



**September 26th, 2024, from 4-7 pm
Lester Pollock Room, FH, 9th Floor**

Colloquium in Legal, Political, and Social Philosophy

**Conducted by
Liam Murphy and Samuel Scheffler**

**Speaker: Sanford Diehl, NYU Philosophy
Paper: Really looking and being seen**



Really looking and being seen

Sanford Diehl (NYU)

Draft – please do not cite or circulate without permission

Abstract: This paper is about how best to understand the Murdochian idea that love is the direct apprehension of another person as a source of value outside oneself. Taking expressions of care as a case study, I argue that the unilateral conception of loving attention which Murdoch and some of her influential defenders employ cannot make sense of phenomena central to interpersonal love. According to the intersubjective alternative I defend, loving attention is based in second-personal thought: thought about another subject that stands to their self-conscious thought as uses of ‘you’ stand to uses of ‘I’. Such a conception better explains why one fully counts as seeing another person, in the sense that constitutes loving attention, only if one thereby puts the beloved in a position to feel seen.

1. Introduction

Many defects of love are defects of attention. Love that is possessive or otherwise self-centered is inattentive to the *objectivity* of the beloved. If you love someone primarily because you want them to fill a hole in your life, there is a sense in which the real object of your attitude is not an actual other person, whose mind, character, and life are independent of your wishes, but what they can do for you. Love that is too impersonal is inattentive to the *particularity* of the beloved. To love someone because they are your type, care for your child to maximize expected utility, or regard your friend with the curiosity of an anthropologist about a case study is to attend primarily to a general category, and only derivatively to the person who falls under it. Even properly directed love can be objectionably impersonal if its focus is too coarse. You can love someone without knowing them well, but if your love does not change as you come to know them better or as they change, it might well be superficial or stagnant.

These attitudes are not just unflattering to their subject or disappointing to their object. Because they are not wholly about the other person, they seem deficient *as love*. Iris Murdoch gives powerful expression to this intuition in her conception of love as an “apprehension of something else, something particular, as existing outside us” (1999, 216). Love, for Murdoch,

is a kind of appreciative contact with an objective particular in which one apprehends it as a source of value outside oneself. Love manifests the normative responsiveness ungrounded in antecedent concerns that is typical of moral motivation, as in acknowledging the overriding force of an obligation, and of aesthetic experience, as in pausing to marvel at a passing bird or allowing particularities of material and process to direct the sculpting of a vase.¹ In Murdoch's words: "Love is the perception of individuals. Love is the extremely difficult realization that something other than oneself is real. Love, and so art and morals, is the discovery of reality" (Murdoch 1999, 215).

The topic of this paper is love for other people, the sort that underlies friendship and romantic and familial relationships. Although I am sympathetic to Murdoch's account of love as attention, I believe that she (along with some of her recent defenders) applies to interpersonal love a conception of attention that neglects what is distinctive about apprehending the reality of a fellow subject, and thereby renders mysterious the value of some of the actions and attitudes that are central to love for other people.² My aim is to defend an intersubjective conception of loving attention, which centrally involves second-personal thought: thought about another subject that stands to their self-conscious thought as uses of 'you' stand to uses of 'I'. This alternative better captures the importance of recognition in interpersonal love, and presents failures of recognition as failures to apprehend the reality of another person.³

2. Two conceptions of loving attention

¹ These examples are from Murdoch 1999, 218 and Murdoch 2001, 82. I am simplifying: in another sense, the object of Murdochean love is the good. See Hopwood 2017 for discussion.

² For other versions of the charge that Murdoch is insufficiently sensitive to the intersubjective character of loving attention see Nussbaum 2012; Darwall 2024, 112-113; Dover forthcoming.

³ The idea that love is essentially second-personal has been defended, above all, by Darwall 2024, expanding the influential framework of Darwall 2006. Axel Honneth has defended a conception of love as a form of recognition in a body of work beginning with Honneth 1995. Like Darwall, I think the intersubjective form of the attitudes in which love consists is essential to their value, in a way that is less central in Honneth's work. But both my understanding of this form and my argument for its importance differ somewhat from Darwall's.

Consider a well-known example from Michael Stocker, which I will call Impersonal Visit, of a Murdochean contrast between concern that is essentially a response to a particular person and concern for a person that is corollary to concern for something else:

[Y]ou are in a hospital, recovering from a long illness. You are very bored and restless and at loose ends when Smith comes in once again. You are now convinced more than ever that he is a fine fellow and a real friend—taking so much time to cheer you up, traveling all the way across town, and so on. You are so effusive with your praise and thanks that he protests that he always tries to do what he thinks is his duty, what he thinks will be best. You at first think he is engaging in a polite form of self-deprecation, relieving the moral burden. But the more you two speak, the more clear it becomes that he was telling the literal truth: that it is not essentially because of you that he came to see you, not because you are friends, but because he thought it his duty, perhaps as a fellow Christian or Communist or whatever, or simply because he knows of no one more in need of cheering up and no one easier to cheer up. (Stocker 1976: 462)

Because of the reason for which Smith visits you in this example, an action which might otherwise have manifested good friendship and given you reason to feel cheered up turns out to do neither.

I understand Smith's mistake in terms of the contents of a certain part of a motivating reason: that which, as G.E.M. Anscombe puts it, "gives a final answer to the series of 'What for?' questions that arise about an action" (Anscombe 2000, 72) by specifying what one takes to be fundamentally valuable or appropriate about it. Let us call such an answer what is *normatively basic* to the reason for which one acts.⁴ To understand what I am skipping a party for, it is not enough to know that I have Covid. Is the point to avoid making others ill, or that I am so exhausted from Covid that I would have a better time at home? If the former, is the health of other guests the end of the story, or is my real worry that infecting them would jeopardize my invitation to future parties? Even if I lack any such further motivation, the prospect of

⁴ I avoid Anscombe's own term, "desirability characterisation," partly for its failure to convey the idea of final rather than derivative importance—"the better to slice tomatoes with" is not an Anscombean desirability characterization of sharpening a knife, since it leaves open what one is slicing tomatoes for—and partly for its potentially misleading emphasis on desire over other responses to the good or appropriate. That said, "desirability characterisation" has the advantage of conveying that what is in question is an aspect of the agent's perspective. To capture this I will speak of what an agent *takes* to be normatively basic.

infecting others with Covid may or may not be normatively basic: although I might be concerned to contain the pandemic, what matters to me might instead be the more general fact that attending the party could make others ill. In the latter case, the relevance of the fact that other guests would contract specifically Covid, not the flu or strep throat (like that of the fact that the gathering is a party, not a conference or concert) lies primarily in how to go about not spreading illness, given the different transmission conditions of different viruses. That I have Covid is not only insufficient to characterize what I take to be normatively basic about skipping the party, but unnecessary.

The motivating reasons described in Impersonal Visit are of two types, neither of which makes the visited party normatively basic. The first type takes as basic a proposition of the form ‘... is *F*’, e.g., that visiting you in the hospital is my duty as a friend, or is the option with the greatest expected utility. To act for such a reason is to manifest concern for, at root, a property rather than a person. The second type takes as basic a proposition of the form ‘Some *a* ...’, e.g., that there is a fellow Christian or communist in need of cheering up. To act for such a reason is to manifest concern for any instance of a certain kind, rather than for the particular person who happens to instantiate it.⁵ The intuitive inadequacy of these reasons suggests that an action is genuinely done out of love for a particular person only if that person is essential to what the agent takes to be normatively basic about it. And a compelling explanation of this observation about the appropriate motivating reasons for acting out of love is a claim about the appropriate normative reasons: that the normative basis of loving concern is not the properties of the beloved or your relationship to them but rather, simply, the beloved themselves. So

⁵ Cannot ‘a friend of mine needs cheering up’ be an unexceptionable reason to act? Following Keller 2013, 87-94: It is an excellent reason to set out for the hospital if you know that some friend of yours is ill, but not which. If you learn *en route* who it is, however, the needs of that particular person should become what you consider normatively basic; otherwise the case resembles Impersonal Visit. It is unobjectionable to be moved by facts about ‘a friend of mine’, under that description, only when it is unobjectionable to be moved by the fact that one has some reason or other to act, rather than by the reason itself—like following advice to stretch after exercising ‘because it is good for you’ without knowing what actual difference it makes.

understood, Impersonal Visit supports a broadly Murdochean account of love as the direct appreciation of another person as a source of reasons.⁶

The difference between action done essentially for the sake of another person and the merely contingent relation of Smith's impersonal reasons to the visited party reflects a difference between singular and general thought.⁷ Thoughts about this knife, made possible by being in perceptual contact with it, are singular in that they are immediately, and therefore essentially, about a certain object. (Compare thoughts about the largest knife in the kitchen, which are in the first place about whatever satisfies that description, and only derivatively about the particular thing that does.) If your belief 'this knife is dull' is derived from the belief 'the largest knife in the kitchen is dull' (suppose you were told so), then its justification depends on the identity premise 'this knife is the largest in the kitchen', which could turn out to be false, just as Smith's friend could turn out not to be a Christian or communist. If, however, your belief that the knife is dull is based in the perceptual link that allows you to think about the knife demonstratively, then it is immune to error through misidentification—you are not in danger of knowing that some knife is dull, but being wrong about which—because it is essential to this belief that one specific thing, the knife, is at once its topic and its justificatory source.⁸

In order for a person likewise to be essentially both topic and source of your reason for acting, your grasp of what is normatively basic to what you are doing must be based in a relation to that person which allows you to think singular thoughts about them. What sort of relation might that be?

Murdoch conceives of the relation between attentive lover and beloved as one of *spectator* to *spectacle*. Adapting a Kantian conception of aesthetic judgment as essentially

⁶ For defenses of roughly this view see Velleman 1999; Keller 2013; Setiya 2014; Marušić 2022, ch. 5; Ebels-Duggan 2023. Another touchstone for these discussions is Williams 1981.

⁷ Kraut 1986, Pettit 1997, Ebels-Duggan 2023, and Setiya 2023 explore the role of singular thought in love.

⁸ Shoemaker (1968) introduced "immunity to error through misidentification" as a mark of one variety of self-knowledge, developing an idea of Wittgenstein's; Evans (1982, §6.6) argues that the phenomenon extends to demonstrative belief. See also Rödl 2007, 5-10.

disinterested, she tends to contrast projection of one's own wants and fears onto the beloved with appreciation of the beloved that is for their sake in virtue of being "selfless" or "detached."⁹ The Oxford English Dictionary distinguishes 'detachment' as in the loosening of attachment—"the action of detaching; unfastening, disconnecting, separation"—from "a standing apart or aloof from objects or circumstances; a state of separation or withdrawal from connection or association with surrounding things." These senses can come apart. A parent might bring themselves to relinquish control over their increasingly independent child, checking an impulse to replicate themselves, without thereby withdrawing from connection or association; indeed, such unfastening might enable a maturer connection. For Murdoch, however, the act of detachment characteristic of love, which she calls "unselfing" (2001, 82), produces a state of standing apart or aloof from which one can really see another person. Just as a spectacle is visible for anyone to see, "the highest love is in some sense impersonal" (74), which is to say that its grounds and character do not depend on the identity of the lover or their relation to the beloved. In loving attention, "[w]e cease to be in order to attend to the existence of something else, a natural object, a person in need" (58); "nothing exists except the things which are seen" (64).

Murdoch's recent champions have inherited her spectatorial conception of loving attention. "If we are paying proper attention," writes David Velleman, "we marvel at the bottomless depth of the self-awareness that is embodied in this particular, concrete human being" (2013, 331). Although this "state of attentive suspension, similar to wonder or amazement or awe.... disarms our emotional defenses" and thereby "makes us vulnerable to the other," it is in marveling, and not in making oneself vulnerable, that one encounters the

⁹ See, e.g., Murdoch 2001, 40, 63-64, 74, 86, 91. I discuss Murdoch (1993, ch.15)'s explicit defense of the metaphor of spectacle in §4. On Murdoch's complex appropriation of Kant's accounts of respect and the sublime, see Merritt 2022.

reality of another person (Velleman 1999, 360-361).¹⁰ Kieran Setiya defends a Murdochian view of love as the apprehension of particular other people in his theory of personal acquaintance, a *sui generis* cognitive relation to someone that underwrites singular thoughts about them, makes it rational to love them, and figures in a distinctive type of moral reasons. We are personally acquainted in Setiya's sense just as fully, and in the same way, with anencephalic humans incapable of registering our presence as with friends and romantic partners. Even when the other is capable of mutual awareness, "[t]he phenomenology of personal acquaintance is not mutual or interactive" (Setiya 2023, 328).

Such remarks place Murdoch, Velleman, and Setiya on one side of a divide in philosophical approaches to knowledge of other minds. It makes sense to think of loving attention to another subject as an impersonal and detached beholding, akin to aesthetic appreciation and acquaintance with individuals lacking a perspective, given a conception of what it is to have knowledge of another mind which ascribes no active part to the person known. An alternative paradigm of knowing another mind is eye contact.¹¹ Fully to apprehend the reality of another subject is, on this intersubjective view, to see them as a 'you', the opposing pole of a relation of mutual awareness of the sort that underlies directed address (as in telling, listening, asking, demanding, inviting, and so on). The relation of communication established and exploited by directed address requires me to think about the other in such a way that they can grasp my thoughts about them only by exercising their capacity for self-conscious thought—by understanding, as they would put it, that 'I am being addressed.' And it requires, reciprocally, that I understand myself to be the object of thoughts of this kind that the other has about me.

¹⁰ Echoing Murdoch's claim that love and aesthetic experience have a common structure, Velleman (2013) proposes that the amazement characteristic of love is an instance of the mathematical sublime as Kant understands it. For a related view, focused on respect rather than love, see Walden 2023. See also Bagnoli 2003 and Merritt 2017.

¹¹ This approach is developed, in different ways, in Cavell 1976b, Darwall 2024, Eilan 2020, and Laing 2021.

Thinking of someone as ‘you’ and understanding oneself to figure likewise in their thoughts are, in one sense, more *direct* ways of encountering another point of view than observing them or imagining how they must feel. Suppose you notice that I am trying to conceal how funny I find the pigeon eating a slice of pizza bigger than its body a few feet away from the funeral we are attending. Perhaps, your attention now drawn to the pigeon, you even start to find it funny yourself. You have a thought about me which it makes sense to have only about a fellow subject, since only a subject can find something inappropriately funny. And you know that my attitude toward the pigeon is just like what you are now feeling. Still, there remains a way in which my subjectivity does not figure in your thought, and in which it would figure were I to notice you looking at me and return your glance, embarrassed; were we to laugh at the pigeon together; or were I openly to make fun of how *you* eat pizza. In each of these scenarios, I figure in your thought not only as another object in the world, on which you, as a subject, have a point of view, but also as a distinct vantage point on the very same world. You encounter my point of view directly in something like the sense in which you encounter a painting directly when you see it, but not when you read about it, or in which you encounter heat directly when you feel it, but not when you watch water come to a boil. Since such direct awareness of another subject depends on occupying a particular position with respect to them, which consists partly in being the addressee of an activity of which they are the author, it is unlike unilateral attention to a spectacle equally visible to all.

In §§3-4, I argue that explaining what it takes to visit one’s beloved essentially because of them requires appeal to an intersubjective rather than a spectatorial conception of loving attention. The spectatorial conception is incomplete because the forms of cognitive contact it countenances cannot explain how expressions of loving care put the beloved in a position to feel seen. In §§5-6, I sketch an account of second-personal thought, and use it to describe an

intersubjective conception of loving attention which provides a way to understand what is distinctive about encountering another point of view directly in the sense just described.

3. Expressions of care

Let us return to Impersonal Visit. Notice that Smith's mistake blurs the ordinary distinction between failing to do what you have most reason to do and doing it, but for the wrong reason. If what is normatively basic to your reason for rescuing a drowning child is that it will later make for a good story, your action will merit less praise than if you had done it to save the child's life, but their life will be saved all the same. If you try to stay healthy by following your horoscope rather than your doctor and the two happen to recommend the same thing, you will be no less healthy for your irrationality. But if you visit a friend in the hospital for the wrong reason, then your mistake, in addition to making the action merit criticism rather than praise, will undercut what reason your friend might have had to feel cheered up at all, thereby depriving the action of its point.

In virtue of what is Impersonal Visit a case, not of doing the right thing for the wrong reason, but of failing to do the right thing at all? I propose it is that visiting someone in the hospital out of love is a communicative action, the point of which is to express one's care to the patient. In a successful visit, the patient can see what matters to them about being ill and alone in the hospital reflected in what the visitor takes to be normatively basic about what they are doing. Visiting you is a way of acknowledging, and thereby sharing in, what you are going through; that is what gives you reason to feel cheered up. But the visit communicates the agent's understanding and concern for what you are going through only by actually manifesting such concern. Since what primarily matters to you about your situation is neither its contribution to the value of a state of affairs nor its making true that a Christian or communist or friend of Smith's is in the hospital, a visit that takes one of these considerations to be

normatively basic does not acknowledge the importance of what you are going through, and therefore does not give you the same reason to feel cheered up.¹²

Indeed, the communicative aim of the visit, on which its value depends, is not limited to informing the patient of the agent's concern. One cannot sincerely undertake to inform someone of a fact one knows they already know. Yet if you already know that Smith cares about what you are going through in the hospital (by testimony or inference, say), and if Smith realizes this, his realization does not preclude him from sincerely undertaking to express his concern to you. If nothing else, such a visit has the same effect as, in Charles Taylor's example, saying, 'Whew, it's hot in here!' to one's neighbor in a sweltering train car: that of turning something you each know, know that the other knows, and so on into something that is, as Taylor (1985, 259) puts it, *entre nous*, "out there as a fact between *us*," a public object in an intersubjective space established by the act. A successful expression of care is communicative, that is to say, not only in the sense of transmitting knowledge of the agent's care to its object, but in the further sense of *acknowledging* what matters to the addressee by making the normative significance of what is good and bad for them common ground between the two parties.¹³ By creating an intersubjective space in which patient's health, comfort, and the disruption to their life are taken to matter in the way that they matter to the patient themselves, acknowledging what the patient is going through *recognizes* the patient as the subject of a particular life with intrinsic importance.

Despite this difference in their aims, informing and expressing care share a communicative structure that is found also in commanding, requesting, inviting, and

¹² My use of the concept of acknowledgment in this context is inspired by Cavell (1976a, 1976b)'s essays on the centrality of acknowledgment to both knowledge of other minds and interpersonal love. In its emphasis on the communicative dimension of expressions of care, my analysis resembles Nel Noddings's view that "the recognition of caring by the cared-for is necessary to the caring relation" (Noddings 1984, 71).

¹³ By contrast, if your partner or child is in the hospital, and it is already mutually acknowledged that their illness is the central thing in your life right now, the expression of care I have described would indeed seem redundant. It might still be important, however, to acknowledge particular twists and turns in their recovery.

apologizing.¹⁴ If you inform me that the semester begins tomorrow, you might be said to give me both a reason to believe it does and a reason to finish my syllabus today. But the former reason, unlike the latter, is essentially communicative in three respects. First, my reason to believe that the semester begins tomorrow is the fact that you told me so; had you not, there would have been no reason for me to apprehend. Second, to apprehend this reason is to be in an epistemic state that is constitutively interconnected with your understanding, as informer, of what you are doing. You aim for me to learn that the semester begins tomorrow by understanding myself to be the addressee of your act of telling me so; in understanding this aim of yours, I thereby make it succeed. Third, because of the interdependence of my reason for belief and your intention to inform me, my available responses admit of a distinction between *rational engagement* and *miscommunication*.¹⁵ We are rationally engaging if I believe you that the semester begins tomorrow, but not if I tune you out, yet infer from how stressed you sound that the semester must begin tomorrow; and also if I disagree with you about when the semester starts, but not if we have different universities in mind. Exactly what rational engagement consists in will vary with the kind of communication in question. The mark of rational engagement with a command is being in a position to obey, rather than happen to do what was commanded, or to disobey, rather than fail to obey out of misunderstanding; with an invitation, being in a position to accept or decline, rather than choosing unilaterally to show up at a party to which one also happens to be invited. My reason to finish my syllabus (that I cannot distribute it tomorrow otherwise) lacks these communicative features. Neither the truth of this fact nor its status as a reason depends on any thought or utterance of yours. If you tell me that the semester begins tomorrow and I do not infer that I should finish my syllabus today, I have

¹⁴ This communicative structure is the object of Grice (1989)'s analysis of non-natural meaning and Darwall (2006, 40)'s account of attitudes that "essentially includ[e] an RSVP." My sketch here draws on Moran 2018 and Enoch 2011.

¹⁵ See Heck 2002 and Dickie and Rattan 2010 for discussion of the idea that communication aims at rational engagement; see also Moran 2018, 160-168.

not *ipso facto* either misunderstood or disagreed with you. You do not give me a new reason, really, so much as enable me to notice one I already had.

The reason to be cheered up by a friend's hospital visit has the same communicative structure as a testimony-based reason to believe that the semester begins tomorrow. Since what gives you reason to cheer up is a relation of acknowledgment which the visit establishes by partly constituting, the visit gives you a reason that you did not already have and to which it is essential. Your grasp of this reason depends on a reciprocal and interlocking understanding on the visitor's part—and this for two reasons. First, acknowledgment, too, is a form of rational engagement. There is genuine acknowledgment, not miscommunication, only if the visitor intends to be understood by the addressee as acknowledging the tribulations of their hospital stay, and if the addressee understands this intention and acknowledges it in turn. Second, the reason that the visitor's acknowledgment gives you to cheer up is conditional on their reason for providing it—namely, that you would appreciate it. (Were your visitor now acknowledging the gravity of your illness only in begrudging response to your protests, having mocked it previously, their action would have a different meaning.) And “that you would appreciate it” is recursive: what the visitor anticipates you will appreciate is their acting for that very anticipatory reason. So what the visitor takes as normatively basic includes, as a component part, how you have reason to react to their taking that very fact as normatively basic.

In summary, the value to the patient of a successful visit depends on the agent expressing an attitude of concern that is indexed to what matters from the perspective of the patient; such expression is valuable because it constitutes acknowledgment; and it can constitute acknowledgment, in a way that gives it value, only if the expression is directed towards the patient's understanding of it in a way that admits of rational engagement.¹⁶

¹⁶ This is only a necessary condition. Even if Smith's thought has a communicative form, he might be substantively mistaken about what matters to you. Or you might fail to appreciate the real reason his visit gives you, regarding it instead as entertainment, interchangeable with Hulu, or as a mark of belonging to Smith's exalted circle.

4. Against the spectatorial conception

The problem that these communicative dimensions of a fully successful visit pose for the view that loving attention consists in spectatorially-based singular thought can be seen in the inability of that view to explain what goes wrong in the following variant of Stocker's case:

Calculated Visit: You are in a hospital, recovering from a long illness. You are very bored and restless and at loose ends when Smith comes in once again. Smith's visit manifests a standing attitude of appreciation, affection, and care for you in particular. Knowing it is unpleasant to be sick and alone in the hospital, Smith has set out to make you feel better. But the question of what meaning his reasoning and motivation will have for you is simply not on his radar. Smith thinks of himself as trying unilaterally to induce a change in you, and reasons about the best way to do so. He calculates that time with a friend is more likely to cheer you up than installing a TV in the room or increasing the dosage of your pain medication, and decides on that basis to visit you.

Calculated Visit is not a case of someone deliberating about whether to express their care to their beloved by visiting them, keeping them comfortable or entertained, or in some other way, viewing this all the while as a question of what the beloved would most appreciate as loving support. The question Smith's reasoning aims to settle is not what you would most appreciate as loving support, but what would most reliably induce a better mood in you. He compares ways to cheer you up on the basis of their effect *on* you, not their meaning *to* you.

Calculated Visit does not seem as bad as Impersonal Visit. And that is just what one would expect, given that you do figure in what Smith takes to be normatively basic about what he is doing, and therefore that he can, more plausibly than in Impersonal Visit, be said to be acting out of love. Nevertheless, Smith's reasoning in Calculated Visit, too, is defective in a way that undermines the success of his action. And it is natural to describe what goes wrong as a failure of communication. Sweet as Smith's intentions may be, his attempted kindness is marred by an imperfect grasp of what actually matters to you about his visit. What is normatively basic for him about visiting you is the change it would produce in your mood. From your perspective, however, a change in mood is not something that just washes over you;

it is a fitting response to a meaningful visit. What you have reason to appreciate about a visit is that it establishes a shared space in which the disvalue of your illness, boredom, and loneliness is mutually acknowledged. Such acknowledgment must be deliberate, yet in Calculated Visit Smith does not intend it; it requires that you be able to see your perspective reflected in Smith's understanding of the situation, yet what he takes to be normatively basic about a visit is not what you take to be good about being visited, and you do not figure in his reasoning as an addressee upon whose uptake its success depends. As a result, it would be reasonable to feel that you have not been seen or understood. You might be touched by the goodwill which shines through Smith's confusion, but because he does not fully engage with your perspective on the situation, you do not end up with the reason to take heart that his visit might have given you. Calculated Visit thus shows that it is not sufficient, to satisfy the presumption of personal concern internal to loving friendship, that one be moved by a thought that is essentially, but unilaterally, about the beloved.

Can the gap be closed by pointing to some further condition which remains unmet—say, that one must communicate to the beloved that one is so moved—rather than by finding fault with Smith's concern itself? No. It would misconstrue what goes wrong in Calculated Visit to hold that Smith has the right sort of concern for you, and fails only to see the need to communicate it. Smith's insensitivity to the essentially communicative aspects of what, in the good case, a visitor would consider normatively basic about their action—the relation of acknowledgment (or its absence) established thereby; the difference between inducing a change in you and giving you a reason—constitutes, in its own way, a failure fully to apprehend the reality of your point of view.

Here is an argument for that claim. To apprehend the point of view of another subject is, in part, to see and respond to aspects of a situation that are grounded in the actual or possible attitudes of that subject. It is to be sensitive, for example, to what is or is not visible, humorous,

plausible, or desirable to them, no matter how things seem to oneself. Children learn to do this around age 4-5, when they begin to distinguish between where an object is and where it is rational for someone else to think it is.¹⁷ Yet it is one thing to grasp this distinction in principle and another to be more or less vividly aware, in a particular situation, of how things seem to someone else. Jean-Paul Sartre describes the decentering of one's own perspective such awareness involves in the case of realizing that one is not alone in a park:

Around the Other, an entire space is grouped... it is a regrouping, at which I am present, and which escapes me, of all the objects that populate my universe... [T]he lawn is something qualified... [its] green turns toward the Other a face that escapes me... Everything is in place, everything still exists for me, but now an invisible and frozen flight toward a new object penetrates everything. The Other's appearing in the world corresponds... to a decentering of the world that undermines the centralization I simultaneously impose. (Sartre [1943] 2018, 350-351)¹⁸

The sweep of another point of view does not stop at objects in one's environment, of course. Like the park lawn, I myself turn towards the Other a face to which I lack immediate epistemic access. The other-facing properties of one's own actions and attitudes are a source of reasons both instrumental (to make myself heard, I must moderate how loudly and distinctly I am speaking) and noninstrumental (someone else's presence can make it rude to yawn loudly, or showy to recite poetry to oneself).

A further set of reasons arise from seeing the situation as one in which there are two distinct points of view, each aware of the other. It would seem strange and intrusive, out of context, for me to shove a dumpling towards you while saying, "Go on, eat it!" But if we are each aware that we are each aware, and so on, that the dumpling is yet uneaten only because fewer remain than people who might like one and nobody wants to deprive anyone else, the action becomes perfectly comprehensible and even friendly. Likewise, taking myself to have reason to avoid your eye at the funeral requires me to be sensitive to such facts as that you find

¹⁷ See Tomasello 2018 for discussion and one interpretation of this capacity.

¹⁸ I am ignoring, since it does not matter for present purposes, that Sartre himself considers this an impure case of apprehending another subject, for it involves taking another person as the object of one's attention and "the Other is not in any way given to us as an object" (366).

the jumbo-slice-eating pigeon funny and suspect I do too; that many people around us are openly grieving; that they might reasonably take a burst of laughter to express disrespect for their grief, not to mention the deceased; and that were I to acknowledge my amusement to you, one of us might well begin to giggle. To be more or less sensitive to such facts is to be more or less vividly aware of the reality of points of view other than one's own.

As we have seen, the absence of precisely such facts from what Smith takes to be normatively basic in *Calculated Visit* is what makes his action less than fully successful. Smith's insensitivity to the reason you have to be cheered up by acknowledgment of the tribulations of your hospital stay from someone with whom you care to share it, and his consequent insensitivity to the reason he has to provide such acknowledgment, constitute a failure fully to integrate into his practical outlook the presence of a point of view distinct from his own. That, I suggest, is no less a failure fully to apprehend the reality of another person, and no less a defect of loving attention, than the sorts of failure Murdoch emphasizes, in which one conflates the beloved's interests with one's own, or their actual characteristics with what one might wish for. That is to say, the intuition that motivates a Murdochian account of loving attention in the first place counts also against a spectatorial conception of such attention. The lesson of *Calculated Visit* is that apprehending the reality of another person, in the way that serves as a regulative ideal for loving attention, requires the lover to be moved not simply by singular thought about the beloved, but by singular thought that is oriented towards the beloved's perspective in a way that allows for acknowledgment.¹⁹

¹⁹ My focus on expressions of care should not be taken to imply that care is the only part of love in which recognition is at issue, to the exclusion of appreciating the particular qualities of the beloved, having affection for them, liking them, or enjoying their company. Indeed, as Yao (2020, 7-8) observes, these parts are complexly interrelated: the pleasure you have reason to take in a visit from a close friend whose company you enjoy, and who enjoys yours, differs from the solidarity provided by a visit from an old friend from whom you have grown distant, but who continues to care about you. Another advantage of an intersubjective conception of loving attention is that it creates space in which to mark differences between these kinds of value, and between agents who are more or less sensitive to those differences.

Murdoch herself appreciates the importance we place on how we matter to those who matter to us. But she denies that it supports an intersubjective conception of loving attention:

Looking at other people is different from looking at trees or works of art. We may receive deep consolation from knowing that we are ‘present’, *pictured*, in someone else's loving thoughts or prayers. It matters how we see other people. Such looking is not always dialogue, indeed it is rarely mutual. Others are given to us as a *spectacle* which we should treat with wise respect. (Murdoch 1993, 463; second emphasis mine.)

Why does Murdoch insist on conceiving of looking at other people as looking at a spectacle? In part because she believes—incorrectly, I want to suggest—that an intersubjective conception would concede too much to a moral-psychological picture she wants to oppose, according to which “the inner or mental world is inevitably parasitic upon the outer world” and therefore of derivative importance (Murdoch 2001, 5). One need not agree with Murdoch (as I do) that such a picture is to be resisted in general in order to find it ill-suited specifically to love. If anything, the idea of loving behavior is parasitic on that of an ‘inner’ way of feeling about someone which such behavior typically expresses, and not vice versa. And yet the second-personal attitudes essential to familiar kinds of communicative reason-giving (to demand, invitation, and request, for instance) are indeed both conceptually and normatively secondary to an overt speech act. Conceptually, it makes no sense to think of someone as your addressee without reference to some act of overtly addressing them. Normatively, even if a communicative intention makes an utterance into the kind of speech act it is, it is the outer expression—the speech act itself—which gives the addressee a reason, and does so whether or not you genuinely hope they will do as demanded, invited, or requested. Should an intersubjective conception require us to model the relation between loving attitudes and action on the relation between intending to invite someone to dinner and following through, Murdoch would be right to reject it.

I hope it is clear by now that this picture of the relation between intersubjective thought and communicative action is too narrow. As the good version of Stocker’s hospital case

illustrates, there is a type of care (as there is a type of understanding and appreciation) that is essentially intersubjective in that it is internal to the self-understanding one has in holding it that it is oriented towards the possibility of uptake from the other person. Likewise, trusting another person and being emotionally vulnerable to them are attitudes that build in from the start a perspective from within a possible relationship with the person they are about. None of these attitudes is parasitic on ‘outer’ behavior in a way that would prevent it from counting as an instance of seeing another person. Although overt expression is necessary to realize and sustain them, they are conceptually and normatively self-standing. Conceptually, each constitutively involves a way of taking the other person to count that is not conditional on having adopted some plan of action (e.g., to issue an invitation or request), which might in turn be done for all sorts of reasons, perhaps unrelated to the beloved. They reflect one’s standing take on another person, which precedes rather than being contained within any particular context of choice and action. Normatively, whereas rational engagement is only a constitutive means of request, invitation, and demand—a certain way of giving someone a reason—relations of mutually acknowledged trust, vulnerability, care, understanding and appreciation are valuable for their own sake, independently of the value of any particular action they facilitate. They are ways of attending to and engaging with another person as a distinct point of view on the world, including on oneself.

5. Second-personal thought

I have just argued that reflection on expressions of loving care reveals the need for an intersubjective conception of loving attention. In this section, I begin to develop such a conception by sketching an account of second-personal thought and arguing that it can explain the difference between how the hospital patient has reason to feel in *Calculated Visit* and in

response to a good visit. In the next section, I suggest how to extend the account beyond cases of overtly communicative action.

Second-personal thought is singular thought based in mutual awareness between the thinker and the person it is about. It is interconnected with that person's first-personal thoughts in a manner exemplified by the reciprocal use of 'you' and 'I' in ordinary conversation.²⁰

Consider an example from John McDowell (1998, 222):

Suppose someone says to me, 'You have mud on your face'. If I am to understand him, I must entertain an 'I'-thought, thinking something to this effect: 'I have mud on my face: that is what he is saying'.

That their referent must entertain an 'I'-thought to understand them distinguishes utterances that refer to someone by 'you' from those that do so in other ways that can underwrite singular thought, such as by means of a name or demonstrative. Suppose someone says, "That person has mud on his face," pointing to me. I will have understood this assertion if, catching sight of the speaker's gesture and its intended object in a nearby mirror but failing to recognize the latter as myself (perhaps there is really a lot of mud), I entertain a thought such as "He has mud on his face: that is what she is saying." But I have not understood "You have mud on your face," said to me, by picking out its addressee in a mirror if I do not go on to recognize him as myself. That would be a failure of communication.

The contrast between these examples resembles a familiar rationale for taking first-personal thought to be distinct from its third-personal counterparts. If I do not realize how

²⁰ Much work on second-personal thought has focused on its relation to first-personal thought: Do 'you' and 'I' express the same thought, perhaps like one person's uses of 'today' and 'yesterday' to track a single day over time (Rödl 2007, ch 6; Thompson 2013; Longworth 2014, extending Evans 1982, 192-196)? Or is second-personal thought distinct from first-personal thought, either because it is *sui generis* (Salje 2017) or because it consists of a distinctive bundle of iterated first- and third-personal thoughts (Peacocke 2014, ch. 10)? I will not take a stand on this question here. My purposes require only that second-personal thought (a) is distinct from *third*-personal thought and (b) nonaccidentally corefers with the first-personal thoughts of its referent. That much is compatible with all of these views—though not with Heck (2002, 12)'s claim that "the word 'you' has no correlate at the level of thought." My principal reason for rejecting that claim is the ability of the account of second-personal thought I sketch in this section to explain the difference in cognitive significance for a hospital patient between the reason for which Smith acts in the good case and in Calculated Visit. I am also persuaded by Dickie and Rattan (2010)'s argument that Heck's conception of rational engagement is too thin; see also Salje (2017, 830-833).

muddy I am, it might be rational for me to believe that the muddy guest is dirtying the carpet, but not to believe that I am dirtying the carpet, even though these thoughts have the same truth conditions. We can explain how it is rational to have different attitudes towards these thoughts by supposing them to involve different ways of thinking about the same person. In Fregean terms, this is a difference in concepts, components of thought that bear a many-to-one relation to the referents of their uses. Concepts are individuated by their rational significance for the thinker, and rational significance depends in turn on what it is in virtue of which a concept is about its referent.²¹

Like others, I think McDowell's observation can likewise be explained by supposing the component concepts of the thoughts normally expressed by "That person has mud on his face" and "You have mud on your face" to differ.²² Even though these two singular thoughts ascribe the same property to the same person, they pick that person out in different ways: one demonstrative, the other second-personal. The question facing this proposal is why this difference in means of reference should generate the difference in rational significance that McDowell observes. What relation to another person's capacity for self-conscious thought could explain why one kind of thought about another person (normally expressed with a second-personal pronoun or vocative) but not others (normally expressed with demonstratives, third-personal pronouns, or non-vocative uses of names) should be such that its referent must exercise their capacity for self-conscious thought in order to grasp it? Let us approach this question by examining two features of ordinary communication: the tacit mutual awareness that underlies conversation, and the nonaccidental coreference of perceptual demonstratives in the context of joint attention.

²¹ Perry 1979. My exposition of Frege follows Evans 1982; Evans discusses the phenomenon McDowell describes at pp. 314-316. Although my discussion is framed in the terms of Evans's Frege, I think the basic points could also be expressed using other approaches to the contents of thought.

²² See Rödl 2007; Longworth 2014; Salje 2017.

One-off communicative success, understood as one person's rational engagement with another's utterance, does not require the speaker to address the hearer, or even to know of her existence. But ordinary conversation is more than a sequence of one-off communicative successes. Communication in conversation is *directed*, aimed at rational engagement specifically between the interlocutors, and it is *cumulative*, adding and responding to a shared context of what has been said.

For communication in conversation to be directed, each speaker must address the other, which means that the hearer must figure in the speaker's thoughts in a way that provides the hearer with first-personal understanding that she herself is being addressed. Consider, for instance, what it takes for a teacher to ask, "What is eight times seven?" of a specific student rather than the class at large. The teacher must intend, of that student, that she acquire first-personal understanding to the effect that she herself is to answer the question. He will ordinarily act on this intention by making eye contact with the student, calling her name, or in some other way giving the student to understand that it is she herself whom he intends to address. What the student understands, in understanding the teacher's signal, is that she figures in his thought as someone who is to understand that she herself should answer the question. So there is mutual awareness between the two parties of the role each is playing in the conversation, and the way each party relates to her own role is first-personally, through an exercise of her capacity for self-conscious thought.²³

For communication in conversation to be cumulative, this relation of mutual awareness cannot be something contained within and reestablished by each individual speech act. In order for what the interlocutors have already said to enter into the meaning-determining context of each successive assertion, and for new assertions to constitute responses to previous ones, the interlocutors' shared self-conscious awareness of being in conversation with one another must

²³ My understanding of such cases is indebted to Moran 2018, 183-189.

be a standing relation that persists from one speech act to another and serves as the framework in which the conversation takes place.

Now consider what it takes to communicate using a perceptual demonstrative. Suppose A and B are standing on either side of a display of apples in the grocery store. A, looking at a particular apple, tells B, “That apple looks juicy.” B, looking at a particular apple, replies, “That apple is bruised.” Upon hearing B’s reply, A comes to believe that the apple that looks juicy is bruised. It should be clear that A’s belief amounts to knowledge only if A and B are talking about the same apple. Indeed, A’s belief does not amount to knowledge even when A and B are talking about the same apple if each is attuned only to the apple, assuming baselessly that the other must be looking at the same one. For in that case the truth of A’s belief is not safe: it could easily have been the case that B was talking about a different apple, and A’s apple was not bruised, and then A would have believed falsely. Minimally, to learn that some object *o* one perceives is *F* on the basis of someone else’s assertion, “that is *F*,” one must know that her use of ‘that’ refers to *o*. And for two parties to converse back and forth about some object both can see, each adding to the other’s knowledge of it through a series of demonstrative assertions, both must know that the demonstratives each uses corefer. For A and B to have an ongoing conversation about the apple in the grocery store, it is not enough that each party know which apple the other is referring to; it must be mutually known that each is referring to the same apple. Only then may we speak not only of each subject rationally engaging with the other’s assertion in sequence, but of two subjects rationally engaging *with one other*.

One source of such knowledge is joint attention. When two people attend jointly to some object, there is mutual awareness between them that both are attending to it. This mutual awareness expands the epistemic basis for demonstrative reference available to each person. Each is in a position to refer demonstratively to the object, not merely on the basis of her own awareness of it, but on the basis of their shared awareness. And when a demonstrative is based

in shared awareness, fully understanding it involves understanding that it corefers with the awareness-based demonstrative used by the other party.²⁴ Joint attention, that is, can change the meaning of a perceptual demonstrative in such a way that fully understanding it requires knowledge that it corefers with the use of a certain expression by some other person.

I propose that ‘you’ is an expression for which this is always the case. Whereas it *can* happen, in virtue of two people’s joint attention to some object, that each’s use of ‘that’ acquires a property it ordinarily lacks—namely, that full understanding of such uses must include knowledge of coreference with uses of ‘that’ by the other—it is *essential* to ‘you’ that full understanding of a token use of it must include knowledge of its coreference with uses of ‘I’ by its referent. What underwrites this feature of ‘you’ is not joint attention to a third object both attenders perceive, but rather mutual awareness of the sort that underlies conversation.²⁵ Just as joint attention provides an epistemic basis in virtue of which the ‘that’-thoughts of two parties necessarily corefer, mutual awareness provides an epistemic basis for a distinctive kind of singular thought about another person, second-personal thought, which differs from singular thought with other epistemic bases in that it is part of its meaning that it nonaccidentally corefers with the first-personal thoughts of its referent.

With this proposal in hand, we can explain what distinguishes the good version of Stocker’s hospital case from Calculated Visit. Although in both the source of Smith’s grasp of what is normatively basic to his action is a relation to you that underwrites singular thought, the two cases exhibit precisely those differences it is the job of a Fregean sense to explain: between pairs of thoughts that do, and those that do not, enable rational engagement between two thinkers across whom their members are distributed; and in the respective cognitive significance of two thoughts for one thinker.²⁶ In a good visit you can see what Smith takes to

²⁴ Here I am following Dickie and Rattan 2010.

²⁵ In appealing to the mutual awareness implicit in interpersonal address to defend the distinctiveness of second-personal thought I am following Salje 2017.

²⁶ See Heck 2002; Dickie and Rattan 2010.

be normatively basic about the situation as an affirmative response to (not just a happy congruence with) what matters to you; in Calculated Visit there is a miscommunication about what matters. A mark of this difference is that fully acknowledging and accepting the care Smith expresses in the good case requires you to be open with him about what matters to you, whereas doing so in Calculated Visit is compatible with concealing from Smith how you really feel. And since what gives you reason to cheer up, in the good case, is the recognition of the importance of what matters to you constituted by Smith's acknowledgment, you have reason to respond differently to Smith's reason for acting in the good case than in Calculated Visit.

We can explain both differences by supposing that in the good case, but not in Calculated Visit, Smith's thought about you is based in mutual awareness, so that it is part of its meaning that it corefers with your first-personal thoughts. It follows from this difference in epistemic basis that, in the good case alone, there is no room for a gap, from Smith's perspective, between what he takes to be important about the situation and what you do, when you think first-personally of its impact on your life. And to understand Smith's reason you must take there to be no gap either. (There is room to think he has it wrong—perhaps what you really want is to be left alone—but not to understand what he considers good about his action without taking it as a claim about what you yourself do, or should, consider good for you about it.) That is why, if Smith does get it right, fully acknowledging and accepting the care he expresses requires you to acknowledge your own attitudes to him in turn, as it does not in Calculated Visit. Likewise, because if Smith gets it right you can see your own perspective reflected and affirmed in his, and such recognition gives you a distinctive sort of reason to feel cheered up, it is rational to respond to Smith's reasoning in the good case in a way that you would not in Calculated Visit. The contrast between these cases thus provides an abductive argument for the role of second-personal thought in loving attention.

6. Situated vision

If my argument to this point succeeds, it shows that spectatorial conceptions of the relation to another person through which we apprehend them as a source of value cannot deliver a complete account of loving attention. This claim is compatible with the ecumenical conclusion that, while there is indeed an essentially intersubjective kind of loving attention, it is merely one kind among others, which might for all that be spectatorial.²⁷ It may appear to support such a conclusion that not every manifestation of love depends on overt acknowledgment in the way that expressions of care do. As Murdoch and Velleman stress, attentive suspension—as in private responses of amazement to personhood, of fondness to particularity, and of care to vulnerability—is an important part of love, too. Even in mutual interaction, overt acknowledgment is often optional and sometimes counterproductive. It is not a mistake to conceal your efforts as host to a friend visiting from out of town so as not to make them feel burdensome, for instance, rather than for your every act of hospitality, its having been done out of love, and your friend’s appreciation thereof to be explicitly and mutually acknowledged. These are just different interpersonal styles, both reasonable.²⁸ And if your beloved is in a nasty mood that manifests itself partly in a disposition to bristle at any suggestion that they are in a nasty mood, treating them with kindness might positively require you to keep your intentions below the surface.

I want to draw a stronger conclusion than this ecumenical one. Spectatorial conceptions of loving attention are not only extensionally incomplete, but also explanatorily incomplete. Even when overt expression is not at issue, how well an instance of beneficence or appreciation manifests loving attention depends on its surrounding intersubjective context.

²⁷ Thus Velleman (2013, 332-333) allows that friendship and other forms of mutuality are also ways of valuing a person; Setiya (2023, 328) allows that “the second person matters,” if not to personal acquaintance.

²⁸ Murdoch (1993, 740) makes a similar point.

Consider two contexts other than the overt expression of care in which the presence and quality of second-personal thought is essential to what makes an attitude toward another person good as loving attention. First, even when acknowledgment is not the proximal point of an action, it can matter as something to be avoided. When it does, insensitivity to the question of what is and is not mutually acknowledged can still constitute a failure really to see another person as a subject. My analysis of the hospital visit case as a communicative action turned on the observation that Smith's mistake blurs the distinction between doing the right thing for the wrong reason and failing to do it at all. That is not a feature of graciously hosting a friend at an inconvenient time, or of relating to an ill-humored loved one with tactful kindness: with luck, someone who is wholly insensitive to the meaning their reasoning will have for the other person, as Smith is in *Calculated Visit*, can still succeed in not making their friend feel burdensome or in lifting their mood. Nevertheless, if in *Calculated Visit* Smith fails fully to apprehend the reality of the subject for whose sake he is acting, as I have argued, then so does someone who is wholly insensitive to the intersubjective meaning of their reasoning in these cases. The possibility of doing the right thing for a defective reason does not prevent it from being a defective reason.

Second, a background relation of mutual recognition can make an otherwise objectionable action permissible, and even grant it a distinctive form of value. Take Martha Nussbaum (1995, 265)'s example of using your lover's stomach as a pillow. Within the context of a relationship in which it is mutually acknowledged that each party both respects the other and welcomes physical intimacy from them, this instance of treating someone as an object is not one of treating them as a *mere* object. Indeed, what might otherwise be objectifying in the pejorative sense becomes a distinctively valuable way for each party to enjoy the other's objecthood and to be so enjoyed in turn. Likewise, being discreetly gentle to a loved one in ill humor need not be patronizing, as it otherwise might, against a background mutual

understanding that taking care of each other when out of sorts is part of what friends are for. An open readiness to engage in such care can even constitute valuable acceptance of each party's ethical imperfections and acknowledgment of their mutual interdependence.

I propose that when the object of love is another subject capable of reciprocal thought, the components of love that resemble awe or aesthetic appreciation depend for their status as instances of loving attention on their intersubjective context in the same way. Like using a stomach as a pillow, being awestruck by someone's personhood and cherishing their qualities do not always and everywhere constitute a discerning apprehension of their intrinsic value. There is a difference between forms of appreciation that are self-consciously open to uptake from the beloved and those that are possessive or voyeuristic, or that (to use an apt expression) put the beloved on a pedestal. In happy circumstances, receptivity to the beloved's response might amount to appreciation that is open or shared, in the knowledge that it is welcomed and returned. But one-sided appreciation that is accepting of its status as unrequited, too, has a better claim to constitute loving attention than forms of awe, admiration, and enjoyment to which the beloved's response is not essentially in question. And receptive attention of the right sort requires second-personal thought.²⁹

A defender of the ecumenical conclusion might try to accommodate this observation by supposing there to be a single quasi-aesthetic form of attention common to the good and bad cases which stands on its own as one kind of ideal loving attention, but coexists with a distinct,

²⁹ Although I cannot fully defend this claim here, I suspect many hallmarks of interpersonal love to which philosophers have recently drawn attention should be understood along the same lines. For instance, Ebels-Duggan (2008) defends the centrality to love of sharing ends with the beloved, as opposed to unilaterally benefitting them, on the grounds that only the former treats the beloved as a fellow agent; Bagley (2015) defends the centrality of a shared activity of mutual improvisation; and Dover (2022) defends the centrality of receptivity to transformation by the other, as opposed to reciprocal self-revelation, on the grounds that only the former allows for a valuable form of intersubjectivity in which each party is genuinely open to the other. Yet there are forms of collaboration that are merely instrumental, and forms of shaping and being shaped that are manipulative and servile. Conversely, as I hope to have shown, there are forms of beneficence, knowing, and being known that are valuable precisely because they engage with the other as a subject. I suspect that in each case (collaborating, helping, shaping, knowing), as with using a stomach as a pillow, what makes the difference is the background presence or absence of mutual understanding that such actions are undertaken in a spirit of affirmative engagement with the other as a subject, and welcomed as such.

intersubjective kind of appreciation which may be more or less salutary. Yet were that so, then if you are aware that someone is awestruck at your particularity, but not of the surrounding context, it would be fitting to welcome their loving attention, rather than to suspend judgment. If you learn that their appreciation is possessive or voyeuristic, it would be fitting to have mixed feelings, rather than univocal disappointment. And it is not. Being appreciated from a pedestal or as a prized possession is not valuable at all, for there is an important sense in which the object of appreciation is not really you, yourself.

It is sometimes charged that one or another conception of objectivity presents as stance-independent what is really a view from one particular standpoint, and thereby obscures crucial aspects of the relation between subject and object. I have argued that the Murdochian idea of loving attention as “unselfing” is vulnerable to an objection of this kind when understood not merely as the apprehension of and response to another person as a source of value outside oneself, but as a normative outlook that abstracts from how the lover is situated with respect to their beloved. Since how it is fitting to engage with another subject depends on each party’s understanding of their importance to one another, the attention that partly constitutes such engagement is the positional view from within an intersubjective relation.³⁰

³⁰ For feedback on previous drafts of this paper I am extremely grateful to Rachel Achs, Matthew Boyle, Samuel Dishaw, Lidal Dror, Andrew Flynn, Nick French, Jane Friedman, Ned Hall, Yunhyae Kim, Doug Kremm, James Laing, Kristina Lepold, James Lewis, Beri Marušić, Richard Moran, Tim Scanlon, Sam Segal, Kieran Setiya, Sharon Street, Gili Vidan, Quinn White, the Moral Address Work in Progress group, and audiences at Harvard University and the University of Birmingham.

References

- Anscombe, G.E.M. [1957] 2000. *Intention*, 2nd edition. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bagley, Benjamin. 2015. "Loving Someone in Particular." *Ethics* 125 (2), 477-507.
- Bagnoli, Carla. 2003. "Respect and Loving Attention." *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 33 (4), 483-516.
- Cavell, Stanley. 1976a. "The Avoidance of Love." In *Must We Mean What We Say? A Book of Essays*, 267-356. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Cavell, Stanley. 1976b. "Knowing and Acknowledging." In *Must We Mean What We Say? A Book of Essays*, 238-266. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Darwall, Stephen. 2006. *The Second-Person Standpoint: Morality, Respect, and Accountability*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Darwall, Stephen. 2024. *The Heart and its Attitudes*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Dickie, Imogen and Gurpreet Rattan. 2010. "Sense, Communication, and Rational Engagement." *Dialectica* 62 (2), 131-151.
- Dover, Daniela. 2022. "The Conversational Self." *Mind* 131 (521), 193-230.
- Dover, Daniela. Forthcoming. "Love's Curiosity." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*.
Online at <https://www.aristoteliansociety.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/2024-06-06-Loves-Curiosity-1.docx>. Last accessed July 12 2024.
- Ebels-Duggan, Kyla. 2008. "Against Beneficence: A Normative Account of Love." *Ethics* 119 (1), 142-170.
- Ebels-Duggan, Kyla. 2023. "Learning from Love: Reasoning, Respect, and the Value of a Person." In *Rethinking the Value of Humanity*, edited by Sarah Buss and L. Nandi Theunissen, 337-365. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Eilan, Naomi. 2020. "Other I's, Communication, and the Second Person." *Inquiry*, 1-23.

- Enoch, David. 2011. "Giving Practical Reasons." *Philosophers' Imprint* 11 (4), 1-22.
- Evans, Gareth. 1982. *The Varieties of Reference*, edited by John McDowell. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Grice, Paul. [1957] 1989. "Meaning." In *Studies in the Way of Words*, 213-223. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Heck, Richard Kimberly. 2002. "Do Demonstratives Have Senses?" *Philosophers' Imprint* 2 (2), 1-33. Originally published under the name "Richard G. Heck, Jr."
- Honneth, Axel. 1995. *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*, translated by Joel Anderson. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Hopwood, Mark. 2017. "'The Extremely Difficult Realization That Something Other Than Oneself Is Real': Iris Murdoch on Love and Moral Agency." *European Journal of Philosophy* 26 (1), 477-501.
- Keller, Simon. 2013. *Partiality*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kraut, Robert. 1986. "Love *De Re*." *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 10, 413-430.
- Laing, James. 2021. "When Eyes Touch." *Philosophers' Imprint* 21 (9), 1-17.
- Longworth, Guy. 2014. "You and Me." *Philosophical Explorations* 17 (3), 289-303.
- Marušić, Berislav. 2022. *On the Temporality of Emotions: An Essay on Grief, Anger, and Love*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McDowell, John. 1998. "*De Re* Senses." In *Meaning, Knowledge, and Reality*, 214-227. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Merritt, Melissa. 2017. "Love, Respect, and Individuals: Murdoch as a Guide to Kantian Ethics." *European Journal of Philosophy* 25 (4), 1844-1863.
- Merritt, Melissa. 2022. "Murdoch and Kant." In *The Murdochian Mind*, edited by Silvia Caprioglio Panizza and Mark Hopwood, 253-265. New York: Routledge.

- Moran, Richard. 2018. *The Exchange of Words: Speech, Testimony, and Intersubjectivity*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Murdoch, Iris. [1959] 1999. "The Sublime and the Good." In *Existentialists and Mystics*, edited by Peter Conradi, 205-220. New York: Penguin.
- Murdoch, Iris. [1970] 2001. *The Sovereignty of Good*. London: Routledge Classics.
- Murdoch, Iris. 1993. *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*. New York: Penguin.
- Noddings, Nel. 1984. *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Nussbaum, Martha. 1995. "Objectification." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 24 (4), 249-291.
- Nussbaum, Martha. 2012. "'Faint with Secret Knowledge': Love and Vision in Murdoch's *The Black Prince*." In *Iris Murdoch: Philosopher*, edited by Justin Broackes, 135-153. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Peacocke, Christopher. 2014. *The Mirror of the World: Subjects, Consciousness, and Self-Consciousness*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Perry, John. 1979. "The Problem of the Essential Indexical." *Noûs* 13 (1), 3-21.
- Pettit, Philip. 1997. "Love and its Place in Moral Discourse." In *Love Analyzed*, edited by Roger E. Lamb, 153-163. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Rödl, Sebastian. 2007. *Self-Consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Salje, Léa. "Thinking About You." 2017. *Mind* 126, 817-840.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. [1943] 2018. *Being and Nothingness*, translated by Sarah Richmond. New York: Washington Square Press.
- Setiya, Kieran. 2014. "Love and the Value of a Life." *Philosophical Review* 123 (2), 251-280.
- Setiya, Kieran. 2023. "Other People." In *Rethinking the Value of Humanity*, edited by Sarah Buss and L. Nandi Theunissen, 314-336. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Shoemaker, Sydney. 1968. "Self-Reference and Self-Awareness." *Journal of Philosophy* 65 (19), 555-567.
- Stocker, Michael. 1976. "The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories." *Journal of Philosophy* 73 (14), 453-466.
- Taylor, Charles. 1985. "Theories of Meaning." In *Human Agency and Language: Philosophical Papers, vol. 1*, 248-292. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Thompson, Michael. 2013. "Propositional Attitudes and Propositional Nexuses: A Hieroglyphical Elucidation." In *Sinnkritisches Philosophieren*, edited by Sebastian Rödl and Henning Tegtmeier, 231-248. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Tomasello, Michael. 2018. "How Children Come to Understand False Beliefs: A Shared Intentionality Account." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 115 (34), 8491–8498.
- Velleman, J. David. 1999. "Love as a Moral Emotion." *Ethics* 109 (2), 338-374.
- Velleman, J. David. 2013. "Sociality and Solitude." *Philosophical Explorations* 16 (3), 324-335
- Walden, Kenneth. 2023. "Great Beyond All Comparison." In *Rethinking the Value of Humanity*, edited by Sarah Buss and L. Nandi Theunissen, 181-201. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Williams, Bernard. 1981. "Persons, Character and Morality." In *Moral Luck*, 1-19. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yao, Vida. 2020. "Grace and Alienation." *Philosophers' Imprint* 20 (16), 1-18.