.
34 Thus, the second view is similar to Wesley Hohfeld’s conception of multital rights or claims: ‘A multital right, or claim, (right in rem) is always one of a large class of fundamentally similar yet separate rights, actual and potential,’ residing in a single person (or single group of persons) but availing respectively against persons constituting a very large and indefinite class of people.’ See, for example, Hohfeld (1917), 718-720.
part of the wronged one, even if the situation does not allow her to address the one who wronged her. And it simply not clear what the analogues of these acts of address would be in such a case. There is just no such thing as a victim of humanity, unless that is construed as a victim of the rest of the world.

On the other side, there may be actions that fall into the category of wrongs against humanity as a whole; maybe there is an interesting sense in which the Holocaust wronged humanity generally, for instance. But aside from the fact that it is mysterious what it would be for humanity as a whole to forgive, say, Hitler for nearly destroying the Jewish people, other obligations to other people do not fit the mold. When I unjustly kill Sylvia in particular, I wrong her all right, but do I wrong humanity in general? Not in the first instance. The primary victim of my action is Sylvia herself, as reflected in the fact that when I feel guilty for it and I can identify her, my thoughts are of the individual herself. The content of my guilty thought is not that I killed a member of the moral community or that I killed a person. It is that I killed Sylvia. I may be haunted, saddened, or devastated by the deed I committed, but not simply because I regard it was a particularly egregious instance of my having acted wrongly. I am instead haunted by the image of Sylvia’s face or the sound of her voice, saddened by the details of her life revealed in her obituary, or devastated by her family’s show of forgiveness in the courtroom. (What would it be to feel guilty for murdering her yet unmoved to feel at least some of these emotions?)

When others reproach me for my deed, there is a sense, I grant, in which they are acting as representatives of the moral community, and morality is such that it authorizes anyone to hold anyone else accountable for certain violations or demand certain forms of treatment on behalf of others. But once again neither fact implies or suggests that when I murder Sylvia, the object of my wrongdoing is Sylvia conceived primarily as a member of the moral community or as just one person among many.

Those who reproach me on Sylvia’s behalf are acting as representatives in that they are exercising broad powers of accountability-seeking that belong to everyone in virtue of their humanity or personhood. In exercising those powers, too, they are acting also as enforcers of moral requirements.
One dimension along which moral requirements can be distinguished concerns whether or not they are generally enforceable by third parties. The requirement that we keep our promises to others is not normally enforceable in this sense, whereas the requirement that we refrain from killing others is. It is an interesting question what makes it the case that a moral requirement is one that can be enforced. But it strikes me as a substantive question about morality. Answering it will not tell us about the form of our obligations to others or the nature of moral relations. I need not take a stand on this question. My point is that in guilt I cannot see Sylvia primarily or only as a speck of humanity if I am in a position to identify her. The distinction between wrongings that ground an individualized complaint alone and those that ground a generalized complaint as well is important for a substantive theory of relational normativity. Yet pointing to the existence of the latter does not show that our obligations to others are obligations to humanity generally, or that our moral relations are basically with humanity generally.

The foregoing reflections, if correct, have provided some evidence that moral relations are normative relations to particular people in the first instance, rather than to people taken as a totality. But the evidence is not yet decisive. And it might be suggested that the idea that moral relations are to humanity generally is needed to explain why it is that every person has obligations to all people. What else would explain morality’s generality? If moral relations are relations between every person and every other, as on the second view, how it is that every person has moral obligations to all people?

There are two halves to the challenge that are worth distinguishing. First half of the challenge: if moral relations are relations between every person and every other, how is it that every person has obligations to other people? This is a question about who has the obligations in question, who counts as the obligations’ agent. Second half of the challenge: if moral relations are relations between every person and every other, how is it that our obligations to others are obligations to all people? That is a question about whom we have the obligations in question to, who counts as the obligations’ patient. These questions concern two different kinds of general scope, then: the scope of the class of agents
of other-directed moral obligations and the scope of the class of patients of other-directed moral obligations. Does accepting the view that moral relations are relations between every person and every other, not with humanity generally, present some obstacle in the way of answering them? Or can the view explain why all people are at once the agents and patients of other-directed moral obligations?

I want to close by pointing out that this challenge is sound, but the questions it raises are again substantive, lying within the subset of moral theory that specifies what we owe to each other and why. The first half asks why moral requirements of this kind apply to all people, while the second half asks why all people are the objects of moral consideration (which is not to say that we alone are its objects). In other words, what makes it the case that all people have moral obligations to others, and what makes it the case that all people are the ones to whom we have these moral obligations? I will not answer these questions here. Responding to them is the project of the dissertation, and the third and fourth chapters in particular will be devoted to answering them. For now, I only conclude that, in view of the difficulty in the idea of an obligation to humanity at large, moral relations between people are best conceived as holding between particular people who are to regard each other as individuals.

6. The Original Puzzle Revisited

I have shown what it would be to conceive of morality as giving pride of place to obligations to others, and how acknowledging morality’s connection to the possibility of wronging is significant for ethics. Directedness to another person is to be understood in terms of normatively significant relationships: we have particular obligations to others in virtue of some relationship between ourselves and them, and these relationships specify relations of accountability as a response to the disrespect that wronging constitutes. I’ve argued that the phenomenology of guilt reveals to us that when we wrong a particular specifiable person, it is part and parcel of proper moral concern that we regard her as an individual, and that this shows that moral relations are normative relations between every person and every other.
These conclusions have consequences concerning the shape of the puzzle that this dissertation aims to address. Recall that the original version of the puzzle was this. Other people seem to make valid claims on us just because they are people. How is that possible? That is, how can others, just in virtue of their personhood, make claims on us that could move us to act for their sake? Or crucially, how could these claims move us in the way that a grasp of binding practical requirements does?

If I’m right that the normative force of a claim derives in part from the relationship between the claim-bearer and the claim’s recipient, then these claims are peculiar indeed. For their validity entails that fellow person is a normatively significant relationship in its own right, and thus that every person stands in accountability relations to everyone other. Yet how could this be? How could others be sources of directed claims on us, just by being the same kind of being that we are? After all, moral relations are supposed to be unlike personal attachments and official relations in that we don’t voluntarily enter into them, nor does our standing in them presuppose any special attitudes. How, though, can simply being a person like I am imply that I’m accountable to you for the way I treat you?

This does seem puzzling. It seems less dubious that when you and I are friends we could have valid claims on each other just as such, or that the fact of our friendship with each other places us in the space of wrongdoing and accountability. But it calls out for explanation that a relationship between people just as such could support valid claims, violation of which wrongs particular people, and that it could implicate relations of accountability. Can it just be the seemingly anodyne metaphysical fact of our common personhood that explains why we stand in this peculiar set of nexuses with each other?

I will deal with this puzzle in due course. First, however, I want to lay out a crucial implication that the fact of morality’s other-directedness has on the shape that a vindication of its authority must take. In particular, a vindication of morality’s authority must not just demonstrate that the kinds of actions prescribed by morality are ones that we are universally and categorically bound to perform. It must also show that these forms of treatment are owed to others such that others are wronged when
we fail to treat them in these ways—a substantial criterion of adequacy on a vindication of morality.

It will turn out that certain accounts of morality are intrinsically unsuitable for the task of vindication.

We will also learn a bit more about what a successful vindication of morality would have to be like.
2. The Authority of Another Individual

I can recognize that I am under obligation to others only insofar as I at the same time put myself under obligation, since the law by virtue of which I regard myself as being under obligation proceeds in every case from my own practical reason...

—Immanuel Kant

1. The Significance of Morality’s Directedness

In the first chapter, I closed by drawing out a consequence of emphasizing morality’s connection to the phenomenon of wronging. Since wronging other people is possible only if every one of us stands in moral relations with every other one of us, skepticism about morality’s authority should be recast. We should reinterpret it as concerning the possibility of moral relations: normative relations between people that hold just because we are people, capable of conceiving one another as distinct individuals.

In this chapter, I examine another consequence of the fact that central moral obligations are obligations to other people, not about the shape of moral skepticism but about the form of an answer to it: that morality’s other-directedness suggests a criterion of adequacy on vindications of its authority.

A vindication of morality’s authority is adequate only if it grounds our moral obligations to others in a fact that does not rule out that these obligations are owed to the right party, in the right way. To put it briefly, a vindicatory account must preserve the other-directedness of our moral obligations to others. I will call this the directedness constraint. An account would fail to meet it if, say, it yielded the conclusion that our moral obligations to others are, in fact, merely owed to ourselves, or a fortiori to no one at all. This kind of account cites the wrong sort of ground of an other-directed obligation’s normative force.

Keeping the directedness constraint in mind is important for ethical theorizing, I will show, for it turns out that some respectable moral theories do not meet it and thus that they are inadequate. It follows that vindications of morality that proceed from these theories inherit the same inadequacy. This possibility makes the directedness constraint relevant to our project. For, I will argue, in addition to ruling out certain moral theories as unfit for the task of vindication, applying the constraint reveals something significant about the normative status of other people, or their authority to obligate us: that others’ authority to obligate us cannot be grounded in our own authority to obligate ourselves.

To establish this conclusion, in this chapter I focus my attention on contemporary Kantian constructivism, particularly as it is elaborated in the work of Christine Korsgaard. Korsgaard is an ideal interlocutor in this context, because she has thematized the directed character of our moral obligations while also holding that her Kantian framework can well accommodate their directedness. I will argue that Korsgaard’s style of Kantian constructivism cannot meet the directedness constraint, or at least that its prospects of meeting it are dubious. More specifically, Kantian constructivism’s inability to meet the constraint is due to its conception of the nature and grounds of our obligations. On that conception, a rational agent is under an obligation to φ just when, and because, she has obligated herself to φ, by adopting the relevant maxim as a practical law that could be willed universally.

So, after fleshing out and motivating the directedness constraint (§2), I present Korsgaard’s early account of how other people can obligate us (§3), then raise a basic challenge for that account: since my obligations arise from my obligating myself, on the Kantian view, it seems that I am the source of my obligations; yet if others are to obligate me, they must be the sources of these obligations (§4). The Kantian view seems to imply that there can either be no obligations to other people or no

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37 As we will see (§5), this statement is not quite right, since promissory obligations arguably have their source both in promise-maker and in the person on whose behalf the promised action is undertaken. Nevertheless, not all obligations appear to be this way, so that it is unpromising to take promissory obligation as the model of obligations generally. I thank Stephen White and Wesley Buckwalter for pushing me to clarify this point and for challenging criticisms of an earlier draft.
unmediated obligations to others. Next, I consider a response to this challenge: that our obligations to others are other-directed because we engage in joint self-binding, by obligating ourselves to grant them authority to obligate us in interaction (§5). After showing why this response is inadequate, and why appealing to this activity’s inescapability multiplies mysteries, I offer a diagnosis of the Kantian constructivist’s failure (§6). It is due to the mistaken view that we each have authority over ourselves originally while others have the authority to obligate us only derivatively, because we grant it to them. The authority that others have over us must be on a par with the authority that we have over ourselves.

2. Wronging and the Directedness Constraint

The directedness constraint receives intuitive support from basic reflection on the phenomenology of recognizing our obligation to some specifiable individual, both prospectively and retrospectively. Suppose that my friend Sylvia calls to ask me if I could give her a ride from the airport next week. Suppose, too, that it would not be a long or otherwise burdensome drive, that I am available on the day she is scheduled to return, and that none of her other friends or acquaintances could pick her up.38 Recognizing these facts, I take myself to be obligated to do so. What is the character of my obligation?

My experience of that obligation presents Sylvia as related to it, and to me, in a distinctive way. In particular, I would not just see myself as bound to perform some action—driving Sylvia from the airport, fulfilling her reasonable request—that can only be properly characterized by reference to her. If I refrain from driving her to the airport next week, then, it seems that I do not merely act wrongly, in failing to help a friend by fulfilling her reasonable request of me—although, clearly, I do that, too. Rather, I regard myself as bound to Sylvia—as obligated to her—to drive her from the airport, a thought that is connected with the recognition that I would wrong her if I did not, indeed even if I did not

38 In other words, I am asking the reader to suppose that all else is equal in the case in question.
agree to do so. And should I recognize that wrong and feel guilty for having done it, my guilt is for what I have done to her specifically: the focus of my guilt is on the effects of my violation on her.

Moreover, I experience my obligation to Sylvia as my standing in a normative nexus to her alone. Of course, in saying that, I don’t mean to rule out my having a qualitatively identical obligation to someone else or my obligation to Sylvia interacting, in significant ways, with my other obligations. I just mean that my obligation to Sylvia strikes me as independent of my obligation to anyone else, and my violating it is a wrong done to her that is normally distinct from a wrong done to anyone else.

Michael Thompson characterizes this striking feature of our obligations to others in similar terms:

Sylvia and you have fallen into a peculiar nexus which limits your pursuit of objectives of any kind, even the beautiful objectives of charity and the love of justice. The consideration operates pairwise, and the rest of the world is, at least to a certain extent, closed out.\(^{39}\)

Finally, the difference between wronging her and wronging someone else seems deeper than that between acting wrongly in cutting down this redwood and acting wrongly in cutting down that one.

This phenomenological sketch seems to capture our pre-philosophical grasp of the difference between merely monadic and other-directed obligations, between acting wrongly and wronging others. It also underscores the apparent distinctness of our obligations to others, their independence of one another, and, potentially, their separateness from the other requirements that we happen to be under. If this stretch of normative space matches the phenomenology as depicted, there really are obligations to other people, and they are distinct from one another and from other kinds of normative material. Accordingly, my sketch also suggests some simple ways that an account of an other-directed moral obligation’s normative force could turn out to violate the directedness constraint and why that matters.

Any account which entails that there are only merely monadic obligations, even if some of these are other-regarding—my obligation to pick up Sylvia, say—would clearly fail to meet the directedness constraint.

constraint. Think of a view, like that of W.D. Ross, on which we all have perfectly impersonal duties to do certain things, such as helping others, refraining from harming them, and keeping our promises.\footnote{Ross (1930), ch. 2.}

Perhaps this view is true. But its truth would mean that all obligations were merely monadic. For there is a large gap between the idea of a general requirement of conduct, to the effect that everyone ought to φ in a situation of a certain kind, and the apparently different thought that, in failing to φ in such a situation, one person would wrong another person in particular. The truth of such a view would make it so that the other person, Sylvia, can figure only among the content of a specific requirement—to help Sylvia by picking her up from the airport—that is itself an instantiation of an applicable general requirement that is even more basic, the requirement that we help those who need it. And this general requirement does not entail that any individual would be wronged by its violation. For that reason, the view in question implies that there are no bona fide obligations to other people, or at least makes it mysterious how there could be. It is, therefore, inadequate as a moral theory. It implies, incredibly, that I would not wrong anyone in violating my obligation to drive Sylvia from the airport next week: the obligation is, structurally, like my obligation not to cut down redwoods.

Equally, a moral theory runs afoul of the directedness constraint if it yields the conclusion that what we take to be our obligations to others are, in the end, merely self-directed, obligations to ourselves alone. That too seems incredible. My obligation to drive Sylvia from the airport, in light of the circumstances, doesn’t present itself to me as, ultimately, one whose fulfillment I owe only to myself, nor does it seem plausible that I would only wrong myself, rather than her, if I forgot to pick her up. Any moral theory with this consequence would be inadequate, then, indeed as inadequate as an account that denied the existence of any directed obligations whatsoever (or that entailed that denial).

There are other, equally damning ways for a moral theory to violate the directedness constraint. The theory could admit the existence of obligations to others yet systematically misidentify the patients...
of these obligations, and that would certainly constitute a serious failure to meet the constraint as well. The charge can justifiably be made against a view on which all of our obligations are really obligations only to our parents or to God. Once again, if the phenomenology of our obligations to others is trustworthy, it just does not seem that my obligation to pick Sylvia up from the airport, apparently an obligation to Sylvia specifically, could really be owed only to some party other than her, such as my mother and father, or that I would wrong them alone in forgetting her. Likewise, it just does not seem as if picking her up is really owed only to God, or as if I exclusively wrong God in ignoring her reasonable request. Indeed, the obligation that I have to Sylvia does not seem to have to do with anyone else. It is simply between me and Sylvia, not between me and other people, whether human or divine.

A moral theory’s capacity to meet the directedness constraint depends on whether it comports with the idea that other people are the sources of our obligations to them and not merely their occasion.\textsuperscript{41} To get a grip on the difference, imagine a crude version of ethical egoism, already a crude view. On that view, we ought to act in a certain way because doing so is the best way of furthering our own aims and interests. Now if what we ought to do in any given situation is whichever action furthers our aims and interests, it will be true that one person can give another a reason to act in a particular way. Suppose, for instance, that you are carrying a heavy piece of luggage up the stairs in an otherwise empty train station. Suddenly, you see me and ask for my help. On the egoist view, you have triggered a reason to come to your aid if, say, my sweetheart is nearby and a show of might would impress her. Here, though, you are functioning as the occasion for whatever obligation I incur, since the obligation is binding on me only in virtue of the instrumental relation between my helping you and my winning over my sweetheart.\textsuperscript{42} In this case, I have no obligation \textit{to you} to help you; I have, at best, an obligation

\textsuperscript{41} The idea that relations of interpersonal justice require that another person be the source of my obligations to her can also be found in Haase (2014b).

\textsuperscript{42} I take the term ‘occasion’, and the entire source-occasion distinction, from Michael Thompson, although he does not use the term ‘source’. See Thompson (2006), p. 340: ‘I did wrong in that I lied to you [when you have subjected me to an unjustly intrusive inquiry]’ contains representations of a pair of agents, indeed, but the combination is not properly bipolar.
concerning you, from which it follows that I do not wrong you when I decline your request for help. Egoism of this kind implies, in other words, that I have only merely monadic obligations, at best, since I am under a general requirement to promote my own good, which has nothing to do with wronging.

I hasten to emphasize that whether a moral theory is committed to treating people as merely the occasion for our other-regarding obligations—so, whether it meets the directedness constraint—doesn’t just depend on whether it traces the bindingness of these obligations to a relation to our good.

To illustrate the point, consider hedonic maximizing act-utilitarianism, the view that what we ought to do is to maximize pleasure, and minimize pain, in people and sentient creatures generally. Now this view holds that if the promotion of your happiness belongs to a possible state of affairs in which the occurrence of pleasure is greater than in any other state of affairs, I am under an obligation to realize the former. But again, from the fact that I am under such an obligation, it does not follow that I would wrong you in failing to promote your happiness, and it is difficult to see how it could. The obligation’s applicability to me depends on the accidental matter of whether the promotion of your happiness is part of an optimific state of affairs. You are the obligation’s occasion, not its source. And that is not because of any relation the promotion of your good has to the promotion of mine, for hedonic maximizing act-utilitarianism is not an egoistic theory. But it makes the bindingness of an obligation to ϕ consist in ϕ-ing’s relation to the promotion of the impersonal good, the maximization of pleasure over pain, and that is enough to ensure that it does not meet the directedness constraint.

I hope to have conveyed the source–occasion distinction well enough; I return to it below.43

If there are obligations to others and if they are generally as they appear to be, then every moral theory

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43 As these examples illustrate, for you to be the source of some (valid) claim on me, it is not enough that certain facts about you ground the immediate reason I have to do what you are calling on me to do. That’s because this abstract description is instantiated in all three examples. In each one, my immediate reason to act in the relevant way is the relation between that action and your aims and interests, as mediated by some more basic practical requirement—of promoting, respectively, my own good, the balance of good over ill, or the impersonal value of consideration for persons.
needs to show that it meets the directedness constraint, and any one that runs afoul of it is inadequate. That is not to say that a view which failed to meet it couldn’t still show us that the kinds of actions that we appear to owe to others are ones that we ought to perform. Yet it would entail that there are no obligations to others, or that these are, at any rate, radically unlike they appear to us to be, that we are profoundly mistaken about them. Compare what we might say about a crude egoist vindication of morality, according to which we ought to act as morality prescribes because in doing so we best promote our own good. This view contradicts another aspect of the phenomenology of obligation: that our moral obligations are *categorical*, binding regardless of whether the action they call for happen to realize our aims or satisfy our interests. If the crude egoist vindication of morality is true, then our moral obligations are binding precisely because the actions they enjoin will promote our own good. It follows, then, that crude egoism and its vindication of morality imply there are no moral obligations: that what appear to be moral obligations are only self-interested reasons to do as morality calls for. Or at least that our moral obligations are utterly different from the way they present themselves to us. That is a patent inadequacy in crude egoism. Our moral obligations are not just counsels of prudence. And any view that violates the directedness constraint is similarly inadequate, even if it can show that we have other-regarding obligations that are extensionally identical to our moral obligations to others.

I expect that the importance of meeting the directedness constraint is sufficiently clear. It is perhaps unsurprising that crude versions of Ross-style realism, egoism, and utilitarianism would not meet the directedness constraint, and these views are implausible enough that it might seem like the constraint sets a rather low bar for a moral theory. In what follows, I will try to defeat that impression. Specifically, I will now argue, focusing on Christine Korsgaard’s attempts to vindicate the normative status of other people, that contemporary Kantian constructivism meets with a similar fate and that it is, on that account, inadequate. I will also argue that Kantianism’s failure justifies us in adopting a quite different view of the normative status of other people, of their power to make claims on us.
3. A Kantian Constructivist Account of the Status of Others

Korsgaard’s earlier attempt to vindicate the normative status of other people comes in Lecture 4 of *The Sources of Normativity*. The account presented there will serve as our point of departure. Her account is predicated on the idea that normative reasons for action are *public* rather than *private*, in her terms. Reasons are public in that they are essentially *shareable*: they are such as to be given by one agent to another in the space of interaction, so that they come to be shared by both parties. A private reason, on the other hand, would be one that could not be exchanged between agents; it would therefore necessarily be a reason for one agent alone. In Korsgaard’s view, there are no private reasons.

How can we come to share others’ reasons for action, according to Korsgaard? For her, interpersonal address and its relatives constitute the paradigmatic mode of reason-sharing:

If I call out your name, I make you stop in your tracks… Now you cannot proceed as you did before. Oh, you can proceed, all right, but not just as you did before. For now if you walk on, you will be ignoring me and slighting me. It will probably be difficult for you, and you will have to muster a certain active resistance, a sense of rebellion. But why should you have to rebel against me? It is because I am a law to you. By calling out your name, I have obligated you. I have given you a reason to stop.

Of course that’s overstated: you don’t have to stop. You have reasons of your own, and you might decide, rightly or wrongly, that they outweigh the one I have given you. But that I have given you a reason is clear from the fact that, in ordinary circumstances, you will feel like giving me one back.

That is, the paradigmatic mode of reason-sharing lies in a kind of exchange: a *claim-making interaction*. Claim-making interactions include acts of direct verbal address, such as requests, demands, promises or agreements, and invitations. In interactions of this kind, one person gives another a reason to respond to her in the way she is calling for, and it is a significant and characteristic feature of such a reason that its recipient cannot simply ignore it without personally disrespecting the reason-giver. In

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44 Korsgaard (1996b), pp. 132-145, although it was preceded by her (1996a).
46 Ibid., p. 140.
the above case, for instance, we can presume that our interlocutor is calling on us to stop and chat. Of course, as Korsgaard points out, often what we give one another in these interactions is just a reason: as in the case of someone calling our name, we may have independent reasons to decline to act as our interlocutor is calling for, and where possible it is natural to articulate these reasons to her.

As the passage highlights, what distinguishes claim-making interactions is their co-deliberative character. The aim of these interactions is to jointly arrive at a decision that both parties can basically accept, so that they come to stand in a complementary relation to the reason in question. This aim is particularly evident in contexts of coordination or collective deliberation, where the responses of our interlocutor are normally taken as directly generating reasons for us as well. That, for example, the person with whom we are trying to schedule a meeting cannot make a certain time is seen as giving us a (nonstrategic) reason to find a different time, too, one that will be acceptable to both parties.47

Korsgaard clarifies that interpersonal address is not the only mode of reason-sharing, however:

> the reasons of others have something like the same standing with us as our own desires and impulses do. We do not seem to need a reason to take the reasons of others into account. We seem to need a reason not to. Certainly we do things because others want us to, ask us to, tell us to, all the time. We give each other the time and directions, open doors and step aside, warn each other of imminent perils large and small. We respond with the alacrity of obedient soldiers to telephones and doorbells and cries for help.48

Thus, while verbal address is a paradigmatic mode of reason-giving, on her view, it is not the only one. We can share reasons with each other through forms of communication that fall short of address proper; that is arguably what is going on when we ring a doorbell or call someone up on the telephone, or indeed through nods and other non-verbal gestures. We also share reasons when we pursue ends with which others might be in a position to interfere: think of my walking to a certain location, which gives people in my path a reason to get out of the way, or my trying to enter a building, which may

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give someone a reason to open the door for me (especially if, say, I am carrying something heavy). Finally, we make claims on each other simply by being in certain conditions—in the case above, peril—that we strongly want forestalled or ended, and that others may be able to alleviate or prevent outright.

But the more basic point expressed in the last passage is that it is our default stance to respond to the reasons of others as public, as reasons for us as well and not only for the person they concern. Korsgaard reiterates this point later on: in light of our sociality, ‘[we] can no more take the reasons of another to be mere pressure,’ she says, ‘than [we] can take the language of another to be mere noise.’\footnote{Ibid., p. 143.} In fact, in her view our social nature as human beings is characterized by this form of responsiveness, which enables us to share a social world in the first place. And in sharing a social world with one another, we are committed to recognizing the publicity of our reasons and of the reasons of others.

Now, at first glance, public reasons seem to differ markedly from obligations to others. In failing to act according to a public reason, we do not necessarily wrong anyone, it seems, nor do those who share that reason with us always appear to have the authority to hold us accountable. So, there may seem to be a significant difference between public reasons and obligations to others. How, then, could Korsgaard’s treatment of public reasons shed light on the possibility of obligations to others?

There is, in fact, a solid case for insisting that public reasons are other-directed, too, and hence that they belong in the same family as obligations to others: that they are what I’ve been calling claims. And Korsgaard herself also associates publicity with other-directedness.\footnote{See ibid., p. 134: ‘If reasons were essentially private, consistency would not force me to take your reasons into account. And even if it did, it would do it in the wrong way. It should show that I have an obligation to myself to treat you in ways that respect the value which I place on you. It would show that I have duties with respect to you, about you, but not that there are things I owe to you.’ For a similar thought, see also Korsgaard (2007), p. 11.} Like obligations to others, the sharing of reasons takes two parties: the one who has the reason and the one with whom she shares it. It is, of course, true that there are some cases in which a public reason constitutes a mere reason, in the sense that the recipient’s failing to act according to it does not wrong the reason’s source.
But there are also plenty of cases in which our inaction does count as wronging someone, as expressing a kind of basic disrespect for her as a person. (Think of ignoring someone’s cry for help.) And even when a public reason is a mere reason, dismissing it outright normally expresses a kind of personal disrespect for her that is similar in kind to the disregard expressed in violating an obligation to her.

I conclude, then, that Korsgaard’s early discussion of what it is for us to obligate one another is indeed relevant to our topic. If her account of the phenomenon is right, moreover, it would secure the normative status of other people, by explaining why they should have the power to obligate us. The question I will address is whether her account is right, whether that kind of account can be sound, and in view of the fact that her conception of obligation seems problematically centered on the self.

4. The Basic Challenge for Kantian Constructivism

I want now to raise a basic challenge for Korsgaard’s account of the normative status of others. The basis for the challenge is the appearance of a tension between the other-directed pretensions of that account and, as I will explain shortly, the self-directed form of her general conception of obligation.

On Korsgaard’s view, the ground of all of our obligations lies in our capacity for self-binding: the reflective structure of self-consciousness inevitably places us in a relation of authority over ourselves and that we are as a consequence also accountable to ourselves. By the reflective structure of self-consciousness, I mean the fact that we are conscious of the potential grounds of our beliefs and actions as such. When I am conscious that I am tempted to do something because of something else, I can ask myself whether I should do that, and this amounts to asking whether the consideration on which I propose to act provides a reason. To answer in the affirmative is to adopt a certain maxim of action as a law governing my conduct; to answer in the negative is to command myself to adopt a law of doing the opposite—refraining from the forbidden action and, if necessary, taking positive action to avoid the violation. Thus I act under my own authority as a lawgiver, and I am accountable to myself if I do not. So my reasons—and indeed practical reasons in general—are grounded in the authority the human mind necessarily has over itself.\(^{51}\)

The picture is this. We are obligated to act in a certain way if and only if, and at least partly because, we have obligated ourselves to act accordingly. And this happens when we choose to act for the sake of an end and thereby adopt the relevant maxim—of acting on that end—as a universal law. So, the source of our obligations is our authority over ourselves, the authority to give ourselves binding laws. This original authority is essential to rational agency. We exercise it just by choosing actions at all.

At this point, the basic challenge arises. If we grant Korsgaard’s view that all of our obligations originate in a basic authority that we have to obligate ourselves, how could other people obligate us? How can they ever constitute the source of our obligations, yielding obligations to them specifically? If I only have an obligation when, and at least partly because, I have obligated myself, it seems to follow that the source of my obligations, even my other-regarding obligations, is never another person. Rather, my obligations have their source in me, particularly in an exercise of volition with respect to other people, the act of adopting maxims as universal laws when they could be willed as universal laws, or, to be precise, when they could be willed as universal laws for the regulation of co-deliberation.

So, on Korsgaard’s picture, I am the ultimate originator of my obligations. Others’ claims on me are valid just when, and at least partly because, I validate them, that is, I will acting on those claims as a universal law, thereby exercising original authority over myself by giving myself the relevant law. And if that is the case, then though I act wrongly in violating an other-regarding obligation, I cannot possibly wrong someone in doing so, even when the obligation in question concerns her specifically; it doesn’t matter whether these laws apply to everyone or are such that they can be willed by everyone. For as in the crude versions of Ross-style realism, egoism, and utilitarianism, the other person seems to enter my consciousness only through the content of the universal law on which I act, and this

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53 For doubts about the idea that we can literally be said to obligate ourselves in the same sense in which other people obligate us, see Haase (2014a), Moran, forthcoming, ch. 7.
fact—if indeed it is one—makes him only the occasion for whatever obligations concern him. Other people cannot obligate me, then, it seems, threatening the idea that I have obligations to them.

In fact, the self-directed form of Korsgaard’s view suggests a more troubling possibility: that all of our obligations, and our moral obligations to others in particular, are not actually owed to these people after all but are owed to ourselves instead. An example will help to illustrate the difficulty here. Imagine a position—the crudest voluntarism—on which we have an obligation to act in a certain way if and only if—and (at least partly) because—we have promised ourselves that we would do so. Because promising ourselves that we would perform some action makes it the case that we owe the performance of that action to ourselves, it follows that we owe every obligatory action to ourselves. In that case, however, it does not seem that there could be much room in the view for the fact that we owe certain forms of treatment to other people in particular, nor is it at all clear what could bridge the explanatory gap between our promissory obligations to ourselves and our obligations to others. In other words, the view seems to have the strange consequence that we never really owe it to others to treat them in certain ways; instead, we always merely owe these kinds of treatment to ourselves.

For example, suppose that I see you drowning in Lake Michigan. If crude voluntarism is true, I actually incur an obligation to come to your rescue only when I have promised myself to save you. But then even if the obligation to save you concerns you, even if you are specified in its content, that obligation is ineluctably self-directed in its structure, as it arises solely from my act of promising myself; the fact that it is a promise about you does not change the fact that I ultimately owe the action to myself. Nor would it matter that my promise had general content—to help everyone in a situation like yours—

54 In his (2007), Darwall doubts that this picture can even get us self-directed obligations: ‘I don’t yet see how authority of this kind necessarily involves answerability or accountability. Of course, it is foolish and contrary to reason to forgo greater goods under the press of current desire, but that doesn’t mean all by itself that one owes this to oneself or that one is answerable to oneself for it. It gives one no authority to claim or demand prudence of oneself. That imprudence involves acting against reason is one thing; that it involves letting oneself down is another… I don’t yet see how in giving the kind of authority to oneself that reflective consciousness necessarily involves we yet get the idea that I owe this to anyone, either to myself or to others.’ See Darwall (2007), p. 56.
or even that it was made in light of its suitability to serve as a principle of self-promising for everyone. With these amendments, crude voluntarism still seems to imply that my obligation to rescue you from drowning is self-directed through and through, and therefore that I do not wrong you, but only myself, if I violate it. I have the authority to demand that I rescue you, and I’m accountable to myself if just leave you, in that I can reproach myself for my misdeed and compel myself to behave otherwise. But since only I can oblige myself through self-promising, you have not obligated me to act on your claim; I have, at best, obligated myself to do so. You lack the authority to oblige me, it would seem.

The key question here, I submit, is this: Why doesn’t Korsgaard’s view incur the same false conclusion? If grounding the validity of others’ claims in acts of self-promising rules out our having obligations to others, why shouldn’t grounding it in acts of self-binding have exactly the same effect, particularly as promising someone that I will do such-and-such is a way of obligating myself to do it?

A closer look at this case, however, suggests a different possibility but one that is still damning. Perhaps rather than implying that all obligations are self-directed and not other-directed, Korsgaard’s view entails only that all basic obligations are self-directed, that no other-directed obligations are basic. Maybe the crude voluntarist view has that upshot, too. All of our obligations are grounded in promises made to ourselves, the crude voluntarist can insist, yet we could still have obligations to other people even if we make no promises to them—via a prior promissory obligation that we have to ourselves. So, in the rescue case, maybe I incur an obligation to myself to save you from drowning when I promise myself that I will do so, but I also thereby incur an obligation to you to the same effect.

That possibility would no doubt make crude voluntarism less crude, since the view would not deny the existence of obligations to others. But I believe that it would be a false view nevertheless, as it would not admit that we have any obligations to others that are unmediated by obligations to ourselves. Why is this result unacceptable, if it is? Let us take a step back. The directedness constraint, recall, states that a moral theory is adequate only if it grounds our obligations to others in a fact that does
not rule out that these obligations are owed to the right party—specific other people—in the right way. A less crude voluntarism could perhaps be credited with accommodating obligations to others. And for getting the directionality of these obligations right, to this extent: they would be owed to the exact party to whom they seem to be owed—normally, specific individuals whom we encounter in daily life. But does the view capture our obligations to others in the right way? There is room for doubt.

In brief, our obligations to others do not seem to be grounded in obligations to ourselves. Before I considered the possibility that what we took to be our obligations to others were, in fact, owed only to some other party instead—to God or to our parents, say—but I rejected it on the grounds that it conflicts with the phenomenology of recognizing that we are under these obligations. The very notion of an obligation to the self is not an entirely uncontroversial one, to be sure. But my point is that even if there are obligations to others and there is some interesting sense in which we owe it to ourselves to comply with these, it is not part of their phenomenology that these obligations are grounded in more basic obligations to the self, obligations to treat other people in particular ways.

If it is objectionable that I have no obligation to you to rescue you from drowning but only an obligation to myself with the same content, it would be, if not equally disastrous, then problematic enough if it turned out that I have an obligation to you to save you but because I have a prior obligation, to God or to my parents or whomever else, to provide minimal aid to people when they need it. For when I have an obligation to you, it doesn’t normally seem to depend interestingly on any other obligations, not to myself and not to anyone else, not even my parents or God or humanity generally. That is reflected in the fact that if I had to rely on the thought of these other obligations in order to recognize that I have an obligation to you, then I could well be accused of having one thought too many.55

55 The idea is due to Bernard Williams. See Williams (1981), p. 18.
These intuitive considerations favor an extension of the directedness constraint. At this point, it is unclear whether Korsgaard’s general conception of obligation preserves the possibility of others obligating us and thus of our having obligations to them—at least in the right way. In particular, it seems that Korsgaard’s brand of Kantian constructivism yields one of two conclusions: either our putative obligations to others are obligations to the self or they are grounded in obligations to the self. I have argued that either conclusion is a mark of inadequacy in a moral theory. In the next two sections, I assess the prospects for a successful reply to the basic challenge and contend that they are doubtful.

5. Joint Self-Binding as the Basis for a Reply to the Challenge

So far in the discussion I have been assuming, perhaps unfairly, that for a Kantian constructivist such as Korsgaard, a person’s obligations derive from her obligating herself, from acts of individual self-binding. But that is not the only possibility for the view. Indeed, we might think, it is more plausible that a Kantian constructivist should take the ground of obligation to be joint self-binding: two parties granting one another the authority to obligate. Perhaps the view could meet the directedness constraint with an appeal to this idea. And indeed, in more recent work Korsgaard makes just such an appeal.

Let’s begin by getting Korsgaard’s view of joint self-binding into view. The view is explicitly modeled on Kant’s view of personal relationships such as friendship and marriage. In standing in these relations, we make a kind of joint commitment. That is, you and I reciprocally cede our unilateral authority with respect to some range of choices that concern us. I cede my authority to make these choices on my own to you, and you cede your authority to make corresponding choices on your own.

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56 Actually, these considerations support further extensions of the constraint. A moral theory runs afoul of it if it entails, or suggests, that others have no claims on us and that there are only claims that I have on myself, even if these claims on myself never actually constitute obligations to myself. And likewise, a moral theory runs afoul of the constraint if it entails, or suggests, that the claims of others are valid in virtue of (mere) claims that I have on myself.


58 Or, as Korsgaard puts it, following Kant, ‘a unity of will’ or ‘the formation of unified wills.’ Ibid., p. 187, 190. A view like this is also found in Montaigne (1991).
to me. Not that there are two separate acts; in reality, it is a single act. Anyway, in so doing, we commit ourselves to arriving at shared decisions on these matters, decisions arrived at by joint practical deliberation. We deliberate jointly in the sense that our deliberative efforts are guided by the aim of arriving at the free choice of a law valid for both parties—by the aim of basic mutual acceptability.

How could this idea help Korsgaard meet the directedness constraint? An answer is suggested by her remark that promises and agreements consist in acts of (what I’ve called) joint self-binding, as does interaction generally.59 Like friendship and marriage, she thinks, entering into the promisor-promisee relation involves the reciprocal ceding of authority. If I promise you that I’ll pick you up from the airport tomorrow, I give up my authority to choose whether or not I come to the airport then and I grant it to you, making myself accountable to you for compliance. You are then entitled to be picked up from the airport by me at that time, and to hold me accountable if I fail to do so. Similarly, you give up your authority to choose whether or not to remain at the airport at the designated time; I could rightly hold you accountable if you left the airport before I came to pick you up, for example.

Now if on Korsgaard’s account all interaction has this structure, maybe the proposed solution would be this: when we engage in a claim-making interaction, we make a joint commitment to deliberating on matters that concern us, treating these matters as calling for a mutually acceptable decision. In so doing, we reciprocally grant each other the authority to obligate one another, making ourselves accountable to the other person for the way that we each act. There is therefore no puzzle about how some of our moral obligations are owed to others instead of to ourselves. These obligations are owed to others because we have granted others the authority to obligate us. What we have thereby done is extended to them a relation in which, as rational agents, we originally stand to ourselves.

One problem with taking the promissory relation as a model of obligation generally is that it makes obligating one another objectionably voluntaristic. A promissory obligation to another person

59 Ibid., pp. 189-190.
is only generated when the promise is actually made to her; that is, the obligation’s existence depends on an act of voluntary ratification on the part of the would-be promisor. Making a promise, then, is like handing someone a gift: for a gift to be given by one party, it must be taken by another party. But many claim-making interactions do not seem to work this way. The validity of certain kinds of claims on us does not hang on our having assented to them. For example, if I walk by and see you drowning, you make a valid claim on me even if I don’t first ‘accept’ your condition as reason-giving for me and validate it—as if in your distress you were offering me, or anyone, a contract to sign and stamp.

It makes no difference to my argument whether the act of validating others’ claims is a noumenal one or, like the act of answering a question or assenting to an assertion, a phenomenal one. Let’s say that our granting others the authority to obligate us and their granting us the parallel authority to obligate them are acts, or a single act, in the noumenal realm, occurring outside of space and time, yet grounding my obligation to save you from drowning. The problem would remain nevertheless: once you and I have (noumenally) granted one another the authority to obligate, you can obligate me only through my originally obligating myself. In other words, there would still be an objectionable priority of self over other in the genesis of the relevant obligation. Again, if we can only make promises to each other because through self-promising I grant you the authority to make promises to me and you grant me the authority to make promises to you, I submit that we don’t stand in the right relation. And it is hard to see how conceiving of the act of self-promising as noumenal changes that. Why should it be different with me obligating myself even if in tandem with you obligating yourself? The problem, to anticipate a diagnosis that I offer later, is that your authority to obligate me is granted to you by me at all, even if my authority to obligate you is granted by you—perhaps even in the same act.

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60 See Korsgaard’s remarks on promises and agreements as acts in the noumenal realm in Korsgaard (2009), pp. 189-193.
Your power to make valid claims on me simply does not seem to be the sort of normative entity that is granted to you by me, whether phenomenally or noumenally, whether unilaterally or reciprocally.

Actually, there is a further problem with Korsgaard’s appeal to self-binding. To explicate it, let me return to a point I defended in the last chapter: if you and I engage in a claim-making interaction in which you make a claim on me, your claim is valid in virtue of our relationship with one another. Sometimes the grounding relationship will be thick: relations of friendship, parent-child relationships. But sometimes the relationship will be thinner, and at the very limit, our claims on one another will be valid in virtue of our standing in moral relations with one another as one fellow person to another.

The worry, then, is this. In Korsgaard’s view, your claim on me is valid because in the context of a claim-making interaction I have granted you my authority to obligate myself to act accordingly. You then have the authority, derivatively, to obligate me to act on that claim, which makes it valid. Yet if the view presented in the last chapter is correct, the fact of my moral relation to you is needed to explain the validity of your claim on me that I rescue you from drowning, just as the fact of my friendship with Sylvia is needed to explain the validity of her claim on me that I drive her to the airport. The claim that you make on me in interaction is only valid in virtue of a prior normative relationship. However, Korsgaard has not shown why I should enter any moral relation with you in the first place. Nor has she shown that the question of whether I should enter such a relation is incoherent or moot. So, a further story is needed, lest there be no explanation, in her account, of why we must engage in claim-making interactions to begin with—seemingly an open and conspicuously unanswered question.

Korsgaard herself argues, in effect, that we cannot choose not to grant our authority to others in claim-making interactions of certain forms. To adapt a remark of hers into the present context, her view seems to be that we are condemned to engaging in claim-making interactions with others:

We can’t choose to treat someone’s reasons as reasons, as considerations with normative force for us. We can’t decide to treat someone as an end in himself. So am I saying we are all locked away from each other, in our own little system of private reasons? No, just the opposite. I am
saying that responding to another’s reasons as normative is the default position—just like hearing another’s words as meaningful is the default position. It takes work to ignore someone else’s reasons; it’s nearly as hard to be bad as it is to be good. And that’s because reasons are public.\(^6^1\)

If this is correct, Korsgaard can insist that there is no background normative relation which explains why we have the authority to obligate each other, why we are committed to seeing others’ claims as having normative force for us. Others have the authority to obligate us in certain claim-making interactions because we cannot choose not to grant it to them. Joint self-binding is simply our plight.\(^6^2\)

Now suppose that joint self-binding of a recognizably ethical shape really is inescapable for us, as Korsgaard suggests. In the passage just quoted, she holds that the inescapability of recognizing others’ claims or reasons as having normative force for us is explained by the essential publicity of practical reasons. In this context, however, the publicity of reasons is not a sufficient explanation. That reasons are public by their very nature is not a brute fact about them that we apprehend in practical reasoning, as we might come to know that a cup is blue by simply looking at it. By engaging in practical reasoning, particularly with other people, we may learn that we can share reasons, and that doing so is our default stance. But that would not show us *what makes reasons such as to be shared with others*. Nor can publicity, instead of mere (pretension to) universal applicability, be extracted from the bare concept of a practical reason. The publicity of reasons is not an analytic or conceptual truth.

Thus, we need some further explanation of why it is inescapable for us to accord others the authority to obligate us. Otherwise, what would be established is, at best, that as a matter of inclination or psychological compulsion, we simply are led to treat the reasons of others as reasons for us as well.

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In other words, there must be something about us, deeper than any contingent desire, which explains why the claims of other people would prompt us, at least insofar as we are rational, to grant them the authority in question. The inescapability of acknowledging the claims of others must lie in our nature. What aspect of our nature, however, could ground the fact that we cannot help but accord others this authority, and the corresponding fact that seeing others’ reasons as claims on us is our default position? In the next section, I will argue that features of her view of authority prevent her from offering one.

Might there be a more modest way to show that moral relations to others, or joint self-binding, are inescapable? Kyla Ebels-Duggan argues that it is rational for us to stand in moral relations with others because doing so enables us to engage in a form of joint self-binding that is crucial for maintaining our autonomy given that we are interdependent beings who pursue extended projects. According to her, our autonomy is threatened primarily by our inclinations determining how we will act, and to defuse the threat we need reasons for action. We need reasons grounded in our end’s value in order to stick with it when we may want to pursue some worthless alternative, and we need reasons grounded in our choice of that end to resist reconsidering it in favor of some equally valuable project.

Moreover, she says, we do, indeed must, take both grounds to give others reasons to act, at least as long as we are to count on them not to interfere with us and to help us in certain basic ways. We must take the value of our projects as giving others reasons, because it is part of the concept of a reason to act, she says, that if you judge that I have a reason, then you are committed to acknowledging that anyone similarly situated would have the very same reason. But that is insufficient by itself. We must also see our choice of project as giving other people reasons if we are to have some basis for the thought that others owe it to us not to interfere with our projects and to help us in certain basic ways. That is because we need to rely on others’ non-interference and their aid in order to realize our aims. In seeing our projects as giving others reasons, as we must, we will assert the relevant claims on others.

63 Ebels-Duggan (2009).
Yet, she says, we need not do so. Refraining from doing so would commit us to a serious restriction, however: we could only pursue those ends that ‘do not require anything, including non-interference, from others.’ As she points out, ‘given the extent of our interdependence, this restriction is severe.’

So, if we are going to rely on others, we must regard ourselves as capable of creating reasons for them through our discretionary choices of ends. Seeing ourselves in this way is a condition of our autonomy. For this reason, we must recognize one another as having the authority to make claims. Or to put it another way, it is rational for us to stand in moral relations with one another. These relations consist in acts of joint self-binding in which your need creates a provisional claim on me, we deliberate together about how to address your need, and the deliberation concludes with my ratifying your claim and agreeing to a mutually acceptable decision, making the claim conclusively binding.

In fact, Ebels-Duggan’s case is inconclusive. She has not shown that unless I regard my chosen ends as giving others a reason, I won’t be able to see myself as having sufficient reason to continue my pursuit. For one, it is unclear why, in order to see myself as having sufficient reason to continue, I need to also see the value of my chosen end as giving others reasons. In support of this point Ebels-Duggan insists that, as a matter of conceptual fact, my acknowledging that you have a reason commits me to judging that I would have a similar reason in your place. That is true, but it doesn’t support her point. Judging that I would have the same reason in your place seems compatible with denying that your reason gives me a reason to act. And it is equally unclear why, to be able to regard myself as having sufficient reason to continue my chosen project, I need to see my choice of that project as giving others reasons. Why can’t I see my choice as giving only myself a reason? This does not seem impossible if all that is required is that I have reasons not to reconsider my project. After all, it seems that I can very well stick with my project in the face of inclination with the thought ‘I chose to do this’.

64 Ibid., p. 13.
65 Ebels-Duggan calls this the Postulate of Reason Creation: it must be possible for us to create reasons for one another by setting ends. Ibid.
Ebels-Duggan might now respond that we must see our choices as giving others reasons because we must be able to make claims on their non-interference and their aid; and if we did not do so, then we could not stick with our projects in the face of our inclinations. But this too seems unsupported. It seems that I can well engage in apparently claim-making behavior—pleading, imploring, demanding—even if I do not believe that my addressee has the relevant reason, and that this behavior could be effective. Certainly, I can still bargain and negotiate with others in the absence of the thought that they have a reason. At this point it’s unclear why you and I should enter moral relations when we can settle for a pact of mutual non-interference and minimal aid. For the purpose of safeguarding our ability to withstand inclination, that sort of arrangement would work just as well.

I do not mean to be merely sniping at Kantian constructivist attempts to explain how we can obligate each other. And I grant that there may be room, within Kantian constructivism, for a kind of no-priority view. On a view of this kind, when we reciprocally grant one another the authority to obligate, I obligate myself to act on your claim when you try to obligate me to act on it, generating an obligation to myself and an obligation to you simultaneously, with neither really grounded in the other. Carla Bagnoli, for example, conceives of respect, along Kantian lines, as dialogical: on her ‘dialogical account’, we reciprocally grant one another the status of sources of claims through an ideal dialogue.\textsuperscript{66} This account, she says, ‘takes seriously the claim that an adequate account should focus on the relation between the self and the community, but it does not hold the priority of either parties.’\textsuperscript{67} Thus I myself am not the ultimate originator of my obligations to you; rather, we are co-originators of that obligation. Likewise, Andrews Reath proposes that Kant’s model of obligation should be expanded: instead of just distinguishing who has the obligation (the \textit{subject}) from whom the obligation is owed to (the \textit{source}), the model should also countenance an importantly distinct role in the generation of that obligation—
namely, the role of its legislator.68 For Reath, the legislator of an obligation is not a single individual; it is rational agents generally, engaged in shared deliberation to arrive at mutually acceptable principles.69

If it could be shown to work, a no-priority view along these lines would certainly be superior to a view that affirmed a priority of the self over others in the generation of other-directed obligations. But that would seem to be a departure from Korsgaard’s conception, which does insist on the primacy of my authority over myself in generating my obligations, including my other-directed obligations.70

In the next section, I will diagnose the inability of her view to meet the directedness constraint as due to the fact that she has accepted an egocentric conception of the self’s authority in relation to others.

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68 According to Reath, ‘no discrete individual is singled out as the legislator of a moral principle. While any moral agent must be able to identify with and to participate in the ‘legislative process’, it is not owned by any particular individual.’ See Reath (2000), p. 241.

69 Reath (2006), p. 243. Reath’s model of obligation also countenances the role of beneficiary: the entity for the sake of which the action is performed. See ibid., p. 239.

70 In correspondence, Korsgaard has denied that grounding our obligations to others in an act of self-binding threatens their other-directedness. The civil state, she points out, arguably provides an instance of self-binding that is perfectly consistent with the reality of our obligations to one another. Plausibly, we all have an obligation to institute the state, in order to ensure that everyone’s (pre-civil) claims—to bodily integrity and property, say—are respected. And instituting the state, constituting ourselves as a political agent, consists in an act of joint self-binding: we must all obligate ourselves collectively to implement and abide by the collective decision procedures constitutive of civil society. Yet it does not seem to be a consequence of this picture that all of our civic obligations concerning others, which are apparently owed to them, are owed only or more basically to ourselves instead. But then we have an account of our civic obligations that does not undermine their other-directedness. And tracing the force of our obligations to self-binding does not have any deleterious implications in the case of collective agency, why should the implications be any worse in the case of individual agency?

It is plausible, I agree, that the institution of the civil state, so understood, counts as a case in which an act of self-binding grounds our other-regarding obligations without threatening their other-directedness. But, I submit, that is because in our pre-civil condition we already have obligations to others: obligations to refrain from harming them and to respect their property-claims, for example. The problem solved by the founding of civil society is that the exact content of these obligations to others is indeterminate and, more alarmingly, we lack assurance that others will comply with them. Institution of the civil state through an act of joint self-binding doesn’t threaten the other-directedness of our resultant civil obligations to one another because we already have moral obligations to others, which our joint self-binding helps to further specify and for which it provides needed enforcement. If matters were otherwise, if our other-regarding obligations were not also other-directed, I have a hard time seeing how our obligations to others could be secured by an act of joint self-binding. Or at least, I cannot see how these obligations could arise without becoming obligations to everyone, or without it turning out that our obligations to particular others are grounded in obligations to everyone.
6. The Egocentric Conception of Authority

What are we to make, then, of these Kantian constructivist efforts to vindicate the authority of others? To illustrate and motivate my diagnosis, I want now to turn to Christine Korsgaard’s and Tamar Schapiro’s revealing remarks on what it requires to establish the possibility of obligations to others. Diagnosis in hand, I conclude the chapter with a counterproposal: that the authority of others is unmediated by any further claims, obligations (whether directed or undirected), or authority relations.

In a commentary on Stephen Darwall’s *The Second Person Standpoint*, Korsgaard insists that the possibility of obligations to others is adequately explained by the idea that reasons are public and by the fact that we rational agents have original authority over ourselves given our self-conscious nature. And the fact of our authority to obligate ourselves means that ‘every rational agent stands in what Darwall would call a second-personal relation to herself—she has a second-personal voice within.’ In other words, every rational agent stands in a relation of authority and accountability to herself. So, contra Darwall, who (Korsgaard says) argues that only the experience of making claims on others and responding to their claims on us can make us aware of our capacity to act on claims, she holds that the experience of making claims on ourselves, thereby exercising our original authority, is all that is needed to show us that we have the capacity to act on claims of any kind, including the claims of others.

Tamar Schapiro responds similarly to Darwall’s argument. ‘Unless the deliberative standpoint is inherently a standpoint from which we are summoned second-personally,’ she concedes, ‘our taking it up cannot make us aware of our’ capacity to act on claims, including the claims that others have on us.’ Nevertheless, she says, occupying that standpoint does ‘put us into relation to an intrapersonal

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73 Ibid.
74 Schapiro (2010). Darwall’s argument can be found in Darwall (2009), ch. 9.
someone, a “you” within. For we come to be aware of the capacity to act on claims through the experience of desire, which makes us aware of that capacity because it is ‘a demand on the will,’ addressed to our animal nature, ‘made in light of a motivationally-efficacious form of consciousness. Both accounts share a common problem, though: they construe authority as basically egocentric. Authority is most basically held by the self and extended, in a distinct mental act, to others, and the experience of our authority over ourselves reveals to us our capacity to act on others’ claims on us. But surely there is an explanatory gap here. How can the fact that we have the authority to obligate ourselves explain the practical necessity of our granting other people the authority to obligate us? Seeing ourselves as having authority seems plainly insufficient for seeing others as having authority. Likewise, how can knowing our own authority to obligate ourselves reveal to us that we have the apparently different capacity to act on the claims of others? For all Korsgaard and Schapiro have said, the bare notion of our own authority over ourselves does not include any basis for affirming others’ authority over us, not even if it were also granted that others can trigger reasons for us in various ways. Actually, these accounts share a further problem: they obliterate the distinctiveness of the claims that others have on us. They each appear to assume that the question of how others can obligate me in a way that yields obligations to them specifically requires no special answer beyond the one offered by a very general account of how any claims (my own, others’) are to get a normative grip on me. As a particularly striking example of that tendency, Korsgaard seems to suggest that our capacity to act on claims generally can be grasped in our relation to ourselves over time, especially when we make choices that could adversely affect the success of our life-projects or our future well-being.

76 Ibid.
77 Ibid., p. 234.
78 Of course, at this point, Korsgaard may point out that the possibility of obligations to others is supposed to be explained not only by her conception of authority but also with the idea that reasons are public. But again, it’s not obvious how invoking that idea would help her explain how others could obligate us. How there could possibly be the sorts of reasons that are to be shared with others is exactly what is at issue.
The thought may be that when we are aware of a claim made on us by our past or future self, we are thereby provided with a model of an essentially directed normative relation, which allows us to make sense of how others could possibly make claims on us. That is, we can simply apply the concept of an authority relation, revealed to us in the *intrapersonal* case, to our *interpersonal* dealings with others.

The basic problem is that this egocentric view of authority in agency construes your authority to obligate me as, structurally speaking, no different from my authority to obligate myself, thereby suggesting that there is no deep difference between obligations to others and obligations to the self. For Kantian constructivists like Korsgaard and Schapiro, my ignoring my own authority should have the same sort of significance as my ignoring your authority. My wronging myself should really be on a par with wronging another person, merely wronging a different person—Sylvia instead of Philippa.

However, there is a deep difference between these self- and other-relations. And that is because apprehending the reality of other people is a unique phenomenon, central to our ethical life. It is presupposed in the recognition, through guilt, of having wronged another person, and in particular through the recognition of (interpersonal) injustice, which provides the model for directed obligation. Treating another person in a degrading way is not just the interpersonal version of self-abnegation. Injuring someone wantonly is not just the interpersonal version of self-destructiveness or extreme imprudence. Nor is breaking a promise to someone just an interpersonal version of reneging on the projects to which we have expressly committed ourselves. I fully grant that these ways of treating ourselves may express a kind of disrespect for ourselves as people, which may be analogous to the disrespect conveyed in wronging another individual. Nevertheless, what I reject is the thought that wronging another individual is the very same thing as wronging oneself—just with a different target. The views that we have encountered are inadequate, ultimately because they fail to properly register both the unmediatedness of the authority of others and the fact that others’ authority is special, distinct
from our authority over ourselves. To adapt a phrase, these views do not take seriously the boundaries between self and other. For this reason, their capacity to meet the directedness constraint is doubtful.

7. The Authority of Others as Unmediated

In this chapter, I have built a case for regarding the directedness constraint as a substantial criterion of adequacy on proposed vindications of morality's authority and, indeed, on moral theories generally. I have also argued that certain forms of Kantian constructivism do not meet the constraint. The deficiency in views of this kind is no accident, either. It proceeds from the more general conception of obligation that is central to the view. But bringing it to light it is instructive, as it shows that the authority that others have to obligate us cannot derive from our authority to obligate ourselves. The authority of other people must be, if not basic, then at least unmediated by any additional claims, obligations (directed or undirected), authority relations, or exercises of our capacity for self-binding. Thus, others cannot have the authority to obligate us because we grant it to them in a distinct mental act. Rather, their authority to obligate us must be on a par with our own authority to obligate ourselves. That is to say, other people’s authority must be as original and non-derivative as our own authority over ourselves is on the Kantian view. People must be original sources of valid claims, enjoying a normative status as part of their very personhood and not also in virtue of the activity of our volition.

At the same time, however, the normative status of people cannot just be a brute fact about us. For there would then be no explanation of how the claims of others can rationally motivate us. In other words, we would be left with the original puzzle once again. We would still need an account of how my merely recognizing that you are a person like myself can ever move me to act on your claims. Thus, there must be some feature of the recognition of someone as a person which explains this fact.

My proposal is that our recognizing others as people is, in part, a grasp of their authority to make claims on us and thus the normative force of their claims to be treated in certain ways.
Recognition of them also entails our having a motive for acting on the claims that they have on us. That sounds terribly abstract, so let me make it more concrete. Consider seeing someone as our friend. When I see you as my friend, the mere thought that you are my friend is capable of rationally moving me to act on your friendship-specific claims on me in accordance with our friendship’s expectations. The fact that you are my friend settles the question of whether I should act on the claims you have on me. In other words, there is no rational gap in my deliberations, to be filled by some further principle. Thought of such a principle would be one thought too many. The only explanation that we need of why we treat someone as a friend (or why we have reason to do so) is that she is, simply, our friend, although we can always formulate an account of what makes the claims of friendship normative.

There is a rational gap in our deliberations concerning how to treat our friend if it is not irrational or incoherent to seriously question whether to ever treat her as a friend. That sort of question cannot be deliberatively open to us if friendship is to be the ground of friends’ claims on one another. Rather, our seeing someone as our friend must itself be sufficient to move us to adhere to the expectations of the friendship, regardless of whether we would thereby promote our own good. For this to be possible, seeing someone as a friend must be a normative and motivating state. It must itself involve some sort of appreciation of her claims to be treated in accordance with the friendship’s expectations, along with some nonstrategic motive for acting on those claims, such as loving concern.

I submit, then, that the analogous holds of seeing another person as a person. When I see you as a fellow person, the mere thought that you are a person like myself is such as to rationally move me to act on at least some of the claims that you have on me, claims which are recognizably ethical. The fact that you are a person settles the question of whether I should ever act on your claims on me. Thus, there is no rational gap in my deliberations, to be filled by some further principle, for thought of such a principle would be one thought too many. The only explanation that we need of why we treat someone as a person (or why we have reason to do so) is that she is a person—nothing more.
So, fully recognizing another as a person must be rationally incompatible with sincerely wondering whether another person is, as such, a source of valid claims on us, just as fully seeing ourselves as someone’s friend is rationally incompatible with sincerely wondering whether to treat her as a friend.

For this to be possible, recognizing someone as a person must be a normative and motivating state. It must include some sort of apprehension of her claims to be treated as a person, along with some nonstrategic motive for acting on those claims. Recognition of someone as a person must itself be a recognition of her as having a kind of normative standing, the authority to make claims on us. It must be a recognition of her a partner in moral relations. How could recognition have that character? In the next chapter, I will present a view of the recognition of other people that answers this question.
3. What Is It to Recognize Someone as a Person?

To recognize another as a person one must respond to him and act towards him in certain ways; and these ways are intimately connected with the various prima facie duties. Acknowledging these duties in some degree, and so having the elements of morality, is not a matter of choice, or of intuiting moral qualities, or a matter of the expression of feelings or attitudes...; it is simply the possession of one of the forms of conduct in which the recognition of others as persons is manifested.

—John Rawls

1. The Nature of Interpersonal Recognition as a Topic for Ethics

I have argued that the authority that other people have to make claims on us cannot be grounded in our authority to obligate ourselves to act on those claims, and that we should conceive of the former as unmediated by the latter—as, in effect, (at least) as fundamental as our own authority over ourselves. If the authority of others were grounded in our own authority, then it would follow that apparently other-directed obligations were either self-directed after all or grounded in self-directed obligations. My counterproposal was that, like seeing someone as our friend, seeing someone as a person is such as to rationally motivate us to act on others’ claims on us, without the need for any ulterior motive. So, to see someone as a person is already to grasp, however dimly, her authority to make claims on us. That is part of what it is to regard someone as a creature with the same kind of mind that we have.

This view of recognizing others as persons—or interpersonal recognition, as I call it—is internalist, and in two distinct senses. For according to the view, interpersonal recognition is a state of mind that is such as to move us to treat others in certain ways and such as to include a grasp of their authority. We might say, for short, that recognizing others as persons is both a normative and a motivating state. The aim of this chapter is to provide a qualified defense of this internalist conception of what it is to

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recognize others as persons with minds like our own. I intend this defense to show that the claims of others could rationally motivate us, thereby paving the way for a vindication of morality’s authority.

To that end, I distinguish two broad views of what it is to recognize someone as a person. Very roughly, according to recognition-externalism, interpersonal recognition consists in a mental act of folk-metaphysical classification that is motivationally inert. On recognition-internalism, again very roughly, to recognize someone as a person is not, in the first place, to engage in a classificatory enterprise. It is to exhibit a kind of motivational and affective responsiveness to her perspective. On such a view, then, recognizing someone as a person does imply that we have a certain configuration of motives—specifically, the motives for treating her as it is appropriate or rationally intelligible to treat people. It is this latter view that I will defend in order to explain the motivational relevance of others’ claims.

I first offer a more careful characterization of recognition-internalism and -externalism (§2), then present my own internalist conception of interpersonal recognition (§3). According to my view, we recognize others as persons with minds like our own when we experience their power to engage our practical and affective capacities by making claims on our attitudes and will through their own.

Next, I present two challenges to the idea that the recognition of others as persons has intrinsic motivating force, challenges that any recognition-internalist view must meet in order to be viable (§4). The first challenge is how regarding someone as a person could be world-guided so as to count as knowledge that she is a person, given that on the internalist view it is constituted by a susceptibility to certain affective and practical attitudes. The second is how recognizing someone as a person can move us to treat her as a person, given that it is compatible with deep indifference or hostility towards her. I reply to these two challenges in §5 and §6, respectively, before setting the stage for the account that I will present in the final chapter of the practical inescapability of acknowledging others’ claims on us.
2. Two Conceptions of Interpersonal Recognition

According to recognition-externalism, recognizing another as a person consists in, or depends on, correctly applying the concept of a person to her on the basis of identifying more basic features of hers that make her a person, such as her rationality, autonomy, or self-consciousness.\(^{81,82}\) Interpersonal recognition is an achievement of the intellect, on one conception of the capacity: a dispassionate mental act of classifying a certain entity as falling under the folk-metaphysical category *person*.\(^{83}\) It is thus a motivationally inert state of mind that cannot by itself move its subject to act and only plays a role in motivation when combined with an independent motive, such as a desire or rational principle. In particular, our recognizing someone as a person does not imply that we have motives for treating her as a person—that is, for treating her as it is appropriate or rationally intelligible to treat people. To see someone as a person, then, we need not have any particular motives with respect to her, just as to see something as a stone, say, we need not be inclined to take up any practical stance towards it.

I call this kind of view ‘recognition-externalism’ because it construes interpersonal recognition as only extrinsically related to any motive, including any motives for treating others as people.\(^{84}\) Although explicit defenses of a recognition-externalist position are rare in the philosophical literature,

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81 I say that on this view interpersonal recognition consists in *or depends on* the correct application of a concept to leave open the possibility of conceiving of the recognition of other persons as a perceptual state subject to cognitive penetration. On this conception, interpersonal recognition would be a state that is distinct from the correct application of the concept *person* that can nevertheless be informed by conceptual activity of that kind, just as seeing an animal as a finch is distinct from applying the concept *finch* to that animal but depends nevertheless on possession and application of that concept. Since I do not believe the availability of this view affects the argument I want to make, I leave this possibility to one side.

82 In what follows I will mostly use ‘recognizing someone as a person’ and ‘seeing someone as a person’ interchangeably. ‘Seeing someone as a person’ should not be taken to mean ‘merely seeing someone as a person’, where that is to be contrasted with the factive state of recognizing someone as a person. Departures from this convention should be evident.

83 I have in mind a conception of the intellect on which its exercises are dispassionately representational and therefore not immediately linked to action. See, e.g. Blackburn (1998), pp. 88-91, though I believe the view is far more widespread. Note, too, that in stating recognition-externalism in these terms, I do not mean to suggest a commitment to Blackburn’s conception of the human mind, or to the view that all classification, or all metaphysical classification, is dispassionate.

84 To mitigate repetitiveness, I will sometimes allow myself to lapse into calling this view and its rival ‘externalism’ and ‘internalism’, respectively. The context should make it clear that recognition-externalism and -internalism are meant.
externalism is tempting because it resonates with philosophical common sense, especially at first glance; indeed, it may seem so obviously true that it is difficult to imagine a credible alternative to it.\(^8^5\)

On a recognition-internalist view, to recognize another as a person like ourselves is to exhibit a kind of responsiveness to her perspective, to experience her as calling for practical and affective engagement from us. What it is to experience her perspective in this way is to be disposed to a range of interwoven, affectively-laden, and action-guiding attitudes to her in the face of the mental states she reveals to us. These attitudes constitute motives: they can and by default do move us to treat her in ways that acknowledge her personhood. The class of attitudes in question includes sympathy and what P.F. Strawson calls the reactive attitudes: guilt, resentment, indignation, pride, esteem, shame, and others.\(^8^6\) The upshot is that without a motivational profile of a certain shape we could not see people as persons, and we would only be able to relate to them as particularly complex objects. To recognize another as a person, then, we must have a range of dispositions to treat her as a person.\(^8^7\) And so, recognizing another as a person is not a piece of detached metaphysical classification, but a state of

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\(^8^5\) It is difficult to find philosophers who explicitly avow support for recognition-externalism, but then it is tough to find philosophers who explicitly mention motivation at all when they articulate their views on neighboring topics, such as what a person is or what makes someone a person (as these topics are addressed, say, in the literature on personal identity). Here it is typical for definitions of a person to be normatively neutral, with no suggestion that we need certain motives to see others as persons. A representative example is due to David Wiggins, who claims that a person must be regarded as a persisting material entity essentially endowed with the biological potentiality for the exercise of all the faculties and capacities conceptually constitutive of personhood—sentience, desire, belief, motion, memory and the various other elements which are involved in the particular mode of activity that marks the extension of the concept of a person. (Wiggins 1980, p. 160).

No mention is made of the normative or motivational content of the concept. Another example is a certain set of views concerning what it is to know that another has a mind like my own, according to which deploying these capacities is engaging in a kind of theoretical reasoning about others’ mental states; theory-theory is one example, which has perhaps the most affinity with recognition-externalism. Ascribing recognition-externalism to philosophers who hold such views is justified, then, as an inference to the best explanation: the attribution is by elimination, since they do not talk about motivation. However, it does not matter whether the view has any defenders. It only needs to be coherent and attractive.\(^8^6\) Strawson (2003).

\(^8^7\) In my terminology, a motive, or motivational power, is a disposition of the will. As such, an agent can have a motive yet fail to act on it or even to be motivated to act, but there must be a special explanation for the lapse (akrasia, self-deception, the operation of a countervailing motive). It is doubtful, however, that an agent can count as having a motive to act while under no circumstances being motivated to act on it. In such a case, the agent would lack the relevant motive.
mind *intrinsically* linked to the possession of motives for treating her as a person. So, and to complete a parallel with an analogous debate in moral psychology, I call this view ‘recognition-internalism’.  

The recognition-internalist claims that recognizing someone as a person implies possessing motives for treating her as a person, as I have put it, while the recognition-externalist denies this implication. Before we can fully understand the choice between internalism and externalism, we must clarify what it is to treat someone as a person. What does behavior of this kind consist in? The category of actions that count as treating others as people is a large and general one. We treat someone as a person when look her in the face to comfort her in her distress, as well as when we address her verbally, pick up the keys she dropped and return them to her, or step out of her path as she tries to walk by.  

What unites the actions that belong to this category is that they *evince or express* recognition of the personhood of another. They therefore have a kind of interpersonal communicative significance: they are ways of *showing* another that we recognize her as a person like ourselves by treating her as a person, treating her as it is appropriate or rationally intelligible to treat people in light of their personhood.  

So, the category of treating others as people is so broad as to include forms of conduct that are morally salient or banal, deliberate or unreflective, and so forth. But it is an interesting category, for it is important to us that others treat us like people, which gives the category an ethical significance. For the recognition-internalist, interpersonal recognition is intrinsically linked with the possession of motives for this class of other-oriented behavior. For the recognition-externalist, there is no such link.

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88 I’m referring to the debate between *judgment-internalists* and *judgment-externalists*. Judgment-internalism is the view that making a moral judgment is intrinsically linked to being motivated to comply with it, while judgment-externalism maintains that any relation is extrinsic. See, for example, Smith (1996); Brink (1997); Wallace (20006); and Sdvavarsdottir (2006).

89 Work by more recent recognition-internalists includes Murdoch (1959), (2001); Cavell (1979), Part 4 and (2001); Rawls (1958); Wittgenstein (1953), especially p. 178; Sarrte (1956), Part 3; Weil (1986a); Honneth (1992), (1996), (2001), and (2012) among other work; Diamond (1978); Winch (1981); and Gaita (2002), Chs. 4 and 13, and his (2004), Chs. 3 and 10.

90 The connection between sympathy and the recognition of other persons is a familiar theme of Wittgenstein’s later work. See Wittgenstein (1953), pp. 97-103 (§§281-310), and Peter Winch’s excellent commentary in Winch (1981).

91 Compare Stanley Cavell’s notion of acknowledgment, which I effectively borrow. See Cavell (2001) in particular.
As I have presented them, recognition-internalism and -externalism are theses about the nature of the connection between interpersonal recognition and the possession of a broad class of motives. While they directly concern only motivation, however, these views have normative counterparts as well. Indeed, two forms of recognition-internalism and -externalism could be distinguished, a normative and motivational version. While motivational recognition-internalism would be the view that our recognizing someone as a person implies that we have a motive for treating her as a person, normative recognition-internalism would be the view that our recognizing someone as a person implies that we grasp her claims to be treated in particular ways or the reasons that we have for treating her in particular ways. By contrast, motivational recognition-externalism affirms that our recognizing someone as a person does not itself involve the possession of any motives, much less the motives for treating her as a person, whereas according to normative recognition-externalism, our recognizing someone as a person does not entail that we appreciate, to any degree, the normative force of her claims to be treated in this way.

Normative recognition-externalism is compatible with the possibility of our seeing someone’s personhood fully and clearly yet finding it intelligible to ask whether there is any reason to treat her as a person—a further, normative question left unaddressed by a full awareness of her personhood. And motivational recognition-externalism allows for the possibility of completely seeing someone’s personhood but nevertheless remaining unmoved by treat them as a person. So, we could see someone as a person yet still feel utter indifference to what she thinks, feels, wants, and intends, instead regarding her attitudes and inner states as having no nonstrategic significance to us in themselves.

At any rate, from this point on, I will normally use ‘recognition-internalism’ to mean what I have called motivational recognition-internalism; exceptions to this rule will be mentioned explicitly.

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92 To be more precise, we might distinguish between two distinct versions of recognition-internalism and -externalism. Motivational recognition-internalism is the view that recognizing someone as a person is intrinsically linked to having motives for treating her as a person, while motivational recognition-externalism is the view that the relation between these is extrinsic. Similarly, normative recognition-internalism is the view that recognizing someone as a person is intrinsically linked to recognizing her as a source of claims on oneself, while normative recognition-externalism asserts that the link between them is extrinsic. Further distinctions beyond these are possible, of course, but I have forgone making them for the sake of presentation.
To determine recognition-internalism’s viability, it will be helpful to have a concrete view before us. Thus, in the next section, I will present my own version of recognition-internalism, which is an amalgam of the motivational and normative versions of the position. On my view, in central cases, we recognize others as persons with minds like our own when we experience them as making claims on us through the mental states they express or disclose, engaging our practical and affective capacities.

3. Interpersonal Recognition and the Sharing of Perspectives

My own version of recognition-internalism is predicated, in part, on an opposition to a certain overly-intellectualized picture of interpersonal recognition that is quite plausibly associated with externalism. On the view I oppose, to recognize someone as a person is to be in a representational state of mind that is ultimately no different, in its structure, from recognition of any other kind of worldly entity. Interpersonal recognition differs from other forms of recognition by its content, not its form—by which substantive class of entities it is a recognition of—so that in fact we enjoy the same generic mode of representation whether we represent an entity as a person or as an amoeba, aardvark, galaxy, or elm.93

The motivating conviction of my internalism, on the other hand, is that our awareness of others as persons is significantly unlike our awareness of inanimate objects and even other animals. Awareness of another person as such is not just awareness of what so happens to be a person but may have been an animal or a thing, for all that we know. It is awareness of someone specifically as a person (or a fellow person). And one intuitive basis for taking interpersonal recognition to have a special character is that it has a distinctive phenomenology. Simone Weil observes, with some justice, that

93 I should point out that recognition-externalism does not imply acceptance of, or commitment to, such a view. The recognition-externalist may very well believe that we achieve knowledge that others are persons by simulating their mental states and thereby realizing that they are susceptible to the same kinds that we are in roughly similar circumstances, say. But there is a certain affinity between recognition-externalism and views of the character and provenance of our knowledge that others are persons that make that knowledge not distinctively different from our knowledge of other worldly entities.
Weil’s case is overstated. The other animals share something of this power with people: no one stands up, or moves about, or sits down again in quite the same fashion in the presence of his dog or cat, for instance. But set that aside. Weil’s broader point, I take it, is that when we see others as persons, our experience of them is centered on their perspectives—their shifting sets of attitudes and aims, particularly with respect to ourselves. Our experience of others is structured by an awareness of the power that other people have over us, one that they can exert on us through the disclosure of their perspectives. To what power is Weil referring in this passage? I suggest that it is, most generally, the power of others to influence our attitudes and will through the expression or disclosure of their own attitudes and will.

To see how this might be true, recall our ordinary experience of being looked at by others. If I am on the train biting my nails voraciously and a stranger gives me a disgusted look, I will tend to feel ashamed (or maybe defiant!). Similarly, if I am reading at a coffeeshop and see a beautiful person smiling at me, I will tend to feel elation and a hint of pride. If I am sitting in a park and catch someone watching me with malice in her eyes, I will tend to feel fearful of her or perhaps hostile towards her. In such cases, we apprehend the perspectives of others—particularly how they feel about us—through the way they look at us; their expression reveals to us the attitude that they take towards us. And their attitudes do not normally appear to us as neutral data. They appear immediately significant for us, or at least as purporting to be so. Indeed, the attitudes of others normally affect us, sometimes deeply.

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95 How, exactly, recognizing others as persons differs from recognizing them as non-rational animals is a large and difficult question. It is a question that I will largely ignore in this paper but that I expect to be a topic of future work.
96 The phenomenology of being looked at by another person is aptly captured by Jean-Paul Sartre. See in particular Sartre (1956), pp. 342-354.
They can move us to take up corresponding attitudes, sometimes even without the intervention of a judgment to the effect that it would be appropriate for us to feel such a way given the circumstances.

When others look at us, our experiences of their perspectives appear to be tinged by our own practical and affective stances towards the attitudes that they disclose to us through their expressions. These experiences also appear to involve a consciousness of the power that others have to affect us through their perspective, even when their general orientation towards us is unknown or concealed. That fact about our encounters with other people distinguishes our experience of a person, at least of one who is looking at us, from our experience of a thing. A mere object does not present itself as capable of affecting us in this way, since it lacks a perspective on the world altogether (and a fortiori on us) and lacks, therefore, the power to directly modify, or put pressure on, our attitudes and will. That is not to deny that we can see people as things, in some sense: we can objectify other people, and, indeed, we can regard them from what Strawson called ‘the objective attitude’. But these stances consist precisely in an inability to be directly affected by others in these special ways, and they should be interpreted, rather, as attenuations of the power with which we normally see people as invested.

My recognition-internalist view ascribes the phenomenological difference in our experience of a person and a non-person to the fact that these kinds of awareness have characteristically different forms. In my view, to be aware of another as a person is to be aware of him through his perspective in a way that registers his power to directly elicit our emotions and engage our will. Moreover, to enjoy this form of awareness is, paradigmatically, to regard the attitudes and inner states that he reveals to

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97 See Strawson (2003), p. 79: ‘To adopt the objective attitude to another human being is to see him, perhaps, as an object of social policy; as a subject for what, in a wide range of sense, might be called treatment; as something certainly to be taken account, perhaps precautionary account, of; to be managed or handled or cured or trained; perhaps simply to be avoided... But [the objective attitude] cannot include the range of reactive feelings and attitudes which belong to involvement or participation with others in inter-personal human relationships; it cannot include resentment, gratitude, forgiveness, anger, or the sort of love which two adults can sometimes be said to feel reciprocally, for each other.’
us as making some kind of claim on our own attitudes and will—as at least potentially reason-giving. In that respect, our awareness of others as persons has a normative component, in a sense I specify.

Take, for example, our awareness of a person’s physical pain. To see someone as in physical pain is to see his pain as making a claim on us, as calling on us to share the sufferer’s own outlook on his suffering—that it is terrible, a condition to be alleviated (or at least mitigated), lamented, regretted. Awareness of suffering is manifest, paradigmatically, in sympathy for the sufferer, which disposes us to alleviate his suffering. Sympathy is perhaps the most direct response to the claim his suffering makes on us, since it is the most direct way of sharing his outlook on his suffering. This awareness with its characteristic disposition can also be present in us, indirectly, when we see the sufferer’s condition as something to turn our back on, indeed even when we see his suffering as something to be intensified: deliberately ignoring and heightening a person’s suffering are also responses to the sufferer’s claim.

We can certainly count as recognizing another person’s pain even when his suffering leaves us completely cold and we fail to see the claim he makes on us. Whether we can be credited with such awareness is a matter of the overall pattern of responses we exhibit to the suffering of others, rather than of our sharing a particular sufferer’s perspective on his own pain on every given occasion. Someone who was such as to never see another’s pain as calling on her to share his perspective—as to never see his suffering as calling for her help or cruelty—would not count as recognizing her pain. That is not to say that such a person couldn’t form some concept of another’s pain which might play a somewhat analogous role in her mental life that it does in ours. What she could not have, though, is a concept of it predicated on an internal grasp of the pain’s significance for the person suffering, just as

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99 Inflicting suffering on others for its own sake—and, in a less direct way, turning away from those in distress—involves an intentional rejection of the sufferer’s claim. Cruel motivation presupposes that the default response to another’s suffering is sympathetic and its enjoyment derives from denying that response to him. That’s why a more benevolent orientation to those in distress doesn’t baffle the cruel person: her enjoyment lies in violating the implicit expectation a sufferer has to be pitied and helped by others.
a person blind from birth could not have a concept of blue predicated on visual experience of blue objects, for instance. She would lack our concept of pain. And since seeing someone as a person requires being aware, under certain circumstances, of his suffering pain, someone who is totally unable to share the sufferer’s sense of his own pain would thereby miss out on an aspect of his personhood.⁴⁰⁰

The same point can be made about our awareness of others’ emotions: that it is, in part, an awareness of the claims these emotions make on our attitudes and will, calling on us to share them. To be aware of another’s resentment of us is to see it as calling on us to feel guilt, to be aware of her admiration for us is to see it as calling on us to feel pride, to be aware of her contempt for us is to see it as calling on us to feel shame… To be sure, when we experience the emotion of another person as calling us to share her perspective we may nonetheless see her emotion as inapt, irrational, or mad. Even in such cases, I maintain, awareness of her as being in the grip of a certain emotion will consist in experiencing it as purporting to give us a reason to share her emotion, although we may not in fact come to feel similarly and may even conclude that doing so would be inappropriate. In most cases, when we do not come to reciprocate her emotion, we may see it as exerting rational pressure on us, inviting or demanding a certain response from us and leading us to find reasons to decline to share it.

Awareness of emotions is therefore a considerably more complex affair than awareness of pain. To count as being aware of emotions such as those mentioned above, we must be disposed to share the other person’s outlook on the object of her attitude, under certain circumstances; thus, we must be susceptible, in such circumstances, to feel the emotion complementary to hers. Someone who lacked such a disposition entirely, who could not share the emotions of others in this sense, would not count as knowing what it is for other people to be in the grip of those emotions. To that extent, her awareness of the personhood of others would be manifestly incomplete. Here again, though,

⁴⁰⁰ As John Rawls puts a related, if stronger, point, ‘A person who never under any circumstance showed a wish to help others in pain would show, at the same time, that he did not recognize that they were in pain.’ See Rawls (1958), p. 182.
awareness of other people’s emotions is fully compatible with a failure, on particular occasions, to appreciate the claims they make on us, and with a failure to share the emotions that others express.

On my own view, we recognize others as persons with minds like our own, in the first instance, through such interpersonal affective responses and their associated modes of practical engagement. This is a particular internalist thesis, not strictly entailed by the statement of recognition-internalism with which we started. It is a thesis concerning how we know that others are people like ourselves: we see others as persons by seeing them as making claims on our attitudes and will in various ways. We need not regard the claims made on us by others as everywhere valid or reason-giving in order to count as seeing them as persons, as I have pointed out. Nevertheless, it is something like our natural tendency, our default stance, to see others’ attitudes and inner states as at least prima facie reason-giving. And we very often do see them in this way. To see someone else as a person, then, on the view I am proposing, is to experience her as capable of normatively influencing our attitudes and will through her own attitudes and will. Crucially, for a recognition-internalist, our practical and affective responsiveness to other people does not ultimately depend on a prior classificatory belief that they are people. It does not depend on any act of reflection, though reflection may certainly modify, refine, and diminish our capacity for these responses in all sorts of ways, or defeat them in particular cases. Interpersonal recognition is not primarily intellectual but the work of our emotional, volitional nature.

One key advantage of my conception of interpersonal recognition is that it comports with the phenomenology of so-called ‘objectifying’ behavior and stances, from the side of the objectified party. To illustrate this point, I will share an anecdote from the life of Malcolm X. When he was thirteen years old, Malcolm X was sent to a detention home in Mason, Michigan. His easy temperament and willingness to help with housework soon earned him the affectionate approval of the manager of the

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101 See Winch (1981) for an elaboration of this idea.

102 For philosophical work on sexual objectification, see Nussbaum (1995); Haslanger (2012); Langton (2009a), (2009b); and Bauer (2015), Ch. 3. For an excellent phenomenological study of racial objectification, see Fanon (2008), Ch. 5.
home, Mrs. Swerlin, and her husband. Although the Swerlins treated the young Malcolm X kindly, the way they related to him had a dimension of significance that he did not fully grasp at the time.\(^{103}\) The Swerlins ‘would talk about anything and everything with me standing right there hearing them, the same way people would talk freely in front of a pet canary. They would even talk about me, or about “n——s”, as though I wasn’t there, as if I wouldn’t understand what the word meant.'\(^{104}\) He continues:

Mr. Swerlin, as nice as he was, came in from Lansing, where he had been through the Negro section, and said to Mrs. Swerlin right in front of me, ‘I just can’t see how those n——s could be so happy and be so poor.’ He talked about how they lived in shacks, but had those big, shining cars up front.

And Mrs. Swerlin said, me standing right there, ‘N——s are just that way…’ That scene always stayed with me.

With an unmistakable edge of social critique, Malcolm X draws a lesson from this and similar incidents:

[It] just never dawned upon them that I could understand, that I wasn’t a pet, but a human being. …But it has historically been the case with white people, in their regard for black people, that even though we might be with them, we weren’t considered of them. Even though they appeared to have opened the door, it was still closed. Thus they never did really see me.\(^{105}\)

I want to focus on the language of vision in this connection and on the associated sense of invisibility, a familiar focus of moral complaint. Talk of the Swerlins failing to see Malcolm X is a metaphor, to be sure. He does not accuse them, or white Americans generally, of bad eyesight. Nor does he primarily fault them for treating him badly, even if he would have admitted a sense in which they had done so. As he presents it, the problem is with the view they have of him: the way they regard him is bad—distorted, incomplete. The Swerlins, he claims, do not recognize him as a ‘human being’, as a person. According to Malcolm X, what is invisible to them, indeed to most white Americans, is his humanity.

What exactly is lacking in the Swerlins’s view of the young Malcolm X? One externalist-friendly answer is that they are guilty of a purely intellectual sort of error, a sheer miscategorization:

\(^{104}\) Ibid., pp. 26-27.  
\(^{105}\) Ibid., p. 27.
they have failed to apply the concept *person* to Malcolm X, as we fail to apply that concept to the street performer in mistaking her for a statue. That is because they have failed to attribute to him one of the qualities that constitute personhood. Malcolm X’s own account of the issue suggests such a view: ‘They didn’t give me credit for having the same sensitivity, intellect, and understanding that they would have been ready and willing to recognize in a white boy of my position,’ he laments.\textsuperscript{106} Thus what the Swerlins lack is the ordinary belief that he is sensitive, intelligent, and insightful, and, consequently, the equally prosaic belief that he is a person. Their view is predicated on ignorance of empirical fact.

One issue with this account is that it implies that Malcolm X would be committed to rescinding his complaint about the Swerlins—that they did not see him as human—if, say, they ascribed understanding to him but continued to talk about him as if he could not understand them, out of unconcern for his perspective. On the externalist-friendly answer, their view of him as a person would not be distorted. They would simply have bad motives, leading them to treat him badly. Or maybe they would have bad moral beliefs, to the effect that it is permissible to ignore African-Americans. (They may also have both.) But there would be no blank in the Swerlins’s view of Malcolm X as a person, on this interpretation. In particular, they could count as crediting him with understanding even though, in certain contexts, they were not disposed to exhibit *any* practical or affective response to his power of understanding, to grasp the force of his claims on them that they not ignore him. Their gaining empirical knowledge of him would not defeat his complaint that they did not see his humanity.

In my view, by contrast, there *is* a defect in the Swerlins’s view of Malcolm X’s personhood but it does not consist in ignorance of empirical fact. In failing to appreciate the claims that he makes on them in light of his power of understanding, and in remaining practically and affectively unmoved to treat him as a person in such contexts, they show that they have an incomplete or distorted view of

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid.
his understanding and, therefore, that they have an incomplete or distorted view of him as a person. Hence, Malcolm X could still legitimately complain, as I think would be in order, that even if they could intellectually register, in some way, that he exhibited understanding and that he was a person, they did not see his humanity—and thus did not see him. The complaint would not just be evocative rhetoric. The language of invisibility in it would refer to a distinctive moral phenomenon: that of misrecognizing someone’s personhood, a failure to see her claims on us that is at once a failure to see her as a person.

4. Two Externalist Challenges to Recognition-Internalism

Yet there is a case for externalism, and it rests on the apparent force of two challenges to internalism. The first and most basic challenge is that it is unclear how to make sense of the internalist idea that seeing others as persons is a state that is both practical and cognitive, at once capable of motivating us to treat others as people like us yet also capable of counting as knowledge that they are people.

The recognition-internalist denies that to see others as persons is mainly to classify them as such, affirming instead that interpersonal recognition is constituted by certain affective and practical dispositions. Yet if interpersonal recognition is not a classificatory state, what makes it correct to see other human beings as people but incorrect to see inanimate objects and non-rational animals as people? If practical and affective engagement is what seeing an entity as a person consists in, how could seeing an entity as a person ever count as recognizing that entity as a person, given that it is psychologically possible for us to have interpersonal practical stances towards non-persons—to pity a doll, say? How could seeing others as persons sometimes count as knowledge that they are people?

The problem is that interpersonal recognition’s status as a cognitive state—as recognition—seems to be in jeopardy unless it is a mental act of metaphysical classification, per externalism. However, let us instead suppose that grasping the personhood of another is coming to appreciate a prosaic, non-normative fact—a matter of the metaphysical classification of certain familiar entities in
the world and the object of a belief as ordinary as any other. Then it is unclear how such a piece of categorization could be anything other than motivationally inert or normatively neutral, lacking intrinsic normative significance or immediate relevance for deliberation about how to treat others. The very idea that interpersonal recognition is motivating starts to seem unintelligible. We are forced to choose, it seems: interpersonal recognition can be practical or it can be cognitive—but not both.

The grounds of this first challenge are deep, no doubt, and it owes some of its force to a particular and rather controversial way of ordering logical space in this corner of moral psychology. On this picture, the normative or practical is wholly separate from the descriptive or prosaically factual, and these categories map neatly onto the distinction between the conative and the cognitive—that is, between those states of mind which are capable of motivating us and those states that are capable of constituting genuine cognition because they purport to represent a reality independent of our minds. The recognition-internalist can reject the assumptions animating this way of approaching moral psychology, of course. But doing so will not dissolve the first challenge entirely. It will still be prima facie puzzling how seeing others as persons could count as knowledge that they are people, given that it is constituted by practical and affective dispositions instead of consisting in a classificatory state.

The second challenge is not conceptual but substantive. A recognition-internalist view is, the challenge alleges, incompatible with two indisputable psychological facts about the human condition. We are sometimes deeply indifferent to others, for one. Yet, by any plausible criteria, it seems that we can nonetheless be said to regard the objects of our indifference as persons. We just lack concern for them, so that in such cases our indifference implies that we lack a motive for treating others as people. Yet if we can recognize another as a person without having any motive for treating her as a person, the link between interpersonal recognition and this broad class of motives turns is extrinsic after all.

Likewise, the challenge continues, in recognizing others as persons we can be moved to take up various hostile stances towards her that may lead us to mistreat her, sometimes in terrible ways.
These stances include such attitudes as envy, hatred, contempt, a sense of vengeance, or sheer malice. Recognizing someone as a person is not just consistent with the possession of these motives for mistreatment. They presuppose that we recognize, perhaps implicitly, the target of our abuse as a person. The possibility of subjecting a person to certain forms of cruel treatment, for example, depends on an awareness, however dim, that our victim is a person and not a mere thing or a non-rational animal. At any rate, like the fact of human indifference, interpersonal recognition’s link to the hostile stances demonstrates that we may see someone as a person while lacking motives for treating her as such.

Together these two challenges make trouble for the position that interpersonal recognition consists in a kind of practical orientation to others that is expressed in treating them as people. The next two sections of the chapter are devoted to addressing these challenges to recognition-internalism.

5. Disarming the First Challenge: Recognition and Identification

If seeing another as a person consists in practical and affective responsiveness to her perspective (and not in folk-metaphysical classification of her), then it may be unclear how it could be a cognitive state. After all, couldn’t we have interpersonal responses to inanimate objects or to non-rational animals? Couldn’t we, for example, pity a file cabinet, esteem the Eiffel Tower, or resent a dog for her antics? Certainly, our esteeming the Eiffel Tower counts as seeing it as a person, but doesn’t the internalist incur the false conclusion that this reaction actually suffices for recognizing its object as a person as well?

The internalist must explain why our seeing inanimate objects and other animals as persons is incorrect, a cognitive failure, while under normal circumstances seeing our fellow human beings as persons amounts to recognizing them to be such. She must also explain why failing to see us as persons

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107 A point made characteristically well by Williams (1972, p. 60), perhaps in response to Nagel (1970): ‘If it is a mark of man to have a conceptualized and fully conscious awareness of himself as one among others, aware that others have feelings like himself, this is a precondition not only of benevolence… but of cruelty as well. The man of sadistic sophistication is not more like animals than the man of natural affections, but less so. If we offer as the supreme moral imperative that old cry, ‘be a man!’ it is terrible to think of many of the ways in which it could be taken literally.’

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is incorrect, a cognitive failure, indeed a way of misrecognizing us. And she must do all of that in a way that is compatible with her denial that seeing others as persons ultimately hinges on having folk-metaphysical, classificatory beliefs about them. This seems like an impossibly tall order. The problem is, broadly, that the internalist’s conception of seeing others as persons does not appear to construe it as world-guided, which it needs to be if that state is sometimes to count as a way of knowing. And the only way that such a state could be world-guided, it seems, is if it is, or rests on, a classificatory state.

I have argued that recognizing someone as a person requires a susceptibility to certain practical and affective responses to others and a complementary awareness of their power to make claims on us. It may seem, however, that practical and affective responses could never constitute, in themselves, knowledge that someone is a person. For these responses seem to be based on a prior classificatory belief to the effect that she is a person. We may think it is unclear how matters could be otherwise. To put the point simply, don’t we need to first identify someone as a person, or anyway judge that she is a person, before we can even have practical and affective responses towards her in the first place? (Or can we pity someone without first thinking that she is a person—hence, a possible object of pity?) And if we do need the prior classificatory belief that she is a person in order to be able to be susceptible to the relevant practical and affective responses, what remains of the recognition-internalist position?

Furthermore, the recognition-externalist has a plausible story about the method by which we might come to recognize that someone else is a person. Perceptual experiences of another person’s (paradigmatically embodied) behavior yields evidence that she has certain mental states or properties, such as rationality, self-consciousness, and autonomy. And these perceptual experiences, in turn, constitute evidence that others are, in fact, people like ourselves. The form of this reasoning could be analogical, or it could be theoretical reasoning of another kind; the exact form of it doesn’t matter. The point is that such an externalism-friendly story is creditable, and it leaves us no puzzle about how seeing others as persons could constitute knowledge that they are such, at least when they are people.
And it is a story that casts interpersonal recognition as itself a dispassionately classificatory enterprise. Alas, no equally plausible, non-mysterious, internalism-friendly counterpart appears to be available.

I agree that in order to show that the state of seeing-as-a-person is world-guided, recognition-internalists must be able do justice to the intuition that, in some sense, our identifying others as persons is a condition of the possibility of practically and affectively responding to them as to fellow people. And this act of identification, whatever it is like, must not be a dispassionate classificatory state, lest the view collapse into recognition-externalism by another name. What could play the relevant role? My proposal is that, in the first instance, we come to identify others as persons, hence to recognize them as such, by identifying with them, on the basis of their bodily and behavioral resemblance to us. This mental act of identification is not a classificatory belief, though it may justify us in forming them. But to flesh out and motivate this proposal, let me start with a seemingly more tractable phenomenon.

How do I know that you speak the same language as I do, that you and I are same-speakers? For simplicity, let's stipulate: it's a spoken language and we are native speakers. One possible answer: I arrive at a classificatory belief about the language that you speak in relation to the language that I speak, and I do so on the basis of taking the utterances that I hear from you as evidence that you are using the same string of sounds to mean what I mean when I myself utter similar-sounding sentences. Not that I always go through that chain of reasoning explicitly: ‘Her words sound like the ones I use to refer to such and such; if so, she must mean such and such by them; so, we speak the same language.’ Nonetheless, according to this story the rational or justificatory structure underpinning my recognition of you as my same-speaker is articulated in that formulation, even if I never entertain it occurrently.

Yet there is another, and I think more natural, account of how I know that we share a language: namely, in light of the resemblance between the sound of your words and the sound of mine, I just hear your words as the words of my language. No classificatory belief is required to pull this off. To recognize you as my same-speaker, I need not even form a prior classificatory belief concerning the
resemblance between the sound of your words and the sound of mine. I can just hear the likeness. And in hearing it, I simply find myself understanding the thoughts expressed by your utterances, normally by experiencing you as making claims on me that I consider certain thoughts or that I respond to you in particular ways. I therefore come to recognize you as my same-speaker. Appeal to a prior classificatory belief is otiose in this context, as it is plainly in conflict with Occam’s Razor.

I do not want to commit myself to a particular view of what it is to recognize a same-speaker. For my purposes, it is enough that the second account is available and viable, plausibly enjoying the cited explanatory advantage over its rival: that it does the same work but posits one fewer mental state. My proposal is analogous to the second account. How do I know that you inhabit the same form of mindedness as I do, that you are a fellow person? For simplicity, let’s stipulate: we are human beings, and we are in some kind of perceptual contact with one another, perhaps I am face to face with you. My answer: I know that you are a person because in light of your bodily and behavioral resemblance to myself, I see your embodied behavior as expressing the same kinds of mental states that I exhibit.\footnote{This criterion of correctness or veridicality for particular instances of seeing others as persons is of Wittgensteinian inspiration: ‘Only of a living human being and what resembles (behaves like) a living human being,’ he claims, ‘can one say: it has sensations; it sees; is blind; hears; is deaf; is conscious or unconscious,’ and in his view that we can only see a creature as having our form of mentality if it also has a corresponding kind of body (Wittgenstein, §281, p. 103e). However, I dispute other aspects of Wittgenstein’s view of our relation to other human beings—in particular, his claim that, strictly speaking, we cannot be said to know that particular individuals behaving in familiar ways are human.}

Again, no classificatory belief about you, or you in relation to myself, is needed to effect the transition. I do not even need to first form a belief about the resemblance between your body and behavior, on the one hand, and my body and behavior, on the other—and conclude, as it were in a separate step, that you are a person like myself. I can just see the likeness or perceptually recognize it in another way. And when I do so, I simply find myself having certain dispositions to practical and affective responses towards your perspective, normally by experiencing you as making claims on my attitudes and will.
Why should recognizing a fellow human being as a person depend on a classificatory belief to some relevant effect when, plausibly, recognizing someone as a speaker of our native language does not?\(^{109}\)

Thus, seeing our fellow human beings as persons counts as knowing that they are people because the former partly consists in a kind of primitive identification with them in the light of their bodily and behavioral resemblance to ourselves, just as we can know that others speak the same language that we do by hearing their utterances as the words of our language, as expressing the same thoughts that we would convey with those very words. Through such an act of identification with our fellows, their attitudes or aims are revealed to us, as these are expressed in their behavior. Through the revelation of others’ attitudes and/or aims, we come to grasp that they are susceptible to the same kinds of mental states that we have and thus that we share a form of mindedness with them.\(^{110}\) We come to see them as having the same intellectual, volitional, and affective capacities that we do. So, we know that other human beings are people by seeing ourselves in them via the medium of their embodied behavior, which reveals the presence of a mind like ours. And that mind is revealed to us through our experiences of her attitudes and/or aims as calling for practical or affective engagement. Once again, no prior classificatory belief is needed to mediate any step of this seamless process.

What about recognizing those who are not human beings as persons, then? In my view, we are capable of seeing a creature of an alien species as a fellow person, and thus of seeing that she is a

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\(^{109}\) That’s not to say that it we can always pick out the speakers of our native language easily. It may sometimes be difficult. Of course, native speakers of our language can speak in unfamiliar dialects or with idiosyncratic pronunciation that might impede our ability to recognize them as speakers of our language. At this stage, we may need to appeal to classification in order to know that a particular interlocutor is speaking our language, to hear past the distinguishing feature of his dialect, so to speak. But it is still true, I maintain, that the original way of knowing that someone is speaking the same language as we are is by hearing his words as the words of our language. Likewise, the original way of knowing that someone is a person is not through classification, though we may need to engage in it in order to recognize people who look or behave significantly differently. It is by identifying with him in light of his bodily and behavioral resemblance to us, which reveals to us that he has the same general kind of mind that we do. The history of humanity’s social and moral progress should, I expect, adequately illustrate the difficulty of recognizing that other human beings are persons in the same way that we are.

\(^{110}\) It follows that to see a particular human being as a person we must see her as having the same kind of body we have. That point, however, would not imply that we cannot see human beings as persons when their bodies look very different from ours—amputees or people with severe physical disabilities, for example. Although certain human beings may have bodies that do not perfectly resemble our own, there is a more basic resemblance registered when we see them as persons. That is, we see that the bodies of these people exhibit modifications of the same kind of body that we ourselves have.
person, to the extent that we can see ourselves in her given her behavioral and bodily resemblance to us. (Likewise, we might say: we are capable of hearing someone speaking an unfamiliar dialect as a same-speaker, and thus of hearing that she is a same-speaker, to the extent that we can hear in her utterances the words in our own language, given the resemblance between the words that she utters and ours.)

My proposal thus construes interpersonal recognition as anthropocentric—but as harmlessly so. Recognizing others as persons isn’t restricted to human beings, as understanding someone through the exchange of words is not restricted to same-speakers. Yet each of these enjoys epistemic primacy. For us human beings, the case of humanity is paradigmatic, in the sense that it is the one by reference to which the others are to be understood. Recognizing other human beings as people is possible through identification with them, which lays the interpretative grid of our kind of mentality onto them. But because identification is anthropocentric, we will be able to recognize alien creatures as persons only insofar as they approximate the human form and exhibit human modes of behavior and life. Just as a Spanish speaker may be able to understand an Italian speaker by carefully listening to her speak, we may be able to recognize a rational Martian as a person by discriminatively identifying with her.

Thus, I leave open the possibility that the unexplored universe contains non-human rational beings who are so manifestly unlike us that identification with them is impossible. We may be unable to see any link between the purposive movements that they make and any form of mentality like ours, perhaps because their bodies are so different from ours in their structure as to be uninterpretable by us. And in that case, it is true, we would be unable to identify with them and hence unable to see them as persons, and thus we would be unable to know that they are people by seeing ourselves in them. To know that a radically different alien creature is a person, then, we may have to await the results of scientific investigations, which would be the basis for the classificatory belief that she is a person.

From that point, we shouldn’t conclude that when we recognize our fellow human beings as persons we do so on the basis of a classificatory belief or that our justification for regarding human
beings as persons lies in our justification for judging that they are such—access to neurological data, presumably. We should conclude that we cannot rely on our standard route to knowing that the members of dramatically different alien species are people: seeing them as persons by seeing ourselves in them. In such cases, we must resort to other methods instead to achieve this form of knowledge.\textsuperscript{111}

I have been characterizing interpersonal recognition in a way that suggests that it is inextricably connected with our concrete, face-to-face encounters with other people.\textsuperscript{112} And there is a connection. It is through such encounters, I believe, that we first come to recognize the reality of other people. But my suggestion is not that it is only in such a context that we can recognize others as persons. It is that recognizing particular, living others in our interactions with them bears epistemic priority. Interpersonal recognition, as I have construed it, is the linchpin of our knowledge of other people: its role in the formation of that sort of knowledge is similar to the one perceptual experience plays in constituting our knowledge of material objects. The advent of perceptual experience marks our entry into the enterprise of knowing the material world around us, and concrete episodes of experience are bases for particular pieces of empirical knowledge. To point that out, however, is not to imply that in every instance of knowing that some material object is a certain way we must first have had sensory impressions, to that effect, of the relevant object. Thus, we can allow that we sometimes achieve this kind of knowledge through other sources: testimony, inference to the best explanation, and so forth.

\textsuperscript{111} One advantage of my account is that it could be easily extended to provide a plausible picture of our recognition of the mindedness of non-rational animals as well. The idea would be that we come to see animals as minded through a kind of identification with them insofar as their body and behavior resembles our own, but that the identification is only ever partial because the other animals with whom we are acquainted only imperfectly resemble us along the relevant dimensions. A corresponding idea would be that we come to see a particular animal's form of mindedness as resembling our own insofar as her body and behavior also resemble our own. I hope to elaborate on these complementary ideas in future work.

\textsuperscript{112} I do not here want to suggest support for a conception of persons that would exclude young infants, the extremely mentally ill or severely intellectually disabled, and those in a persistent vegetative state—in short, people who are given the unfortunate name ‘marginal cases’. In my view, people in these conditions are persons: they have the same rational capacities as ‘normal’ or fully grown human beings. It is just that their rational powers are undeveloped, limited, or damaged. The trickier question is how coming to recognize the personhood of people in these conditions is connected with our recognition of ‘normal’ adult human beings as persons. My hunch is that for us ‘normal’ or fully grown adult human beings constitute the paradigm case of personhood, by reference to which people in these conditions are to be understood. Thus, the former is what we see the latter as either gradually developing into (young infants) or, as it were, falling away from (the extremely mentally ill, the severely intellectually disabled, and those in a persistent vegetative state).
Equally, then, interpersonal recognition is, I submit, what enables us to know that others are people. Yet we need have no affectively-laden, action-guiding awareness of a person to know she is a person.

The upshot of the foregoing reflections for my efforts to reply to the first challenge is this. We are looking for an internalist-friendly account of what it is to see others as persons that would ensure that the state is world-guided and thus that it could count as knowledge that they are people, even though it is constituted by susceptibilities to various practical and affective responses to others. That account would have to characterize seeing others as persons in a way that clarified how this state could be a source of knowledge of their personhood, capable of correctness and incorrectness, and the account must do so without positing a prior, dispassionate mental act of metaphysical classification. The proposal that I have advanced fits the description. Seeing others as persons is a world-guided state in virtue of the fact that it is partly constituted by a primitive mental act of identifying with them. Identifying with others shows us that they have the same kind of mind that we do, disclosing their perspective to us through affectively-laden and action-guiding experiences of their attitudes and will. And identification with others can play this role because it is subject to a criterion of fit with its object. Identification is guided, specifically, by the appearance of similarity in the body and behavior of others, which reveal them to be prone to the same kinds of mental states to which we ourselves are subject. That state depends on no classificatory belief. It is a form of awareness of others that is at once a practical or affective orientation towards them but that nonetheless also counts as cognition of them.

Have I been responsive to the first challenge? For if identification, as I have construed it, is constituted by, or involves, practical and affective dispositions, too, then are we not right to be worried about its capacity to count as knowledge? Why doesn’t the challenge just reappear at that next step?\(^{113}\)

\(^{113}\) A fuller exposition of this objection, which I owe to Selim Berker, is this. Our challenge is to show how it is possible for seeing someone as a person to be knowledge that she is a person, given that it is constituted by certain susceptibilities to affective and practical attitudes. Yet I have only offered an account of how we in fact arrive at knowledge that others are persons. And, indeed, the crucial element in my account—affectively and practically seeing ourselves in another—seems unable to explain how our seeing another as a person could sometimes count as knowledge of her personhood, since seeing ourselves in some entity or other is no more factive than our seeing that entity as a person. If it is psychologically
Because if my proposal is right, identification with others is no non-cognitive stance that may legitimately take anything or anyone for its object. It is a state with a genuine claim to be world-guided, as it is sensitive to the features of people that ground, and reveal, their having the same kind of mind as ourselves. The appearance of trouble for recognition-internalism may instead be based only on the conviction that a state constituted by practical and affective dispositions cannot be a way of knowing the world, or perhaps on the corollary that emotions and other practical responses are blind reactions. A recognition-internalist is not obligated to accept these ideas or the moral-psychological assumptions that lend them credibility: that the cognitive and the practical or affective are exclusive of each other.

The first challenge is dissolved, then, by showing that seeing others as persons, as construed by the recognition-internalist, is guided by mind-independent features of them such that it could count as knowledge that they are people, rather than just the non-factive state of seeing them as such. Our seeing others as persons is elevated to knowledge when it is a response to their bodily and behavioral resemblance to us, though there is no guarantee that identification of this kind will always be possible. In the case of creatures who are radically different from us, though we cannot see them as persons by seeing ourselves in them, we can still perhaps know they are people through scientific investigation. From this concession, however, it does not follow that interpersonal recognition as such consists in, or depends on, arriving at the correct folk-metaphysical classificatory belief that others are people.

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possible to see a couch as a person, in other words, it is equally psychologically possible to see ourselves in a couch. In both cases, it is unclear how our state could amount to knowing. The problem is that in explaining how seeing ourselves in another could count as knowledge that she is a person, my account must, it seems, either appeal to our having prior classificatory beliefs or insist that identification with another is constituted by a susceptibility to a certain class of practical stances. In the former case, my view is less clearly distinct from a recognition-externalist one. Yet in the latter case, the first challenge reappears: if seeing another as a person and seeing ourselves in another person both include affective and practical dispositions, we should worry how either can be knowledge. My proposal is not that seeing an entity as a person is the kind of state capable of having factive instances in virtue of its including, or being constituted by, the factive state of seeing ourselves in that entity. It is that the latter is more recognizably a mental state capable of having factive instances.
6. Disarming the Second Challenge: Indifference, Interpersonal Blind Spots, and Hostility

The second challenge to recognition-internalism begins with a pair of seemingly indisputable facts, and in responding to the externalist I will take these facts and their alleged consequences in order. First of all, we human beings are sometimes robustly unconcerned with other people. Nonetheless, the recognition-externalist alleges, plausibly we still regard the objects of our indifference as persons. We do not normally deny that they are rational or self-conscious, for instance; on the contrary, we are ready to admit that they presumably have plans, thoughts, and feelings of their own, as we do. We simply lack concern for these people. And the externalist will maintain that when our unconcern for them is sufficiently deep, it follows that we have no motive for acknowledging them as people. So, the externalist claims, recognizing others as persons is only extrinsically related to motives for treating them accordingly. How, then, might a recognition-internalist respond to this line of argument?

Not, certainly, by denying the fact of human indifference. It is a persistent feature of our condition that we are often unconcerned, to varying degrees, with our fellows, and with the effects of our actions and policies on them, especially to the extent that we see them as different from ourselves. We are unconcerned with these people not in the sense that we are simply unaware of them but rather in the sense that we are aware of them—and aware of them as persons—but do not care about them. Thus, a recognition-internalist need not doubt that we can be robustly unconcerned with other people, or that unconcern of this kind is compatible with regarding them, to some degree, as persons. But she can dispute the externalist’s interpretation of such cases and its centerpiece: that when we are in the grip of deep indifference we lack a motive for treating the objects of our unconcern as people.

My task in this section is not so much to rebut the externalist’s account of human indifference as to place an internalist-friendly alternative in its stead. I hope to show that the latter is plausible enough as to make it an open question whether it or the externalist’s account of indifference to people is the correct one. My argument should have the effect of robbing the second challenge of much of
its force. I will then address the second part of the challenge: that recognizing someone as a person appears to be compatible with our taking up hostile stances to her that lead us to violate her claims.

Unconcern for other persons comes in a variety of forms, which can have diverse etiologies. We can be unconcerned with a certain individual or with members of a group. We can be subject to a momentary lapse in concern or to a lack of concern so robust as to be a stable trait of our character. Unconcern for a person is often taken to be indifference to her plight. But that is not the only kind. It can also take the form of indifference to her attitudes, particularly her attitudes towards ourselves: an inability to be affected or motivated by them. Caring about someone is caring about not just her welfare but her thoughts and feelings as well. Finally, unconcern for a person can be due to external factors (severe depression, brain damage) or to internal factors (willful ignorance, spite); yet only the latter sort of indifference—motivated indifference—is the proper object of moral and social criticism.

It is worth pointing out that not all of these forms of unconcern for others imply the absence of a motive for treating them as people. Temporary indifference does not, for one. A motive is a kind of disposition, and a disposition can be present even if there are cases in which it doesn’t express itself. Our focus should therefore be on deep unconcern for others. Even here, though, not all varieties rule out our having a motive for treating others as people. Unconcern for someone’s thoughts and feelings does not, for one. For it is compatible with caring about her plight, hence with acting benevolently towards her, and treating someone with benevolence is indeed a way of treating her as a fellow person.

Nor does motivated indifference to a person rule out having a motive for treating her as such. For instance, a colonial magistrate may be indifferent to the plight of the colonized people while still caring about their perspective. He may want the people he oppresses to be not just obedient to him and his fellow colonizers but also respectful to, or fearful of, them as well. And he may, in turn, treat them with gratitude if that conduct is forthcoming, or with resentment and indignation if it is withheld; both forms of treatment count as expressing recognition of the ones so treated as people. One plausible
psychological explanation is that his indifference to them is a kind of self-deception, brought on by the distorting effects of self-interest, particularly ambition. He has a tremendous interest in exploiting them and their native land, and the operation of that motive silences any concern he might have had. His motive for taking the colonized people not to matter is powerful enough to lead him to believe that, or act as though, they were unimportant. That does not show that he lacks a motive, however.

For a disposition may be blocked—and so inactive—yet remain present. Consider a match. The match has a disposition to light when struck. For all that, this disposition may well be prevented, by some further condition (such as the match’s getting wet), from activation in its characteristic way. That disposition of the match is not removed by wetness. It is quite simply, and temporarily, inactive. Likewise, the colonial magistrate can still be said to have a motive for treating the natives as people even if he cannot presently muster up concern for them while in the grip of his motivated indifference. His concern for them might be blocked by his self-interested desires, but it will be present nonetheless, as shown by the fact that it may be reactivated through conversion—such as the one undergone by Bartolomé de las Casas, who came to see the Native Americans as victims of Spanish colonial rule.

I bring these points up only to show that the recognition-externalist’s thesis—that indifference to someone implies a lack of motive for treating her as a person—is not as obviously true as it seems. In particular, it does not appear to hold of all forms of indifference. The real matter is more complex. At any rate, my plan is to provide the internalist with an alternate account of human indifference. The basis for such an account lies in an analogy with visual perception. Our sight may be weak or occluded, which can leave us with an incomplete or distorted view of some object in our environment. The suggestion would then be that there is a sense in which our awareness of other persons as persons can be partial or otherwise deficient, and that this is precisely what indifference to others consists in.

To evaluate the suggestion, we need to know how to think about these gaps or distortions in our awareness of other people and what it would be for it to be clear and complete in these respects.
As there are various forms of unconcern for others, we should expect there to be potentially distinct accounts of these forms, accounts that differ as to what is amiss or lacking in our awareness of others.

To return to our earlier example: the Swerlins appear to lack a certain kind of concern for Malcolm X, which plausibly extends to the other black children they host. The case is complicated. In disparaging black people (or even him) in front of him, they seem to exhibit a lack of concern for, or at best selective concern with, his epistemic and evaluative attitudes: what he thinks, how he feels. But what makes describing the case so tricky is that the Swerlins are not deliberately ignoring Malcolm X. It just doesn’t occur to them not to discuss topics that might be sensitive for him in his presence, and that is because, as he says, they fail to credit him with the intellect and understanding of a white child. Due to the habits of attention that condition their interactions with black children, they do not even consider that he has those qualities or, if they do, they dismiss the possibility. Does this mean, then, that they lack an affectively- and motivationally-neutral belief about his mental capacities or powers?

That needn’t be so. True, the Swerlins likely did not believe that Malcolm X was as sensitive and intelligent as a white child. But, importantly, they may have had a belief to that effect, and judged that he was a person like them, yet displayed the same failure of consideration for his point of view. **Believing** that someone is a person or that she has qualities that make her a person is not the same as **seeing** someone as a person or seeing her as sharing the same capacities or powers that one oneself has. The problem with the Swerlins is that they do not really **see** Malcolm X as they see themselves: as a subject of thoughts, evaluations, and, more generally, an inner life of his own. To see him in this way, it is neither sufficient nor necessary that they have an independent, dispassionate classificatory belief.

Rather, the Swerlins must experience his perspective differently: as calling on them to have certain attitudes under certain circumstances. The marks of this Gestalt shift will be many and various. They will start seeing his attitudes as capable of appropriately moving them to feel certain things. For instance, they will feel his gaze as capable of shaming them or of arousing their pride, and they will
see feel his resentment of them as potentially calling on them to feel guilty, to justify or excuse themselves to him, to offer him an apology, reparations, and so on. They will also regard his opinions and reflections as capable of challenging theirs, as possibly indicating a lacuna in their view of the world. Without such changes in their experience of Malcolm X, the Swerlins will not fully see him as possessing the sensitivity, intellect, and understanding that they would expect of white children. They will not fully see him as a fellow person then, even if they are aware of his personhood in other ways.¹¹⁴

What if the Swerlins had been unconcerned with Malcolm X’s plight as well as his evaluative and epistemic point of view? Suppose that instead of treating him with condescending benevolence they could not ever be moved to act for his sake. They do not regard his needs, aims, and interests as giving them any reason to help him or not to interfere. They also show no signs of sympathy (or even regret) in the face of his suffering and peril, nor are their spirits lifted by his happiness and success. Do they still count as failing to fully see him as a person like themselves? Or are they completely aware of his personhood while simply lacking concern for him? This question must be approached with care, since it is unclear what would be missing from, or distorted in, the Swerlins’s view of Malcolm X if they were indifferent to his plight in this way. Of what aspect of his humanity would they be unaware?

So much depends on the particularities of the case. But under such circumstances, it seems to me, the Swerlins can be described as not entirely registering Malcolm X’s suffering. He might say that they do not see him as suffering in the same sense in which they themselves suffer, for they lack any sympathetic disposition which might lead them to share his perspective on his own awful condition. Their awareness of his suffering is external: they cannot recognize his suffering from his own point of view. Closed off from Malcolm X’s perspective as they are and failing to grasp the normative significance of his suffering, however, the apathetic Swerlins are missing a crucial dimension of the suffering itself,

¹¹⁴ That is not to say that we have to credit someone with all of these mental powers in order to count as seeing them as a person. However, to count as seeing someone as a person, we do have to credit a person with having those powers if she meets the criteria for having those powers. Hence the conclusion that the Swerlins do not see Malcolm X as a person.
just as a person who hears a piece of jazz as a smattering of noise is missing something about the music even if he manages to hear all of the notes. A similar point could be made about his happiness, I think: they are missing something about it, something indispensably to the character of the condition.

The upshot for the recognition-internalist’s efforts to address the second challenge is this. It may be true that we can believe that those with whom we are unconcerned are persons in some sense. But I deny that we fully see them as such in that case, for we lack a motivationally (and normatively) loaded view of their mental condition. We may be able to form classificatory beliefs to the effect that they are persons, but the internalist can credibly insist that we do not entirely see them as persons. Our view of others is partial, distorted. In particular, depending on the character of our unconcern, we miss an aspect of their capacity for suffering and happiness, or of their epistemic and evaluative faculties. Pace the externalist, the fact that we are robustly indifferent to others does not imply that we lack a motive for treating them as people while at the same time enjoying a complete view of them as such. Nor, of course, does possessing a motive for treating others as people entail that we will actually go on to treat them in this way. Even if we have a motive for treating someone as a person, we can recognize someone as a person yet be derailed on the way to action by other motives, as when we experience temptation, and through conditions of the will like self-deception, depression, or laziness. But on the recognition-internalist account I favor, there is no such thing as ‘clear-eyed’ indifference. Even when we are indifferent to others, we are subject to interpersonal blind spots.

The internalist’s account of indifference strikes me as quite attractive, especially compared to its externalist rival. The externalist’s account is strange because it seems to allow for the possibility that a person could be completely, globally indifferent to others in every respect, without any capacity to share their perspective, while nevertheless suffering no impairment in his view of their personhood. Such a character would be so unconcerned with others that he would even lack all susceptibility to be immediately influenced by their inner states and attitudes (including their attitudes towards him). Not
only would he be incapable of being moved to feel sympathy at their distress, their disgust or contempt for him could also never move him to feel shame, nor could their esteem move him to feel pride.

The externalist will credit this figure with a perfect grasp of the personhood of others so long as the latter can identify certain entities as people, as someone might be able to distinguish geraniums from other flowers, and so long as he accepts certain platitudes about what makes someone a person. The issue is that we standardly appeal to behavioral criteria when attributing mental states to others, and a person who is completely, globally indifferent would not score well according to such criteria. For instance, this sort of person would fail to exhibit any tendency whatsoever to help or comfort the sufferer out of sympathy, to turn away from him out of self-protection, to withdraw aid or intensify his suffering out of malice, and other, similar responses. In the absence of any such reaction, however, in ordinary life we would normally suspect that he simply does not recognize the pain of other people. But then it is unclear why he should count as seeing those in pain as persons rather than as especially complicated material objects, especially as he seems to treat others as we might treat inanimate things.

What, then, of the other side of the second challenge: that recognizing another as a person is a precondition for, and maybe even triggers, hostility towards him that may move us to mistreat him? A recognition-internalist should certainly grant that interpersonal recognition is linked to such hostile stances as resentment, hatred, envy, contempt, and malevolence, and she should grant that holding these stances towards another person does depend on seeing him as a person, in some minimal sense. The malice that informs cruelty towards a person presupposes a basic awareness of his perspective as relevantly similar to our own, and it would be unintelligible if we did not see our victim as a person. We must be able to know what harm our target or make him suffer, and to appreciate the significance of harm and suffering for him. Thus, we must, to that extent, see him as a person if we are to derive

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115 Manne (2016) contains a compelling statement of this objection, though in her discussion it figures as an objection to the view that recognizing others as persons tends to motivate us to treat them ‘humanely’ (and its contrapositive).
satisfaction from hurting or mistreating him, indeed if our act is to count as cruelty in the first place. Do these considerations present recognition-internalism with a decisive counterexample by showing that recognizing others as persons can come apart from the motives for treating them as people?

Interpersonal recognition’s link with distinctive forms of hostility to people does not cut against recognition-internalism. In fact, the view is compatible with the fact of interpersonal hostility. To acknowledge or treat someone as a person is, as I have said, to act in such a way that we evince or express our own recognition of her personhood, indicating to her that we recognize her as a person. I have also claimed that to acknowledge the personhood of another is to treat her as it is appropriate or rationally intelligible to treat people in light of their personhood. By these criteria, though, conduct motivated by interpersonal hostility should count as acknowledging its victim as a person. Attacking someone out of vengeance or from a sadistic impulse, insulting and humiliating her, inflicting suffering on her for its own sake—these actions are, disturbingly, ways of expressing our view of her as a person. So, we should understand the category of treating-as-a-person as including not just actions that are morally required, humane, or banal but also actions that are immoral, inhumane, and downright evil.

I concede that more needs to be said on this score if the project of this chapter is to be tenable. What we need, in effect, is a critical account of the various ways in which we are moved to mistreat and dehumanize other people. That is a monumental task, to put it mildly, and I do not pursue it here. But I want to end the section with a suggestion. Insofar as we’re sympathetic to the sort of recognition-internalism that I have advanced, we should admit that cruel and hostile ways of treating others do express some kind of awareness of their personhood but that the relevant kind is not on a par with the awareness expressed by our treating others in ways that acknowledge the force of their claims on us. We should show that the hostile interpersonal stances that constitute motives for mistreating other people embody a warped view of them—a view of them that is defective as interpersonal recognition.
And one step in the direction of such an account would be to show that acknowledging the claims of others on us by acting on them is practically inescapable for us. That is the task of the next chapter.

7. Interpersonal Recognition and the Value of Humanity

My aim in this chapter has been to reconstruct part of the basis for a recognition-internalist position. I have done so by rebutting two challenges to the view, showing that there is nothing inherently troublesome in the idea that recognition of others as persons takes a motivational and normative form. I have also provided descriptions of the phenomenology of interpersonal recognition to underscore that seeing another as a person is, in part, the experience of her power to influence our attitudes and will through her own attitudes and will—apparently, by experiencing her as making claims on us, or as giving us reasons (or as purporting to do so). And, I pointed out, it is our default stance to be moved—by their claims on us—to think, feel, and do certain things because we take them to be valid.

So, seeing another person as a person is, in part, an experience of her power to make claims on us, or anyway of a pretension to that power, and it is our default stance to accede to those claims. To see her as a person, then, is to be subject to appearances of her authority or normative standing. If my efforts in this chapter have been successful, then, not only is there no in-principle problem with the idea that interpersonal recognition rationally motivates us, but people also present themselves as bearing a kind of value that consists in their authority to make claims on our own attitudes and will.

However, what I have not shown is that regarding others in this way is inescapable for us, that the appearances of others’ value, which are built into our experiences of their personhood, are correct. And certainly, it may seem all too easy not to maintain this view of them, or to uphold it only conditionally. That is especially true given the fact that seeing someone as a person can sometimes just involve seeing them as purporting to make claims on us but failing because the claims are invalid.
So, my thesis about interpersonal recognition appears to be perfectly compatible with the tenability of amoralism: categorical rejection of the value of humanity. An amoralist could deny that other people have value as such while conceding, perhaps, that others may appear, or appear to some, to have value.

To vindicate the authority of morality, we still need some account that would explain why this stance towards others is irrational, incorrect, or otherwise ruled out. More positively, we need an explanation of why the view of other people afforded by the capacity for interpersonal recognition is not like some lens that we can just put on or take off at will, that we can reasonably have or lack. For morality to have authority over us, recognizing others as persons and thereby recognizing their value as people must have a tight connection with our nature as the kinds of creatures that we are. It must go deep with us, in other words, or else be the upshot of some feature of our nature that does. To show this would be to confirm our sense that in recognizing others as persons we grasp their value.

In the final chapter, I will argue that there is a sense in which regarding others as persons, hence as having a kind of value consisting in their power to make claims on us, is inescapable for us, and precisely in virtue of our deeper nature. It is inescapable because we must have that view of the people we love in order to count as loving them and because love of others is part of human nature. The basis for a vindication of morality is thus our characteristically human love for particular people.
4. Human Nature and the Conditions of Love

Love is the attempt to form a friendship inspired by beauty.

—Cicero

There would… be something unnerving about a ‘friend’ who would steal a kidney for you if you needed one. This is not just because you would feel guilty towards the person whose kidney was stolen, but because of what it implies about the ‘friend’s’ view of your right to your own body parts: he wouldn’t steal them, but only because he happens to like you.

—T.M. Scanlon

1. Love of Other People as the Basis for a Vindication of Morality

To locate us within the overall argument of this dissertation, let me briefly summarize my case so far. We are seeking a vindication of morality: an account that shows that its requirements have authority. The aim of the account is to explain how the claims of other people can rationally motivate us to act on them even when we have no special concern for, or any personal attachment to, these people.

The first two chapters of the dissertation have made the task before us more determinate. Morality is essentially connected with the possibility of wronging other people, I argued, and this fact, properly understood, constrains the shape of skeptical challenges to, and vindications of, its authority. For the possibility of my wronging you depends on the existence of moral relations—a collection of genuine relationships between me, taken as an individual, and every other person, similarly conceived. Moral skepticism, then, should take the form of questioning how the relation of one person to another could constitute a nexus within the moral relationship. And an answer to it must be predicated on the idea that other people’s authority to make claims on us is not grounded in our authority over ourselves.

As I proposed at the end of the second chapter, one promising way for the moral relationship, to be possible is for recognizing someone as a person to be an intrinsically normative and motivating state, in roughly the same sense in which recognizing someone as our friend or as a fellow citizen is. That is, regarding another as a person with a mind like our own must include a grasp of her authority to make and have claims on us, and a corresponding power, on our part, to be moved by those claims. And in the third chapter, I showed that this view of interpersonal recognition is coherent and plausible, and thus that we should take our experiences of other people as appearances of their authority. So, we have an explanation, with the right shape, of the motivational relevance of the claims of others.

My account therefore indicates that the claims of other people could rationally motivate us to treat them morally. But I have not yet shown how these claims do, in fact, rationally motivate us to so treat them. And to show that I must explain why acknowledging the authority of others is inescapable.

My strategy will be to show that in loving another person for her own sake, we recognize in her a special standing—one that is not contingent on her suitability as a means to our ends, her capacity to satisfy some interest of ours, or the fact of our special concern for, or special relationship with, her.117 We must see in her a value that makes the value of her existence and what happens to her their value for her. And when we love her in this way, I will argue, we are thereby committed not just to recognizing this standing in her but also to acknowledging it in some other people as well—and therefore to inhabiting an ethical viewpoint that includes these people and ourselves within its scope. So, internal to love is this form of ethical consciousness, which contains internal pressures that lead its inhabitants towards a more general moral concern. And love, I contend, belongs to human nature.

The structure of the argument is dialectical. I begin the chapter with a few orienting remarks about love another person for her own sake (§2). These remarks reveal a potential danger in love, one that is obviated by respect for the beloved; hence, I maintain, respect for her is essential to love (§3).

117 For a somewhat more modest argument that takes a similar form, see Raz (1999a).
To show that our beloved’s value is independent of our loving her, I evaluate the suggestion that our reasons for treating the beloved with basic consideration depend on our love for her in roughly the way that (we might think) our reasons for engaging in a pleasant activity for its own sake depend on our retaining the relevant inclination (§4). The suggestion is false. Since love includes appreciation of the beloved’s individuality, our reasons to treat her with consideration are more like our reasons to care about a natural object that we experience as magnificent: not contingent on her relation to us or whether she serves our aims, interests, or desires (§5). We see the beloved as having value in herself.

Next, I argue that since loving someone includes regarding her life and what happens to her from her perspective, this attitude also includes recognizing that she has value of herself, too—the kind of value whereby the value of her existence and of what happens to her is their value for her (§6). We therefore see our beloved as having value as an occupant of another perspective, a distinct inner life. And once we have this view of her, commitment to entering an ethical viewpoint is a step away (§7). It follows that a genuine amoralist, someone who rejected ethical considerations entirely, could not love other people for their own sake. Such a figure is not just morally bad, then, but also deeply alone.

Finally, there are rational pressures internal to a lover’s ethical viewpoint, pressures which lead us in the direction of not just basic consideration for some people (including our beloved) but basic consideration for all people. A lover’s ethical viewpoint rationally favors moral concern, then (§8). I conclude that we must acknowledge an authority shared by all people because the lover’s ethical point of view is inescapable for us, and it is inescapable for us precisely because our need for the love of others is among the basic needs of our soul. Love is essential to our nature as human beings (§9).

Love of another person may not be the only route to general moral concern, to seeing the value that all people have. But love is one route to this destination, one that it is in our nature to take. Most importantly for our purposes, if love for a person commits us to acknowledging the authority of all people, we have an account of morality’s authority that respects the fact that a view of others as
individuals is necessary for fully registering the fact that we have wronged them in particular. My account will therefore also be consistent with the other-directedness of our central moral obligations.

2. Love of a Person for Her Own Sake: Preliminaries, Dangers

My focus will here be on love. Specifically, it will be on the love of other people for their own sake. Yet what I offer here is not an account of love in this sense. There are many concrete forms of love: love between friends or among acquaintances; love between romantic partners; love between family members, including the love a parent has for his or her child; and so on. There is a striking, almost botanical diversity among these kinds that makes love notably resistant to theoretical understanding. The challenge in formulating a philosophical theory of love is to uncover the unity in its distinctive varieties, without assimilating one form of it to another and thereby providing a misrepresentation. At any rate, my plan in this section is to highlight a few defining features of our love of other people, which will be the basis of my argument that this kind of love has ethical consciousness built into it.

First, if we love another person for her own sake, we care deeply about her for her own sake. Our concern for her is non-instrumental. It is not predicated on her suitability as a means to some end of ours. Instead, we care about her for herself or finally—rather than in light of the accidental matter of her usefulness to us—and so in a way more intimately linked to her identity as an individual. For this reason, when we love a person for her own sake, she is the irreplaceable object of our concern. To say that she is irreplaceable, in this sense, is to say that we could not substitute her as our beloved for another person with similar qualities; there would be a meaningful difference in the relationship. Final concern for the beloved, indeed as the irreplaceable individual that she is, is part of loving her.

Second, loving another person for her own sake is connected with appreciating him for himself. This sort of appreciation involves a ‘sense of wonder at the vividly perceived reality of another person,’
as David Velleman characterizes his own view of what is essential to love.\(^\text{118}\)

But it also involves more. I take appreciation of a person to be a positive, affirmative response to him, often but not always involving pleasure. Here the object of appreciation is the individual herself: our beloved. To the extent that we appreciate our beloved, our appreciation of her is not primarily or uniquely based on the fact that she is a suitable or indispensable means for achieving our aims, advancing our interests, or whatever. That is, our appreciation is final, as it were, not predicated on an ulterior motive of any sort. And characteristic of this appreciation is that its focus is on the various marks or aspects of her *individuality*, of her singular perspective on the world and the particularities of her concrete existence.\(^\text{119}\)

What we appreciate the other for may be articulable in terms of familiar personal qualities, merit-constituting qualities: wit, elegance, compassion, sense of humor, knowledge, or love of beauty, say. But of course, we do not just appreciate the instantiation of generic properties in our beloved. Rather, it seems that minimally we appreciate his determinate way of having the personal qualities in question: we appreciate him for *his* wit, *his* elegance, *his* compassion, *his* sense of humor, *his* knowledge, or *his* love of beauty.\(^\text{120}\)

Plausibly, that is not all that we appreciate about those we love, and even these determinate properties may be so specific that to understand them we may need to tell a story about

\(^{118}\) Velleman (2008), p. 199. He also compares it to the experience of wonder, awe, and amazement: like these experiences—and, he holds, like respect—love includes ‘the feeling of being pulled up short, brought to attention, riveted, transfixed’ and the corresponding feeling that ‘some other, distracting motivational tendency is actually being arrested.’ In love, for Velleman, what is arrested is ‘our emotional defenses against [our beloved], leaving us emotionally vulnerable to him.’ Ibid, p. 201. See also Velleman (2009), especially pp. 361-362. I do not endorse the other aspects of Velleman’s view.

\(^{119}\) That is not to say that our love for a person must always be based on a *prior* appreciation for her. That restriction on what counts as love would exclude, as a full-fledged form of love, the love of parents for their children, among other kinds. Nor is it my view that love of a person must always involve taking pleasure in her individuality, which would seem to rule out love for meddling relatives, abusive parents, and so forth. Beyond the fact that love may be based on appreciation, however, I insist that love also *seeks* appreciation of the beloved, and that appreciation for her individuality is the *default*.

\(^{120}\) Cf. Nozick (1991), p. 427: ‘… as love grows you love not general aspects or traits but more and more particular ones, not intelligence in general but that particular mind, not kindness in general but those particular ways of being kind,’ although he appears to restrict the point to romantic love only. Similarly, Neera Badhwar claims that when we love someone as an end (rather than as a means), we love him for the cluster of qualities that collectively constitute his essence—in other words, for ‘the way his fundamental qualities are expressed, i.e., *his style.*’ See Badhwar (1987), p. 19.
the beloved or to situate them in the broader context of his life and its overall shape.\footnote{Thus, Alexander Nehamas claims that his love for his friend Tom could only be expressed not by a list of qualities, no matter how determinate, but by an illustrative anecdote about Tom. See Nehamas (2010), pp. 277-278; the point is also repeated, and elaborated upon, in Nehamas (2016), especially pp. 147-152 and 125-128, among other points.} We may also appreciate him for some of his physical features, the idiosyncrasies of his outward appearance, of his face, form, and demeanor: his yellow hair, his crooked smile, his boisterous laugh, say. And we may appreciate him, too, for simple facts of his autobiographical profile, such as might be included in a memoir (or an obituary): where he lived, whom he married, what he liked (or disliked). The list is not exhaustive. In each of these cases, the person herself is the irreplaceable object of our appreciation, in that we could not substitute our beloved’s personal qualities, idiosyncrasies of outward appearance, or autobiographical details for someone else’s without a meaningful difference in our appreciation itself. Final appreciation for the beloved, as the irreplaceable individual that he is, is part of loving him.

Third, love of a person for her own sake is an attitude whose home is in reciprocal engagement. If we love someone, we will normally have some desire to interact with her, to communicate with her. This is a complex desire. On the one hand, it is a desire to interact with the beloved affirmatively—abstractly, to relate to her in a way that expresses our concern for, or appreciation of, her, \emph{to her}. On the other hand, it is at the same time a desire for our beloved’s affirmation \emph{of us} in turn: we want her to show signs that she cares about us for our sake and ideally that she appreciates us for ourselves.

So, there is a desire for some kind of mutuality, if not perhaps equality, built into love. For this reason, love of a person for her own sake will draw us towards a pattern of interactions with the beloved, a history of shared activity with her. That suggests that a love marked by this desire for mutuality will have its home not just in the specific form of reciprocal engagement that is a \emph{relationship}. My characterization has been terribly abstract, but the basic idea is simple. If we love someone, then
normally we want to interact with her and in particular to show her our love in all sorts of ways, and we want her to love us in turn and to show us her love for us in all sorts of ways, which means that, all other things being equal, we will want to interact with her in the context of a relationship with her.

In the third chapter, I made the point that to recognize someone as a person is to experience him as calling on us to share his perspective, where that would be a matter of sharing his attitudes. Recognition of another as a person requires a kind of affective and practical responsiveness to him. But when we love another person, his perspective takes on a special salience for us that is not shared by the perspectives of mere others. And this salience consists in the fact that we just are affected, we simply do care about, such things as what he thinks, how he feels, what he values, what he hopes for. We exhibit an openness towards his perspective that is deeper than the kind we have towards strangers.

So, to count as loving someone, particularly in the context of a relationship, we must exhibit a different kind of attunement to our beloved, a proneness to share a whole network of his attitudes, so that we are prepared to reciprocate a range of his emotions, concerns, and other attitudes. In other words, we must merge our perspective with that of our beloved. I will call this activity perspective-merging. When we merge our perspective with our beloved's, we are susceptible to his influence over us: his feelings and attitudes affect our own, his concerns shape our own, and his aims limit our pursuits. Then our beloved will have the power to move us to feel and think certain things through his own feelings and thoughts, and to move us to act through his own aims, needs, interests, and concerns. And in particular, the beloved will thereby have the power to move us to do things for his own sake. She will have a kind of privileged power to rationally motivate us to engage with her in a certain way.

The perspective-merging that is characteristic of love of another contains an inherent danger, however: the possibility that we will colonize our beloved, so to speak, or that she will colonize us. The problem is that in loving you I may fail to properly respond to the fact that you and I are distinct individuals, separate perspectives on the world. So, I may come to regard my own verdicts concerning
your good as authoritative, or, worse still, I may come to regard your good as derivative of my own. In that case, I will show little deference to your own conception of what your good consists in, or, alternatively, I will tend to underrate the reason-giving force of your needs, aims, and interests. Perhaps I will also see your identity as derivative of my own, only appreciating the qualities that we share as constituting your value and showing less consideration for the differences between you and myself. You may willingly go along with me in all of this, too, allowing me to exercise inordinate control over your sense of your own needs, aims, interests, and attitudes, indeed of your good and your identity. Alternatively, of course, you might colonize me instead, in a parallel fashion: you may come to regard your own verdicts concerning my good as authoritative, or, worse still, you may regard my good (and perhaps my identity) as derivative of your own—and treat me accordingly whenever we interact. And as before, I may willingly go along with you in all this, capitulating to your attempts to appropriate me.

Each of these stances—colonizing the beloved or being colonized by him—can be tempting. And even though the temptation need not run deep, the motives in which it originates certainly do. For love is risky, even treacherous. Loving someone requires that we expose ourselves to the prospect that our love will not be reciprocated, that we will be spurned by our beloved rather than affirmed, particularly when we reveal more of ourselves to him. And certainly, loving someone opens us up to the risk of a loss of our identity through his colonization of us. So, for the sake of self-protection, we might seek to preempt the beloved, so to speak, by colonizing him, averting the threat he poses to us. I would even venture to say, although I do not intend to defend this claim here, that an at least incipient awareness of this danger belongs to our ordinary experience of loving others. Awareness of the danger is what leads the lovers to engage in a kind of struggle, responding to the threat of colonization by the beloved by seeking to colonize him preemptively, in order to defeat the threat to us that he presents.122

122 A dynamic of this kind plays a definitive role in the conceptions of intersubjectivity advanced by both Sartre and Hegel. It is to be found in Sartre’s description of being-for-others as essentially conflictual and in Hegel’s account of the genesis of self-consciousness through opposition to another rational subject, commonly referred to as the master-slave dialectic.
These stances are unstable in a way that makes a pure version of either ultimately unsatisfying. And that is because love is predicated on a grasp of the distinctness of the beloved from ourselves, of the fact that her perspective on the world is independent of our own and her good is distinct from ours. If we love each other and I colonize you completely, blotting out my sense of your distinctness, then I will hardly find it meaningful when you treat me in ways that express concern and appreciation for me; I will only find it meaningful if I see your treatment as flowing from a subjectivity that is not my own. And if you colonize me completely instead, you are faced with a parallel problem: only the subject of a distinct inner life can affirm you meaningfully, so deny that to me and I lose the power.

Yet the problem with colonizing, or being colonized by, the beloved is not that either of these stances makes the beloved’s affirmation of us unsatisfying, or vice versa. Or at least it is not only that. The more basic problem is that these stances jeopardize our love’s status as for our beloved’s own sake, threatening to transform the colonizer’s love into a quite different sort of concern for the colonized. The colonizer who sees his beloved’s good as derivative of his own, or systematically fails to regard her verdicts concerning her own good as authoritative, is liable to slide into an inattentiveness to the beloved’s good, or, indeed, to loving her merely as a means to his ends, rather than for her own sake. In love marked by colonization on either side, the beloved is, therefore, utterly lost to the lover. Caring about and appreciating someone else as an extension of our own selves is inimical to the spirit of love. So, there’s a problem: a problem in our account of love, and in our relations to those whom we love.

3. Respect for the Beloved as Essential to Love

If the problem is due to ignoring the fact of our beloved’s distinctness from ourselves, the solution will be to properly acknowledge this fact, both in our view of our beloved and in the way that we treat

See Sartre (1992), Part 4, especially pp. 361-364 and 364-372; and Hegel (1977), pp. 112-119. (Indeed, Sartre himself points out the points of analogy—and of disanalogy—between this aspect of his position and Hegel’s; see Sartre (1992), p. 370.)
her. How do we acknowledge the fact of the beloved’s distinctness, though? My argument will be that a certain attitude, a form of respect, solves the problem of colonization. But like any solution, adverting to respect introduces further issues, which it is the aim of the rest of the chapter to address.

Before characterizing the kind of respect that I have in mind, I begin with a clarification. According to my usage, the object of respect is always, or in the first instance, a person or what is relevantly similar to a person—a non-rational animal, perhaps, or a corporate entity such as the state. My characterization of respect will be fairly minimal. It is common to conceive of respect for a person as a cognitive, affectively-laden, and action-guiding response to a value that she has regardless of whether she can promote our good—a value that she has simply as a person—so that in respecting someone we are committed to judging that everyone has reason to treat her with consideration. Probably this is accurate as a conception of respect. In the context of the aims of this chapter, however, this conception makes for dialectical awkwardness, for it is unsatisfying, and too easy, to simply build a moral attitude—an apprehension of the dignity of persons—into the lover’s stance at the very outset. My strategy is, instead, to establish that respect, characterized minimally and in a more neutral way, is essential to loving another person, and then to employ that point as part of a fulcrum to show that love requires a minimal ethical consciousness that’s continuous with a more general moral concern.

The stance of respect is to be understood through the experience of respecting another, and in terms of the kinds of motives and actions with which it is connected. What we need is a rudimentary

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123 Within the vast and intricate literature on respect, it is standard to distinguish among different kinds of respect, particularly in order to separate those attitudes that may play a substantial role in ethical life from those that plainly do not. (For a helpful overview, see Dillon (2014).) In this connection one touchstone is Stephen Darwall’s seminal treatment of the topic, which makes a (now widely adopted) distinction between ‘appraisal respect’ and ‘recognition respect’—crudely, between the attitude of positive appraisal for someone for manifesting certain personal excellences and the ‘disposition to weigh appropriately in one’s deliberations some feature of the thing in question and to act accordingly.’ See Darwall (1977), pp. 38-39, which to some extent supersedes the distinctions made in Feinberg (1973). As will soon be apparent, the kind of respect that I will thematize is closest to recognition respect, but it is considerably more determinate. I am skeptical of the methodological assumption that respect can be adequately understood via a thin description meant to capture our attitudes towards persons, ‘the law, someone’s feelings, and social institutions,’ as on Darwall’s view of recognition respect.

124 This is the method followed explicitly in Timmons and Kriegel, forthcoming, which characterizes the phenomenology of respect for persons rather than the attitude’s functional role, which the authors claim is more commonly explicated by
description of its characteristic phenomenology and the merest sketch of the role it plays in our dealings with those we love. Let’s first ask, then: what is it to experience respect for someone else?

To hold the attitude of respect for someone is, in the first place, to regard her in a way that is inconsistent with, or at least in tension with, a view of her as only an obstacle and instrument in relation to the pursuit of our own ends—with a view of her, more generally, as merely an object. We normally experience an object in a way that is conditioned by our own egocentric motives, which present that object to us in the light of the variety of concrete uses to which we might want to put it. To respect a person, by contrast, we must regard her with a kind of attention that is fundamentally nonegocentric. We must regard her in a way that is focused not on ourselves but on her herself, unconditioned by our own needs, aims, and interests, and, similarly, in a way that is capable of providing a countervailing motive in the face of whatever motivational influence these egocentric motives have on us. Not only is respect a mode of attention that is not self-regarding, then, it is also an attitude that is by its nature other-regarding, self-transcending. Respect for someone reshapes our deliberations so that they do not proceed only from a consideration of our own needs, aims, and interests—our good—but also register the significance of her needs, aims, and interests—her good. Hence, in the grip of this attitude, or mode of regarding people, we are prepared to acknowledge in action that the person whom we respect has a good of her own that is not just identical to our good.

These characterizing remarks about respect are, as I have said, minimal. In particular, they do not distinguish respect from concern, also a nonegocentric, other-regarding attitude towards another. But one important characteristic of respect, as I am construing it, that distinguishes it from concern is that it also involves seeing another person as, in a sense I will specify, a limit to our will.125 We regard

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125 Compare Kant’s influential statement concerning the contrast between love and respect: ‘In speaking of laws of duty (not laws of nature) and, among these, of laws for human beings’ external relations with one another, we consider ourselves in a moral (intelligible) world where, by analogy with the physical world, attraction and repulsion bind together rational beings.
the object of our respect as a limit to our will when we see her as restricting the ends that we can justifiably pursue in seeking our own good. So, respecting someone is incompatible with denying that her needs, aims, and interests ever give us reason to curtail the pursuit of our ends, or that the reasons these generate for us ever defeat the reasons provided by our own needs, aims, and interests.

Yet respect for a person not only requires seeing her as restricting what we can do in pursuit of our own good. It also requires seeing her as restricting what we can do in the service of her own good—anyone's good—and as restricting the production of states of affairs that are good impersonally. Respect for a person is, in part, the grasp of a reason not to interfere with her pursuit of her chosen ends when it would conflict with the realization of our good or, indeed, with the realization of her own. Finally, a respectful stance involves a readiness to defer to her own conception of which ends to pursue. We do not simply ignore or override the choices and evaluative judgments of the person we respect, but see her as entitled to make decisions about her life according to her own conception of the good.

When we have concern and respect for someone, I will say that we grasp a reason to treat her with consideration—a reason to promote her needs, aims, and interests in basic ways; to refrain from interfering with her chosen ends; and to show deference to her own conception of what a good life for her consists in. Grasping such reasons to some degree is integral to the enterprise of ethical life.

By now it should be relatively clear how a respectful stance solves the problem of colonization. The danger in loving another person is twofold: that he will relate to us in a way that assumes that his own verdicts concerning our good are authoritative or perhaps even that our good is derivative of his; and alternatively, that we will relate to him in a parallel fashion. The lovers’ respect for one another (on Earth). The principle of mutual love admonishes them constantly to come closer to one another; that of respect they owe one another, to keep themselves at a distance from one another...’ See Kant (1996), p. 198.

126 On this point, I have been particularly influenced by Kyla Ebels-Duggan. See Ebels-Dugan (2008), pp. 151-153, for one line of attack against what she calls the ‘benefactor view’. See also the distinction between selection authority and authority in judgment that is crucial to her own positive view of practical love within (adult) relationships in ibid., pp. 156-160.
obviates this threat because it is precisely an action-guiding recognition of the in-principle separateness of the beloved’s good and perspective from our own good and perspective—respectively.\textsuperscript{127} Respecting our beloved, apprehending him as a limit to our will, is therefore inconsistent with the kind of paternalism, intrusiveness, and disregard that is characteristic of the colonizer’s love of her beloved. Insofar as we are in the grip of respect for our beloved, then, as I have said, we will be moved to defer to his choices and his verdicts on his good, rather than treating our own as supremely authoritative. The problem of colonization is solved when we and our beloved are guided by respect for each other, and additional fortification against the danger is gained when we both have self-respect.

If this point holds, perspective-merging is not an unguided enterprise: merely losing ourselves in the other (or the other in ourselves), simple passivity in the face of the influence of another person. It is, rather, mediated by a respectful stance towards the beloved and towards ourselves, and these stances determines the form of our attitudes to, and consequently our interactions with, one another. Specifically, along with concern for our beloved and for ourselves, respect for the beloved and self-respect push us in the direction of forming expectations of her and of acknowledging her expectations of us in turn: expectations concerning, more broadly, how we are to relate to each other and to others. We will also form expectations that the beloved share our outlook (to a certain extent, on certain matters, in certain circumstances), and, for her part, she will form complementary, perhaps conflicting expectations of us. And animated by mutual respect, we will feel compelled to coordinate these expectations, and to jointly delineate a perhaps quite limited, probably implicit evaluative framework. We and the beloved will regard one another as endowed with the authority to make certain claims on one another, and hence as entitled to hold one another accountable for violating these expectations.

\textsuperscript{127} (No pun intended.)
That is to say, lovers will normally be moved to see one another as partners in co-deliberation, granting one another some role in the formation of the expectations that are to define their loving relationship.

Since respect is necessary for solving a problem that is inherent in loving another person, then, it follows that respect for the beloved is essential to love. Love without respect is hardly love at all.

4. Reasons for Showing the Beloved Consideration: Contingent on Loving Attitudes?

A challenge arises. I have argued that respect is essential to loving another person for her own sake. To count as loving someone, we must therefore be disposed to regard her as a limit to our will—as a source of constraints on our deliberations and actions. And when we regard our beloved in this way, we grasp the claims she makes on us that we not interfere with her pursuit of her chosen ends and that we defer to her verdicts on what a good life for her consists in, at least in certain circumstances. So, in loving her we will be disposed to show her consideration and to see this conduct as appropriate. How, though, would establishing that point demonstrate that loving someone entails recognizing in him a value that is independent not only of her relation to our own good but also of our love for him?

For all I have said, it may be that loving a person commits us only to treating her as valuable, not that we are committed to recognizing in her a value that is relationship- or attitude-independent and final. To love someone, we must see her as making valid claims on us that we treat her with consideration yet why must we see her as a source of claims some of which are valid regardless of our loving her? Our beloved may well be a limit to our will yet only conditionally so: our reasons for treating her with consideration might be grounded in, or contingent on, the fact that we love her or care about her.

For our beloved to have real ethical standing, it must be appropriate for us to show her a kind of respect that is not ultimately based on our love for her and that could survive that love’s dissipation. I have not shown that respect of this sort, a recognizably ethical attitude, is called for by our love for her. And we may worry that if love and respect are inextricable from one another, as I have maintained,
the extinguishment of the latter should reasonably follow upon the extinguishment of the former, just as the special regard and appreciation we have for our beloved can fade once that love has dissolved. In that case, however, loving someone for her own sake is perfectly compatible with the sober realization that if we were to stop loving her (or indeed if we had never loved her in the first place), she would be completely valueless, entirely lacking the power to make claims on our attitudes and will. It is thus obscure why loving another should require even a minimal form of ethical consciousness.

To dramatize the problem at hand, consider what we would need to say about an amoralist who claimed to love certain people for their own sake: friends, family members, a romantic partner. Such an amoralist would deny that people (including, he is ready to admit, himself) have any value in and of themselves, although he may regard some as valuable to him, for him, or in relation to him. That is, this amoralist could only see his would-be beloveds as bearing some form of egocentric value. His denial of the value of humanity is not a matter of his rejecting, on the basis of abstract theoretical considerations, a philosophical thesis about value. It is all too easy to do that, and some professions of skepticism are just, in Bertrand Russell’s wonderful expression, professional rather than sincere. His denial is, more basically, an orientation of his will, deeply woven into the fabric of his character.

Still, the amoralist claims to love and thus respect some people for their own sake and not his, seeing their needs, aims, and interests as giving him non-instrumental reasons to do things for them. Apart from his caring about them, though, he concedes that his putative beloveds are valueless, so that he doubts he would have reasons to show them consideration if he stopped caring about them. If inhabiting an ethical point of view is internal to loving another person, then, there must be some basis for saying that he is mistaken in that attitude, or perhaps that he does not really count as loving. There must be something in love that rules out the amoralist’s stance towards his putative beloveds. But it is not at all clear what that feature of that love could possibly do the relevant explanatory work.
The challenge is to show that in loving someone includes grasp of a reason for treating him with consideration, a reason that is not contingent on the love itself (or on the concern it entails). There are, I think, at least two distinct ways in which our reasons for consideration may be contingent on our loving attitudes, and to defuse this challenge these possibilities must each be addressed in turn. One suggestion would be that our reasons for treating our beloved with consideration are contingent on our loving concern because our respect for her is fully based on our caring about her in this way, as our admiration for him might be fully based on our recognition of certain of his meritorious qualities.

The idea would be that treating our beloved with consideration is appropriate in virtue of the love that we have for her—as our friend, family member, or romantic partner, say. So stated, this idea does initially have the ring of plausibility. If we are asked why we are showing someone consideration, then it is normally adequate to point out that the person is, say, our friend, and it might be thought that we thereby cite our love for her as a justification for so treating her. And it does seem as if in loving someone for their own sake we accord her, or see in her, a kind of authority that we deny to those whom we do not love—in particular, a standing in our deliberations. When we cease loving that person, however, it is perfectly natural to withdraw that authority from her (or to see it as withdrawn). These considerations support the idea that our respect for our beloved is fully based on our love.

The reflections pursued in the last section should make us doubt the idea that respect for a person can be fully based on love for her, that the former can be contingent on the latter in that sense. If I am correct in concluding that respect is an essential part of love for a person, then it is doubtful that respect and concern are sufficiently separate such that one could be fully based on the other. Respect is not an external constraint on love. It is not comparable to a legal requirement governing our interactions with the beloved, which we can fail to fulfill without thereby impugning our claim to love. A love predicated on significant disrespect for the beloved is compromised in its status as love.128

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128 Compare Ebels-Duggan’s response to an objection from the specified benefactor view in her (2008), pp. 152-153.
The conclusion to draw here is that respect for our beloved is internal to, or criterial, of love for her. Someone with a total lack of respect for the person he purports to love is—to anticipate the analogy I explore in the next section—like someone who purports to find the Atlantic Ocean beautiful yet would see nothing wrong with its becoming the world’s largest floating trash heap. Just as not wanting to see a natural wonder destroyed or disfigured is not distinct enough from finding it beautiful to be its full basis, respecting the one we love is not distinct enough from our love for her to be its full basis.

Respect for our beloved is not some independently intelligible element of our total attitude towards her, as shown by the fact that what counts as respecting someone we love is not simply what counts as respecting anyone else plus additional constraints deriving from the special circumstances of our relationship with her. Rather, respect for our beloved is partly constitutive of love. We might even say that respect is the form which transforms the matter of brute concern into love, saving it from the inherent danger of blurring the distinction between people on which genuine love depends. But then given that respect and love are not distinct, I conclude, the former cannot be fully based on the latter.

Can respect for our beloved be fully based on our loving concern for him, then, so that our reasons for showing him consideration are still somehow objectionably contingent on our attitudes? Our caring about him would then completely explain and make appropriate our respect for him, and thus if we did not have the relevant concern we would lack any reason to show him consideration.

I do not think so. For one, it seems that our concern for someone we love is often not the full basis of our respect for him. Sometimes a partial (or even full) basis is some recognition of the relationship we have to the person—the fact that someone is our brother, father, or husband—recognition of which is sufficient to explain and make appropriate our respect for him.\textsuperscript{129} Concern for

\textsuperscript{129} I should mention that in saying this I am not committed to holding, with Niko Kolodny, that relationships are the only reasons that there are for loving others; see Kolodny (2003). For criticisms, see Velleman (2008), pp. 198-199, and Setiya (2014), pp. 258-261, among others.
someone cannot be the whole story—or else we would not be able to hold onto the idea that someone comes in for fitting criticism when he fails to properly care about his friends or children, for instance.\footnote{Cf. Kolodny (2003), pp. 137-138.}

More importantly, even if our concern for our beloved is the full basis for our respect for her, that fact does not entail that our reasons for showing her consideration are contingent on that concern. Of course, we can and do still appeal to our love for someone, or to the loving relationship we have with her, to explain and justify the respectful stance we take to her. But to do so is to point out that the \textit{particular} kind of respect we have for her—respect for her as a friend, sister, or wife—is explained and made appropriate \textit{by} our caring about her as our friend, sister, or wife. That the particular kind of respect for her—respect for her as our _____ —is explained, and made appropriate by, on our caring about her as our _____ does not show that our reasons for showing her consideration are contingent on our caring about her as such. It may be that recognizing someone as a person is also sufficient to explain and make appropriate a basic respect that we may have for her just as such, which would mean that our reasons for treating her with basic consideration were independent of our special concern. It is also true that when our special concern for her wanes that may change the form of respect that it is appropriate to show her; for instance, the scope of our co-deliberation with her will likely become considerably more restricted. Yet from that point little follows about our reasons for consideration.

So, we can dismiss the first possibility as a nonstarter: our respect for the beloved is not distinct enough from our love for the latter to be the full basis of the former. And our respect for our beloved as a partner in a particular relationship may very well have as its full basis our concern for her as a partner of the relevant kind. But that would not show that there are no reasons of consideration that hold regardless of our special concern for her. For our having a basic sort of respect for her can sometimes be fully based on our recognition of her humanity or personhood after we stop loving her.
There is, however, another possibility that more plausibly threatens to reveal our reasons for showing the beloved consideration as problematically contingent in some way on our loving attitudes. Reasons of consideration could be conditional on our loving her because, on this proposal, love has the same rational status as a mere desire or inclination. So, these reasons are related to love in roughly the same way that (we might think) inclination-based reasons are related to the relevant inclination.\textsuperscript{131}

Our reason for engaging in an activity for its own sake out of inclination depends on our retaining the inclination in question: absent such an inclination, our reasons for doing so are effectively undermined. And because we can stop having an inclination for that activity without error or irrationality, it follows that we are not mistaken or irrational when we simply stop engaging in that activity. Analogously: Our reason for treating our beloved with consideration may depend on our continuing to care about her for her own sake, so that if we did not care in this way about her we would lack such a reason entirely. Because we can stop loving someone without error or irrationality, the waning of our concern for our beloved would undermine our reasons to treat her with consideration, and there would be nothing wrong with acting indifferently towards a former beloved or refusing to treat her as a limit to our will. There would therefore be no defect in an amoralist’s stance towards the people he professes to love.

The purpose of the next three sections is to discredit this model of our reasons regarding our beloved.

5. Love of Another Person as a Grasp of Her Value

On the model that we are examining, our reasons for showing someone consideration are related to our loving concern for him in the same way that (we might think) our reasons for engaging in simply pleasurable activities for their own sake are related to our finding some activity pleasant or agreeable (in a word, our having an inclination for engaging in it). The relation in question is one of dependence.

\textsuperscript{131} I am not committed, however, to holding that this view of our reasons of inclination is true, only that it gives us a coherent account of the content of such reasons. These reasons may be, not the fact that we have the inclination to engage in the relevant activity, but the fact that engaging in it would be pleasurable. See Scanlon (1998), pp. 38-40 and Raz (1999b).
Take, as an example, my reasons to go cycling for its own sake. I may, of course, have reasons to go cycling that are totally, or largely, external to my finding the activity pleasant: that doing so is good exercise. But reasons to go cycling that are of this form are not reasons to engage in it for its own sake. These are, rather, reasons that depend on its contributing to the realization of some further aim that I have—in this case, physical well-being. Cycling is merely a means to this further aim, which is, strictly speaking, external to the activity itself; in principle, any similar activity could play the same role.

The reasons of love cannot be like that, clearly: we are talking about love of people for their own sake, not merely as a means to our ends. Still, we might think that the reasons of love are like our reasons to engage in an activity such as cycling for its own sake, dependent on the presence of the corresponding mental state. On this view, my reason to go cycling for its own sake depend on the fact that I simply like to do so: if I simply don’t like it, then I don’t have any such reasons, though I may have reasons that are external to the activity, given, say, its tendency to promote my physical health. And though I may start out liking cycling, I may reasonably stop engaging in it if my inclination dies out, nor am I mistaken or irrational when I stop liking cycling; the inclination is a state that we may have or lack. So, the proposal would be that our love for our beloved for his own sake is like that: our reasons for treating him with consideration only persist insofar as our love for him does, and since it need not our love’s dissipation would make it reasonable for us to no longer treat him accordingly.

But the analogy drawn, between reasons of love and reasons of inclination, is untenable. Loving another person for his own sake exhibits a closer resemblance to the appreciation of the beauty of an enduring natural object than to our inclination to engage in some activity just for its own sake. It is this counter-analogy that I want to explore. I will argue that the counter-analogy shows that reasons of love cannot be like reasons of inclination but that love’s similarity to aesthetic experience is, apparently, too limited to demonstrate that loving someone is by nature an ethical attitude as well.
My argument begins by rehearsing platitudes about our experience of a natural object’s beauty. An example: whenever I see the Atlantic Ocean, I experience it as beautiful, appreciating it particularly for its unruly waves, its perfume of salt, the vastness of its waters, and the utter richness of its gray-blue hues, which is so unlike the Pacific Ocean’s cerulean mingling with shades of green, even purple. How should my experience of its beauty be characterized? When I experience the Atlantic in this way, I find my attention directed to, and pleasurably captivated by, the presence of this external object. That initial glimpse of it leads me to attend more closely to the peculiarities of its physical form, which does not just appeal to me but arrests me, temporarily drawing me outside of myself, as it were, sometimes halting whatever other idle thoughts happened to be passing through my mind as I see it. I stand back and behold it, immersed in the whole experience, enjoying the sheer sight of the ocean.

Now, and the point bears emphasizing, my experience of the Atlantic Ocean’s beauty is in key respects unlike my enjoyment of some activity in which I engage merely out of an inclination for it, even though both can be described as, in some sense, subjective, different from perceptual knowledge. When I see the Atlantic Ocean as beautiful, I see the object itself as meriting or calling for my appreciative response, which implies the possibility of that response fitting or failing to fit its object in a way that my enjoyment of cycling cannot plausibly be said to be adequate or inadequate to the activity. Further, given the character of these responses themselves, the beauty of the ocean can be said to reveal itself to me, but the agreeableness of cycling does not. The beauty of the former is, in that sense, seen as independent of whether I happen to appreciate it, and I can regard my future lack of receptivity to its beautiful qualities as a failure in me. The agreeableness of the latter, by contrast, does seem to hang on my appreciation for it: I can regard a newfound inability to enjoy cycling as a change of taste. And with this fact comes the possibility that my experience of the Atlantic Ocean as beautiful will be revealed to be illusory, a possibility that, again, has no analogue in the case of my enjoyment of cycling.

132 Here I have benefited from Moran (2012) and from discussions of these topics with Dick Moran.
Importantly, and related to the above, my experience of the Atlantic Ocean’s beauty presents itself to me as an apprehension of a value or status that it has whether I happen to appreciate it or not. In experiencing it in this way, in other words, I’m aware not just of reasons for appreciating it but also the value of its continuing to exist in its current state, hence of reasons to protect it from destruction or disfigurement. I am horrified by the idea that its waters might be spoiled by pollution, for example, and I would take action to prevent that outcome, quite apart from its harmful effects on marine life. These reasons, too, do not seem to depend on my appreciation in the way that my reasons to continue cycling do, although my appreciation of the Atlantic’s beauty make me aware of the relevant reasons. My reasons to protect the Atlantic from destruction or disfigurement, revealed in the experience of beauty, rather appear to derive from the object itself, so that unless my capacity for beauty is eroded I would be aware of them even if a change of fortune made it unlikely that I would ever see it again. Someone to whom the Atlantic did not appear in this way wouldn’t count as experiencing its beauty.

The features of aesthetic experience cited above belong equally to the experience of love, and that is because, again, there is a link between loving someone and appreciating her as an individual. Consider an example that I take to be unremarkable and representative: my love for my wife, Céline. In encountering her, I find my attention arrested by the various marks of her individuality: her strange, disturbing sense of humor; the depth of her intelligence; her wild sense of style; the list is long indeed. Similarly, I find my grasp of her individuality leading my attention to her to deepen. I am aware of, and delight in, her separateness from myself, her often striking differences, and by how her perspective appears to outstrip my ability to predict and even to apprehend it, much as the Atlantic Ocean seems to be concealing more beautiful qualities than my experience of it can hope to capture. And as with the experience of the beauty of nature, I see the way she is as calling for these appreciative responses from me (though not, of course, from everyone, or even everyone who encounters her)—all the while regarding that response as of the very sort that can be said to fit, or to fail to fit, her. I see my inability
to muster an appreciation of the qualities of hers that make her appreciable for me—and a fortiori my total lack of receptivity to her individuality—as a personal failure, indeed, crucially, as failing her, too. And I can appreciate her for some of her qualities but come to see them as not meriting that kind of response later on. All in all, then, I regard the qualities that I appreciate in her herself as, to some extent and in a complex way, independent of the particular responses I happen to have to her, and as providing a standard to which my responses (though not necessarily everyone’s) are answerable. Finally, in appreciating my beloved, I grasp reasons that I have to want her to be protected from destruction or harm and reason to so protect her, reasons that seem to stem from her, not from myself. That is, I find myself caring about her, and regarding the concern I have for her as appropriate, not because she serves my ends or furthers my interests but for herself, simply because of who she is.

If the experience of love and the experience of beauty resemble each other in these respects, however, love and inclination appear to be quite different psychological states, making it much less plausible that our love for someone has the rational status of an inclination to engage in some activity. An inclination does not present itself as an apprehension of a value that its object has regardless of our reactions to it. Nor are objects of inclination conceived as making our desire for them appropriate or inappropriate, or as meriting concern regardless of whether they happen to further our own good. But the appreciation of the beloved’s individuality which is internal to loving him for his own sake does appear to share these features with the aesthetic appreciation of a natural wonder as beautiful. Loving appreciation of another person presents itself as the apprehension of a value that he has regardless of that reaction, a reaction that is made appropriate or inappropriate by the beloved himself. Crucially, when we appreciate our beloved lovingly we find ourselves caring about him, and he is conceived as meriting concern regardless of whether he advances our interests or satisfy our desires. In that case, however, it has not been shown that our reasons for showing our beloved consideration bear the same relation to our love for him that our reasons for going cycling for its own sake bear to
our inclination for cycling. Unlike that or any other inclination, our love for someone appears to involve a grasp of the beloved’s value which it has in itself apart from any relation to our own good.

Yet, so far, the analogy between love and aesthetic appreciation falls short of demonstrating that loving someone for her own sake is an ethical attitude. In fact, there seem to be two problems. One is that the value that our love for a person reveals her to have is attitude-independent only in a sense that is too weak to make our apprehension of that value an ethical attitude. The problem is this. In speaking of the prospect of no longer experiencing a natural thing as beautiful, I considered only two possibilities: that I had been mistaken about its beauty all along, or that I was presently failing to see the beauty that it has. Yet in aesthetic experience there certainly appears to be a third possibility: that there has simply been a (not unreasonable) change in my aesthetic tastes. And it is not implausible to think that when my tastes change so that I no longer find the Atlantic Ocean beautiful, it is not inappropriate for me to stop caring about it. In the wake of that kind of change in my proclivities, though, maybe I would lack such reasons to protect the Atlantic from destruction or disfigurement.

But the analogue is a possibility for my love for another person, too: a rational (or arational) change in my concerns or temperament may make my love for someone disappear in the same fashion. Shouldn’t that loss of love have a similar effect on my reasons, then? It seems plausible that in such circumstances the reasons that I would otherwise have to act for my beloved’s sake will disappear. And if the reasons for showing the beloved consideration, grasped in our love for her, are so easily undermined by the waning of that love, then loving another person is not an ethical attitude after all.

The second potential problem with the aesthetic analogy, as stated, concerns the character of the value that love reveals the beloved to have. The analogy between the experience of beauty and that of love seems to suggest that the kind of concern we have for a person when we love her is similar, in key respects, to aesthetic concern. Yet there appears to be a significant difference between aesthetic and ethical attitudes, in particular between aesthetic concern for an object like the Atlantic
Ocean and the kind of concern that informs an ethical attitude towards a person such as my wife, as well as a corresponding difference between the kinds of value that these attitudes put us in touch with. The aesthetic value of the Atlantic Ocean lies in its value for creatures capable of experiencing beauty. Or perhaps its value is impersonal: its value is not its value for anyone but simply its value, full stop, a value that it has intrinsically, in virtue of what it is. The value of a person seems different, however.

To understand the distinctive character of the value of a person, we will need to know what the exact difference is between aesthetic concern for objects and ethical concern for other people. We can find the beginnings of a response in John Taurek’s discussion of what distinguishes the kinds of concern it is appropriate to have for a beautiful object from the kind we ought to have for others:

But when I am moved to rescue human beings from harm… I cannot bring myself to think of them [in the way that I think of things]. I empathize with them. My concern for what happens to them is grounded chiefly in the realization that each of them is, as I would be in his place, terribly concerned about what happens to him. It is not my way to think of them as each having a certain objective value… If it were not for the fact that these objects were creatures like me, for whom what happens to them is of great importance, I doubt that I would take much interest in their preservation. As merely intact objects they would mean very little to me, being, as such, nearly as common as toadstools. The loss of an arm of the Pietà means something to me not because the Pietà will miss it. But the loss of an arm of a creature like me means something to me only because I know he will miss it, just as I would miss mine. It is the loss to this person that I focus on.133

This passage suggests an attractive view of what is distinctive of our ethical attitude to other people. When we hold an ethical attitude to another person, the value that we recognize her to have consists in the following fact about her: the value of what happens to that person, indeed of that person’s existence as a whole, consists in its value for her, not its impersonal value (or, certainly, its value for us). That people are intrinsically valuable is plausibly related to that thought. But the two are not identical. Mere objects may be intrinsically valuable, too: think of works of art or wonders of the natural world.

133 Taurek (1977), p. 306-307, italics in the original. Similarly, Christine Korsgaard argues that claims about what is good for a living being are claims about that being made as from her perspective. See Korsgaard (2013), pp. 23-25. I want to thank her for discussions of this point, and specifically for making me see that the point had to be front and center.
Yet the value of a mere object’s existence, and the value of what happens to it, may still lie only in the thing’s value for us (or perhaps in its impersonal value). There is no sense in the idea that the value of their existence, or of what may affect their good, is its value for them, for nothing is valuable for them. Unlike things, people are such that we are not only intrinsically valuable, as certain objects may be, but likewise valuable in the sense that the value of our existence and plight consists in their value for us. We might put the point by saying that persons have value of themselves, a value that mere objects lack. The suggestion would then be that to exhibit proper ethical concern for a person we must regard him as having intrinsic value, or value in himself, and this reflexive sort of value, or value of himself. And the aesthetic analogy seems to show, at best, that our beloved has value in himself but not of himself.

6. The Beloved’s Value as Another Perspective on the World

The aesthetic analogy, as stated, seems at first glance to be quite limited. The issue is that the beloved has not been shown to have the right kind of value. The value that our love reveals her to have must be a value she has of herself, such as would ground categorical reasons for showing her consideration. How can loving appreciation of another person’s individuality disclose this unique sort of value to us? In this section, I argue that loving appreciation of the beloved as an individual reveals her to have this kind of value when the attitude is informed, as it must be, by respectful concern for her. It is loving appreciation in this spirit which displaces our sense of the primacy of our own perspective, paving the way for us to recognize that the beloved has value in and of herself, apart from her relation to us.

What is it, exactly, for us to appreciate someone we love for who he is, as the individual he is? In characterizing this attitude before, I pointed out that loving appreciation of our beloved is final or for its own sake, and that the focal point of this sort of appreciation for him is his concrete existence as an individual, as a historically specific subject in the world who is defined by a singular perspective. I want to clarify this thesis further. Loving appreciation for someone is not just appreciation for this
or that quality of his, nor is it appreciation for all (or most) of his qualities. It is appreciation for him, connected to his identity as an individual. The person as a whole is the object of loving appreciation.

When we appreciate someone, as I have said, the focus of our attitude is on his perspective. A particular person’s perspective, in this sense, is constituted by the shifting set of attitudes and inner states of which he is the subject: by—inter alia—his values, aims, concerns, emotions, memories, beliefs, and inclinations, all woven together to form the temporally extended tapestry of his inner life. I said that a person’s perspective was the focal point of loving appreciation, and before I made the point that we can and normally do appreciate features of our beloved other than aspects of his perspective: his physical features, for example, or details of his autobiography not obviously connected with his mental capacities. How our loving appreciation of someone’s perspective is related to appreciation of these other features is a rather difficult question, and I do not intend to provide a full answer here. But it seems to me appreciation for aspects of our beloved’s perspective has priority over appreciation of other qualities, even if the appreciation of the latter often leads us to appreciation of the former.

The fact that loving appreciation for another person has her whole perspective as its focus is a significant one. For much like our loving concern for our beloved, this form of appreciation is predicated on her separateness from ourselves, on the distinctness of her perspective from our own.134 Suppose I appreciate Céline for her taste in art. My appreciation presupposes, minimally, that she has an aesthetic sensibility of her own: responses towards particular pieces of art which may differ from mine, patterns of attention and perceptual saliences that are—to some extent—unlike my own, and tendencies to justify her aesthetic judgments by appeal to considerations that may leave me unmoved. Certainly, I may find her aesthetic responses surprising, outstripping my attempts to predict or grasp it. I take her aesthetic sensibility seriously. I care what she thinks and how she feels about art, including

134 Once again, as I have argued previously (§2), if we did not regard our beloved’s perspective as distinct from our own, we would not find it meaningful when she treats us affirmatively, in a way that expresses her appreciation for us.
the art that we see together. If we are both looking at a particular sculpture, for instance, the fact that she finds it clever or beautiful will strike me as a reason to look at it again, even if I dislike it initially; similarly, the fact that she sees it as shallow or ugly may move me to reconsider my stance toward it. Even though I do not defer to her aesthetic sensibility, exactly, I do see her point of view as placing rational pressure on my own judgments about art—as inviting me to share her distinct point of view. In other words, I see her aesthetic sensibility as external to my own but as authoritative nevertheless.

Of course, loving appreciation for a person as a whole is global in a way that appreciating him for his aesthetic sensibility is not. But they share a crucial similarity: appreciating a person lovingly entails regarding his perspective as external to ours but as authoritative with respect to certain matters. As I have said, when I appreciate Céline as the individual that she is, my loving appreciation for her effectively assumes that she has a perspective on the world that is, to some extent, separate from mine. That is to say, I recognize her as the subject of an inner life that is entirely hers, with her own needs, aims, interests—in short, her own good—and with her own epistemic and evaluative point of view, a point of view that is, even after all these years, capable of surprising me, of escaping my understanding. Moreover, I care—very much and quite directly—about Céline’s perspective on the whole: what she thinks, what she wants, what she values, how she feels, and so on. (Particularly where I am concerned.) Through her attitudes towards me she has a power over me. Because she is capable of affecting my thoughts and attitudes directly, she is thereby capable of determining the significance of the actions that I undertake, the reactions that I exhibit, and even the situations in which I happen to find myself.

Suppose that Céline and I are driving from Boston to Chicago. I am responsible for navigating. Out of sheer inattention, I make a mistake that ends up adding another hour to an already long journey. If she is angry with me, I will likely feel guilty that my carelessness has lengthened the trip. If there is a hint of contempt in her reproach, I will likely feel shame for having made such a silly error; maybe
I will doubt my competence in this area (this sort of incident is not isolated, sadly). But that’s not all. In expressing these attitudes, she does not just affect me. She also leads me to recognize myself in these attitudes of hers: I come to see myself in her gaze. In her anger, I see myself as at fault. In her contempt, I see myself as incompetent. It need not turn out this way, of course. I may try to deflect her anger or contempt by telling her that it was a simple mistake brought on by spending several mind-numbing hours in a moving van. But the point is that I would feel the force of her attitudes towards me. That wouldn’t be mere pressure, either. I would experience her attitudes as making claims on me. I would feel compelled to respond, to defend myself. I could not just dismiss her feelings as irrelevant. But if her perspective can make me recognize certain facts about myself, if she can make claims on me, she does not merely have power over my perspective but authority with respect to me as well, which extends beyond the realm of this kind of situation. In loving Céline, then, I recognize her perspective as external to my own but as authoritative as well, in at least this somewhat limited way.

Naturally, appreciation of the beloved is not the only element in our love for another person. We must also care about her for her own sake in a way that is mediated by respect for her. The fact that love includes these other moments helps show that her perspective has an authority that is global.

In appreciating our beloved for the individual that she is, we learn that her attitudes have authority with respect to ours, that our attitudes are not the sole authoritative measure of their objects. In caring about our beloved for her own sake, we come to see her good as worthy of our promotion. We learn that the good of our beloved has authority with respect to our own: that she has the power to give us reasons to promote her needs, aims, and interests. We learn that our own good is not the sole authoritative measure of the worthiness of our pursuits, which is part of what it is to recognize final value in her. Finally, in respecting our beloved, we see her as a limit to our will. We see her pursuit of

135 N.B. She was actually not too hard on me for this, even though it did massively inconvenience us.
her own good as constraining what we can do in pursuit of our own or anyone else’s good (including hers), and we see her judgments about her own good as prima facie valid. What, if anything, does this experience of respect for the beloved teach us, perhaps in tandem with the other elements of love?

From respect, we learn two things. First, we learn that the fact that an action conduces to the beloved’s good is not always a reason to pursue it for her sake: that her choices may sometimes override our reasons for promoting her good. Second, we learn that the fact that the beloved disagrees with us about what constitutes her good, or about how best to promote it, should not always lead us to judge that she is viewing the matter wrongly. We learn two kinds of modesty, in effect. In respecting our beloved, we come to recognize her authority to make claims on us, particularly claims that we not interfere and that we defer, in some contexts, to her conception of her good. And we recognize in her the authority to hold us accountable for ignoring or violating these claims. So, from respect we learn that the beloved’s own good is not the sole authoritative measure of the worthiness of the actions that we undertake for her sake, and that our judgments about her good are not the sole authoritative measure of her own good. We learn that she is entitled to lead her life by her own lights.

These points have some force in showing that love of a person is plausibly an ethical attitude. Yet even if they are true, how exactly do the elements of love lead us to the view of the beloved’s value that is internal to a distinctively ethical stance toward her? How do they show that for the lover the value of the beloved’s existence—and of her plight—lies primarily in their value for her?

There is one final piece of the puzzle. My presentation of the above points may conceal the exact nature of love’s effect on us. Love does not merely introduce new motives into our will. It does not just equip us with motives whose presence leaves our psyche otherwise unchanged. Loving another person has a transformative effect on us as individuals. In particular, love fundamentally alters our relation to our own perspective, furnishing us with a dramatically different view of our beloved.

See Kriegel and Timmons, forthcoming, pp. 14-18, for an account of respect as modesty.
Consider, once again, the connection between love and the merging of the lovers’ perspectives. Before I said that when we merge our own perspective with that of our beloved, we are vulnerable, affectively and practically, to our beloved. He gains the power to move us to feel and think certain things through his own feelings and thoughts, and to move us to act through his own aims, needs, interests, and concerns; in particular, he acquires the power to move us to do things for his own sake. I would like to elaborate on this thin description of the phenomenon. Perspective-merging, I want to add, does not merely consist in the genesis of a new set of dispositions with respect to our beloved. It also includes the normally tacit judgment that it is appropriate for us to be so moved by the beloved. In my view, in merging our perspective with his, we are joined to him more deeply still: what we forge with him is at once a unity of wills and a community of feeling, ideally mediated by the expectations of whatever relationship we have with him. We are not, as it were, walled off from his perspective but bound nevertheless to take facts about that perspective into proper account in our deliberations. Rather, we find it natural, indeed appropriate, to regard the matters that concern him from his perspective.

Yet, and this is the vital point, from her perspective what happens to our beloved, and certainly her existence as a whole, are important: they have value. Not only that: their importance to her is great, and her regarding them as such is, quite plausibly, a condition of her finding anything else important. When we regard our beloved’s existence and what happens to her as from her perspective, then, we grasp their value from that very perspective. We see their value as lying simply in their value for her. The shift in outlook that I am describing might seem downright magical but it is also commonplace. I expect that it will seem familiar to anyone who has ever loved another person for her own sake.

Why should we regard our beloved’s perspective as the ultimate measure of the value of her existence and plight? Why should we defer to her perspective to such a great extent? There is, I think, an inherent pressure, within the lover’s outlook, to defer to the beloved’s perspective on matters that are deeply important to her. Because my wife, Céline, is an artist and engagement with art is central to
her identity as the individual that she is, she naturally finds it deeply important to be able to continue making, seeing, and discussing art; doing these things has value from her perspective. For this reason, they have value from my perspective as well, since the fact that I have merged my perspective with hers means I will be moved to regard her engagement with art from her perspective. Thus, I will come to see it as valuable, as worth facilitating and sustaining, regarding its value as lying in its value for her.

The same point applies, a fortiori, to her existence and what happens to her. Because they are both so important to her, so generally and basically significant from her perspective, I must defer to her view of them. I must see them as possessing a value that lies in their value for her. Therefore, I must grasp the reasons that I have to treat her with consideration—reasons whose normative force does not depend, in any interesting sense, on her relation to my needs, aims, or interests; on my love for her (or loving attitudes towards her); or on the fact that I have some thick relationship with her. When I do grasp them, I recognize her as having value in and of herself. My attitude is ethical, it seems.

 Practically speaking, moreover, this conclusion implies that we are committed to maintaining a baseline of concern and respect for our beloved even if our love for her has been dispelled. This accords with our intuitive view of love. Raimond Gaita makes the point with characteristic lucidity:

 Notoriously the claims of love… are not the same as those of morality. But they are not wholly other than those of morality either. To love someone is to be unable, while loving them, to tolerate the thought that one day we might be entirely indifferent to what should happen to them. Exactly that happens often enough, but it is condemned as much by love as it is by morality.138

Suppose, then, that though I have loved Céline, my love for her has disappeared, and I now feel utter indifference towards her. Not only have I ceased caring about her thoughts and feelings, I'm unconcerned with her plight more generally: when I'm told of her successes and the happiness they

138 Gaita (2004), p. 155. He also claims that the generality of moral concern is to be found in the lover's stance towards her beloved. See Ibid, pp. 154-155.
have brought her, I feel no cheerier on her account, and when I hear news about her disappointments and losses, I don’t feel at all sad for her, nor do I regret her condition. We can imagine plausible explanations of my indifference that would not necessarily reveal my former love to be less than genuine. I might stop caring about her, consistently with having loved her, because she has done me a terrible wrong, say. But absent such special explanations lacking any concern for her in the wake of my love’s dissipation would show that I never really loved her for her own sake to begin with. Perhaps I merely liked her or felt affection for her or anyway found myself attached to her. Or perhaps I appreciated her for what she did for me, or for the place she has occupied in my autobiography. But I could not count as having loved her. (Indeed, confronted with my coldness, she might well respond, ‘You never cared about me, did you?’) Hence, while love of someone for her own sake is consistent with its dissolution, it is normally inconsistent with indifference for her after the fact. Even after our love for another has dissolved, a residue of concern for her must survives that dissolution. We must care about her at a rudimentary level at least, remaining minimally open to her perspective in this way.

In having this basic concern for someone we have loved, we do not seem merely to be in the grip of an alien impulse, a strange compulsion. Rather, we experience our residual concern for our former beloved as appropriate, as called for by the person whom we have loved. In our concern, we seem to be aware of reasons to have certain attitudes towards her and to do certain things for her sake, seeing it as appropriate to, say, lament her ruin or to prevent her destruction if we can readily do so. And the appropriateness of this form of concern, and of those attitudes and actions that are minimally required by the fact of having loved her, appear to be independent of any commitment to morality.

Although we have made extensive progress, we have not yet reached the end of the argument. That’s because the portion of the argument presented so far invites the following sort of challenge: why does the conclusion for which I have argued in this section show that in loving someone we thereby occupy an ethical viewpoint? We do not count as inhabiting such a viewpoint if we only grasp
reasons for treating only a single person with consideration, no matter the character of our view of her. The problem is that all that has been shown, apparently, is that loving someone is recognizing the value she has as the *individual* that she is. But then how can our view of our beloved have the kind of *generality* that defines an ethical viewpoint? Why should our consideration be extended to others, too?

7. Individuality and Generality: The Ethical Viewpoint Internal to Love

We want to know how our grasp of our beloved’s value—the value that he has in and of himself—amounts to holding an ethical viewpoint. More specifically, we need to determine where the generality characteristic of that viewpoint is to be found in our apprehension of the value of a lone individual. My contention in this section will be that, although it is initially the recognition of an individual’s value, love carries with it the power to reveal the value of other people quite apart from the beloved himself, for when we love someone we see him as capable of disclosing the value of the people he loves. It is this feature of love for others that explains the generality that makes love a genuinely ethical attitude. So, in this section, I show that love for another involves inhabiting an ethical viewpoint, by presenting a hypothetical origin story that details the founding of a rudimentary ethical community through love.

Before I begin telling my origin story, however, it is necessary to clarify the sort of generality that defines an ethical viewpoint. I claim that two distinct kinds of generality are relevant. My origin story must account for both. First, an ethical viewpoint is characterized by generality of consideration. In other words, to count as viewing the world in ethical terms, we must be prepared to acknowledge that there are non-instrumental reasons for showing consideration to multiple people, including those we do not love and, indeed, those with whom we have no thick relationship, either personal or official. We must therefore admit that a whole group of people possesses the sort of value highlighted above.

Second, an ethical viewpoint exhibits generality of reflection, in particular practical reflection. Such a viewpoint exhibits generality of this kind insofar as those who inhabit it demonstrate a tendency
to conduct practical reflection in terms that do not apply exclusively to themselves. For example, occupants of an ethical viewpoint will tend to cast practical questions, concerning what ought to be done in a given situation, in first-person plural or indefinite third-person terms, so that they become the question of what we or what one ought to do instead of merely what I ought to do. Accordingly, occupants will be prone to employ more general categories in framing and settling such questions as well, categories which might be applicable to other people in other, relevantly similar circumstances and which determine which kinds of considerations count as reasons for action and when. To belong to an ethical community, we must occupy an ethical viewpoint defined by both forms of generality.

Our fictional story begins with just two people: you and me. Imagine that I am largely innocent of any distinctively ethical consciousness, much less of full moral commitment. I inhabit no ethical viewpoint but neither am I an amoralist, exactly. Yet I am otherwise normal, let us suppose: I can be moved to share the perspectives of others—for example, in sympathizing with them—but only in a very limited way. If I take others into account in my deliberations, it is because I am inclined to do so, or else it is only strategically. But now you come along, and gradually I find myself not simply appreciating you but loving you. Maybe we become friends. Maybe we become romantically involved. The exact nature of my love for you, or of our relationship with one another, is not significant, so long as your value as an individual—the value that you have in and of yourself—is revealed to me in love. I apprehend this value that you have insofar as I have merged my perspective with your own. When I do, I grasp attitude- and relationship-independent reasons to treat you with consideration.

Now because I love you for your own sake, I am moved sometimes to do things for your sake. That is, I am moved to treat you in ways that affirm your value. I am moved to treat you in ways that express my love for you, my loving concern, respect, and appreciation for you as an individual. For instance, I may be moved to seek your company; to encourage you and help you in your pursuit of your ambitions, even to the point of self-sacrifice; to refrain from meddling in your life; and so on.
And when I do these things for your sake, not only do I affirm your value; I affirm your value to you. These actions oriented to you have a communicative significance: they express my sense of your value. Further, the fact that the various ways I treat you carry this significance means that they have the power to, directly and vividly, reveal your own value to you, to sustain your conviction that you matter.

My actions can reveal your own value to you by constituting the basis for a kind of self-love on your part. In the face of my love for you, you might come to love yourself in turn and thus to see yourself in the light of my love, as bearing the special value that I cannot help but recognize in you. Not that the affirmation of a lover is the only source of your conviction that you matter, of course. There is a basic form of self-love to which all human beings, or perhaps all animals, are susceptible, in virtue of the fact that we simply care about what happens to us and want to continue existing. Perhaps this form of self-love is more basic. But by itself it is not sufficient for us to retain our sense that we matter. In addition, we need the love of particular people—such as our parents and other family members, our romantic partners and our friends—in order to have a full sense of our value. At any rate, then, suppose that you reciprocate my love for you: you love me for my own sake in turn. Then when you do things for my sake—when you treat me in ways that express loving concern, respect, and appreciation for me as an individual—your actions will have a similar power: they will be capable of revealing my own value to me, capable of serving as the basis for self-love on my part.

So, I reveal your value to you through my loving affirmation of you, and you reveal my value to me through your loving affirmation of me. That does explain why love involves a grasp of the value of more than a single individual, someone apart from the beloved. But it is not yet clear why that gives us the requisite sort of generality. What is needed is a ground for a commitment to acknowledging the value of other people beyond the particular loving relationship in which you and I find ourselves.

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139 Plausibly, we also need those with whom we interact to show us basic consideration in order to have a full sense of our own value, and probably we need the esteem of some of our fellows, too, particularly of the people whom we love.
The requisite sort of generality—generality of consideration—is to be found in the following: that if I am to regard your loving affirmation of me as revealing my value to me, I must also, and more generally, see you as capable of revealing the value of others to me through your loving affirmation of them. And their value, as revealed to me by you, cannot depend on whether I happen to love them. Hence, although I may not love the people you do, I will have to acknowledge their value, not just their value to or for you, and thus I will have to recognize the force of reasons for treating them with consideration. That is not to suggest that I am thereby committed to loving them as well, of course, just that I am committed to maintaining, and to showing them, a modicum of concern and respect.

Since the people you love matter to you, a failure to muster basic concern or respect for them—treating them with utter indifference or outright disrespect—would amount to a failure to accord you proper consideration, in the same way that disregard for your good or for the aims you set for yourself amounts to disregard for you, since your good and the ends you choose matter to you. And, in a sense, it is not important whether you, in fact, love anyone. So long as I love you for your own sake, I will see you as having the power to reveal the value of other people to me through your loving affirmation of them, and this power holds whether there happen to be any such people or not.

Imagine, however, as is plausible, that you do happen to love people other than me as well. You love your parents and the other members of your family: siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins. And you have a few friends whom you love, some of them dearly. Maybe there are also people whom you no longer love but have loved in the past: childhood friends from whom you have grown estranged, say. You are therefore entangled in a web of thick, individualized relationships. And suppose that I am, too: I also love people other than you—my parents and other family members, a small circle of friends. So, I am entangled in a web of thick, individualized relationships of my own, exactly as you are. Then

140 The idea that expressions of love have revelatory potential is found in the work of Raimond Gaita. For example, see Gaita (1998), p. 19, and Gaita (2003), pp. 120-123, among other points in these texts.
each of us is committed to according consideration to the people loved by the other, to acknowledging
the value of these people, and, once again, not only because the other person happens to love them.
And because my argument applies quite generally, each person in this collection of beloveds and lovers
is committed to according consideration to everyone else and to acknowledging everyone else’s value.
There is therefore a rudimentary ethical community forged through our love for each other, which
comprises everyone I love and everyone you love—and everyone whom those we love, love.141 This
ethical community may be quite local: it could just be a family or a collection of mutual friends. But
the members of this community will be seen as enjoying a distinctive, albeit local, ethical standing.

Again, it doesn’t matter if you happen not to love anyone besides me. I am still committed to
recognizing your power to reveal the value of others through your loving affirmation of them, and to
seeing these hypothetical others as sources of valid claims on me, regardless of whether I love them.
Even if there is no one else you love, in other words, I inhabit at least this limited ethical viewpoint.

I make one final remark about the generality of the ethical viewpoint that is internal to love.
Thus far, my attention has been focused on accounting for the generality of consideration that I have
argued is the upshot of loving another person for her own sake. What about generality of reflection?
As a matter of fact, if we shift our attention slightly, I think we get an explanation of this feature, too.
For when we have a kind of generalized concern for the members of our rudimentary ethical life, we
will stand in thick, individualized relationships with each other, relationships defined by a framework
of expectations of the partners to them. Or at least we will be able to imagine standing in such relations.
The consequence of this situation is a change in the form of our reflection. Instead of my considering
the stubbornly egocentric thought of what I ought to do, I will be led to reframe the practical questions
that I confront in more general terms, so that I think of them in terms of what any member of the
ethical community who occupies the same role ought to do—what one ought to do qua parent, friend,

141 Indeed, the ethical community will be wider, comprising everyone whom we—or those whom we love—have loved.
sibling, or romantic partner, say. I will be led to reflect, again in more general terms, on what parents can expect of children, children of parents, friends of one another, siblings of one another, and so on. Hence, I am led to employ ethical categories of some generality in conducting my practical reflection. And in registering the claims of the various people who together make up my local ethical community, I am also led to reflect on the question of how we community members ought to lead our lives.

My hypothetical origin story of the founding of a basic ethical community is now complete, and it shows that an ethical viewpoint, marked by the two kinds of generality I highlighted above, is internal to the lover’s attitude towards her beloved. Ethical consciousness is not extraneous to love. It is, rather, inextricable from the lover’s perspective. Love is by nature an ethical attitude, for it commits us to recognizing the value of some others and realizing a local Kingdom of Ends with them. Another way to put this point is by saying that love commits us to recognizing some others as persons.

I want to close this section by drawing out some implications of the foregoing discussion for our understanding of amoralism and then by offering a brief diagnosis of this condition of the soul. If what I have argued is correct, it follows that an amoralist cannot love others for their own sake. An amoralist is incapable of love both because he denies that the people he loves have the requisite sort of independent value and because he correspondingly rejects ethical considerations of any kind. Both denials are incompatible with the spirit of love. But what exactly is his stance towards the people he purports to love, in that case? Is it really credible that contrary to appearances he doesn’t love them?

I believe it is. To deny that the people he professes to love have value in and of themselves, the amoralist must be affectively and motivationally closed off from their perspectives, more or less. He must be incapable, really incapable, of merging his perspective with those of his would-be beloveds. That is always a possibility but not one that is consistent with his loving them for their own sake. He might like or appreciate or even care about them in other ways, certainly: as a means to ends of his, or for their role in his autobiography. But these are recognizably deficient or defective forms of love.
When we want to be loved by someone, our desire is to be loved for who we are, as the irreplaceable individuals we are, not just for who we are to our beloved and still less for our presumed usefulness to her.

I submit that, along with self-interest and similar motives, pure amoralism is predicated on a kind of deep and primordial fear: the fear of subjection to the power of another person’s perspective. This sort of fear is natural enough. Intersubjective engagement is a difficult, even treacherous business. In recognizing someone as a person, we find ourselves opened up to this other person’s perspective, from her practical stances to her non-normative beliefs, regarding that perspective as of immediate significance with respect to the attitudes that we hold, as to be taken at least somewhat seriously. Thus, others’ attitudes towards our character, abilities, appearance, tastes, pursuits, accomplishments, and relations will be able to influence the way we see ourselves and those close to us, even if we do not come to share those attitudes ourselves, and they can do so negatively. Others can hurt us, quite badly. The contempt, shame, and disgust of others—on their own or expressed in the way they treat us—can make us feel shame or self-loathing in turn; her disappointment can jeopardize our self-esteem; and her resentment and indignation can lead us to feel guilty and deserving of punishment. Others can have aims and aspirations that are incompatible with our own as well. We are vulnerable to the interference of others and, indeed, to their mistreatment, which can be systematic. In a recent paper, Kate Manne aptly highlights the dangers of intersubjective engagement in the following passage:

> in being capable of rationality, agency, autonomy, and so on, [another person is] also someone who could coerce, manipulate, embarrass, or undermine you. In being capable of abstract relational thought and congruent moral emotions, they are capable of thinking ill of you and regarding you contumaciously. In being capable of forming complex desires and intentions, they are capable of harbouring malice and plotting against you. In being capable of valuing, they may value what you abhor, and abhor what you value. They may hence be a threat to all that you cherish.

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Manne is right: others are threatening, and the reality of this threat is built into our awareness of people. It is precisely the tacit desire to escape or mitigate the threat that can make amoralism appealing to some characters, I think. The amoralist tries to defuse the threat by walling himself off from others’ perspectives, which gives him the false thrill of superior strength, daring, independence, and mastery.

But the appeal of amoralism is superficial and ultimately illusory. Far from successfully ducking the threat of intersubjective engagement, the amoralist is still subject to it. He is subject to it insofar as he still cares about the perspectives of others at all, in wanting some people to love, admire, or even fear him. And he must care about others’ perspectives to some extent if he is to be human enough for his kind of life to constitute an at least apparently desirable alternative to the ethical life. Furthermore, far from exhibiting the apparent virtues of strength, daring, independence, and mastery, the amoralist has been revealed to be a kind of coward, so afraid of the admittedly genuine dangers of involvement and commitment that he is willing to throw off any limitations others impose on his will, not realizing that subjection to those limitations is a condition for what he acknowledges to be good—loving relationships with other people. In the end, then, a genuine amoralist would not just be morally bad, although he would certainly be that. He would also be deeply alone, on the verge of solipsism. So, far from leading an enviable and magnificent life, the amoralist is actually a rather pathetic figure.

8. The Lover’s Ethical Viewpoint as Rationally Favoring Moral Concern

The conclusion I have reached is that loving a person for his own sake includes, by its very nature, two complementary stances: first, recognizing in him a special kind of value not shared by mere objects and, second, inhabiting an ethical viewpoint in which that value is seen as belonging to some others. This conclusion is, admittedly, a modest one. If it is true, then we are committed to acknowledging

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143 Thus, my strategy bears some resemblance to Plato’s argument that the tyrant is, contrary to appearances, a miserable and utterly disunified wreck of a person. See Plato (1992), Book IX.
the special value of some other people, and thus to treating these people with basic consideration as fellow members of a common ethical order. But my aim in this dissertation was to vindicate the authority of morality specifically, not just a commitment to accepting ethical considerations generally.

The ethical is wider than the moral. To occupy an ethical viewpoint is to take at least some people to have value in and of themselves, in virtue of their falling under some general designation. The boundaries of any given ethical community may be narrow indeed, then, comprising only the members of a small tribe, the citizens of a nation-state, or even a circle of ‘free spirits’. Within the community, members will see one another as sources of claims, but outsiders will enjoy no such status. To occupy the moral viewpoint, on the other hand, we must take at least all human beings or persons to have the special value that makes us sources of claims; we must regard our value as grounded simply in our humanity or personhood; and we must recognize one another as enjoying this value equally. So, I have fallen short of my original aim, it seems. Morality has not received its promised vindication.

While I have contended that loving another person includes a limited ethical consciousness, I doubt that a full-blown commitment to morality is likewise internal to love. I can think of no argument which shows that recognizing all persons as valuable belongs to the lover’s stance towards her beloved. There may very well be one of which I am unaware. I would not rule that out. Yet rather than casting about for an argument to this effect when I am unsure of its existence, I venture a different strategy. Even if the lover’s stance does not entail a commitment to recognizing the value of humanity generally, I will argue that there are nevertheless, within the ethical viewpoint that is internal to love, identifiable and interlocking rational pressures which push us in the direction of a more general moral concern. Hence, the ethical viewpoint internal to love is ‘pro-moral’, to borrow a term from David Velleman.146

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144 Or perhaps our value is due to the fact that we are subjects of an inner life rather than to our humanity or personhood.
145 I don’t argue that any given or any imaginable ethical viewpoint should lead us to embracing morality, only that the ethical viewpoint internal to the lover’s stance does so. This is another respect in which my conclusion is modest.
146 See Velleman (2009), p. 149: ‘My strategy… is to argue that the aim constitutive of agency can be seen to have pushed us in the direction of our moral way of life, and to be pushing us still indirections that are recognizably moral. The strategy
I want to emphasize, however, that the reflections I advance are not to be taken as complete but, rather, as sketches of some currents in ethical reflection which should lead us to embrace morality. If successful, at any rate, my gambit yields a definite, albeit humble, vindication of morality’s authority.

Ethical viewpoints are chauvinistic when they affirm the value of some people but not others. I will examine two versions of ethical chauvinism with a view to showing that the pressures endemic to the lover’s ethical viewpoint make them reflectively unstable and so militate against their acceptance. These versions of the position are distinguished by where, and on what basis, the boundaries of the ethical community are drawn within them, by whom they include (and why) and whom they leave out. On the first sort of chauvinist view, the bounds of the ethical community are drawn according to *merit*—the possession of certain personal qualities such as strength, courage, resolve, cunning, or creativity. People who have these qualities (to a high degree) are counted as members of the ethical community, whereas people who fail to exhibit them to a sufficient extent (or who lack them altogether) are not. This view makes admiration or esteem the basis of basic consideration. Call this *meritocratic chauvinism*.

On the second sort of chauvinism, by contrast, membership in the ethical community is determined not by superior merit, according to some conception, but by local group identification—by simply belonging to some narrower social group such as a tribe, ethnicity, nationality, or race. People of the relevant social group have standing in the ethical community; those who don’t, lack it. This view makes social identity the basis of basic consideration. Call this *identitarian chauvinism*, then. My statements of these two forms of ethical chauvinism are rough: variations are not tough to imagine, and while distinct, I might add, they often accompany, and even psychologically reinforce, each other. Still, it will be fruitful to have them clearly before us, in their distinctness, to better see their inadequacy.

thus provides a retrospective commentary on morality as a rational development, a form of rational progress... Just as reasoning in pursuit of the truth has been pro-Newtonian when applied to the phenomena of this world, I believe, so reasoning in pursuit of self-understanding has been pro-moral when applied to the human condition.’
First, a general point: the members of an avowedly local ethical community will still have to confront the question of who is to be included within it and how these boundaries are to be drawn, and they will feel compelled, at least sometimes, to justify their answers to that question to one another. That question cannot be ignored entirely—particularly if community members are aware of, interact with, and incorporate outsiders. Why think, though, that the answer cannot stably be a chauvinist one?

One pressure that serves to make meritocratic chauvinism untenable lies in a feature of certain forms of love for other people. I have in mind the love of parents for their children, children for their parents, siblings for one another, and, more generally, the love of family members for each other. These forms of love are, typically, (largely) merit-insensitive, neither founded nor conditional on merit. For example, it is standard for parents, even those who prize meritorious qualities in others, to care deeply about their children regardless of whether they turn out to be especially admirable characters, indeed to love their children even before they develop any stable personal qualities in the first place.147

This is not universal, I grant. Perhaps some people love their children in a merit-sensitive way, regarding a lack of good personal qualities in their children as undermining the reasons for them (and others) to treat their children with even basic consideration, much less with loving concern for them. But that is a crazy attitude. Even if parental love or other forms of familial love are not unconditional, they should not be held hostage to whether the object of that love is worthy of admiration and esteem.

It may be appropriate to love our friends and romantic partners in a merit-sensitive fashion. But, I submit, there is a tacit requirement of equality built into friendship and romantic relations for which a responsiveness to the beloved’s merit is in order, which need not be present in family relations. And anyway, the form of self-love discussed in the last section is, plausibly, not merit-sensitive either: we care to some degree about our lives and what happens to us regardless of the extent of our virtues.

(If we did not have this kind of concern, we would not be able to cultivate those virtues to begin with.)

It is just hard to believe that it wouldn’t matter how others treated us if we lacked meritorious qualities.

The fact that familial love and basic self-love are merit-insensitive pushes us in the direction of taking the view that a person’s entitlement to basic consideration is independent of the merit that she exhibits, effectively leading us away from at least the pure version of meritocratic chauvinism outlined above.

We are thus placed in a position to seriously consider the idea, central to full moral concern, that the value of people lies in a deeper, more stable fact about us, and hence the idea that all of us have value.

There are additional pressures, to be sure, which play a significant role in the process of ethical development as well, and these help explain why identitarian chauvinism, too, is an unacceptable view.

To illustrate the psychological tension that threatens this form of the view, I will adapt a point made by Stanley Cavell in his discussion of a slave-owner’s attitude towards the people he has enslaved.\textsuperscript{148}

The slave-owner presents a paradigm case of identitarian chauvinism. He does not, or anyway need not, reject the ethical sphere entirely. He need only deny that those he has enslaved (and black people generally) fall within that sphere and so that they are patients of the obligations of interpersonal justice.

Nor need he regard them as excluded from the ethical sphere because they are not human or because they are lacking in certain empirical qualities, such as intelligence, industriousness, beauty, or manners.

Instead, Cavell says, his failure to see them as entitled to basic consideration may be based on ‘nothing more than some indefinite claim of difference, some inexpressible ground of exclusion of others from existence in our realm of justice.’\textsuperscript{149} That is why, for Cavell, the slave-owner is not missing a fact about the slaves: that they are human, or that they have certain qualities that are constitutive of humanity.\textsuperscript{150}

Just as the duck-rabbit can be seen as a duck or as a rabbit, people can be seen as morally considerable

\textsuperscript{148} Cavell (1979), pp. 375-379.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., p. 378.
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., p. 375-376.
or inconsiderable, and the transition between these views may be the result of a pure Gestalt switch.\textsuperscript{151} Cavell does not doubt, of course, that excluding some group from our local ethical community can be based on an explicit denial of the excluded group’s humanity and, in particular, on the judgment that members of the ethical community possess certain empirical qualities that the excluded group lacks. Yet, he thinks, this is a more sophisticated basis for exclusion—and an especially vulnerable one.\textsuperscript{152}

It is not difficult to see why the explicit affirmation of empirical differences between members of the ethical community and those who are excluded from it should be so vulnerable to reflection. To make such an affirmation as the basis for excluding others from ethical consideration is to expose ourselves to the possibility of refutation by reference to empirically discoverable counterexamples. Thus, the slave-owner who claims, as a basis for exclusion, the putative fact that black people are less intelligent, less industrious, or less well-behaved than white people is in a precarious position indeed. For he is committed to withdrawing that judgment when faced with a slave who is noticeably cleverer than his daughter, more hard-working than his son, or more mannered than his brother. It is therefore likely that he will only be able to maintain his prejudiced view with the aid of elaborate self-deception, and self-deception is famously liable to being undermined by education, experience, and reflectiveness.

But excluding others from our ethical community more simply on the basis of some ‘indefinite claim of difference’ is vulnerable as well, and in part because there is a pressure towards generality and consistency in practical reflection—a pressure that is global, not restricted to the ethical sphere. To borrow an example of Derek Parfit’s: if you tell me that pain is bad except when it takes place on a future Tuesday, I will want to know what it is about it that accounts for the discrepancy, and if you

\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., p. 378.

\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., p. 377: ‘It may be that Southern slavery, as has been claimed, was the severest form slavery had ever taken in human history. But if, as has been assumed in my fictitious little history, the justification for it was pushed to its final ground—that the slave is not a full human being—then that human misery represented an awful form of human progress; for that ground cannot in the long run be maintained.’
cannot cite a feature of Tuesday to credibly explain the difference, I will be skeptical of your position.\(^{153}\)

Of course, Future Tuesday Indifference, as Parfit calls it, cannot be sustained except in pathological cases; our interest in avoiding pain is so great that it raises the skeptical question especially urgently. And it is a well-known and frankly regrettable fact that the analogous skeptical question (‘Why exclude this group from our ethical community?’) quite often does not strike us with the same insistence, particularly whenever some motive of ours is served by excluding members of the group in question. The institution of slavery offers a chilling reminder. Even so, members of the local ethical community who exclude others on this slender basis are subject to a psychological tension: insofar as they interact with those from the excluded group, they are at least dimly aware of their resemblance to themselves, and the limited appearances of their common humanity are sufficient to raise the justificatory question, particularly whenever it is less clear that the excluding group’s interests are served by the exclusion. In the case of slavery, for instance, the institution may cease to be as profitable due to a shift in social circumstances, leaving the members of the slave-owning society to more squarely face the justificatory question, and making the need for fabricating empirical differences all the more pressing. And if they arrive at that point, of justifying their exclusion by appeal to an articulate and questionable empirical view of the world, their chauvinism is on a ground ‘cannot in the long run be maintained.’\(^{154}\) Hence, since it is generally liable to these tensions, ethical chauvinism of this kind suffers from instability.

Ultimately, once the justificatory question is raised, we are pushed in the direction of widening the circle of our ethical community so that it includes all human beings and perhaps all people, too. We are pushed towards accepting a system of norms that is, in important respects, recognizably moral.

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The argument pursued in this chapter purported to show that recognizing others as bearing ethical standing is inescapable for us, since so recognizing them belongs to our nature given what we are. How have I shown that? Clearly, the argument succeeds only if loving other people for their own sake belongs to our nature. I have not shown that it does, nor have I even specified the referent of ‘our’.

So, two questions are in order. First, what shows that loving other people is an inextricable aspect of our nature such that the ethical viewpoint internal to love is actually inescapable for us? For even if we love someone, isn’t it possible to cease to love him, and without error or irrationality? Second, if my account is sound, to whom do moral requirements apply? Who is included within the class of agents of directed moral obligations? Just all human beings? All rational agents with a social nature? Maybe all conceivable rational agents, including rational but unsocial aliens, angels, and God? The success of my argument hangs on whether plausible answers to these questions are forthcoming.

I submit that loving others is, in the first instance, essential to human nature specifically, and that this is what anchors the ethical viewpoint—with its orientation towards morality—deeply within us. I say ‘in the first instance’ because I take my argument to apply most clearly to human beings and any creatures who resemble us in crucial respects. But matters become considerably less clear when we turn to creatures who may be very different from us—a point that I will elaborate on below.

What do I mean by ‘human beings’? I have in mind a kind of rational, self-conscious animal, prone to take up the perspectives of others, whose form of life is social in the sense that she cares, in a nonstrategic spirit, about the regard and the plight of her fellows. Human beings are correspondingly susceptible to an intricate web of social emotions, including the basic sentiment of sympathy, the evaluative sentiments (shame, pride, esteem, contempt, and admiration), and the moral sentiments (resentment, gratitude, and indignation). And we are, finally, inclined towards various forms of love and hatred for our fellows. In what sense, then, is loving others essential to human nature specifically?
Love is essential to human nature in that one of our basic needs, as the kinds of creatures that we are, is to be loved by other people for our own sake and to love them in the same spirit, in return. Here is a piece of familiar natural history. We enter the world as helpless, needy infants, completely dependent on our parents and other caregivers to nourish us and to keep us in security and comfort. It is in this context that we are first initiated into the lover’s point of view. For we come to form deep emotional attachments to these people and, in our rudimentary way, to love them: to care about how they feel and how they fare, to welcome their presence, and to seek out emotional intimacy with them.

It is no understatement to say that these early experiences of love are transformative. The love that our parents and other such figures show us is what provides us with the basic confidence we need to freely explore the world.\textsuperscript{155} And caring about our parents’ and caregivers’ perspectives appears to play an indispensable role in the genesis of worldly knowledge.\textsuperscript{156} It is a well-known fact about us that lack of love can make our lives wretched, even empty. It can make us feel that we do not matter. But the absence of love, particularly early on in our lives, can also constitute a severe psychological harm, leaving us emotionally and intellectually stunted, incapable of relating well to others or to ourselves.

Many of us do experience the love of others in the crucial early stages of our development. We come to love our parents and our families more generally. And as we mature, we come to care about people outside of this immediate circle. As toddlers, we start to befriend people our own age—children in our neighborhood and at school—and sometimes to forge profound connections with them. Eventually, we usually form lasting friendships and perhaps romantic relationships with others, too, which shape our identities, restructure our concerns, and very often give meaning to our lives.

My point is that the love of others is woven into human life, certainly early on and typically later on. Of course, the fact that love is essential to human nature, in this sense, does not mean that

\textsuperscript{155} The indispensability of emotional connection to the development of basic self-confidence is a theme of the psychoanalytic tradition. See, for example, Bowlby (1958), Erikson (1980), and Benjamin (1988), Ch. 1, among other works.

\textsuperscript{156} See Hobson (1995), Ch. 3, and Tomasello (1999), Ch. 3.
every single human being will in fact love someone. (Plausibly, lifelong psychopaths do not ever love anyone.) It does mean that each of us has a natural propensity to love others and to seek their love—a propensity that may, for all that, be eradicated or otherwise compromised in particular human beings. The fact that a particular human being has always been without even the appearance of others’ love, or lacks any desire for it, simply entails that he is deprived, maybe profoundly damaged, not that we have no basic need for love. The individual himself may even experience a vague sense of the lacuna.

As far as we know, we are the only creatures whose nature can be characterized in these ways. There may well be other rational creatures who resemble us sufficiently in that they, too, need the love and consideration of others much like we do. If my strategy succeeds, it follows that the ethical viewpoint is anchored deeply within them as well. But that viewpoint may have a rather different shape depending on the extent of their similarity to ourselves. Hence, it may be that the ethical viewpoint they inhabit in virtue of sharing our need for the love of others is not pro-moral. Broadly ethical considerations would still apply to them, but they would not be bound by moral requirements proper.

Beyond that, I must leave open the question of whether ethical considerations apply to rational agents who are drastically different from us, particularly in the role that love plays in their form of life. For all we know, there may be rational agents whose peculiar way of being in the world does not include loving relations to others. Nothing I have said so far shows that such a creature is impossible. I know of no argument that any rational agent must be one whose form of life includes love for others. I doubt that any argument to that effect would be successful, but there might be one after all. More credibly, there could be an argument that showed that it is a condition of rationality that we stand in ethical relations to others, an argument that did not threaten the directedness of our moral obligations. My intention is not to dispute these possible views. But I do want to insist on one final point here. Even if we could find no argument that showed that morality had authority over every rational agent, no matter how different they otherwise were from ourselves, that would in itself be no catastrophe.
We should not be bothered by the possibility that moral requirements only apply to human beings and whoever is relevantly similar to us but not to radically different rational agents, if there are any. We do not need to vindicate morality’s authority from a higher perspective than that of our humanity. Our humanity is not some contingent or shallow fact about us whose removal would leave our identity otherwise intact. It is essential to who we are. Our human plight is to live in the light of others’ love.
Conclusion

In closing, let me outline my positive proposal in its entirety, situating it within the broader project of the dissertation to explain how it constitutes a vindication of morality and a solution to the puzzle with which we first began. My argument has been long and intricate, and at different points it has been guided by formulations of the original puzzle that appear distinct from one another. For this reason, it will be helpful to review these versions of the puzzle before characterizing my attempt to address it.

In its first formulation, recall, the puzzle was this: how could other people have valid claims on me, claims that are valid even when I have no special concern for, or thick relationship with, them? How can other people possibly have this power? And how can I have a parallel power vis à vis them? This puzzle was then given a motivational interpretation: how could the claims of other people, or my obligations to them, rationally motivate me to act for their sake? How, in other words, could others’ claims move me to act on them the way a grasp of a practical requirement’s normative force does?

Yet the claims that others have on us, and our obligations to them, are normatively special. For in failing to act on these, we wrong other people. So, others stand in a relation of authority to us. We are joined to one another, individual to individual, in a vast network of interpersonal relationships. Which is to say: we stand in moral relations to each other. Thus, the puzzle takes a final form: how can there be moral relations between us and others in the first place? How can there be authority relations between every person and every other in which we are to regard one another as distinct individuals? And, I have argued, answers to this vindicatory question must meet the directedness constraint. They must be compatible with justifiably acknowledging the other-directedness of others’ claims on us, and this can only be secured by denying that the authority of other people is mediated by our own authority over ourselves. The authority of others must not be granted to them. It must belong to them originally.
My solution to the puzzle came in two parts: a theory of recognition and a view about love. The first part of my proposal is a theory of what it is to recognize others as persons. To see others as persons is to be in a state that is both normative and motivating: it is to be subject to motivationally efficacious appearances of their power to make, and have, claims on our own attitudes and our will. My conception of recognition shows that the claims of others can motivate us to act for their sake, even if we have no special concern for them. For seeing them as persons is constituted by dispositions to sympathy, the reactive attitudes, and other forms of practical and affective responsiveness to them. It is constituted, in other words, by motives for treating others as people. There is no mystery in the idea that the claims of others move us to act, as what explains it is our seeing them as fellow persons.

Our experiences of others’ power to move our attitudes and will, interpreted as claims on us, suggest that people have a kind of special, non-instrumental value, different from the value of things. This indicates that the claims of others could rationally motivate us. Seeing you as a person by its nature includes experiencing your power to affect my attitudes and will through your claims on me. However, that account does not tell us how the claims of other people do, in fact, rationally motivate us, and in particular how apprehending these could motivate us to show others genuine moral consideration.

In the last chapter, my aim was to show that recognizing the status of others is inescapable for us, given some especially deep aspect of ourselves. My account of this stance’s inescapability also had to ensure that the value we are committed to recognizing in others is of the distinctively ethical kind. If seeing others in this way is inescapable for us given our nature, that would count as philosophical confirmation that people have value in and of themselves, and so that others’ claims on us are valid.

The purpose of the second part of my proposal, elaborated in the last chapter, is to confirm exactly this point through an account of the conditions of loving another person for her own sake. Because I love you and care about you, I must respect you and show you consideration, I contended. Because my love contains an element of appreciation that is analogous, in certain respects, to a form
of aesthetic appreciation, in loving you I must grasp a value that you have which is non-instrumental and independent both of my loving appreciation of you and the thick relation we have to one another. Yet for my love for you to count as an ethical attitude and for your value to be an ethical one, my love must be an apprehension of a value that you have in and of yourself—one that belongs to you because of who you are and makes the value of your life and plight consist primarily in their value for you.

And it is, I argued. Because I love you, I’m moved to merge my perspective with yours, and thus to defer to your perspective concerning your life and your plight. In regarding your existence and plight as you do, I come to regard them as valuable purely given that they are valuable for you. Thus, through loving you, I come to grasp that you have value in and for yourself, and when I do so, I also grasp your power to reveal that the people you love—myself included—have this kind of value. So, I am committed to acknowledging the standing of some other people just by loving you in particular, in the sense that I am committed to showing them basic consideration. I occupy an ethical viewpoint, and one that, I have argued, contains internal pressures that rationally favor the acceptance of morality. We are committed to relating to all other people in accordance with moral requirements, then. And since love is inextricable from our human nature, recognizing this value in others is indeed inescapable.

So, the claims of other people that are valid in virtue of our humanity rationally motivate us to do things for their sake because we must grasp the dignity of persons in loving anyone in particular, and the love of other people is woven into our human nature; it is one of the basic needs of the soul. Yet these claims rationally motivate us because recognizing others as persons constitutively includes a cluster of motives for treating them in ways that acknowledge the value that they have as fellow people. And since morality is the rational development of a point of view on others that is inescapable for us, we are committed to regarding others as valuable in a way that makes them partners in moral relations. In other words, we are committed to acknowledging the authority of other people through showing them consideration, by treating them in ways that express a modicum of respect and concern for them.
Thus, the motivational relevance of the claims of others and the normative necessity of acknowledging them is secured by my account. And that is enough to solve the puzzle in its first two formulations.

Morality carries authority over us because adhering to its requirements in our dealings with other people is the most appropriate form for our acknowledgment of others’ authority to take. That also explains how, exactly, it is possible for there to be moral relations—normatively significant, accountability-mediated relations between particular people which secure the possibility of wronging. Moral relations are not constituted by special concern or attachment, nor do they simply consist in a very general fact about us: that we are human beings or people, or even that we can respond to reasons. Rather, these relations are constituted by our capacity for normatively-loaded mutual recognition. That is what makes the concept of a person an action-guiding concept on a par with the concept of a friend. What makes moral relations possible, in general terms, then, is the perhaps idiosyncratic shape of our affective and volitional capacities, and the way in which they are drawn on in seeing others as persons. So, we have an account that constitutes a solution to the third formulation of the puzzle as well.

Does the account defended in this chapter meet the directedness constraint? According to the constraint, a moral theory is adequate only if it gets the directionality of our obligations to others right. Thus, a moral theory cannot entail or suggest that our obligations to others are, in fact, merely monadic obligations, obligations only to the self, or obligations to some other party (God, humanity generally). Nor, I added, should the theory entail or suggest that our obligations to other people are grounded in obligations that are not appropriately other-directed. Rather, it must be compatible with the thought that others are normally the source of our obligations to them and not merely the occasion for these.

We may well worry that my account does not manage to avoid these untoward implications. For although the authority of others to make claims on us is not granted to them by an act of our will, on my view, it seems that there are still further elements that mediate the validity of others’ claims. Your claim on me is valid not just in virtue of you yourself. It is valid in virtue of the moral relation
between us and its expectations, and, ultimately, in virtue of the nature of love and our human nature. But what does any of this have to do with your claim on me, as it appears to me in practical reflection? I concede that, aside from our expectations of one another, none of the further grounds I cite for your claim’s validity actually appears to me when I deliberate about what to do. What shows up instead is, again, typically such prosaic considerations as the fact of your need, aim, want, request, and demand. So, the phenomenology of our obligations to others does not include the other mediating elements. From that fact, however, it does not follow that my account fails to meet the directedness constraint.

Our particular obligations to others derive from the expectations that we have on one another as partners in moral relations, but these relations are the inner unity, or form, of these expectations. And what makes moral relations inescapable are features of human nature and of the nature of love. None of these points entails or suggests that our obligations to other people are merely to someone else, to ourselves, to everyone, or to no one. Nor does my account indicate that obligations that are not other-directed, or not other-directed in the right way, are what ground our obligations to others. Nor does the fact that morality is anchored in human nature and the nature of love show that the authority that other people have to oblige us is grounded in our own authority to oblige ourselves.

In my view, moral relations are like personal relations such as friendship in that both kinds of relationships normatively join two individuals and explain why their claims on one another are valid. Presumably, too, friends can be sources of friendship-specific claims on us in virtue of our human nature and the nature of love, just as other people can be sources of moral claims on us on this basis. If that view of friendship poses no problems for the directedness of friends’ obligations to each other, my view of moral relations should not be thought to undermine the directedness of our moral claims. I am forced to conclude that my account has no obvious difficulty meeting the directedness constraint.

Nothing I have said so far in this dissertation will quell doubts about morality’s authority or the value of humanity. I expect it to provide no assurance to those experiencing a crisis of moral faith.
And it will certainly not persuade someone who rejects the force of ethical considerations entirely, even if he is otherwise sensitive, intelligent, and rational. This is not, I think, a problem with my view. Serious doubts about the authority of morality or the value of humanity are adequately addressed not by a philosophical defense but, I submit, by our ordinary experiences of other people. Insofar as we clearly, vividly recognize others as persons as perspectives on the world, with thoughts, feelings, and plans of their own—well, no such doubt should move us. It is a familiar fact of human existence, of course, that skeptical doubts of that form can grip us, given how notoriously difficult it is to keep the reality of other people in view. But it is not the work of moral philosophy to dispel such doubts. That is the business of therapy and literature. It is plausibly one of the aims of education and politics. We need no independent philosophical validation in order to regard our experiences of other people as disclosing their value to us, I would argue, any more than we need one to rely on perceptual experience or the testimony of others in our efforts to know the world around us. On the contrary, the value of humanity is manifest in our experiences of family members, friends, and partners—indeed, even in our experiences of the strangers who pass us in the street with a conventional nod of acknowledgment.
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