THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

LOVING GRACIE: AN ACCOUNT OF HUMAN-ANIMAL LOVE

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

AUGUST 2022

For Gracie

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank the members of my dissertation committee – Martha Nussbaum, Agnes Callard, and Matthias Haase – for their invaluable advising and support. The dissertation was formed through several years of dialogue with each of them, and all of them together, and the places in which my argument, framing, or presentation was shaped in response to one of their comments or suggestions are innumerable.

Martha's humility toward the lives of non-human animals – approaching them with wonder, curiosity, and empathy – has been a source of both inspiration and validation from beginning to end. She encouraged me to write of my own experience of loving Gracie rather than to simply draw on other people's writings, and much of the style and method of this dissertation owes to that suggestion. Her kind words of enthusiasm and encouragement have helped to give me the confidence required for carrying out such a project in a discipline whose general climate is not always uplifting. I am grateful also for her support during times, in both my professional and personal life, when being a woman has been particularly hard.

Working with Agnes has been a pleasure throughout. I particularly appreciate that, though we feel quite differently about animals, I have always felt that Agnes has been supportive of my project and my point of view. Her philosophical feedback has been, consistently, simultaneously challenging and encouraging, and the energy that she brings to our meetings makes me more excited about my own work.

It is through having Matthias as an advisor that I have come to understand the value of discussing one's work before it feels ready for discussion. I can enter meetings with Matthias feeling confused

and frustrated and leave with a clear sense of the way forward. His ability to make space for barely articulated thoughts, to take them seriously and see where they can go, has been pivotal to my perseverance.

My research in the philosophy of love began in Kyla Ebels-Duggan's 2017 graduate seminar, "Love, Reasons, and Reasoning," at the University of Chicago. It was, in part, the wonderful experience I had in this seminar that led me to pursue a dissertation on the topic. My thinking on the topic of love has also benefited from engagement with Kyla's paper "Love, Respect, and the Value of Humanity" presented at the Other Minds/Other Wills conference at the University of Chicago on June 2nd, 2018.

I want to thank Candace Vogler and David Finkelstein, as well as the participants in the Preliminary Essay Workshop, for their conversation and advice on very early versions of what would become the topic of the dissertation. I also want to thank the participants of the philosophy department workshops in which I presented papers that would be incorporated into the dissertation – "Loving Gracie" and "Love and Attachment" at the Practical Philosophy Workshop, and "Love and Relationships" at the Theoretical Philosophy Workshop.

During my time in graduate school, I am thankful for my numerous interactions with Ben Laurence – as his course assistant, research assistant, and elsewhere – from which I have benefitted both as a philosopher and as a teacher. I am also grateful for the support received from Dan Brudney, and from numerous other supportive faculty members. Special thanks is owed to William Weaver and Jessica Barbaro for keeping the philosophy department running smoothly, and for keeping its members in good spirits. I think it is fair to say that William's stream of uplifting emails carried the department through the pandemic.

I also want to thank Jessica Moss, Adam Swift, Rowland Stout, and David Leopold, and the many other faculty whose undergraduate teaching at Oxford gave me the confidence and inclination to pursue a career in philosophy. I am extremely grateful to Jessica for her help with my graduate school applications.

One cannot disentangle the experience of writing a dissertation, and of graduate school in general, from the fact that it occurs over such a long and usually pivotal period in one's life. In this respect, I could not have completed the project without the continuous and oftentimes fierce support of my friends, and to them I owe special thanks. To Maggie Sandholm, for her kindness and humor. To Melina Garibovic, for her generosity and for understanding the value of a cup of tea. To Hannah Smith, for her wisdom and profound empathy. And to Emily Dupree, my inspiration and champion.

I am forever grateful to Melina Garibovic, Olivia Sultanescu, Sam Steadman, John Muller, and Jana Thesing, for together covering Gracie's care for several weeks while I was unable to re-enter the country, and to Matthias Haase and Wei Cai for their help with Gracie's walks and care of Walnut.

I am, as always, indebted to my family for their continual support in all of my endeavors, even when they mean travelling far from home. Throughout this project, I have benefited from my Grandma, Nancy Blake's, many stories about her life with dogs, and from conversation with my mum, Julia Blake, about her ever evolving relationships with her three animal companions – her horse, Rita, and her two miniature horses, Eloise and Darcy – examples of what loving human-horse relationships can and should look like.

To my husband, Daniel Wyche, who has supported me in countless ways – emotional, practical, and spiritual – I am so grateful. His presence – on our walks, our small adventures, and around the house – is continually uplifting, bringing joy and lightness in times of great stress. His consistent and

deliberate attempts to make my life easier during the final stages of dissertation writing – cooking me nourishing food, waking me with a cup of tea in the morning, taking on more than his fair share of the housework, and his help with the bibliography – are testament to his kindness and generosity, and have benefited me immensely in these last few weeks. Above all, his constant love and affirmation have gradually given me more confidence and less self-doubt, enhancing my agency both as a philosopher and as a person.

And, finally, I am grateful to Gracie, for everything.

INTRODUCTION

In October 2016, I adopted Gracie, a six-month-old Wheaton Terrier-Poodle mix, with my then-husband. I still remember the day she arrived – how she approached me with a gentle sniff and then, looking up at me, wagged her tail. And I remember that first night, the way she hopped casually up onto the foot of our bed and started making herself comfortable, settling this way and that until she had moved my legs into a satisfactory position, and I felt the warmth and the weight of her body against me. By the morning, I had fallen in love.

I had not been prepared for how deeply I would love her. I soon realized that I had not adopted a pet but a family member, an intimate companion, a best friend. And I came to understand what had already been evident to others: that one can genuinely, fully, with all of one's heart, love a non-human animal.

Gracie and I have lived together for six years now. While my relationship with her has been in many ways transformative, marking a turning point in my life – a switch in focus from Marxist philosophy to the philosophy of love and animal ethics, a change in persona from dog-indifferent to avid dog-lover, a profound growth in patience, empathy, curiosity, and wonder – it has also been an undercurrent of stability in the changing landscape of my most intimate relationships. My relationship with Gracie began during my first marriage, as part of a trio. It was preserved, just the two of us, through my separation and ultimate divorce from my now ex-husband. We lived together, Gracie and I, during my first ever bout of adult singlehood. And we embarked together on the path to my second marriage, merging once again into a family of three.

After my ex-husband left, Gracie's presence was the difference between living with another and living alone. Still I slept and woke with another warm body in the bed. Gracie's was the last face I'd see at night and the first I'd see in the morning – her tongue on my face, her twist and stretch and wagging tail as she received my rubs and kisses. Our morning routine remained basically the same – I'd give her breakfast and then we'd go to the morning play group at Kenwood Park. When I returned home from campus, she would as always greet me at the door with a wiggling body. When friends came by, she basked in their attention, inserting herself physically into conversations. Bedtime remained a joint activity, she being observant of the usual routine – lights turned off, door locked, plugs unplugged – and leading the way upstairs, bedward bound. Up she would jump, as she still does now and always did before, and settle with a sigh on the bed. Inhaling, exhaling – her living presence filled the silence of the room. Whereas, before, she would occupy some spot in the middle of the bed and my then-husband and I would sleep cramped and awkward, carefully maneuvered around her, now she and I could spread out, and she came to occupy the vacant spot next to me. It is testament to her living presence that for some months after my ex-husband's departure, occasionally her shifting and sighing in the night would half-wake me and, momentarily, like not recognizing and then recognizing the surroundings in which you wake, I would perceive her movements first as his and then as hers.

The bed is cramped again now, as we are once again two members of a family of three. In a sense, my love for Gracie is unremarkable to me – if asked how it is that I love her, I might simply respond, "How could I not?" But in another sense, it does strike me as remarkable. How, I might wonder, has my love leapt across a seeming abyss of difference and taken hold of this creature in all of her *otherness*? How is it that one of the beings with whom I have come to share my life – one of our family of three – is a *dog*? Indeed, if the sheer volume of memoirs written about human-dog relationships is anything to go by, such love is quite possible, quite usual, but at the same time endlessly *notable*.

Indeed, as a culture, we are ambivalent about such relationships. On the one hand, we know of the love that people can have for animals, and for dogs in particular. Dogs are, after all, "man's best friend." In the *Twilight Zone* episode, "The Hunt," a man (Hyder) and his dog (Rip) drown together in a river while out hunting raccoons. Together, they find themselves in the afterlife, but are told by a man claiming to be St. Peter guarding the gates to heaven, that Rip cannot enter. Hyder refuses to enter without Rip, saying that "Any place that's too high-falutin' for Rip is too fancy for me." Hyder's actions seem reasonable, even admirable, to the viewer: what kind of heaven would it be, anyway, in which you weren't allowed to take your dog? And indeed, this point of view is vindicated, when we meet the real St. Peter, looking for both Hyder and Rip to welcome them both to the real heaven. The first man, it turns out, was the devil, and those gates were the gates to hell. Suddenly it all makes sense. The devil knew that Rip would, if he had accompanied him, alerted Hyder to the smell of brimstone: "a man," explains St. Peter, "well, he'll walk right into Hell with both eyes open. But even the devil can't fool a dog."[1]

A storyline like this speaks to our cultural understanding of the role that a non-human animal – and in particular a dog – can play in a person's life. But on the other hand, such love is often undermined, dismissed, or pathologized. Love a dog *too much* and you might just be frivolous, sentimental, have trouble with human connection, or be misdirecting your parental yearnings – especially, perhaps, if you are a woman. A particularly sensitive area in which this cultural divide can be seen is around grief. Websites offering support for those grieving the death of their companion animals often warn people of the difficulty of facing mixed responses. One website, for example, warns the griever of "well-

[1] The Twilight Zone, "The Hunt," *Amazon Prime/Paramount* video, 24:47, January 26, 1962, https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B000I0F81S/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r

meaning friends and relatives" who will not understand one's grief, stuck on the thought that their beloved is, for example, "just a dog."[2]

In Chapter 1, "Loving Dogs: A Puzzle for the Philosophy of Love," I demonstrate, with reference to the views of Troy Jollimore, Niko Kolodny, W. Newton-Smith, Kieran Setiya, that in the divide between those who love their dogs (or other companion animals) and those who would demean such experiences, the contemporary philosophy of love seems, for the most part, to have taken the latter position. The kind of love we are most interested in, I suggest, is a distinctive kind that one might have for, for example, one's friends, family members, or life partner. And we are talking about love of this kind, I think, when we claim that one can feel this also for a companion animal. It is the thought that non-human animals can be objects of this kind of love that many philosophers either deny or ignore.[3]

I argue that this discrepancy between philosophy and experience is a problem. The serious testimony of serious people, concerning their own experiences, should carry philosophical weight; philosophers should not be in the habit of dismissing or undermining people's experiences without very good

[2] "Coping with the loss of a pet," *American Veterinary Medical Association*, Accessed June 1, 2022, https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/pet-owners/petcare/coping-loss-pet.

[3] The distinctive kind of love at issue here does not map neatly onto the *eros/philia/agape* distinction found in Ancient Greek thought. In terms of the extension of love's possible objects, this kind of love bears some resemblance to the notion of *philia*, insofar as that refers to the love of friends and family (though *philia* also refers to various relations, such as that of fellow citizens, that we would not consider loving in this sense). Insofar as *eros* is specifically romantic or sexual in nature, it is more specific than our notion of love, which includes the love of romantic partners but is not limited to it. *Agape* is often thought of as an impersonal and impartial form of love, and in these respects different from *eros* and *philia*, since it is understood not as responding to the particular features of the beloved but rather as either (a) *bestowing* value on the beloved or (b) responding to the value that an individual has in virtue of being of a particular kind – a value that she thus shares with others of that kind. However, some contemporary views have blurred this distinction. Thus, for example, in Frankfurt's view, love involves a bestowal of value but is nonetheless neither impartial nor impersonal. (See, for example, Harry Frankfurt, *The Reasons of Love* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 38-39.) And in David Velleman's view, discussed further in Chapter 2, the lover responds to the value that the beloved possesses in virtue of her personhood – a value that she therefore shares with all other persons but that, by its nature, marks each person out as having incomparable worth and thus as inherently *individual*. (J. David Velleman, "Love as a Moral Emotion," *Ethics* 109, no. 2 (January 1999), 366-370.)

explanation. Some have suggested that what distinguishes humans as distinctive objects of love is that they, unlike mere things, are loci of subjective experience and initiative,[4] with "complex inner lives."[5] But, I argue, as any reasonable observer can see, these characteristics are also true of many non-human animals, including dogs. Animals are not mere things.

In Chapter 2, "Love and Rational Nature: A Critique of Two Prominent Views," I discuss the accounts of Bennett Helm and David Velleman, respectively, according to which love's possible objects are limited more specifically to "persons," where personhood is understood in a technical sense in terms of a capacity for reflective self-evaluation. Such views would, as far as we know, exclude all non-human animals from the set of love's possible objects. However, a troubling implication of these views – even for those who doubt the possibility of loving a non-human animal – is that infants and some severely cognitively disabled adults would also be so excluded. Indeed, consideration of the cases that would be excluded actually helps us to see something that is true even of cases in which a person is the object of love – that when one loves a person, one loves them not merely *as* a person, understood in terms of the capacity for reflective self-evaluation, but rather as what we might call a "somebody."

The notion of a "somebody" that I develop is the notion of a locus of subjective experience and initiative, capable of striving[6] and suffering, and, crucially, of interaction and connection with other somebodies. There is something distinctive, I argue, about loving *somebody* as opposed to *something*; and, in particular, there is something distinctive about the love we have for those with whom we share a certain kind of relationship. Thus, what will ultimately explain the possibility of loving a non-human

[4] Edward Harcourt, "Attachment, Autonomy, and the Evaluative Variety of Love," in *Love, Reason, and Morality*, eds. Esther Engels Kroeker and Katrien Schaubroeck, 46.
[5] Troy Jollimore, *Love's Vision* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), xi-xii.
[6] The notion of animal striving is central to Martha Nussbaum's forthcoming book, and my use of the term is influenced by having read her manuscript. (Martha Nussbaum, *Justice For Animals: Our Collective Responsibility* (New York: Simon and Schuster, forthcoming.)

animal such as a dog, as I develop my positive view, is the possibility of engaging with them in this kind of relationship.

In Chapter 3, "Between Hearts: Love and Relationships," I argue that the distinctive kind of love that interests Helm and Velleman, and the kind that is of interest to me, is in fact localized to such relationships. Indeed, it should be understood as a *feature* of a relationship. Such love does not make sense outside of the context of a relationship. The relevant kinds of relationship should be understood as consisting, at the most basic level, of patterns of interaction between the participants, of a kind that constitutes what I call *togetherness*. Such togetherness requires not only mutual recognition and address but also mutual openness, receptivity, and attunement. Relationships also consist of the attitudes of the partners toward one another – and love is one such possible attitude. These attitudes themselves would not make sense in the absence of a *history* of interaction, but given that history they can sustain the relationship over long periods of absence in which there is no interaction. Notably, I argue, such interactions, as well as the attitudes of the partners, need not be symmetrical in order to constitute the relevant kind of relationship – this is clear, for example, in the case of parents and their young children.

By arguing that love, of the kind that is of interest here, should be understood as a feature of a relationship marked by a history of togetherness, I provide a framework for explaining the possibility of loving a non-human animal – the possibility of such love depends on the possibility of engaging in the relevant kind of relationship. The possible asymmetry of such relationships – as demonstrated in the human case – leaves room for the possibility of such relationships with certain non-human animals. In particular, the love need not be reciprocated in kind. This leaves it, for now, an open question whether there must be a reciprocation of love *of some sort*. But before we can address that

question, and the question of whether animals can love us back, I must give a more detailed account of the nature of love itself.

In Chapter 4, "Love as Caring Attachment," I argue that love should be understood as a kind of attachment, characterized as a felt need to be together with another, where such attachment is understood as one side of an affectional bond. Notably, many other species form affectional bonds. Specifically, love should be understood as *caring attachment*, in which the attachment figure – the beloved – is cared about for her own sake as an irreplaceable individual.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I apply this framework to the specific case of my relationship with Gracie, giving a detailed, rich account of the nature of our togetherness and our enduring, affectional bond, characterized by mutual attachment. Here I address the question whether Gracie, strictly speaking, loves me back – since I have said that love should be understood not simply as an attachment but as a kind of caring attachment. I do not suppose that Gracie loves me in exactly the same way that I love her (though, as I have argued, our relationship, including our attitudes toward one another, need not be symmetrical). But she does show a kind of care for me that might be described as caring about me for my own sake. I thus think it is natural to construe her affections toward me as loving. My argument that she is a proper object of my love, however, does not hang on this interpretation – however exactly we construe what I get back from Gracie, it is enough.

The account that I give of my relationship with Gracie is of course in many ways specific to that particular relationship, though it does draw on more general elements insofar as it references canine science. The particular details of human-dog relationships of course admit of a lot of variety, because each dog, and each person, is different. And, though my focus is on the example of human-dog relationships, this is meant to be just one example, establishing a general objection to the idea that

only humans, or persons, can have such relationships and that only they can be possible objects of love.

While there will of course be qualitative differences in the details of the kinds of relationships one can have with various different species, and different individuals within a species, my account also allows for the possible "togetherness" achievable in such relationships to differ as a matter of degree, though there will not necessarily be a clear, linear scale by which to measure this. Though I have some experience interacting with a variety of different animals, having had many "pets" as a child and adult – including cats, rabbits, gerbils, guinea pigs, rats, mice, hamsters, and a leopard gecko – I suspect that in many cases I was not attentive enough to see the full potential of the relationship, and am therefore not in a good position to describe the relational possibilities. My account calls for us to be imaginative and open to the serious testimony of others. I provide such testimony in particular about my relationship with my dog. I leave it to others to write about their own experiences with other species (or with their own dogs, for that matter).

1. LOVING DOGS: A PUZZLE FOR THE PHILOSOPHY OF LOVE

In this chapter, I lay out the problem that sets the stage for the rest of the dissertation. The problem is this. On the one hand – as I demonstrate in Section I – many people's experience and testimony, including my own, suggests that it is possible to love a non-human animal, such as a dog, in that deeply personal and meaningful way in which we might love a close human friend or family member. But on the other hand – as I discuss in Section II – much of the contemporary philosophy of love is unable to adequately account for this possibility; indeed, many philosophers would deny that such love is possible, arguing that we can only love, properly speaking, other human beings. When philosophy cannot acknowledge or make sense of people's actual experiences, this should be cause for re-evaluating the dominant philosophical view.

Presumably, if only human beings are possible objects of love, this must be in virtue of something special about them. What could this be? In Section III, I address claims that human beings are distinctive objects of love in virtue of their "complex inner lives," or in virtue of their being loci of subjective experience and initiative. I argue that these cannot be taken as reasons for limiting love's possible objects to human beings, since many other species also have these features. I argue that we have quite conclusive reason to think that many other species are conscious, striving beings with rich emotional lives. They are, to introduce a term that I will use throughout the dissertation, "somebodies."

In Section IV, I suggest that what we need, in order to make sense of the love we can have for non-human animals – is an account of loving *somebody*. This is the account that I will develop in the course of the dissertation – an account that includes our love for human and non-human animals alike.

I. THE TESTIMONY

I adopted Gracie in 2016 when she was six months old. I had not had a dog before, and though I was prepared to love her, I was not prepared for what a profound love it would be. It happened within twenty-four hours, and over the six years we have spent together it has grown deeper and wider like the roots of a sturdy tree. In it there is a caring devotion, an anxious vigilance for her well-being, an awe-like sense of her preciousness, a deep and enduring attachment, and a profound joy. Our relationship has transformed me, awakening new capacities for curiosity, wonder, patience and empathy. Through the window of my love for her, I see the world anew; not only do I smile at each dog that walks by; I see more clearly, too, the individuality of each squirrel, bird, or deer that I encounter, more heavily impressed by the thought that we are fellow creatures on this earth.

In my love for a dog, I am not alone. In *Pack of Two: The Intricate Bond Between People and Dogs* – the memoir of her relationship with her dog, Lucille – Caroline Knapp announces on the first page: "I have fallen in love with my dog."[1] Describing a moment of intimacy between her and Lucille, she writes:

> "I crouched down by the sofa to scratch her chest and coo at her, and she hooked her front paw over my forearm. She gazed at me; I gazed back.
>
> I have had Lucille for close to three years, but moments like that, my heart fills in a way that still strikes me with its novelty and power. … I adore this dog, without apology."[2]

I experience moments like this too – moments that make my heart swell. Sometimes as Gracie and I lie together, I really look at her, her rounded stomach, her legs extended to almost the length of the bed, those paws, those ears, her soft grey-and-black-and-white fur, her expressive brown eyes. The

[1] Caroline Knapp, *Pack of Two: The Intricate Bond Between People and Dogs* (New York: The Dial Press, 1998), 1.
[2] Knapp, *Pack of Two*, 15.

rhythmic sound of her breath, the feel of her heartbeat, her body gently rising and falling. And I think to myself, *God, I can't put you into words*.

George Pitcher, in his memoir *The Dogs Who Came to Stay*, gives a moving narrative of his and his partner, Ed's, loving relationship with their rescued dogs – Lupa, and her son, Remus. They find Lupa and her puppies under the shed in their garden. Though it is clear that Lupa has endured abuse at the hands of humans, they slowly gain her trust, and the two dogs eventually come to live with George and Ed in their house (the other puppies are all adopted), occupying a central place in their lives. Of both dogs, Pitcher says "we simply loved them with all our hearts."[3]

We find testimony of the love we can have for a dog also in accounts of grief. Writing of his childhood dog, Orloff, in his book *The Philosopher's Dog: Friendships with Animals*, Raimond Gaita says: "I felt that he was my closest and truest friend and I loved him."[4] When Orloff dies – from eating glass-laced sausages put down by a neighbor – Gaita's father carries him "tenderly" over the fence into their yard, to be buried:

> "As my father dug the grave, placed Orloff in it, and buried him, I remembered our friendship. … We cried for him. It was the first time I had seen my father cry and the only time we cried together. For weeks I felt as though the pain in my chest would make it explode."[5]

In the section of his *Moral Questions* titled "The Death of a Dog," Rush Rhees records his grief at the sudden and unexpected death of his dog, Danny, caused by a bad reaction to an anesthetic during a routine teeth cleaning.[6] Rhees demonstrates the difficulty of grasping what happens in death, what death *is* – "I don't understand it; I don't understand what's happened" – in a way that speaks to the

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[3] George Pitcher, *The Dogs Who Came to Stay* (London: Orion Books, 1996), 147.
[4] Raimond Gaita, *The Philosopher's Dog: Friendships with Animals* (New York: Random House, 2002), 11.
[5] Gaita, *The Philosopher's* Dog, 13.
[6] Rush Rhees, *Moral Questions*, ed. D. Z. Phillips (Basingstoke: MacMillan Press, 1999), 197-198.

profundity of the loss.[7] Unable to make sense of this loss ("it is the trouble about *death* – trying to understand his death – for one thing"[8]), and unable to move forward for fear of in some sense leaving Danny behind ("What sort of fidelity would this show?"[9]), Rhees's grief takes the form of a kind of prolonged existential crisis. "I cannot," he writes, "think that the world in which I move and do things now is real. The world that's real is where I left him."[10]

At Lupa's death, Pitcher describes he and Ed as "plunged into a world of grief" and writes that "her death has left a great empty place in the center of our … life."[11] Nonetheless, he writes with gratitude: "she taught me how to deal with the death of someone I love."[12] He goes on:

> "She taught me how to be with a person in her dying, how to comfort her. … She taught me not to resent a beloved person for dying but rather to cherish her all the more. She taught me how to say farewell. And she taught me, at last, how to grieve."[13]

That Lupa teaches Pitcher how to grieve speaks, I think, to the continuity between the love he has for her and the love he has for certain human beings. Indeed, what all of these testimonies suggest, I think, is that insofar as there is a distinctively profound form of love that we can feel for other humans, such as our close friends and family members, it is this kind of love that we can feel, too, for certain non-human animals, such as our dogs.

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[7] Rhees, *Moral Questions*, 206.
[8] Rhees, 211.
[9] Rhees, 201.
[10] Rhees, 201.
[11] Pitcher, *The Dogs Who Came to Stay*, 115.
[12] Pitcher, 117.
[13] Pitcher, 118.

II. INADEQUATE ACCOUNTS OF LOVE

Serious consideration of the possibility of loving a non-human animal rarely appears in the philosophical literature on love.[14] It is quite common for philosophers to start their inquiry into the nature of love by acknowledging that we use the term "love" in a variety of quite loose ways, many of which are directed at mere *things*, and then quickly specify that they are interested in a distinctive kind of love that is directed only towards other humans or persons (where the two notions appear to be treated as synonymous[15]).Thus, for example, W. Newton-Smith notes that "we speak of loving persons, food, countries, art, hypothetical divine beings, and so on," before clarifying that in his "conceptual investigation of love" he will be "interested only in cases where the object of a love is some one or more persons."[16] Similarly, though acknowledging its wider English usage, Niko Kolodny says that he is interested in love only as "a state that involves caring about a person."[17] Troy Jollimore, too, acknowledges a wide notion of "love" that we often use in common parlance, according to which "one can be said to love a great many things: Thai food, Bach's concertos, playing or watching baseball, one's country, and even life itself," before noting that he is "especially, indeed exclusively, concerned with love for *persons*."[18] Though neither one of these philosophers gives an explicit definition of

[14] Tony Milligan has recently drawn attention to this neglect of human-animal love, and has argued for its possibility. See Tony Milligan, "Love and Animals," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Philosophy of Love*, ed. Christopher Grau and Aaron Smuts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), Oxford Handbooks Online; and Tony Milligan, "Animals and the Capacity for Love," in *Love and its Objects: What Can We Care For?*, eds. Christian Maurer, Tony Milligan, and Kamila Pacovská (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2014). Raimond Gaita gives the love of non-human animals serious philosophical treatment (Gaita, *The Philosopher's Dog*). Martha Nussbaum takes seriously the testimony of George Pitcher (Pitcher, *The Dogs Who Came to Stay*), drawing on it to argue not just that humans can love non-human animals but that non-human animals can love us in return (Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 120-124).

[15] For now, I will treat the term "person" as synonymous with "human," since that appears to be the way these philosophers are using it. However, in the next chapter I will introduce a more technical notion of personhood, and the views of certain philosophers that it is persons in this technical sense that are the proper objects of love.

[16] W. Newton-Smith, "A Conceptual Investigation of Love," in *Eros, Agape, and Philia: Readings in the Philosophy of Love*, ed. Alan Soble (St. Paul: Paragon House, 1989), 201-202.

[17] Niko Kolodny, "Love as Valuing a Relationship," *The Philosophical Review* 112, no. 2 (2003): 137.

[18] Troy Jollimore, *Love's Vision* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), xi.

"person," they each seem to be understanding it as roughly synonymous with "human." Kolodny takes love for persons to be in some sense *paradigmatic*, noting that "the species of love that involves caring for another person is the species that most attracts the interests of moral philosophers."[19] Newton-Smith offers a similar justification:

> "It would seem fairly clear that this is, as it were, the home territory of the concept of love and that the use of 'love' in conjunction with objects other than persons is best understood as an extension of this use."[20]

Not all philosophers agree – some make no conceptual distinction between the love we might have for a mere thing, on the one hand, and the love we might have for our friend, spouse, sister, child, or parent, on the other. According to Susan Wolf, for example, we can love all kinds of things, including people but also, for example "philosophy, or music, or the Great Smoky Mountains."[21] The term "love" is meant to pick out just the same thing when applied to all of these different kinds of objects, and so, conceptually speaking, it is indiscriminate across a range of different kinds of object. Similarly, Harry Frankfurt writes: "As I construe love … the range of its possible objects is very wide." According to Frankfurt, the object of love "may be a person; but it may also be [for example] a country or an institution," or "a moral or a non-moral ideal," or "a tradition, or a way of doing things."[22] Sam Shpall, noting what he sees as the mistaken tendency to focus exclusively on love for other humans, has defended the more "commodious" approach to love's possible objects:

> "absent strong positive reasons for thinking that what we routinely call love – for non-human animals, artworks, causes, natural wonders, places, and maybe even God – is fundamentally different in kind from love for human beings, the default view should be that we have our

[19] Kolodny, "Love as Valuing a Relationship," 137.
[20] Newton-Smith, "A Conceptual Investigation of Love," 202.
[21] Susan Wolf, "Love: The Basic Questions," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Philosophy of Love*, ed. Christopher Grau and Aaron Smuts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), Oxford Handbooks Online.
[22] Harry Frankfurt, "On Caring," in *Necessity, Volition, and Love* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 166.

> conceptual scheme for a reason. We are picking out a distinctive and unified psychological condition."[23]

On the one hand, then, we have those views that single out love for other humans as special, dismissing all other uses of the term "love" – including, presumably, love for non-human animals – as mere extensions of the term, applied to a correspondingly watered-down and relatively insignificant version of the phenomenon. And on the other hand, there are those views that deny any distinction between the love we could have for all kinds of objects – including humans and non-human animals but also inanimate objects, ideas, and activities. *Both* kinds of view, it should be emphasized, consider love for a non-human animal to be on a par with love for a mere *thing* – this is a feature that they share, and it is, I will argue, a problem for both kinds of view.

I do not want to deny that there is a meaningful sense in which one can "love" a *thing* (a non-being), such as an artwork, or justice, or any of the other things mentioned in the "commodious" approaches to love's objects. But is this exactly the *same* sense as that in which we might love a person – for example, a close friend or relative? I don't think so. Were somebody to tell me that they loved the Great Smoky Mountains, I would *not* take them to mean the same thing as when they had told me that they loved, for example, their child, sibling, or romantic partner – we do indeed make such distinctions in common understanding, contrary to Shpall's claims.[24]

[23] Sam Shpall, "Love's Objects," in *Love, Reason, and Morality*, eds. Esther Engels Kroeker and Katrien Schaubroeck (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 58-59.

[24] It might be countered that because I have never *been* to the Great Smoky Mountains, I am not qualified to judge this; and perhaps, too, if I had cultivated a more sophisticated aesthetic appreciation, I could conceive of loving a painting *in just the same way* that I love my little sister. But I cannot conceive of what I might learn in such a case that could make the experience of loving *something* the same as that of loving *somebody*.

Though the love one might have for one's child will differ in various ways from the love one might have for one's parent, and both will differ in turn from the love one may have for one's spouse, there nonetheless seems to be a general sense of the term "love" that applies to all of these cases regardless of those differences. And it seems to be this phenomenon that most contemporary philosophers have in mind when they speak of the distinctive kind of love that one can have for another human being or person.[25]

What, then, are we to make of love for non-human animals? Notably, none of those philosophers, discussed above, who single out love for persons as distinct from any other kind of object, explicitly mentions the case of love for a non-human animal – betraying a lack of serious acknowledgment of this question. Given that they are non-human, or non-person, we can only assume that they are meant to fall into the category of love objects on a par with, for example, Thai food, art, or baseball. The problem with this, of course, is that it runs contrary to the experiences recorded above. The love that the humans in my above examples have for their non-human animal companions does not seem comparable to the sense in which I might "love" chocolate, or Thai food, or baseball – indeed, it seems far more comparable to the sense in which I might love my sister, spouse, or child.

Some philosophers have recognized this difficulty – of how to characterize love for non-human animals within a view that singles out love for humans or persons – but have had disappointingly little to say about it. Kieran Setiya, for example, in his "Love and the Value of a Life," mentions love for non-human animals in a footnote as a "difficult case," but only remarks briefly "I doubt that it is

[25] Thus, for example, Kolodny argues that such love is in fact rationally grounded in personal relationships (Kolodny, "Love as Valuing a Relationship").

rational to love one's dog with the degree of partiality one has for one's wife or child."[26] In his Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry, "Love," Bennet Helm singles out a distinctive kind of love that might be described, he says, as "a matter of caring about another person as the person she is, for her own sake." He briefly mentions the possible case of loving a non-human animal such as a cat or dog and suggests that it can be understood as "a kind of deficient mode of the sort of love we typically reserve for persons." Questions surely arise here, but Helm swiftly moves on, saying simply that "philosophical accounts of love have focused primarily on the sort of *personal* love at issue in [statements such as "I love my wife (or mother or child or friend)"]" and that "such personal love will be the focus here."[27]

Clearly, then, serious consideration of the possibility of loving a non-human animal has been neglected in much of the contemporary philosophy of love. The question is: why? Why should we think that human beings, and only human beings, are possible objects of love?

Just as there is notorious difficulty in singling out all and only humans as having special moral status in virtue of some morally relevant feature that they all share, so too it is difficult to pick out some distinctively human feature in virtue of which they are possible objects of love. With regard to moral status, the dilemma goes like this: any feature that is a candidate for moral relevancy and which is shared by all human beings – including infants and severely cognitively disabled people – will also be shared by at least some other species; features of human beings, of a kind that are candidates for moral relevancy, that are not shared with any other species are also not shared with *all* human beings – often, the cognitive capacities that are supposed to distinguish humans as having higher moral status than

[26] Kieran Setiya, "Love and the Value of a Life," *The Philosophical Review* 123, no. 3 (July 2014): 260, note 20.
[27]Bennett Helm, "Love," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed.* Edward N. Zalta (Fall 2021), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2021/entries/love/.

other animals are capacities that infants and at least some cognitively disabled people do not have. Thus, if one wants to distinguish all and only humans as having a special moral status, in virtue of some morally relevant feature, one will face the difficulty of casting one's net either too narrow or too wide.[28]

A similar difficulty faces those who want to distinguish all and only humans as possible objects of (a distinctive kind of) love. If there is a special kind of love that we can have only for humans, as these views would have it, then this should owe, presumably, to something special *about* humans in virtue

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[28] This is the dilemma one faces if one wants to distinguish human beings as morally special and subscribes to the view that James Rachels calls "moral individualism": "Moral individualism is a thesis about the justification of judgments concerning how individuals may be treated. The basic idea is that how an individual may be treated is to be determined, not by considering his group memberships, but by considering his own particular characteristics." (James Rachels, *Created from Animals: The Moral Implications of Darwinism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 173.)

Some philosophers embrace this implication of moral individualism. Thus Jeff McMahan, for example, defends moral individualism, arguing that there is no good reason "to accept that a radically cognitively impaired human being makes a stronger moral claim on one than an animal with comparable psychological capacities and potential." (Jeff McMahan, "Our Fellow Creatures," *The Journal of Ethics* 9, no. 3-4 (2005), 379.) McMahan's version of this view is tasteless and politically troubling, insofar as it is framed in terms of revising our understanding of the moral status of humans with intellectual disabilities to something lower than it is currently. If what one wants is to argue that non-human animals have a higher moral status than previously supposed, based on their relevant mental features, I see no good reason why the relative moral status specifically of humans with intellectual disabilities should enter the discussion at all. Why not just discuss the moral status of non-human animals in relation to the average human being, and leave those with intellectual disabilities – a group that has historically been subject to immoral treatment – alone?

Peter Singer offers a more egalitarian argument, according to which humans and non-human animals have equal moral status. "I am urging," he says "that we extend to other species the basic principle of equality that most of us recognize should be extended to all members of our own species." (Peter Singer, "All Animals Are Equal," in *Animal Rights and Human Obligations*, eds. Tom Regan and Peter Singer (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1976), 149) This is, he specifies, the principle of equal consideration of interests (Singer, "All Animals Are Equal," 150). Insofar as this is a form of moral individualism, it is a very minimalist form, since the only morally relevant feature of an individual, in Singer's view, is that they can suffer. In this respect, he follows Jeremy Bentham, who says of the treatment of animals: "The question is not, Can they *reason*? nor, Can they *talk*? but, Can they *suffer*?" (Jeremy Bentham, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, ch. XVII, cited in Singer, 153.) This is a morally relevant feature, Singer argues, insofar as it is in virtue of an individual's capacity for suffering that they can be said to have interests at all (Singer, 154.)

On the other hand, some philosophers reject moral individualism. Cora Diamond, for example, argues "for the importance of the notion *human being* in ethics" (Cora Diamond, "The Importance of Being Human," *Royal Institute of Philosophy supplement* 29 (March 1991), 35) – a notion that is not to be understood as merely marking a biological category, or indeed as reducible to any empirical features, but rather as an irreducibly ethical notion, bound up with our moral imagination (Diamond, "The Importance of Being Human," 44-45). Similarly, in the *Philosopher's Dog,* Raimond Gaita argues that human beings have "individuality" in the sense that "we express when we say that each human being is unique and irreplaceable, in a sense that can never be conveyed by appealing to individual features, and not just to those who care for them, but unique and irreplaceable period" (Gaita, 78). Though non-human animals have, he says, such individuality in an "attenuated way," there is something special about being human: "Human beings are individuals in a way that nothing else that we know in nature is." (Gaita, 78.)

of which they are possible objects of such love – something that other species lack.[29] But it is hard to see what the relevant feature could be. In the following section, I'll consider some suggestions that cast the net too wide, citing features – our "complex inner lives," or that we are loci of "experience" and "initiative" – that are shared with many other species. In Chapter 2, I'll consider some views that cast the net too narrow, singling out love's possible objects in terms of a distinctive capacity that would exclude infants and some severely cognitively disabled people.

III. COMPLEX INNER LIVES

Presumably, if there is a special kind of love we can have only for other humans, this should owe to something special *about* humans in virtue of which they are distinctive objects of love. The "crucial and deep difference," Jollimore writes, between the love one can have for a person and the love one can have for Thai food, baseball, etc., "has to do with the nature of the love object: the fact that a person, unlike other objects of love, possesses a profound and complex inner life and exists as a subject in the world."[30] In a similar vein, Edward Harcourt distinguishes the "love of human beings for other human beings"[31] from anything else we might call "love," citing the special nature of the human being as a "*locus of experience*" and a "*locus of initiative*."[32]

[29] Just as there are views according to which humans have, simply in virtue of their humanity, a special moral status, so it might be argued that humans are, simply in virtue of their humanity, possible objects of a distinctive kind of love. I will not directly address that possible line of argument here, but the arguments in this chapter should effectively constitute an objection to that line of thought.
[30] Jollimore, *Love's Vision*, xi-xii.
[31] Edward Harcourt, "Attachment, Autonomy, and the Evaluative Variety of Love," in *Love, Reason, and Morality*, eds. Esther Engels Kroeker and Katrien Schaubroeck, 39.
[32] Harcourt, "Attachment, Autonomy, and the Evaluative Variety of Love," 46.

A "locus of experience," or "subject in the world," is someone for whom there is a way that it is to be her – a (phenomenologically) conscious, or sentient, being. It is to have an "inner life," of more or less "complexity." To be a "locus of initiative" is to act in the world, in a sense more robust than mere unconscious reflex – it is, we might say, to have agency in the sense that one's actions can be explained, in part, by reference to one's own motivational states. The obvious question, then, is whether any non-human animals are loci of subjective experience and initiative.

That the answer to this is, for many non-human animals, affirmative, is quite obvious: it is obvious to those who spend time or have relationships with non-human animals, and it is now quite generally granted by scientists and philosophers.[33] To anybody who has spent time with, for example, a dog, it is clear that they are conscious beings who experience pleasure and pain, have desires and goals, successes and disappointments, and experience emotions such as fear, anxiety, excitement, joy, boredom, frustration and sadness. It is clear, too, that they are curious, that they learn, explore, and

[33] On the state of science, cognitive ethologist Marc Bekoff notes:

> "The field of animal emotions – which is a specific area of focus within the larger scientific discipline of cognitive ethology, or the study of animal minds – has changed a great deal in the past thirty years. When I first began my studies, researchers were almost all skeptics who spent their time wondering if dogs, cats, chimpanzees, and other animals felt anything. … But thankfully, there are fewer and fewer skeptics today, and while debates over *whether* animals have emotions still occur, the question of real importance is becoming *why* animal emotions have evolved the way they have. In fact, the paradigm is shifting to such an extent that the burden of proof now falls more often to those who still argue that animals don't experience emotions." (Marc Bekoff, *The Emotional Lives of Animals* (Novato: New World Library, 2007), xvii-xviii.)

Numerous scientific subdisciplines have, he notes, converged to explain animal emotions:

> "Scientific research in evolutionary biology, cognitive ethology, and social neuroscience supports the view that numerous and diverse animals have rich and deep emotional lives. Emotions have evolved as adaptations in numerous species, and they serve as a social glue to bond animals with one another. Emotions also catalyze and regulate a wide variety of social encounters among friends, lovers, and competitors, and they permit animals to protect themselves adaptively and flexibly using various behavior patterns in a wide variety of venues." (Bekoff, *The Emotional Lives of Animals*, xviii.)

Of course, we need a philosophical account of emotion to flesh out these claims, but such a philosophical account should be given in dialogue with both the scientific research and common experience. Indeed, I am not really suggesting that either Jollimore or Harcourt would, upon reflection, deny that non-human animals are loci of subjective experience and initiative, with "complex inner lives." Since this is so obvious, I think it is more likely that they simply hadn't registered its significance, having instead simply assumed that humans are special objects of love and only cursorily defended that assumption.

play, and that they communicate and form deep social bonds. Thus, the ethologist Frans de Waal recommends that "any academic who doubts the depth of animal emotions ought to get a dog."[34]

Indeed, those who live or work closely with animals, and who approach their interactions with openness and sensitivity, enjoy, I think, a privileged epistemic position with regard to questions about animal minds and behavior. This is partly due to the increased ability to observe the animals with whom one regularly interacts – to detect behavioral patterns and to understand these patterns in the wider context of the animal's way of life. Indeed, as with the humans in our lives, when we regularly interact with a non-human animal such as a dog, we often come to learn the meaning of even very subtle behaviors, with predictive success, without necessarily making conscious effort to do so.

I have no doubt, for example, that when Gracie greets me or my husband when we return home, her tail wagging her whole body; or when she runs bouncily alongside her friends at the park, tongue lolling out the side of her mouth; or when she splashes through the water on a hot day; or rolls on I-don't-know-what, her little legs dancing in the air; or when she ambles through the grass, gobbling up goose poop; she is happy – joyful, in fact. Her joy radiates.

Similarly, it is clear that when she licks my face in the morning she intends to wake me up, because she wants breakfast; or that when she taps me on the knee in the afternoon, she wants her lunch and intends to get it (though she needn't, of course, actually discriminate between "breakfast" and "lunch" as I do).

It is obvious, too, that when my husband packs the car to go away on a trip, and she watches the door and whines, that she is anxious; and that after he leaves, she is upset. Her hopefulness when she

[34] Frans de Waal, *Mama's Last Hug: Animal Emotions and What They Tell Us about Ourselves* (New York: Norton, 2019), 50. Similarly, Marc Bekoff writes that "To live with a dog is to know firsthand that animals have feelings. It's a no-brainer." (Bekoff, xx.)

follows me around as I eat a snack is clear; as is her satisfaction when she inevitably gets some, or her disappointment in the rare cases when she doesn't. There is no doubt that she is afraid when, tail between her legs, she runs from an aggressive dog at the dog park. She has, on two occasions – once when pinned down by an aggressive dog, and once when on a dingy in rough waters – defecated in fear, and she has once peed with excitement, when reunited with an old friend. Her contentment, when she lies on her back across the length of the sofa, slightly twisted with limbs in the air, is plain.

Through being with another, we also have a certain *feel* for their presence and the quality of that presence. Thus, for example, the ethologist Marc Bekoff writes: "Observing large groups of wild elephants close up I could feel their majestic presence, awareness, and emotions."[35] Barbara Smuts, writing of her experience of living among baboons, takes this even further, describing a sense in which she actually takes on the baboon group experience:

> "The baboons' thorough acceptance of me, combined with my immersion in their daily lives, deeply affected my identity. The shift I experienced is well described by millennia of mystics but rarely acknowledged by scientists. Increasingly, my subjective consciousness seemed to merge with the group-mind of the baboons. Although 'I' was still present, much of my experience overlapped with this larger feeling entity. Increasingly, the troop felt like 'us' rather than 'them.' The baboons' satisfactions became my satisfactions, their frustrations my frustrations."[36]

Science and philosophy are of course important here too, but just as common (and not-so-common) experience is answerable to science and philosophy, so too are science and philosophy answerable to common (and not-so-common) experience.[37] Understanding requires dialogue between all three perspectives. For example, philosophers develop theories of such things as consciousness and emotion, but while these theories will have implications regarding who counts as "conscious" or as

[35] Bekoff, 3. He describes this experience as "spiritual, inspirational, and transformative."
[36] Barbara Smuts, "Encounters with Animal Minds," *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 8, no. 5-7 (2001): 299.
[37] Of course, Bekoff and Smuts *are* scientists, and Smuts's work definitely reads as philosophy.

having "emotion," they cannot get off the ground without material to reflect on, and that material must presuppose some account of who is conscious and who has emotion, that is, of whose experiences we are trying to theorize.[38] And, further, our pre-philosophical understanding of who is conscious, who has emotions, etc., must be invoked when judging the adequacy of a given philosophical account.

Scientific studies of consciousness and mental states, too, cannot get off the ground without some prior understanding of who we should be studying – if we want to know, for example, what the neurological correlates of consciousness are, then, in order to get a full picture of this, we need to have a sense of who we *suspect* is conscious, in order to know who to study.

Given this codependency of philosophy, science, and common experience, Kristin Andrews suggests, with regard to, for example, the question of which animals have consciousness, what she calls a Dynamic Marker Approach (DMA). The DMA "works first by identifying the properties that trigger human judgments or perception of consciousness." These are the "initial markers" and "will include all the behaviors that play a direct role in our consciousness judgments," such as "language use, eye contact, bodily interactions, goal-directed action, emotional facial expressions and vocalizations, and pain behavior." The next step is to "identify an initial class of subjects who have some number of those markers," (they need not have all of them) and study members of that class to find "derived markers" – "relevant features that are repeatedly found among them," including "neurological, computational, cognitive, social, or biological" markers. We can then use a "calibration method" whereby, one the one hand, if species outside of the group given by the initial markers share in the

[38] Kristen Andrews remarks on this problem in Kristen Andrews, *The Animal Mind*: *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Animal Cognition* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), 85.)

derived markers, they can be added to the group for further study (perhaps finding more derived markers), and if some members of the initial group lack a salient variety of derived markers, "we will downgrade the degree of belief we have in the consciousness of those creatures."[39]

This kind of approach recognizes that the philosophical "problem of other minds," understood as the possibility of a general skepticism about the existence of other minds, insofar as mental states are not directly observable,[40] applies no less to other humans than to non-human animals.[41] And it takes seriously – indeed, gives epistemic priority to – our common experience and perception of

[39] Andrews, *The Animal Mind*, 86-87.

[40] I do not mean to take a stance here on the issue of whether or not we infer mentality and mental states through observing behavior, or whether we directly observe mental states. I mean only to point to the fact that if, as has often been supposed, we cannot directly observe mental states, then they raise special epistemic difficulty. What I want to suggest is that, insofar as this is a problem, it is not a special problem for animal minds. Some philosophers deny that this is a problem to start with. Dale Jamieson, for example, argues that the view according to which "all knowledge-claims about animal minds are based on probabilistic inferences to hidden mental states from observations of behavior," creates a "philosophical monster" in the "idea of a behaving body" that "may or may not be animated in some way or another by a mind." On the contrary, he argues, "we experience an animal's behavior not as a set of premises that support an inference, but as expressing the animal's mental state." (Dale Jamieson, "Science, Knowledge, and Animal Minds," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 98 (1998): 85-86.)

[41] Thus, Andrews writes, "We don't have proof that other humans have minds, just as we will never have proof that other animals have minds. Our commitment to the existence of human minds is based on markers – sets of behaviors and other properties that together we perceive or judge as making a conscious agent." (Andrews, 87.) It might be supposed, since humans tend to have language and can thus verbally describe their mental states, whereas non-human animals cannot, that the problem of other minds applies more strongly to non-human animals. But, in fact, once we are under the grip of skepticism about other minds, based on the apparent gap between observable behavior and the inner nature of the mind, then language will not get us out of it, since it is itself just an observable behavior. A robot could describe what were purported to be its inner states, without actually having any. Andrews, too, notes that "verbal reports … are just another kind of behavior." (Andrews, 88.) The ability, or lack thereof, of the other to verbalize their mental states becomes significant only once we assume that they do, in general, have mental states – their ability to vocalize can then, in some instances (i.e. when it is used truthfully and accurately), give us information about a mental state that is not easily inferred by other behaviors.

I can tell, for example, from certain vocalizations, when Gracie is in pain; but I do not always know where the pain is coming from or what is causing it. Recently, she had been experiencing pain that was very difficult to diagnose. Her vocal expressions of pain were happening seemingly at random with no obvious association with a distinct cause or particular area of her body. As the vet commented during her physical examination, which was giving no clues, "It's times like this when I really wish they could talk."

Nonetheless, the fact that when she was crying out she was crying out *in pain* was not in question. That she is a sentient being, and that we are able to make some kind of contact with her mental states, such that we might have some indication of when she is in pain, are premises on which the intelligibility of much of veterinary practice – including, most notably, the management of pain – depends.

consciousness, while nonetheless allowing for scientific and philosophical scrutiny of those perceptions. Indeed, if to a careful and curious observer or participant in interaction, an animal appears to quite clearly be conscious, this fact alone gives us prima facie reason to suppose that the animal in question is in fact conscious, such that we should need good reason to doubt it.[42] And in fact much scientific evidence confirms our common-sense beliefs about non-human animal consciousness. Regarding the neurological correlates of consciousness, for example, *The Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness*, signed by a "prominent international group" of neuroscientists at a conference at the University of Cambridge in 2012, states:

> "Convergent evidence indicates that non-human animals have the neuroanatomical, neurochemical, and neurophysiological substrates of conscious states along with the capacity to exhibit intentional behaviors. Consequently, the weight of evidence indicates that humans are not unique in possessing the neurological substrates that generate consciousness. Non-human animals, including all mammals and birds, and many other creatures, including octopuses, also possess these neurological substrates."[43]

[42] Michael Tye adopts a similar approach. (Michael Tye, "Do Fish Have Feelings?" in *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Animal Minds*, eds. Kristin Andrews and Jacob Beck (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018).) Tye claims that the rationality of believing that another human being has experiences similar to oneself, and the rationality of believing that a non-human animal has similar experiences to oneself, both depend on "an inference to the best available explanation of [the other's] behavior," in accordance with Newton's principle that "we are entitled to infer like cause from like effect unless there is defeating evidence." What might constitute defeating evidence? In the case of another human, an example would be if it turned out that "your head is empty and that you have only an organic exterior." (Tye, "Do Fish Have Feelings?" 169.)

Regarding the hypothesis that (teleost) fish feel pain, Tye argues, drawing on the research of Elizabeth Sneddon, that "In general, the overall pattern of behavior [teleost] fish produce is indeed similar to that we produce in response to the feeling of pain, as is their reaction to opiates. So, we should prefer the hypothesis that they feel pain too." (Tye, 171.) Here is something that might look like defeating evidence: fish lack a neocortex, and in human beings, pain is generally "generated by activity in regions of the neocortex." However, humans do not actually require a neocortex in order to feel pain. And further, it seems that the neocortex in mammal brains is a development from earlier brain structures that have been found in birds and also perhaps in fish. So it looks as though pain is not dependent on the existence of the neocortex. Fish's lack of a neocortex does not constitute defeating evidence against the hypothesis that they feel pain. (Tye, 171-172.)

[43] Philip Low et. al., "The Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness," (2012), https://fcmconference.org/img/CambridgeDeclarationOnConsciousness.pdf.

According to this statement, anyone who would try to cast doubt on non-human animal consciousness by pointing to the neuroanatomy of non-humans would, in the case of mammals, birds, and cephalopods, at least, find the evidence weighted against them.

We have good reason, then, to suppose that many non-human animals are loci of subjective experience and initiative, and we should expect our philosophical theories of consciousness to be accommodating of this fact. Indeed, Rocco J Genarro has argued that the possibility of non-human animal consciousness can be accommodated even within a version of the relatively demanding "higher-order representation" theory of consciousness according to which "what makes a mental state M conscious is a higher-order representation … of M."[44] Moreover, Gennaro takes it that the plausibility of such a theory of consciousness depends on its being able to account for non-human animal consciousness.[45]

Similarly, philosophical theories of emotion should be able to accommodate the common understanding of non-human animals as emotional beings – an understanding that is supported in science by cognitive ethologists. Writing about animal joy, for example, the cognitive ethologist Marc Bekoff claims that "To observe animals for any length of time is to see that animals clearly enjoy themselves."[46] Situations that often elicit joy include "when they play, greet friends, groom one another, are freed from confinement, sing, and perhaps even when watching others having fun." How do we know? First, by their behavior:

> "Joy and happiness are clearly signaled by behavior – animals are relaxed and walk loosely, as if their arms and legs are attached to their bodies by rubber bands. They also speak in their own tongues – purring, barking, or squealing in contentment. Dolphins chuckle when they are happy. Greeting ceremonies in African wild dogs involve cacophonies of squealing, propeller-like tail wagging, and bounding gaits. When coyotes or wolves reunite, they gallop toward one

[44] Rocco J. Gennaro, "Animal Consciousness and Higher-Order Thoughts," in *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Animal Minds*, 198.
[45] Gennaro, "Animal Consciousness and Higher-Order Thoughts," 200.
[46] Bekoff, 53.

> another whining and smiling, their tails wagging wildly. Upon meeting, they lick one another's muzzles, roll over, and flail their legs. When elephants reunite, there is a raucous celebration. They flap their ears, spin about, and emit a 'greeting rumble.'"[47]

There are numerous accounts that suggest that animals experience sorrow and grief. Jane Goodall writes of her experiences with chimpanzees:

> "I have watched chimpanzee children, after the death of their mothers, show behavior similar to clinical depression in grieving human children – hunched posture, rocking, dull staring eyes, lack of interest in events around them. If human children can suffer from grief, so too can chimpanzee children. Sometimes, in this state of grieving, chimpanzee orphans – like Flint and Kristal – die."[48]

Bekoff recites the following story of dog grief:

> "Many years ago, veterinarian Marty Becker gave his father a miniature schnauzer, Pepsi, as a gift … and the dog became his father's best friend. For years they shared the same food, the same chair, and the same bed. Then, when he was eighty years old, Marty's father committed suicide. Soon after family, friends, and the police left his house, Pepsi ran downstairs to the spot in the basement where Marty's father had died and stood as rigid as a statue. When Marty picked Pepsi up, the dog went from rigid to limp in his arms an emitted a painful moan. … Pepsi never recovered from his companion's death. Remaining weak and withdrawn, he slowly died."[49]

Barbara King, in her book *How Animals Grieve*, documents the grieving behavior of individual animals of many different species, including rabbits, cats, dogs, horses, elephants, chimpanzees, dolphins, and whales. She writes, for example, of the reaction of three elephants, Tarra, Winkie, and Sissy, to the death of their companion, Tina, at the Elephant Sanctuary in Hohenwald, Tennessee:

> "The next day, sanctuary caretakers gathered to bury Tina. Tarra and Winkie stood at the edge of the grave, where they remained, joined by Sissy, throughout that evening and the next day. Once again, distinct individual differences in mourning were apparent: Tarra was vocal and asked for attention from her human caretakers, Sissy stood vigil, and Winkie paced stiffly around.

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[47] Bekoff, 53-54.
[48] Jane Goodall, "Foreword," in Bekoff, xiv.
[49] Bekoff, 66.

> "On the following day, before moving on to another part of the Elephant Sanctuary, Sissy … placed her beloved tire, her security blanket, on her friend's grave. There she left it, an elephant memorial offering, for several days."[50]

The most plausible theories of emotion, I think, are those "cognitive-evaluative" views on which emotions are to be understood as, broadly speaking, ways of seeing things or situations as of significance or import to the subject. Examples of this kind of view are George Pitcher's theory of emotions as involving, in central cases, apprehension and evaluation of an object,[51] Martha Nussbaum's theory of emotions as "geological upheavals of thought,"[52] and Bennett Helm's theory of emotions as "felt evaluations."[53] Cognitive-evaluative views of emotion are able to capture the intentionality of emotions – their "aboutness" – a feature that cannot be captured if we think of emotions as mere feelings or sensations.[54]

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[50] Barbara J. King, *How Animals Grieve* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 62-63. We are given the following backstory for Sissy:

> "Sissy had been wild-caught at the age of one … in Thailand. Separated from her family and confined to zoos, Sissy experienced a complicated and sad series of events. Swept away in a flood at one Texas zoo, she was beaten by keepers at another. Nonetheless, at the Elephant Sanctuary, Sissy acted in a gentle manner. For emotional security, she carried a tire with her most everywhere she went. But she loved the company of elephants too." (King, *How Animals Grieve*, 61-52.)

[51] George Pitcher, "Emotion," *Mind* 74, no. 295 (July 1965): 332-334.

[52] Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 88. More specifically, Nussbaum subscribes to "a modified version of the ancient Greek Stoic view, according to which emotions are forms of evaluative judgement that ascribe to certain things and persons outside a person's own control great importance for the person's own flourishing" (Nussbaum, 22).

[53] Bennett Helm, *Love, Friendship, & the Self: Intimacy, Identification, & the Social Nature of Persons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 57. Helm actually distinguishes his view from what he calls cognitive accounts of emotion insofar as he rejects the "cognitive-conative" divide with regard to the "direction of fit" between mental states and the world. In Helm's view, a given instance of emotion is responsive to the import of its object, but this very import is itself constituted by a pattern of rationally interconnected emotions, of which the given emotion in question is just one instance. In this sense, there is no one-way direction of fit between emotional evaluations and the actual import of their objects in virtue of which such evaluations are rationally assessable. (See, for example, Bennett Helm, "The Significance of Emotions," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 31, no. 4 (October 1994); Bennett Helm, "Love, Identification, and the Emotions," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (January 2009): 43-44; and Helm, *Love, Friendship, & the Self,* 49-66.) However, although Nussbaum characterizes emotions as having a world-to-mind direction of fit, she conceives the "world" here as specifically, the world from the agent's point of view – the point of view of the agent's "own scheme of goals and projects, the things to which [she] attach[es] value in a conception of what it is for [her] to live well" – so the difference could be overstated. (Nussbaum, 49.) For Nussbaum, emotions are "cognitive-evaluative" in the sense of "cognitive" that refers merely to being "concerned with receiving and processing information" (Nussbaum, 23), and in that respect I think it is fair to call Helm's account a cognitive-evaluative account.

[54] See, for example, Nussbaum, 27, and Pitcher, "Emotion," 326-329.

In Helm's version of this view, for example, the emotion has three kinds of object. First is the emotion's "target," understood as "that at which the emotion is directed." Suppose, for example, that you stumble upon a venomous snake – presumably, you would be afraid of the snake, in which case the snake is the "target" of your fear.[55] Second is the emotion's "formal object," that is, "the kind of evaluation of the target that is distinctive of the emotion type at issue." So, for example, in fearing the snake (the target) you see, or evaluate, the snake *as dangerous* – roughly speaking, "dangerousness" is the formal object of the fear.[56] Third is the emotion's "focus" – "the background object having import to the subject, whose relation to the target makes intelligible the evaluation implicit in the emotion."[57] In this case, we might assume, the thing that is of importance to you in fearing the snake is, roughly speaking, your "health" or "safety" or "survival."

The cognitive-evaluative nature of the emotions does not preclude non-human animal emotions. Cognitive-evaluative accounts are able to accommodate non-human animal emotions insofar as the evaluations characteristic of emotions needn't be understood as "linguistically formulable propositions."[58] Helm states explicitly that his view is meant to capture the emotions of animals such as dogs and cats. Indeed, what motivates his account is, in part, a desire to give an account of import

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[55] Helm, 43. There can be a variety of possible ways of describing the target of the emotion. For example, we could say that you are afraid of the snake, or we could also say that you are afraid *that* the snake will bite you. Emotions can take as their target particulars – this snake – or (possible, or hypothetical) states of affairs. (See, e.g., Pitcher, 135.)

[56] Helm, 43. Nussbaum expresses an equivalent thought when she says that the aboutness of an emotion "embodies a way of seeing," and it is "the way in which an object is seen" that distinguishes different emotions from one another (Nussbaum, 27-28).

[57] Helm, 43. As noted above, Nussbaum characterizes emotions as evaluations that are made from the agent's own perspective, in terms of those things that are important to her. This reflects, in Nussbaum's view, the eudaimonistic character of emotions, in virtue of which "they contain an eliminable reference to the self" (Nussbaum, 52).

[58] Nussbaum, 23. In Pitcher's account, the notions of "apprehension" and "evaluation" should be understood loosely, and not as necessarily implying the presence of any belief or judgement. (Pitcher, "Emotion," 332-335.) Though Pitcher does not explicitly argue in his paper, "Emotion," that non-human animals have emotions, his account there seems to easily allow for this, and he clearly ascribes emotions to his dogs in *The Dogs Who Came to Stay*. (For example, Lupa's joy and affection as Pitcher rubs her stomach (Pitcher, 59-60), her fear of strangers (Pitcher, 48), Remus's anxiety and disappointment when Pitcher and Ed leave home for the evening (Pitcher, 76-77), and his grief at Lupa's death (Pitcher, 119), to give just a few examples.)

that distinguishes the genuine agency of, for example, cats, dogs, and people, from the mere goal-oriented behavior of, for example, "chess-playing computers."[59] Thus, the account is motivated by the common-sense understanding that animals are similar to us – they are conscious, intentional beings – in a way that computers are not. Nussbaum, too, appeals to the perspective of somebody who actually lives with non-human animals as material to draw on in the development of her theory of emotion.[60]

I have said that we should take seriously the experiences and testimony of those who live closely with animals, and that our scientific and philosophical theories should be, to some extent, answerable to it. Some nuance, though, is required here. From the fact that an animal obviously has an emotional life it does not follow that it is always obvious which emotion the animal is experiencing at any given time (and, in general, from the fact that an animal is obviously conscious, it does not follow that it is always obvious exactly what the animal is experiencing). Sometimes human projection and assumption obscures our understanding of animal behavior. For example, dogs are often perceived as displaying guilt when caught in the act or confronted about a misdemeanor – when they are found in the kitchen surrounded by the contents of the trash can, perhaps, or when they are shown a recently chewed-up shoe. But it turns out that this is probably not a display of guilt but more likely to be a display of fear.[61]

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[59] Helm, *Love, Friendship, & the Self*, 66. Helm's account is directed, in particular, at views like that of Daniel Dennett, according to which the kind of "means-end rationality" exhibited by a chess-playing computer is the kind of rationality constitutive of genuine mental states. (Helm, "The Significance of the Emotions," 319-320.)

[60] Nussbaum draws on Pitcher's account of the emotional lives of his dogs in his *The Dogs Who Came to Stay*. Just as a philosophical theory of emotion should be based on "close attention to narratives of [human] experience," so too, she argues, it should pay attention to narratives of non-human animal experience – since we cannot use first-personal narratives in this case, the closest we can get to that is by allowing an empathic and attentive observer to speak on behalf of the animals with whom he is intimately acquainted. It is important that Pitcher's account of his dogs' emotional lives "is consistent with scientific accounts," but at the same time, Nussbaum notes, "it reminds us … that all such scientific accounts must begin with experiences of interaction between humans and animals, and are thus only as rich as are the capacities of the scientist for observation and empathy." (Nussbaum, 92.) Again, we see that there is a delicate balance to be struck between the relative expertise of scientists, philosophers, and laypeople when it comes to thinking about animal emotion, and the need for each perspective to be answerable to the others.

[61] For example, Alexandra Horowitz (founder of the Horowitz Dog Cognition Lab at Barnard College) writes: "In my research, what looked to people like their dogs' guilt turned out to be the dogs' deferential, pleading reaction to owners' scolding and punishment: more 'please don't hurt me' than 'I did a bad thing.'" (Alexandra Horowitz, *Our Dogs, Ourselves:*

Other times, body language and behavior might just be hard to read, such that some expertise is required. A wagging tail on a dog, for example, is commonly understood to be a sign of happiness and a display of sociability; but this is not entirely correct. It depends on the way in which the tail is wagging – is it low and loose, or upright and stiff? – and other aspects of the dog's body language and behavior. When Gracie was a puppy, it took me some time to get used the wrestling, biting, and snarling that is often part of dog play; and indeed, it takes some practice to be able to recognize when play fighting is not entirely amicable, or when one dog is enjoying it more than the other.

Moreover, there are cases in which it might be clear what emotion an animal is experiencing without even a qualified behaviorist being in a position to say with certainty what the emotion is *about*. (This is similar to the pain case discussed above.) For example, at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and unexpected travel restrictions, I got stuck in the UK for three months. Several friends very generously offered to divide Gracie's care between them. For a few weeks she stayed with two of my colleagues and their dog, already a good friend of hers. After this period, she was collected by a close friend of mine, adored by Gracie, and brought back to my apartment where they would stay together. Arriving back at the apartment, Gracie started to pace and whine frantically. It was clear that she was very distressed. My friend video called me to see if I could help. The scene was heartbreaking – it was clear that Gracie was experiencing separation distress and was very upset. What wasn't clear was which separation she was upset about – was her distress caused by arriving home and seeing that I was not there, or was it caused by being separated from her dog friend, with whom she had spent the last few weeks? Was it both? I don't think that anybody could answer this with certainty.

The Story of a Singular Bond (New York: Scribner, 2019), 254.) It is for this reason that it pleases me that Gracie has never displayed "guilt" over a transgression – since I don't use scolding or punishment to teach her how I would like her to behave, she has no reason to be afraid when I catch her being an opportunist.

These three kinds of case, however, do not give us reason for a general skepticism about animal emotion. The fact that an untrained eye can be quick to project and make assumptions about ambiguous emotional expressions, or that an animal's behavior and body language can be hard to read, does not imply that animals do not in fact have any emotional life. Similarly, the fact that we cannot always know what a given emotion is *about* does not prevent us from discerning that the animal is experiencing an emotion, or even that she is experiencing *this* emotion. Of course, pacing and whining doesn't always suggest separation distress – Gracie has shown similar behavior when desperately wanting to eat my sister-in-law's pet rabbit or our neighbors' chickens, unfairly kept from her, and other similar behavior when she has urgently needed to go outside to pee. If somebody told me, without context, that their dog was pacing and whining, the first thing I would think of is that this *could* be a sign of "bloat" – a life-threatening emergency that calls for an immediate trip to the veterinary emergency room.[62] But the similarity of these cases owes just to the fact that they can all be described as "pacing and whining" – the *kind* of pacing and the *kind* of whining are, in ways not easy to describe, different. My certainty that in this case Gracie was experiencing separation distress owes both to the context and to my privileged epistemic position, given my intimate acquaintance with her. If you were me, or somebody similarly situated, you too would know it when you saw it (as in this case my friend did).

Central to cognitive-evaluative accounts of emotion is the notion of importance – a creature's emotions are intelligible only if there are things that matter to her, or that she cares about. Thus, to have emotions is to care about things – it is to be a creature for whom things matter. By observing a creature's emotional expressions, then, as well as her intentional behavior, we get a picture of which

[62] Thus, were I to receive a call, in a different context, informing me that Gracie was suddenly, for no apparent reason, pacing and whining, I would not say "Oh, she misses me!" but rather "take her to the emergency room."

things matter to her in life, of what she cares about. Thus, a good life for Gracie – a life that honors the things that are important to her – will include, among other things: frequent walks in diverse places – woods and parks and beaches, for example – with many smells to smell, both new and familiar; a variety of tasty foods; space to run, to get her feet wet and her fur muddy; opportunities to play with other dogs, including those with whom she has developed an ongoing relationship; the persistent, reliable company of myself and my husband; and frequent visits from other favored people, including many of our friends and neighbors.[63]

We have good reason, then, to think that many non-human animals, including dogs, are loci of subjective experience and initiative, with "complex inner lives" – indeed, this seems to be beyond reasonable doubt. Thus, human beings cannot be distinguished from other animals on this basis. In the following chapter I will consider those views according to which the objects of love are limited not to human beings but, more specifically, to "persons," understood as possessing capacities for reflective valuation that would, as far as we know, separate them from all non-human animals (as well as some humans). I will ultimately argue there that there is no good reason for such a limitation on love's objects. For now, though, I want to end the present chapter by suggesting that the idea of love's objects as being, distinctively, loci of experience and initiative, with "complex inner lives," is in fact a helpful one – the mistake lay only with the assumption that this description was unique to human beings.

[63] That non-human animals such as dogs are indeed subjects of a life, is something that Horowitz insists in her obituary for her dog. "Finnegan," she writes, "was scrutable, his desires visible and his affections solid. He was enthusiastic about both humans and dogs, always keen to closely sniff either, to engage in play or to get a rub." The subject of many of her best-selling books on canine cognition, he "lived on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, frequenting both Riverside and Central Parks, where he was admired for his running and twirling speed, his winsome look formed by a panting face and wagging tail, and stealing other dogs' squeaky ball toys and refusing to give them back." (Alexandra Horowitz, "Finnegan, Dog Known for His Exemplary Nose, Dies at 14," *New York Times*, February 21, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/21/opinion/dogs-animals-obituaries.html?searchResultPosition=1.)

IV. CONCLUSION: LOVING SOMEBODY

I argued above that those who see love for other humans as distinctive, as against those who see no distinction between the love we can have for another human and the love we could have toward a mere thing, are getting something right. Though they are right to distinguish different kinds of love that we can have for different kinds of object, they draw this particular distinction in the wrong place – they are wrong to treat attitudes toward non-human animals as on a par with attitudes toward mere things, and to treat the love we can have for another human being as fundamentally distinct from what we can feel for a non-human animal. To draw the distinction in the right place, I suggest that what we need is the notion of a *somebody*, as distinct from a mere *something*. The distinction between loving *somebody*, on the one hand, and any attitude we might have to a mere *something*, on the other, seems to be precisely what is missing from those "commodious" approaches discussed above.

We might characterize this notion of a "somebody" as, most minimally, a locus of experience and initiative; or more richly as someone for whom there is a way that it is to be her, capable of striving and suffering, vulnerable to the world. Looking into the eyes of certain animals can give an arresting sense that there is, quite certainly, "somebody home." Steve Jenkins, co-founder of Happily Ever Esther Farm Sanctuary, comments that "if you look a pig closely in the eyes, it's startling; there's something so inexplicably human."[64] I take it that what he means is that, looking into the eyes of a pig, he sees *somebody* there.[65]

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[64] Steve Jenkins, "I Accidentally Bought a Giant Pig," *The Guardian*, https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/feb/10/experience-i-accidentally-bought-a-giant-pig.

[65] Bekoff also notes the expressive nature of the eyes and how the eyes of non-human animals have been read by humans. For example, describing an incident in which an adult human named Rick entered a chimpanzee enclosure at the Detroit Zoo to rescue a drowning chimpanzee, he writes: "Rick did this despite repeated warnings that his life was in danger, and when asked why, he answered: 'I looked into his eyes. It was like looking into the eyes of a man. And the message was: Won't *anybody* help me?'" (Bekoff, 50.)

But to be a somebody is not just to be a locus of experience and initiative but also, in all but the most marginal cases, to be capable of some form of bidirectional connection. Usually, when we look at somebody, that somebody can, more of less metaphorically speaking, *look back*. What is distinctive about a somebody, in this sense, is that when one is *with* somebody, one is not alone: a substantial kind of togetherness is possible, on the basis of which a relationship can be formed.[66] Indeed, I will ultimately argue that it is the possibility of having the relevant kinds of relationship with certain non-human animals that explains the possibility of our love for them.[67]

[66] Barbara Smuts writes of such connection with non-human animals: "the 'presence' we recognize in another when we meet in mutuality is something we feel more than something we know … In mutuality, we sense that inside this other body there is 'someone home,' someone so like ourselves in their essence that we can co-create a shared reality as equals." (Smuts, "Encounters With Animal Minds," 308.)

[67] Pitcher, for example, writes that one of the reasons that he and his partner loved their dogs "stemmed from the fact that we communicated with them in various ways, subtle and unsubtle. They spoke to us with their actions and with the multitude of sounds they made." (Pitcher, *The Dogs Who Came to Stay*, 144.)

2. LOVE AND RATIONAL NATURE: A CRITIQUE OF TWO PROMINENT VIEWS

I demonstrated in Chapter 1 that many philosophical accounts of love distinguish love for other human beings – the kind we might have for our close friends, family, and romantic partners – as special. They thus fail to appreciate, I suggested, the possibility of loving a non-human animal, such as a dog. Indeed, insofar as any reasons were given why loving human beings might be special – their "complex inner lives" – we saw that the features of human beings referred to did not distinguish them from many of the non-human animals. I suggested that the distinctive kind of love at issue might be better understood as loving *somebody* – a notion that includes not only human beings but also many non-human animals, including dogs.

However, before developing my account of loving somebody, and thereby explaining the possibility of loving a non-human animal, I want in the present chapter to address a kind of view – presented in different forms by both Bennett Helm and David Velleman – that limits love's possible objects not to humans but to "persons," understood in a specific technical sense. This technical notion of personhood is defined by the capacity for evaluative self-reflection. Whereas, in Chapter 1, the term "person" was being used colloquially as synonymous with "human," it will from herein be used in this technical sense.[1] What is distinctive about the views of Helm and Velleman, then, is that they do offer

[1] The term "person" is often understood as designating a special moral and/or legal status. Insofar as it is understood in this way, the capacities that are supposed to be definitive of personhood are precisely those capacities in virtue of which a given individual has that special moral and/or legal status. However, we might also think of "personhood" as merely descriptive of certain of an individual's features, without, by its very definition, implying a special moral and/or legal status. For the sake of terminological clarity, I will give the same extension to the term "person" as Helm and Velleman do, and define a person in terms of the capacity for evaluative self-reflection. However, by using the term "person" in this descriptive sense, I am not committed to using it also in its normative sense and thereby implying that "persons," that is, those with the relevant capacities, have, by definition, a special moral status, or that they ought to have a special legal status.

a characterization of love's possible objects that distinguishes them (as far as we know) from all non-human animals. Thus, these views need to be addressed in order to pave the way for my positive account of the possibility of loving a non-human animal.

Ultimately, my argument in this chapter is that these "person-centric" views give too narrow an account of love's object: not only do they fail to account for love of both non-humans and humans who are not "persons" in the technical sense; they also fail to adequately describe the love we have for persons. For, even when our beloved is a person, we do not love her only *as* a person. Rather, we love her, I will suggest, as a somebody, as that notion was developed in the previous chapter and will be further developed here.

Another approach to the use of the term "person" would be to grant its normative meaning as designating a special moral or legal status, and then ask which capacities a being must have in order to have that moral status. If this is one's approach, one might then argue that Helm and Velleman are simply wrong to equate personhood with the capacity for evaluative self-reflection. Indeed, non-human animals have been recognized as persons with legal rights by courts in India and Ecuador. (See, for example, Sonia Shad, "Indian High Court Recognizes Nonhuman Animals as Legal Entities," *Nonhuman Rights Blog* July 10, 2019, https://www.nonhumanrights.org/blog/punjab-haryana-animal-rights/, Nonhuman Rights, "Ecuador Recognizes Nonhuman Animals as Rightsholders," *Nonhuman Rights Blog*, February 24, 2022, https://www.nonhumanrights.org/blog/ecuador-nonhuman-rights/, India Bourke, "Could Happy the elephant follow an Ecuadorian monkey into legal personhood?" *New Statesman* February 23, 2022, https://www.newstatesman.com/the-environment-interview/2022/02/could-happy-the-elephant-follow-an-ecuadorian-monkey-into-legal-personhood.)

Some philosophers have argued that the capacities relevant for personhood are *relational* capacities, and that it is *in interaction* with another that we experience their personhood. See, for example, Barbara Smuts, "Reflections," in J. M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals*, ed. Amy Gutmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 118, and Elisa Aaltola, "Personhood and Animals," *Environmental Ethics* 30, no. 2 (Summer 2008), 187-193.

I am, indeed, sympathetic to these latter two approaches, insofar as we take personhood to be an inherently normative notion. However, for my purposes here, I am not directly concerned with the moral and legal implications of the term "person" and mean only to use it in a descriptive sense, as having the same extension as Helm and Velleman's use of the term, for the sake of ease of exposition. It should be noted, though, that my notion of a "somebody" seems to correspond with the notion of a person as it is used in this third sense (though the moral status of a somebody is not something with which I am directly concerned, except insofar as the distinctive *value* of a somebody – which does, I think, imply a certain moral status – is relevant to their being an object of love.)

I. LOVE, PERSONHOOD AND RATIONALITY

Philosophers are often most interested in those aspects of our experience that (as far as we know) distinguish us from other animals. It is by looking to those aspects, they think, that we can understand who we essentially are.[2] According to a long philosophical tradition, we are distinguished by our "rational nature".[3] Contemporary philosophers tend to understand our rationality, or "personhood," as consisting in the capacity to reflect on and normatively evaluate our own reasons for acting or being (and to be motivated accordingly).[4] This constitutes taking ourselves as objects in a certain way, a distinctive kind of self-consciousness that provides, we might suppose, a unique depth to our inner lives.

Now, of course, this kind of self-consciousness is a fundamental feature of our experience (whether or not we share it with other creatures), and it should come as no surprise that it figures in accounts of how we love. But sometimes its importance, especially when understood in abstraction from other features of ourselves (for example, our need for embodied, emotional connection with others) that we share with other animals, can be overstated, and indeed can lead to a skewed understanding of who we are, and, accordingly, of how we love.

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[2] It is quite common, I think, for philosophers to assume that whatever constitutes our "essential nature" will also be something that unequivocally marks us off from all other animals. This would be fine if all that was meant was that what is essential to humans is what distinguishes "human" from "non-human" – indeed that is just what it means for a feature to be "essential." But it is a fallacious assumption when what is meant – as I think is often the case – is that our essential feature(s) must determine a clear dividing line between "us" and "them" or "human" and "animal", where this means something quite different from the distinction between, for example, "rat" and "non-rat", or "whale" and "non-whale", etc.

[3] For a discussion of the various interpretations of "rational nature", see Christine Korsgaard, "Rationality," in *Critical Terms for Animal Studies*, ed. Lori Gruen (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018), 294-306.

[4] This characterization is meant to be broad enough to encompass, for example, both Kantian and Humean understandings of moral psychology, with the difference between these two traditions lying in the proposed grounds of normative evaluation.

The targets of the present chapter are those views according to which love is, properly speaking, something that occurs only between "persons" so understood. I focus on two prominent versions of this view – that of Bennett Helm and that of David Velleman. On both of these views, love is to be understood as the response of one being with the depth of experience just described to another being with the same kind of inner life.

Helm's particular take on this broad conception of personhood is that a "person" is defined as a being with the capacity not only for *caring* about things, but, moreover, to normatively reflect on her own cares such as to either identify with them or not. In this vein, Helm says, persons are distinguished in terms of their ability to normatively constitute their own identities through such identification. An explanation of the "deeply personal" and "distinctively intimate" nature of love requires, on Helm's view, that love is, properly speaking, something that can occur only between "persons" so understood. (We'll see the details of this argument later in this chapter.) "On this understanding of love," Helm writes, "dogs and infants, insofar as they are not (yet) persons …, are not proper objects for our love," and "it is more precise to say that we [merely] care about our dogs and infants, albeit in ways distinct in kind from the ways in which we care about mere things or ends."[5] (In Chapter 1, we saw Helm proposing a slightly different view, according to which love for a non-human animal was to be understood as a "deficient mode" of the kind of love we can have for a person. Here, he is saying that "love" for a non-person is not really love at all. This latter view is in fact more consistent with his account of what love *is*, so from now on I will consider this to be his view.)

Velleman defines personhood, in a similar vein, in terms of the possession of a "rational nature," understood as consisting in "a capacity to care about things in that reflective way which is distinctive

[5] Helm, "Love, Identification, and the Emotions", 52.

of self-conscious creatures like us."[6] And love is, in Velleman's view, a response of one instance of rational nature to another instance of rational nature. More precisely, it is a response to the beloved's value – a value that she (like ourselves) has "by virtue of being a person or … an instance of rational nature."[7]

Before elaborating on the details of each of these views, I begin by presenting a quite general objection to the conclusions that only "persons" can be objects of love. For, such views would deny not only that we can love non-human animals but also that we can love infants (who are not yet "persons" in the sense intended) and also certain severely cognitively disabled humans (who might never be deemed "persons" in the relevant sense).[8] And this conclusion is both factually incorrect (as I will emphasize with the help of testimony from literature) and morally suspect.

Not only do these views give an overly exclusive account of love's possible objects, but moreover, the very source of this exclusivity leads to an impoverished account of love, even when such love happens to be between "persons" so conceived. For, in making the beloved an object of love only *qua rational being*, these accounts give too narrow an account of the description under which we love other people. Indeed, consideration of the richness of the love that one can have for "non-persons" such as infants

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[6] Velleman, "Love as a Moral Emotion," 365.

[7] Velleman, 365.

[8] Helm is explicit, as we have seen, in acknowledging that his view commits us to a denial of the possibility of loving an infant. He does not, however, acknowledge the implication that it might, on his view, be impossible to love a profoundly cognitively disabled adult. And yet, I think this *is* an implication of his view, and a troubling one. David Velleman is a little more ambiguous about who can be an object of love. In "Love as a Moral Emotion" he writes,

> "… love is felt for many things other than possessors of rational nature. All that is essential to love, in my view, is that is disarms our emotional defenses toward an object in response to its incomparable value as a self-existent end. But when the object of our love is a person, and when we love him *as* a person – rather than as a work of nature, say, or an aesthetic object – then indeed, I want to say, we are responding to the value that he possesses by virtue of being a person or, as Kant would say, an instance of rational nature." (Velleman, 365.)

However, the account of love that he gives in "Love as a Moral Emotion" is specifically an account of loving a "person," and it is an account of such love as being quite distinctive. Further, in his later paper, "Beyond Price," Velleman characterizes his love for his dog as dependent upon projecting onto the dog a personhood that he does not have, and in that sense as being delusional (David Velleman, "Beyond Price," in David Velleman *Beyond Price: Essays on Birth and Death* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2015), 50-51, http://dx.doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0061.)

or certain humans with severe or profound intellectual disability helps us to see what is missing from those accounts in which we love other persons simply *qua* persons.

II. LOVING HUMANS WHO ARE "NON-PERSONS"

The first and most obvious objection to views like Velleman's and Helm's, according to which love can be directed, properly speaking, only at "persons," is that they would thereby deny the possibility of loving both infant humans and a small minority of humans with intellectual disabilities, insofar as they lack the capacities that are definitive of "personhood."[9] This should be cause for grave doubt over the adequacy of such views, even for those who are not initially convinced by my descriptions, in Chapter 1, of loving non-human animals.

It is something of a truism in our culture that parents love their infant children. It might thus seem unnecessary to drive the point home. Nonetheless, I refer to the written experience of a new mother (since I myself am not a parent, I cannot here draw on my own experiences). Anne Lamott, in her memoir *Operating Instructions: A Journal of My Son's First Year*, documents the experience of encountering this new, world-changing kind of love. When her son, Sam, is one month old, she writes:

> "I look down into his staggeringly lovely little face, and I can hardly breathe sometimes. He is all I have ever wanted, and my heart is so huge with love that I feel like it is about to go off."[10]

[9] There is of course vast diversity between individuals with intellectual disabilities. The American Psychiatric Association diagnoses intellectual disability on the basis of "deficits in intellectual functions" and "deficits in adaptive functioning" that have their onset in "the developmental period," and distinguishes between different "levels of severity" of intellectual disability – "mild," "moderate," "severe," and "profound" – "on the basis of adaptive functioning." (American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition* (Arlington: American Psychiatric Association, 2013), 33.) Presumably only a small minority of those with intellectual disabilities, and probably only those with "severe" or "profound" disabilities (and not necessarily all of those in these groups), lack the capacities definitive of "personhood," as it is here being defined.

[10] Anne Lamott, *Operating Instructions: A Journal of My Son's First Year* (New York: Anchor Books, 1993), 60.

At only one month old, Sam was not yet a "person" in Helm or Velleman's sense, and yet it seems plain that his mother loves him. Presumably, if all goes well, Sam will develop the capacities definitive of personhood, and so he is someone who has personhood in his future. And indeed, when one loves an infant, one's love might be shaped by this expectation. But it will not do simply to say that we can love infants qua potential persons, since some humans – humans who are loved – will never be persons in this sense. Eva Kittay writes lovingly of her "severely" intellectually disabled[11] daughter, Sesha, at twenty-seven:

> "I am awakening and her babbling-brook giggles penetrate my semiconscious state. Hands clapping. Sesha is listening to "The Sound of Music." Peggy, her caregiver of twenty-three years, has just walked in and Sesha can hardly contain her desire to throw her arms around Peggy and give Peggy her distinctive kiss—mouth open, top teeth lightly (and sometimes not so lightly) pressing on your cheek, her breath full of excitement and happiness, her arms around your neck (if you're lucky; if not, arms up, hands on hair, which caveman-like, she uses to pull your face to her mouth). Sesha's kisses are legendary (and if you're not on your toes, somewhat painful)."[12]

Sesha does not have the capacities definitive of "personhood," in Helm and Velleman's sense, and she never will; and it is plain that her mum loves her. Clearly, there is something wrong with those views that would deny the possibility of such love. Nonetheless, I think it is worthwhile to consider these views in more detail. For, their arguments make explicit what many other views seem to implicitly assume. And by considering where their arguments go wrong – how they end up with such bizarre conclusions – we can get a better idea of what an adequate account of love requires.

[11] Eva Feder Kittay, *Love's Labor: Essays on Women, Equality and Dependency* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), 161.
[12] Kittay, *Love's Labor*, 160.

III. TAKING SOMEBODY TO HEART

I take it as indisputable that love involves *caring for the beloved for her own sake*. We can understand "caring," broadly speaking, in the following way: caring about something is to be emotionally vulnerable to its fate. One does not love someone if one does not experience any emotional vulnerability in matters concerning her – if one is always emotionally unmoved, for example, by her good or ill fortune, by her presence or absence, or by how she treats or regards one. In loving someone, one cares about her for her own sake. To care about one's beloved for her own sake might be understood in the following way. Insofar as one is moved to actions concerning her or her well-being, one's ulterior motive is, ultimately, *her* – *she* is the object, or end, with regard to which one is moved to act.[13] And one's emotional responses to her and her well-being also ultimately take *her* as their object. That is, one does not care about her merely for the sake of something else – as an instrument to some further goal, perhaps, or as the realization of some independent ideal that represents one's ultimate concern. If one cared about the other only for the sake of something else, then one would not genuinely love her.[14]

Now, at least when one conceives of morality as having something essentially to do with the agent's motives, then caring for another for her own sake might also be a description of, for example, moral concern. And since we want to distinguish love from mere moral concern, we need to give an account of love that offers something more specific than *merely* caring for the other for her own sake. It is this thought that motivates Helm's account of love as necessarily directed only toward "persons." Here is

[13] Velleman has a helpful discussion of this in Velleman, "Love as a Moral Emotion," 355-359.
[14] This is compatible with the claim that, as I will argue in the following chapter, one's special concern for this person in particular can be made sense of only in terms of her relation to one, and in that sense in reference to the self. Nussbaum makes an equivalent claim in arguing that the emotions are eudaimonistic, in the sense of seeing their object as important from the perspective of their own scheme of ends and projects, without thereby being egoistic. (Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 52.)

the problem as he sees it: given an understanding of love as essentially a form of *caring for the beloved for her own sake*; how are we to understand a loving concern as "distinctively intimate" and "deeply personal", and thus distinguish love from other, impersonal, modes of caring about another for her own sake such as compassion or moral concern?[15]

The thought here is that, insofar as morality is essentially impartial, it is essentially unconcerned with *individuality*. It matters not, from a moral point of view, *who* the other is. Rather, what matters is that she falls under some general description (human, "person," sentient being, etc.) in virtue of which she has moral status. As falling under this general description, she is entirely substitutable, as an object of moral concern, with anyone else similarly situated. Love, on the other hand, it quite unlike this. Indeed, it is a central feature of love that the beloved is non-substitutable: one's love for her is attached, precisely, to *her*, as *this* particular individual.

As Helm conceives of it, the puzzle is thus to give a description of love as involving taking a particular individual "to heart," while nonetheless preserving the separateness of lover and beloved (so the lover does not, for example, merely absorb the beloved's interests such as to blur the distinction between them).[16] An explanation of this requires, he thinks, invoking the notion of "personhood."

"To be a person," Helm writes, "is, roughly, to be a creature with a capacity to care not merely about things or ends in the world but also about yourself and the motives for action that are truly your own."[17] To reflectively evaluate and endorse certain of one's cares in this way is to identify with them,

[15] Helm, "Love, Identification, and the Emotions," 39.
[16]This is in opposition to "union" accounts of love, according to which love in some way merges the identities of lover and beloved. Helm takes Frankfurt's account of love, in which the interests of the beloved become the lover's own interests, in virtue of her love. The problem with this kind of account, in Helm's view, is that it fails to appreciate the separateness of lover and beloved, and the sense in which the lover is concerned with the beloved's interests precisely as *her* interests. (Helm, 39-40.)
[17] Helm, 46.

to make them part of one's identity understood as a structure of interconnected reflective values. To value things in this reflective way is to be committed to the import of one's identity – it is to care about who one is and whether one is living up to one's own values. This is the commitment, Helm says, constitutive of self-love. It manifests, he says, in "person-focused" emotions such as pride and shame. Pride and shame, according to this view, "involve a notion of identification – a sense of how something bears on [the person's] identity," and it is in this respect that they involve a certain kind of *depth*.

"Person-focused" emotions embody a commitment to the import of the particular person as such – both as *a* person, with a self-constituted identity, and as *this* particular person with *this* particular identity. "Person-focused" emotions can be either reflexive (directed toward oneself) or non-reflexive (directed toward another).[18] When one is proud or ashamed of oneself, according to Helm, one's emotions essentially involve reflecting on one's own "identity" and involve a commitment to its import – a commitment constitutive of self-love.[19] Correspondingly, when one feels pride or shame toward another, one's focus is the other person's system of values, constituting *her* "identity," and it thus involves a commitment to the import of *her* "identity" as such – a commitment constitutive of one's love for her.[20] This, Helm argues, explains love's "deeply personal" nature.

The "distinctive intimacy" of love is to be explained, moreover, by the structural analogy between one's commitment to the import of one's own "identity" constitutive of *self-love* and one's commitment to the import of the other's "identity" constitutive of one's *love for her*. In this way, the lover is said to share in the beloved's values, not in the sense of absorbing them into the lover's own identity, but

[18] Helm, 47.
[19] Helm, 47.
[20] Helm, 49-50.

sharing them *as her values*, for *her sake*, presupposing "a commitment to the import of the particular person she is" and thus preserving her *otherness*.[21]

This picture is supposed to capture all at once the senses in which love is deep, personal, and intimate. It is "personal" in the sense that it is caring about another not under some general description but *as* the particular person that she is – as *this* person with this particular identity. In its essential reference to the reflective-value-constituted identity of the person, it goes deep. And the love of another finds its intimacy in its structural analogy to self-love. This is a neat picture, but ultimately the focus on "personhood" is too narrow and gives us a skewed picture not only of who we can love but also of how we love.

Helm says that things have import to us *under some particular description*, and that love involves a commitment to the import of another person *understood as a person (in his technical sense)*, or, more precisely, *as this person, with these particular values*. He says further that the well-being of a person *understood in this way* "crucially depends … on whether she has upheld the values constitutive of her identity."[22] A loving concern, for another or for oneself, is thus, in Helm's view, always to be understood as, ultimately, a concern about whether the object of one's love is living up to her values.

A problem with this is that it gives us too narrow an account of the kind of concern, and the corresponding emotions, constitutive of love. We are not *only* reflective valuers, our well-being cannot be understood solely in relation to such values, and it is implausible to suppose that either our self-love or our love of others consists in such a narrowly focused concern. For we are also, among other things, *animals*, susceptible to physical pains and pleasures, to joy, sadness, loneliness, excitement,

[21] Helm, 50.
[22] Helm, 46.

anxiety – often bearing no relation to a commitment to the import of our identity understood as a system of reflective values. A loving concern encompasses a much broader sense of the well-being of the beloved than that for which Helm's account allows. We have a deeply personal and intimate aversion to, for example, the physical pain or injury of our loved ones. And we share, for example, in their sadness, even when (as is, I think, most often) this sadness has no focus on their "identity" and its affirmation or transgression. If Helm's account cannot make sense of this, then it is not an adequate account of love.[23]

But, indeed, once we acknowledge that *merely* focusing on the beloved's identity and whether or not it has been upheld or transgressed, does not sufficiently capture the nature of loving concern, either toward oneself or toward others, this casts doubt on whether such "person-focused" emotions are necessary to love at all. We are left with the idea that the object of our love is a (non-substitutable) individual *as such*, and that when we love her, we take her to heart in the sense of seeing those things that are important to her as important precisely *as* things that are important to her. It involves being able to distinguish between her perspective and your own, while at the same time investing her perspective with a certain level of importance.[24] But now the notion of "personhood" doesn't seem to be doing any work at all – for these ideas can all apply beyond the bounds of "personhood" so understood.

[23] Indeed, it is already an odd feature of Helm's view that pride and shame are portrayed as paradigmatically loving emotions; but in the absence of specification of any other strictly "person-focused" emotions, his account risks positing pride and shame as the *only* distinctly loving emotions. This cannot be right. Once we acknowledge this, it casts doubt on the claim that only "persons" can be objects of love.

[24] An example of taking another's perspective to heart can be seen in Kittay's *Love's Labor*, where she quotes one of Sesha's caregivers, Peggy, realizing with empathy how this caregiving role could work: "Thank you for being my teacher, Sesha. I see now. Not my way. Your way. Slowly." (Kittay, 165.)

Indeed, it seems that however we are to account for love's "deeply personal" and "distinctively intimate" nature, it actually cannot be in terms of "personhood" so understood. I have already pointed out the general problem with denying the possibility of loving "non-persons" such as infants and some individuals with "severe" or "profound" intellectual disability. Helm presumably seeks to appease such an objection when he claims that his distinction between the genuine love we can have for a "person" and the mere "care" we can have for those deemed "non-persons" is "largely a matter of stipulating a linguistic convention."[25] His aim is thus not to describe how we in fact use the term "love" but, rather, to say how we in some sense ought to use the term. But even leaving aside the questionable nature of this methodology, and the dubious moral status of such a linguistic stipulation, there is a further, conceptual problem. For, the linguistic distinction was supposed to be grounded in a conceptual distinction, and that conceptual distinction was supposed to hinge on the "deeply personal" and "distinctively intimate" nature of love proper – qualities that distinguish it from, among other things, the kind of moral concern we might have for just anyone. But Lamott's concern for her infant son, and Kittay's concern for her cognitively disabled daughter, are not the kinds of concern they might have for *just anyone*. Indeed, whatever might distinguish these instances of concern from modes of care one could have for a "person," it surely cannot be that the latter are "deeply personal" and "distinctively intimate" while the former are not; for there is nothing impersonal or non-intimate about the former. At this point, the distinction breaks down.

[25] Helm, 52.

IV. A HEART RESPONDING TO ANOTHER HEART

Helm, as we saw, is concerned to distinguish love, as "deeply personal" and "distinctively intimate," from "impersonal" modes of concern, such as moral concern, in which an individual is an object of concern in virtue of being of a certain kind (for example, a person) and is in this sense substitutable with anyone else of that kind (any other person) similarly situated. Helm understands the particularity of the beloved in terms of her reflective-value constituted identity – she is loved not just as *a* person but as *this* particular person with *these* particular values constituting *this* particular identity.

By contrast, Velleman argues that love is a response to the beloved's personhood *as such*. Love is, he argues, a response to the value of the beloved – specifically, the value that the beloved has "by virtue of being a person or … an instance of rational nature."[26] Velleman defines personhood, or "rational nature," as constituted by "a capacity to care about things in that reflective way which is distinctive of self-conscious creatures like us" – basically the same terms in which Helm is understanding personhood.[27] The particularity of the beloved, in Velleman's account, is described in various ways as her "bare individuality as a person,"[28] her "bare personal identity,"[29] and her being an "I" or a "Who."[30]

This response to the value of the beloved is to be understood as an "arresting awareness" of value – phenomenologically similar to awe, reverence, or wonder – that "disarms our emotional defenses"

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[26] Helm, 52.
[27] Velleman, "Love as a Moral Emotion," 365.
[28] Velleman, 370.
[29] Velleman, 369.
[30] Velleman, 369. This is an understanding of individuality, or particularity, that cannot be reduced to the particular features of the individual in question – features that one might in principle share with a science-fictional clone. It is in this sense more fundamental than Helm's understanding of the particularity of the beloved in terms of her reflective-value-constituted identity. Two people could in principle be descriptively identical without thereby being numerically identical. Of course, this distinction applies to *things* as well as persons, but in the case of persons – or rather, as I would have it, somebodies – this more basic sense of individuality has a special significance. As Raimond Gaita describes it, for example, it is "the individuality we express when we say that each human being is unique and irreplaceable, in a sense that can never be conveyed by appealing to individual features, and not just to those who care for them, but unique and irreplaceable period." (Gaita, *The Philosopher's Dog*, 78.)

and "makes us vulnerable to the other."[31] This capacity for reflective valuation, definitive of personhood, is to be understood as, "at its utmost," the capacity to love. Thus, "what our hearts respond to" in loving someone is "another heart." Love, he says, is "the heart's response to the realization that it is not alone."[32]

The fact that the lover responds to the beloved as possessing a value that she has in common with all other persons does not, Velleman argues, deem the beloved substitutable. And this is because of the very nature of the value of personhood. This value is captured, in Kantian terms, in the notion of "dignity" – a value which, in contrast to "price," does not admit of comparison. This thought captures the way in which, while we might recognize, in judgement, that each person is equally valuable, we can at the same time recognize that each individual is irreplaceable, and we can respond to a given individual as having an incomparable worth. In this way, Velleman argues, we can account for the way in which the lover appreciates the beloved as an irreplaceable individual while also claiming that the value that she has belongs to her in virtue of being a person: "being valued merely as persons is compatible with being valued as special because our values as persons is a dignity rather than a price."[33]

The value to which the lover responds is the very same value, Velleman notes, that demands Kantian respect: "I regard respect and love as the required minimum and optional maximum responses to one and the same value."[34] It is nonetheless to be understood as an account of *personal* love directed only toward a few special somebodies – for example, "our own children, spouses, parents, and intimate friends."[35]

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[31] Velleman, 361.
[32] Velleman, 366.
[33] Velleman, 361.
[34] Velleman, 366.
[35] Velleman, 372.

Why, then, do we love only some people? Though all persons are, in virtue of their value as persons, "eligible to be loved," who each person actually comes to love is, in Velleman's view, a matter of some contingency. "Grasping someone's personhood intellectually," he writes, "may be enough to make us respect him, but unless we actually *see* a person in the human being confronting us, we won't be moved to love." And "we can see into only some of our observable fellow creatures," for "the human body and human behavior are imperfect expressions of personhood, and we are imperfect interpreters." Thus, for Velleman, though love is a response to the value of personhood, there is a derivative sense in which we love another for his particular qualities, or "observable features," for example "the way he walks and the way he talks."[36] Moreover, Velleman notes that we are "constitutionally limited in the number of people we can love," and "we may have to stop short of our constitutional limits in order to enjoy the loving relationships that make for a good life."[37]

I think that Velleman does capture *part* of the experience of loving someone. When we love someone, in that personal way that is at issue here, we are prone to experience them, in this awe-like way, as having a special value – a value that they share with others, but which nonetheless deems them irreplaceable. A denial that the beloved had this value would, indeed, seem to be incompatible with genuine love: it wouldn't make sense to say "I love her, but she doesn't really *matter*." But, first, I think he is wrong to equate this value with the rational capacity for reflective valuation that is definitive of personhood. And, second, it is odd, as I will discuss below, to think of this personal kind of love – the kind that we have for our close friends and relatives – purely on the model of this kind of one-sided appreciation.

[36] Velleman, 371-372.
[37] Velleman, 372.

Concerning the value of the beloved, consider Jeanette Kennett's description of a moment of being struck with an "arresting awareness" of value in her two-year old son:

> "It's a summer night. My son is two years old. I wake up to footsteps running through the house and then the slam of the back door. I leap out of bed and follow. In the backyard he is dancing and whirling under the stars, arms reaching up to them. He looks at me, ecstatic. 'I can see stars. I can see the moon,' he cries."[38]

The love with which Kennett writes is palpable and moving, but it is not a response to her son's capacity for reflective valuation – it can't be, since he presumably does not, at two years old, have this capacity. Or consider the passages discussed above, in which Lamott is struck by the loveliness of her infant son such that she can sometimes "hardly breathe." Again, what she is struck by cannot be the capacity for reflective valuation, since he does not have this capacity. Consider, too, Kittay's description of the loveliness of her severely intellectually disabled daughter, Sesha, as coming from her "capacity for joy." "Her loveliness," she writes,

> "shines through a somewhat twisted body, the bridge that substitutes for her natural front teeth (lost in a fall at school), and her profound cognitive deficits. … How to describe it? Joy. The capacity for joy. The babbling-brook laughter at a musical joke. The starry-eyed faraway look as she listens to Elvis crooning "Love Me Tender," the excitement of her entire soul as the voices blare out "Alle Menschen werden Brüder" in the choral ode of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and the pleasure of bestowing her kisses and receiving the caresses in turn. All variations and gradations of joy."[39]

Indeed, if love is to be understood purely as a response to the beloved's capacity for reflective valuation, and the beloved is loved *qua* reflective valuer, then we seem to arrive at the same problem that I found with Helm's account, above – namely, that this gives too narrow an account even of the

[38] Jeanette Kennett, "True and Proper Selves: Velleman on Love," *Ethics* 118 (January 2008), 222.
[39] Kittay, 160-161.

description under which we love other persons. For, even when our beloved is a person, with reflectively held values, we do not love her merely *as* a reflective valuer.

Velleman's argument seems to deal, in part, in unjustified equivocations between the notion of personhood as "rational nature," on the one hand, and the less specific notion of "someone," or "somebody," on the other. For example, we have seen that he tries to capture the distinctive value of persons in terms of, among other things, the notion of a "who." The notion of a "who," as distinguished from a "what," seems to be, precisely, the notion of a "somebody" as distinguished from a "something." And as I discussed in Chapter 1, someone can be a somebody – with a rich inner life, capable of striving and suffering and relating – without being a person in the technical sense used here.[40] Indeed, what Kennett, Lamott, and Kittay seem to be responding to are various iterations, not of personhood, but of *somebodiness*.

We see a tragic equivocation of the notions of "somebody" and "rational nature" in the following passage, where Velleman speaks of his love of his dog as delusional:

> "I am quite sure that my feelings for my late poodle were a response to the experience of seeing someone there in his eyes. In clearheaded moments, I don't believe that there really was someone there, but I am still under the illusion after his death, remembering him as I would a deceased person – not a lost toy for which I felt a fond attachment but a beloved personal presence, even though he was only a dog."[41]

This is quite strange. Though not a person, as Velleman is using the term, his dog was certainly not a "toy" – that is, a mere *thing* – and it is strange that Velleman seems not to be allowing for another option. Velleman refers to the experience of "seeing someone there in [his dog's] eyes" – an experience

[40] In saying that the value to which the lover responds is the value of being a somebody, I do not mean to suggest that this is the only value in terms of which moral status might be determined. It is no part of my argument to claim anything specific about the relative moral status of persons and non-persons, or humans and non-humans.
[41] Velleman, "Beyond Price," 51.

he thinks must have been an "illusion," presumably because, in "clearheaded moments" he is aware that his dog is not a person, in the sense of having a capacity for reflective valuation. This, too, is odd, because it does not seem at all obvious that when we take ourselves to "see someone there" in another's eyes, what we take ourselves to be seeing is this rational capacity for reflective valuation.[42] Presumably, for example, when Lamott looks into her infant son's eyes, she sees somebody – namely, Sam – looking back at her; and she needn't be under the illusion that Sam is capable of evaluative self-reflection. Similarly with Kennett and her young son, and Kittay and her daughter Sesha.

Indeed, when Velleman looked into the eyes of his poodle, there *was* somebody looking back. His poodle was not like a stuffed toy who's "personal presence" Velleman had, like a child, imagined into existence.[43] What is tragic about this case is that Velleman is undermining his own grief. I said in Chapter 1 that when philosophy denies the testimony of people whom we have no reason not to take seriously, we have a problem. In Velleman's case, he is using his philosophy to undermine his own experiences, and that is sad.

Velleman ends his paper by suggesting that love is a "moral education."[44] I take it that what he means by this is that in loving someone, we get a particularly deep acquaintance with their value, such that

[42]There might indeed be times when we are mistaken about what we see. We might see a very convincing robot and think that we are witnessing "somebody there." I sometimes observe cockroaches and am struck by their movements – the way they seem to move with a certain conscious intention, and yet I suspect that they lack sentience. My claim is not that we never make mistakes in seeing. Rather, my claim is that we should defer to instances of "seeing somebody" (even when such seeing is mistaken) to determine what it is we tend to be claiming when we claim that there is, in a normatively significant sense, "somebody there." Such an experience, and the precise object of such an experience, will be hard to articulate. But what we find, I think, is that we mean something like, at the most minimal level, "a locus of subjective experience" rather than the more demanding notion of "rational nature."

[43] Unless, of course, this *was* what was going on – that when Velleman refers to his "late poodle" he really is talking about a stuffed toy poodle that he had been treating as though he were a real dog. But I take it that this is not what Velleman means. On the contrary, Velleman is speaking here about a real dog *as though* he were only a toy. I take it that this is not how Velleman actually felt, and his philosophical commitments are here leading him astray.

[44] Velleman, "Love as a Moral Emotion,"374.

we are better able to see and appreciate this value in others, such that we are more prone to be moved by their fates.[45] But if love is a moral education – if it is in some sense revealing of this special value of individuals – then we should let it be a moral education. That is to say, we should not have strict and inflexible preconceptions about who is in fact loveable, and to what features their special value owes. Thus, it is Kittay, and not Velleman, who seems to truly treat love as a moral education, when she describes her experience of learning of Sesha's cognitive disability:

> "Her impairment in no way mitigated my love for her. If it had any impact on that love it was only to intensify it. She was so vulnerable. … . We didn't yet realize how much she would teach us, but we already knew that we had learned something. That which we believed we valued, what we—I—thought was at the center of humanity, the capacity for thought, for reason, was not it, not it at all."[46]

IV. CONCLUSION: BETWEEN HEARTS

There is a further oddity in Velleman's account. On the one hand, Velleman shows that it is possible to love another for a value that she shares with others while still loving her as an irreplaceable

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[45] This is my read of what Velleman is suggesting in his criticism of Bernard Williams' famous "one thought too many" argument. Williams' thought is that, in a hypothetical situation in which an agent is confronted with his drowning wife and a drowning stranger, and only able to save one, it would be troublesome if, in offering a justification for saving his wife, the agent appealed to the impartial, moral point of view. If the agent's justification was "She is my wife, and in situations of this kind it is permissible to save one's wife," that thought about what is morally permissible from an impartial perspective would be "one thought too many." The truly loving thought, in Williams' view, is simply the thought "She is my wife." (Bernard Williams, "Persons, Character, and Morality," in Bernard Williams, *Moral Luck* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 16-18.) Against this, Velleman writes that, in loving his wife, the agent will see her "not in a way that tips the balance in her favor, but rather in a way that reveals the absurdity of weighing her in a balance at all." He continues: "Love does not help to overcome the absurdity in these cases: it doesn't help us to compare incomparables. On the contrary, love is virtually an education in this absurdity." (Velleman, 374.) The idea that love helps us to see the value of those other than the beloved is also expressed when he says: "My own experience is that, although I may be insensitive to suffering until I see it in people I love, I cannot then remain insensitive to it in their fellow sufferers." (Velleman, 373.)

[46] Kittay, 159-160. Kittay does suggest, and argues elsewhere, that the value to which she is responding in Sesha is a distinctively *human* value (though she is not arguing that we cannot therefore love non-humans). See, for example, Eva Kittay, "The Personal is Philosophical is Political," *Metaphilosophy* 40, nos. 3-4 (July 2009), and Eva Kittay, "At the Margins of Moral Personhood," *Ethics* 116 (October 2005). I find Kittay's work instructive for debunking the focus on rational capacities of "persons," but I do not directly address the further claim about the specialness of human beings simply in virtue of being human.

individual. In this sense, love can be personal without responding to a *unique* value. I think he is right about this. Part of what we do when we love a close friend or family member is to recognize – potentially in an awe-like way – how precious and irreplaceable they are. Indeed, when I love somebody in this way, I experience her as not just precious and irreplaceable *to me*, but as precious and irreplaceable *period* – her value, I recognize, is not dependent on my loving her.[47] And I can recognize in judgement that others also have this value, even if I am not moved in the same way by that fact; that is, even though they are not precious and irreplaceable *to me*. I can, and do, recognize others as loveable without actually *loving* them.

On the other hand, however, Velleman's model of this kind of love is strangely one-sided. Though he speaks of the significance of the possibility of somebody *looking back* at him, the *dialogical* nature of this interaction is not significant for him. It doesn't matter, for his view, that when you look at somebody and they look back, there is a kind of *mutual awareness*, something going on genuinely *between* the two of you. Rather, such looking is only, for Velleman, of epistemic significance – seeing somebody looking back at you is just evidence that there is, indeed, "somebody home," and thus that they have the kind of value that makes them loveable.[48] But you might also see this just by *watching*, maybe from afar – the beloved needn't, in principle, even know that you are there. Indeed, it is notable that Velleman explains the contingency of love in terms of the beloved's *observable* qualities.

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[47] The language of "preciousness" and being "irreplaceable," borrows from Gaita (for example, 16, 78). Gaita also articulates the thought that the lover must recognize the beloved as irreplaceable not just to her but "period" (Gaita, 78.)

[48] Velleman does sometimes speak as though reciprocation might be important on his view, but this is misleading. For example, he suggests that what explains our tendency to feel (what he takes to be) some delusional semblance of love for our dogs is that "looking into [the dog's] eyes, we seem to see *someone there*, someone who can reciprocate these interpersonal emotions," and thus we mistake, for example, her "instinctual affections" for love (Velleman, "Beyond Price," 50). To be consistent with his theory of love, however, what is important here is not the actual reciprocation of love from one's beloved, not the actual exchange of interpersonal emotions, but rather the beloved's *capacity* for love, since this capacity is, according to Velleman, a mark of her personhood (a mark which, Velleman thinks, dogs do not really have). It is this capacity, rather than its relational expression, to which the lover, in Velleman's account, responds – for this capacity defines the beloved's value.

By describing love as "the heart's response to the realization that it is not alone"[49] Velleman invokes a sense in which, when one loves somebody, one finds something of oneself in one's beloved; one finds in her a kindred nature, or a fellow creature. This thought captures a sense of connectedness to the object of love, but this is a connection that exists within the subjectivity of the lover. Indeed, this thought applies also to Helm's account of love, for whom the "intimacy" of love lies purely within the subjectivity of the lover, in the structural analogy between her self-love and her love of the other.

I do not want to deny that we can use the term "love," in this way, understood as something that might occur from a distance.[50] But Velleman, like Helm, means to be picking out the kind of love that we have for our close friends and relatives, in which case we might have thought that the *somebodiness* of the beloved would be relevant not just in terms of her value but also for the possibility of *interaction*. When Velleman writes that love is "the heart's realization that it is not alone," he means to say, it seems, that love is a distinctive kind of emotional awareness, or seeing, that somebody else is out there. But "out there" does not mean, for him, "right here *with* me," and thus "aloneness" is not to be contrasted, in his view, with a robust form of "togetherness," such that the two hearts actually *meet*. It is precisely the possibility of a *meeting* of hearts, however, that we might have thought especially significant to the kind of love we have for those with whom we share a relationship; and it is to this possibility that I now turn.

[49] Velleman, "Love as a Moral Emotion," 366.
[50] Nussbaum gives an example of this kind of love in her daughter's love for whales. (Nussbaum, *Justice For Animals*.)

3. BETWEEN HEARTS: LOVE AND RELATIONSHIPS

The kind of love that we tend to be most interested in is the kind of love we can have for our close friends, family members, and romantic partners – our special somebodies. Such love is in fact, as I will argue in Section I, necessarily localized to relationships: this very concept of love is such that it does not make sense except in the context of a personal relationship.[1] Love, of this kind, is an attitude of one individual toward another individual within the context of a relationship. Thus, when I speak of love, I mean to refer, unless stated otherwise, specifically to this kind of love.

This is not to deny that there are other kinds of love, including other kinds of love that might be directed, distinctively, toward a somebody – forms of love in which we might care deeply about and be touched by the preciousness of a particular individual, without having any kind of relationship with them. And indeed, these other forms of love will resemble the kind at issue here insofar as they all involve caring for another for her own sake and recognizing her distinct value. But the kind in which we are, I think, usually most interested – the kind that "makes the world go 'round" – is the kind that occurs in the context of a relationship. Such love cannot be properly understood according to a model – like Velleman's or Helm's – that fails to account for the significance of relationships.

In Section II, I look more closely at what such relationships – the kind that provide love's necessary context – involve. I argue that the most basic feature of such relationships is interaction – interaction that is distinguished from any way in which we might "interact" with a mere thing by its intersubjective nature. But they are also characterized by the ongoing and relatively stable attitudes of the participants

[1] The point here is meant only as a conceptual point; I do not explain *why* love and relationships in fact have this connection, but rather simply report that they do.

toward one another – attitudes that persist over periods of absence. Given that the attitudes of the partners toward one another can themselves be described as a feature of their relationship, and taking love to be such an attitude, we can understand love as essentially a feature of a relationship – a relationship marked by (a history of) interaction.[2] Such a relationship need not be perfectly symmetrical, and so the love need not be, exactly, reciprocated in kind. What is required is a history of interaction between the participants – interaction, characterized, moreover, by a mutual receptivity that constitutes what I call "togetherness."

Being and doing together – this is the most basic material of relationships. In Section III, I give a more developed account of these notions of interaction and togetherness. What is required here is that two loci of subjective experience and initiative[3] – two somebodies – mutually recognize one another as such. Such recognition might be understood as both an awareness of the other as a somebody, and a corresponding orientation to the other, approaching them *as* a somebody rather than *as though* they were a mere thing.[4] Such recognition might be manifested in the form of *address*, in which each communicates to the other information, desires, demands, questions, etc. (where such communication need not involve language). Finally, the interactive basis of relationships is characterized not only by encounter and address but also by a mutual attunement, receptivity, and openness in virtue of which the participants to the interaction are being or doing *together*.

[2] That such relationships must be marked by a *history* of interaction allows for the possibility of the relationship's continuing – in the form of the partners' enduring attitudes toward one another – over periods of absence.
[3] This notion of a locus of experience and initiative is borrowed from Harcourt, as discussed in Chapter 1. (Harcourt, "Attachment, Autonomy, and the Evaluative Variety of Love," 29.)
[4] Thus, the term "recognition," as I am using it here, is not meant to imply the exercise of any kind of mental capacity that nonhuman animals are unlikely to have.

In Section IV, I briefly discuss the love of parents for fetuses and newborns as "marginal cases," insofar as the love in these cases is to some extent shaped by an orientation to the future and the expectation of a relationship characterized by togetherness.

Though I focus on love between humans in this chapter, the framework that I develop for thinking about love and relationships will ultimately be applicable to love and relationships between humans and non-human animals. In the final chapter, I apply this theoretical work to a detailed account of the nature of the kinds of loving relationship that are possible between humans and non-human animals.

I. LOVE AND RELATIONSHIPS: A CONCEPTUAL RELATION

As we saw in Chapter 2, Bennett Helm tries to capture the "distinctive intimacy" of love in terms of a structural analogy between self-love and love of the other – in loving another, one has a depth of care for her that is analogous to one's care for oneself. More specifically, in Helm's view, the lover shares in the beloved's own values, *as her (the beloved's) values*, for *her (the beloved's) sake*, presupposing "a commitment to the import of the particular person she is," just as the lover's commitment to her own values presuppose a commitment to the import of her own identity.[5] What is notable about this intimacy, as I said in Chapter 2, is that it occurs entirely within the subjectivity of the lover. Love makes no reference, in this view, to any kind of intimacy that might occur genuinely *between* lover and beloved. Indeed, it is irrelevant to love whether the beloved even knows of the lover's existence, for there need be no interaction between them at all.

[5] Bennett Helm, "Love, Identification, and the Emotions," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 46, no. 1 (January 2009): 50.

Similarly, in Velleman's account of love, there is nothing that must occur *between* lover and beloved. Love is, in Velleman's view, an awe-like awareness of the beloved's value – a value that can be grasped simply by *observing* the beloved.[6] This value is the value of her "personhood," understood in terms of the very capacity for such valuation – which is, "at its utmost", the capacity to love. Thus, according to Velleman, "what our hearts respond to" in loving someone is "another heart" – love is "the heart's response to the realization that it is not alone."[7] But, as I noted in the previous chapter, such "aloneness" seems to be contrasted not with genuine togetherness, in which the two hearts actually *meet*, but rather with a kind of one-sided awareness that somebody else is out there.

It is strange that, for both Helm and Velleman, there is no significance to the possibility of *interaction* with one's beloved, since they both mean to be picking out the kind of love that one might have for one's close friends, family members, or romantic partners – that is, people who are identified by their relationship with the lover.[8] Indeed, what I want to show here is that our concept of love, of the distinctive kind at issue here, is essentially bound up with relationships. On the one hand, we have various relationship-concepts that contain in them the implication that the relationship ought to be loving. On the other hand, and more importantly, our concept of this kind of love is such that it doesn't make sense outside of the context of a relationship.

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[6] J. David Velleman, "Love as a Moral Emotion," *Ethics* 109, no. 2 (January 1999): 371-372.
[7] Velleman, "Love as a Moral Emotion," 366.
[8] Velleman, for example, says his account is an account of the kind of love we might have for "our own children, spouses, parents, and intimate friends" (Velleman, 372). Helm describes the love in which he is concerned as "an evaluative attitude we may take toward other persons" (Helm, "Love, Identification, and the Emotions," 39), but the examples he gives refer to his love for his wife (Helm, 49). Moreover, in his "Love" entry in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, he notes that the love in which he is interested – which he characterizes as "a matter of caring about another person as the person she is, for her own sake" – is the kind of love that one refers to in statements such as "I love my wife (or mother or child or friend)." (Bennett Helm, "Love," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed.* Edward N. Zalta (Fall 2021), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2021/entries/love/.)

Niko Kolodny has argued, in his influential paper "Love as Valuing a Relationship,"[9] that relationships – between friends, family members, and romantic partners, for example – provide normative reasons for love.[10] He notes, for example, of "the parent who is emotionally indifferent to her child" that we would find this "inappropriate."[11] I think Kolodny is right about this normative relation.[12] There is a sense in which a parent *ought* (barring, perhaps, certain extreme conditions) to love their child.[13] We would find a parent who did not love their child bizarre, bemusing, maybe even shameful. At the least, we would think that something had gone badly wrong. The depth of our sense that parents ought to love their children is evident when, for example, somebody's child does something terrible – murder, perhaps – and their parents are faced with a tragic dilemma concerning how to respond. The thought that they ought to love their child and stand by them, regardless of what she has done, is the thought that they ought to do so precisely *because* they are her parents. Parenthood is perhaps the strongest case of this, but other close relationships – those of siblings, friends, and romantic partners, for instance – also call for love. People in relationships expect things of one another, and love is, other things being equal, something that they might reasonably expect.

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[9] Niko Kolodny, "Love as Valuing a Relationship," *The Philosophical Review* 112, no. 2 (2003).

[10] "The reason one has for loving Jane, in any given case," he argues, "is that she is one's daughter, sister, mother, friend, or wife." (Kolodny, "Love as Valuing a Relationship," 136.)

[11] Kolodny, 137.

[12] Kolodny argues further that love itself is "causally sustained," by the first-personal belief that one's relationship to the beloved deems it appropriate, and that the emotions and motivations of love in the absence of such a belief are not love at all ("special concern for a person is not love at all when there is no belief that a relationship renders it appropriate" (Kolodny, 146)). I am not committed to this further point about the lover's psychology. My arguments are about the meanings of the concepts that we have and not about the lover's own responsiveness to normative reasons.

[13] I will shortly qualify this claim, arguing that it is true only when we understand "parenthood" in a more substantive sense than a mere biological relation.

This is, I think, a conceptual point. In a given culture, we ascribe certain meanings to relationships in the very application of a particular relationship-concept (for example, "parent"), and these meanings contain notions of the appropriate emotional responses of the partners to one another.[14] The observations just given, then, are conceptual – they follow from our cultural conceptualizations of the meaning of certain relationships. It is, in our culture at least, part of what it *means* to be a parent that a parent ought to, among other things, love their child. Similarly, part of how we understand the sibling relation, in our culture at least, is an expectation that siblings will love each other, even if they do not always get along. Again, when this is not the case, something, we suppose, has gone badly wrong. Similarly with children's attitudes toward their parents – barring extreme circumstances, they ought to love them.[15]

Indeed, different relationship-concepts call for different modes of love.[16] We would expect that one's love for one's adult friend would take a different shape to one's love for one's infant daughter, and both ought to look quite different from one's love for one's spouse. Nonetheless, as I will argue, there is a commonality between these different iterations of love, insofar as they are all cases of loving *somebody* (as opposed to merely some*thing*), and, moreover, somebody with whom one has a relationship.

Some relationship-concepts – those relating to romantic partnerships and close friendships – require the presence of mutual love for their very application. There is no romantic relationship if the partners

[14] Eva Kittay uses the term "social relation" to designate these kinds of meanings, or the ways in which we conceptualize the relations between people. "It is by virtue of the meanings that the relationships acquire in social practices," she writes, "that duties are delineated, ways we enter and exit relationships are determined, emotional responses are deemed appropriate, and so on." (Eva Kittay, "At the Margins of Moral Personhood," *Ethics* 116, no. 1 (2005): 110-111.)
[15] We needn't understand this as a *moral* "ought" – the norm in question is not necessarily a *moral* norm.
[16] That different kinds of relationship call for different "modes" of love is something that Kolodny notes too (Kolodny, 139).

do not love one another, or have some attitude at least resembling love, such as infatuation. Friendship, too, seems to require something at least close to mutual love.[17]

This is not to say that there is a clearly defined set of universal relationship-concepts. Different cultures may of course have different relationship norms regarding the appropriate attitudes and behaviors of the participants toward one another. But there will also be variation within a given culture concerning the accepted norms of a given kind of relationship, on, for example, a class or subcultural level but also on an individual level. Cultural norms are somewhat flexible and are open to revision. Individual romantic partners might, for example, be more or less conscious and deliberate about not simply following a cultural script dictating the norms of their relationship but rather collaborating together to determine those norms. Spouses, for example, might choose not to live together in the same house or apartment (a divergence from our cultural norm), opting instead for some other kind of living arrangement that allows more individual space and independence.[18]

Nonetheless, there must be some level of contact with cultural norms – we are not entirely free to make things up as we go along – and there will be conceptual limitations on the flexibility of these norms. For example, were a legally married pair to choose to live in different places and have no contact with one another, we would presumably consider them separated, at least without further explanation.[19] Sometimes, new cultural concepts might be developed where existing concepts do not adequately capture the nature of the relationship ("friends with benefits" might be one such notion).

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[17] As Kolodny notes, though certain attitudes are required in order for these relationship-concepts to be applicable, once they are applicable they may also imply that these very attitudes ought to continue (Kolodny, 161-163).

[18] Though we might expect the prevalence of this arrangement to depend also on socio-economic class, since maintaining two separate households is expensive.

[19] There are circumstances in which spouses might reasonably choose to live apart, even without contact, for long periods of time, under which we would not consider them separated – for example, if one spouse decided to go and fight a war for a cause they believed in, while the other stayed home and took care of the children. The kind of case I am thinking of is where there is no such reason for their distance.

Furthermore, the more flexibility and ambiguity there is concerning the meaning of a given relationship, the more need there seems to be to "define the relationship" – a phrase familiar in popular culture – so that each partner is clear on the norms and expectations of the arrangement.

The normative demands and expectations of a given relationship need not be symmetrical. The parent-child relationship is an obvious case of asymmetrical demands, and also of the relative expectations changing over time. In infancy, nothing much at all is expected of the child, whereas a lot is expected, in our culture, of the parents and often of the mother in particular, regarding the love and care of the infant. Cultural and sub-cultural norms vary regarding expectations of other family members, for example grandparents, aunts and uncles, and siblings, regarding the care of infants. Beyond infancy, more will be expected of the child, including, for example, a demand for respect of the parents (and other caretakers) and an expectation of returned love. As parents age, the care-taking roles may gradually reverse. Other relationships, by contrast – in particular, friendships and romantic relationships – involve quite symmetrical demands and expectations of, and require a substantial degree of equality between, the partners.[20]

So far, then, I have argued that our conception of the meanings of certain personal relationships is such that love is expected, or even normatively required. But the more important conceptual connection between love and relationships, for my purposes, refers to our concept of love itself. I now want to argue that (as a conceptual point) this kind of love in fact only makes sense in the context

[20] Kolodny, too, notes that friendships and romantic partnerships require "symmetry in the participants' attitudes to each other" and "viewing one's friend or lover as someone with equal standing," and that "family relationships require less in the way of symmetry" (Kolodny, 165). Aristotle, too, notes the asymmetry in demands and expectations in loving relationships between unequals, for example between parent and child: "Now each does not get the same thing from the other, and must not seek it; but whenever children accord to their parents what they must accord to those who gave them birth, and parents accord what they must do to their children, their friendship is enduring and decent." (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Terence Irwin (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2019), 1158b 20-24.) The term "friendship," here is of course used more broadly than the sense in which I am using it, as distinct from the parent-child relationship.

of a relationship. Before making this argument, though, I want to clarify how such an argument distinguishes my view from Kolodny's.

A Note on Kolodny

According to Kolodny, not only are there normative reasons for love, from the third-person perspective, but, moreover, love itself must be, in order to count as love at all, responsive to reasons from the first-person perspective:

> "Love is not only rendered *normatively appropriate* by the presence of a relationship. Love, moreover, partly *consists* in the belief that some relationship renders it appropriate, and the emotions and motivations of love are *causally sustained* by this belief (except in pathological cases). Special concern for a person is not love at all when there is no belief that a relationship renders it appropriate."[21]

In this respect, love is, in Kolodny's view, localized to relationships – in order to be love at all, the lover must at least *take herself* to be in a relationship with the beloved (though such a belief might be delusional). On this point I am in agreement with Kolodny, as I will argue below. However, Kolodny draws this connection between love and relationships only indirectly, via a claim about love's rational structure. His argument can be reconstructed as follows: (1) love must be responsive to reasons; (2) these reasons are relationships; therefore (3) love must occur in the context of a relationship (or at least, the lover must believe that she has such a relationship with the beloved).[22] It is the first two

[21] Kolodny, 146. To say that "the emotions and motivations of love are causally sustained" by the belief that one's relationship renders them appropriate is not to say that we arrive at love by reasoning our way there – since, as Kolodny notes (Kolodny, 138) we do not arrive at love by reasoning – but rather to posit a counterfactual: the agent believes that her relationship with the beloved deems her emotional and motivational responses appropriate, and if the agent did not believe she stood in a personal relationship with the beloved and that this relationship provided normative reasons for her emotional and motivational responses to the beloved, then she would not have these emotional and motivational responses.

[22] Indeed, this leads Kolodny to posit a series of quite complex beliefs the, he argues, the beloved must have – beliefs that manifest an understanding of, for example, what it means for something to be a normative reason (Kolodny, 151-153).

claims that are of most interest to Kolodny. My claim, on the other hand, is that there is a direct conceptual connection between love and relationships, such that we cannot make sense of love outside the context of a relationship (or at least, the lover's belief that she has a relationship with the beloved).

Before making my argument for this claim, I want to say a little more about Kolodny's claim and where my view stands in relation to it. Two considerations suggest, Kolodny argues, that love must be (from the first-person perspective) responsive to reasons. First, "from the first-person perspective of someone who loves," he claims, "the constitutive emotions and motivations of love make reflexive sense," that is, "they seem appropriate to the person who experiences them."[23] Second, "unless we can appeal to reasons for the [mental states] that are supposed to constitute love, we cannot distinguish love from psychological states that it manifestly is not."[24]

Suppose, he says, that he simply wakes up one day and finds himself with a special concern for Fred Simmons, a classmate of his daughter. "Fred," Kolodny clarifies, "is a complete stranger to me, apart from my having read his name on a class list." Such a concern would not, he argues, constitute love, for it would make "no normative sense" to him. "My desire to help my daughter, by contrast," he writes, "is not simply an impulse that overtakes me. I see the point in it. It strikes me as appropriate."[25] Kolodny's point here seems to be that love is not the kind of thing from which the lover could feel alienated in this way; she must experience it as her own rather than as something that merely happens to her – that is, she must identify with it. And such identification requires, in Kolodny's view,

[23] Kolodny, 137.
[24] Kolodny, 143.
[25] Kolodny, 144-145.

normative endorsement in terms of reasons: "What distinguishes loving desires to do X from mere urges to do X *is* a certain kind of normative endorsement."[26]

The Fred Simmons example is directed specifically at the view of Harry Frankfurt, according to whom love is not reasons-responsive.[27] This disagreement might be framed in terms of the question of what constitutes a person's identification with her own mental states. For Kolodny, it requires normative endorsement in terms of external reasons.[28] For Frankfurt, it requires no such reference to external reasons.[29]

My own argument makes no reference to this debate, and nothing in my argument hangs on it. My claim is a conceptual claim about what, from the third-person perspective, we can make sense of; it is not a claim about the rational structure – by reference to the first-person perspective – of love. It might seem as though I should be interested in taking a side in this debate, since if love is necessarily reasons-responsive, then it would follow that only persons can love. My primary question here is not whether non-persons can love, but whether they can engage in the relevant kinds of relationships that

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[26] Kolodny, 145.

[27] Kolodny, 142-146. Kolodny refers specifically to Harry Frankfurt's paper "On Caring" (Harry Frankfurt, "On Caring," in *Necessity, Volition, and Love* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999)). See also Harry Frankfurt, *The Reasons of Love* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

[28] That is, reasons that do not themselves refer to the agent's own mental states.

[29] Frankfurt addresses this very issue in his engagement with Joseph Raz (see Joseph Raz, "When We Are Ourselves: The Active and the Passive," in Joseph Raz, *Engaging Reason: On the Theory of Value and Action* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) and Harry Frankfurt, "Disengaging Reason," in *Reason and Value: Themes from the Moral Philosophy of Joseph Raz,* ed. R. J. Wallace (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)). Distinguishing between the "active" and the "passive" aspects of our mental lives, characterized as the distinction between "my life as I lead it, and what happens to me in my life" (Raz, "When We Are Ourselves," 5), Raz argues that we are *active* insofar as our mental states, such as our "moods, emotions, beliefs, desires, etc." (Raz, 21) are "responsive to reasons as we see them" (Raz, 16) and thus "appropriate to our circumstances" as we see them (Raz, 11). We are *passive*, on the other hand, insofar as our mental states are opaque to us, in the sense that they are not responsive to what we take to be normative reasons (Raz, 21). "Reason," he asserts, "makes us intelligible to ourselves." (Raz, 20.) This, I take it, is the view that Kolodny is expressing in the Fred Simmons case.

For Frankfurt, on the other hand, "the will is active in so far as (and only in so far as) it is whole-hearted," which means that the agent "wants or is willing for his will to be as it is, and that he therefore identifies with it," and this "may not be grounded in reasons": "Whole-heartedness consists just in a certain harmonious volitional structure, which can come about independently of a response to reasons." (Frankfurt, "Disengaging Reason," 126.)

would deem them possible *objects* of love. Nonetheless, the question whether non-persons can love will arise in future chapters, and I do not want the possibility of non-persons' love to be foreclosed here. However, once we recognize that the debate about love's reasons-responsiveness is framed in terms that *presuppose* the personhood of the lover, it is clear that they cannot be used, without circularity, to conclude that the lover must be a person.

Recall that the disagreement about love's reasons-responsiveness hinges on the question of what is required for the lover's identification with the mental states that constitute her love – according to Kolodny, such identification requires normative endorsement in terms of external reasons, while for Frankfurt it does not. But this very requirement of identification rests on the understanding that love is not the kind of thing that the lover experiences, from a reflective standpoint, as alien. Thus, the requirement of identification only arises for those who are vulnerable to such alienation; that is, for persons. Thus, even if Kolodny is right – as he may be – that a *person's* love must be reasons-responsive, it does not follow that only those who are able to respond to reasons in the relevant sense are able to love, for non-persons are not vulnerable to alienation from their own mental states. I can therefore leave aside this debate about love's reasons-responsiveness.

Relationships as Necessary Context for Love

To see that we have a distinctive concept of love that makes sense only in the context of a relationship, consider the following scenario. Imagine your friend has just dropped off her son, Tim, for his first day of school and, meeting up with you afterward, she tells you that they had arrived at the school quite early, and when she left there was only Tim and one other child there with the teacher. She had

heard the teacher call the other child Jeremy, and so she guessed that was his name, though she hadn't interacted with him herself. She had seen him, though, and he looked very sweet. In fact, she goes on to tell you, she had, just in that brief, one-sided encounter, come to love Jeremy very much.

This would, I take it, be a bewildering claim. You might feel compelled to ask what on earth she means. Suppose then that she clarifies, admitting she phrased her claim misleadingly. What she meant, she explains, is that, since becoming a mother and experiencing such a profound love for Tim, she had come to see the preciousness of all children in a way that she hadn't appreciated before becoming a mother – indeed, not just of all children but of all people, seeing that everybody is somebody's child. Through the window of her love for her own son, she explains, she has come to see the infinite loveliness of everyone's child; though, as she clarifies, she of course does not love them in the same way that she loves her own son.

This is, I think, something like what Velleman means by love's being a "moral education," the idea that through our love of a select few people – our special somebodies – we become deeply acquainted with their value and thereby with the value of others relevantly like them. This is not to say that we come to love other people in the way that we love our special somebodies, but it does suggest that we will be moved by them and their fate in certain ways – coming to be more affected by their tragedies, perhaps, though without this amounting to the kind of *grief* that we would experience should tragedy befall one of our special somebodies.[30]

This explanation would, I think, resolve your bewilderment, though you would probably agree that your friend's initial statement – that she had "come to love Jeremy very much" – was misleading. "Ok," you might say, "but there is love and there is *love*: you feel love for everyone that you encounter,

[30] See Velleman, 373-374.

knowing them as somebody's child; but you *love* Tim, since he is *your* child." You would be pointing here to a conceptual difference, between different meanings of the term "love."

Indeed, to emphasize this difference, suppose that your friend had given a different explanation, insisting that her initial statement was not misleading, and that she really did *love* this boy Jeremy. The group of people she loves most in the world now includes, she says, her parents, her one brother, two very dear friends – one of whom she has known since childhood, and the other of whom she met at college – her spouse, her son Tim, and now also Tim's classmate, Jeremy. You would, I propose, find this bemusing, unintelligible – it wouldn't make any sense.[31]

And it would not help if, after seeing your bewildered expression, your friend tried to offer more explanation about her new love for her son's classmate, informing you that she had been struck by his movements and his smile; by what Velleman would call his "rendition of humanity."[32] This would not lend any intelligibility to her professed love.[33] Again, this is a conceptual matter: we have a concept of

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[31] This example is similar to Kolodny's Fred Simmons example (Kolodny, 144-145), but, as I have argued above, Kolodny uses his example to make a claim about the rational structure of love – about love's perceived appropriateness from the first-person perspective – whereas my claim is made from the third-person perspective and is not concerned with love's rational structure. A further difference is that in my example the woman *sees* Jeremy, whereas in Kolodny's example he merely reads Fred's name from a list. Thus, my example makes clear that merely observing the beloved is not enough to make sense of one's love for them.

[32] Recall that Velleman explains the selectivity of love not in terms of relationships but in terms of people's *observable* qualities. Though all persons are, in virtue of their value as persons, "eligible to be loved," who each person actually comes to love is a matter of some contingency, because "the human body and human behavior are imperfect expressions of personhood, and we are imperfect interpreters." Thus, for Velleman, though love is a response to the value of personhood, there is a derivative sense in which we love another for his particular qualities, or "observable features," for example "the way he walks and the way he talks." (Velleman, 371-372.)

[33] First, this just doesn't seem to be a plausible story of how we come to love our family members – the contingency of who we love, in the case of family members, is not determined by whether or not their particular rendition of humanity is able to get through to us. As Kolodny notes, "the etiology of familial love entailed by Velleman's account is implausible" – such love "does not wait for the appreciation of personal qualities as reminders of rational nature." (Kolodny, 174.) The same intuition would seem to apply to the case of loving another *as though* they were a family member. Second, not only is this inaccurate as a description of how we in fact come to love a family member, but moreover, it is not an intelligible possibility: we simply cannot make sense of the idea that someone might come to love another *as a son* based purely on this one-sided encounter.

love that makes sense only within the context of a personal relationship – we could not make any sense of someone professing to direct this kind of love toward someone whom they take to be a stranger.[34]

This is, of course, to deny the possibility of "love at first sight," when that is meant to refer to the very same kind of love that one has for someone with whom one has a close relationship. Maybe one could be infatuated or obsessed with someone at first sight, or have a strong desire, at first sight, to form a relationship with them – but in the absence of an actual relationship it would not make sense to say that one already loved them, in the sense at issue here.

I also don't think it would help if your friend explained that she knew a lot about Jeremy. Suppose, for example, that she followed his parents on Instagram, and they were always posting photos and stories about him, through which one could learn quite a lot about his character and his life. Still, I think it would be very strange indeed if your friend said that she loved Jeremey in the same way that she loved her friends and family.[35]

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[34] I have said "someone whom they take to be a stranger" to allow for the possibility of a case of delusion, in which somebody takes themselves to have a relationship with somebody when no such relationship actually exists. In such a case, the love would, I take it, be intelligible, and it would be intelligible precisely because of the lover's belief that she has a relationship with the beloved, but it would, insofar as it involved delusion, be a deficient and unsettling case. Kolodny mentions, for example, stalkers, who "often believe that they have relationships to the objects of their obsessions. Sometimes this reflects a willful interpretation of the evidence, other times a full-blown psychosis." (Kolodny, 146.) In what follows, I will set aside this possibility, but it should be understood that when I speak of love as occurring only in the context of relationships, I mean to include the possibility of an imagined relationship – though this would of course be a strange case. This account would also allow for less troubling forms of unrequited love. For example, in the context of a friendship, one partner might develop romantic love for the other, without this mode of love being reciprocated. The extent to which we would consider this a case of genuine, non-delusional love will depend, I think, on the quality of the friendship.

[35] There might be a kind of love that depends on knowing *about* another – and thus feeling as though one "knows" them, in the sense usually reserved for someone with whom you have actually interacted – without having ever met them. Many people seem to have felt this way about Princess Diana, for example, as evidenced by the thousands of attendees at her funeral. Nonetheless, it would be worrying, I think, if somebody who had never actually met Princess Diana had said that they loved her in just the same way that they loved their own family, or had supposed that their grief was the same as that experienced by those who had close relationships with Princess Diana.

There is a distinctive kind of love that makes sense only in the context of a relationship. This does not entail that your friend's love for her son must be in some way overly self-focused. To clarify, it may help to draw on Bernard Williams' distinction between "I-desires" and "non-I desires."[36] To make the distinction, we begin by construing desires as having the structure "I want that *p*," where *p* "specifies the state of affairs which, if it came about, would satisfy the want."[37] An "I-desire" is "a desire whose propositional content requires 'I' or related expressions ('my', etc.)." A "non-I desire" involves no such reference to the self in the specification of the desired state of affairs. A "*basically* non-I desire" is "a non-I desire which does not depend on an I-desire," in the sense of having the non-I desire merely because one has a further, I-desire.[38] Similarly, we might suppose, a basically I-desire is one that does not depend on a non-I desire.

In loving Tim, we would expect your friend to have the following kinds of non-I desires: that, in the event of her death, Tim should be well cared for, happy, etc; that, even in a hypothetical universe in which Tim existed but (bypassing our usual biological understanding) she did not and hadn't ever existed, or in which she and Tim had no relation to one another, Tim should be well cared for, happy, etc. These look to be basically non-I desires, in the sense that they are not held *because* of some further I-desire.[39] Nonetheless, we can only make sense of them by reference to your friend herself; that is, by referencing her relation to Tim. That Tim is in fact her son and that they relate to one another as mother and son is what makes sense of her desires that, even had she not existed and somehow Tim had, he be well cared for.

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[36] Bernard Williams, "Egoism and Altruism," in Bernard Williams, *Problems of the Self: Philosophical Papers 1956-1972* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973).
[37] Williams, "Egoism and Altruism," 260.
[38] Williams, 261.
[39] Williams, 262-264.

How, then, should we understand the nature of relationships, such that they provide love's necessary context? It is to this question that I now turn.

II. THE NATURE OF RELATIONSHIPS

I said above that it is part of our cultural understanding of parenthood that a parent in some sense *ought* to love their child. But we should be careful about how we interpret this, because the meaning of "parenthood" is here ambiguous, and the claim is true only if we are taking "parent" to mean something more than a mere biological relation. Indeed, the biological relation is neither necessary nor sufficient for true parenthood, in the richer sense of that term. It is not necessary because, for example, people can adopt children. And its insufficiency is evident from the fact that we can imagine a situation (as I'll demonstrate below) in which it would not make sense for someone to love their biological offspring – thus "parent" must refer to something more than this merely biological relation when it is taken to imply that the parent ought to love their child.

Imagine, for example, a man who has just found out that he has a biological child – an ex-girlfriend from many years ago was pregnant when they broke up, and had the child, but never told him, let's suppose. He has never met the child, and until today did not know of her existence. The relevant biological relation obtains, but in the absence of any acquaintance with the child, I don't think we would want to say that he has reason to love her; indeed, it would not make any sense for him to love her, in that distinctive sense that occurs in the context of a relationship. Indeed, he is not really a parent in the sense that we mean when we think that parents ought to love their children. It would be comical if, having just found out about his biological offspring, he started identifying as a parent,

suddenly acting like a participant when his parent friends share stories of the ups and downs of parenthood, smiling and nodding knowingly.

Now, given the realization that he has a biological child, it might make sense for him to want to learn about her, to seek her out, and indeed to try to establish a relationship with her (and we are of course using the term "relationship" here in a richer sense than a mere biological relation). Indeed, he perhaps *ought* to do these things. And it might make sense for her, too, to be curious about her biological father, and perhaps to explore the possibility of a relationship with him.[40] And if they do develop such a relationship, we might expect that relationship to become a loving relationship. Indeed, they may even become parent and child in the more robust sense that implies that the relationship *ought* to be loving. We might say that one becomes a parent, in this more substantive sense, by occupying the "parent" side of the parent-child dynamic, manifested primarily through patterns of interaction, where each occupies something at least resembling the cultural norms of these respective roles. But whatever the dynamic that develops between them – if indeed they do establish a relationship – it seems that there must be some relationship, marked by actual interaction, in order to make sense of love of either of them for the other. In the absence of actual interaction, there is simply no relationship present of a kind that would provide the necessary context to make sense of love.[41]

This is not to deny the importance of how we conceptualize relationships. Indeed, the conceptualization of the meaning of a relationship, on the part of those participating, will to some

[40] Then again, it might make sense for one or both of them to *not* want to establish a relationship – maybe the child, for instance, already has a (non-biological) father and is not interested in this merely biological tie. Or imagine a different case in which the man had donated sperm to a sperm bank – he might thereby have made a commitment not to be anything more than a sperm donor to any potential offspring, in which case it might make sense for him, after discovering that his donation had led to the creation of his biological daughter, not to want to establish a relationship with her.

[41] That the mere biological relation is not sufficient to make sense of the presence of love is something that Kolodny does not seem to recognize, as I discuss below.

extent inform their interactions, giving them a particular flavor. Further, an expectation about the kind of relationship that will occur can orient one or both of the partners toward one another (and the relationship) in a particular way and can *prepare* them for love. Thus, for example, a parent-to-be will await the birth or adoption of their future child with a certain anticipation and preparedness to love that child in particular (and the same might apply to the man who hopes to establish a relationship with his biological offspring). The love does not truly begin, I am arguing, until they *meet* the child, but their anticipation of the relationship that they are about to start, and an understanding of its meaning, marks the difference between this child that they are about to – perhaps instantaneously – fall in love with and any other child that they might meet in passing.

Nor is this to say that relationships should be understood purely as ongoing patterns of interaction. We should expect the partners to have relatively stable attitudes toward one another that in part define the nature of their relationship. The attitudes of the partners toward one another will inform their interactions, giving them a certain shape or flavor. Indeed, it might be hard to describe the nature of these interactions without referencing the attitudes of the partners toward one another. Moreover, we would expect these attitudes to endure, in the background or foreground, throughout periods of absence. Indeed, it is in virtue of these enduring attitudes that we can say that a relationship still exists, or persists, during periods of absence. Nonetheless, there is no such relationship in the absence of any *history* of interaction.

Love is to be understood as a feature of a relationship, then, insofar as it occurs within, and in part characterizes the nature of, a relationship. It refers to the attitude of one individual toward another individual, that occurs within a relationship marked by (a history of) interaction.[42]

It is notable that Kolodny does not seem to recognize that relationships, of the relevant kind, require (a history of) interaction. To distinguish interpersonal *relationships* as belonging to "a different ontological category" from what he terms mere "interpersonal *relations*," in which two people are "related" only in the formal sense of satisfying some two-place predicate, he specifies that interpersonal *relationships* are, unlike mere logical relations, ongoing, historical, and occur between particulars (particular people). That a relation is "ongoing" means that it "is not the momentary obtaining of some relation, but something that has persisted, and may continue to persist, over time" (as contrasted with, for example, "standing to the left of"). The criterion that such a relation be "historical" means that "whether I stand in a relationship to someone at a given time depends on some fact about our pasts" (which, again, contrasts with a relation such as "standing to the left of"). And the condition that such relationships obtain between *particulars* means that "relationships are individuated by the identities of their participants; they cannot survive substitutions of participants" (as contrasted with, for example, the relational fact of my having *a dentist*).[43]

He further distinguishes between "attitude-dependent" and "attitude-independent" relationships on the basis of the *kinds* of ongoing, historical relations that must occur between the participants in order to say that a given kind of relationship obtains between them. In the case of "attitude-dependent"

[42] The relationship can endure, in the form of the ongoing attitudes of the partners, in the absence of ongoing interaction, but it cannot get off the ground without some history of such interaction. Love does not make sense in the absence of such a history. This allows us to make sense of an enduring love when there is no longer interaction, including when no such interaction is possible because one's partner has died – though in such an instance we would expect love to take the form of grief. Indeed, we could not make sense of grief for an individual with whom the griever had never interacted.
[43] Kolodny, 148.

relationships, such as friendships and romantic partnerships, the participants must have certain attitudes toward one another in order for us to say that they stand in that kind of relationship. Kolodny does seem to recognize, in this case, that these attitudes themselves would not make sense in the absence of a history of interaction.[44]

In the case of "attitude-independent" relationships, the relationship in which the participants stand toward one another does not depend on their attitudes toward one another. "Whether Ivan is my brother," writes Kolodny, "does not depend on how we feel about one another; it depends on a biological tie, or a fact about our upbringing."[45] By referencing "a fact about our upbringing," Kolodny acknowledges that a biological relationship is not necessary for brotherhood, but by allowing that such brotherhood might be established merely on the basis of a biological tie, he fails to recognize that this merely biological relation is in fact not *sufficient* for brotherhood in the relevant, robust sense (as I argued above with regard to biological fatherhood). Two people could be "brothers" by mere biological tie and yet have no *relationship* with one another, in the relevant sense – they could be total strangers to one another, not even knowing of one another's existence.

Indeed, Kolodny's general characterization of relationships, in terms of ongoing, historical relations between particulars, is inadequate as a way of capturing the ontological distinctiveness of interpersonal relationships. For, while it does distinguish such relationships from mere logical relations, it does not actually put them in a distinct ontological category from the kind of relation one might have to a mere *thing*, for example, a property relation. For, the fact that the chair on which I am sitting is *my chair* specifies an ongoing, historical relation between me and this particular chair. But, of course, my relation to a mere *thing* does not constitute the relevant kind of relationship. Now, Kolodny has

[44] Kolodny, 170.
[45] Kolodny, 149.

stipulated that he means for these relationships to obtain only between persons, and so he is certainly not including this relationship, between me and my chair, as of the relevant kind. But we should not expect such a relation to be ruled out only as a matter of stipulation. What we might have wanted, in fact, out of a characterization of the distinctive nature of relationships, is something that explains *why* this kind of relationship cannot, in principle, apply between me and a mere *thing*.[46]

What distinguishes such relationships is interaction – interaction marked by intersubjectivity and therefore of a kind that one could not have with another thing but could only have with another somebody. In the relevant subset of such relationships – those that provide the context for love – we might describe such interaction as a *meeting of hearts*. It is to this idea that I now turn.

III. HEART TO HEART: INTERACTION AND TOGETHERNESS

I have argued so far that it is relationships of the kind that one has with, for example, one's close friends, family members, and romantic partners, that provide love's necessary context. We might think of these relationships as instances of the broader category of *dyadic* relationships – ongoing, historical relationships between particular subjects, marked by a history of intersubjective interaction. Friendships, family relationships, and romantic relationships would be included in this broader category, but so would less intimate relationships such as my relationships with my co-workers, my hairdresser, or my doctor (assuming I keep the same hairdresser and the same doctor). In the

[46] Indeed, had Kolodny been more curious about this, as opposed to simply stipulating that such relationships occur between persons, he might have recognized that such relationships might also be possible with non-human animals.

relationships that provide the context for love, however, our interaction has a particular quality – what we might call "togetherness" or a "meeting of hearts."

Consider three quite different cases of the kind of interaction – constituting togetherness – in which I am interested:

(1) My husband and I lie in bed, bodies meshed together like a jigsaw puzzle. My head rests on his chest, and he holds me close. We lie like this for a while, sometimes talking, sometimes not talking, lost in thought. During moments of silence, we acknowledge one another through a squeeze of the hand or a nuzzle of the nose.

(2) I am nineteen and my dad is driving me from Hull to Oxford, to return to university after the winter break. Side by side and with eyes on the road, we talk and laugh and smoke cigarettes.

(3) My little sister is four; I am twenty-six, visiting home. We play for an hour according to a script she has improvised and then repeated over and over. "Oh no!", she says, "Flowertree has eaten another bug!" We take Flowertree, her stuffed dog, to the imaginary vet. He makes a quick recovery. We get under the covers to "sleep," and then its "morning" and time for breakfast again, time for Flowertree's walk, and then, oh no, he has swallowed another bug. I am both exhausted and delighted to be with her.

In each case, a kind of co-created, shared world arises between us, something genuinely two-sided. To see the sense in which this relation is essentially two-sided, we might use the imagery of two hands

being used to create a soapy bubble, stretching and shaping it between them.[47] To get a picture of what is involved in these kinds of interaction, I want to, somewhat artificially, break down them down into various "layers" or "levels." My aim here is to get a general understanding of what is going on here, such that we can start to ask *who* might be able to engage in these kinds of interaction.

At the most basic level, there is intersubjectivity – what we might characterize as a kind of "meeting of minds." It is in virtue of intersubjectivity that the relation is fundamentally different from any way in which I might relate to a mere thing. I can be aware of a mere *thing*, of its presence, but that thing – a chair, perhaps – cannot be aware of me. And in virtue of this, its presence to me – it's mere *there*ness – is fundamentally different from the presence of another somebody who is at the same time aware of *my* presence, and aware of me precisely *as* a somebody. A somebody is capable not just of being (so to speak) *looked at* but also, unlike a chair, of (so to speak) *looking back*.

Each is a *somebody* – a locus of subjective experience and initiative – and they are mutually aware of one another as such. In this case we might say that, for example, I am aware of your presence and you are aware of mine, and I am aware that you are aware of my presence, and you are aware that I am aware of your presence, and I am aware that you are aware that I am aware of your presence, and you are aware that I am aware that you are aware of my presence.[48] What we have here might be described as a *social encounter*. With this notion, we are beyond any kind of relation in which one might stand with respect to a mere *thing*.

[47] Strictly speaking, this kind of shared social world is not essentially two-sided but essentially multi-sided, since it might occur between more than two people.
[48] This is not necessarily to say that mutual awareness can be *reduced* to such a series of one-directional states of awareness, but it does seem to at least imply such a series.

We might say that one is not merely aware of but *recognizes* the other as a somebody when one orients oneself toward her as such (instead of behaving toward her as though she were a mere thing). Such recognition might manifest in *address* – a distinctive form of "turning toward" and intentionally communicating (asking, telling, demanding, suggesting) something to the other, which may or may not take the form of language. When such recognition is mutual, we have social interaction.

Something else is required, though, to make these instances of interaction the ongoing patterns of which would form the basic material of the kinds of personal relationship we are after. This further thing might be described as a form of "togetherness," which is, again, distinct from any way in which one might be said to be "together" with a mere thing. Such togetherness requires that the interaction be genuinely dialogical, in the sense that there is mutual receptivity and attunement so as to create a dynamic characterized by a genuine give-and-take – each must actually take up and respond to the inputs of the other, rather than, so to speak "talking past" one another. And, further, such togetherness requires a kind of mutual openness, where each embraces, and gets satisfaction from, the presence of the other (and not merely as a means to something else).[49]

In the first case, in which my husband and I lie snuggling in bed, our receptivity and openness to one another is very bodily. Now, in all of these cases the togetherness is an embodied togetherness insofar as the two are in physical proximity as embodied beings. Such physical proximity is neither necessary nor sufficient for togetherness, though it is paradigmatic. It is not sufficient because I can be, for example, in the physical proximity of a mere thing. Further, I can be physically near somebody without one or either of us knowing it, in which case there is no mutual recognition. And even when there is

[49] This notion of togetherness bears some similarity to Stephen Darwall's notion of "being with" such that "two people are with one another when they are mutually aware of their mutual openness to mutual relating" (Stephen Darwall, "Being With," in Stephen Darwall, *Honor, History, and Relationship: Essays in Second-Personal Ethics II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 123.

physical proximity in the form of encounter or actual interaction, this alone is not, as I have said, sufficient for *togetherness*. I might, for example, sit next to a stranger in a waiting room, where we are mutually aware of one another, and may even interact, without being or waiting "together" in the sense intended, for there is not the required openness between us.

Neither is physical proximity necessary for togetherness. Such togetherness might be achieved via technology such as the telephone or video calling, or even perhaps over instant messenger. Such technologies, of course, are not accessible to all with whom we might interact in person. But physical proximity is *paradigmatic* of togetherness, and so the capacities required for engaging over these technologies are not necessary for togetherness. That physically distant forms of connection, such as over the telephone, video, instant messenger etc., are usually experienced as derivative and deficient forms of such togetherness is clear, for example, from the collective dismay at "social distancing" during the COVID-19 pandemic.[50]

Though each of the three cases involves physical proximity, it is perhaps most prominent in the first case. In this first case, the physical intimacy of *touch* is the main channel of interaction – though each is to be understood, always, as not merely a *body* but rather as an embodied *somebody*. Each is attuned and responsive to the slight bodily movements of the other as we shift around to get comfortable, or as we communicate affection through a squeeze of the hand. This contrasts with the second case, where my dad and I drive together, in which the openness, receptivity, and attunement, takes the form of conversation, joking, and laughter (though such conversation occurs within the context of physical presence and proximity, and is in that sense quite different, for example, from being on the phone). The third case – playing with my little sister – lies somewhere between the other two cases with regard

[50] I'll discuss the *need* for physical togetherness further in Chapter 4.

to physical intimacy. Children often have different physical boundaries to adults, and interaction with children often involves a lot of touch and close physical proximity.

The three cases also show variety in the nature and level of mutuality and reciprocity between partners. In the first case, in which I lie with my husband there is a high degree of symmetry between what each brings to and takes away from the interaction. The second case, too, shows a high degree of symmetry in the interaction – the give-and-take is pretty much equal. Now, dialogical interactions are never *completely* symmetrical, since two somebodies are never (outside of science-fiction) a perfect mirror of one another. Indeed, what is quite special about such interaction is precisely that it creates a kind of bridge between the separateness, and difference, of individual somebodies. Nonetheless, there is a relatively high degree of symmetry here.

In the third case, in which my little sister and I play together, the interaction is less symmetrical. We are doing something genuinely *together*, but our experience of it, as well as the nature of our respective inputs, is quite different. She is being creative and imaginative, improvising pretend scenarios; I am mainly following her lead, adding little bits here and there in an effort to do my part in propping up the imaginative world that is primarily her creation. She is happy to be with her big sister, and also to be playing this game – she is enthralled in the repetition. I am happy to be with my little sister, and I will take what I can get, though my interest in the game owes only to the fact that it is hers – the repetition is exhausting, and I am trying my best to look alive. The togetherness is thus in many respects asymmetrical, but this does not take away from the togetherness itself – it would be quite unintelligible if I were to return home and say, "I wish my sister and I had been able to properly hang out together, instead of playing that game".

Similarly, the ongoing attitudes that we each have toward the other, and toward our relationship, are asymmetrical, owing not only to the fact that I am the older, and she the younger, sister, but moreover to the vast age gap – twenty-two years – between us. It is hard to know the exact nature of these differences, but for example, I presumably have a more reflective conception of the meaning of family, and this in turn is brought to my attitudes toward her and toward our relationship. I also take on a caring role toward her, usually in the form of sending her things in the mail, but also, for example, when I am able to be with her, reading her bedtime stories. I suspect that she occupies my thoughts more than I occupy hers; and of course, I find her utterly adorable in a way in which I would not expect to be reciprocated. None of these differences, however, take away from the fact that we have a genuinely dialogical relationship – a relationship founded on togetherness, informed by an understanding of sisterhood, and maintained across distance – or undermine my love for her.

We see asymmetry, too, in the cases of Eva Kittay and her "severely" intellectually disabled daughter, Sesha, discussed in the previous chapter. Though the roles of Kittay and Sesha, and their relative cognitive abilities, are very different, there is certainly *togetherness* between them. We see this, for example, in Kittay's description of Sesha's kisses – "mouth open, top teeth lightly (and sometimes not so lightly) pressing on your cheek, her breath full of excitement and happiness, her arms around your neck."[51] Through their differences, there is a profound emotional connection.

[51] Kittay, *Loves Labor*, 160.

IV. MARGINAL CASES: INFANTS AND FETUSES

I have given a general account of the togetherness from which relationships are made – the kind that give love it's context. Two kinds of case, however, do not quite fit this account: the love of newborns and the love of fetuses. Newborns and fetuses do not have the capacities for togetherness as I have described it. About these case, I want to say two things: first, it seems reasonable to say that, to some extent, these cases are special – they are just not quite like other loves; but second, they can be perceived as marginal cases of the kind of love the is my topic, insofar as they are largely shaped by an orientation to the (near-)future – a future where, if all goes well, there will be a togetherness, and a relationship, of the kind I have discussed.

Consider, for example, Francesca Segal's description of her pregnancy with twins:

> "For the first time in my life I was part of a posse; I was a one-woman girl gang. Pregnancy was like performing a perpetual magic trick, to move around the world in the silent company of my daughters. Two tiny sidekicks always there, shifting just below the hot, taut skin."[52]

Segal characterizes her relation to her fetuses as a kind of togetherness – they are "silent company" – but this seems quite dependent on her own take on the matter. Presumably not all pregnancies are experienced in this way – especially not, perhaps, by those who are seeking an abortion. Some women might experience the occupation of their body in pregnancy (unwanted or otherwise) as similar to being occupied by a parasite, or an alien. Insofar as there is a kind of intimacy between Segal and her fetuses, it is not "togetherness" as I have characterized it. On the one hand, fetuses do not have the kind of awareness of Segal that would be required for their experience to be mutual. Moreover, the

[52] Francesca Segal, *Mother Ship* (London: Vintage, 2019), 3-4.

very separateness on which dialogical interaction depends does not quite hold in pregnancy. This ambiguity is drawn out when Segal describes herself as a "one-woman girl gang." The intimacy of pregnancy, we might presume, is of its own, distinctive kind. Nonetheless, one can look to a future when the fetuses will be *somebodies*, and to the kind of relationship one expects to have with them.

Consider, too, Anne Lamott's description of breastfeeding her infant son, Sam, as "the easiest, purest communication I've ever known."[53] Clearly, she is understanding this as a truly dialogical interaction – as being really, and very intimately, "together" with her son. After a certain age in infancy, we can accommodate this thought within my framework and conceive of the infant as recognizing the mother as a particular *somebody* – in this case, each is open to and attuned with the other as another somebody, and there is extreme bodily intimacy. Suppose, however, that the infant is a newborn – in that case, what can we say about his awareness of the mother? There is physical intimacy, and it seems very different from the kind of physical closeness one could have with a mere *thing*, but it probably doesn't fit into the framework I have given for understanding togetherness. And yet, I obviously do not want to deny that mothers love their newborns. Again, I think what we might have to say is that the love that mothers – or indeed, parents generally – have for their newborn babies is of a distinctive kind. There is not yet the kind of mutual recognition required for the kind of relationship that I have been describing in this chapter – though in most cases there will be in the near future, and the nature of the love will be shaped in part by the parent's looking forward to this future relationship. In the meantime, it actually seems quite natural to say that the love of a newborn is a class of its own, not exactly like anything else.

[53] Lamott, *Operating Instructions*, 165.

Both of these cases, then, seem to be distinctive, not quite fitting my general characterization; and in both cases this seems unproblematic. The parent's experience in both cases might be shaped by a number of elements, all of which are open to interpretation and might elicit different feelings in different people. These include: extreme bodily intimacy (or, in the case of pregnancy, being not-quite-separate); anticipation of the kind of relationship one expects to have with one's child in the future; and an understanding of the meaning of the parent-child relationship as lending the parent-fetus (insofar as the relation is conceived in this way) or parent-newborn relation a special significance.

V. CONCLUSION: RECIPROCAL LOVE?

My argument in this chapter has been that love should be understood as a feature of a relationship; or, more specifically, as an attitude of one individual toward another in the context of a relationship marked by a history of interaction. Such interaction should be understood as constituting a form of togetherness, resting on mutual openness, receptivity, and attunement. We thus have a major piece in the puzzle of explaining the possibility of love for non-human animals: non-human animals are possible objects of our love insofar as they are capable of participating with us (and we of participating with them) in the relevant kinds of interaction.

I have said that these interactions, as well as the attitudes of the participants toward one another, need not be symmetrical, and that the love of one partner for the other need not be reciprocated in kind. In order for a parent to love their young child, for example, that child is not required to have the very same kind of love for them in return – this would be implausible, since we would expect and adult's love to be quite different in various ways from a young child's. Indeed, I have so far left it an open question whether a "non-person" can *love*, having focused primarily on the possibility of their being

an *object* of a person's love. Nonetheless, we would expect a genuinely emotional connection between the participants to the relationship.

Though Sesha "occupies a limited spectrum" of "the scope and breadth of human possibilities and capacities," she has, Kittay argues "the most important faculties of all":

> "The capacities for love and for happiness. These allow those of us who care for her, who love her, who have been entrusted with her well-being to form deep and abiding attachments to her. Sesha's coin and currency is love. That is what she wishes to receive and that is what she reciprocates in spades."[54]

We saw in the previous chapter that Velleman conceives of love as a "heart responding to another heart," where "heart" is to be understood as the "capacity to love," and the capacity to love is understood specifically as a rational capacity for reflective valuation. We see in Kittay's writing an idea that might be expressed as a "heart responding to another heart," but where the notion of "heart" is understood more broadly. Kittay describes this in terms both of the capacity to love and the capacity for happiness, or (as in her description quoted in the previous chapter) joy. And the capacity to love is understood not as a distinctly rational capacity but as something else, something that Sesha has access to.

In the following chapter, I develop an account of the nature of love as a form of "affectional bond," suggesting that there is a great deal of continuity between the love that a person can experience and the forms of emotional connection and vulnerability experienced by "non-persons." While we should recognize some important differences, I see no reason to reserve the term "love" only for the former.

[54] Kittay, 161.

4. LOVE AS CARING ATTACHMENT

I argued in Chapter 3 that it is a strange feature of the views of both Bennett Helm and David Velleman that, although they are concerned with love of the distinctive kind that we might have for a close friend, family member, or romantic partner, neither of them recognizes an essential connection between love and relationships. In the present chapter, I note a further oddity of their views – something that they share also with Harry Frankfurt: they fail to recognize the importance to the lover, qua lover, of being together with the beloved.

In Section I, I note two features that are shared by views as various as those of Helm, Velleman, and Frankfurt. First, each sees love as the exercise of a personhood-defining capacity, and second, each sees love as essentially disinterested. They thus cannot see the need to *be with* our loved ones as having anything essentially to do with love. Accordingly, I suggest, insofar as these views present a picture of the importance of love in the lives of creatures like us, they view us as essentially rational creatures, making no reference to our basic need for connection with others – and that is strange.

In Section II, I argue for an alternative picture. While I agree that love involves caring for the beloved for her own sake, to see this as all that love involves is to give a one-sided picture. It is a central feature of the love that we have for our close relations that we want to be together with them in more or less intimate ways and with more or less frequency. In Chapter 3 I argued that love makes sense only in the context of a personal relationship. I now further characterize such relationships as *affectional bonds*, in which the participants experience mutual enjoyment and affection in one another's presence, seek at least some frequency of togetherness with one another, miss one another during times of separation, delight in reunion, and would experience a form of grief in the face of permanent loss or separation.

We might refer to the attitudes of each individual toward the other, within such a relationship, as *attachment*, understood as a felt need to be together with the other. I argue that love involves, quite centrally, attachment to the beloved.[1]

In Section III, I argue that love should be understood not *simply* as attachment, since one can be attached to another without caring for them and without having a genuinely dialogical relationship with them. Rather, love should be understood, specifically, as what I call *caring attachment*. Thus, while love itself involves attachment, understood as a felt need to be together with the other, such attachment will be limited by one's overarching concern for the beloved for her own sake, and by recognizing her as a limit to one's will. Accordingly, we would not expect the lover to, for example, seek to be together with the beloved at the expense of the beloved's own well-being, or against her wishes.

According to the account that I develop, of central importance to an understanding of ourselves as lovers is our need of, and capacity for, bonding. In this respect, our nature as lovers is not set apart from the other animals but is in fact continuous with the natures of many other animals, including dogs. This is a thought that I will develop more fully in the next chapter.

[1] The notion of attachment, though prominent in the psychological literature on love and relationships, has been relatively neglected in philosophy. The recent work of Monique Wonderly and of Edward Harcourt are notable exceptions. See Monique Wonderly, "Love and Attachment," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (July 2017), Monique Wonderly, "On Being Attached," *Philosophical Studies* 173, no. 1 (2016), and Harcourt, "Attachment, Autonomy, and the Evaluative Variety of Love." Wonderly argues that romantic love involves not just caring for the beloved for her own sake but also being attached to the beloved. Wonderly's argument is more specific than mine insofar as she focuses only on romantic love and only on what she terms "security-based" attachment (see Wonderly, "Love and Attachment," 19-21, and Wonderly, "On Being Attached," 231-232). My notion of attachment is more specific than Wonderly's, however, insofar as it is a need for *togetherness*, of a kind that one cannot have with a mere thing, whereas Wonderly's is a need for "engagement" – a kind of engagement which one can have with a mere thing or activity (Wonderly, "On Being Attached," 227-228). The notion of attachment I invoke is basically the same as that discussed by Harcourt, though our views differ insofar as he takes his account of love to be an account only of love between humans (Harcourt, 39).

I. LOVE AND DISINTERESTED CONCERN

In this section I want to discuss two – I think, related – features of the views of both Helm and Velleman and also of Frankfurt. The features that these various views have in common are: (1) they understand love as an exercise of a personhood-defining capacity, and thus conceive of the lover as essentially a person; (2) they construe love as essentially disinterested, and, in particular, as thereby irrelevant to any feature of the lover not definitive of her personhood.

Lover as Person: Velleman, Helm, Frankfurt

In Chapter 2 my focus was those views who see only persons as possible *objects* of love. But fundamental to such views is the perception of the lover, too, as essentially a person. Indeed, those accounts that specify that only *persons* can be objects of love, seem to do so for two (jointly sufficient) reasons. First, there is a sense in these accounts that when one loves somebody one finds *something* of oneself in one's beloved; one finds in her a kindred nature. This kindred nature is to be understood in reference to the nature of the lover *qua lover*. And second, the lover's nature, *qua lover,* is her rational nature – she is, qua lover, essentially a person.

Thus, for example, in Helm's account, as we saw in Chapter 2, the intimacy of love is to be understood in terms of the structural analogy between the way in which the lover relates to her beloved's reflective-value-constituted identity (definitive of her personhood), on the one hand, and the way in which she relates to her own reflective-value-constituted identity (definitive of her own personhood), on the other. Similarly, in Velleman's view, the capacity to love just is the rational capacity – definitive of

personhood – for reflective valuation, and this is the very capacity of the *beloved* to which the lover *responds* in loving her (thus exercising the very same capacity in herself).

As I briefly discussed in Chapter 1, Frankfurt gives an account of love according to which love can take any kind of object. Nonetheless, the *lover* is understood by Frankfurt to be essentially a person. Like both Helm and Velleman, Frankfurt understands personhood as defined by a "capacity for reflective self-evaluation."[2] According to Frankfurt's particular construal of this capacity, it is "manifested in the formation of [higher]-order desires."[3] Thus, persons' wills are distinctively structured, in his view, in terms of a hierarchy of desires.[4] First-order desires are focused on external objects. Higher-order desires take as their objects lower-order desires – they are desires about our desires, for example whether we want to have them and whether we want them to be effective.

Frankfurt understands love as a particular form of caring, where caring about something means having a desire for it, and also having a "higher-order desire … that this first-order desire not be extinguished or abandoned";[5] in other words, it is to be "unwilling to give up" this first-order desire.[6] And he understands love as a form of caring for the beloved for her own sake that is, among other things, "more or less volitionally *constrained*".[7] What he seems to mean by this is that our loves constitute the very foundation of the structure of our wills, such that love involves a kind of psychological necessity, in the sense that we cannot betray what we love without betraying ourselves:[8]

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[2] Harry Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person," in *Free Will*, ed. Gary Watson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 323-324.
[3] Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person," 323-324.
[4] "One essential difference between persons and other creatures," he writes, "is to be found in the structure of a person's will." (Frankfurt, 323.)
[5] Frankfurt, "On Caring," 161.
[6] Frankfurt, 160.
[7] Frankfurt, 165.
[8] Frankfurt, 174.

> "love is essentially a somewhat non-voluntary and complex *volitional* structure that bears both upon how a person is disposed to act and upon how he is disposed to manage the motivations and interests by which he is moved."[9]

Loving constitutes, in this view, the very core of a person's volitional identity, guiding him or her "in supervising the design and the ordering of his [or her] own purposes and priorities."[10] Love, in Frankfurt's view, constitutes the very heart of personhood.

In all of these accounts, then, the lover is conceived of as essentially a person; and love is understood as, distinctively, an exercise of personhood. Thus, in loving, we are understood as fundamentally distinct from the other animals; in loving, we exercise a capacity – and only that capacity – that sets us apart from the other animals.

Love as Disinterested: A One-Sided Account

In all of these accounts, too, love is understood as essentially disinterested – that is, as involving no self-referential needs, motives or concerns. We saw, for example, that Helm's account of love as "essentially person-focused" is motivated by the problem, as he sees it, of explaining love as "deeply personal and distinctively intimate" while understanding it as *nothing but* a form of caring for the beloved *for her own sake*.[11] The emotions of love are, in Helm's view, focused purely on how the beloved is faring in relation to her own identity-constituting values, as the particular person that she is – the things that one values, in loving her, are valued on her behalf, as her values. If this is all that love

[9] Frankfurt, 165.
[10] Frankfurt, 165.
[11] Helm, "Love, Identification, and the Emotions," 41.

consists in, then all of one's loving emotions and inclinations will be explained in terms of what is, in one's beloved's own point of view, good *for her*. In particular, one's emotions and inclinations concerning the possibility of *being with* one's beloved have, accordingly, nothing essentially to do with love.

Frankfurt is adamant about the disinterested nature of love.[12] Love is understood, in Frankfurt's view, as a particular form of concern for the "well-being or flourishing" of the beloved, and he insists on "the irrelevance to love not just of considerations that are self-regarding but of *all* considerations that are distinct from the interests of the beloved."[13] Frankfurt says that "the fact that a person has come to love something entails that the satisfaction of his concern for the flourishing of that particular thing is something that he has come to *need*."[14] Thus the lover does have needs concerning the beloved, but they are derivative of the beloved's own needs – they are just needs that things go well for the beloved. Thus, insofar as the lover has other needs regarding the beloved – for example, to be with her – these are, for Frankfurt, irrelevant to love.

That love is essentially disinterested is an idea that Velleman takes to the extreme. For Velleman, love is an "arresting awareness" of the beloved's value, understood as "rather like a state of attentive suspension, similar to wonder or amazement or awe."[15] Notably, emotions like wonder, amazement and awe are distinctive in taking the subject outside of herself, being singularly focused on their object.[16] The arresting nature of this awareness is to be understood, Velleman says, in terms of

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[12] Frankfurt, 165.
[13] Frankfurt, 167-8.
[14] Frankfurt, 170.
[15] Velleman, "Love as a Moral Emotion," 360.
[16] Martha Nussbaum, for example, describes wonder and awe in the following way:

> "The most striking exception [to the eudaimonism of the emotions] would appear to be the emotion of wonder … This emotion responds to the pull of the object, and one might say that in it the subject is maximally aware of the value of the object, and only minimally aware, if at all, of its relationship to her own plans. That is why it

disarming the lover's emotional defenses, and thereby making her vulnerable to the beloved.[17] But the various emotional responses that are "unleashed" in this process are not to be identified as essential aspects of the love itself. On the contrary, he writes, "only vague generalizations can be drawn about what love can motivate the lover to do."[18] All that is essential to love, in his view, is this conceptually prior state of "arresting awareness" of the beloved's value.

In all of these views, then, love is seen as in one way or another an exercise of a personhood-defining capacity and (thereby) as essentially disinterested, making no reference, with regard to the lover, to anything other than the exercise of this capacity. As a result, there are a number of things that they cannot capture, or at least that they cannot explain as having much to do with the nature of love. They cannot capture, for example, the tragedy of unrequited love – that it may be part of the nature of one's very love for another that one yearns for them to love one in return, to be with them in a relationship. And they cannot capture the pain that one might feel in the face of one's friend, partner, or family member putting an end to the relationship one has with them – a pain that one would presumably feel even if it was, all things considered, what was best for them; or at least, they couldn't understand this pain as having anything to do with the nature of love itself. And they cannot understand that it might be, precisely, part of what it means to love someone, that when they are gone one might deeply, profoundly, miss them.

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is likely to issue in contemplation, rather than in any other sort of action toward the object. Another related emotion would be reverence or awe … an acknowledgment of the surpassing value of the object, not just from the person's point of view, but quite generally." (Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 53-54.)

[17] Velleman, 360-361.

[18] Velleman, 361.

The Role of Love in the Lives of Creatures Like Us

I argued in Chapters 2 and 3 that it is a strange feature of the views of both Helm and Velleman that, though they insist that love must occur only between persons, this sense of "betweenness" is not genuinely intersubjective or dialogical – it makes no reference to *being together with another*. And this lack of reference to the possibility of *relationship* is, as I argued in Chapter 3, especially strange when we consider that the kind of love at issue – as both Helm and Velleman recognize – is precisely the kind that we might have for a close friend, family member, or romantic partner; that is, those who are marked out in terms of the relationship we have with them. It is similarly strange – and, in a way, this is the same criticism from a different angle – that in these views, love makes no essential reference to a desire to *be with* the beloved. This picture of love as entirely disinterested is perhaps less striking, though no less troublesome, in Frankfurt's case since Frankfurt already failed to make a distinction between the love that one might have for one's close relatives and the attitudes one might have toward mere things.

I do not mean to deny that love involves, quite centrally, caring for the beloved for her own sake, and that such care should be understood as disinterested in the sense of making no reference to the lover's own needs. As I have suggested in earlier chapters, love does involve recognizing the value of the beloved – her preciousness – according to which she is, for example, worthy of being an ultimate end of one's concern. And this in turn entails that one is emotionally vulnerable to how she fares, for her own sake. Caring for another for her own sake is thus a central feature of love. But I want to suggest

that to see such disinterested modes of caring or valuation as singularly constitutive of love is to have a one-sided understanding of our nature as lovers, and of the importance of love in the lives of creatures like us.[19]

As Velleman portrays love, for example – as essentially a form of awareness of value akin to awe or wonder – loving somebody looks to be basically the same kind of experience as, for example, standing before the Grand Canyon, or the Northern Lights, or some other natural wonder. There might indeed, as I noted in Chapter 3, be certain kinds of love that are like this, and indeed we might experience moments of this awe-like love toward our special somebodies. But this surely falls short of a full and apt description of the kind of love we have for our special somebodies. Indeed, just as in the previous chapter I argued that Velleman fails to distinguish the special connection between this kind of love and the relationships in which it occurs, so too I think Velleman fails to properly distinguish this kind of love in terms of its constituent parts. In particular, he neglects the sense in which we might *need* our beloveds, and in particular, the sense in which we might need to *be with* them.

Accordingly, Velleman's characterization of love suggests a strange picture of who we are of lovers, and of the role of love in our lives. The impression we might get is that as lovers, we are essentially like visitors to an art gallery, floating around peacefully, sometimes standing in silence in appreciation of a particularly breath-taking or disarming artwork, but otherwise perfectly self-contained and whole. There is no suggestion here that we are in fact needy beings, of flesh and blood, forging deep two-way connections with others like us.

[19] I'm influenced here by Susan Wolf, who emphasizes an understanding of love's importance as central to an understanding of love itself: "rather than proceed by first asking and answering what love is, and only then moving on to ask why love might be special, it seems best to treat these questions as equal partners, to be explored together." (Wolf, "Love: The Basic Questions.")

Frankfurt gives an explicit account of the importance of love to creatures like us; but, again, he is conceiving of us as essentially persons. For Frankfurt, love is a particular form of caring, and it is by caring that we "provide continuity and coherence to our volitional lives".[20] Thus, in his view, "our caring about things possesses for us an inherent value by virtue of its essential role in making us the distinctive kind of creatures that we are."[21] If caring gives a coherent hierarchical structure to our wills – in virtue of which we are able to function as persons – then, as discussed above, love forms the foundation of this structure. The importance of love in the lives of creatures like us owes, thus, to our nature as beings capable of holding reflective, identity-constituting commitments. "Without loving," Frankfurt writes, "life for us would be intolerably unshaped and empty."[22]

We might think of this in terms of our need for a sense of meaning, or importance, in life in order for our agency to get off the ground. We are, indeed, beings for whom there is meaning: beings for whom things can deeply, profoundly, and categorically *matter*. Our sensitivity to the meaning of things is such that we can be, for example, existentially shattered by tragic events. And, further, we *need* meaningful lives. Sometimes when people suffer from depression they express their state of mind in terms of experiencing things – life, the world – as having no meaning (for them, anymore). It is as though they had sunk into contact with that ephemeral "point of view of the universe" from which nothing matters. Thus, Andrew Solomon, in his *The Noonday Deamon: An Atlas of Depression*, writes that "In

[20] Frankfurt, 162.
[21] Frankfurt, 162-163.
[22] Frankfurt, 174. Wolf has a view of love that is in many ways similar to Frankfurt's. She, too, offers an account of the nature of love that is explicitly bound up with an understanding of what makes love important in the lives of creatures like us. She distinguishes love as a form of caring for something (for its own sake) that "roots us motivationally to the world." On her view, it gives us a stake in the reality of the world outside of ourselves, and in being in it, that *mere* care does not. "Impersonal" forms of care, such as those embodied in moral concern or mere compassion, are to be distinguished from love, on her view, by (among other things) the fact that they give us reasons to *respond* to the world in a certain way, whereas love gives us reason to *be* in the world in the first place. Put another way, the idea is that *mere* care gives us reasons to live *in certain ways*, whereas love gives us reason *to live*. (Wolf, "Love: The Basic Questions.")

depression, the meaninglessness of every enterprise and every emotion, the meaninglessness of life itself, becomes self-evident."[23] It is not clear, however, that this capacity for meaning-making is peculiar to human beings or that it should be reduced to the capacities typically supposed to be definitive of rational "personhood."[24]

But more importantly, when we consider the importance of love in our lives, and in particular the role of the love that we have for our special somebodies, our need for meaning is not, I think, the only thing that should come to mind. This is obscured for Frankfurt, I think, by his failure to distinguish the love of our close friends, partners and relatives as special. But when we do think of this kind of love as a special, we see that such love is in fact *especially* meaningful. And we might explain this in terms of a basic need for connection with others. We need connection not just to the world in general but also, specifically, to other somebodies; this is a need for bonding and intimacy, and for secure, ongoing relationships in which such things take place.[25] I turn now to an alternative picture of love that puts this need center stage.

II. LOVE AND ATTACHMENT

As an alternative to the views discussed above, we might think of love as involving, quite centrally, attachment, understood as one side of a two-sided affectional bond. Attachments and affectional bonds are the central focus of Attachment Theory, pioneered by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth

[23] Andrew Solomon, *The Noonday Demon: An Atlas of Depression* (New York: Scribner, 2015), 15.
[24] Recall, for example, from Chapter 1, Jane Goodall's description of grieving chimpanzees: "I have watched chimpanzee children, after the death of their mothers, show behavior similar to clinical depression in grieving human children – hunched posture, rocking, dull staring eyes, lack of interest in events around them. … Sometimes, in this state of grieving, chimpanzee orphans – like Flint and Kristal – die." (Goodall, "Foreword," in Bekoff, xiv.)
[25] Indeed, Wolf concedes that the phrase "love makes the world go around" is usually understood as referring to love for other people. This would in fact suggest that the need for connection is more basic than the need for meaning. (Wolf, "Love: The Basic Questions.)

in the second half of the twentieth century. Bowlby describes Attachment Theory as: "a way of conceptualizing the propensity of human beings to make strong affectional bonds to particular others."[26] In an affectional bond, as I am here using the term, there is a mutual attachment between the partners, where attachment is understood as (to use the words of Ainsworth) "a relatively long-enduring tie in which the partner is important as a unique individual, interchangeable with none other." Such attachment is characterized by "a desire to maintain closeness to the partner." Such closeness may, in the case of older children and adults, "to some extent be sustained over time and distance and during absences," but even in these cases "there is at least an intermittent desire to re-establish proximity and interaction, and usually pleasure – often joy – upon reunion." And in all cases, "inexplicable separation tends to cause distress, and permanent loss would cause grief."[27] We might

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[26] The passage continues "… and of explaining the many forms of emotional distress and personality disturbance … to which unwilling separation and loss give rise". The "forms of emotional distress and personality disturbance" that are found in response to separation and loss include "anxiety, anger, depression and emotional detachment". (John Bowlby, "The Making and Breaking of Affectional Bonds," *British Journal of Psychiatry* 130 (1977): 201.) The effects of attachment disruptions on personality development will not be my focus here.

[27] Mary Ainsworth, "Attachments and other affectional bonds across the life cycle," in *Attachment across the life cycle*, eds. C. M. Parkes, J. Stevenson-Hinde, & P. Marris (Abingdon: Routledge, 1991), 38. My use of terminology here is actually slightly different to that used by Bowlby and Ainsworth. What I have here termed "attachment" is actually referred to as an "affectional bond" by Ainsworth and Bowlby. Thus, whereas I am using the term "affectional bond" to refer to a dyadic relationship, the term is used in Attachment Theory to refer to an attitude of one individual toward another within the dyadic relationship (for which I am using the term "attachment"). Thus, Ainsworth writes:

> "relationships are dyadic, whereas affectional bonds are characteristic of the individual but not the dyad; although they develop in the context of the dyad, they come to entail representation in the internal organization of the individual person." (Ainsworth, "Attachments and other affectional bonds across the life cycle," 38.)

Again, I am using the term "affectional bond" to refer to the dyad, since this, to me, seems the more natural use of the term "bond" – as a two-way relation. And I am using the term "attachment" to refer to the attitude of an individual toward another individual within the dyad (that is, as corresponding to Ainsworth's use of "affectional bond"). Ainsworth and Bowlby, on the other hand, reserve the term "attachment" for something more specific – as just one kind of what I am referring to as "attachments." Since it is distinguished in terms of its relation to the attached partner's sense of security, I will, following Wonderly, refer to it as "security-based attachment" (Wonderly, "Love and Attachment," 242). Security-based attachment (or simply, "attachment" in Ainsworth and Bowlby's terminology) involves "a seeking to obtain an experience of security and comfort in the relationship with the partner," the availability of which provides the attached with a "secure base" from which she has the "confidence to engage in other activities." (Ainsworth, 38.) The attachment-figure in security-based attachment is "usually conceived as stronger and/or wiser." (Bowlby, "The Making and Breaking of Affectional Bonds", 203.) The dyad in which security-based attachment occurs is, specifically, the attachment-caregiver dyad, where the attachment figure acts as the caregiver (see, for example, Bowlby, *Attachment and Loss, Vol. 1: Attachment*

characterize attachment broadly as a felt need to be together with another – in the sense of togetherness discussed in the previous chapter – as one side of an affectional bond in which the attachment is mutual.

In the previous chapter I argued that love should be understood as a feature of a relationship marked by togetherness. We might characterize such relationships as involving an affectional bond, and thereby characterize love – understood as an attitude of an individual toward another individual in the context of such a relationship – as involving attachment.[28]

(London: Pimlico, 1997), 376-377). The attachment-caregiver dyad is especially prominent between young children and their primary caregivers – and it was this relation in particular that was of primary interest to Bowlby and Ainsworth.

[28] Just as, in the previous chapter, love was distinguished as something that occurred in the context of a relationship marked by togetherness, and so as something directed toward a *somebody* and not a mere *something* (except in cases of delusion, where the mere thing was taken to be a somebody, with whom the lover had a relationship), so too I am using the term "attachment" here to refer specifically to something that occurs in the context of a relationship and that is directed toward togetherness, and so as something that, except for in cases of delusion, is had toward a *somebody* and not a mere thing. This is not to deny that there is a broader sense of the term, in which one can be attached to a mere thing. For example, a child might have a "security blanket" toward which they have a specifically security-based attachment. But in that case the attachment should be understood, I think, as a derivative form, in which a form of security-based attachment primarily directed at a mother-figure is directed also at something in small part reminiscent of the softness and warmth of the mother-figure. (A similar thing is seen, for example, in young rhesus monkeys who are separated from their mother – given the option, they will cling to something soft. (See Bowlby's discussion of the studies of Harry Harlow on infant Rhesus Monkeys in Bowlby, "The Making and Breaking of Affectional Bonds," 202.)

One might also be said to be "attached" to a mere thing in the sense that G.A. Cohen describes being "attached" to his pencil eraser:

> "I have a pencil eraser … that I have used ever since I became a lecturer forty-six years ago. When I got it, it was a cube, but now it is a sort of sphere, and although it is small, most of it is still there. … I would hate to lose this eraser. I would hate that even if I knew it could be readily replaced … not even by one of precisely the same off-round shaoe and the same dingy color that my eraser has now acquired. There is no feature that stands apart from its history that makes me want to keep the eraser. I want *my* eraser, with *its* history." (G. A. Cohen, "Rescuing Conservatism: A Defense of Existing Value," in G. A. Cohen, *Finding Oneself in the Other* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 167.)

What this kind of "attachment" has in common with the kind in which I am interested here is, first, that it is directed at an irreplaceable particular, and second, that Cohen would be sad should he lose it. We might say that the eraser has sentimental value for him. Indeed, it's value is symbolic, insofar as it represents his own history. But this is quite different from the kind of attachment that one has toward someone with whom one shares a relationship. If Cohen should miss his eraser when away from it, in anything like the way that one might miss a close companion, we would consider this at least a strange quirk and at most unintelligible. Furthermore, whatever would be the felt need in this case, it could not be, except in the case of delusion, the same need that is felt in the case of attachment to someone with whom one has a relationship; for one cannot be, and ideally does not hope to be, *together* with an eraser in the way that one can be together with a somebody.

Indeed, this felt need to be with our special somebodies, in more or less intimate ways and with more or less frequency, does seem to be a distinctive and central feature of the kind of love that we have for our close friends, family members, and romantic partners. Such "being with" should be understood as the "togetherness" discussed in the previous chapter, and as involving, paradigmatically, some level of physical proximity. This is perhaps most obvious with romantic partners, with the obvious case of sex, insofar as that occurs, but also with such things as cuddling, holding hands, or simply being in physical proximity. The level of touch in a relationship varies, depending on a number of factors such as the kind of relationship it is, the culture in which it occurs, the respective genders of the partners, the ages of the partners, neurodiversity, and individual variation. Young children, for example, seem to communicate through touch more so than adults, having fewer physical boundaries. In my own case, my female friendships as a child and teenager were marked by more physical intimacy than they are as an adult, and more than they usually were in my friendships with males. In many countries it is quite normal for men to hold hands in friendship, though in Western countries this is not the norm. In some religions, touch between members of the opposite sex is highly regulated. Some people are, for whatever reason, less amenable to touch in general than are other people. There is a huge range of diversity here.

Still, even in those relationships where there is not much, or any, actual *touch*, the desire to be with the beloved is typically an embodied need, a need for physical proximity – for example, to be in the same room. Long-distance relationships are notoriously hard – not just in romantic relationships but in other kinds of relationships, too. Thus, for example, living in America, away from my family, I miss them. And I miss them despite the frequency of technologically aided, long-distance (verbal and visual) communication – such communication does help, but it is not the same as being in physical proximity.

Indeed, this is the sole purpose of my transatlantic flights – taking the bus and then the subway to O'Hare, flying eight hours to London, taking the tube to Kings Cross, and then the three-hour train to Hull, so that I can be in the physical presence of my family, if only for a couple of weeks.

Of course, this need for physical proximity, and the pain at prolonged separation, is now, in the wake of COVID-19, glaringly obvious. As I write this, it has been just over two years since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic. There have been national "lockdowns" and "stay at home orders" across the world, placing restrictions on how often people could leave their houses, where they could go, and with whom they could meet. Restrictions were placed on international travel as various countries imposed bans on incoming travelers. Many people were in various ways separated from their loved ones. Even as lockdowns eased, still there were, and are, various "social distancing" measures in place, with people remaining six feet apart and often meeting outside, sometimes in the cold and thus only for short periods. It was, and is, a time of deep collective pain – not just because of the fear and tragedy of the spread of the disease itself but also because of the social costs of our collective efforts to slow its spread.[29] It is a drawback, I think, of those views I have been considering – of Helm, Velleman, and Frankfurt – that they cannot understand this pain as having anything essentially to do with love.

The last time I visited England was in March 2020, and I arrived just days before the announcement of the Presidential Proclamations that barred US entry to non-US citizens from many countries around the world, including the UK.[30] I was stuck in England for about three months, and within about a

[29] There are at least two dimensions to this social loss. First, there is the separation between loved ones. The loss here is the experience of missing someone – a particular person with whom one has a relationship. Second, there is the general lack of socialization, of simply being around people. I am concerned here mainly with the first aspect.

[30] See Executive Office of the President, "Suspension of Entry as Immigrants and Nonimmigrants of Certain Additional Persons Who Pose a Risk of Transmitting 2019 Novel Coronavirus," *Federal Register*, March 16, 2020,

week the country went into "lockdown." Over the months there were various rules about socializing and physical contact – for much of the time, people from different households were not allowed to meet, and for none of the time were they supposed to physically touch.[31] I was staying with my mum, which meant she was the only family member from whom I did not have to "socially distance." That leaves my dad, my two older brothers, and my little (half-)sister, who was then five years old. I'm sure the reader can imagine my frustration at, having finally been in the same country as my family members, not having been able to actually be with them. Upon finally returning to the US, knowing that I probably would not see my family again for a long time, I expressed sadness that "I couldn't even hug my little sister goodbye." Again, it is strange, I think, that neither Frankfurt nor Helm nor Velleman could see the sadness I expressed as having anything essentially to do with my love for her.

Against the idea that love involves attachment, Velleman raises two counterexamples. First, he cites, drawing on Iris Murdoch, the possibility of a "troublemaking relation," whom one loves but has no desire to be around. Second, he says of hypothetical divorcing spouses who "tell their children that they still love one another but cannot live together," that "they are telling not a white lie but a dark truth."[32] In the first case, we might simply doubt that one really loves the relation who one plainly and simply never wants to be around. There might be more complicated cases, in which one does have a felt need to be around this troublesome relative, but in some way always regrets the time spent together as causing more harm than good. In this case it would seem that one does have an attachment to one's

https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/03/16/2020-05578/suspension-of-entry-as-immigrants-and-nonimmigrants-of-certain-additional-persons-who-pose-a-risk-of.

[31] For more details of the lockdown laws in the UK in 2020, see for example, Sarah Barber, Jennifer Brown, and Daniel Ferguson, "Coronavirus: Lockdown Laws," *House of Commons Library*, December 22, 2021, https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8875/CBP-8875.pdf.

[32] Velleman, 353.

relative, but it is a painful and conflicted attachment, and thereby, perhaps, a painful and conflicted love.

In the second case, we can assume that there was, initially, a deep attachment between the spouses. And in fact, the reflective decision that it would be best not to live together does not itself do away with that attachment. Indeed, part of the painfulness of separation seems to be explained by the fact that there remains a residual attachment well after the decision is made to part ways. In some cases, especially perhaps where the separation is amicable and some form of relationship endures, some form of attachment may remain indefinitely. Of those cases, though, in which the attachment relation is eventually severed, over a prolonged and painful period, and yet some form of love resides, we can at least say that the love here is very much marked by a history of attachment, that the ex-spouse is loved precisely as somebody with whom one once shared a marriage.

To the extent that in either case we would want to say that there is love without attachment – and this is anyway not obvious – we would at least want to say that these are marginal cases, and in some sense tragic cases. Indeed, the tragic nature of these cases can be made sense of only in relation to the central cases in which love *does* involve, quite centrally, attachment. Moreover, we could not, I think, imagine a recognizable world in which the central cases of love for one's special somebodies were not marked by attachment.

Creatures Who Bond

Whereas Helm, Velleman, and Frankfurt all portrayed lovers as essentially persons, and saw love as an exercise of a personhood-defining capacity for reflective valuing or caring, the notion of an

attachment, understood as one side of an affectional bond, requires no such reference to personhood. Indeed, it is quite clear that our need and capacity for bonding is something we share with many other species.[33]

Anybody who grew up with "pets" will be familiar with the general rule of thumb that, with many species – for example, mice, rabbits, rats – one should not keep only one of that species as a pet but should always house at least two together. This is because they are social creatures with a need and capacity for bonding. So too, it is familiar to see on pet adoption websites potential adoptees listed as a "bonded pair," meaning that the shelter will not separate them in the adoption process – since they are bonded, this would be detrimental to their welfare.

We saw in Chapter 1 examples of the grieving behavior of elephants, dogs, and chimpanzees, after the death of somebody with whom they were bonded. We also saw the joy of wolves, cayotes, and elephants when reunited. In a recent video published by Animals Asia, we see three bear cubs – two brothers who had been rescued from an arrested wildlife trafficker, and their sister who had escaped and been rescued days before – reunited, with clear joy as they embrace and play.[34]

Animals form not only intraspecies bonds but also interspecies bonds. A video published by The Dodo, for example, tells the story of the enduring bond between a golden retriever and a deer – lasting eleven years to date. The deer, named Buttons, had been rescued by the golden retriever, G-Bro's,

[33] "Attachment behavior," Bowlby writes, "occurs in the young of almost all species of mammal, and in a number of species it persists throughout adult life." (Bowlby, "The Making and Breaking of Affectional Bonds," 204.) In developing Attachment Theory as a way of theorizing studies of human behavior, Bowlby drew largely on models from ethology, demonstrating continuity between the attachment behavior of humans and that of many other species. Bowlby notes in particular the influence that the work of Konrad Lorenz, on "the following response of ducklings and goslings and the phenomenon of imprinting," had on his development of the basic tenets of attachment theory. (John Bowlby, "By Ethology Out of Psychoanalysis: An Experiment in Interbreeding", *Animal Behavior* 28 (1980): 650.)

[34] "Three Cubs Reunited," Animals Asia, June 10, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7wIzUXgUwM&ab_channel=AnimalsAsia.

humans after she was hit by a car. After recovering and returning to the wild, Buttons has continued to regularly visit G-Bro, coming to the door of the house and kicking at it to communicate her desire to see him, and the two of them regularly hike and play together, cleaning one another and feeling obvious contentment in one another's presence. Every spring, Buttons brings her fawns with her to see G-Bro.[35]

Thus, insofar as love involves attachment, it at least has something deeply in common with what many non-human animals experience. I now want to argue that love should not be understood as *mere* attachment but rather as *caring attachment*. This leaves it, for now, an open question whether any non-human animals can, properly speaking, love, as opposed to merely being attached – I will further address that question in the following chapter.

III. LOVE AS CARING ATTACHMENT

"No form of behavior," writes Bowlby, "is accompanied by stronger feeling than is attachment behavior. The figures towards whom it is directed are loved … ."[36] Describing the "engagement of emotion" in attachment, he notes that "many of the most intense emotions arise during the formation, the maintenance, the disruption and the renewal of attachment relationships," and he equates these feelings to love: "The formation of a bond is described [in Attachment Theory] as falling in love, maintaining a bond as loving someone, and losing a partner as grieving over someone."[37] Attachment, on this view, *just is* love; or, to put it differently, love *just is* attachment.

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[35] "Deer Brings Her Babies to Meet Her Dog Best Friend Every Spring!" The Dodo Odd Couples, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FKztz7xHxkA&ab_channel=TheDodo.
[36] Bowlby, *Attachment and Loss, Volume 1: Attachment*, 209.
[37] Bowlby, "The Making and Breaking of Affectional Bonds," 203.

However, to simply equate love with attachment is, I think, misleading, to the extent that one might be attached to another without caring about her for her own sake. In attachment, the other is experienced as a non-substitutable particular; one's *need* for the other cannot be satisfied by anyone or anything else – not even by another attachment figure. In *love*, she is also experienced as having an importance, or value, independent of oneself – she is recognized as irreplaceable not just *to oneself*, but *period*.[38] To recognize her as having this value is to recognize her as profoundly *other* – to recognize her as separate from oneself, with her own needs that have import insofar as they are *hers*. In other words, it is to care about her for her own sake.

Attachment for another, and caring for her for her own sake, do seem to, in principle, come apart. This is evident insofar as the motives associated with attachment, on the one hand, and care about the attachment-figure for her own sake, one the other hand, come into conflict. Consider, for example, a case in which one's spouse receives a job offer for a temporary, three-year position that would be both intrinsically very satisfying for her and a highly beneficial addition to her resume – perhaps vital for her continuing to pursue her chosen career. And suppose that one was unable to join her during this time, due to various conflicting demands. Let's assume that taking the job is what is best for her, and to the extent that one is motivated by caring about one's spouse for her own sake, one would be inclined to encourage the decision to take the job. One's felt need to be together with one's beloved, on the other hand, seems to pull in the direction of wanting her to reject the job offer.

[38] Raimond Gaita speaks to this when he writes that love is "answerable to standards which distinguish it from its many false semblances" and that one such standard is that "love must be responsive to the independent reality of the beloved – must be so in order actually to count as real love." He continues: "the character of such efforts is conditioned through and through by a response to [the beloved] as to someone who is unique and irreplaceable," and not just as unique and irreplaceable to the lover – as with an object that has "sentimental value" – but "unique and irreplaceable, period." (Gaita, 81-82.)

If one was motivated *solely* by a desire to be near to one's spouse, without also caring about her for her own sake, then presumably one would try to get her to stay, through persuasion or demandingness, or perhaps even through manipulation or sabotage. And this would be quite troubling, not just from a moral point of view but also from the point of view of love – we would not want to describe it as loving behavior.[39] But it would also be troubling, from the point of view of love, if one was motivated *solely* by a concern for one's spouse for her own sake, and experienced immediate, unqualified excitement and joy on her behalf, without having any sense of reservation about the separation.[40] *Both* such responses would, I think, be quite troubling, from the point of view of love. We could say the same about a number of different kinds of case. For example, on the one hand, a mother who was simply and purely dismayed at the prospect of her son going to college, because she didn't want to be away from him; and on the other hand, a mother who was simply and purely overjoyed at her son's opportunity to go to college, caring not at all about being away from him.

We might refer back, at this point, to Williams' distinction, introduced in Chapter 3, between "I-desires" and "non-I desires," to see how this distinction fits into the overall picture of love that I am proposing.[41] We should expect love's various desires to be a combination of I-desires and non-I desires. On the one hand, attachment looks to be a basically I-desire: in having a felt need to be together with my beloved, the state of affairs that I desire makes essential reference to *me*, and it does not depend on some further non-I desire, for example, the desire that my beloved be happy, in the sense that I want to be with my beloved only *because* I think this will make her happy. What I desire is, specifically and ultimately, to be with her. Nonetheless, though my *reason* for desiring to be with my

[39] Wonderly describes a hypothetical case like this in the character of "obsessed Olivia." (Wonderly, "On Being Attached," 226.)
[40] Wonderly also makes this point (see Wonderly "Love and Attachment," 240-241).
[41] Bernard Williams, "Egoism and Altruism," 261.

beloved makes no reference to her well-being, it will, if it is loving, be limited by a counterfactual condition.[42] Namely, were it to be the case that my being with the beloved made her unhappy, or went against her wishes, we would expect this to limit my behavior. In this sense, we might think of the I-desires involved in love's motivations as limited by overarching non-I desires, just as we would expect the lover to be responsive to the reality and the will of her beloved in their interactions, so as to constitute genuine togetherness.

When one loves somebody, one has, first, a felt need to be together with her (an I-desire), but this is limited, second, by one's care for her for her own sake (non-I desires), such that one desires her good after one's death, or in an imagined world in which one did not exist or didn't know her.[43] This is to recognize that her preciousness does not depend on her relationship to oneself. Nonetheless, and third, that it is *she*, and not somebody else, whose preciousness impresses on you in the form of love, that gives the sense of her independent preciousness such urgency, owes to your bond.[44]

These three elements can be seen in grief over the death of a loved one. On the one hand, the pain of grief is the pain of having a felt need to be together with the other and being unable to meet this need (in this respect, the ending of a relationship, too, can be experienced as a kind of grief).[45] On the other hand, one also mourns the loss to the beloved of her own life – expressing a concern for her for her

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[42] On the difference between a reason and a counterfactual condition see Peter Railton, "Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 13, no. 2 (Spring 1984): 145.
[43] Williams, 262-264.
[44] Raimond Gaita expresses a similar thought when he writes that "The need we have – often unfathomable – of other human beings is partly what conditions and yields to us our sense of their preciousness." (Gaita, *The Philosophers Dog*, 16.) This is not to say that there is no form of love, such as *agape*, that does not involve attachment. But it does suggest that the value we see in others in *agape* might be grasped first through this distinctive, personal form of love that I am here understanding as a form of attachment, and then generalized in judgment to apply to all others. Velleman, as we have seen, calls love a "moral education" in this respect – though, as we have seen, he does not consider attachment to be an element of love. (Velleman, "Love as a Moral Emotion," 374.)
[45] Wonderly, too, draws attention to the connection between attachment and grief (Wonderly, "On Being Attached," 237-240).

own sake – and recognizes this as a tragedy not just for oneself but *period*.[46] The difficulty of grasping, in grief, the full meaning of what has happened – experiencing the profundity of the tragedy as in some sense mind-boggling – speaks, I think, to the sense in which the beloved is experienced as precious and irreplaceable, not just to oneself but period. Nonetheless, while one recognizes that the beloved's importance does not owe to her importance *to oneself*, it is precisely her importance *to oneself* that explains one's grief. While we can acknowledge the importance of strangers and the tragedy of their death, we do not experience personal *grief* over such tragedies.[47] If grief is to be understood as the other side of love's coin, as it commonly is, then these considerations favor the account of love that I have put forward.

Love involves having a felt need to be together with the beloved while also caring for the beloved for her own sake and experiencing her as a limit to one's own will. Thus, while the loving thing to do might be to endure or even encourage a separation from one's beloved (for example, one's spouse, friend, or child), as they set out to take a new job, or to go to college, or travel the world, or whatever else they need to do in order to flourish, we would nonetheless expect that one would *also* feel at least a little dismayed at the prospect of this lengthy separation. Indeed, it would be quite troubling if one

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[46] Thus C. S. Lewis, writing on the death of his wife in *A Grief Observed*, laments his preoccupation with *his* loss and vows to focus more on his wife's own loss:

> "For the first time I have looked back and read these notes. They appall me. From the way I've been talking anyone would think that H's death mattered chiefly for its effect on myself. Her point of view seems to have dropped out of sight. Have I forgotten the moment of bitterness when she cried out 'And there was so much to live for?'" (C.S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed* (The Seabury Press: New York, 1961), 17.)

[47] This element of grief is discussed by Nussbaum in *Upheavals of Thought* as she notes the duality between the latter two aspects of grief that I have discussed: "The notion of loss that is central to grief itself has this double aspect: it alludes to the value of the person who has left or died, but it alludes as well to that person's relation to the perspective of the mourner." (Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 31.) It is in this sense that emotions such as grief are, in Nussbaum's terminology, eudaimonistic: "Emotions contain an eliminable reference to *me*, to the fact that it is *my* scheme of goals and projects. They see the world from my point of view." Accordingly, in her discussion of her own grief for her mother, she writes: "The fact that it is *my* mother is not simply a fact like any other fact about the world: it is what structures the geography of the whole situation, and we cannot capture the emotion without including that element." (Nussbaum, 52.)

were to experience immediate, unqualified excitement and joy on behalf of one's beloved, without having any sense of reservation about the separation.

This kind of duality – in which one must make space both for the feelings associated with one's need to be together with one's beloved and for those associated with caring for one's beloved for their own sake – is a quite familiar feature of love. Both of these orientations to the beloved are part of love and giving precedence to one of them does not mean dismissing or downgrading the other. Indeed, I want to suggest that, in love, they are intimately combined; that love should be understood as *caring attachment*.

Indeed, the notion of attachment as I am here using it, characterized as a felt need to be together with a particular other, and understood as one side of a two-way affectional bond, is quite a rich notion that already has built into it, through the very notion of togetherness (as developed in Chapter 3) a recognition of the other as an independent locus of subjective experience and initiative – a somebody – and an openness, receptivity, and attunement to her. Insofar as these interactions are genuinely dialogical, then, they already involve an orientation to the other as a will that acts as a limit on one's own – not as a mere object to do with as one wishes. Further, this openness to the other, the enjoyment of her presence for its own sake, which might be expressed in various forms of affection, already suggests something that at least closely resembles caring for her for her own sake. In the examples given in the previous chapter, what else is being expressed through, for example, the snuggles between my husband and me, my laughter and conversation with my dad, and the play between me and my sister, if not some kind of mutual affection embodying a mutual care? And for what other sake could this be – at what is it ultimately directed – if not one's partner in togetherness?

Thus, in characterizing love as *caring attachment*, I mean to point out two things. First, that within the notion of attachment itself, *as I am here using it*, there is already implicit some notion of care for the beloved for her own sake – a kind of immediate, in-the-moment care that might be expressed in various forms of affection, and that, insofar as there is genuine togetherness, is sensitive and responsive to the other as an independent being and a limit to one's will. Second, insofar as one (is the kind of being who) has also a more reflective orientation toward one's beloved, such care will also take the form of, for example, taking her interests into account, reflectively, in one's deliberations, and reflectively thinking of her as an end in herself, as precious and irreplaceable, etc. Now, insofar as there is a failure in the second area, we might expect this to have its roots in, or at least correspond to, a failure in the first. For, it is hard to conceive of somebody who experiences genuine togetherness with another, who sees her as she really is, and is attuned and responsive to her as such, is affectionate in the interaction, has satisfaction in and a felt need for such togetherness for its own sake, but who, in more reflective moments, fails to take her needs into account or appreciate her value as independent of one's need of her. Insofar as there are failures in this latter area, we should expect to see, I think, failures in the former.

We should allow, I think, for love to have some degree of imperfection, with regard to the lover's responsiveness to and care for the other for her own sake, such that wherever we draw the line between "love" and "not love," and we should expect this to be vague and open to disagreement, we allow for cases in which the lover does not love her beloved very well, but loves her nonetheless. Thus, we might allow, for example, for the parent who is often selfish, or siblings who are competitive with one another, or the teenage friends who are often mean to one another, or the spouse who is prone to projecting a narrative onto her partner, obstructing her view of him as he really is. Indeed,

an ideal form of loving might be something that we strive for but do not always, or perhaps even regularly, attain.

Further, different terms of assessment would seem to be applicable in different cases, such that, for example, assessment in terms of how one takes one's beloved's interests into consideration in reflection will only apply in those cases in which the being in question is in fact capable of such forms of reflection.[48] Indeed, we might think of there as being a kind of spectrum between the two "areas" of concern discussed above – that is, between the kind of immediate, in-the-moment concern expressed in an affection that is responsive and attuned to the other, on the one hand, and between a reflective consideration of the beloved, on the other. The terms in which one's love is assessed will depend, then, on where on the spectrum one's capacities fall.

[48] Harcourt suggests something similar with reference to human infants. He, too, characterizes love as a form of attachment and suggests that love should be understood as having "evaluative variety," with the ideal of love bearing the right relation between intimacy and autonomy (both the lover's and the beloved's) (Harcourt, 40). Such autonomy, he suggests, needn't be understood as *rational* autonomy – the kind belonging only to "persons" as I have been using the term. His worry is that, if autonomy is understood as *rational* autonomy, then this theory of love cannot apply to love for infants, since they are not yet rational (Harcourt, 46-47). What he suggests is that *rational* autonomy should be understood as a "phase-specific" subset of a more general notion of autonomy, where to be autonomous is to be "a *locus of experience* and a *locus of initiative*" – a notion that applies to infants as well as to adults (Harcourt, 48-49). This accounts for the possibility of infant's being the *object* of an adult's love. But so too, he suggests, we can account for a kind of "phase-specific" love of the infant for her parent (or attachment figure) – what we might call "*proto*-love or $\text{love}_{\text{infancy}}$": "what's needed is to make vivid what 'recognizing another as a limit of one's will' amounts to in infants, granted that it doesn't involve the exercise of reason" (Harcourt, 50- 51). Given that Harcourt allows for the love of and for infants, based on these limited capacities for autonomy and recognizing the autonomy of other, it is quite strange that he insists that love is nonetheless something that occurs only between humans (Harcourt, 39, 43-44).

IV. CONCLUSION: SOMETHING IN COMMON

Many philosophers have understood love as something that sets us apart from non-human animals, by understanding it purely as an exercise of a personhood-defining capacity for a self-reflective kind of caring about another for her own sake. They have thereby, also, conceived of love as essentially disinterested. I have argued, on the contrary, that we should understand love as involving, quite centrally, an attachment to the beloved, where such attachment is understood as one side of an affectional bond and characterized in terms of a felt need to be together with the beloved.

The notion of an affectional bond gives some more substance to the characterization of relationships, introduced in Chapter 3, that provide love's necessary context. And I have argued here, briefly, that non-human animals engage in such relationships. Thus, insofar as love involves attachment, it at least overlaps with the experiences of many non-human animals who form deep bonds, both intraspecies and interspecies, with particular others. The possibility of loving a non-human animal might be explained, then, by our having something – something very central to our experience of love – deeply in common. That is, the need and capacity for affectional bonding.

In the following chapter, I give a more developed account of the form that a human-animal relationship can take, focusing specifically on my own relationship with my dog, Gracie.

5. LOVING GRACIE

The kind of love that I have for Gracie is of the same general kind as that which I have for my close friends, my family, and my spouse (insofar as these are all, despite their various difference, of a general kind). The possibility of loving somebody in this way (the way in which I love Gracie as well as my friends, family, and spouse) depends on the occurrence of a particular kind of relationship – a relationship we might characterize as an affectional bond. Indeed, love just is a particular form of attachment – caring attachment – which can be understood as one side of an affectional bond.

In the present (and final) chapter I want to show in detail how this framework for thinking about love – the framework I have developed in Chapters 3 and 4 – can be applied to the case of human-animal love, and in particular my love for my dog Gracie. In Chapter 3, I argued that love is a feature of a relationship, where such relationships are understood, at the most basic level, in terms of patterns of interaction constituting *togetherness*. Such togetherness requires not only mutual recognition but also mutual openness, receptivity, and attunement. I gave a general account of such togetherness in Chapter 3 and demonstrated there that such interactions need not be symmetrical. In Section I, I apply this general account to the case of human-animal interaction, and in particular to a rich description of interactions between me and Gracie.

In Section II, I characterize the relationship between Gracie and me as an affectional bond, each side of which can be characterized as an attachment, in which there is a felt need to be together with the other. This is enough to make sense of my love for Gracie. However, we still might wonder whether Gracie's side of things amounts, properly speaking, to loving me back. In Chapter 4, I argued that love should be understood, specifically, as *caring attachment* – an attachment in which the attached also cares about the attachment-figure for her own sake and experiences her as a limit to one's own will. While

it is clear that many non-human animals form attachments, and that these attitudes are therefore at least continuous with our love, this leaves open the question of whether animals can, properly speaking, *love* – that is, whether their attachments can be *caring attachments*. I suggest that we can indeed characterize Gracie's attachment as a caring attachment and thus as love, though she does not love me in exactly the same way that I love her – there remain various asymmetries in our affectional bond. However, my love for her does not hinge on the aptness of characterizing her as loving me back – whatever it is that I get from her is enough.

I. INTERACTION ACROSS THE SPECIES DIVIDE: GRACIE AND ME

My love for Gracie would not have made sense in the absence of a relationship – a relationship marked by (a history of) interaction. On the one hand, I was *prepared* to love her, having already conceptualized, by the time we met, the kind of role that she might come to play in my life. Such a conceptualization colored my subsequent interactions with her, and my attitudes toward her. When my then-husband and I decided to adopt a dog, neither of us having had a dog before, there was no way we could have known in advance, I think, just what it would be like; nor, indeed, just what it would be like to adopt the particular dog that we did adopt – Gracie. But in the course of our deliberations, we had mentally carved a space and a role in our lives for a dog – for what would be *our* dog. And when the Wheaton Terrier Rescue offered us Gracie, then only six months old, we cooed over her photograph with excitement and anticipation and oriented our expectations around *this* particular dog. So, by the time she arrived, we were prepared; not just in the sense of having done our research and committed to giving her the care she needed, but also in the sense of having established, using through our

imagination her name and photograph as a placeholder, an emotional and practical orientation around her.

Thus, I do not fall in love with every dog with whom I interact, not even the ones I think are especially great. There are other dogs who I care about and whose company I enjoy, but it doesn't come close to how I feel about Gracie.

Nonetheless, interaction is central. The mere conceptualization of the relationship alone was not sufficient to breed love. On the day she arrived at our apartment, I was for the first time confronted with her in the flesh. I don't know exactly what I had expected, but she wasn't quite it. After a shy and gentle greeting, as she sniffed inquisitively around our apartment, I observed her, this weird little creature, with her docked stub of a tail and her slightly bowed back legs and strange waddle, and I thought to myself "she doesn't *look* much like a dog." When my sister was two-and-a-half years old, I returned for a visit to England for the first time since she had been a baby. In a way, it was the first time we met, since, having been only seven months old when I had moved to America, she had no prior memory of me. Though, as my dad and step-mum assured me, she had heard of and spoken about me often – her "big sister who lives in America" – and was excited for my arrival, she said nothing to me for the first couple of hours, standing coyly behind our dad's legs when we met at the station, and then observing me silently with shy looks. I suppose she was processing my presence, taking me in, a little overwhelmed by this long-imagined and familiar stranger. This is something like how I felt when Gracie arrived. My preparedness to love her had developed around a projected image, but now the interactions with the actual dog-in-the-flesh – the real, living Gracie in all her individuality and strangeness – had to do the work.

I now want to consider in detail the kinds of interaction that occur between Gracie and me – interactions from which our relationship is made. Here are three cases:

(1) Gracie and I are at a crossroads. I intend to turn right, toward Nichols Park, where there is a regular play group for dogs. Gracie intends to turn left, toward A Paw Place, a boutique pet supply store full of expensive dog treats. She pulls to the left; I stand firm, gesturing to the right. She assumes an insistent posture, four paws firmly on the ground, her body weight pushing downward toward the floor, her head a straight line from her back, her eyes staring up to me from under heavy-set brows.

(2) My husband and I take Gracie for a walk in the woods. He and I talk as we meander through the trails – about life but also about the birds and the trees and the river. Gracie walks in front following scents, leading the way, looking back to make sure we are following. Sometimes she loses herself in a scent and we overtake. We call her name, she looks up, and bounds toward us, reclaiming her spot at the front of the pack. I break into a run, call her name and gesture to her, and she runs alongside me, ears flapping in the wind. We stop and wait as my husband catches up.

(3) Gracie is seven months old, and I am collecting her from the spaying clinic. I wait nervously as, one by one, dogs emerge from the surgery room and are reunited with their humans. I wait for a long time, and then out she comes, her head in a cone collar, walking sleepily, still under the effects of the anesthesia, beside the nurse. Together, we wait on the street for our taxi. I sit on the curb of the pavement, next to her, and with my arm around her she gives her weight to my body. My heart swells.

Communication and Address

In the first case, at the crossroads, Gracie is communicating to me that she wants to turn left (to go to A Paw Place). To clarify the nature of such communication, lets consider three different ways in which Gracie can be taken into account.

On the one hand, I can observe her behavior, including her making choices and expressing emotions, in order to know, generally speaking, what her preferences are. So, for example, I know through experience that Gracie likes to go to A Paw Place and that she also likes to go to play groups. I also know that she likes to walk on trails, to run off leash, to sit on the porch and smell the air. And I can, and do, take such things into account when I am planning our activities for the day. We might use the term "telling" quite loosely here and say that, in a sense, Gracie is "telling" me, through her behavior and body language, what she wants.

Alternatively, instead of my deciding what to do on the basis of knowing what Gracie likes to do (based on past observations) I can also simply, in any given instance, let her decide. I do this, for example, when I follow her lead on walks, turning when she turns, pausing when she wants to sniff, stopping when she decides to lie down under the shade of a tree. These are cases in which I defer to her without any negotiation. Indeed, there will be moments where my very presence for her fades into the background, when she is absorbed, for example, in the trail of a particular smell, nose to the ground and hyper-focused, and I simply facilitate by keeping up and keeping the leash loose.

On the other hand, however, Gracie can also *address* me.[1] And, likewise, I can address her.[2] When Gracie engages in the behavior I have described at the crossroads, it is not merely that I am reading her behavior and deducing that she wants to go left (to A Paw Place). Rather, she is (so to speak) *insisting* (*to* me) that we go left. I cannot properly understand her behavior unless I understand it as addressed to me, as making a demand. And this means that she, too, in addressing me, is understanding me as an intentional being who can be persuaded, or maybe even cajoled, rather than as merely an object who might simply be *moved* in the right direction.[3] And this is, likewise, how I am understanding her when I hold my ground and say "not today", or offer her a treat "wan'a biscuit?" to coax her in the other direction, or when I say "okayyy fine" with a roll of the eyes and follow her lead.

Communication between us is continual and evolving. She usually wakes me up in the morning by sitting right next to the bed and putting her face in front of mine. I feel and hear her presence as she waits with her face about an inch from mine, huffing and puffing and shuffling with a certain impatience. If I don't open my eyes within about twenty seconds of this, she licks my eye lids, which

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[1] For discussion of the various ways in which dogs intentionally communicate, see for example A. Miklósi et al, "Intentional behavior in dog-human communication: an experimental analysis of 'showing' behavior in the dog," *Animal Cognition* 3 (2000) and Marcello Siniscalchi et al, "Communication in Dogs," *Animals (Basel)* 8, no. 131 (July 2018), https://doi.org/10.3390/ani8080131.

[2] Various studies suggest that dogs understand humans' communicative intentions. See, for example, Kaminski et al, "Domestic dogs comprehend human communication with iconic signs," *Developmental Science* 12, no. 6 (2009), and K. Soproni et al, "Comprehension of human communicative signs in pet dogs (Canis familiaris)," *Journal of Comparative Psychology* 115, no. 2 (June 2001). Eye contact and, to a lesser extent, calling the dog's name, have been found to be of particular importance for dog's ability to discern when a human's behavioral gesture is intended to communicate something to them – communicative cues that are used also by human infants for determining communicative intent (J. Kiminski, L. Schulz, and M. Tomasello, "How Dogs Know When Communication is Intended for Them," *Developmental Science* 12, no. 2 (March 2012).) For discussion of these studies see also Juliane Bräuer, "What Dogs Understand about Humans," in *The Social Dog: Behavior and Cognition*, eds. Juliane Kaminski and Sarah Marshall-Pescini (London: Academic Press, 2014), 307-308.

[3] A recent study shows that, while there is mixed evidence concerning dogs' ability to recognize humans' goal-directed behavior as carrying out prior intentions, dogs are able to recognize human "intentions-in-action," or "present-directed intentions … that underlie the voluntary guidance of action," demonstrated by canine subjects' ability to distinguish between situations in which a human is *unwilling* to give the subject a treat, and situations in which a human is *unable* to give the subject a treat. (Britta Schünemann et al, "Dogs distinguish human intentional and unintentional action," *Scientific Reports* 11, no. 14967 (2021), https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-021-94374-3.)

is always successful. If I close my eyes again the pattern repeats, until I am properly awake and at her service.

She will usually *tell* me when it's time for lunch or dinner. It goes something like this: I'll be sitting at my desk or on the sofa reading, and Gracie will come and sit very straight in front of or next to me, staring. She has a particular way of doing this where it is obvious to me that she is addressing me. I don't always know, at first, what she is asking for. Sometimes when she does this she is communicating that she'd like to join me on the sofa, but that I am somehow in her way. In such cases, I budge over, tap the sofa to invite her, and she jumps up and gets comfortable. If what she wants is her lunch, then I might scoot over and tap the sofa to no avail, think for a moment, and then "oh you're right, it's lunch time!". Then I stand up and follow as she leads me to her food bowl.[4]

On rare occasions she (intentionally) wakes me in the middle of the night, again by coming up close to my face and licking my eyes. She wakes me at this time only if she has diarrhea and needs to go outside urgently. There is an unmistakable look in her eyes at such moments – a look that says, "I need to go right now." I of course oblige, following her as she runs down the stairs, putting on her harness and leash in quick haste, trailing behind her in the garden in my pajamas in a sleepy haze as she paces in search of the right spot to relieve herself. Notwithstanding the sudden awakening, the scooping of diarrhea into bags, and sometimes the bitter cold, my heart swells in these moments. There is, of course, a sense of extra tenderness toward her in her physical discomfort. But it is also a satisfaction at the smoothness of the communication between us, so direct and pure.

[4] Pitcher describes a mode of communication adopted by his dog Remus as "significant sitting": "For example, if he wanted a dog biscuit, he simply sat near the box of biscuits and silently stared at one or the other of us." Remus's mother, Lupa, on the other hand "told us she wanted something by placing her paw gently on our knee and looking expectantly into our eyes, perhaps also whining softly. This method, too, got results." (Pitcher, 45.)

And of course, I address her too. Gracie responds, for example, to her name. Sometimes I call her name in a particular, deliberate way – like "Gracieee, *come*," my voice going up to a high note as I say her name, and then down slightly for the word "come"[5] – and she runs to me. This is her "recall," and she has been trained to do it – to come when called – from a young age.[6] There might be a question here about whether this really counts as address, since it might be interpreted as her simply responding to a noise – a noise I am making – having learned that if she comes to me when I make this noise, she gets a treat. Regardless, there are many other instances in which she responds to her name, or to other noises or gestures, in way that she has not been specifically trained to – and these are I think, more straightforwardly instances in which she is responding to my *addressing* her. Sometimes, for example, I say her name just to get her attention, or to initiate play, or cuddles. Sometimes when we walk or run together, I say her name and physically gesture, by tilting my head or moving my arm in a particular direction, to indicate for her to come over to me, or to run this way or that way with me. In such cases, she comes to me, or runs with me in the direction indicated, but she does not expect a treat – that is, she does not treat my address like a recall. I know this because when she responds to a recall, she bounds straight up to me and sits at my feet, expecting a treat.

Indeed, often she will look to me as though awaiting communication. For example, on walks in the woods, when there is a fork in the trail and she is slightly ahead of us, she will walk a little way up one side, stop, and look back. I then gesture to her, either to carry on up that way, or to come back and

[5] For a discussion of the best way to use one's voice, in terms of speed, notes, and pitch, to communicate with dogs for various purposes and in various contexts, see Patricia McConnell, *The Other End of the Leash: Why We Do What We Do Around Dogs* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2002), 53-64.

[6] Indeed, it is probably the most important thing she has been taught, since its purpose is safety – it ensures that I can call her back to me if, for example, she ventures too close to a road. And this gives her freedom – the freedom to run off leash.

take the other trail. She responds immediately, either carrying along happily on her chosen route, or darting to the other one to reclaim her place at the front of the group.

Being Together, Doing Together

I have so far described moments of communication between Gracie and me – moments in which one of us *addresses* the other. These are more or less distinct (though frequent and regular) moments within the ebb and flow of our relationship. But there is something else, something in a sense more basic than such moments of address. It is the way in which we are continually, mutually aware of one another's living, embodied presence, and are open and attuned to one another as such, such that we experience ourselves as being and doing *together*.

In the case of our disagreement at the crossroads, we are somewhat at odds in our interaction. But these moments are brief and quickly forgotten about and occur within the context of an overall more cooperative enterprise. When we go on walks, we go on walks together. It is not merely that we are walking in close proximity, taking the same route. It is not a mere coincidence, or addition, to what each of us is doing that the other is also there. Rather, that we are walking *with* one another is an essential part of the description of the activity in which we are each (together) engaging.

To avoid confusion, I should emphasize that what I am getting at feels purest when Gracie is walking *off*-leash. For there is a trivial sense in which two beings might be thrown into something essentially "together" if they are attached to one another by rope. However we might describe that mere physical bondage, it is not what I am getting at. Supposing that two beings were attached by rope, it could go a variety of ways. The stronger might simply treat the weaker as an object to be dragged along wherever the stronger wants to go. Or maybe the two would be engaged in a constant struggle, or tug-of-war,

each wanting to move toward a different goal. Now, to be sure, dog walking *can* be like this. There are moments, as I've described, in which Gracie and I engage in struggle, or at least in fraught negotiation. Things do sometimes come down to brute struggle – usually when there is a chicken bone on the sidewalk. But when it is going well it is mostly closer to the model of a three-legged-race. Which is to say, we navigate the physical limitation cooperatively, toward a more-or-less joint goal.[7] One way in which this manifests is in the leash's rarely being taut. And this takes skill, on both sides – it is more like dancing than merely walking alone, requiring a great deal of mutual attunement.

It is, in a way, easier for us to be cooperative and open to one another when there is no leash involved, and indeed this is a great deal preferred, I think, by us both. For Gracie and I are, of course, quite different creatures, with different interests, senses, and ways of moving. It takes great patience for me to stand and wait and keep a loose leash as she sniffs every single tree on the block. And it takes, I presume, great discipline on her part to walk in a straight line – unnatural to dogs[8] – and simply pass by all the urgent scents of the neighborhood. We are often, quite frankly, annoying to each other on leash. But without this limitation, able to move each at our own pace and in our own way, we soar. As in my description of our walks in the woods, we are in tune with one another despite our differing preoccupations (her with scent, me with conversation and sight). We run just to run together. I call her name and she bounds toward me as I cheer her on. I turn one way and she follows; she turns

[7] I speak here of us both being subject to a "physical limitation." I should of course acknowledge that there is an asymmetry here, insofar as, on the one hand, it is me who decides that Gracie must (for safety, and to abide by the law) wear a harness and leash, and on the other hand, I am not also wearing a harness with a leash attached but am rather only holding the handle of the leash. This asymmetry can be overstated though, since I haven't really the option (insofar as I care about her and am socially responsible) of simply dropping the leash should she, for example, drag me over on an icy sidewalk. Moreover, since I rarely resort to forcefully pulling on the leash to get her to go somewhere, my own movement is limited by hers – I must use persuasion if we disagree about which direction to head in, and if she decides to simply lay down and rest on the sidewalk, as she often likes to do, I have to stand and wait.

[8] I forget where I originally read this, but nonetheless it is quite obvious if you watch a dog roaming off-leash that they do not tend to walk in straight lines, as we do. They also generally walk at a faster pace than we do.

another and I follow her. We are constantly keeping track of, and keeping up with, one another's movements.

Though I speak of the dialogical relation between Gracie and me, this relation often exists within, and in the context of, the *triad* that is our family. So, for example, in the case of our walk in the woods, we can on the one hand distinguish three dyads – my husband and me, Gracie and me, my husband and Gracie. There is me and my husband talking as Gracie sniffs, and there is me and Gracie running together, or my husband bending down as Gracie licks his face. But each of these interactions should be understood also as operating within the *triad* of Gracie, my husband, and me. My husband and I carry on our conversation always with a recognition of and attunement to Gracie's presence – aware of her movement, ready to share in her curiosity or to respond to her address. And Gracie and I, too, finish our burst of running and then wait and turn toward my husband as he catches up. And their interactions, also, are mediated and shaped by my presence. The social world that we together inhabit on this walk is co-created by the three of us.[9]

So, although I often talk of relations between two beings, it should be understood that these can also occur in the context of, and be more or less shaped by, larger group relations – as is familiar from the notion of a family. Nonetheless, since I work from home, Gracie and I are often alone together, and my focus will be mostly on the dyad, for the sake of simplicity.

[9] As in the case of my interactions with my little sister (discussed in Chapter 3), togetherness does not require identical contributions. The ways in which my husband and I interact and manifest our openness and receptivity to one another are in many respects different from the way in which either of us interacts with Gracie. Gracie does not engage in our conversation – she does not reflect with us about life, or verbally remark upon the trees and the birds and the water. Furthermore, her experience is markedly different from ours – most notably with regard to scent. And yet, she is there with us, engaging in a shared social world, shaping and co-creating that world by her very presence.

At home, we are usually in the same room. When I make to leave, she often gets up and casually follows – unexcited by the obviousness of the fact that she will be joining me. She joins me even in the bathroom, laying at my feet with a sigh, or sniffing around me intrusively. When I take my daily bath, she is never far behind – the sound of paw-steps on bathroom tiles, heavy breath, a snout-nose poking around the shower curtain, big grey fluffy head, expectant eyes. Leaning over the side of the tub, she licks the water from my arms, my shoulders, my knees, my face. When I nap, or sit down to watch TV, I call her name and she joins me. Sometimes we lie touching, other times we are at opposite sides of the bed. Sometimes she comes to me and lies on my foot as I sit, and I feel her heartbeat against my toes.

Such togetherness might be more or less intimate, and more or less in the foreground of our focus. It is a mark of our familiarity that our togetherness often recedes into the background – as when close friends can comfortably share a silence. Sometimes we recline on opposite ends of the sofa, while I work and listen to the rhythm of her breath. Other times it is startling. When I am in the bath, I leave the bathroom door open for her so that she can come and go. Sometimes with my eyes closed and the water running, my senses are deadened, and her silent appearance when I open my eyes – her baboon-like face inches from mine, staring, expecting – gives me a fright.

Sometimes our intimacy is pronounced, as in moments like the third case described above, when she leans into me and I hold her close, or when I massage her ears. I sit with her, rubbing her fur behind her ears, moving my hands slightly inside her ears in a circular motion. She breathes deeply, leaning into my hand, softly grunting. Sometimes I move along her body like this, gently massaging her shoulders, moving down her back, and along her legs. Paying attention to her responses as she relaxes, stretches, and leans into me, I move accordingly, focusing on those spots that give her the most

pleasure. As her breathing becomes deep and slow, I notice that I too am breathing more deeply, a weight lifted from my chest as we melt into one another.[10]

On mornings when my husband wakes up before I do, I wake to find Gracie on his side of the bed; and our post-sleep reunion – kissing, licking, cooing, pawing, snuggling – would put young lovers to shame. Indeed, it is a near-constant feature of our interactions that they express mutual joy in one another's company. Part of the mutual openness required for togetherness takes the form of each actually wanting, to some degree, the company of the other; and my interactions with Gracie take this to the extreme.

II. AN AFFECTIONAL BOND

Alexandra Solomon, a couples' therapist and relationship expert, writes that "A happy and healthy intimate relationship is grounded in rituals that convey, 'I am glad I'm here, and I'm glad you're here.'"[11] In our little family, these rituals abound. At our regular family "dance parties," my husband and I will put on some kind of up-beat song and dance around, as Gracie joins in, jumping up, spinning around, wiggling and wagging her tail. When my husband returns home from work each day, Gracie and I run to the door to greet him, as she jumps on him, licks him, and wags not just her tail but her whole back end, for minutes. He responds by rubbing her back and ears and telling her how much he loves her. For Gracie, all separations from either me or my husband, no matter how short, are

[10] Pitcher describes a tender moment with his dog, Lupa, stating that "A great current of love passed between us, as real as a table or a piano." (Pitcher, 125.) This is the imagery that we need, I think, to describe such moments, where love itself becomes a two-way, tangible force.

[11] Alexandra Solomon (@dr.alexandra.solomon), "A happy and healthy intimate relationship is grounded in rituals that convey, 'I am glad I'm here, and I'm glad you're here.'" (Augst 22, 2021), https://www.instagram.com/p/CS5eWxMMmhR/?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=.

deserving of such a reunion. One of us waits outside with her while the other briefly goes into a store and is met with her delight upon returning. This delight is, of course, mutual. Gracie and I returned home from a walk today to find my husband unexpectedly home early – Gracie ran loops around the living room at the sheer joy of it.

At home, our days are filled with play. In hide-and-seek, I go to another room and hide, under a desk or behind a door, and call Gracie's name. My husband accompanies her as she looks for me, excitement building. I hear her little footsteps getting closer, and then retreating. I call her name again, and back she comes, this time closer, until eventually she sees me, wagging her tail or jumping up as we reunite. Then we wait while my husband hides, and it continues. In the garden, or in the living room, we play tug-of-war with her rope toys. Sometimes we mix it with "keep away," where I throw the rope, she runs to fetch it, and then runs away, dodging me as I try to catch her, until eventually I grab the other end and we are playing tug-of-war again. I am sure to let her win, if she doesn't anyway, and she trots around holding the rope in her mouth with her head held high. One of my favorite games I call, simply, "dogs." I get down on all-fours and try to mimic the way that dogs wrestle. Gracie spins around, whacks me with her paws, bites playfully at my arm. I try to mimic her "play bows."[12] Sometimes I "bunny hop" around the room while she chases me, pouncing, throwing her weight at me. Certain movements get her especially excited. Sometimes my husband and I take it in turns to simply move in a weird way until we are "disqualified," which means that Gracie has jumped up, with an open mouth and excited expression, hitting one's body with a thud.

[12] On the "play bow" see, for example, Marc Bekoff, *Canine Confidential: Why Dogs Do What They Do* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 56-57.

It is clear that Gracie and I (and my husband too) have mutual enjoyment in one another's presence. Indeed, that this is a desire we have constitutes, in part, the form of our mutual openness to one another.

Attachment

I have no doubt that Gracie is attached to me, just as I am attached to her, and so too she is attached to my husband.[13] When one of us leaves the house without her, she stands at the door, sometimes whining a little, before settling down, and greeting us joyfully when we return. If all three of us are out walking together, and one of us splits off to go and run and errand, Gracie always tries to follow them, sometimes refusing to walk in the other direction. Indeed, we often have to plan around this fact (for example, one of us might want to take Gracie home from the park and get started on lunch while the other goes to the post office, but often we end up sticking together because we know Gracie doesn't like it when we separate).

If we both go out for the day, or take a short trip without her, the report of the person taking care of her is always that she seemed a little upset and anxious after we left, eventually settling down. Some

[13] Clive D. L. Wynne discusses an experiment he carried out with Erica Feuerbacher, which was designed to address the question whether dogs sought the company of their humans because it was valued in itself, or simply because the human was associated with food. In the study, the dogs' humans returned home from an 8-hour workday, during which time the dog subjects had not had access to food. Only humans who lived in houses with garages participated. The humans each entered the garage attached to their house and were placed at a spot that was equidistant with a bowl of food from the door. The dog was then let into the garage, with a choice between approaching the human first or the food. Wynne writes "Invariably, the dog – who had heard the owner drive up – was practically on top of him or her as soon as the assistant opened the door." He continues: "We never found that, on the first exposure to this test, the dogs had any real interest in the food at all." After repeating the experiments every day for a week, "the dogs got wise to what we were up to and started eating more of the food," but they still demonstrated great interest in their humans: "They continued to greet their humans first but developed a pattern of running over to the food bowl and stuffing their cheeks with as much dog chow as possible before rushing back to continue greeting their owner." (Clive D. L. Wynne, *Dog is Love: Why and How Your Dog Loves You* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2019), 55-56.)

dogs don't eat when their people are away. Though Gracie is thankfully able to settle into her usual routine while we are away, and to enjoy herself, she is always joyful when we reunite. And we feel the same way. We miss her when we are away – I always feel a little out of sorts not having her around – and are always full of joy when reunited.[14]

Nonetheless, the way that the attachment manifests is in some ways different for me than it is for her. During the pandemic, I was stuck in England for several months due to the unexpected travel restrictions. I missed Gracie dearly and was struck with a vertigo-like sense of the distance that separated us. A lot of this experience was due to worry – I did not know when I would be able to come back to the US, and since this was during a period in which I was (romantically speaking) single, there was nobody in the US with whom I shared responsibility for caring for her. I had arranged for two weeks of care for her, not knowing that I would wind up stuck, and had to scrabble together other

[14] Indeed, some studies have suggested that we should understand the attachment that dogs have toward their humans as analogous to the specific form of attachment that infants and young children have toward their primary caregivers. In Attachment Theory, security-based attachment involves "a seeking to obtain an experience of security and comfort in the relationship with the partner," the availability of which provides the attached with a "secure base" from which she has the "confidence to engage in other activities" (Ainsworth, "Attachments and other affectional bonds across the life cycle," 38). To further study the "interaction between attachment behavior, exploration, separation anxiety, and fear of the strange," Mary Ainsworth and Silvia Bell developed the "strange situation," in which one-year-olds were observed in "a controlled laboratory environment – the strange or unfamiliar situation" (Mary Ainsworth and Silvia Bell, "Attachment, Exploration, and Separation: Illustrated by the Behavior of One-Year-Olds in a Strange Situation," *Child Development* 41, no. 1 (March 1970), 50). The "strange situation" was designed so that the researchers could observe "the extent to which the infant could use his mother as a secure base from which he could explore a strange environment, with fear of the strange kept in abeyance by her presence," and "the extent to which attachment behavior might gain ascendancy over exploratory behavior under conditions of alarm introduced by the entrance of a stranger and under conditions of separation from and reunion with the mother." (Ainsworth and Bell, "Attachment, Exploration, and Separation," 53.)

Emanuela Prato-Preivde et al reconstructed Ainsoworth and Bell's procedure to study the attachments of dogs to their humans. They describe the procedure as follows: "38 adult dog-owner pairs were observed in an unfamiliar room, introduced to a human stranger and subjected to four short episodes of separation." They note that the "procedure and behavioral analyses were as similar as possible to those used in studying human infants." Summarizing their results, they note that the dogs "accepted to play with the stranger more in the presence of their owner than during his or her absence," which suggests, they concluded, a "secure base effect." The dogs also displayed "a range of attachment behaviors, i.e. search and proximity seeking behaviors when separated from their owner" and "greeted their owner more enthusiastically and for longer durations compared to the stranger." The dogs' behavior, they conclude, "was very similar to that reported in human infants and chimpanzees." (Emanuela Prato-Preivde et al, "Is the Dog-Human Relationship an Attachment Bond? An Observational Study Using Ainsworth's Strange Situation," *Behavior* 140, no. 2 (February 2003).) For discussion of this and similar studies see Emanuela Prato-Previde and Paola Valsecchi, "The Immaterial Cord: The Dog-Human Attachment Bond," in *The Social Dog* eds. Kaminski and Marshall-Pescini, 165-189. See also Wynne, *Dog is Love*, 57-59.

care for her, relying on the kindness of my friends. At not infrequent intervals this worry would spiral into panic. After finally securing some more long-term care for her (with my now-husband), the sense of relief was like nothing I had experienced before; the world felt solid again.

Still, I missed her – I missed the feel of her body against mine, the weight of her leaning, of a paw draped over me. I missed being pinned down and suffocated as she licked my face, the feel of her tongue, warm and slimy. I missed the feel of her head on my foot, soft as water, as she slept by my chair. I missed her smell – the smell of her breath, her hair like hay, her ears like honey; and her sounds – her sighing, grunting, yawning, licking, chewing, snorting, her paws against bathroom tiles. Her snoring – the little whistle of her nose. Her dreamy noises, muted barks and squeaks. It was an aching need to be with her that would bring me to tears.

And there was so much that she didn't know. She didn't know that I was coming back, that I had been frantically arranging her care, that I missed her. I worried about the effect that this separation would have on her, and I knew that she would be joyful to see me when I returned. But there was so much that I didn't know, too. For example, did she miss me? What did her attachment to me feel like, for her, over such a long period of absence? In what sense did our relationship endure over this period, without such mutual understanding?

It is in these enduring attitudes – the kind that can be detached from ongoing interactions – that there is, I think, the most asymmetry between us. And this is true, too, with regard to those more contemplative aspects of my love for her. I am under no illusion, for example, that Gracie is occupied with thoughts of how wonderful and precious I am, as I am with thoughts about her.

There are clear differences between the way in which I care about Gracie, for her own sake, and her attitudes toward me. Consider, for example, our negotiation at the crossroads. Our attitudes here, especially the way in which they take the other into consideration, are quite different. For my own part, a variety of considerations come into play, some of them self-serving, some of them focused on Gracie's well-being, and some of them of a different kind altogether. Two kinds of consideration that express concern for Gracie for her own sake will particularly impress upon my decision. First, the simple fact that she wants to go to A Paw Place, and that she will be happy if we do, is a reason that points, for me, in favor of going there. Seeing her satisfaction as she marches triumphantly toward the store, pulling ahead on a taut leash, always brings a smile to my face. Second, my deliberation will consider what is good for her on the whole, noting that at the park she will get more physical exercise and might ultimately feel better as a result (this consideration might, of course, point toward going *both* to A Paw Place and to the playgroup at Nichols Park, and often that is what we do). This is not to say that I always do what it best for her – I don't always have the energy, or the money to spend; sometimes my own needs win out. But, in general, her wants and needs are at the center of my deliberations, both big and small.

Consider, for example, the following kind of deliberation. When I think about the future, I think about how I want to divide my time between the US and the UK, and what my options are in that regard. Indeed, this is a deliberation that my husband and I enter into together. A limitation that we consider absolute is that we do not want Gracie to travel by airplane unless she can be in the cabin with us. This makes our options a lot more limited and difficult than they otherwise would be, but we simply will not (absent some dire emergency) put Gracie through the stress and risk of travelling in the cargo

hold. We are also limited by not wanting to leave her in somebody else's care for more than a couple of weeks at a time – for her sake but also for ours. Thus, the option of spending summers together in the UK is quite limited – it would be possible only if we were able to travel by ship. In this respect, a concern for Gracie for her own sake takes center stage in important life decisions. Similarly, I would probably not apply for a job that would involve relocating to an overly hot climate, since Gracie is especially sensitive to the heat and appears to be much happier when the weather is cooler.

Gracie, of course, does not consider my needs in the same way. I don't suppose she engages in the kinds of longer-term deliberation in which I engage and to that extent the question of whether she considers my needs simply doesn't arise. And regarding the short-term decisions of the kind made at the crossroads, I don't think Gracie considers what would be good for me. She will eventually cooperate if I insist that we turn right, but she doesn't do so because she likes to see me get my way. Gracie is "selfish" in ways that I would not tolerate from, for example, a friend or romantic partner. She *implores* me, for example, to share my food with her, but has never considered sharing hers with me – indeed, given the chance, she will take my food when I am not looking. And, as I said above, I don't suppose that Gracie spends time contemplating my preciousness, as I do with hers.

But, as I argued in Chapter 4, the assessment of somebody's care for their attachment-figure (for her own sake) should be made relative to her capacities. Thus we might want to say that Gracie can love me, and love me without deficiency, while being "selfish" in these ways (and we might say the same for the love of a young child, for example).[15] This difference in assessment is reflected, too, in my

[15] As I noted in Chapter 4, Harcourt says something similar about the love of infants (Harcourt, 46-51), but strangely does not expand his view to include love of non-human animals (Harcourt, 39, 43-44).

general attitudes to Gracie's behavior. Her selfishness, far from being a source of annoyance or resentment, brings me great amusement and joy. Similarly with her preciousness about her own physical boundaries and disregard for mine – walking up and down the stairs is a hazard, her little bulldozer body barging past, and I am delighted each time. Part of the reason these behaviors cause amusement and delight rather than resentment is, precisely, because the same standards of interpersonal behavior as I would expect from a peer are not applicable in her case.[16]

It should be noted, too, that these differences in consideration are by far offset by our differences in power and agency. Gracie does not, as far as I know, choose her walking route according to where she thinks I would prefer to go, she never offers me food, and she does not move over on the sofa to give me an equal amount of space. But, given that I have most of the power in our relationship, this asymmetry in consideration seems quite fitting. If I wanted to, I could leave Gracie home alone for most of the day, feed her boring food, rarely take her on walks, use punishments to get her to behave as I would like, scold her for behaving like a dog, and forbid her from going on the furniture. Of course, I would never do such things, and am thoroughly committed to taking her needs into account and giving her as much agency as possible. But given this asymmetry in power, I need to take her into consideration in a way in which she does not need to take me into consideration – for the most part, she does not, ultimately, call the shots. The extent to which she calls the shots is the extent to which I let her call the shots.[17]

[16] In this respect, she is kind of like a young child, though with a young child we might be focused on instilling her with a sense of fairness of a kind that I needn't hope for with Gracie.

[17] I do not mean to strike a triumphant note in saying that I have more power than she does. It is, rather, a fact that I find quite disturbing.

Moreover, these differences in our orientations toward one another should not be overstated. Gracie might not *think of me* as precious, or as a limit to her will, or as an appropriate object of care for my own sake. Nonetheless, she does *treat* me, in interaction, as in many respects a limit to her will. That she recognizes me, for example, as a locus of initiative is in fact required, I have argued, for our "togetherness" in interaction. The very nature of our relationship – its back-and-forth and give-and-take – relies on her being receptive and attuned to me as I actually am. She does not project onto me, or look past me, or belittle or demean; she does not fail to treat me as a somebody. Between us there is a mutual trust: I am certain that she would never intentionally hurt me, just as I would not intentionally hurt her – she is secure in my presence as I am in hers.

In her attachment to me, her joy and comfort in my presence and her need of me when I am not there, I am not experienced as instrumental, as merely providing something else. Rather, her need is ultimately simply to be together with me – a togetherness in which she is oriented, ultimately and simply, toward *me*. And her affection and tenderness toward me is clear. She seems generally committed to keeping me clean and dry. When I get out of the bath or shower, she always follows me, licking the water from my legs. She often does this while I am actually in the bath, as my knees poke out of the water. In the mornings, I clean the sleep from her eyes, and she does the same to mine, of her own accord. When I cry, she attends to me, gently licking my tears, sometimes putting her weight on me. Once, she simply sat on me, her whole 60lbs on my lap. Her attention unfailingly soothes me – so much so that when I am upset, my husband has taken to calling her over, knowing that she is the one that I need.

George Pitcher describes similar experiences with his dogs. Describing his response to having watched a documentary about a little boy with a congenital heart defect, in which the child dies, he writes:

> "As the program ended, my eyes filled with tears. Instantly, both dogs rushed to me, almost knocking me over backward, and, with plaintive whimpers, fervently licked my eyes, my cheeks, in an effort – which was totally successful – to comfort me. The very same thing happened again in our house in Provence when the news of Kit Bryan's death brought a rush of tears to my eyes."[18]

Of his dogs, he writes: "we simply loved them with all our hearts … And they loved us, too, completely, no holds barred."[19]

III. CONCLUSION

In this detailed description of mine and Gracie's relationship, we see an example of how togetherness can cross species boundaries, as the basis for an affectional bond that bridges the many differences between us. The possibility of this bond, however, demonstrates that we are, in many respects, not so different. We are both subjects of experience, with rich inner lives, capable of striving and suffering. We share a basic need and capacity for bonding, for embodied emotional connection, for caring touch. Indeed, through loving animals we can be viscerally reminded of our own animality, and in that respect, brought home.

[18] Pitcher, *The Dogs Who Came to Stay*, 146-147.
[19] Pitcher, 147.

CONCLUSION: LOVING WELL

I have suggested that we should allow for better and worse forms of love, and that the ideal of love is an attachment in which the lover genuinely responds to the reality of the beloved, as an end in herself, and treats her accordingly. I have argued that the ways in which the lover does this will be relative to her capacities, and that dogs can, in their own way, love their humans. But how well do we love our dogs? To conclude the dissertation, I want to note two closely related obstacles to loving well – projection and domination – that might be especially, though not solely, prominent in relation to our love for non-human animals, and to present, with reference to the relationship between Barbara Smuts and her dog Safi, an ideal toward which we should be striving.

Projection

I have argued that dogs (and by extension, I think, various other non-human animals) are somebodies, beings with complex inner lives, capable of forming loving, affectional bonds with others. Thus, when people love their dogs, in relationship with them, there is no reason to think – and indeed it would be quite troubling to think – that such people are suffering from delusion, like thinking that their big teddy bear is real. Nonetheless, just as we can, in relation to other human beings, fail to really see and relate to the other as she is, instead projecting our own narratives onto her – seeing emotions, motives, intentions, and personality traits that are not really there – so too we can do this with dogs.[1] And, indeed, we might be at more risk of

[1] Both projection and domination might be seen as forms of the exercise of the "fat relentless ego" (Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good* (London: Routledge, 2013), https://doi-org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.4324/9781315887524, 51).

doing this with dogs and other non-human animals, since they do not have the same resources (such as language) to correct our image of them.[2]

Now, of course, we all have our own stories and emotional needs, and we bring these to our relationships. So, the problem is not our emotional neediness – indeed, love's very importance to creatures like us can be explained, I have argued, by reference to our need for connection. Rather, the problem arises if we allow our own narrative to cloud our vision of the other.

A clear case of the way in which projection can obscure understanding can be seen in a story that was recently recounted to me. The story was about a friend-of-a-friend – we'll call him Ronald. Ronald bought a German Shepherd, paying way over a normal price under the understanding that this dog knew the "kill" command, whatever that means. Clearly, it was worth a lot of money to Ronald to be able to say, with some conviction, that his dog would kill somebody if told to. Now, having acquired this dog just a couple of months ago, Ronald attended a poker game at a friend's house and brought the dog with him. Ronald made a display of feeding the dog a large amount of raw meat – presumably the food of only the toughest dogs. The dog then started pacing around the room. Ronald bragged that the dog was in fact "patrolling" – that this was the dog's way of protecting him. After pacing for some time, the dog disappeared into the kitchen, and when he returned, he was no longer pacing. Detecting a foul smell, the poker players found, in the middle of the kitchen floor, a huge pile of dog shit. It was now clear to all involved that the dog had not been "patrolling" but rather pacing in discomfort, needing to relieve himself, and had gone into the kitchen to do so. At this point, Ronald tried to save face by declaring, "he's done bigger shits than that."

[2] Though it should be noted that even the use of language is often ineffective against such projections if somebody is determined to misunderstand.

In this case, many factors converge to suggest that Ronald's understanding of his dog is obscured by his own projections. He is clearly motivated to believe that his dog is a fierce security guard, presumably because this inflates his own ego. That pacing in a dog is often a sign of stomach upset is pretty basic knowledge, easily available for anyone who is interested in accurately reading their dog's behavior. That this was in fact the explanation of the dog's behavior is borne out by the evidence - the dog relieved himself, whereupon the pacing stopped. Ronald, it seems, doesn't really care about knowing his dog. Their relationship is far more about Ronald than it is about the dog – indeed, it fails to be properly dialogical, since Ronald is not really attuned with and responsive to his dog.

To be committed to really seeing one's animal companion takes work. It is an effort to be attentive to another, to really look. Often, the meaning of a dog's behavior is obvious, but as I discussed in Chapter 1, it isn't always. We must thus be willing to learn from dog behaviorists and ethologists who have a demonstrated commitment to understanding the behavior of non-human animals. And we must be willing to apply what we learn to our interactions with our animal companions, to really see them as they are instead of reverting to stories about who they are that are convenient or pleasing or cute.

Domination

The problem of projection is closely related to the problem of domination, both of which involve a failure to respond to the independent reality of the beloved. We might define domination as, roughly, acting toward another, or in ways that concern her, without taking into account her needs and/or expressed preferences.[3] This failure might be grounded in projection

[3] This rough characterization of domination is based to some extent on the republican conception of domination as republican unfreedom, put forward by, for example, Elizabeth Anderson (Elizabeth Anderson, *Private Government: How Employers Rule Our Lives (and Why We Don't Talk About It)* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).) Anderson

– that is, in a failure to see what the needs of the other are, or what she is telling one. Or it might consist in a failure to be moved by what the other needs and/or is telling one – a failure to be appropriately moved by her needs or by her voice.

The notion that in one's relationship with one's dog(s) one ought to assume the position of "pack leader" or the "alpha," has been quite popular, and makes domination the actual goal in one's relationship with dogs. No doubt this appeals to the egos of many. At any rate, it is not grounded in an understanding of how dogs actually are.[4]

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understands domination as being subjection to another's "arbitrary, unaccountable will" (Anderson, *Private Government*, 45), which can be further characterized as a lack of republican freedom under which the government (of whatever kind of institution) would be answerable to the governed: where government is "something that is the people's business, transparent to them, servant to their interests, in which they have a voice and the power to hold rulers accountable." (Anderson, 44.) Here I have emphasized the importance of taking one's dog's interests into consideration as well as her expressed preferences – that is, her voice. There is a sense in which, given the standing of dogs in relation to the state and the law, the relationship between people and dogs is one of domination, since, if a person fails to properly take her dog's interests into account and to give her a voice in matters concerning her, there is at present not much that can be done in the way of holding that person accountable. (For a good argument that dogs and other domesticated animals should be given the status of citizens, see Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka, *Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).) Nonetheless, there is another sense in which domination or non-domination is relative to the particular human-dog relationship, notwithstanding the background conditions, insofar as a person can be committed to taking her dog's interests into account and listening to her when she expresses her preferences. It is this latter sphere of domination/non-domination in which I am interested here.

[4] The idea that dogs are natural pack animals, in which a pack is constructed in terms of a hierarchy of dominance, with an "alpha," or pair of alphas, at the top, is made on an inference from an understanding of wolves that is dubious in two respects. First, this understanding of the nature of wolves as a species was based on studies that we know now to have been misleading, since they were based on packs of captive wolves. "What almost all of these packs had in common," writes John Bradshaw, "was that their structure had been irrevocably disrupted by captivity, so that the wolves were thrown into a state of confusion and conflict." (John Bradshaw, *Dog Sense: How the New Science of Dog Behavior Can Make You a Better Friend to Your Pet* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 18.) By contrast, studies of wolves in the wild reveal that "the majority of wolf 'packs' are simply family groups," and "contrary to many notions of wolf behavior, cooperation, not dominance, seems to be the essence of the wolf pack." (Bradshaw, *Dog Sense*, 16.) Moreover, "our new understanding of the way that wild wolves construct their packs" reveals that "'alpha' status comes automatically with being a parent" and "the term 'alpha,' as applied to a parent wolf in a normal pack, thus doesn't describe much about the wolf's status beyond its role as a parent." (Bradshaw, 23.)

Second, most of our studies on wolves are studies of the grey wolf, and in particular the American timber wolf, and "although DNA analysis indicates that dogs descended from Eurasian grey wolves, none of the wolves that have been studied over the past seventy years or so, American or European, can possibly be considered the *ancestors* of the domestic dog: The two certainly had a common ancestor many thousands of years ago, but there is no evidence to suggest that modern wolves closely resemble these common ancestors." (Bradshaw, 25.) Thus, as Bradshaw suggests, "although the DNA of dogs tells us that they are indisputably wolves, much of the scientific study of wolf behavior conducted in the twentieth century must now be regarded as of dubious significance to our conception of dog behavior." (Bradshaw, 27.)

One might also simply fail to ascribe the needs of one's companion much importance, overlooking them for the sake of convenience – docking dog's tails and cropping their ears for the sake of looks, dressing them in uncomfortable and unnecessary clothing, leaving them alone for long periods. And so, too, one might stifle or ignore the animal's expression of preferences and capacity to make decisions – to exercise some degree of choice, for example, about where to go on walks, who they associate with, where they lounge – perhaps under the umbrella of "discipline."

Of course, in some cases we might just conclude that the human does not in fact love their companion animal. But there are many I think, who do take themselves to love their companion animal, and yet in many ways fail to really see them for who they are, and who fail to treat them accordingly.

But this does not mean that we cannot improve. I want to end by referencing Barbara Smuts' beautiful description of her relationship with her dog, Safi – a relationship between a woman and her dog that might serve as an ideal.

Smuts and Safi: An Ideal to Strive For

As an ethologist who has spent time living among wild baboons, adapting to their social world and their way of life,[5] Smuts appears to be particularly adept at seeing animals as they really are. Of her relationship with her dog, Safi, having at this point lived together for ten years, she writes:

[5] See, for example, Smuts, "Encounters With Animal Minds," 294-301.

> "I've worked hard to empathize with Safi, so that I can meet her needs and desires as fully as possible. Safi's communication is subtle and refined, and I employ everything I learned from baboons in feeling my way into her being."[6]

In their relationship there is balance, and Smuts has a deep respect for Safi's agency:

> "When we are in the human world of the city, I make most of the decisions about where to go and what's off limits, and I protect her from cars and other human dangers. But the further we go from human habitation, the more our roles shift. When in the wilderness, Safi mostly takes the initiative because I am now in her world, and she usually knows much more than I do about what's up."

Of their bond, she writes:

> "When two beings delight in one another this much, their relationship becomes a haven for free and creative expression of being. Trust deepens, mutual attunement grows, and that elusive quality we call consciousness seems to extend beyond the boundaries of a single mind."[7]

Loving well is hard, and I doubt that we ever do it perfectly. In the case of our companion animals, there are particular obstacles to loving well – to treating them as ends in themselves to be seen and appreciated as they really are and whose needs and wishes place a limit on our own. Our relative positions of power, our cultural biases, our own narratives, our egos, our ignorance and obtuseness, are all things that we must work against in order to love our companion animals well. In this, we can always strive to improve. The relationship between Smuts and Safi is, like Smuts and Safi themselves, unique. But it shows us, I think, one ideal to which we might aspire.

[6] Smuts, 304.
[7] Smuts, 306.

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