

Love, Identification, and the Emotions*

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Abstract

Standard accounts of love, it is argued, fail to make sense of the kind of intimacy love essentially involves because they understand such intimacy in tacitly egocentric terms and then either embrace it or recoil from it—in each case unsatisfactorily. In part this tacit egocentrism also supports an egocentric conception of emotions like pride and shame that are central to love. Instead such emotions are understood to be “person-focused.” By analyzing the rational interconnections among such person-focused emotions, I offer a non-egocentric account of intimacy as a kind of identification: an identification which, when reflexive, constitutes one’s own identity and, when non-reflexive, constitutes the close, personal attachment to another that love is.

Recently there has been a resurgence of philosophical interest in love, resulting in a wide variety of accounts. Central to most accounts of love is the notion of caring about your beloved for his sake. Yet such a notion needs to be carefully articulated in the context of providing an account of love, for it is clear that the kind of caring involved in love must be carefully distinguished from impersonal modes of concern for particular others for their sakes, such as moral concern or concern grounded in compassion.¹ That is, we might say, the kind of caring that is central to love must be

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¹There are two senses of ‘impersonal’ concern that should be distinguished here: the concern for another simply as an instance of a particular kind (such as the concern for this man insofar as he is homeless), and the concern for a particular person not merely as an instance of a kind, albeit a concern that does not involve any significant closeness (such as the concern for Andrew, your neighbor’s child). The phrase “impersonal modes of concern for particular others,” is intended to convey this latter notion of impersonality, which contrasts with a notion intimacy.

somehow distinctly intimate. The trouble is to cash out these firm intuitions in a satisfactory way.

In cashing this out, the focus will be on love as an evaluative attitude we might take towards other persons, rather than on loving relationships. Moreover, the focus will be on one paradigm of love: love of one adult for another. Understood this way, there is nothing essentially romantic about love, though love can be the basis for a variety of loving relationships from friendship to romantic relationships.²

1 Intimacy and Standard Accounts of Love

One common intuition is that the requisite notion of intimacy is to be understood in terms of the lover's somehow identifying with the beloved. This view gets taken to an extreme in what is nonetheless a widely held kind of account: the *union account*. According to such an account, we should understand love—especially romantic love—in terms of the idea that the lovers form a kind of union into some sort of “we” in which the boundaries between the lovers' identities become blurred or erased, so that “all distinction between my interests and your interests is overcome.”³ In this way, what formerly had been separate identities has now become a shared identity, a “‘fusion’ of two souls,”⁴ in which the lovers pool not only their well-beings but also their capacity for autonomy as they come to form this “we.”⁵ It is such a shared identity that union accounts use to make sense of the distinctive intimacy of the kind of concern we have for others for their sake that is characteristic of love, and it is an attempt to do so in especially personal terms—terms that affect our very sense of who we are as persons.

Alan Soble has criticized this appeal to the lovers' having a shared

²I have elsewhere understood loving relationships to involve the parties not only each loving the other but also sharing a conception of their relationship. The difference between friendships, romantic relationships, and so on, therefore, stems from the differences in their shared conception of that relationship and so of the kinds of shared activities it ought to involve. For details, see Bennett W. Helm, “Plural Agents,” *Noûs* 42.1 (2008), pp. 17–49.

³Roger Scruton, *Sexual Desire: A Moral Philosophy of the Erotic*, New York, NY: Free Press, 1986, p. 230. For similar claims, see Harry G. Frankfurt, *The Reasons of Love*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004, pp. 61–62.

⁴Robert C. Solomon, *About Love: Reinventing Romance for Our Times*, Simon & Schuster, 1988, p. 24.

⁵Robert Nozick, “Love's Bond,” in *The Examined Life: Philosophical Meditations*, Simon & Schuster, 1989, pp. 68–86, p. 71. See also Mark Fisher, *Personal Love*, London: Duckworth, 1990; Solomon, *About Love*.

identity as being unable to make sense of the kind of concern for another essential to love.⁶ For, Soble argues, in order to make sense of the idea that a lover essentially cares about another person *for his sake*, and so in order to make sense of the possibility of the lover's sacrificing herself for the sake of her beloved, we must be able to distinguish between the interests of the lover and those of the beloved. Yet the union view makes the blurring of this distinction the centerpiece of its account of love; this is, it seems, a matter of the lover's simply *appropriating* the beloved's interests for her own, rather than caring about them for the beloved's sake, where it is precisely such appropriation that blurs the boundaries between the lover and beloved. Although intimacy requires a kind of closeness, such closeness should not be construed in a way that undermines the separateness of the two persons. Consequently, it seems, the union view's account of love does not capture the relevant sense of intimacy.⁷

An alternative (but also widespread) kind of account of love tries to minimize the place of identification in the intimacy of love. Such *robust concern accounts* understand the notion of concern for another for her sake largely in terms that apply equally well to non-intimate sorts of concern, such as those grounded in compassion; the intimacy of love, then, gets understood in terms of the causal role such non-intimate concern plays in the lover's mental life: in terms of its typical causes and effects. Gabriele Taylor puts it this way:

To summarize: if x loves y then x wants to benefit and be with y etc., and he has these wants (or at least some of them) because he believes y has some determinate characteristics ψ in virtue of which he thinks it worth while to benefit and be with y . He regards satisfaction of these wants as an end and not as a means towards some other end.⁸

Thus, the concern for another for her sake is understood in terms of non-

⁶Alan Soble, "Union, Autonomy, and Concern," in *Love Analyzed*, ed. by Roger E. Lamb, Westview Press, 1997, pp. 65–92.

⁷For a further fleshing out of this critique in the context of romantic love, see Neil Delaney, "Romantic Love and Loving Commitment: Articulating a Modern Ideal," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 33.4 (1996), pp. 339–56; Marilyn A. Friedman, "Romantic Love and Personal Autonomy," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 22 (1998), pp. 162–81. A similar view, offered in the context of a discussion of friendship, can be found in: Richard Wollheim, *The Thread of Life*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984, p. 276; and in Dean Cocking and Jeanette Kennett, "Friendship and the Self," *Ethics* 108.3 (1998), pp. 502–27.

⁸Gabriele Taylor, "Love," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 76 (1976), pp. 147–64, p. 157.

instrumental desires to help and be with another, and these desires are caused by an assessment of the beloved's character.⁹ There are many variants on this basic account. Thus, W. Newton-Smith argues that this concern must give rise to (or itself involve?) feelings of affection for the beloved as well as a commitment to her that, unlike mere liking, potentially conflicts with one's other (possibly moral) commitments.¹⁰ Richard White adds that this concern for your beloved must both affect your emotional state and transform your identity in some way—in more subtle and indirect ways than simply by identifying with your beloved and so appropriating her interests.¹¹ Larry Thomas claims instead that such concern must create a "bond of trust" that enables the lovers to share secrets with each other.¹² Niko Kolodny argues that the concern you have for your beloved is grounded in a concern you have for the type of relationship you have with him.¹³ And Harry Frankfurt claims that the concern you have for your beloved is not grounded in a positive evaluation of her but rather bestows value on her.¹⁴

⁹For similar accounts, see Alan Soble, *The Structure of Love*, Yale University Press, 1990; David O. Brink, "Rational Egoism, Self, and Others," in *Identity, Character, and Morality: Essays in Moral Psychology*, ed. by Owen Flanagan and Amélie O. Rorty, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990, pp. 339–78; Hugh LaFollette, *Personal Relationships: Love, Identity, and Morality*, Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Press, 1996.

¹⁰W. Newton-Smith, "A Conceptual Investigation of Love," in *Eros, Agape, and Philia: Readings in the Philosophy of Love*, ed. by Alan Soble, New York, NY: Paragon House, 1989, pp. 199–217.

¹¹Richard J. White, *Love's Philosophy*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001.

¹²Laurence Thomas, "Friends and Lovers," in *Person to Person*, ed. by George Graham and Hugh LaFollette, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1989, pp. 182–98; Laurence Thomas, "Reasons for Loving," in *The Philosophy of (Erotic) Love*, ed. by Robert C. Solomon and Kathleen M. Higgins, Lawrence, KS: Kansas University Press, 1991, pp. 467–476; Laurence Thomas, "Friendship and Other Loves," in *Friendship: A Philosophical Reader*, ed. by Neera Kapur Badhwar, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993, pp. 48–64.

¹³Niko Kolodny, "Love as Valuing a Relationship," *Philosophical Review* 112 (2003), pp. 135–89.

¹⁴Frankfurt, *The Reasons of Love*, pp. 38–39. Frankfurt was cited above as a proponent of the union account (see note 3). However, he also seems to share elements of the robust concern view insofar as he claims that the essence of love is a kind of "disinterested" concern: a concern that "can be satisfied completely and only by the satisfaction of interests that are altogether distinct from and independent of his own" (Harry G. Frankfurt, "Autonomy, Necessity, and Love," in *Necessity, Volition, and Love*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 129–41, p. 134). Yet if my interests and those of my beloved are independent, it is not clear how it can also be true that "the interests of [a person's] beloved are not actually *other* than his at all. They are his interests too" (Frankfurt, *The Reasons of Love*, p. 61). As is suggested by my diagnosis below, Frankfurt is trying to have his cake and eat it too in both accepting and recoiling from an egocentric construal of intimacy.

It is not clear, however, that any of these variants of the robust concern view succeeds in making sense of the kind of intimacy characteristic of love. In part the trouble is that such views of love are generally reductive: in general, robust concern views understand love to be constituted out of a certain concern for your beloved as well as its causes and effects, each of which is supposed to be conceptually prior to the love itself and each of which is typically conceptually independent of all the rest.¹⁵ Yet although it is undeniable that love *involves* concern for the beloved for her sake, feelings of affection, a commitment to her well-being, effects on the lover's emotional state, the potential to transform the lover's identity, bonds of trust, etc., the kind of concern, affection, commitment, trust, etc. that are definitive of love differ from other kinds precisely because they are a part of the attitude of love. Thus, the concern you have for victims of distant famines, the affection you feel for your pet, the commitment you have to your sick, elderly neighbor, the trust you have in a politician: all of these differ significantly from the concern, commitment, trust, and affection characteristic of love in ways that seemingly cannot be articulated except by appealing to their role in love. Moreover, any reductive account of love owes us an explanation of why all these individual and independent components come packaged together in such a way as to constitute love as a distinctive kind of attitude. Yet if these various components are each intelligible as independent of the rest, it becomes hard to see what this package could be, and so we are left wondering why love itself is the important attitude we think it is.

These problems with reductive accounts of love point to a further, deeper trouble that arises for robust concern accounts generally: a trouble concerning intimacy. Part of what is behind the intuition, embraced by union accounts, that identification is important to understanding love is the thought that what differentiates my loving concern for another person from merely compassionate, non-loving concern is that in loving him I must take an interest not just in his well being but also in his identity itself, and the kind of interest I take in his identity must itself be deeply personal. Thus, we might say, in loving someone I must "take his identity to heart" so that I am concerned with it not merely in the sense that I might be concerned with things or projects or strangers; rather, the intimacy, the deeply personal nature of this concern ought to be understood in a way

¹⁵Indeed, typically little attempt is made to provide accounts of these components since, it is assumed, whatever the correct account is—something we can investigate irrespective of love—can simply be plugged into the account of love.

that is somehow analogous to my concern for my own identity—or, for that matter, to his concern for his own identity. This is to “identify” with him in a distinctively intimate, deeply personal way, and it is such *intimate identification* that seems to distinguish love proper from other, less intimate forms of concern such as compassion.¹⁶ Of course this notion of “intimate identification” is so far only a gesture in the direction of an intuition of what is needed for a satisfying account of love; my aim in this paper is in part to spell out this intuition in an explicit account of love. Nonetheless, the intuition even thus vaguely expressed does reveal that robust concern accounts, in recoiling from the excesses of union accounts by appealing to a rather generic notion of the concern we might have for another for her sake, fail to make sense of that concern as distinctly personal and so as distinct in kind from non-intimate forms of concern for persons.

Indeed, we can now begin to see that both the union and the robust concern accounts make the same underlying mistake, which prevents them from providing adequate accounts of the intimacy of love. Union accounts, in trying to make sense of something like what I have called “intimate

¹⁶It might seem that David Velleman denies this intuition about intimate identification (J. David Velleman, “Love as a Moral Emotion,” *Ethics* 109 (1999), pp. 338–74). For this looks like the sort of “conative analysis” of love, understanding it in terms of certain motives to act on behalf of the beloved, that he thinks we should reject insofar as it implies that the beloved is instrumental to the aim of these motives (354). Rather, he argues, love is a special kind of awareness of the dignity of a particular person that differs from (Kantian) respect insofar as love involves an appreciation of his irreplaceable expression of his personhood in a way that in fact lowers the lover’s emotional defenses (365). Although Velleman is right to think that a conative account on its own is inadequate, it should be clear that the sort of concern involved in intimate identification need not be understood as an exclusively conative attitude (as union and robust concern accounts tend to do). As will be argued, insofar as love is a response to the value (or “import”) of a particular person as such, that responsiveness itself must simultaneously be both an attentiveness to his well-being and a motive to act on his behalf; hence, we should not, as Velleman does, construe the “cognitive,” appraising elements of love as separable from its “conative,” motivating elements. Moreover, to make sense of the *personal* nature of love, we ought to understand the import to which love responds to be not merely the beloved’s dignity, a property he shares with all persons, but rather an import he has *to the lover*. For whom we love is not simply a matter of the contingent fit between his expressions of his personhood and our receptivity to it, as Velleman thinks; it is rather a matter that alters our sense of who we are as persons, of what is worth devoting ourselves to, and so is potentially subject to the exercise of our autonomy: it must be intelligible that we have some control over the special value our beloveds have to us, even while we can justify our love by appeal to that value. However, these issues go beyond the scope of this paper, and I can only register my disagreements here (though see note 52). I have discussed the background issues of autonomy and justification more fully in Bennett W. Helm, *Emotional Reason: Deliberation, Motivation, and the Nature of Value*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

identification," appeal to a conception of intimacy in which your concern for the identity of your beloved is not merely *analogous* to your concern for your own identity; it is a *part* of it, so that you make your beloved's cares and concerns, interests and values, become a part of your identity. Such a conception is *egocentric* insofar as the intimacy of concern is intelligible only in virtue of this connection of the object of your concern to your own identity: your concern for yourself and your own identity is thus that in terms of which we are to understand any intimate or distinctively personal concern for others. It is this egocentrism that leads union accounts to understand intimate identification in terms of the blurring of the distinction between my interests and my beloved's, so that love ultimately is understood to involve the appropriation of my beloved's interests. Proponents of robust concern accounts, correctly seeing that love cannot be construed egocentrically in this way, nonetheless retain the egocentric construal of intimacy. This leads them to reject the idea of intimate identification as central to love, and they consequently fail to understand love as distinct from compassionate concern.

The choice between union and robust concern accounts, between an understanding of intimate identification as breaking down the boundaries between persons and the rejection of intimate identification as central to love, is a false one, foisted on us by the unnecessary egocentric conception of such intimacy. The solution is to reject that egocentric conception of intimacy. As suggested above, we should come to understand what is distinctively personal about love in terms of a distinctive kind of concern for the identity of another as a person, a concern that is same in kind as the concern you have for your own identity but without presupposing that this self-concern is conceptually prior. The task, of course, is to articulate how it is possible to provide an account of non-egocentric yet nonetheless genuinely intimate concern for others.

This strategy may seem similar to that advocated by Jennifer Whiting in her accounts of friendship and personal identity.¹⁷ According to Whiting, we ought to understand our concern for our future selves as essentially the same in kind as our concern for our present friends. David Brink adopts an egocentric construal of Whiting's (or, more generally, an Aristotelian) account of concern, arguing that our personal concern for others must be understood in terms of the conceptually prior prudential concern for our

¹⁷Jennifer E. Whiting, "Friends and Future Selves," *Philosophical Review* 95.4 (1986), pp. 547–580; Jennifer E. Whiting, "Impersonal Friends," *Monist* 74 (1991), pp. 3–29.

selves.¹⁸ Whiting, however, explicitly rejects this egocentric construal of her view, arguing that we cannot give conceptual priority to either self-concern or other-concern, but must rather understand each of these in terms of the concern for persons (whether myself or someone else) as having a certain sort of character; such concern or affection, Whiting claims, is therefore “impersonal” and “disinterested.”¹⁹ As she says, this “involves rejecting the importance traditionally attached to the distinction between self and other.”²⁰

Although I sympathize with Whiting’s attempt to overcome an excessive emphasis on individualism, she recoils from egocentrism too far in turning to an impersonal account of love and friendship. As Brink has subsequently argued, such impersonal accounts “assign only *extrinsic* significance to special concern; . . . by contrast, common sense attaches *intrinsic* significance to special relationships:” the value we find in love and friendship cannot be appreciated apart from their essentially intimate, personal nature.²¹ Yet we should also to reject Brink’s egocentric construal of that intrinsic significance. The aim, therefore, is to find a middle path by providing an account of a distinctively personal mode of concern that we have for others that does not fall into the egocentric trap of being conceptually posterior to our prudential concern for ourselves.²²

In what follows §2 will present a non-reductive account of what it is to care about something in terms of a distinctive pattern of emotions. (The account is non-reductive insofar as these emotions themselves are not intelligible except in terms of that caring.) Then, through a criticism of standard accounts of the emotions of pride and shame in §3—emotions that

¹⁸Brink, “Rational Egoism, Self, and Others.”

¹⁹Whiting, “Impersonal Friends.”

²⁰Whiting, “Impersonal Friends,” p. 6.

²¹David O. Brink, “Eudaimonism, Love and Friendship, and Political Community,” *Social Philosophy & Policy* 16 (1999), pp. 252–289, p. 269.

²²Whiting and Brink formulate their dispute largely in terms of worries about the nature of the justification of love and friendship. Brink’s criticism is that Whiting, given her impersonal model of friendship, cannot explain why we are not justified in “trading up” from our current friend or beloved to someone else who is (potentially) more virtuous (Brink, “Eudaimonism, Love and Friendship, and Political Community,” pp. 268–269). On this issue, the solution is to provide an account of the justification of love and friendship as potentially personal and idiosyncratic, depending in part on the particular history of the individual (thereby making intelligible that what gets justified is one’s commitment to this particular person), and yet as something about which the individual can go wrong (thereby making intelligible how rational norms are in play). I have provided such an account as applied to personal values in Helm, *Emotional Reason*; for a few details, see note 41. I cannot, however, discuss the application of this account to love and friendship here.

are central to our understanding of love—this account will be extended to make sense first of self-love (in §4) and then of love of others (in §5). The claim will be that pride and shame are ‘person-focused emotions’ and that love, whether of oneself or others, is to be understood as a distinctive kind of caring that emerges with patterns of such person-focused emotions. In this way the egocentrism presupposed by standard accounts of love can be avoided by understanding self-love and love of others each to be grounded in a capacity for person-focused emotions, with neither conceptually prior to the other.

2 Import and the Emotions

Love is a form of caring. What is it to *care* about something?—In other words, what is it for something to have *import* to you? Intuitively, at least part of what it is for something to have import to you is for it to be worthy of your attention and action.²³ That something is *worthy of attention* means not merely that it is permissible or a good thing to attend to it; rather, it means that, other things being equal, attending to it is required on pain of giving up or at least undermining the idea that it has import to you. After all, it is hard (though, perhaps, not impossible) to credit someone with caring about, say, having a clean house even though he never or rarely notices when it gets dirty. This is not to deny that someone who genuinely cares may in some cases be distracted by other things that are more important and so occasionally not notice that it is getting dirty. What is required, however, is a consistent pattern of attending to the relevant object: in short, a kind of *vigilance* for what happens or might well happen to it. Similarly, that something is *worthy of action* means that, other things being equal, acting on its behalf is required if it is to be intelligible as having import to you: to care about a clean house requires not only vigilance for cleanliness but also a *preparedness* to act so as to maintain it.

The relevant modes of vigilance and preparedness necessary for understanding import are primarily emotional, desiderative, and judgmental (though for the sake of simplicity the focus here will be on the emotions).

²³Note the relativism explicit in this formulation: import is, at least in the first instance, relative to an agent. However, this does not mean that whatever the agent thinks has import does in fact have that import for him; nor does it mean that whatever the agent in fact attends to and acts on behalf of has that import. The point of the notion of something’s being *worthy of attention and action* (to an agent) is that there are normative standards in play here, such that the agent can get it right or wrong. This gets cashed out a bit more fully in the text below; for a fuller treatment of these issues, see Helm, *Emotional Reason*.

I shall claim, without much argument, that we can understand the sense in which objects of import are *worthy* of attention and action in terms of the rational interconnections among these modes.²⁴ To do so, it is first necessary to establish some vocabulary.

Emotions, of course, have several distinct objects. Most obvious is the emotion's *target*: that at which the emotion is directed. Next is the emotion's *formal object*: the kind of evaluation of the target that is distinctive of the emotion type at issue. Thus, when I am afraid of the dog, the dog is the target, and the formal object is, roughly, dangerousness; by contrast, when I am angry at you, you are the target, and the formal object is, roughly, offensiveness, for my anger evaluates you as offensive. A third object of emotions, one that is often overlooked, is their '*focus*': the background object having import to the subject, whose relation to the target makes intelligible the evaluation implicit in the emotion. For example, what makes intelligible my evaluation of you as offensive is that you have just interrupted my talk, which is something that has import to me; thus, my talk is the focus of my anger.

This notion of an emotion's focus makes intelligible the rational interconnections among emotions. For example, other things being equal, there would be something rationally odd about my getting angry at you for interrupting my talk without my also feeling pleased if my talk goes well, fearful or worried if I suspect it might not, etc. That is, (other things being equal) I can be accused of a kind of inconsistency for being afraid because I suspect it might go badly but subsequently being pleased when it does go badly or even subsequently failing to be relieved when things turn out all right. In this way, these emotions are rationally interconnected in a way that my anger at you for interrupting my talk and my anger at the kid who just broke my window are not.

What underlies these rational interconnections is that to experience an emotion is to be committed to the import of its focus: it is my commitment to the import of my talk, implicit in my anger at you, that rationally calls for a range of other emotions with this focus when circumstances are appropriate. Moreover, such commitments are fundamental to understanding the constitution of import. Of course, to exhibit such a commitment to import on a single occasion does not on its own make something have import to you. However, to exhibit a *pattern* of such commitments to the import of a common focus just is to display the kind of vigilance and preparedness to act necessary for something's having import to you. Given the way in

²⁴For detailed arguments, see Helm, *Emotional Reason*.

which this pattern is rationally structured, it constitutes its focus as *worthy* of attention and action, precisely because a failure to attend and act would then be a rational failure. This is what it means for that focus to have import to you: to have *import* is to be the focus of such a rational pattern of emotions.²⁵

Of course, things have import to us—we care about them—under particular descriptions. Consider, for example, my caring about my favorite water pitcher. On the one hand, I might understand it simply to be a functional item, a tool I care about because it enables me to get the job done particularly well. Thus, it might be just the right size, have a spout that pours well, be well balanced around the handle, etc., so that I prize it because of its usefulness: I care about it as a tool. In understanding the pitcher in this way, I delimit a conception of its well-being with which I am concerned and to which my emotions and desires ought to be responsive. So, as you carelessly swing the pitcher around I might be afraid that you will bang it on the counter top and damage the spout, for this is central to its well-being as the tool it is and as that in virtue of which I care about it; however, I may be wholly unconcerned if you scratch the finish, for in understanding it merely as a tool, I do not care about its appearance, so long as this does not affect its integrity as the tool it is.²⁶ On the other hand, I might in caring about the pitcher understand it to be simply a work of art. Thus, its proportions, its color, the design etched into it, etc. all might make it an item of beauty, and I care about it as such. In this case, its appearance is everything. So, whether or not its handle is beginning to loosen, or whether or not it has developed a leak, may be irrelevant to me so long as its appearance is unaffected. Consequently, a person might care about the same object in different ways, or in only one of these ways, depending on her understanding of the kind of object it is. Caring is always caring about something *as* something. (This point will become important later.)

It should not be presupposed that the relevant understanding of the focus of your care must be explicitly articulated in judgment (though it may

²⁵Again, for detailed arguments for these claims, see Helm, *Emotional Reason*, especially Chapters 2–3.

²⁶This is not to say that I care merely about having a thing—anything—with certain of its properties: that I care merely about having *a* good pitcher, or that I care about having a good pitcher merely as instrumental to my end of serving drinks. Rather, I might care about this particular thing itself, as is revealed in the fact that it is not fungible: not just any object with these properties will likewise be an object of my concern, as this is revealed in the way in which the pattern of emotions and desires projects into the relevant counterfactual or future cases.

be). Rather, such an understanding may be implicit in the existing rational structure of emotions and desires constitutive of your caring about it. Thus, it may be that I come to discover that I care about the water pitcher merely as a tool only because I am unconcerned by its becoming tarnished or scratched or dented. Indeed, such a discovery may even force me to revise my explicit judgments about how I care about it.²⁷ Consequently, such an implicit understanding is not one the subject needs to have explicitly articulated, nor need she be able to articulate it clearly when asked. At issue is not a discursive understanding, but a practical one, something like the way in which ordinary people understand what numbers are in being able to make use of arithmetic in their everyday lives: such an understanding is revealed in the way they generally conform their responses in particular circumstances to certain norms of rationality as when, for example, giving correct change or correcting mistakes when they are called to one's attention. Likewise, an implicit understanding of a pitcher as a tool is revealed in the way in which a subject generally conforms his emotions and desires to a certain rational pattern constitutive of caring about it as such.

3 Rejecting Standard Accounts of Pride and Shame

The kind of caring or import just discussed is not the sort characteristic of the concern for others that is directly relevant to love; after all, animals like dogs and cats exhibit the relevant patterns of emotions constitutive of their caring about things,²⁸ and yet they are not capable of the kind of intimate and deeply interpersonal evaluative attitude that love is. What more is needed for genuine love? As will ultimately be argued, love is to be understood in terms of rational patterns of "person-focused emotions"; these are emotions like pride and shame that involve a close, personal connection with their targets and focuses. However, this understanding of love in terms of emotions like pride and shame is blocked by standard accounts of these emotions. These standard accounts will be criticized in this section, and an alternative account of these as person-focused emotions

²⁷For more details on the rational interconnections among emotions, desires, and judgments and the ways in which our emotional feelings of import can correct our evaluative judgments, see Bennett W. Helm, "Emotional Reason: How to Deliberate about Value," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 37.1 (2000), pp. 1–22; and Helm, *Emotional Reason*, especially Chapter 5.

²⁸Indeed, I have argued that having such a capacity for caring is necessary for genuine agency; see Bennett W. Helm, "The Significance of Emotions," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 31.4 (1994), pp. 319–31.

will be presented in §4 in the context of an account of self-love and our identities as persons.

Standard accounts of pride and shame understand these emotions to be *reflexive* in that they are essentially evaluations of oneself.²⁹ Thus, consider three such accounts: those of Arnold Isenberg, Donald Davidson, and Gabriele Taylor.³⁰ According to Isenberg, pride is to be understood as having three parts: “there is (1) a quality which (2) is approved (or considered desirable) and (3) is judged to belong to oneself.”³¹ Moreover, Isenberg claims,

The analysis of shame runs parallel to the analysis of pride. Shame is the feeling that comes with consciousness of [one’s own] faults, weaknesses, disadvantages—that is, of qualities deemed undesirable. . . . This reflexive character of shame must be reemphasized.³²

Similarly, Davidson claims that

the basic structure of pride and its etiology . . . is clear: the cause consists, first, of a belief concerning oneself, that one has a certain trait, and, second, of an attitude of approbation or esteem for anyone who has the trait. Together these result in self-approval or self-esteem—what is normally called pride.³³

Finally, Taylor claims that pride consists in a belief that your own worth has been increased, a belief explained by your further belief that you stand “in the relation of belonging to some object” that you think desirable.³⁴ Similarly, Taylor understands shame to be constituted by a “self-directed adverse judgment . . . : she [i.e., the subject] feels herself degraded, not the sort of person she believed, assumed, or hoped she was or anyway should

²⁹This is true of my own earlier account of pride, shame, and related emotions. For details, see Helm, *Emotional Reason*, especially §4.1.

³⁰It is no accident that these standard accounts are all inspired by Hume’s account of pride (David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. by P. H. Nidditch, 2nd ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978). To avoid controversy in the interpretation of Hume, however, the focus here will be on these contemporary accounts.

³¹Arnold Isenberg, “Natural Pride and Natural Shame,” in *Aesthetics and the Theory of Criticism: Selected Essays*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973, pp. 216–44, p. 219.

³²Isenberg, “Natural Pride and Natural Shame,” p. 227.

³³Donald Davidson, “Hume’s Cognitive Theory of Pride,” in *Essays on Actions and Events*, New York, NY: Clarendon Press, 1980, pp. 277–90, p. 284.

³⁴Gabriele Taylor, *Pride, Shame, and Guilt: Emotions of Self-Assessment*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 41.

be.”³⁵ However, to understand pride and shame as essentially reflexive is a fundamental mistake.

The point of the idea of reflexivity in these accounts is to capture the idea that pride and shame involve a notion of identification, a sense of how something bears on the kind of person worth one’s being—on one’s *identity* as this particular person.³⁶ Thus, in being proud of completing a research project, I am revealing the way in which that research is a part of my identity.³⁷ In this way, pride and shame involve a kind of “depth” that is not shared by emotions such as being pleased or displeased with something. Thus, I may be displeased with or even embarrassed by my most recent haircut, but not ashamed of it (at least not without some special story), for my response to my haircut does not have the intuitive “depth” that pride and shame do. (Although we do say things like, “my young daughter is proud of being able to use the potty,” this use of ‘proud’ picks out a different emotion—perhaps that of being pleased—and for the same reason: her positive appraisal of going to the potty does not have the kind of “depth” that pride does.)³⁸ Indeed, it is partly because of the way in which pride and shame essentially involve a sense that one’s identity as a person is at stake that, properly speaking, we ought not attribute these emotions to mere animals.³⁹

Nonetheless, the appeal to reflexivity in providing accounts of pride and shame fails, even when bolstered with an explicit account of one’s identity. For to understand pride and shame as essentially reflexive prohibits our

³⁵Taylor, *Pride, Shame, and Guilt*, p. 64.

³⁶This notion of a person’s identity will be clarified in my positive account in §4, below.

³⁷This claim is too quick: just because something is in some sense an object of your pride does not mean that it is a part of your identity. Nonetheless, there does seem to be some essential connection between certain kinds of objects of pride and one’s identity, a connection that will be spelled out below (in §4) in terms of the notion of a subfocus of pride.

³⁸Notice that Davidson’s account really does not address this worry in a satisfying way: merely to appeal to my possessing a praiseworthy property (such as having the ability to use the potty) is not enough to ground pride in the sense discussed here. Isenberg perhaps does somewhat better in insisting that one judge the relevant praiseworthy property to “belong” to oneself (to one’s identity?); Taylor does better still in tying the reflexivity of pride, and the idea of “belongingness,” explicitly to a Frankfurtian notion of identification: a self-conscious endorsement in judgment, arrived at through a process of deliberation, of the desire that something belong to one.

³⁹Of course, we do speak of a “proud horse” or say that the cat is “proud” of having caught the bird. In the former case, however, ‘proud’ is used not to refer to an emotion of the horse but rather to a characteristic manner or bearing the horse exhibits; in the latter case, the cat is better described as being pleased at its success rather than as proud.

making sense of an interesting and important class of cases in which we are proud or ashamed of other people. In being proud of a colleague for receiving a prestigious fellowship, I need not evaluate myself positively, as a reflexive account of pride would require; rather, I may evaluate *her*. Thus, I may not automatically feel better about myself as a part of being proud of her; there need be no positive trait that I have now come to possess because of her; there need be no self-approval or increase in self-esteem; and there need be no self-directed positive judgment. The same can be true of cases in which we feel ashamed of someone else: again, such shame can amount to a kind of evaluation of *him*, not of myself. To deny that emotions like pride and shame are essentially reflexive is therefore to reject the idea that the concern involved in pride and shame is essentially derived from the contribution made by the object of that concern to one's own well-being: a kind of egocentrism implicit in standard accounts of pride and shame akin to the egocentrism implicit in standard accounts of love. Nonetheless, these feelings of pride and shame targeted at someone else must be understood as involving some relevant notion of identification: pride and shame, unlike esteem and contempt, presuppose a "deep," interpersonal connection to the person they evaluate; indeed, the "depth" at issue must be analogous to that at issue in reflexive pride and shame, or 'pride' and 'shame' would not be homonymous across these cases.⁴⁰

How, then, are we to make sense of the notion of "depth" at issue in pride and shame, if not simply in terms of reflexivity? The answer is to understand pride and shame to be person-focused emotions in that they are always focused on, and so commit one to the import of, particular persons as such. Clarifying this is part of my task in §4.

4 Values, Identity, and Person-Focused Emotions

Recall my earlier claim that a thing has import to us under a particular (possibly implicit) description, a description which determines how its well-being is to be understood and so what sort of responsiveness—what sort of vigilance and preparedness to act—is demanded from the subject by that import. Because what constitutes the well-being of a person is so complicated and interesting, the import of a person as such demands a special and interesting kind of responsiveness—indeed a responsiveness

⁴⁰Of course, it is possible to feel reflexive pride or shame that target others. The differences between the reflexive and non-reflexive cases and the corresponding notions of identification will be discussed in §5.

that essentially includes the emotions of pride and shame. This requires explanation.

To be a person 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. To care about yourself in this way is to put yourself at stake in your engagement with particular things, projects, ends, etc.—things that you thereby *value*, as I shall use the term. This is, in effect, to define the kind of life it is worth your living and so your *identity* as this particular person.⁴¹ Yet to be a person is not merely to have a capacity to evaluate yourself in this way; it is also to be *autonomous*: to have the capacity to be responsible, both for these evaluations and therefore for your identity, in virtue of the interconnected capacities to deliberate about what kind of person you shall be and to exercise a form of control over your cares and values so as actually to acquire this identity. (Of course, we persons need not actually take responsibility for ourselves in this way; we need only have the capacity to do so.)⁴²

The well-being of a particular person as such, therefore, is not merely a matter of her physical and psychological health; rather, it crucially depends on her identity: on whether she has upheld the values constitutive of her identity and consequently on whether she has succeeded or failed to live the kind of life worth living for her.⁴³ A commitment to the import of a

⁴¹It should be clear that value, as here understood, is a kind of import, and as such it is relative to the agent, albeit in a way that allows for the possibility that the agent can, in a sense, get it wrong. (See note 23.) In the case of mere caring, the agent can get import wrong by making particular evaluations, whether explicitly in judgment or implicitly in feeling an emotion, that do not fit into the broader rational pattern constituting that import; such standards of correctness are, therefore, relative to what the agent now cares about. Values, on the other hand, have a more complete kind of objectivity in that a person can value things that are not really valuable to her: merely to value something, let alone merely to think something is valuable to you, is not enough for it to be such that you *ought* to value it, and so it may take a process of deliberation to *discover* what really is valuable to you.

⁴²This idea that we can control what is valuable for us and so control our identities may seem contrary to the idea, expressed in note 41, that what is valuable to us is an object of discovery. I have presented an account of how it is possible simultaneously to discover what is valuable in life and autonomously to create that value in Helm, “Emotional Reason” and in more detail in Helm, *Emotional Reason*. Moreover, this understanding of values implies that your identity is not defined by the kind of person you merely *think* you ought to be (since you can be wrong about that), nor is it defined by the values you in fact have (since your identity is here understood as a normative standard in terms of which you can evaluate how your life is going).

⁴³This is not to imply that what we merely care about (rather than value) is irrelevant to our well-beings. Clearly, for example, caring about eating delicious food and so deriving pleasure from that activity can be a part of what we find worthwhile and so a part of our

particular person as such—and not merely as *a* person but as *this* person, as having this particular identity—is therefore a commitment to her living this kind of life, a commitment in which one attends to and acts on her behalf as she succeeds or fails in this regard. *Person-focused emotions* just are emotions that, because they take particular persons as such as their focuses, involve precisely such a commitment.⁴⁴

Given this, my claim is that pride and shame are essentially person-focused emotions. Thus, to be proud of someone is to feel her to be ennobled for notably upholding her values, and to be ashamed of her is to feel her to be degraded for trampling on her values; indeed, these are, roughly, the formal objects of these emotions. Understanding pride and shame this way has two major benefits. First, it enables us to acknowledge the complex kinds of rational interconnection among these emotions so as to reveal the importance these emotions have in constituting our identities as persons; second, it enables us to make sense of love as an intimate evaluative attitude in a way that resolves the problems (noted above) with standard conceptions of love grounded in egocentric construals of intimacy. These rational interconnections will be discussed in the remainder of this section (focusing, for simplicity, on cases in which these person-focused emotions are reflexive) and love will be discussed in §5, when the account will be broadened to include non-reflexive cases.

It was claimed that pride and shame concern whether a person has succeeded or failed to uphold some particular value. For example, upon receiving tenure I might be proud of myself for my accomplishments as a professor. Here, in order to make sense of this as a case of pride, we must presuppose that I value being a professor—that my fulfilling well the roles of teacher and researcher is a part of the kind of life worth my living. Moreover, such pride also commits me to being ashamed of myself for failures in this aspect of my life, such as when I fail to charge with plagiarism the star quarterback out of fear of reprisals by supporters of the athletics department.⁴⁵ To be proud of receiving tenure and yet fail to be

well-being, even if we do not define the worthiness of our lives in terms of it. Precisely what the relationship is between our cares and values in their contributions to our well-beings is something that depends on an account of *priorities*, which I have undertaken in Helm, *Emotional Reason*, §4.3 and §7.4.

⁴⁴As indicated in note 43, our well-being as persons depends as well on what we care about but do not value. Consequently, to be committed to the import of a person as such is to be committed as well to the import of the focuses of her cares; I have discussed how this is possible in Bennett W. Helm, “Action for the Sake of . . . : Caring and the Rationality of (Social) Action,” *Analyse & Kritik* 24.2 (2002), pp. 189–208.

⁴⁵Of course, whether or not this is a failure depends on one’s understanding of what

ashamed of letting football stars cheat would be rationally odd, precisely because in feeling such pride I am rationally committing myself to the value being a good professor has to me, a commitment that, other things being equal, would go unfulfilled without my also feeling such shame. Given the rational interconnections among these emotions, the failure to feel shame in this case, other things being equal, begins to undermine the commitment to import implicit in my pride, and the failure in general to feel other emotions concerning my being a good professor undermines the idea that this really has import to me, that I really value this.

Of course, my pride and shame here are also rationally connected to other person-focused emotions. Thus, as I read the star quarterback's paper and find mounting evidence of plagiarism, I may begin to realize the implications and so come to feel uneasy, knowing what I should do, but uncertain about whether I can muster the courage to do it. This is, we might say, a kind of *anxiety*: a kind of pain in anticipation of a possible failure to uphold one's values (of being a good professor, say), evaluating one's own motives (such as the fear of reprisal) as a threat to these values. Moreover, in feeling such anxiety I am committing myself to feeling the relevant other person-focused emotions as the situation unfolds. Thus, if I end up giving in to my fears, I ought to feel shame, whereas if I overcome my fear and stand my ground in the face of intense pressure from the athletic department, my anxiety ought to become pride (if my conduct here is laudatory) or, perhaps, a kind of *self-directed relief* (if I merely narrowly or accidentally avoid acting shamefully). On the other hand, I might feel not anxiety in these circumstances, but a kind of *self-assurance*: a kind of pleasure in anticipation of my ability to uphold my values in the face of such a test.

In short, these person-focused emotions are rationally interconnected because they involve a shared commitment to the value that being a good professor has as a part of a more general commitment to my identity as this person, to the kind of life worth my living. Consequently, we might say, being a good professor serves as a kind of *subfocus* of these emotions, whose focus is ultimately myself.

Why bother with this notion of a subfocus as distinct from that of a focus? Why not just understand pride and shame to be focused on the things valued rather than insisting that they are focused on the person

it is to be a good professor, an understanding that must be at least implicit in the pattern of one's emotions with this common focus. After all, one might think (contrary to what my example presupposes) that being a good professor requires giving special treatment to football stars.

as such, and so why not do away with the notion of distinctively person-focused emotions? The short and rather unenlightening answer is that this understanding of pride and shame is required by their formal objects: the evaluation implicit in pride or shame of the target as ennobled or degraded is intelligible only in light of a commitment to its import as a person—that is, only because these emotions are focused on particular persons as such. The trouble with this answer, of course, is that it presupposes that these emotions are person-focused; this just begs the question: why think these emotions are person-focused emotions after all? The long and more informative answer concerns further rational interconnections among these emotions, interconnections that make intelligible the sense in which particular values are each parts of a single identity.

Assume that I value both being a good father and being a good professor. In particular cases, these two values might motivate contrary actions. Thus, when my daughter breaks her leg and needs to be taken to the hospital just as my class is about to begin, I decide that, although teaching classes is a part of being a good professor, in this case my priorities lie with my daughter. Should I then feel ashamed for failing to uphold my value of being a good professor? Of course not: taking care of my daughter in these circumstances just is living as I ought—just is upholding my identity as this person, who has multiple and sometimes conflicting values—and shame would be warranted only if I fail to do so. Consequently, whether or not any particular action (or omission) amounts to notably upholding or trampling on particular values, and so whether or not such an action is an appropriate target of pride or shame, depends in part on the place it has within a broader rational structure of values constitutive of one's identity. It is in this sense that particular values are each parts of one's identity as this person.

This means that the implicit (albeit common) assumption that particular values are largely independent of one another is false:⁴⁶ a particular value is not intelligible as *my* value unless it already has a place within this broader rational structure constitutive of my identity. Thus, we cannot understand the rational interconnections among one's values—one's '*priorities*,' as we might call them—to be an optional extra slapped on top of one's values

⁴⁶This is a structural feature of Frankfurtian accounts of values now in vogue; see, for example, Harry G. Frankfurt, *The Importance of What We Care About: Philosophical Essays*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988; Harry G. Frankfurt, *Necessity, Volition, and Love*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. For an alternative, see Bennett W. Helm, "Freedom of the Heart," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 77.2 (1996), pp. 71–87; Helm, *Emotional Reason*.

after the fact. Rather, such priorities are integral to one's conception of one's identity as this particular person, and the commitments one undertakes to particular values must already understand them to be a part of that identity. These commitments therefore presuppose a broader commitment to the import of the person as such. Indeed, in being susceptible to these person-focused emotions, one must be responsive to the overall structure of one's values constitutive of one's identity, lest one feel unwarranted shame at such things as canceling class in the face of a family emergency.

This understanding of the emotions constitutive of one's own values as person-focused therefore makes intelligible not merely the rational interconnections these emotions have with each other, but also thereby the identity of particular persons as such. The overall pattern of such emotions, by committing one to the import of a certain kind of life implicitly delineated within this pattern, constitutes one's identity as this particular person, and the resulting attitude towards oneself we might characterize, for reasons to be made clear in §5, as *self-love*.

5 Love and Identification

The cases of pride, shame, etc. discussed so far have been *reflexive*, and it has been argued that even if we only examine such cases we have good reason to understand these emotions to be person-focused in light of the rational interconnections constitutive of what I have called "self-love." Further reasons for understanding these emotions to be person-focused arise when we consider a particular class of examples in which we are proud, ashamed, etc. of other people. For it is such non-reflexive person-focused emotions that enable us to make sense of the sort of intimate identification that is central to an account of love.

When I am proud or ashamed of someone else, she is the "object" of my pride or shame (leaving it ambiguous for the moment what sort of object this is). There are at least two kinds of case in which others can be the object of emotions like pride and shame, cases which differ in the sense in which the subject identifies with that person.

Consider first *reflexive* pride and shame that *target* others. For example, I may be proud of the U. S. soccer team for putting on such a good showing in the World Cup. Such pride is reflexive, for in being proud of them, I come to feel better about myself, in part because I identify with them. Here, the relevant notion of identification should not be construed in the same way as when I am proud of a particular accomplishment—i.e., in terms

of my making them directly a part of my identity as this person; after all, I may never have met any of them or seen them play before. Rather, I identify with them in that I see them as representatives of something else I value; thus, I value being a U. S. citizen and see them as representatives of U. S. citizens generally. Consequently, their good showing reflects well on me because they represent a larger group membership in which I value and so with which I identify in this (different) sense. My pride in them is therefore reflexive—focused on myself—with my citizenship in the U. S. as its subfocus.⁴⁷

By contrast, my pride in my wife for winning a bagpipe competition is *non-reflexive*. For I do not merely see her as a representative of something I value, I do not value merely my association with her, nor do I simply appropriate her interests for my own; rather, in feeling this pride I thereby commit myself to her import as a person. In particular, in being proud of her for this, I commit myself to the place playing bagpipes (among other things) has in the kind of life worth *her* living, and so I commit myself to feeling a broad pattern of other emotions focused on her and subfocused on piping. This means in part that I ought to share her feelings of pride, shame, anxiety, etc. when these are focused on herself.

That I must “*share*” these person-focused emotions with her means not merely that I must have sympathetic echoes of emotions that she antecedently has. Rather, the commitment I undertake to her import as this particular person, and consequently to her values as these define her identity as this person, is a commitment to respond emotionally to that which significantly impacts her well-being positively or negatively. This may mean that I feel, say, anxious on her behalf, even when she does not yet recognize the impending threat to her identity. In effect, for me to share these person-focused emotions with her is for me to share the rational pattern of such emotions with piping as its subfocus. This is for me to *value* piping, albeit not for my sake in that I make this a part of my identity (heaven forbid!) but for her sake, as a part of my commitment to the import she has to me.

To value piping *for her sake* is for this pattern of emotions to be *focused* on my wife and subfocused on piping. Consequently, it is only as contributing to her well-being that her piping is valuable to me, so that I “share” not

⁴⁷Notice that this interpretation of my pride requires that in feeling the pride I thereby commit myself to the value of this subfocus (being a citizen of the U. S.), and it can be confirmed by my exhibiting a broader pattern of such emotions with a common subfocus. Moreover, it requires that I find their—our—prowess in sports (or in soccer in particular) to be part of what is valuable about my membership in this group.

just her person-focused emotions (via sympathy, for example) but also, in this sense, her values. This means that the commitment I thereby undertake to the value of piping is intelligible only against the backdrop of a broader concern for her. Just as my valuing things for my sake presupposes a commitment to the import of myself, so too valuing things for her sake presupposes a commitment to the import of the particular person she is and so to her well-being as this person, insofar as this is defined by a broad rational structure of values and priorities constitutive of her identity.⁴⁸

Yet by whose standards ought I to assess what affects her well-being positively or negatively? That is, whose conception of her identity ought I to use in responding in these ways: mine or hers? And under what circumstances, therefore, ought I to feel the person-focused emotions constitutive of my concern for her? On the one hand, the answer cannot simply be that it is her conception, for I would not be proud of her for upholding values I think are generally shameful. In such a case I would be inadequately sensitive to the value these things intelligibly can have (by my lights), and I would thereby fail in my commitment to her well-being. On the other hand, the relevant conception of her identity cannot simply be mine, for then I would be inadequately sensitive to her identity as this person and, in particular, to the place her autonomy has in defining her identity as such. For example, when I value for her sake something she takes to involve excessive hedonism and so am proud of her for being what by her lights is weak willed, she might well take my pride to be a patronizing insult rather than an expression of my concern for her.

Because in being committed to the import she has as a person I am committed to those very capacities defining her personhood, including her autonomy, I ought in general to defer to her view. This means that I ought, other things being equal, to *respect* her at least in the sense that I refuse to undermine the role she has as an autonomous being in defining her identity and well-being. Moreover, other things being equal, I ought to *trust* her in

⁴⁸It has been suggested by an anonymous referee that we might feel non-reflexive pride of a stranger whose accomplishments we have followed on a reality TV show; however, it seems unlikely that such pride would involve the sort of global commitment to the import of the stranger as the particular person he is, contrary to my claim in the text. Although we might wonder whether the emotion in question should instead be understood to be esteem or admiration, such cases of pride are indeed possible without this global commitment. However, this is an abnormal case, parasitic on the normal case of pride. For, as has been argued, pride in general is a matter of valuing its subfocus for the sake of its focus, and insofar as such pride in a stranger fails to fit into a broader rational structure of other emotions focused on that person and constituting the broader concern it will for that reason be deficient (but no less genuine) as an instance of pride.

the sense that I take her values, and the emotions constitutive of them, as reasons for me to value and feel similarly for her sake. Consequently, were her values to change, other things being equal mine should as well insofar as they are values I undertake for her sake.

There are, of course, cases in which I ought not simply to defer to her. One such case is when my concern is paternalistic and so focused on a child whose autonomy is not fully developed and who therefore needs some guidance in developing his identity as a person. Another such case is when our disagreement concerns what it is mandatory (or impermissible) to value, for in such a case simply to defer to her view would be, according to me, harmful to her well-being and so contrary to my concern for her. Here there is a rational conflict between my sense of what is mandatory (or impermissible) and my trust in her, and such a conflict, like any other rational conflict, demands resolution by, for example, my helping her to see she ought (or ought not) to value this, or her helping me to see that she can justifiably fail to value (or continue to value) this after all—a possibility to which I ought to be open as a part of trusting her.

To have such a concern for another as a person, therefore, is to *identify* with him in a sense that is distinct from that in which we identify with something by valuing it. For in identifying with some project, thing, etc. one values, one is making it be a part of one's sense of the kind of life worth one's living; such a notion of identification, as reflexive, is essentially focused on oneself, and valuing this thing is not thereby intelligible apart from its place within a concern for one's overall identity (see §4).⁴⁹ By contrast, in identifying with another person in the way just outlined, one is not concerned with one's own well-being but rather with *his*. This is to be committed to his identity as this person for his sake (and not for any ulterior motive), and it is thereby to share his values for his sake and so, in this sense, to take his identity to heart. In this way, such a concern for another is distinctively *interpersonal*, and it is precisely such identification, with its "depth" of interpersonal relation, that makes intelligible that the relevant emotions are the person-focused emotions of pride and shame rather than the non-person-focused emotions of esteem and contempt, for example.

The difference in the sort of identification at issue here stems from its being reflexive in the one case and non-reflexive in the other. For, on

⁴⁹Of course, this does not mean that in identifying with particular projects, etc. by valuing them one does so only for one's own sake. Thus, in valuing piping, my wife does so because of the value she finds piping itself to have, and not because it somehow contributes to her well-being in a way that is identifiable apart from this value.

the one hand, when we are non-reflexively concerned with the identity of another person, we are responding to what is often⁵⁰ an already determinate identity of an independently autonomous person, such that our concern must then involve respect and trust; such concern constitutes the import that determinate person has for us. On the other hand, in the reflexive concern for one's own identity, the import constituted by the concern is the value of particular things, projects, activities, etc. as having a place within, and so as defining, one's identity itself; hence, concern for one's own identity is that which constitutes that identity by virtue of the reflexivity, and it is a crucial element in one's own autonomy. Nonetheless, in spite of this difference, such non-reflexive concern for others, in which we take their identities to heart, is the same in kind as this reflexive concern for ourselves: the sense in which each involves taking a person's identity to heart is to be explained by appealing to the same sort of rational pattern of person-focused emotions.

That such reflexive concern for oneself and non-reflexive concern for another are the same in this respect means that we can understand the "depth" of interpersonal concern at issue in such identification with another to be a kind of *intimacy*, and it is precisely this sort of intimate identification that standard accounts of pride and shame miss with their focus on reflexivity and with the consequent egocentrism such reflexivity presupposes (see §3). Moreover, the kind of reflexive concern we have for ourselves is not here understood as conceptually prior to the kind of intimate concern we have for others. For having the capacity to love yourself and so constitute your own identity is a part of an overall capacity to love, which includes a capacity to love and intimately identify with others. That is, to be capable of having this concern for yourself implies that you are also already capable of having such concern for others, insofar as each is grounded in the capacity to feel person-focused emotions, whether focused on oneself or on others. This account of intimacy, therefore, is not egocentric in the way presupposed by standard accounts of love and so my account of intimate concern for others does not involve either the union account's appropriation of the values and interests of another or the robust concern account's recoil from intimacy.

Finally, this sort of intimate identification and concern for another grounds a distinctive kind of affection for him. We must not forget that emotions are not merely commitments to import; they are essentially feelings—*evaluative feelings*. Thus, to feel pride is to be pleased by someone's notably

⁵⁰Of course, as noted above this will not be true of our paternalistic concern for young children, for example; hence the qualification.

upholding his values, and to feel shame is to be pained by someone's notably flouting his values. Indeed, as I have argued elsewhere, such pleasure and pain are not mere phenomenal accompaniments of the emotions, but are themselves identical to the kind of commitment to import that emotions are.⁵¹ This means that the *affection* you feel for someone for whom you have such a concern is the result of the overall pattern of person-focused emotions, both pleasant and painful, that constitutes your concern as intimate identification. Such affection is therefore different in kind from the sort of affection you feel for your pet dog, for example.

To have such a concern for someone, to be committed to his well-being for his sake, to trust and respect him in the sense previously articulated, and to feel such affection for him—all as both intelligible in terms of and constituting one's intimate identification with him—is, I submit, to love him. Thus, to *love* someone is for the beloved to be the focus of a rational pattern of the lover's person-focused emotions.⁵²

The kind of love just described establishes what is essentially a relationship between persons; after all, the emotions constitutive of love are person-focused and so are commitments to the import of particular persons *as such*. On this understanding of love, dogs and infants, insofar as they are not (yet) persons in the technical sense described above (§4), are not proper objects of our love. This is counterintuitive: it does seem appropriate to say that we love our newborn children (if not our dogs), and it might seem that we have reason to reject any account that denies this. However, the distinction between our relationships with such non-persons and our relationships with persons is not merely a matter of degree. It is a distinction in kind: your love for another, by allowing you to take to heart her identity as the person she is, allows for a kind of intimacy in your relationship that is not possible for non-persons, who do not (yet) have such an identity.

⁵¹Bennett W. Helm, "Felt Evaluations: A Theory of Pleasure and Pain," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 39.1 (2002), pp. 13–30.

⁵²As indicated above (note 16) Velleman is right to think that love is a response to the import of a person, but, contra Velleman, we ought to understand that responsiveness to be both an attentiveness to our beloved's well-being and a motive to act on his behalf, so that the "cognitive" and "conative" aspects of this appraisal cannot be separated. My account shows how this is possible (though for more on what I call the "cognitive-conative divide," see Helm, *Emotional Reason*, especially Chapter 2). Moreover, to understand the distinctively personal nature of love, we ought to understand the sort of response to import at issue in love to be a recognition of what it is worth the lover's devoting *himself* to and so to be relative to the individual. Taken together these two points make possible the idea that love can be both justified and subject to our autonomy. I cannot argue for this here, but hints as to how such an argument might go are provided in notes 41–42.

So as not to blur this distinction in kind, 'love' is here restricted to this technical sense, so that it is more precise to say that we care about our dogs and infants, albeit in ways distinct in kind from the ways in which we care about mere things or ends: we care about them as agents or even as potential persons, and we can value our relationships with them and so make these relationships be parts of the kind of lives worth living for each of us. Nonetheless, this is largely a matter of stipulating a linguistic convention, and further analysis is needed of these distinctive modes of caring.⁵³

6 Conclusion

This essay began in part by arguing against reductionist accounts of love: although various attitudes—such as concern, commitment, affection, trust, and respect—are clearly central to love, the concern, affection, etc. at issue in love are distinct in kind from other forms of these attitudes and cannot be understood independently of love itself, as reductionist accounts require. A non-reductionist account of love has now been provided that understands such attitudes to be integral to and not intelligible apart from the kind of attitude that love is. Thus, we can now say, love just is a distinctive kind of affectionate, identificatory commitment to another: the kind of commitment that emerges from a rational pattern of person-focused emotions. Hence the concern, commitment, affection, etc. characteristic of love are intelligible only in terms of their place within what is already intelligible as a loving attitude. Moreover, although love itself is constituted by rational patterns of person-focused emotions, the capacity for these person-focused emotions, with the kind of "depth" or intimacy they essentially have, is itself intelligible as such only insofar as these emotions are normally rationally structured in such a way as to constitute love. Love and person-focused emotions are, therefore, a conceptual package, with neither reducible to the other.

⁵³It is, of course, a substantive thesis that the sense in which we "love" our pets and young children can properly be analyzed in terms of my analysis of what it is to care about something as something. I have addressed this in Helm, "Action for the Sake of . . ." It must also be admitted that our attitudes towards young children, as potential persons, will differ from our attitudes towards pets—from caring about them as agents—precisely because our concern is partly that they develop their own identities as persons. Indeed, we might call such concern a properly paternalistic sort of *love*, so long as we carefully distinguish it from non-paternalistic sorts of love. Thanks to an anonymous referee for help clarifying this latter point.

This essay also began by suggesting that standard accounts of love presuppose an egocentric construal of intimacy that ultimately proves unsatisfactory. Thus, union accounts embrace such intimacy, thereby understanding love in part as a matter of appropriating the beloved's interests; whereas robust concern accounts recoil from intimacy thus understood, thereby failing to make sense of the distinction between the kind of concern essential to love and other, less personal forms of concern. Instead, the account offered here can preserve the idea that intimacy is central to love by understanding our loving concern for others to be the same in kind as the concern we have for ourselves and our own identities, while avoiding an egocentric conception of such intimacy by rejecting the idea that self-concern is conceptually prior to intimate concern for others.

This account has important implications for our understanding of ourselves as individuals. As was argued in §4, to be a person and so to have values defining one's identity as this particular person requires having the capacity for person-focused emotions like pride and shame. Given my account of these emotions and their role in constituting love, this implies that to be a person is to have the capacity to love not only oneself but also others and so to share in their identities as persons in the intimate way described in §5. That is, that very capacity to love ourselves and determine our identities as persons, which is central to our capacity for autonomy, is also the capacity for intimate identification with others in virtue of which we persons are inherently social. This means not only that psychological egocentrism is false, but it also suggests—but does not, of course, show—that our social nature itself is central to our autonomy, and that we should not conceive of our autonomy as a capacity we exercise most fully on our own and apart from others. Rather, our loving relationships with others may itself enhance our autonomy—especially, we might think, as we are developing our capacity for autonomy as young children. As Marilyn Friedman suggests, what I have called “intimate identification”

with someone who is more autonomous than oneself might become the very vehicle by which one learns through emulation and participation to become more autonomous.⁵⁴

This suggestion is well worth considering.

⁵⁴Friedman, “Romantic Love,” p. 176.