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Openness to the Development of the Relationship: A Theory of Close Relationships

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Openness to the Development of the Relationship:

A Theory of Close Relationships

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in Philosophy

by

Emily Page

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Openness to the Development of the Relationship:

A Theory of Close Relationships

by

Emily Page

Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy

University of California, Los Angeles, 2021

Professor Alexander Jacob Julius, Chair

In a word, this dissertation is about friendship. I begin by raising a problem related to one traditionally found within some of the philosophical literature regarding moral egalitarianism: that of partiality and friendship, except that I raise the issue of partiality within the context of one's close relationships. From here I propose a solution to the problem based on understanding a close relationship as one in which friends possess the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship. The remainder of the dissertation is concerned with elaborating upon and explaining this conception of friendship and its consequences. In the course of doing this I propose a theory of the self and how we relate to one another, consider the importance of the psychophysical self, explore the notion of mutual recognition, reflect on relationship's end, and, finally, explore the connections between friendship and play.

The dissertation of Emily Page is approved.

Daniela J Dover

Barbara Herman

Gavin Lawrence

Alexander Jacob Julius, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2021

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Acknowledgments

I think of offering my thanks as similar, in a sense, to observing and appreciating a great and clear night sky over the seasons. Not only do you have your north star, or what have you, to guide you along the way, but you have all sorts of many constellations and patterns of stars to appreciate along the way, emerging at different times as the year unfolds. Partly they are interconnected by pre-established patterns, but, mostly, they are not. The extent to which they are not is a matter of recognizing and appreciating them as they come. I start with my north star in these thanks, and proceed throughout to recognize the various beautiful constellations and patterns that emerged along the way.

First I would like to thank my dissertation committee chair, AJ Julius for his philosophical acuity, his willingness to indulge my sometimes unorthodox ideas and methodology, and perhaps most importantly, his unwavering support, kindness, and belief in my philosophical ability. Under no other supervisor could I have completed this dissertation. Secondly, I would like to thank Daniela Dover in particular for her thoughtful contributions throughout, and, additionally, for her help with regard to the practical side of completing the dissertation process. I extend my sincere thanks to the rest of my committee as well: Barbara Herman and Gavin Lawrence.

I thank my UCLA philosophical friends and colleagues who have contributed directly to this philosophical project, present and former, and especially extend thanks to Aaron West, Jonathan Gingerich, Tristen Cardwell, and Alexi Patsaouras.

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I thank our current and former department staff. I particularly extend my sincerest thanks to our former Student Affairs Officer Tanya Kim for her monumental kindness, support, and general wonderfulness. The department would not have been as inviting without these staff members.

Next I would like to thank the professors outside of the philosophy department who offered me support and encouragement with respect to my multidisciplinary interests and who fostered my growth toward, hopefully, the next adventure in my life. In particular, I would like to thank musicologist Raymond Knapp and composer and music theorist David S. Lefkowitz. I thank both for their patience, kindness, and willingness to believe in my aspirations, and, of course, for their encouragement regarding my current program and dissertation. I am indebted to Ray for helping me begin to develop as a scholar of music. Particular thanks is owed to David S. Lefkowitz for his two-year music theory course sequence, which constituted my favorite class I have enrolled in up to this point in my educational career…and at the risk of embarrassing myself, I further admit that it was even one of the highlights of my life.

I also extend my thanks to those who took a chance on me when I first began my interdisciplinary trajectory, despite little existing background in hand at the time. Thanks to musicologist Elizabeth Upton who allowed a curious philosophy graduate student to take her medieval polyphonic manuscripts seminar as my first-ever musicology course. Similarly, I extend thanks to composer Ben Phelps for allowing me into his introductory music theory course

and getting me started with the UCLA music theory course sequence in the first place. I extend thanks to composer Dante De Silva as well for his involvement throughout the music theory sequence, too. Though I am but an amateur musician, I think I am safe in saying that music theory pedagogy at UCLA is absolutely first-rate.

However, I extend my most personal thanks with respect to my interdisciplinary interests to my friend Anahit Rostomyan for helping to inspirit these interests and the possibility of pursuing them professionally. While these interests do not substantially appear within this dissertation, hopefully they will appear in another one someday soon.

I would further like to thank even those whose role in my life may not immediately seem relevant to this academic feat.

I offer my thanks first to the profession I hold perhaps the most esteem for outside of the fields music and poetry. Thank you to my my hair professionals, and especially to my colorist Emily Neri. Your work and the sense of community I derive from my visits to you have been helpful beyond what your services might superficially suggest. Yours are hair-acquaintanceships I will not easily forget. Not only have you set a high standard, turning me into something of a hair snob, but my visits to you have kept me sane more than you know over the course of my time in the program. Though you might not realize it, your conversation has been filled with both philosophical insight and general insightfulness about life, and has even had an impact on this dissertation. In any case, your hair skills and work outshines that of my own philosophical work in this dissertation!

Almost every idea expressed in this dissertation was written out by hand with *pencil* and paper before appearing in this manuscript. In a very practical sense, then, I have the finest pencil,

stationery, and office supply store in the world to thank. My sincere thanks are owed to CW Pencil Enterprise and to Caroline Weaver, the best small business owner that I know of. Long after the filing of this dissertation will our pencil-acquaintanceship endure. Your work, the example you have set, and the community you have effected continue to inspire me.

Though I lived in Los Angeles for the duration of this program, I like to think of this dissertation as unfolding, crucially, in light of my experiences in better parts of the country, and thus I offer an abstract thanks to *place*. I owe thanks to the great American Northeast, from the mid-Atlantic to the land that continually inspires me more than anywhere else: New England. I truly believe that my experiences in this region have made me a better person and this dissertation stronger. While there is nothing so inspiring as a person, second to that is a community and a culture that inheres in a time and place. My love, my *self*, belongs to the northeast—and though not quite as vast as persons, but almost as beautiful, to the deciduous trees that populate the region. For Amy Lowell it is the lilac that emblazons her New England spirit, for me, it is the deciduous tree.

But perhaps most importantly, I would like to thank my friends—some of whom have already been mentioned in another capacity—to whom I dedicate this dissertation. While there are too many of you to enumerate, I would like to give special mention to Paul, Olivia, Zach, Eddy, and Andrew.

Lastly, I would like to thank my dad Mark, and special thanks to RCP, who will remain named only by his initials.

All of you have not only contributed either intellectually or pragmatically to the completion of this dissertation, but have helped shaped who I have become along the way. I am sincerely grateful and indebted to every one of you—*it has been so much fun!*

Preface

Sometimes when contemplating the value of philosophy I am tempted toward the infamous conclusion of James Wright's poem "Lying in a Hammock at William Duffy's Farm in Pine Island, Minnesota:"

> *Over my head, I see the bronze butterfly,*
> *Asleep on the black trunk,*
> *Blowing like a leaf in green shadow.*
> *Down the ravine behind the empty house,*
> *The cowbells follow one another*
> *Into the distances of the afternoon.*
> *To my right,*
> *In a field of sunlight between two pines,*
> *The droppings of last year's horses*
> *Blaze up into golden stones.*
> *I lean back, as the evening darkens and comes on.*
> *A chicken hawk floats over, looking for home.*
> *I have wasted my life.*

I hope, if nothing else, that in the course of reading this dissertation, the reader can tell that *I had tremendous fun writing it*. Fun, like laughter, is contagious. I also hope I have, at very least, gestured toward something not only fun, but also quite beautiful and wonderful.

Yet other times I feel that I can make more traction toward articulating the value of philosophy.

For some, philosophy is an abstract exercise that seeks conceptual clarity, true conclusions, or something of the like. Most often when viewed this way it is engaged in for reasons having to do with interest in some particular theoretical topic or for an interest in the outcome of some particular investigation, much like the scientist might think of her relationship to her work. For others, it is a more personal endeavor.

This dissertation grew out of some of the most important interpersonal experiences of my 20s: a relationship-ending argument about the fundamental role of friends in one another's lives, navigating all kinds of relationships under differing social situations, bumping up against boundaries and learning the hard way, relationship loss, loving, affectionate and fulling relationships, new friendships, and watching my long-existing relationships grow and change in ways I didn't once have the perspective to imagine. In other words, all the standard fare for a woman emerging from the end of her 20s. But I hope that this approach translates into something worthwhile and of philosophical interest. Nevertheless, I offer it as what it is: a personal-philosophical project emerging out of a time and place in a life. It is contiguous with the aesthetic pursuits, projects, and values I that hold.

I believe that philosophy is best conceived of in these terms. That is, the best philosophy really is what the word's modern vernacular meaning entails: one's own conceptualization of life and the world. At least when doing value theory this strikes me to be the case. As philosophers we rely so much on what we term "intuition," even in the course of our arguments. So much of this intuition is shaped by a life and one's personal experience when it comes to the broader matters of value theory. It is hard for me to imagine worthwhile value theory as a more thoroughly scientific enterprise more fully divorced from the personal.

I take seriously the idea of the commonsensical and vernacular throughout this dissertation. I take more seriously popular belief and conception of ordinary phenomena of value than I do highly abstracted and analytic-style definitions in the domain of value theory. This is reflected in my methodological approach and in the relative absence of much traditional philosophical literature on the topic. Yet I am also guilty of theorizing much at times, especially

in the earlier chapters of this dissertation. However, my hope is that theory yields to commonsense in the end. That is, even if one rejects my argument or my conclusions, I hope that they can find it possible to charitably interpret me as coming from a place of commonsensical perspective, even if the reader and I disagree on what common sense entails. This work is not merely an abstract exercise.

Following in that respect, I have this to justify my project: it is not ultimately about finding true claims or even conceptual clarity surrounding the topics investigated. I do not even know what it would mean to claim that a given theory of friendship is true, or morally right, or good simpliciter. Friendship is simply not subject to these sorts of claims in absolute. When I make claims that sound like this, they are always meant to be qualified that the good, moral implication, or value claim that I make is based upon my own conceptualization that emerges. I know that I believe that these views do constitute a better, richer way of living with our friends and those close to us. But I do not know how to argue for them beyond my own conceptualization of a life. This is not relativism. It is humility.

Thus, this dissertation ultimately constitutes one conceptualization of the phenomena investigated. It is my hope, however, that my own conceptualization will inspirit reflection and clarity on others' own ways of conceptualizing the topics at hand. In good philosophy, as I understand it, we exchange our conceptualizations of the world and hopefully gain more insight upon our own stances and those of others. But we are just not in the enterprise for some ultimate notion of truth or clarity. What good philosophy, and particularly value theory, can instead yield is better understanding of *oneself and the other.*

"All that has been said of friendship is like botany to flowers"

Henry David Thoreau

Vita

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This chapter represents a particular time and place within my life that is now within the more distant past. It is dedicated to a former friendship, whose place now likewise rests firmly in the past, but not without appreciation and gratitude for all the good, wonder, and self-actualization that came of it in its time.

Chapter 1

Relationships Egalitarianism

0. Introduction

Emily Dickinson writes:

The Soul selects her own Society —
Then — shuts the Door —
To her divine Majority —
Present no more —
Unmoved — she notes the Chariots — pausing —
At her low Gate —
Unmoved — an Emperor be kneeling
Upon her Mat —
I've known her — from an ample nation —
Choose One —
Then — close the Valves of her attention —
Like Stone —

Certainly this poem conveys much, though among its meaning two themes are particularly relevant to situating the following investigation. The poem conveys a sense of the intimacy of friendship. But even more prominently, it also conveys a sense of the exclusivity and *partiality* friendship, for the soul selects her own society and then she shuts the door. Perhaps this is true and the soul does select its own compatriots. Perhaps friendship is at least in part an exercise of partiality. But does this also hold true within the society itself? And are there further rules or considerations that ought to govern the society once selected?

1. Partiality Across Close Relationships

Of the many individuals we encounter we find ourselves more partial[1] to some rather than others. I am more partial to those with whom I am acquainted than I am to complete strangers. Similarly, I am more partial to those I like of those with whom I am acquainted than I am to those with whom I am acquainted and do not like. Further, of those with whom I am acquainted and like, I am more partial to those who are my friends than those with whom I am merely acquainted. Further still, of my friends I am more partial to some rather than others. We find ourselves displaying greater degrees of partiality to some rather than others across seemingly every type of relationship, even those lacking a disparity in distance or closeness.

While questions about the justification of our partiality to those close to us over those we have little or no relation to have received much attention, our partiality across relationships of similar closeness is equally deserving of investigation. This phenomenon, *partiality across close relationships*, will be the topic of my initial investigation. I will talk first of friendships as a paradigm case in which this kind of partiality arises, though my remarks will generalize across all of our close relationships. My aim will be to develop and motivate an egalitarian problem that arises when we show partiality across these relationships; that is, to elaborate upon a certain tension between our partiality and the nature of these relationships. Drawing out this problem will, in turn, be productive in thinking about the nature of our close relationships in general. Finally, I will offer an account that solves the problem by clarifying both the nature of friendship and our practices of partiality.

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[1] The term "more partial" may seem to be an unusual construction, however, it is merely intended to track the pretheoretical use of the notion without committing to any particular instance of partial behavior. More will be said about this later.

While the *problem* of partiality in close relationships may be relatively unfamiliar, the phenomenon itself will not be. Of one's friends there seem to be some to whom one stands in a certain special sort of relationship that is not common to all. Though we ought to carefully develop just what this special sort of relationship is, colloquially, the phenomenon itself is familiar enough: we have our friends and our best friends. By simply describing one's friend as a best friend we engage in a kind of partiality across our friendships.

We recognize some of our friendships to be relationships worth distinguishing from our others. By doing so it seems not that we mean to claim that friendships and best-friendships are two distinct kinds of relationships, but rather that there is a feature in virtue of which we are partial to a particular friend. What this feature is will be personal and vary for different individuals. A friend may be characterized as a best friend for sharing particular values, for the quality or quantity of time spent together, for her own particular qualities, etc. However, in case we find this distinction mysterious, we need not look to the distinction between friendship and best-friendship in order to find the relevant kind of partiality at stake. Pretheoretically, it is not unusual to maintain differing attitudes of care and appreciation towards one's friends regardless of the way we describe our level of the friendship. Partiality among one's friendships is thoroughly commonplace.

1.1 Finding the Problem: the Opponents and the Cases

However, a standard objection to those who take partiality of any sort to be troubling immediately arises. The standard form of the objection raises the possibility that partiality is actually constitutive of our close relationships. For me to be friends with you in the first place is for me to be more partial to you than I am to others. In fact, it even seems to be a necessary

condition of friendship that I be more partial to you than to others whom are not my friends. Insofar as equality is part of the nature of friendship, it must not be taken to prevent this sort of partiality from arising, lest it contradict the nature of the relationship in the first place.

An analogous objection can be made specifically addressing the concerns of partiality across one's close relationships. It is a fact about our interpersonal practices that we favor some of our friends over others. This is no more surprising than it is that we form friendships by favoring, or being more partial to, some individuals rather than others in general. Just as part of what it is to be friends with someone in the first place is to favor, or be more partial to, them over others, part of what it is *to be better friends* with one particular friend rather than another friend is to favor, or be more partial to, that friend. Thus the partiality we find in friendship is simply constitutive of what it is to be better friends with one friend rather than another, a practice we have observed to be commonplace. Call this view Close Relationships Constitutivism. As before, the nature of the equality involved in friendship cannot be such that it disallows favoritism among friendships, this time lest it contradict the nature of being better friends with one friend rather than another. Certainly the response to these worries cannot plausibly be that we can have no friends nor even that we cannot have some friendships better than others.

However, someone worried about partiality will not likely find this objection yet tempting. In order to further motivate it, we might introduce a certain conception of morality that restricts us little in the friendship-relevant respects of our lives. On this conception there are a set of basic duties owed to every other person in virtue of their standing as an other person. These basic duties fall under the domain of an impartial, egalitarian morality of the kind that causes worries about our partial relationships. However, the domain of such a morality is limited. In

fact, it is rather restricted. It might tell us the sorts of actions that are allowed and disallowed based upon egalitarian considerations of fairness and equality toward other persons, but outside of these prescriptions it leaves us with much freedom as to how we live the rest of our lives. Call this view the No-Further-Requirements View of morality. Things like love and attraction of any other sort will be outside the domain of an impartial, egalitarian morality. Morality just does not tell us who to love or how to love them, and love is just not the sort of thing subject to fairness and equality. Yet it seems to be just these sorts of things on which we base our close relationships. Once we recognize this, the above account of what it is to have a close relationship with someone should no longer be troubling.

However, in order to cast some immediate doubt upon this objection, next consider the following cases meant to show that we can go wrong in our friendships by making moral mistakes about the requirements of fairness and equality across our relationships.[2]

(i) First, consider the inattentive favorer. Suppose that April is friends with both May and June but that April favors May over June. Her favoritism is such that she habitually devotes more of her attention to May than June. Further suppose that each friend is roughly—greater devotion aside—of a similar level of friendship in relation to April. That is, perhaps they are both best friends of April or both simply friends of April. There is no disparity in the level of friendship between them. Additionally, it is not the case that one friend is more in need of attention than the other based upon her circumstances or composition. Nevertheless, April always devotes more of

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[2] Perhaps one will object to these cases constituting *egalitarian* moral mistakes. That is, one might agree that April does make a moral mistake, but that it is not one of an egalitarian nature. Instead, it merely constitutes something like letting June down, or the like. I will not argue against such a skeptic here, but instead ask her to consider the plausibility of my explanation and account on the egalitarian reading I propose.

her attention to May than she does to June. Now suppose that June notices April's greater devotion to May than herself. June notices, for example, when April is attentive to May even during April's private time with June. June notices that April often talks of her plans with May when she spends time alone with April, but seems less interested in their own plans taking place together *right there and then*. June notices that when the three of them are together, April always is more attentive to May. It seems that April has not been a good friend to June.

(ii) Second, consider the reluctant-to-spend-time-together favorer. Again, begin with the supposition that April is friends with both May and June but that April favors May over June. This time, though, suppose that April is better friends with May than June. April's favoritism is such that she is reluctant to spend time together with June alone. April will invite June to accompany both May and herself when they are together, but has little interest in spending time alone with June. That is, April will primarily admit June into her life only in the company of other, better friends. June begins to notice this. Even though April is better friends with May than June, she has still failed to be a good friend to June. Being better friends with one does not make neglect of the other permissible.

(iii) Third, consider the new-friend favorer. As previously supposed, assume that April is friends with both May and June but that April favors May over June. However, this time, suppose that May is a new friend to April. Suppose that April's nascent relationship with May is particularly rewarding and promising. All that April wants to do these days is spend time with May. Her desire is so strong that she has neglected her old friends, even her very best, June. June begins to notice this. No matter how strong April's desire, nor how promising the relationship, April's abandonment of June seems to constitute a failure of April to be a good friend to June.

(iv) Lastly, consider the commitment-breaker. Suppose that April has a commitment to May and that April has a commitment to June. Furthermore, the relevant kind of commitment to each is not promissory, but rather based in the nature and history of each relationship. That is, the structure of each commitment is such that April finds herself *committed* to come through for each as a matter of her being in the kind of relationship that she is and having the history she does with each of her friends in each of their respective relationships. However, each of April's commitments conflict in this case. April cannot maintain her commitment to May and still do so to June, likewise, April cannot maintain her commitment to June and still do so to May. If April is to maintain her commitment to one she must, as a consequence, break her commitment to the other. Further, suppose that each commitment is equally pressing in April's own judgement and that April knows that the degree to which May values their commitment is equal to the degree to which June values their commitment. April takes it that her breaking of either commitment would be equally wrong and would equally damage her relationship to either May or June, all else the same. Now suppose that April favors May over June. Is April's greater partiality to May than June justification for April's choice to maintain her commitment to May and break her commitment to June?

Certainly this seems reasonable on the picture suggested by the earlier objection. We maintain commitments to friends at the expense of non-friends as a matter of course. It seems natural to think that the same will hold true among close relationships on this view. Such an objector, then, seems committed to the view that one ought to be able to resolve the conflict merely by appealing to one's favoritism. Thus April is justified in maintaining her commitment to May and breaking her commitment to June.

But it seems that this view would commit us to dispelling with the conflict too quickly. We seem to have missed the point of the case by ignoring what is deeply troubling about being in April's position. April must make a decision, *between friends*, whose commitment to hold and whose commitment to break. If it were as easy as appealing to her favoritism, the case would not be difficult or troubling. It seems that such a decision is difficult because there is no obvious appeal to make, whether to one's favoritism or something else entirely. To make this decision, it seems, is to be a bad friend in one way or another. It is to violate some condition of the relationship that one stands in to the other. Perhaps, tentatively, we might think that the difficulty arises because April seems to violate the necessary equality on which friendship depends when she makes this decision one way or the other. Thus an appeal to partiality as constitutive of friendship and better-friendship does not do away with the problem of partiality across close relationships. In fact, the appeal seems misguided, since, for April to appeal to her partiality seems for her to have been a bad friend one way or the other, not a better one.

What seems to be going wrong in each of these cases is a disregard for equality and fairness toward one of April's friends. But, if friendship really is beyond the domain of an impartial, egalitarian morality, it should not be possible to make mistakes of equality and fairness across our close relationships. Thus if we are tempted to think that something has gone wrong in any of the above cases, we ought to reject the No-Further-Requirements Close Relationships Constitutivist View. Hence it remains for something to be said about the nature of the requirements of equality and fairness that close relationships are subject to.

1.2 Theorizing the Problem

The problem of partiality in close relationships comes into view once more when we

consider the kind of equality that seems to be a necessary condition for friendship. It seems that the very possibility of friendship rests upon a certain kind of equality between persons. In order for me to be friends with you, it is necessary that we see the other as standing in a fundamentally equal relation to ourselves. That is, I mutually recognize the other to be an other individual who is equal in her relation to myself as an individual herself. The exact nature of this recognition of equality needs to be made precise, however, for the time being simply recognizing its necessity for friendship to take place is enough to begin to see the problem take shape.

Suppose that April is friends with both May and June. As a necessary condition for April to be friends with May, April recognizes May as an other individual standing in a fundamentally equal relation to herself and May recognizes April to be an other individual standing in a fundamentally equal relation to herself. Likewise, for the same reason, April recognizes June to be an other individual standing in a fundamentally equal relation to herself and June recognizes April to be an other individual standing in a fundamentally equal relation to herself. Further, in virtue of each one of these recognitions, April recognizes May as an other individual standing in a fundamentally equal relation to June as an other individual.

Call this further recognition the transitivity of equality in friendship. Note, however, that this transitivity does not entail that May and June are friends themselves, or even that they actually each do in fact recognize the relation of equality that each stands in with respect to the other.[3] This is because the relation holds between May and June merely because they are each individual persons; it is independent of whether either of them realizes that it holds or not, or of the relationship, or lack thereof, between them. Friendship, whatever its ultimate good is, is at

[3] This would be silly.

least in part for the *actual recognition* of this relation. It remains to be specified what exactly the nature of this transitivity is and what requirements it entails.

Now suppose that April is more partial to May than she is to June. Say that April *favors* May over June. Or maybe that April *cares more* about May than June. How can this be justified if it is a necessary condition for both April's friendship with May and her friendship with June that the friendship depends upon mutual recognition of one's relation of equality to the other? And since April further recognizes May and June to stand in the same relation of equality to one another, this kind of favoritism seems to violate the transitivity of equality in friendship. Here we reach a problem much like the one traditionally considered in much of the discussion of partiality and friendship. Typically one worries about the demands of an impartial mortality equally applicable to all persons generating tension with the particular care that we show for specific individuals in our lives. We, on the other hand, have reached an analogous tension by instead considering *features of the nature of close relationships themselves*. Thus the scope of our problem differs, while the form remains very similar. It appears that a necessary component of what it is to be in a close relationship with another, the mutual recognition of one's relation of equality to the other, generates tension with our actual practices of finding ourselves to be more partial to some individuals rather than others. While this is the general shape that our problem takes, it can be formulated in a multitude of ways, ranging from a violation of the transitivity of equality in friendship to the intuitive appeal of curbing one's favoritism in the cases presented earlier.

Now consider a theoretical formulation of the problem from the first personal viewpoint of April, the favoring-agent herself. If a necessary part of what friendship is consists in mutual

recognition of the equality of one's relation to the other, then it must be that April's recognition of May's equality in relation to herself and April's recognition of June's equality in relation to herself are equal themselves. Call this particular recognition of April's first personal interpersonal transitivity. If first personal interpersonal transitivity holds, April's relationship to May and April's relationship to June should be grounded in the same degree of recognition of equality of each to herself. But if this is the case, then how can April justify her greater partiality to May than June? That she favors May over June? Or that she cares more about May than June? If April stands in a relation of equality to May and April stands in the very same relation of equality to June, and it is part of the nature of April's friendship with each that she stands in this relation to the same degree, it seems that there is no room for April to be more partial to May than June. Or, put another way, by April's being friends with May and her being friends with June, and the respective relations of equality that come along with each respective relationship, April becomes responsible for her treatment of each with respect to the other. It is merely the fact that April is friends with both May and June that establishes this form of transitivity. Hence we reach a tension between the nature of the sort of relationship that each of April's friendships are and April's own feelings of partiality among her friends.

However, one might object to the first personal description of transitivity as ad hoc. After all, how often is it that one really comes near this of train of thought regarding her friendships? Talk of the mutual recognition of the other's relation of equality to oneself is highly theoretical. It is certainly not the typical stuff of one's thoughts about her friends. There is an equivocation of viewpoints making this description seem plausible: that of the favorer, and that of the subjects of favoritism. As a favorer, these thoughts do not naturally occur to me. Attraction of whatever type

the relationship calls for is not subject to considerations of any sort of equality or fairness. It is only according to the viewpoint of the subject of favoritism—or more likely the subject of *lack* of favoritism—on which these thoughts might occur. Thus, to talk of the problem arising from April's own perspective is at best a mistake resulting from the conflation of these two viewpoints.

While there is much to be said for distinguishing these two viewpoints, the objection should not make us skeptical that the problem does arise from the first personal standpoint at all. Even as favorers we do feel the force of the problem. If asked to consider our friendships, we might be able to make some comparative assessments about the traits each one of our friends possesses, their virtues, and their flaws. We might even be able to make some remarks about how they fit into our scheme of value as a whole. However, there is still something we seem to resist when asked to make comparisons about our friends simpliciter. It is this feeling held by the favorer that comes into tension with any evaluations she holds about her friends. While the thought may not always be immediately present to the favorer, it is certainly not ad hoc, nor does it appear to be merely the result of a conflation between viewpoints. Notice, however, that so far the problem has been formulated without ever stating exactly what transitivity itself *requires of us*.

First notice that I have attempted to remain relatively neutral in my characterization of what it means for a person to be *more partial* to one rather than another. The very phrase "more partial" may seem awkward itself. While what it is for *someone* to be partial to *some thing* seems straightforward enough, it is less obvious what it is for *someone* to be more partial to *some thing* rather than *another*. This construction seems to describe a rather different kind of relation. The

partiality relation has two places; x is partial to y. On the other hand, the more-partial relation has three; x is more partial to y than z. However, this awkwardness in construction serves to highlight a desired under-specificity. The relation "more partial" stands in for other more specific relations such as "favors", "cares more about", "spends more time with", and the like; relations that all accommodate at least three places. Transitivity requires us to *recognize*—and *act* in ways consistent with that recognition—all sorts of these relations as being equal among friends.

Before balking at the suggestion of such strong egalitarian requirements across close relationships, consider the voluntariness of friendship. Friendships are relationships we choose to take part in. In engaging in a close relationship like friendship, one has singled out another for the purpose of relating to her in a special sort of way—the soul selects her own society. Part of this specialness is singling out the other person for recognition of one's own equality to the other in a particularly acute way. That is, part of this singling out consists in a certain kind of deep recognition of the equality of the other. It is our finding the other wonderful which gives us reason to single her out. And this voluntariness in singling her out to recognize her particular equality spurs the depth of this recognition. Further, each one of our friends has been singled out for this same special sort of recognition in a similar way. That does not mean that we make each of our friends in similar ways, or that we even make them for similar reasons. But we have singled them out to explicitly *stand in recognition of a certain relation of equality to us* that is present in each and every one of our friendships all the same. For this reason, perhaps the domain of one's friendships has strong egalitarian requirements.

The initial discomfort we might have with accepting the domain of friendship to consist in such strong egalitarian requirements comes from the No-Further-Requirements conception of

morality. However, we have already given reason to doubt the truth of this view. Nevertheless, we can find further reason here. The No-Further-Requirements view seems to get our feelings backward. *Our close relationships are the very relationships that we care the most about getting right.* Hence, if anything, we find ourselves more committed to the requirements of equality and fairness across them than we do in our relationships to any given person to whom we are not close. What we find ourselves committed to in our non-close relationships is a sort of basic moral recognition of the equality of the other person. That is, we recognize them to be other persons and are committed to doing no wrong toward them, but we are not moved by further considerations having to do with our singling them out for recognition in any special way. In fact, if the No-Further-Requirements View is to get off the ground at all, it is here, among these relationships. But then, of course, it contradicts itself.

Furthermore, against the Close Relationships Constitutivist, it seems not to be greater partiality that is constitutive of one's being friends or better friends with another, but rather it is this special sort of singling out of the other in virtue of recognition of her relation of equality to oneself that is constitutive of one's friendship. Of course, as mentioned above, we single out all of our friends in this same way. But it is not that we recognize some of our friends to stand in a relation of greater equality to ourselves than other of our friends.

1.3 Developing a New Account

Though I have now spent some time defending the case for strong egalitarian demands in the domain of our friendships, it still might seem odd to think that these demands require that we care just as much about each of our friends, or spend just as much time with each of them, or give just as much attention to each of them, and the like.

Surely few of us actually engage the domain of our friendships this way, and it seems plausible that we can preserve equality and fairness within one's close relationships without actually making sure that one treats each of her friends equally in all of these ways. That is, while we have reason to think that one can make mistakes of equality and fairness in her friendships, it also seems plausible that these mistakes can be avoided without requiring strict equality in all of these dimensions. Hence I will next turn to the solution to the problem of partiality across close relationships: an account of friendship and our close relationships in general that permits variation across these dimensions while still preserving the recognition of equality that friendship rests upon.

2. Affective Partiality

However, before developing an account of friendship and close relationships in general, it is important to get clear on the concept of partiality itself. Recall that the notion of greater partiality to one over another has been intentionally left underspecified. Part of the reason for this has been to make room for the strong egalitarian demands across friendships discussed earlier. However, a further reason involves the nature of partially itself. Partiality can be separated into two distinct types, one concerning our closeness to others and the other concerning our feelings toward others. While our partial actions often manifest both of these types at once, at least pre-theoretically, it is nevertheless important to recognize each type as distinct in our theorizing. The reason for this will become apparent later in the course of my argument.

First consider *affective* partiality. The affective type of partiality concerns our affective judgements or attitudes about individuals. This type of partiality is familiar enough when considering the relationships we have in our lives. There are some people we seem to like very

much. There are others whom we find merely pleasant. On the other hand, there are others further whom we simply cannot stand. Still, there are others yet whom we fall deeply in love with. Of course, there are many more who fall somewhere in between these cases. When we encounter any given person we tend to form certain affective judgements about them. These feelings, when considered across our close relationships, constitute a type of partiality. April may find June merely pleasant while she likes May very much. Or, April may deeply love May while she simply likes June very much. April's evaluations of May and of June give rise to different attitudes of appreciation that she holds toward May and June. We might say that this type of partiality constitutes what it is to *like someone more than another*.

Perhaps one might think discussing these affective attitudes along a single dimension is a mistake. It is not merely the case that we like people in different degrees, but rather that we have different kinds of ways in which we like others. What it is to love another deeply is something of an entirely different kind than what it is to like someone very much. Of course, among those we find ourselves to be deeply in love with we might be deeply in love with to different degrees. But to compare those we are deeply in love with to those we like very much and explain the difference as a matter of degree of the same attitude is mistaken.

While there might be something to this concern, it nevertheless does not change the dynamics of this kind of partiality. Perhaps our affective attitudes are more complicated than first described, and run along multiple dimensions. But these dimensions are interrelated. We may initially find our attraction to someone to be mild but be surprised to find it grow over time. Or we may fall out of love with someone to whom we find ourselves initially enamored. Those we feel one way about at a time we may come to feel another later. There may be some others for

whom our initial attraction never varies in degree or kind, but this will certainly not be necessary, and it is likely the exception. It will still be true that we possess different affective attitudes toward different persons, and that they will vary in degree, and, perhaps, kind, too. But even if they do differ in kind, and the kinds we feel toward specific individuals never change, this will not change the course of my argument. Whether or not the possession of different *kinds* of attitudes affects the nature of a relationship will be reconsidered later.

2.1 Affective Favoritism

Affective partiality seems to explain at least one notion of favoritism. Consider the following proposal: what it is for April to favor May over June is for April to *like May more than June*. Or, in greater detail, it is for April to *hold a more positive attitude toward May than toward June*. Of course, when April favors May over June, she may act in various ways that betray her favoritism. She may spend more time with May than June, be more attentive to May than June, share more with May than June, and so on. However, none of these actions appear to be constitutive of favoritism, as each may be made consistent or not with April's favoritism. May may be in need of April's time more than June. Likewise, May may be in need of more attention than June, and so on. Instead, favoritism, at its core, seems to be a bare relational fact about how much we like one person as compared to another.

However, one might object to this account of favoritism if it is meant to be troubling. Favoritism, on this proposal, is an entirely natural, harmless human behavior. As noted above, favoritism of this kind is a familiar experience. It is a basic part of the human experience to feel attraction toward some people, and to feel it in different degrees. No person is attracted to *everyone* nor is she attracted *equally* to those whom she does find herself attracted to. A view that

required one to be otherwise would require a certain kind of *inhuman* inhibition of one's feelings of attraction. Achieving such a state would be highly impractical if not impossible. Furthermore, it would preclude much of the kind of attraction to others that motivates our projects and makes possible a vibrant, meaningful life. Any account on which this kind of favoritism is troubling must contend with this objection.

This objection seems to preclude the aspirations of any view that would have it that we abandon our partiality entirely. However, when we find this objection compelling, we seem to have something like affective partiality specifically in mind. This is the objection that makes us feel most uncomfortable with acknowledging our close relationships to be subject to egalitarian requirements. When asked to abandon or inhibit our feelings of attraction, we think that something must have gone wrong. It cannot be the case that these relationships are governed by morality, let alone an egalitarian one. Hence we gravitate toward the No-Further Requirements View and combine it with Close Relationships Constitutivism under the influence of this objection's force. Yet, we have also seen that we have reason to reject this position *just because* we do in fact feel the force of egalitarian demands in these very relationships! Hence we reach a dilemma. The way out is to recognize the alleged second, distinct type of partiality and how it relates to the first.

3. Closeness

Closeness partiality, like affective partiality, is immediately commonplace and familiar. In fact, closeness partiality is commonplace and familiar both pretheoretical and theoretically. Pretheoretically, we are closer to some people than we are to others. Theoretically, philosophers have discussed the notion—usually under the name of differential closeness—in discussions of

partiality. The less familiar terminology, "closeness partiality," serves to explicitly mark that it is alleged to be a type of partial behavior, and further, to highlight it as merely one of two apparent components of partiality.

While closeness is something we can recognize easily enough—philosopher or not—unlike affection, it requires further reflection to say exactly what it is. Like affection, though, it seems bound up with another of our attitudes: care. However, the relationship between the two is not as transparent as that of affection and favoritism. Furthermore, while the notion of being closer to one person than another factors into our pretheoretical thinking about our relationships with little trouble, it is more difficult to give a precise, succinct statement of what exactly it entails. Nevertheless, a detailed reflection on the nature of closeness will lead to a way out of the previously described dilemma.

Closeness is perhaps the most striking component of our relationships, yet, all the same, seems to be the most obscure feature of them. Perhaps before thinking about what it is to be part of a *close* relationships, we should get clear on what it is simply to be part of a relationship. Perhaps before thinking about what it is to be part of a relationship, however, we should get clear on what it is for me to have my own life in the first place! These topics are worth investigations each of their own, but for the time being I will offer some conjectures answering to at least the former question. Whatever it is for me to have a life, and for you to have one as well, a relationship seems to be a literal entangling of these lives. To spell out exactly what that means in detail requires an account of what it is to have a life, but some vague remarks can be made here for now.

If while I go about living, you do too, and your living is a part of what mine is and mine is a part of what yours is, then our lives are entangled in a way that constitutes a relationship. This statement is sufficiently vague enough to capture all sorts of interactions. If a part of my living is to sit down in the office and a part of yours is to sit down in the same office, then you are a part of my life and I am a part of yours through our sitting in the same office together. Our relationship is certainly not substantial if this is our only interaction, but it is a relationship nonetheless; we are officemates. On the other hand, if I wake up to conversation with you every morning and come home to conversation with you every evening, certainly you are a part of my living and I am a part of yours. This formulation is broad enough to consider interactions ranging from sitting in an office together to intimately living together to constitute relationships. Perhaps it is too broad. Does my interaction with a woman I walk past on my way to the airport in a city to which I will never return count as a relationship? Perhaps relationships must have a certain temporal duration. Or perhaps we will appeal to further conditions on our intentions or mutual knowledge regarding our interactions to rule this case out. However, for now, this vague statement is enough to proceed.

3.1 The Interrelated Conditions of Closeness

Now suppose that our lives are entangled in the right sort of way so as to constitute a relationship between us. What further needs to be the case in order for our relationship to be a *close* relationship? Perhaps the most obvious component of the relationship involves one's knowledge of the other. Another fairly uncontroversial suggestion is that one must be made vulnerable to the other. However, I will advance two additional conditions. First, one must recognize the equality of the other in the sort of way already discussed. Second, there must exist

a relatively matching set of mutual expectations in the relationship. A close relationship will turn out to be, in part, a relationship in which these four conditions are met. However, these conditions are not separate, but rather they are interrelated and overlap all in the service of *recognizing the other and her equality*.

First, consider recognition of the equality of the other. There are many ways in which we can recognize the equality of the other. However, the kind of recognition described here is of the same sort detailed earlier. That is, to remind ourselves, we mutually recognize the other to be an other individual who is equal in her relation to oneself as an individual herself. It is this recognition that provides the basis for one's being close to the other. Part of the content of this recognition is the realization that you are a thing just like me, a person, all the same. It is a realization of the significance and importance of your life in just the same way that I recognize the significance and importance of my own life. Thus the content of this realization goes beyond mere recognition of our equal moral standing to one another. While there is overlap between this recognition and recognition of equal moral standing, this recognition is primarily one about *what it is for each of us to have a life*, *be a person,* and the *sameness, for each of us, of whatever that amounts to, no matter how it is particularly realized*. It is through being in close relationships with others that this recognition is fully and robustly accomplished.

Next, consider mutual knowledge. The degree to which one knows the other is perhaps the most widely recognized fundamental feature of closeness. In fact, our pretheoretical, commonsense notions about relationships seem to prominently track this feature. Pretheoretically, we often distinguish between mere acquaintanceship and full friendship in terms of how well we *know* someone. Those whom we like but merely have a relationship in which we

minimally know the other we call acquaintances. These relationships are not very deep. We might associate with an acquaintance because we share some interests in common, a space together, or like some of one another's qualities. But what is most obviously missing from these sorts of relationships is a *deep knowledge* of the other. In order to be *friends* with someone, on the other hand, we have to know them well.

Mutual knowledge of the other enables one to relate to the other in more substantial ways. When I know the other well, I know many things about her; I know her history, interests, imagination, emotions, humor, dispositions, motivations, ambitions, etc. Knowing these sorts of things about the other allows me to relate to her in more meaningful ways. It allows me to contribute to her good, or, not be be overlooked, to detract from it. While one typically thinks of friendship in terms of adding to the good of one's life, such a picture is too simplistic. Part of what makes knowing the other increase the value of a relationship is that one knows how to *affect* and *have influence upon* the other, whether that be good or bad. With deep knowledge of the other, one can interact in ways with her that are deeply meaningful to her. One can affect the other's life in a way that matters. It is this ability that is missing from mere acquaintanceship.

However, the most important reason we seek knowledge of the other is because knowing the other is value-giving to one's own life. Beyond what one can do with her knowledge of the other, she seeks to know the other simply because the other is wonderful. Knowing the other is something that she just wants to do; it satisfies a desire she holds about which the other is the target. It is part of the good of one's own life that she knows the other. Further, knowing and being known by the other is good simpliciter.

Mutual vulnerability to the other is the next fundamental feature of closeness. One cannot be close to the other unless each is vulnerable to the other. Part of how this works has already been discussed: one knows the other and with that knowledge becomes able to affect the other in deeply meaningful ways. To be vulnerable to the other is to open oneself up to being able to be affected by the other in this way. Which, when entangled in the right way, is to make your living *depend* in part upon the other's living. In order to facilitate this vulnerability to the other, each one must share things about herself with the other, and each must mutually pursue information from the other. That is, knowing the other must be a mutually active and voluntary endeavor that each participates in on her own side of the relationship mirroring the other. This is the process by which one opens herself up to being affected by the other. Each places trust in the other with the details of her own life and with the other's very presence in her own life.

3.2 Expectation

Finally, let us now turn our attention to perhaps the least obvious feature of closeness: matching expectations in a relationship. Crucially, the expectations in question here are not of the moral sort discussed earlier. We *can* make moral mistakes by recognizing or holding certain expectations, however, the expectations of interest here are either social or personal in nature. Those most relevant to closeness are those personal in nature. However, in order to get clear on this sort of particular expectation, we must first consider their general nature in relationships of any kind.

Every relationship has expectations on each side of it, even those that are not close. These expectations will in part be determined by social convention— considerations which are not fully determined by either of us alone or in conjunction—and in part by the individual preference and

personal boundaries of each one of us. Even when I am merely colleagues with the other, there are certain expectations regarding how we will relate to the other. In such a relationship many expectations will be determined simply by mere social convention; perhaps we greet each other when we first encounter the other that day, we ask the other her plans for using any shared space such as a classroom, before we make plans for it ourself, we ask the other what belongings are appropriate to bring to the campus, and so on. The less voluntary the relationship, such as the one in which we have merely been assigned a classroom to share, the more minimal the expectations of the relationship will be.

Less voluntary relationships will have more expectations determined by social convention and fewer determined by each participant's preferences and boundaries. On the other hand, more voluntary relationships, such as those we have considered in which I have singled you out in recognition of your equality, reverse the balance, having more expectations determined by individual preference and personal boundaries, and fewer determined by social convention. While social convention is present in all relationships to some degree, personal preference and individual boundaries may override mere social convention in these cases. While we may share a classroom, we may also share a home, and in virtue of this further relationship, we may know each other's preferences well enough to know that it is appropriate to disregard the convention that we greet one another upon first seeing the other at our shared professional workspace, for example. Call cases in which the balance of expectation is tipped toward individual preference and personal boundaries *substantial relationships*.

Each individual has her own set of expectations within a substantial relationship. That is, each expects of the other certain treatment and behaviors as part of their being in the relationship

together. Perhaps I expect you to apologize when you break a significant commitment to me, even when it is reasonable for you to break it, just because significant-commitment breaking is regrettable, even when justified. Or perhaps I expect you to acknowledge the importance of significant events in my life in a timely manner. However, you may not expect the same of me. Perhaps you think it is not regrettable to break a commitment, no matter how significant, so long as the commitment-breaking is justified. Or perhaps you do not hold expectations of timely response to major events in the other's life. Perhaps, instead, you expect of me that I will appreciate your deep care about the events of my life independently of your timely involvement in those events.

Clearly the expectations each holds of the other may fail to be mutual. I may expect treatment from you that you do not expect of me, or the reverse may hold true. This itself is not wholly problematic. One may be in a better position to fulfill certain expectations to the other that the other cannot fulfill to the first. Perhaps I am more familiar with a certain subject so you expect me to give you advice regarding it, but I do not expect the same from you. This itself is not a serious problem. Relationships can be close while maintaining inequality in this way *so long as they do not violate any other condition of closeness.* However, it is not difficult to imagine cases in which the inequality violates these other conditions. Perhaps I share much with you, but you share little with me. Even if expectations in the relationship are such, this seems to be a violation of vulnerability. I have made myself vulnerable to you, but you have not to me. On the other hand, perhaps I am a musicologist and you expect me to help you understand some claim about historical performance practice, but I cannot expect the same from you, since despite being an excellent musician, you slept through your music history course

sequence. Our relationship suffers no harm in this case. Or, to consider a more drastic case, perhaps I am the mother of an infant. In this case I will certainly be in a position to offer my child much that she can expect of me but that I cannot expect of her.[4] What makes this sort of inequality of mutual expectation acceptable in some cases and unacceptable in others, however, *seems to be a matter of expectation within the relationship itself in the first place.*

I may hold expectations about what kinds of expectations are reasonable for you to hold, and you may hold the same of me. And in this way, you give me asymmetry and I'll give you a symmetry.[5] This accounts for cases in which we find inequality in our expectations to be permissible. Suppose, again, that I expect you to apologize when you break a significant commitment to me, even when it is reasonable for you to break it, just because significant-commitment breaking is regrettable, even when justified. But suppose that you do not share my expectation. Nevertheless, perhaps you expect that I expect it because you know of me that I was raised in a culture where commitment-breaking, no matter what, is among the greatest wrongs.

In expecting me to hold my expectation, you take it to be reasonable for me to hold. This is because all expectations held in a relationship seem to be about what one takes it reasonable that the other do. When I expect you to apologize for a commitment-breaking no matter what, I

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[4] Of course, in the parent-child case there will be additional relevant temporal dimensions involved according to the child's developmental stage. If the reader finds this case unconvincing she may substitute any case in which two adults mutually consent to some inequality of expectation in their relationship. If the reader does find it convincing, however, it provides a nice example of how extreme this inequality can be while still being mutually acceptable. If I am the mother of an infant, certainly I may take my infant's expectations of me to be reasonable. I leave it to the philosopher of mind and developmental psychologist to determine whether the infant's mental states and behaviors are to properly count as *expectations* held toward me. If they do not, I take it we can form an analogous notion if we care to be more precise about the infant's precise mental states.

[5] Thanks to AJ Julius for this wonderful joke.

expect you to do so because I think it to be the reasonable thing for you to do. Of course there is likely more to say about why I think this is the reasonable thing to do. Nevertheless, if this is correct, then the degree of inequality of expectation in the relationship is a matter of mutual expectation itself, even if one expectation is of the second order.

Having mutual expectation in a relationship is a virtue. First and foremost, knowing the expectations of the other *is just a part of knowing the other*. However, it constitutes a special kind of knowledge about the other that each mutually has a role in creating. Thus it is not only a kind of knowledge about the other, but also about the relationship itself. Further, because of this, mutual expectation makes for relationships with little fundamental disagreement, at least with respect to how one relates to the other. In such a relationship, each is in agreement with the other *about the nature of their particular relationship*. That is, each is in agreement with the other as to how it is that the one's living fits into the other's living. Of course, expectations will rarely ever match completely. More often than not, mutual expectation will be a matter of degree. Actual disagreements will arise over expectation, or rather, over how the one fits into the other's living. However, the more unity the parties can come to, the greater the recognition of the other, and the closer the relationship will be.

Thus we have the following four interrelated conditions on closeness: mutual recognition of the equality of the other, mutual knowledge of the other, mutual vulnerability to the other, and mutual expectation on the other. Thus, tentatively, what it is for me to be closer to one person rather than another is for me to have a relationship in which the degree that I know the other and the other knows me is greater, the degree to which I am vulnerable to the other and the other is vulnerable to me is greater, the degree to which I successfully recognize the other to be my equal

and the other successfully recognizes me to be her equal is greater, and the degree to which my expectations on the other match the other's expectations on me is greater. Hence we have reached a tentative analysis of closeness partiality. Still to be discussed, though, is how this type relates to affective partiality.

3.3 A Word About Care

Before moving on, however, note that the notion of *care* does not appear in my discussion of what makes a relationship close. One can certainly care about others without being close to them. However, care for the other seems to be *facilitated* by one's closeness to the other. Being close to someone certainly makes it natural, and perhaps even easier, to care about her. The way in which I care for another I do not know is not the same as the way in which I am able to care for someone I do know. My caring about the other I do not know is impersonal. It is a care for the other as a person. Plausibly, it seems that I even recognize the other whom I do not know as my equal in caring about her. But the recognition is abstract. It is unlike my particular singling out of a specific person who has become entangled with my life. When I single out a person for the particular recognition of equality inherent in friendship, I do so in recognition of the ways in which I know her to be wonderful and valuable. I can recognize that the other whom I do not know is wonderful and valuable as a person, but I cannot recognize the *specific* ways in which she is to me and I am to her. It is this further recognition that comes with increased closeness which facilitates greater, or at least *more personal*, care toward those whom we are close. Closeness transforms impersonal care into personal care.

3.4 Relationships Circumscription

A relationship cannot be close without meeting all of these interrelated conditions.

However, these conditions alone are not yet enough to specify a close relationship. Something is missing still, and without it we cannot detail the appropriate connection between the two types of partiality. Recall that the picture of close relationships I have promised to develop is one consistent with the egalitarian moral requirements friendship has been shown to be subject to previously. Yet the thought that there must be an alternative to making our actual interactions equal among all of our friends seemed tempting. The final condition on closeness vindicates this thought. In order to formulate it, however, I will next present a particular account of friendship which straightforwardly fails to meet the egalitarian requirements discussed earlier.

Consider a view on which all friendships are of a kind, circumscribed in various ways according to their circumstances and origins. Such a view takes friendship to be realizable in all sorts of relationships, but, by its very nature, to a certain degree in each case. I may be friends with my social-structure-equals, but also with those standing in some unequal hierarchical social relationship to myself. I may hold friendships between myself and my neighbors, my peers, my colleagues, my professional superiors, and so on. However, the nature of each of these friendships will differ. Each one of these friendships is of a certain kind. Each is a friendship that obtains under certain circumstances and conditions, such as the one at work subject to certain professional boundaries, or the one in our neighborhood with little restriction on how we interact. As such, each friendship is circumscribed in varying ways according to various boundaries constitutive of the nature of the relationship. What is appropriate to share with my neighbor may not be appropriate to share with my colleague. Or, what I may be able to share with my peers may not be appropriate to share with my professional superiors. Further, this is not only true merely as a matter of fact regarding what constitutes appropriate interaction in a given social

space, but it may additionally be true as a fact relating to the origins of the relationship. I may withhold details of my life from a colleague or abstain from certain types of interaction with her even when I see her on the weekends, not just when we are in the office together. Or, I may even withhold these details from her once we are no longer colleagues, just because we once were.

Appropriateness, however, is not limited to definition by social and professional norms and boundaries. It may also be determined by personal ones. I may be uncomfortable interacting with another in certain ways for reasons having to do with how I feel about the other or how she feels about me. Or perhaps I am uncomfortable interacting in certain ways in relationships which have certain origins. Thus my own attitudes, and, to use even more familiar language, my own *affections* may establish friendships of certain kinds and circumscribe them in certain ways.

What does such a view make of closeness? Clearly, it seems that some friendships will be closer than others. Those kinds which are greatly circumscribed will be less close than those which are not. If it is my own affections that determine which kinds of friendships are subject to greater circumscription, however, then it is my own affections that guide my degree of closeness to the other. Hence we see a connection between affective partially and closeness partiality on this view: my affects toward the other grounds my degree of closeness to her. This view is fairly plausible intuitively. Those whom we like more we tend to form closer relationships with. Those whom we like less, we form less close relationships with. We have little reason to do otherwise.

On this view, whatever friendship is for, being *closer* to the other cannot be part of it, at least not in the usual sense. Closeness seems to be merely an incidental feature of friendships. Perhaps it is a good, but a good only present—only *possible*—in some friendships but not others. But this means that the value of friendship cannot be coming closer to the other without

substantial awkwardness. If being closer to the other is supposed to be a virtue, then we are forced to accept that it is unattainable in some relationships. Perhaps this will not be so troubling in some cases. Those in which friendships are constrained by social norms such as professional boundaries, for instance, may not seem so troubling. It is not difficult, for example, to see why colleagues standing in some hierarchical relation to one another should have boundaries limiting the closeness they may possibly achieve. And even after such a relationships dissolves in an official capacity the psychological effects of hierarchy may be difficult to erase. Other cases may feel more strained, but still not entirely implausible. Perhaps it is reasonable to think friendships between non-hierarchical colleagues ought to be limited in closeness as well. However, whatever the reader's intuitions on these instances, they are not the kinds of cases where this consequence seems most troubling.

It is when the nature of my attraction to the other predestines the closeness of our relationship that this consequence is most troubling. Suppose, as this view would have it, that one's attraction to the other is grounds for one's degree of closeness to the other. Then consider a case in which one starts out with a mild attraction to the other. The relationship is circumscribed in all sorts of ways due to the presence of a merely mild attraction between one and the other. Is this case plausible? Do we actually constrain relationships in this way? Sometimes, at least initially. This scenario seems to describe at least some nascent, lukewarm relationships. But often such relationships come to be otherwise. They grow and develop, the attraction of one to the other increases, *merely by being in the relationship*.

True, there are relationships where one's feelings toward the other remain lukewarm throughout the course of knowing her. Or, where the one never finds reason to come to know the

other more deeply. These are cases where one never comes to fully recognize the other. However, genuine instances of these relationships are less common than we are often led to believe. Many instances of these cases are likely the result of failures to take the relationship seriously, and to instead treat it as a less-voluntary relationship, one whose character is largely determined by social convention in shared space. But this is often not quite the case. Even in more minimal relationships in which there is a substantial non-voluntary component of shared living, we may choose to abstain entirely from relating to the other person, though we do not. In many of these relationships we have in fact associated with the other in a voluntary manner, yet we conflate with it the non-voluntariness of our shared living and, unfortunately, use it as grounds not to draw closer to the other.

In the normal course of a friendship, however, it is often typical for each to grow closer to the other over time and continued shared living. This is true even when one's initial attraction to the other is merely mild. Hence it would be strange to think that drawing closer to the other is not a part of what friendship is for. Further, it would be especially strange to think this *because of one's initial level attraction to the other*. This is because closeness begets closeness. It is no matter what degree of closeness a relationship starts with, nor what level of attraction. Fundamentally, it is closeness that forms the grounds of *more* closeness, not one's initial attitudes and affections. And it is attraction *of any degree* that *starts—not circumscribes—*this very process. Hence it seems the view goes wrong in taking attraction to provide the *primary* grounds, or even motivation, for *more closeness*. Rather, it is one's being in a relationship, *with whatever degree of initial attraction*, that grounds and motivates closeness. So it seems that the previous proposal is subject to an instability: our attraction supposedly provides the grounds for closeness,

yet it seems that closeness also provides the grounds for itself and more of it, but it also often grounds greater attraction as well, so it cannot be that attraction is the primary motivational force circumscribing a relationship. That is simply not its role. It functions not to circumscribe, but rather to inspirit relationships.

Hence we reach the final condition of closeness: more closeness. Closeness, then, consists in the following interconnected and overlapping conditions: mutual knowledge of the other, mutual vulnerability to the other, mutual recognition of the equality of the other, mutual expectation on the other, and recursion. My final proposal is this: to be in a close relationship is to be *open to the development of the relationship*. Closeness, as described, gives the conditions for the development of relationships. Hence, closeness is recursive. Openness to the development of the relationship is openness to further closeness. The aim of close relationships, then, is to be open to maximal closeness.

4. Relationships Egalitarianism

We have now reached the solution to the problem of partiality in close relationships. We can satisfy the egalitarian requirements of close relationships simply by maintaining the attitude of openness to development of the relationship in each of our close relationships. We do not actually have to treat all of our friends equally because we instead manifest equality in *the nature of each relationship*. That is, each relationship is one open to its development, all the same. This is the way in which close relationships are egalitarian. Call this view Relationships Egalitarianism. What remains is to spell out exactly how our relationships work on this account.

4.1 Dissolving Closeness Partiality

An immediate consequence of Relationships Egalitarianism is that closeness is a *process*.

Furthermore, due to the nature of the process' recursion and its vast diversity in realizability, it is a process *without universally distinct or linearly progressive stages*. It is *dynamic*. Thus, strictly speaking, the Relationships Egalitarian denies that it is correct to speak of being closer to one friend than another, so long as they are both close friends. Instead, she insists that April is close to both May and June *but in different ways*, assuming that they are each close friends of April. There is simply no more to say about the matter, even when pretheoretically one would be tempted to say that April is closer to May than June. This is because they each simply belong to a distinct, other realization of the the process, each their own. Hence there simply are no universally distinct stages that progress in a linear fashion for us to compare across relationships. Though this may run counter to how we often talk about our relationships, we need only consider the account of closeness just developed in order to motivate it. [6]

Once again consider the conditions of closeness: mutual recognition, mutual knowledge, mutual vulnerability, matching mutual expectation, and recursion. Since every person differs, every relationship differs as a result. The ways in which each recognizes the other, and her capacity to do so, differs across many dimensions according to the particularities of each. What

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[6] More will be said of the dynamic process nature of closeness when considering the aims of friendship. Once more of the framework is in place, it will be easier to consider the nonlinear nature of closeness. Further, the non-linearity, or episodicity, of relationships will be thoroughly discussed in a later chapter. But if the reader is immediately skeptical, consider the following case. Suppose my expectations of you temporarily change such that I want you less involved in my life as a matter of my own self care. What might pretheoretically seem like a breach of closeness—a distancing in the relationship, or a lesser degree of life entanglement—is actually a manifestation of closeness so long as each "backs off" in mutual respect of the other, as their expectation on the other is brought into greater alignment. Importantly, however, note that my motive of self care is what makes such a demand for you to back off one that is consistent with the development of our relationship. The case is very different if I tell you to back off because I no longer appreciate your company as I used to, for example.

there is to know about the other, and each's pursuit of coming to know her and letting herself be known differs according to each's history, constitution, preferences, individual psychology, and so on. The ways in which each is vulnerable to the other not only differs on a case by case basis due to these same factors—what it is for me to be vulnerable to one friend may differ for what it is to be vulnerable to another—but also across different kinds of relationships. What it is for me to be vulnerable to my child is likely rather different from what it is to be vulnerable to my friend, and, perhaps, what it is for me to be vulnerable to my friend differs from what it is for me to be vulnerable to my romantic partner. Further, it is just as easy to see how widely variable expectation can be within a relationship, let alone across them! And, finally, the way in which we go deeper—our recursive process—differs in as many ways as each does herself according to these same factors. Because of all this, closeness, when examined more closely, thoroughly resists a straightforward comparison across relationships. Thus there is an important sense in which different persons come to different processes, though they have all embarked upon the same one, closeness to the other. This is the sense in which Relationships Egalitarianism dissolves closeness partiality.

What, then, of our commonsense locution? Are we wholly mistaken in saying that we are closer to one than another? Locutions like this are common enough to take seriously. While the Relationships Egalitarian denies that they are strictly correct, she can offer an explanation of what these claims actually amount to. First, I think that often when one makes this remark she is really commenting on the difference between her friendships and acquaintanceships. That is, she has a loose, informal notion of friendship that includes both what I will distinguished as friendship and mere acquaintanceship. When she claims that she is closer to one friend than

another, what she is really stating is that she is *friends*, that is, that she possess the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship, with one of the individuals, while she is merely acquaintances with the other, that is, she lacks the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship with the other.

But suppose that one has this distinction in her mind and yet asserts the comparison still. There is a way to explain the remark in this situation as well. To say that April is closer to May than June is to say that within April's relationship to May there are more contingent dimensions on which April shares mutuality with May than there are dimensions on which April shares mutuality with June. Note, however, that to talk of being closer to one than another is not a matter of the *degree* of closeness being greater in one relationship than the other, but rather it is a claim about the way in which the relationship is realized, and how the process unfolds in a particular relationship. For example, suppose April and June share many particularities in common; preferences, dispositions, occupations, interests, values, and so on. However, now suppose that April and May share those particularities as well, but also share more. Say, for example, that April and May are also both artists working in the same medium, something which June is not. In this respect, April and May share an extra dimension of mutuality; there is an additional respect in which their lives are entangled, and this is what it means for April to be closer to May than June. Hence it is merely contingent. But, of course, cross relationship comparisons of closeness in this sense mean little according to the Relationships Egalitarian. They do not tell us anything about the quality of one relationship as compared to another, for we are all up to different things, and thus share different dimensions of mutuality.

What the Relationships Egalitarian can make sense of is a temporal notion of being closer to someone *internal to a particular relationship*. Within the context of a particular relationship one does become closer to the other. Of course, this is just what closeness is on the Relationships Egalitarian's account—a condition of closeness itself is recursion. Put another way, what it is to be close is simply to get closer. It is intelligible within a relationship to think of the degree to which one has successfully recognized the other, come to know her and be known by her, come to be vulnerable to her, come to match and share mutual expectation on her, and come to deepen all of this.

4.2 The Taxonomy of Relationships

Consider the taxonomy established by Relationships Egalitarianism. Relationships Egalitarianism draws one fundamental distinction that divides relationships into two types: close relationships and (mere) relationships. There is considerable variation to be found within each type, however, these are the only fundamentally different types of relationships. That is, the only way in which any two relationships may differ in their *nature* is by being either one type or the other. The difference between these two types of relationships consists in the possession (or lack) of the attitude of openness to development of the relationship. A consequence of this view is that *there is only one kind of close relationship.* Call it *friendship*. Call all other relationships *acquaintanceship*.

This may seem to be a startling claim at first. Close relationships are varied and multifaceted. No two are the same. How could it be that there is only one kind? The immediate answer to this question is that the the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship is so important and basic to how we relate to one another that it forms a single, distinctive, and

unified kind. The second answer is to immediately agree with the first two observations. The wide variation in close relationships—friendships—is due to the wide variation in mutual expectations on the other. This is the level at which friendships differ. In fact, they differ both individually on a case by case basis, and also on a larger social scale. What might have jumped into the reader's mind as a glaring objection is sorted out at the level of expectation.

We do, in a certain sense, have different kinds of close relationships after all. The Relationships Egalitarian does not deny that we have friendships in the ordinary pretheoretical sense on the one side, romantic partners on another, romantic friendship not to be forgotten on the next, siblings on yet another, parents still to be found on one more, and, of course, children on the last. The space of expectation is at least hexagonal, but likely has many more sides as well when we take into account individual variation on a case by case basis; likely it is fractal. The expectations of a friendship in the pretheoretical sense are usually somewhat different from those of a romantic relationship, for example. However, there is nothing inherently different *in the nature of each* that makes them fundamentally different kinds of relationships, and we might expect to see some friendships that look like the romantic relationships of others and the reverse. This is the sense in which they are the same relationship. The sense in which they are not is a matter of mutual expectation.

However, here, one might again direct our attention to different *kinds* of attraction. One might object that Relationships Egalitarianism fails to recognize the significance of the role of different kinds of attraction in different relationships. The objector rejects the claim that the natures of each relationship are the same, and instead claims that relationships possessing different kinds of attraction are relationships different in nature, each with norms of closeness

according to their different natures. The claim is that our different kinds of affective attitudes establish different kinds of relationships, each with a different nature establishing different conditions of closeness. A relationship of mutually deep love just has an entirely different nature from one in which the parties like each other very much. Claiming that these are fundamentally the same kind of relationship conflates the two, and fails to see what is uniquely valuable, but different, to each.

The immediate reply to this objection is that it casts close relationships in the mold rejected earlier, that of attraction directly and primarily shaping and circumscribing the grounds for closeness; and thus it is subject to the instability previously detailed.

However, additionally, and in this very same connection, we ought to recall our earlier observation that the attraction behind relationships is dynamic and often changes over time. Given this, we can explain the data in two ways: that the *natures* of given relationships are subject to change, or that s*omething else* changes. Rather than postulating different kinds of relationships with different and dynamic natures, however, it is more plausible to locate the dynamic nature of relationships within the expectations of the relationship. Mutual expectations will be determined by many factors, among them each's affective attitudes. When these attitudes change, the expectations of the relationship change, and then the relationship looks different. And this is all consistent with the way that we colloquially talk of different kinds of relationships in the manner that Relationships Egalitarianism accommodates. To say otherwise, and instead appeal to changing *natures*, is to skip a crucial explanatory step.

Furthermore, there is another way in which Relationships Egalitarianism's taxonomy better accounts for our actual practices. Locating the differences in what we pretheoretically take to be

different kinds of relationships within a relationship's expectations better accounts for both individual and social or cultural variation across relationships. No two friendships, in the pretheoretical sense, will manifest exactly the same, nor will any two romantic relationships, nor familial relationships, and so on. This is straightforwardly apparent on an individual level as a matter of differing personal preference and variation in what we are each up to, but also accounts for different social and cultural norms. For example, the typical expectations of a romantic relationship may differ widely between monogamous and polyamorous communities, yet they are both taken to be romantic relationships. Or the familial structure from one culture or community to another might differ, yet they are both taken to be families. Again, these are close relationships all in the same way and of the same kind. They are all different relationships as a matter of expectation.

Still, one might wonder how this account satisfies the egalitarian requirements on friendship. That is, one might continue to wonder why maintaining the attitude of openness to development of the relationship is actually consistent with treating others in a way that recognizes their equality each, and manages to skirt the earlier objections. Are the cases of favoritism and poor friendship practices described earlier all made permissible so long as one holds the attitude of openness to development to the relationship toward each friend? No, holding this attitude does not permit one to be a bad friend. Possession of this attitude does not make one immune from moral error in her actions toward her friends. It only makes differential treatment across her actual relationships permissible. The mistakes made are still egalitarian in nature, but they are just that, *egalitarian moral mistakes*. What the attitude offers is a solution to a puzzle about the nature of egalitarian requirements, not a way out of responsibility for

wronging one's friends, or for being a bad friend. Further reflection upon the aims of friendship will make this clear.

5. The Aims of Friendship

Friendship holds between whole persons. I come to know and understand you, and you me. However, due to the recursive nature of closeness, this means that I come to know and understand *all* of you and you *all* all of me. Or at least this is what we each aim to do. For our relationship cannot fully develop without this mutual aim. However, in order to be precise in detailing the nature of this aim, we need to distinguish two distinct but related aims: knowing and understanding the other *entirely* and knowing and understanding *all* of the other. To know and understand the other *entirely* is to have complete knowledge and understanding of the other. It describes the degree of one's knowledge and understanding of the other; namely, it is one that is *total* and *complete* in all respects. To know and understand *all* of the other is to have familiarity with all facets of the other in one's knowledge and understanding of her. Knowing and understanding all of the other can be whole or in part and comes in pieces.

It is a stepwise progression toward knowing all of the other. I may know some parts of the other but fail to even know of the existence of other parts entirely. Of the parts I am familiar with I may have a greater, or more *complete*, knowledge of some than others. Thus there are two interrelated dimensions of knowledge and understanding of the other: first, knowing and understanding all the other's parts, or facets—knowing *all* of the other—and second, how well one knows each of those facets—knowing and understanding the other *entirely*. To know and understand the other entirely, or to have a complete knowledge and understanding of her, is, then, to know all of her facets and know them all completely.

It may not be possible to ever actually know the other *entirely*, but it is actually possible, though perhaps somewhat infeasible, to know *all* of the other. Still, it is important to recognize, however, that both of these are in fact aims of friendship. Closeness, through its recursion, demands entire knowledge of the other, something we strive a lifetime for. (Or at least a relationship's length!) At no point do we simply become satisfied or content with our knowledge of the other and end our pursuit there. Perhaps it is possible that we may hit a local maximum in knowing the other at a particular point in our relationship. However, persons and their lives are dynamic, and thus we are always in continued pursuit of knowing the other over time. The idea of hitting a local maximum may seem strained. *Knowing a person is unlike knowing any other thing; it is a vastness unlike any other.* Nevertheless, I do not mean to rule out this possibility, and perhaps I have been too dramatic in its characterization. But if knowing the other entirely is the lofty aim of friendship, perhaps knowing all of the other will appear slightly more feasible now. I can, in fact, come to know all of your facets; the totality of what you are like: your interests, imagination, emotions, humor, dispositions, motivations, ambitions, and so on. Coming to know these things wholly is no easy task, but it is the foundational task of friendship.

5.1 Openness and the Aims

Maintaining the attitude of openness to the development of the relationships first involves coming to know all of the other. For this is how relationships develop robustly and completely, and run in further recognition of the equality of the other. It, along with knowing the other entirely, is how we satisfy egalitarian requirements across all of our friendships: each relationship is the same in that its aims are equal in nature and objective. Of course, few relationships will follow a linear trajectory where each first comes to know all of the other and

then all parts completely; that is, to first unearth all of her facets and then begin to see more deeply into each of them. The typical growth of a relationships takes place haphazardly. Each comes to know parts of the other, perhaps unevenly, and comes to know more about those parts, discovers other parts, learns more about yet another part, leaves those first parts behind while seeing more deeply into yet further others, returns for a moment to those earlier, and so on, for example. There is no method nor standard course to knowing all of the other. It comes to be over time, and proceeds with intertwined discovery of new facets of the other and deepening knowledge of those facets.

Nevertheless, one must remain open to and aiming for knowing all of the other and being known wholly herself if friendship is to take place. Though openness to the development of the relationship involves both the interrelated aims of knowing all the other and knowing her entirely, and pursuit of the first rarely occurs independently of the second, it is instructive to narrow in upon the first itself, for it is often the first aim violated, and thus the one that prevents getting friendship off the ground in the first place.

What it is to fail to be open to development of the relationship is to lack the aims of coming to know all of the other and coming to know her entirely. When we fail to be open to the development of the relationship, we fail to get friendship off the ground in the first place. Here we see exactly what is wrong with the picture of friendships of a kind circumscribed in various ways for various reasons: it violates these aims. A relationship without these aims may very well be a relationship mutually valuable to both parties. Such relationships are what I have called acquaintanceships. Acquaintanceships are neither egalitarian in nature, nor consistent with full, robust recognition of the equality of the other. It is because friendship is between whole persons,

with aims to entirely recognize the other all the same, that friendship is a relationship of robust recognition of the equality of the other that holds no more with some than any others. No matter how the particular friendship manifests, it is friendship all the same, consistent with egalitarian requirements. Acquaintanceship lacks the aim to know all of the other; thus, instead, it holds between parts of persons. What parts of each individual are known and available to the other will vary considerably based upon circumstance. These relationships will be of a kind, circumscribed in various ways. This was our theory earlier, Relationships Circumscription, a theory of acquaintanceship.

So far these remarks have expanded on the aims of friendship and the attitude of openness to development of the relationship, and in doing so have helped to form a taxonomy of relationships. We have seen what is required in order for friendship to get off the ground in the first place. In detailing this, we have thus seen how there is actually no problem regarding what looked like our greater partial to some of our friends than others. However, what remains to be specified is an account of what it is to wrong a friend, and whether or not that can be explained in terms of egalitarian requirements. That is, so far, these remarks have had nothing to say about how it is that April *wrongs* June, *as a friend*, and how that wrong is egalitarian in nature when she makes a mistake of the sort she has. Here what is at stake is not what requirements must be satisfied in order for a relationship to count as a friendship, but rather what it is for a friend to wrong a friend.

6. The Egalitarian Mistake: Cases (i)-(iii) Reconsidered

Reconsider cases (i)-(iv). These cases were meant to motivate the idea that we can make moral mistakes of an egalitarian nature by being more partial to some friends rather than others.

As before, it will make sense to treat cases (i)-(iii) together, and (iv) in greater detail separately. My proposal is that these cases demonstrate a particular kind of failure of the attitude of openness to development of the relationship. In cases (i)-(iii) April fails to make good on the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship to June *because of another friend, May.* That is, her failure to manifest the attitude of openness to development of the relationship is caused by her relationship with another friend. Unlike cases in which April merely doesn't hold the attitude and thereby prevents friendship from getting off the ground in the first place, here she takes herself to be committed to it, but fails to actually make good upon it. Failures of this sort are the *morally objectionable kind of favoritism.* Or, at very least, they constitute the kind of favoritism that constitutes failure to be a good friend to the other based on a violation of considerations of fairness and equality across our friendships. It is a violation of fairness and equality for one relationship to prevent the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship from getting off the ground in another. As we have already seen, favoritism as a merely affective attitude is not morally objectionable. However, it becomes so when it prevents one's other friendships from developing, or even from getting off the ground. It is this behavior that the egalitarian requirements on friendship disallows.

However, one might still object: why is this an *egalitarian* mistake? That is, one might grant that failure to maintain the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship is a way of letting the other down, if she is sympathetic to Relationships Egalitarianism, but, nevertheless, might remain unconvinced that this constitutes a mistake that is fundamentally egalitarian in nature. Suppose, for example, that I devote myself to my art, becoming so consumed by my latest project that I fail to make good on the attitude of openness to the

development of the relationship to my friends. It seems that this is the same sort of mistake that happens when I let one of my relationships preclude me from maintaining the attitude. Clearly, however, in this case it does not constitute an egalitarian mistake. So why does it when the attitude is cut off for the sake of another *relationship*?[7]

In order to answer this objection we need to reconsider the fundamental aim of close relationships: recognition of the other. Suppose that April maintains the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship in her relationship with May, but does not in her relationship with June, all for the sake of her relationship with May. This means that there are at least some respects in which April's relationship with June is subject to circumscription. Nevertheless, perhaps April genuinely enjoys and values her relationship with June. That is, she genuinely enjoys and values her knowledge of June, June's company, their shared activities, and all the other various aspects of their lives which are entangled, despite not sharing—nor ever planning to—any openness to greater entanglement. On the other hand, April is committed to knowing May entirely, and becoming ever more entangled with her as their lives each unfold, so much so that her intense devotion causes her inability to remain open to the development of her other relationships.

When this happens, it seems that April is not committed to *recognition* of the other in her relationship with June. Or, put another way, because April circumscribes her relationship with June, she cannot be interested in coming to fully recognize, appreciate, and value June *as an other person, vast in all directions, just like herself.* To the extend that April does appreciate and

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[7] In my next chapter I develop the framework needed to provide a direct and more explicit answer to this question by appealing to the metaphysics of the self and relationships.

value the relationship, what she appreciates and values *are the goods of the relationship*, not a mutual *recognition* of the other. In fact, to have a system of favoritism in this way at all *is to have no friends at all*.[8] For it is the very act of favoritism here that precludes my acting in a way consistent with my recognition of the other and valuing her as an other, manifested, in turn, through my relationship with her. Put yet another way: when I favor in this way, I aim at the discrete goods of the relationship, which are obtained in a particular instance of interaction with the other, but not at the value of the recognition of the other herself. Discrete goods need not be immediate or tangible; an acquaintanceship itself can be a discrete good. Since acquaintanceships hold between only parts of a person, they are a kind of instrumental relationship yielding some discreet good obtained from the specific parts in question. We might describe this kind of relationship with the phrase "*persons are pleasant*" instead of "*persons are vast*," as it is not the vastness of the other herself, in her entirety, that this relationship aims at, but rather a kind of pleasantness of company of the other in such a relationship. This is the sense in which the relationship is valued as a discrete good. Of course, relationships in which April does maintain the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship will yield discrete goods, and April will likely appreciate and value those goods, but their attainment is not the *primary* aim of the relationship, rather they are a consequence of mutual recognition. It is this difference in relationship engagement that accounts for the egalitarian nature of the mistake. And, further, it is this that *transitivity* amounts to: *recognitional equality*.

Still, one might ask, why think our friendships are recognitional? To this I ask the reader to consider her friendships. More likely than not, what comes to mind are *whole persons*, not just

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[8] Thanks owed again to AJ Julius for phrasing the thought so succinctly.

things we have done with others or experiences we have shared, nor even memories of merely sharing pleasant company. What comes to mind is the *other herself*, her history, interests, imagination, emotions, humor, dispositions, motivations, ambitions, etc. Of course, more than likely these come to mind intertwined with what we have done with our friends, the experiences we have shared, and perhaps the futures we imagine with them. But when we consider our friendships, it is our *friends*, in whole, that we think of, not the discrete goods of those relationships. And if we cannot conjure a whole picture of the other, but only some experiences we have shared or partial features of their personality, this constitutes a very different experience; one that we associate with our acquaintances, not our friends.

7. The Egalitarian Mistake and the Parent-Child Relationship

The parent-child relationship constitutes a special case in more than one way.[9] Now, I will address an especially important objection to my description of the egalitarian mistake that I have just detailed. Recall that the ambitious of my theory are grand: by friendship, I mean to cover all sorts of close interpersonal relationships, including the parent-child relationship. Perhaps it is immediately objectionable to conceive of the mistake I have described above with respect to the parent-child relationship. And if my theory had exactly the same thing to say about this case as it does for the case of ordinary friendships, there would be something plainly objectionably, or at

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[9] I am not a parent and thus am not especially well positioned to theorize the nature of the parent-child relationship in detail. Instead, I will merely make some remarks about the case for the purpose of clarification and completion of my theory. Particular thanks is owed to Emily Neri whose conversation on the topic has provided me with much insight on the parental perspective. While distinctively my own argument, and I suspect we disagree on some of my conclusions, my willingness and even ability to theorize the case throughout this dissertation is owed to my conversation with her. I have taken care to remain restrained when theorizing the case for my own purposes here.

least unrealistic. Special care must be taken here to consider the complexities of the parent-child relationship, for my remarks about the egalitarian mistake will not directly apply to it in the same manner.

For all that the parent-child relationship involves, one especially prominent feature of it is that it involves a strong kind of asymmetric dependence.[10] A child depends upon her parent in a way that friends outside of the parent-child relationship do not ordinarily depends upon one another. I will take this claim as intuitively basic. That is, it will form the starting point of my remarks about the case. Call this unique feature of the parent-child relationship *asymmetric dependence*. While other kinds of what might be thought of as asymmetric dependence may arise within the context of non-parent-child close relationships, such as those discussed in terms of expectations, I will use this term in an exclusively specific way having to do with the kind of dependence found within the parent-child relationship.

It seems that the asymmetric dependence of the parent-child relationship simply necessitates that a parent must often fail to be open to the development of her relationship in the case of her non-child friendships because of her relationship to her child. For this is simply a unique demand of the nature of the relationship. Raising a child simply comes with all sorts of unique responsibilities and duties that one owes to her child. It is a highly serious endeavor and an even more serious relationship. It would be mistaken to think that the egalitarian mistake could be effected here, since it would be highly unreasonable, and even irresponsible, to think

[10] Clearly the parent-child relationship involves many things, and things that far outstrip this this consideration in importance.

that a parent ought to violate the conditions of asymmetric dependence necessitated by the parent-child relationship in favor of her friendships.

But friendship is a highly serious relationship, too. And, as I have argued, friendships cannot simply be exchanged among one another, nor engaged in at the expense of one another. The way out of this dilemma is to distinguish the egalitarian mistake described above from one which a parent may be subject to instead. For the parent is not subject to the ordinary version of the mistake, but rather to a more specific version of it that is able to accommodate the duties and responsibilities that the parent owes to her child as a result of asymmetric dependence.

Consider the ways in which the two following scenarios differ. Suppose that Spring is the parent of April and she is friends with Autumn, who is not a parent. Suppose that Spring finds herself all-consumed as a new parent. She no longer has time for her relationship with Autumn in the ways that she used to before becoming a parent. Spring and Autumn spend less time together, do not engage in the sort of activity that they used to, nor do they have as many experiences in common with one another anymore. But when Spring and Autumn do have a chance to relate to one another, they still both deeply value one another and their own friendship, knowing, however, that Spring's parenthood has, in fact, prevented her from manifesting the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship as she once could due to the establishment of a new relationship, that of her parent-child relationship with her daughter April.

On the other hand, suppose that Summer is the parent of July and she is friends with Winter. Summer no longer has time for her relationship with Winter in the way that she used to before becoming a parent. Summer and Winter spend less time together, do not engage in the sort of activity that they used to, nor do they have as many experiences in common with one another

anymore. But Summer, unlike Spring, simply no longer cares for her relationship with Winter at all. She has not only become all-consumed with the parent-child relationship, but she has found that she has come to lose value in her relationship with her non-parent friend Winter.

The first case that I have described is permissible. That is, the parent is allowed an affordance to break the ordinary conditions of the egalitarian mistake due to the nature of the parent-child relationship. Call the phenomenon that appears in this case a *contingent reordering* of the parent's life. The asymmetric dependence of the parent-child relationship necessitates a kind of contingent reordering and restructuring of the parent's life which will involve a dramatic change in the *contingencies* of the relationship. The parent and non-parent friend will almost certainly see one another less often, will no longer engage in a number of the activities that they once used to, and perhaps will have less in common between their current lifestyles. But they will not lose value in their relationship. That is, the parent will still value her relationship just as much as she once did. Put in terms of the norm of openness to the development of the relationship, she will still possess the norm in all of her friendships, but she will not be able to act on it as readily as she once could due to the special nature of asymmetric dependence within the parent-child relationship.

The second case that I have described constitutes the egalitarian mistake that a parent is subject to making. Call the phenomenon that appears in this case a *value reordering* of the parent's life. By a value reordering I do not merely mean that the parent establishes a new structure of value in her life by way of becoming a parent. Such is expected, and many parents report coming to view and conceptualize of the value in their lives newly and differently after they have become parents. It is also permissible and not an infrequent occurrence that a parent

may no longer value engaging in some of the same activities, whether alone or with friends, that she once valued before parenthood. But what is distinctly impermissible, and what constitutes the egalitarian mistake that a parent is still subject to occurs when she comes to no longer *value* her friendships in virtue of the fact that she has become a new parent. That is, she does not merely find herself with a newly constrained ability to make good on the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship with her friends, but she finds herself to no longer hold the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship with her friends because of her new parenthood, or because of her parent-child relationship.[11] The distinction may sound subtle in practice, but it is absolutely fundamental in terms of treating one's friends fairly.

Note, however, that there is an analogous case on behalf of the non-parent friend that constitutes the ordinary egalitarian mistake and it is not only parents who may find themselves tempted to disregard their non-parent friends. Suppose that the non-parent friend comes to circumscribe her relationship with her newly-parent friend because the parent-friend no longer desires to engage in all sorts of activities that she once did before parenthood in order to pursue a relationship in which her other friend still does engage in these activities. Such a circumscription of one relationship in favor of the other is, of course, equally impermissible, for it constitutes the basic, ordinary egalitarian mistake between friends in the reverse direction. The danger that I

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[11] I do not actually know how common the latter case is, but I suspect that it may in fact happen sometimes. There is a danger present in the standard western nuclear family structure in that it may encourage one to "narrow herself in" and her world toward that of her family at the cost her friendships, thus effecting the egalitarian mistake. On the other hand, I have heard from many parents that though they often spend much less time with their non-parent friends after parenthood, the time that they do spend with their friends is even more valuable and meaningful to them. Thus it seems that parenthood not only is compatible with the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship with one's friends, but that it actually has the power to strengthen that attitude between friends.

mean to make explicit here is this: parenthood, or the parent-child relationship, has the potential to dissolve friendships between parents and non parents. The parent may either circumscribe her relationship with a friend in favor of a *value* reordering that no longer takes her non-parent friendships to be valuable, or a non-parent may decide to pursue her other relationships at the cost of her friendship with her newly-parent friend due to the contingent changes in their relationship.

However, there is a further danger unique to this case as well. On each side of the parent-non-parent divide, the friend may be tempted to circumscribe the other friend for friends whose lives more immediately resemble their own. That is, the parent-friend may be tempted toward circumscription of her relationships with her non-parent friends in favor of pursuit of relationships with other parent-friends while the non-parent friend may be tempted toward circumscription of her relationships with her parent friends in favor of pursuit of relationships with other non-parent friends. But to do so would be to commit the *ordinary* egalitarian mistake on either side, from parent to non-parent or from non-parent to parent. While I think that this kind of circumscription does not uncommonly occur in the presence of the massively significant life-change that parenthood entails, it may also occur in any case in which friends begin to live somewhat different lifestyles.

This seems to be unfortunate, however, for friendship is made better when it endures across diverse lifestyles. But more than unfortunate, even, to circumscribe one's relationships in this way, once again, *is to have no friends at all.* This is because doing so is highly suggestive that the parties in question did not actually ever possess the aim of openness to the development of the relationship in any of her relationships, but rather related to the others in her life merely on

the basis of having shared certain activities together and the discrete good obtained from doing so. It seems that each did not instead engage one another with the aims of friendship, coming to know the other all her facets in all her entirety, in mind. To behave this way is to merely have acquaintanceships and no deep friendships at all, merely moving from relationship to relationship on the basis of whom best fits one another's contingent life circumstances at the present moment. The exchange of relationships in this manner does not merely fall victim to the egalitarian mistake, but it also is to treat one's *acquaintanceship* rather expendably. And though there is no norm within the nature of acquaintanceship preventing this treatment of the relationship, it does seem to constitute a particularly shallow and impoverished way of relating to other persons, even in the context of mere acquaintanceship.[12]

8. Case (iv) Reconsidered

Next return to case (iv) in which a choice is forced between friends to whom conflicting commitments are held. What does Relationships Egalitarianism have to say about this case? If one merely appeals to affective partiality, or her affective attitudes, in order to settle the matter straightforwardly, she seems guilty of morally objectionable favoritism. But certainly the case need not fall under favoritism of the morally objectionable kind. While a failure of the morally objectionable sort of favoritism is possible here, April's choice, whichever way it goes, is entirely consistent with her genuine possession and manifestation of the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship in each of her relationships. So what of our earlier diagnosis,

[12] This is not meant to suggest that it is never appropriate to end relationships. Nor does it suggest, according to a more charitable concern, that friends can never outgrow one another. I will address this issue substantially in a later chapter.

that to make a choice is to be a bad friend one way or another? If this is what Relationships Egalitarianism has to say about the case, it appears to have no solution.

Recall the aim of friendship in its general formulation: closeness. To make a decision one way or the other seems to be a violation of closeness to one friend or the other. May and June do not merely hold sets of mutual expectation with April in their respective relationships that their commitments are to be held, but the kind of expectation that April will make good on her commitment to each is more fundamental than this. It is simply one in virtue of being in the kind of relationship to which one stands to the other.[13] The failure to maintain this commitment violates these expectations. Either way, then, April wrongs the other, insofar as they are in a friendship, by failing to meet the aim of that friendship, closeness. And this is what it is for friends to wrong one another: to violate a condition of closeness.

When one wrongs another, as a friend, they stunt the development of the relationship. Violations of closeness come in many forms, all relating to the interrelated conditions of mutuality that serve to recognize the other. Thus one friend can wrong another by failing to know the other, or be vulnerable to her, or to meet and maintain their matching expectations of one another. The type of wrong that happens here is seemingly of the last sort. Thus it seems that no matter how April acts, she wrongs a friend one way or the other.

Nevertheless, difficult as it may be, April must settle the matter one way or the other. If by merely appealing to her affective attitudes to straightforwardly settle the matter April commits

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[13] I will leave this claim somewhat mysterious here. I take it to be a kind of fundamental structuring of the relationship in which reason to make good on the commitment arises due to the way mutual recognition of the other works. The intricacies of mutual recognition of the other are discussed in Chapter 4.

favoritism, is she any better by appealing to her state of closeness? That is, does the fact that her contingent state of closeness to May is deeper than her contingent state of closeness to June justify the choice May over June?[14] Certainly it seems a natural choice, and, further, it does not commit her to any special kind of wronging like favoritism does. It remains consistent with the attitude of openness to development of the relationship. But yet it does not appear to release her from her wrong, as a friend, to June, that breaking her commitment produces. So how is April to settle the matter according to Relationships Egalitarianism?

9. The Affective Attitudes and Expectation

In order to say more about this case we first need to further examine the connection between our affective attitudes toward the other and the nature of the mutual expectation in a particular relationship. While I have argued that our affective attitudes do not give us the primary grounds to initiate the development of relationships, they do play a role in *instantiating, or realizing*, each relationship. Recall that the aims of each relationship are the same; this is the egalitarian nature of friendship. However, aims all the same, each relationship instantiates them uniquely, *in part as a function of the affective attitudes held toward one another*. That is, the possession of a certain affective attitude toward the other will give reason for one to hold certain expectations of the other, and it is where these particular expectations meet in mutuality that a relationship is *instantiated*. Of course affective attitudes will not be the only force shaping a particular relationship's instantiation. Origins, preferences, character, individual psychology, and relationship history will all factor in as well. In fact, anything and everything that makes us each

[14] This is to be read as shorthand for the sense in which I can be said to be closer to one than the other described earlier.

unique will have a role to play. The instantiation of a particular relationship amounts to the ways in which each mutually shares her living with the other, all of this taken in; and it is one's mutual expectations of the other that spell out the ways in which one's life fits into the other's.

Certainly, it is easy to see how one's affective attitudes toward the other will influence how each fits into the other's life. This was the intuition that tempted us earlier to think of closeness as a direct function of affection. But, as we have seen, the relationship between the two is not nearly so straightforward. Nevertheless, our earlier intuition was not completely misguided. There is an important place for our affective attitudes in shaping our relationships: how we feel toward the other gives us reason to engage with the other in certain specific and unique ways. If I deeply love you, and you me, our mutually depth of love may give us reason to spend our lives together in immediate proximity throughout our days. If I love you very much, and you me, perhaps neither of us can imagine a life without the other, but we live without the same immediate proximity. That is, our feelings for the other give us reasons *to do certain things with the other and relate to her in unique ways.* It is our possession of these reasons to do certain things with the other and relate to her in unique ways, which at least in part come from our feelings toward the other, that generate our expectations of the other. And, again, where this all comes to meet in mutually with the other, a relationship gets off the ground. Hence we have found a more precise explication of the nature of relationships and how they come to be what they are. Because affective attitudes differ across relationships, what one has reason to do with the other and how one relates to her will differ across relationships; and thus the expectations that arise in any particular relationship will vary across one another. What is found in one relationship may not be found in another.

Of course, not only will affective attitudes differ across relationships, but they will also sometimes differ within particular relationships themselves. The relation between one's feelings toward the other is subtle and complex, and the Relationships Egalitarian is thoroughly prepared to capture this phenomenon; for recall that it is this delicate balance that is central to a condition of closeness itself. While minor discrepancies of feeling toward one another are inevitable and rarely significantly stress a relationship, relationships with vast discrepancy of feeling are often difficult to maintain. We can explain this by appealing to the framework just developed. One's affective attitudes toward an other give reason for her to do certain things with the other and relate to her in certain ways, and these in turn generate expectations of the other. But then, different affective attitudes will give rise to different sorts of things one has reason to do with the other and different ways to relate to her, which in turn will give rise to different expectations of the other. Of course, such relationships are not impossible to negotiate, but they do seem to require additional work in order to remain close, let alone grow and develop.

In any case, we have now seen that Relationships Egalitarianism explains and permits different instantiations of friendship. But what does this actually look like? So long as the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship is not violated in any one of one's relationships for the sake of another, anything goes, and everything ought to be celebrated, valued, and appreciated within each relationship. Given this, it is difficult to say too much or anything too specific about the kinds of ways in which relationships may permissibly differ. This includes variation in time spent together, attention devoted, activities pursued, values shared, and so on. On Relationships Egalitarianism, relationships tend toward equality, but an equality consistent with what each is up to in her own life, and her differing goals and motivations, and

where these meet in mutuality with the other. It is an equality not merely for equality's sake, but instead for mutual recognition of the other, and the ways in which she is uniquely wonderful.

9.1 Intrarelationship Expectations and Interrelationship Expectations

Now return once more to what our affective attitudes cannot permit, failure to make good on the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship in one of April's relationships for another. Another way of stating what we have just discussed above is this: one's affective attitudes toward the other can determine, at least in part, the expectations within, or specific to the norms of, one's relationship with the other; that is, one's affective attitudes may generate *intrarelationship* expectations on the other. But they may not generate expectations of the other that apply *across* relationships; that is, one's affective attitudes may not generate *interrelationship* expectations of the other. This means that the expectations of one relationship cannot bear on the expectations of another relationship.

Otherwise, our affective attitudes toward one individual provide the grounds to circumscribe the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship with another individual. However, that is not what our affective attitudes are for, no matter how strong they may be in any particular instance. Love gives us reasons to do things for the other, to show her the ways we feel for her, and to do so uniquely among the ways we interact with others, but it does not provide us with the grounds to do so at the cost of the development of our other relationships. Further, it is once we realize this that our affective attitudes seem less threatening to an impartial, egalitarian morality. Just as it is not the place of moral theory to tell us who to love or how to love them, it is likewise not the place of love to tell us who to circumscribe our relationships with. In other words, love can grow our relationships, but may not circumscribe

them; it is not for making our lives smaller, but rather for opening us up to the world and *all* of those we are close to, each in a way uniquely their own.[15] It tells us what to do *intrarelationship*, but not *interrelationship*. The former is the domain of love, the latter the domain of morality. With this in mind, our initial conflict between love and impartiality disappears. The Relationships Egalitarian explains away partiality so that what is left of the concept is merely the *misuse of love.* But if partiality is the misuse of love, not to worry, Relationships Egalitarianism offers us a rich, vibrant, and, of course, loving impartiality.

10. Solving Case (iv)

Now we are in a position to provide a solution to April's dilemma. April may settle the matter in a multitude of ways so long as she does not appeal to an interrelationship expectation within her relationship with May that bears on her relationship with June. In other words, it cannot be the case that it is part of the constitution of April's relationship with May that April act on behalf of May ahead of all others. However, this is nevertheless consistent with April's choice to uphold her commitment to May for a variety of reasons that *may in fact appeal to her affective attitudes toward or closeness to May*. But this should not be surprising after what we have just considered, for, after all, we need only remind ourselves that morality cannot tell us who to love or how to love them. Crucially, though, this appeal must be made on an intrarelationship basis.

Here one might object that an intrarelationship appeal to expectation cannot be enough to settle the matter. This is because April also has reason to make the same sort of intrarelationship appeal to the expectation in her relationship with June. That is, just as April has reason to keep

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[15] This is exactly what the pernicious kind of narrowing-in that the typical western nuclear family structure may encourage gets backwards.

her commitment to May, she also does to June. This is true, however, it nevertheless does not change the matter. In fact, it is further reason to support the Relationships Egalitarian's account.

As previously discussed, this decision *should be difficult*. At very least, it should not be a pleasant one. Even if April has an immediate inclination to choose May, she should still feel that it is unfortunate and regrettable that a choice had to be made at all, or that the situation arose at all. On the other hand, if we really did settle cases like these by appeal to interrelationship expectations, then we ought not be expected to feel the difficulty of the situation as thoroughly. We ought to take at least some *satisfaction*, even if solemn in nature, in demonstrating and following through on our interrelationship commitment to one friend over another. But this is not the reaction that we feel in such a case; far from satisfaction, it is one of reluctance and regret, even if we could not be reasonably expected to do otherwise—even if there existed no ideal way out of the dilemma.

But what of the alleged wrong to June from April's unkept commitment? So far what has been said does not yet seem to ameliorate it. It is a fault of Relationships Egalitarianism if it cannot distinguish between an intentional commitment breaking, and an inability to reasonably do otherwise. Have the requirements of Relationships Egalitarianism been formulated too strongly? If failure to meet a condition of closeness constitutes a wrong on the other as a friend, then it seems that April has still been a bad friend to May.

Once April has come to a decision *s*he owes an explanation of it to June, whose commitment she could not keep. When April explains her choice to June, and details its basis, she lets June in on an important facet of herself: her motivational structure as it stands and that which she holds very dear. This itself is a part of knowing the other, an integral one that

constitutes an intimate fact about the other, her life, and the importance of those in it. Though the commitment could not be kept, and expectation failed to be met, April has actually brought the two *closer* through her explanation to June. Recall that close relationships hold between whole persons. To engage a whole person is to engage her as she stands, motivational structure as it is. To expect her to have done otherwise and kept the commitment would be to fail to recognize her in her entirety, what she values, and how her life currently stands. Thus April does not wrong June, in fact, if anything, she has brought her closer.

Still, though, our earlier objector might feel unsatisfied: what does this appeal actually look like and why does revealing this information to June actually bring them any closer? Does April consider the options, weigh her feelings toward each, and then come to a decision after careful calculation? If so, then perhaps the content of her decision is of the form "I like May more than June", or "I care more about May than June", or "May is more important to me than June", or something of the like. But then, is it this comparison that is actually supposed to bring April and June closer? Is it April's telling June something of the sort "I'm sorry that the situation came to be, but I have to chose one, and I like May more than you, so I've chosen to keep her commitment and not yours." what brings the two closer? Perhaps April has reported the state of her feelings and relationships accurately, but how is this the sort of explanation that actually facilitates greater closeness to June? To make comparisons across one's friends hardly seems to be the sort of thing that brings those who fare less favorably closer to oneself.

It is fair enough for such an objector to wonder how April's explanation might actually go, but to accuse April of merely performing and reporting *relationship math* misses the point. April is not to *merely* reason her way out of the choice. When she does this, she finds reason,

intrarelationship, to keep each commitment. Rather, she acts in a way that she finds natural and compelling given the circumstances, even if she wishes they were not so. When making this choice, she simply acts in accordance with some deeply compelling intrarelationship component of her relationship with one that does not arise in the other, or one that arises more deeply in one relationship than the other. Perhaps this is an overwhelming affect, or an aspect of the relationship that gives fulfillment of her commitment some extra, special meaning. April makes no comparison and performs no relationship math, but only acts on some especially forceful and compelling intrarelationship ground present in one relationship, but not the other. It is this that she explains to June; no comparison made, hence none reported. She could not reasonably have done otherwise, and this is exactly what she explains to June. It is a fact about her action that constitutes a piece of intimate knowledge of herself and the vastness and significance of her life and those with whom it is entangled. If June were to object to this it would be to miss the point. For objecting to this would be a kind of category mistake. There is nothing objectionable here: the intrarelationship consideration on which April settles the question belongs to the domain of love and affect, not the domain of morality and fairness.

11. Conclusion: A Gesture Toward Solving the Traditional Problem

Before concluding I will gesture at a solution that Relationships Egalitarianism offers to the traditional problem of the alleged tension between the demands of an impartial, egalitarian morality and friendship. While Relationships Egalitarianism finds its force within the system of our close relationships, it nevertheless has advice to offer those who find the traditional problem compelling: openness to admission to one's domain of friendship. One does not need to befriend everyone, so long as they are *open* to being friends with anyone. That is, one possesses an

attitude of *openness to openness* to development of the relationship. What this means is that one cannot *preclude* the possibility of developing the relationship with the other, all things equal, much like the way in which one cannot preclude the development of any one of her friendships. Further, recall our earlier discussion of *care*, and how it comes in an impersonal and personal variety. My proposal is this: openness to openness to closeness is bound up with the impersonal sort of care, and that this is precisely what we owe to all others at minimum.

The intermediate step that Relationships Egalitarianism allows for between strangership and friendship might potentially be helpful in alleviating some of the typical concerns regarding resting the justification for friendship upon one's actual, conditional ability to be friends with any other. Instead, so long as one is open to the prospect of finding the stranger a place somewhere in her system of friendship, and thereby cares about them, she has done enough to justify her friendships in general. It is not yet clear from these remarks whether this line will ultimately turn out to offer more than the traditional solution lacking the intermediate step, however, it remains available as a weaker claim in any case.

Works Cited

Dickinson, Emily. “The soul selects her own society” *The Poems of Emily Dickinson,* edited by R. W. Franklin, Harvard University Press, 1998, Cambridge.

I celebrate myself, and sing myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.
...
Walt Whitman, Song of Myself, lines 1-3.

This Chapter constitutes a philosophical self portrait, of sorts. Or, alternately, if you can't write a poem about the self of the caliber of Walt Whitman's Song of Myself, then why not do philosophy of the self instead? Dedicated to the great American poet himself.[16]

Chapter 2

Other-discovery

0. Introduction.

Emily Dickinson writes:

I'm Nobody! Who are you?
Are you – Nobody – too?
Then there's a pair of us!
Don't tell! they'd advertise – you know!

How dreary – to be – Somebody!
How public – like a Frog –
To tell one's name – the livelong June –
To an admiring Bog!

[16] In somewhat of a related spirit, these next two chapters constitute my own best effort to marvel at the nature of the self, of being a person, and of being in a world full of others. I fall short of Whitman.

Allow me to misread Dickinson for my own purposes here, in order to set the tone.[17] I'm Nobody, who are you? Are you Nobody, too? Well, I am Nobody to you and you are Nobody to me at the outset of other-discovery, and there is a pair of us, indeed. But there is much *to tell*, and all that will change within the course of a friendship. It turns out that I am somebody, and so are you, and we are somebody to very many others as well! It's all quite the opposite of dreary, really. Do tell me your name.

1. The Question

Many questions center around the self, both metaphysical and ethical. Chief among them, perhaps, is the metaphysical inquiry surrounding exactly what a self is. My ambition will fall short of providing a direct answer to this question. Instead, I will raise a related question: does the way in which I relate to my projects differ from the way in which I relate to other persons[18]? Of course, an answer to this question could shed some light on the first, more basic inquiry.

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[17] This is actually among my favorite poems of all time, and Dickinson my very favorite poet, and my sincere apologies are owed to a better Emily than myself for misreading it trivially. I'll leave another flower, or maybe pencil, for you, Emily, when I'm in Amherst again to atone. Only somewhat more seriously, if counterfactuals can be taken seriously, had I written a totally different dissertation more traditionally on the topic of moral egalitarianism this poem would have been my motto, of sorts, to go along with with the thought that "no one is important, but everyone matters." There is a sense in which the dissertation constitutes the middle ground of a suite of views that I hold, the primary of which deal with what a person is, the middle ground, that I have actually produced, deals with our interpersonal relationships, and the larger picture deals with a larger political system committed to the recognition of equality between person on the level of social organization. The reader glimpses pieces of my account of the self in the next two chapters and has the entirety of the middle ground by the end of this dissertation. I must leave the larger picture to her imagination…or perhaps she can track me down and ask me about it until it exists in writing, if ever.

[18] Though bad practice, especially in such a loaded and technical-notion-filled literature, I will use "self" and "person" interchangeably here. I take "self" to be the more theoretical term and "person" to be more commonsensical.

Perhaps thinking about what it is for me to relate to my own projects and what it is for me to relate to other persons will, at very least, force one to answer some of the more basic metaphysical questions surrounding the self along the way. Indeed, this will be the course of my argument. However, I will not merely be concerned with metaphysics of the self. My answer to this question will be tightly bound up with ethical considerations as well. In fact, I will first introduce the question through a series of cases appealing to broadly ethical, or at very least value-laden, considerations. I will then turn to Korsgaard's notion of practical identity developed in her book *Self Constitution*, using it as a backdrop for my own account of the self that emerges in the course of answering this question. But what all this theorizing will yield is another statement of the main norm of friendship, the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship. Here, the attitude will be developed in terms of selves and relationships. It will constitute the process of *other-discovery*.

2. The Cases

Case 1: April and May are friends. Though they have known one another for years, we can describe the entirety of their relationship in about a sentence: April talks to May about gardening, and that's about it. The two of them get along just fine but circumscribe their interaction in the following way: they greet one another, ask how each is doing—or perhaps about each other's day, but whenever the two get down to the weeds of things, it's literal. April tells May about the flowers she just finished watering, and May recounts chasing the June bugs out of her garden. However, one day April comes to see May differently: she is no longer merely a gardening conversational partner, but a whole person; one just like herself in some ways and wonderfully

different in others, vast in all directions. “Let’s talk about something else today!” she excitedly tells May. Shocked, May insists that all she wants to talk about is gardening, it’s what she does with all her friends. Is there anything objectionable about May’s reply?

Case 2: June and August are friends. They are new friends, but their relationship shows much promise: so far, each is enjoying a rich and multifaceted friendship. One day it’s the weather, the next it’s probing at at each other’s core convictions, the next yet it’s a walk through an unfamiliar neighborhood together counting the number of dead-ends, yet others it’s a deep conversation about all the ways in which beauty inheres in an overgrown field. However, one day June meets July and things begin to change. June and August get together as usual, but August notices something different about June today: all she wants to do is talk about July. At first, August thinks this is cute, suspecting a budding romantic interest within June. But the years pass and their relationship has never been the same. Ever since that day, the one August had first heard of July, it has never stopped. June has a one track mind, only talking to August about July. You might say that July comes between June and August. Lamenting the fact that their own relationship had so much promise, August thinks to herself “It’s no longer cute. This stopped being cute years ago.” Are August’s frustrated thoughts appropriate?

Case 3: Summer and Autumn are friends. They have known one another for years, and it wouldn’t at all be surprising see them know each other for years to come. Their relationship is rich, multifaceted, and responsive to the changes in one another’s lives. They each delight in learning more about the other. They know her interests, imagination, emotions, humor, dispositions, motivations, ambitions, and so on. And of course, they have come to know much about one another’s pasts. Furthermore they have always kept up with the other throughout her

life and intend to continue to through whatever the future brings. They talk about their interests, they talk about each other, they talk about the people who matter in their lives, and they talk about their days. But they don't just talk; they also do things together. Of course, their relationship comes with its ups and downs, just like any human relationship, but no matter what comes of it, they each find it valuable and wonderful. Summer thinks she has a best friend in Autumn, and likewise does Autumn of Summer. They couldn't be more content with their friendship. Is this the kind of relationship to aspire to?

The three cases I have just presented can be summarized as follows: In case 1 we consider a friend who only cares to relate to the other along a single dimension, a shared interest in gardening. In case 2 we consider a pair of friends whose budding relationship comes to a halt as it is circumscribed by another relationship outside their own. Further, it is stronger than mere circumscription; rather, it comes to be defined by a relationships outside their own. In case 3 we consider a multidimensional relationship in which each is committed to knowing the other and keeping up with her life. I will argue that cases 1 and 2 are deficient ways to relate to friends by considering the self and its relation to projects and persons. Further, I will claim that the deficiency in case 2 is greater than that of case 1. This claim will result as a consequence from the account of the self's relation to projects and other persons that I develop. I will conclude that case 3 does, in fact, constitute the ideal way to relate to a friend. In the course of showing this, I will make use of Korsgaard's notion of practical identity. I will position myself against Korsgaard primarily through the contrast between cases 1 and 3, and return to case 2 once my account has been fully developed.

3. Korsgaardian Practical Identity

The notion of a practical identity figures centrally into Korsgaard's project in *Self Constitution*. For Korsgaard a person necessarily must act, and, by acting, thereby come to constitute herself in the first place (19). An action, Korsgaard thinks, must be attached to a person. Put another way, she says "one must be able to attach the 'I do' to the action in the same way that, according to Kant, one must be able to attach the 'I think' to a thought" (18). It is our self consciousness that enables reflection on our desires and other psychological motivations, which provides the opportunity to choose whether or not to actually act accordingly. The choice of whether to act or not, or perhaps how to act, is what is responsible for constituting a self. Korsgaard claims "When you deliberately decide what sorts of effects you will bring about in the world, you are also deliberately deciding what sort of cause you will be. And that means you are deciding who you are." (19). When we do this, we are creating a "peculiar", "individual" kind of identity, a practical identity (19-20).

Korsgaard further describes practical identity as "a description under which you value yourself and find your life worth living and your actions to be worth undertaking" (20). She offers as examples: roles and relationships, citizenship, ethnic or religious membership, causes, vocations, professions, and offices. She further says that it may be important to you that you are a human being, a woman, a feminist, a lover, or a friend. All of these may constitute practical identities so long as they govern our choice of actions (20). In addition to this, however, she offers the claim in a somewhat stronger formulation as well, "to value yourself in a certain role or under a certain description is at the same time to find it worthwhile to do certain acts for the sake of certain ends, and impossible, even unthinkable, to do others." (20).

For example, Korsgaard gives the case of a friend, a parent, and a scientist in order to illustrate how our practical identities will make some of our actions choice worthy and others not. If you are someone's friend you will find it worthwhile to cook and share a meal together, or to go shopping to purchase a gift for her (20). If you are a parent you will find it worthwhile for its own sake to save for your child's education expenses. On the other hand, you will reject actions like refusing to help your child with his homework because you would rather watch a movie instead (20-21). If you are a scientist you will find performing arduous experiments in order to discern the truth as worthwhile in itself, while you will reject the possibility of manipulating your colleague's data in order to beat them to publishing a discovery (21).

Alternately, Korsgaard tells us that we might think of a practical identity as a "set of principles" or the "dos and don'ts" concerning some identity (21). Or, more generally, she claims there are at least some cases in which a practical identity is best thought of as "a role with a point" (21). Importantly, though, this does not commit us to thinking there is but one correct way to fill such a role. Korsgaard admits that there might be "argument about different interpretations" of a role or "room for creativity" in filling it; "One might find a new way of being a friend" she says (21). However, note that these roles are contingent. It is contingent that you've bumped into the individuals you in fact have, and formed friendships with them instead of others. Or, perhaps more poignantly, "Contrary to romantic notions, you don't marry a person who is made for you. You marry a person who is about your age, lives in your vicinity, and is feeling ready to marry at around the same time that you are."[19] (23).

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[19] A refreshingly accurate and under-appreciated example.

Further, Korsgaard claims that practical identity provides us with the source of our reasons. Recall that a practical identity, put one way, simply is a conception under which you find certain actions to be choice worthy. While it may not always be the case that considerations involving one of your practical identities always explicitly factors into your reasoning, it nevertheless is responsible for generating reasons. Other times it may be explicit: "I can't do that, she's my best friend!", "What do you take me for? I'm a scientist.", or "You are his mother, you know. Who's going to help him if you don't?" (21).

Lastly, Korsgaard argues that it is our task to unify ourselves in the face of our multiple practical identities. Given that we tend to have many practical identities, they are bound to conflict. And in fact they often do. Consider the case of the parent who is also a cinephile that Korsgaard gives previously. Or, perhaps one's role as a romantic partner conflicts with one's role as a friend. And we need not even suppose different kinds of practical identities are involved: one's friendship to one person may conflict with her friendship to another. Much of the remainder of Korsgaard's project is concerned with arguing for the necessity of the unification of ourselves in the face of all of our practical identities. I will not present or engage Korsgaard's arguments for this conclusion. Furthermore, the account I proceed to develop here is intended to remain neutral on her conclusion.[20] Instead, I will be concerned with Korsgaard's metaphysics of the self, using practical identity as the point from which to proceed in order to develop my own account.

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[20] I suspect that readers might ultimately think that the account I proceed to develop sits uncomfortably with Korsgaard's conclusion. This might be the case, and, truth be told, I am ultimately skeptical of Korsgaard's conclusion. However, I will not provide argument against it in this paper, and I do believe that the account I provide can be made consistent with Korsgaard's conclusion, even if it appears less immediately natural than the alternative.

4. The Cases: A Diagnosis

Now with Korsgaardian practical identity in mind, return to the cases described earlier. April and May are friends. That means that April holds the practical identity of friend, or more specifically, friend-of-May. Likewise, May holds the practical identity friend-of-April. And we've seen other friends, too: June holds friend-of-August, August holds friend-of-June, Summer holds friend-of-Autumn, and Autumn holds friend-of-Summer. As for June and July, let's confirm August's suspicion: June holds budding-lover-of-July and July holds budding-lover-of-June (we'll also stipulate that it's mutual). This seems straightforward enough, but what of the problems between April and May and June and August? There is more to say about each case, and with practical identity in mind I will provide a tentative diagnosis.

First return to April and May. Each holds the practical identity of friend to the other, as well as the practical identity of gardener. However, April's request seems to create a potential conflict in May's practical identities. Up until now, May's identity as gardener and friend have happily coexisted, and, in fact, coincided. April's request, however, seems to create a conflict between the two. Now it seems as though April has tasked May with relating to her in new ways as part of their friendship. Thus for May to be a friend to April, upon April's suggestion at least, consists in interaction beyond each's being a gardener. And if one might find a new way to be a friend, as Korsgaard suggests, then it seems like this is as good a time as any for May.

But whatever the conflict between May's identities exactly consists in, it is not one to be solved by Korsgaardian unification. A unified May could see herself primarily as a gardener and refuse to relate to April in any capacity outside of gardening, or she could see herself primarily as

a friend to April, yet still refuse to do anything but relate qua gardener.[21] Instead, I suggest that the mistake that May makes is to treat her practical identity as gardener as the same kind of identity as her practical identity as a friend.[22] May's practical identity as a gardener consists in a project, while her practical identity as a friend consists in a relationship. I will argue that the appropriate way one relates to projects is fundamentally different from the way that one relates to other persons. In the course of developing my account, I will suggest that the notion of practical identity is better suited to projects than relationships.

While the situation initially appears similar for June and August—another practical identity creating conflict with the two's identities as friends—I will suggest a rather different kind of mistake has been made in this case. June's two practical identities—to still adhere to Korsgaard's framework for now—are of the same kind: both are relationships. The mistake here consists in inappropriately crossing relationships. Though ostensibly interacting with August, June's interaction consists in an attempt to participate in her relationship with July instead of participating in her relationship with August.[23] Given the aims of friendship, she misses the target.

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[21] I recall Korsgaard's conclusion again only to emphasizes that unification—or not—is irrelevant to the course of my current argument.

[22] Two cases are possible. One of which will involve a mistake, the other case will turn out to be permissible, but unusual: perhaps May is not vast in all directions. If May is nothing but a gardener no mistake has been made.

[23] This example constitutes one kind of paradigmatic case of trying to keep one relationship going in the wrong context. The kind of gossip that occurs when one talks incessantly about a crush to her friend often constitutes an attempt to do just this. Of course this can be normal, healthy, and even fun conversation—or gossip—at times, but it can be carried too far, as June has in this case. When carried too far, it can constitute an attempt to be in the wrong relationship at the wrong time—more on this later.

Lastly, it will become clear on my account how Summer and Autumn relate to their projects and relationships appropriately. The appropriateness of their case is twofold: each relates to their projects and relationships appropriately, and thereby each relates to the other appropriately in light of all their relationships.

5. Metaphysics of the Self

Reconsider April's realization of May: that she is a whole person, that she is like herself in some ways and different in many others, and that she is vast in all directions. In realizing that May is a whole person, April comes to realize that May has a history, interests, imagination, emotions, humor, dispositions, desires, motivations, ambitions, and so on that constitute a distinct character or personality. She also realizes that May cares about and attaches value to various pursuits, ideals, goals, and activities that constitute her projects. Finally, she realizes that there are other individuals whom May cares about and with whom her life is entangled—her relationships. Her realization, then, attributes all of these features to a particular person, or, to speak in more metaphysically familiar terms, a self. How, then, do these components fit together? And what of practical identity?

In order to answer these questions, reconsider Summer and Autumn. Recall that their relationship was described as multifaceted. But what is it for their relationship to qualify as multifaceted? Consider the nature of their relationship: they are each responsive to the changes in one another's lives, committed to learning more about the other and knowing her interests, imagination, emotions, humor, dispositions, motivations, ambitions, and so on, have come to know much about one another's pasts, care about and follow each other's projects, are interested in knowing about the others in their lives who matter to each of them, and they do things

together. The way that Summer and Autumn relate to one another constitutes a particularly robust relationship dynamic.

All relationships consist of a dynamic. The dynamic between Summer and Autumn in particular is multifaceted because the two relate across many dimensions. In fact, not only do the two relate across many dimensions, but they aim at relating to the other across all dimensions of value in their lives.[24] Further, by possessing this aim, their relationship is such that each is open to its further development.[25] This is what makes Summer and Autumn's friendship wonderful. It is

what makes their relationship the ideal, rich, and value-filled relationship that neither April and May's relationship nor June and August's relationship constitutes. And if something has gone wrong in April and May's relationship as well as June and August's but not in Summer and Autumn's, then it is this that is the nature of friendship: to aim at coming to know and recognize the other wholly. This happens by way of the relationship dynamic. But if this is to be the aim of all friendships, then friendship must be multifaceted in order to get off the ground in the first place. And this is exactly my suggestion: the appropriate way to relate to friends, and even other persons, is multifaceted, and takes place through a relationship dynamic.

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[24] This does not mean that they actually do relate across all dimensions of their relationship or that it is a failure to be a good friend if, contingently, they don't ever come to fulfill this aim in full.

[25] cf. Relationships Egalitarianism. Readers familiar with the course of my argument will recognize this claim. I develop an account of friendship at length such that what it is to be in a friendship is to be open to the development of the relationship. I do not rehearse the argument here, but instead offer the framework I develop through one of the cases considered. Summer and Autumn's relationship is such each is open to its development.

In order to see why this is, consider one's projects. We know that May is a gardener, but perhaps she is also an amateur violinist, an avid reader of nineteenth and early twentieth century American poetry, and an anemophile who can't get enough time outside when the Santa Anas pick up in the early fall. Maybe she loves when the Jacarandas are in bloom during late May and early June, though she pines for the deciduous forests of the northeast, but as for actual pine trees….she admires the Douglas firs of the Pacific Northwest, but doesn't love the ones down here.[26] Nevertheless she is grateful to live on a street lined with sweetgums that change color in the fall, albeit not until almost December! She dreams of living to someday see environmentally sustainable fishing practices employed across the country. She is devoted to maintaining her hair color, making sure it is ever as light, bright, and white as possible.[27] And not to be forgotten, perhaps she is a devoted collector of marbles so long as they're not the red ones, but she couldn't care any less to organize her collection.[28] Nor her wardrobe.[29] Call these her projects. They are various pursuits, ideals, goals, activities, and preferences that she values. Importantly, what they are not, however, are persons or relationships. They are the things—quite literally—tangible or abstract, that we commit ourselves to or find value in making a part of our lives. In addition to May's history and psychology— including her interests, imagination, emotions, humor, dispositions, desires, motivations, ambitions, and so on—what makes her distinctive as a person

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[26] She is also, *regrettably*, stuck in Los Angeles for now.

[27] My thanks are owed to Emily Neri.

[28] Here the example becomes no longer autobiographical. I collect stamps, not marbles, and if I did collect marbles, I would love the red ones.

[29] Autobiographical.

are her particular projects. She is, in a sense, fundamentally built out of them and constituted by them into the distinctive self that she is.

Note that projects are especially suited to give rise to practical identities. Perhaps they may even best be thought of as a particular subcategory of Korsgaardian practical identity. One's projects are intimately bound up with her actions. Certainly the "I do" of Korsgaard's earlier formation of action can be appropriately attached to many of May's projects. Furthermore, even if these are not things she always acts on, they're certainly seen to be choiceworthy and likely to constitute descriptions under which she values herself, her life, and her actions.

However, there is an even stronger sense still in which projects give rise to practical identities: *they come onboard oneself*. What this means is that they constitute the facets of a self. My projects are expressions of myself, which, in turn, originate from features of my psychology and what I value. While this claim exposes a set of questions surrounding the nature of value and its connection to my own particular psychology and subjective experience, I would like to remain as neutral as possible on these questions. In that interest, call what my projects express and originate from and what my subjective experience attaches to my *self-something-or-other.*[30]

To say slightly more about what this self-something-or-other is, I will make use of perhaps an only slightly less mysterious notion: self consciousness. Thus, restated, my projects are expressions of my self consciousness. And note that I, a self conscious being, do act, as of course Korsgaard has us well consider. Which means that my projects are the things that I, a self conscious enactor, enact, and by doing so take to be choiceworthy in the Korsgaardian sense. It is

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[30] A technical term of which I will leave it to the reader to judge the precision and formality. Somewhat more seriously, I have purposely stated the idea vaguely to avoid begging very many questions best left to the philosopher of mind, and perhaps even the psychologist.

because my projects are bound up with my very self consciousness qua self conscious enactor that my projects give rise to practical identity in this way. They flow from my self consciousness as I enact, self conscious enactor that I am.

Furthermore, note the following consequence of the above claims: I am, at least in part, individuated by what I value. In other words, at least in part, what makes me the particular self that I am are the things that I value.[31] And I take it that if this is not what Korsgaard has in mind by talking specifically of practical identity, it is at least consist with her account.

But now note that this phenomenon is properly described as identity only in virtue of its connection to myself, or rather, its flowing from my self-something-or-other, or self consciousness. And what it is for something to flow from my self-something-or-other or self consciousness is for it to be an expression of my myself, which, in turn, is for it to originate from features of my own particular psychology, what I value, and my own subjective experience. That means that practical identity is only properly described as identity at all in virtue of its flowing from my self-something-or-other or self consciousness. And, as described, the self-something-or-other is irreducibly me, qua self conscious enactor. And your self-something-or-other is irreducibly you, qua self conscious enactor. And this ties our practical identities to ourselves in such a way that makes talk of relationships as practical identities metaphorical at best. For whatever originates from me, it is not you; and whatever originates from you, it is not me. This is

[31] This partly explains why it can be so jarring sometimes to see someone whose interests radically change or who "moves on" from projects that she once held dear.

how self consciousness works: it attaches to a self; my own to me, the one and only.[32] Hence the notion of identity that we have reached carries a fundamental metaphysical priority attached to a particular self, and it cannot cross to another self. Our projects, then, constitute our identities and express who we are qua individual self conscious enactors. With this in mind, we can return to relationships.

6. Metaphysics of Relationships

Recall that Summer and Autumn's relationship dynamic occurred across all dimensions of value for each. And since, as we have just considered, value is intimately bound up with the self, the relationship dynamic occurs across all dimensions, or facets, of the self.[33] Call the process that unfolds in their relationship dynamic *other-discovery*. Other-discovery involves the aim of coming to know the other, her *self*. In order for other-discovery to get off ground, however, both you and I must make ourselves discoverable to the other. And what it is to make ourselves discoverable is to share one's facets with the other. What this is, of course, is to share one's projects with the other. This, then, is what our relationships, are made of: sharing one's own

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[32] I am reminded of a pedagogical analogy that David Lefkowitz has used in teaching the early part of his music theory course sequence, and if the reader is so inclined, I think this analogy might help elucidate the matter, though I'll be twisting it for my own purposes somewhat. Think of the self like the tonic in some fixed harmonic context or key, which can be thought of as the first personal pronoun "I." The tonic asserts itself, "I," in the context of other functional harmonies, but it is central, not unlike the centrality of self-consciousness. Of course we can modulate to another harmonic context. But then we are no longer dealing with the same first personal self consciousness, or "I," hence a different tonic. These two tonics are to the two self-conscious enactors, surrounded by other functional harmonies centering on, and in a sense stemming from, them as my projects are to myself. Suppose perhaps we modulate from one key to another through a common tone. In our analogy to self conscious enactors, this can be thought of as bridging the gap between selves through shared projects.

[33] Or at least aims to.

projects, and thereby expressing oneself to the other, and discovering the other's projects; thereby coming to know and understand her. Our projects give us the stuff that our relationships are made of; they provide the channel through which the pieces of ourselves rub up against the other and become entangled together.

And here is where shared activity gets off the ground, too. To engage in other-discovery involves more than merely the attainment of other-knowledge.[34] Recall that another distinctive feature of Summer and Autumn's relationship among our three cases is that the two actually do things together. This means that they entangle their projects and thereby entangle themselves. Of course, if projects are in fact a form of Korsgaardian practical identity, then the importance of doing things together, or sharing activity, follows straightforwardly from the connection between identity and action, also brought out in our earlier discussion of self conscious enacting.

But there's more still to Summer and Autumn's relationship, enough to stave off at least one objection that has likely been brewing for some time. Summer and Autumn recognize that there are other persons in each other's lives to whom each values. Certainly it must be the case that these other persons have some place in one's own life just as one's projects do. So why have they not been discussed when considering the self? Furthermore, if one values another person and one is at least in part individuated by what she values, why haven't other persons made their way into the individuation or constitution of a self?

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[34] The unfairly neglected cousin of self-knowledge. There is an argument to be made that at least some kinds of other-knowledge is perhaps even more valuable to attain than self-knowledge, and that it is perhaps even necessary for the acquisition of at least some kinds of self knowledge, though I will not make it here.

The immediate answer to the latter question is to appeal to the condition on the self-something- or-other that it flow from one's own subjective experience. There is a barrier between one's own subjective experience and that of another that is doing a substantial amount of work in the individuation of selves. But this is merely self consciousness at work. Perhaps one might object that quite a bit of substantive metaphysics has casually made its way into the picture here. If that is the reader's worry, I have no trouble granting it, but I do have more to offer.[35]

Each of us is situated in a web, or network, of relationships. In each of the relationships we have we instantiate a relationship dynamic. Of course, there are effects of being in a relationship. I influence and shape you and you influence and shape me. Thus in addition to our relationship dynamic, we find a dynamic of influence between each other.[36] The relationships we have may bear on the projects we have, as may the reverse. There will be a complex loop surrounding our relationships and projects crisscrossing the web that ultimately comes to shape oneself. Though I am built out of my projects, you shape me by influencing the projects I have, and I find you because of the projects I already have, and so on an so forth. This is the place that others have in my coming to be the self that I am.[37]

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[35] But here is where I stop my inquiry. This assumption, though certainly metaphysically substantive, is absolutely fundamental on my account. I start from the assumption that there is a distinctness of persons constituted by a subjective experience attached to each self, and assume all responsibilities for the consequences this entails.

[36] The degree of symmetry, and even more importantly *mutuality*, here is a matter of great importance. cf. Relationships Egalitarianism for a more complete discussion of this topic. Relatedly, the topic of *mutual recognition* will be pursued more substantially in a later chapter.

[37] And here we can see the beginnings of the argument for other-knowledge's role in the attainment of self knowledge. The crisscrossing loop throughout the web provides the route. Metaphor will have to make due here, as I will not detail or precisify the argument in this paper.

But if relationships consist in other-discovery, and there is a place for other persons in coming to be a particular self, there must also be a place for recognizing the others to whom one's relationship partner also stands in relationships with. And, as we have already noted with Summer and Autumn, there is indeed. It is important and valuable to know about and appreciate the significance of the others in the other's life whom she values. Indeed, it is a part of other-discovery. But when Summer stands next to Autumn she stands next to another person, a person going through exactly what she is—metaphysically *and socially*.[38] She has her own history, interests, imagination, emotions, humor, dispositions, desires, motivations, ambitions, projects and so on. The aim of other-discovery is to come to know all of this, *but in context.*

Autumn is only Autumn in the web she stands. We come to know the self as it stands, but also where it stands. This gives the process of other-discovery a foreground and a background. The foreground consists in coming to know the stuff of your relationships. Namely, what you relate in virtue of in any one of your particular relationships, the stuff of your self-something-or-other or self consciousness, you qua self conscious enactor, your projects. In the background are all the other persons you are engaged in other-discovery with, all those with whom you instantiate this process all over again.[39] Part of my other-discovery of you involves my coming to know about the others you are discovering other than me, the other relationships in which you stand. But each of those relationships consists in a *process or activity*, the process of other-discovery, instantiated all over again. And inside any particular one of these processes you and I

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[38] This is more than just a joke, but a reminder of the web of relationships in which we are situated.

[39] Of course other-discovery will yield processes which unfold rather differently and come to have different characteristics in different relationships. Persons are vast, cross two and you get something even vaster: a relationship.

cannot get out, we are moored to each other. We can—and should—marvel at all the others whom we have each moored ourselves to, but we cannot get *inside* any other moorings but our own, the ones we have tied together.[40]

Nevertheless, if all this metaphor has left the reader wanting, I am happy to return to the mysteries of self consciousness, and perhaps just a little more metaphor as well. One cannot escape any individual process due to the nature of self consciousness. I, qua self conscious enactor, enact, communicate, *flail—do whatever I can*—to meet you, qua self conscious enactor, and you do likewise to meet me. Try as we might, we will never break the boundary between persons, self-something-or-others, or self consciousnesses. You will never come on board me nor will I ever come on board you the way that our projects come on board ourselves. This means that I can never know you the way that I know my own projects. But you are infinitely more vast than those projects, self-conscious enactor that you are. I come to know and understand you and your vastness through other-discovery, the process which lets me glimpse all that flows from your self consciousness. Crucially, my glimpse of you, another person, comes only through this process. But this process attaches to you. And for you this process attaches to me. Put another way, other-discovery is individuated by the the two of us together, the persons engaged in it. We confine it. In fact, we define it. For this reason, when it comes to the others in the lives of our relationship partners, the best we can do is to recognize their presence and what they mean to our

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[40] I find this quite a wondrous set of circumstances. While admittedly scholarly analysis of the work points us toward other directions, the language of "mooring" I have used here is intentionally meant to allude to Dickinson's poem "Wild Nights—wild nights!" in order to evoke the pretheoretical wondrousness I feel for this set of circumstances. John Adams also has a lovely setting of the poem in the final movement of his choral symphony Harmonium.

partner in other-discovery. By doing so, we recognize the context of our own relationship, and our place in the web.

And though we each have a relative place in the web, we are also constantly bending it, centering it around each of our various relationship partners contingently. While I can come to understand my current place in your web and likewise your current place in mine, we each bend the web to center around each other insofar as we interact with the other. Or, put another way, when we engage in any given process of other-discovery, we center our networks around each other. It is our aims, or the point, rather, of our relationship—other-discovery—that bends each of our networks to center around each other. For if my aim is to discover you, self conscious enactor that you are, and make myself discoverable to you, self conscious enactor that I am, and your aims the same as mine, then we are bound up with the other. Our aims settle the scope and direction of our action: me toward you, and you toward me. To participate in other-discovery is to bend the web around the other.

But while other-discovery is a program or process that we commit to, we are not always engaged in it with the same particular person. Enter time, space, and finitude. While I may be committed to other-discovery with you, I am also to committed to it with each of my friends. Other-discovery involves interaction, or actual instances of participating in the process of other-discovery. That is, other-discovery requires us to actually make good on our commitment to it. But this means that I have numerous commitments—or at least as many as I have friends— to act upon. But rather than to think this fodder for objection, it ought to instead be considered the foundational question of interpersonal sociality: how should I spend my time with those in my

life? Or, even, merely a subset of the broader question: how should I spend my time? Certainly these are question we all must, and in fact do, settle, as even Korsgaard has us consider, as we must act, after all.

The way I choose to settle these questions is what sets my web into place, giving each other our relative place within each other's webs. Perhaps I have traditional monogamous romantic partner expectations and so decide to spend most of my time with my partner, with my closest life-long friend taking the second greatest share of my time, and those of my friends in close physical proximity taking a greater share of my time than those who have moved a great distance away from me. Or maybe I am in a polyamorous relationship in which I divide my time among several romantic partners roughly equally, and, in fact, make little distinction within the norms of my relationships between the time I spend with my partners and friends. And yet if I am the mother of an infant she will almost certainly take up most of my free time, at least in her earliest years, leaving me with less time spent with even my closest friends or romantic partner. And as already mentioned, recognizing and understanding these facts about my relationships, that is, understanding the configuration of my web, and how it informs our own relationship, self conscious enactor that I am, is part of what other-discovery consists in. But, when we actually

interact this all shifts to the background—if only for a moment—as we center our webs around each other for the course of our interaction, establishing the foreground.[41]

Of course, the way that I in fact do settle these questions is not entirely up to me. Other-discovery involves making good on the commitment to its program. Hence, if I am to be your friend, I better be prepared to make good on my commitment to other-discovery with you. In other words, if we are friends, I must actually interact with you. Friendship is not a commitment to a program alone that may or may not ever actually materialize. It is a program that actually gets instantiated. Put another way, friendship generates norms on each other to actually instantiate other-discovery, that is, to actually interact. This gives each friend a claim to expectations of the other, the sorting out of which is among the foundational tasks of a relationship.[42] Our expectations must be informed by each of our understandings of the other's web in conjunction with the trajectory of our own program of other-discovery. I discover you and you discover me, but I see who you are also discovering and you see who I am also discovering, and those we are also discovering see each of us, and they see that we are discovering each other, informing their own expectations on each of us within their respective relationships; what *entangled* webs we weave.

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[41] Notice, on my account, that locutions sometimes used in traditional monogamous relationships, for example, such as "You're the center of my world." or any other similarly maudlin metaphor appealing to the notion of a center is mistaken. The person whom you spend the most time with, or even value the most, is not the center of your world, or web. Rather, she is just that: the person you spend the most time with, or the person you value the most. You are constantly bending the web, re-centering it with every interaction. The reader can make what she will of this point, as we seem to be dealing in metaphor with talk of a center in any case. Nevertheless I hope the metaphysics is clear.

[42] cf. Relationships Egalitarianism.

7. Remaining Robustly Oneself

Of course our relationships change us, how could seeing into the vastness of the other fail to do so? Relationships without effect are hardly within the domain of friendship, let alone acquaintanceship. Relationships may even be transformative sometimes. Our being situated in the web that we find ourselves to *actually* be in in part makes us who we are. Perhaps if we were situated in any other web we might be rather different.[43] Such are the effects of being in relationships; such is the effect of being in *any one single* relationship. But this does not mean that we are constantly shifting in self, from encounter to encounter with the other throughout our interactions with her in each of our relationships, bringing along a new self to each one another, each and every time, nor does it mean that we are different persons, or at least different individuations of oneself, in different relationships.

The situation is the contrary: there is a single self that underlies the *stuff* that we bring to each of our relationships. It is my self consciousness, self-something-or-other, the thing that makes me irreducibly me, that I bring to you and that you bring to me. Of course there is a route from you to me through the world and to my self consciousness, but I, qua fundamentally irreducible thing that I am, survive the journey. I don't take you on board or lose myself to you.

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[43] I take it that we sometimes find ourselves wondering what our lives might have been like if we found ourselves in a different web than the one we actually are in. Questions and thoughts—regrets, even—like "What if I had married my first love?," "If only I had come out as gay sooner…," "What would my life be like if I had decided to have children?," or "What would my life be like had I not had children?" all make sense and are the kinds of questions that one might actually find herself wondering. We think that our lives and *ourselves* might have turned out quite differently on these counterfactuals. We often find ourselves entertaining the same sort of counterfactuals about our projects, too: "Could I have been more than a musicologist had I been a more responsible child and stuck with the violin back then?," "What if I had accepted that job opportunity across the country?," "Had I planted my pumpkins earlier might I have broken a world record?," etc.

What I am, however, is influenced and directed by you. You nudge me along the way and I nudge you along the way. And we do this with so many persons so many times. Selves, then, are blunt objects, having bumped into so many others and been bent out of shape by them. And while a dull and blunt piece of jewelry may lack shine and luster, the situation is reversed with a self: the more times we bump into the another, the duller our surface becomes, and all the more beautiful.[44] Once we smooth out those sharp, well-defined edges, we become all the more vast.

Though we have a tendency to remain ourselves at our core through our relationships, this is not to be taken for granted. One must not become all too caught-up in other-discovery with any one other. This claim is not meant to invoke the egalitarian problem described in the previous chapter, but rather, to invoke a more basic concern: it is a virtue to remain true to oneself in light of and through her relationships. Relationships should change us, enliven us, make us more interesting, and effect occasion for growth, but they ought not *fundamentally and radically* transform who we are. To do so is to get lost. It is to *lose oneself* in the process of other-discovery.

But this is not the goal of other-discovery. We cannot ever come onboard the other. We tread a fine line and live a delicate balance between the impossible and the admirable. For it is impossible to do so yet admirable to try. But we also tread just as fine a line between the admirable and the impoverished. For it is to *impoverish* one's own life, and *self*, to lose oneself in the process of flailing toward the other. Put another way, the absolutely unbridgeable difference between selves qua self-consciousness is a *good* thing. I should not actually *desire* to come

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[44] Perhaps a better analogy would be to compare the self to a pencil. While a sharp point on a pencil may appear superficially attractive to the eye, it is a well-worn, dull tip that catches the mind. For the dull pencil is the one that has written much, told its story, and has yet more to say.

onboard you the way in which my projects come onboard myself. For my own distinctness as a person and vastness is itself wonderful. Such is the thin tripartite line that we must tread. We try to achieve the impossible in coming as close to the other as we can, doing whatever we can to get there, but it is actually good that the impossible is impossible, that is, it is actually good that we can never transcend our own self-consciousness, for that prevents us from losing our own vastness, yet, at the same time, we must take deliberate care in how we flail at the boundary of the impossible, for we shape the contingent too. The ways in which we contingently absorb ourselves in pursuit of the transgression of the impossible may in fact cost us our own selves. We may flatten out, becoming one-dimensional, in pursuit of the other.

Not only may we flatten-out, becoming one-dimensional, but losing oneself to the other may come at all sorts of psychological costs. One may lose self esteem and confidence, even a basic appreciation for what makes her unique and idiosyncratic as an individual when she loses herself in a mistakenly all-consuming process of other-discovery. Furthermore, she may forget to indulge her own passions, and projects, failing to recognize that she, too, is a person vast in all directions and worthy of the impossible all her self. That is, she too, is worthy of being aimed at via the process of other-discovery; she is a vast self, worthy of being the subject of other-discovery herself. In fact, losing sight of this seems to constitute at least part of the very nature of

losing one's own self esteem.[45] And there is particular danger in appealing to one of Korsgaard's practical identities on the basis of relationship in this respect: it provides the potentially slippery grounds for losing oneself to the process of other-discovery.

Parenthood presents a particular danger of losing oneself to other-discovery. Perhaps it is partly such a great danger due to the asymmetry found within its earliest stages.[46] It seems that some parents lose themselves to parenthood. That is, it seems that some parents lose a sense of who they were *as a self* before becoming absorbed in the parent-child relationship. This is not to say that their interests cannot change, for parenthood effects many new practical realities and deeply serious responsibilities that were not part of one's life before. These changes are quite likely to change a person in at least some ways. But, they should not lead a parent to lose herself. While I am not a parent myself, nevertheless, I think that I can offer some general remarks that may more specifically apply to this case.

Sometimes discovering the other is so rewarding that we find ourselves utterly absorbed in it. We want to do little or even nothing but it. This presents us with a challenge: remaining whole persons in light of the joys of a particularly rewarding process of other-discovery. And this

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[45] Though this discussion has been presented from one-side of the relationship, I do not mean to characterize it fundamentally as such. Doing so is merely for convenience sake. Of course only one of us could have lost herself in the process of other-discovery but not the other. Such a case may involve more acute psychological distress and loss of self esteem. But if we have both lost ourselves in the process to the other, then the situation is no better. It is much the same. There is no further benefit in our mutual lostness, and there is no union of lostness that transcends ourselves. I do not take seriously views that posit certain relationships as a union of persons. Such talk is metaphorical at best, and if claimed to be literal it clearly violates the very most basic of conditions we find ourselves to be in within the world: the boundary between persons via self consciousness. We are delimited as persons by our self consciousness and we are fundamentally individuated by it.

[46] Discussed in the previous chapter as "asymmetric dependence."

is not merely a claim involving considerations of the others in our lives whom we are also discovering and whom are discovering us, but it concerns ourselves. Rather, it is something that we owe to ourselves.

We owe it to ourselves to remain whole in spite of the vastness of all others. For you are vast, but I am too. It can be particularly thrilling, I take it, in the case of parenthood, in which I watch, listen to, and even facilitate, the growth of your own vastness as a self, but yet I must not lose myself as you unfold to me. I owe this to you. And I owe it to all those whom I am engaged in the process of other-discovery. But perhaps most of all, *I owe it to myself*. I will be better for it and so will all of the others in my own life, including my child. For robust selves are selves that have reached self actualization, not lost selves, no matter whom they may be lost to nor how noble the relationship may be. We all face this challenge, but I imagine that parents face it particularly acutely, wedged between fascination, wondrousness, profound emotion, and serious responsibility.

Thus, instead, might be a more promising, yet related, challenge to Korsgaard's ultimate conclusion regarding the challenge of self unification in light of all one's practical identities: to remain robustly oneself in spite of the web in which we find ourselves. We must retain our vastness even in light of all that is vast surrounding us. Such is the world we find ourselves to inhabit: an incredible vast one.

But further, there is yet another related challenge that we face. While staying true to oneself, or staying robustly oneself, in light of all of our other relationships and the ways in which they affect us is but one side of the challenge, the other side presents its own. How is it that we are to maintain friendships in light of our changing selves? This question will be

addressed in a later chapter, but I will here introduce a deep theoretical divide that emerges in positing an account of friendship.

One way out of this side of the challenge is to accept it as nonthreatening. This entails that we recognize that selves change, and even perhaps do not remain robustly themselves, or do not do so very well, or perhaps even that remaining robustly oneself is not a virtue. Friendship, then, is instead a kind of pleasant company of mutual appreciation of the other's presence and company in our lives. On this view change is nonthreatening because friends simply come and go, drift apart, or diverge, as our selves change and we no longer enjoy the company of the other and her presence in our lives. Friends are friends for the moment, for a time, and for a place. Friendship is effected by and ended by mere contingency.

Of course this is not my own view and mine shares little in common with it. Other-discovery sees the other in my life not as mere pleasant company nor even as a companion whom I appreciate, but rather as a vast individual. My goal—*our* goal, as friends is to see as deeply as we can into one another's vastness. But this presents a deep and fundamental challenge, something that we must confront as a basic struggle in our lives. How are we to maintain and continue to value the other through all of this change? Or, put another way, friends change. How are we to preserve the greatness or desirableness of the moment in light of the threat of change? While I will not answer this question yet, I believe that the question itself recommends my conception of friendship over the alternative. For this is a question that we *do* in fact seem to face. It would be mistaken to think that we do not have to worry about it. It would seem callous, or at least inconsiderate, at very least, unkind perhaps—to take the middle-ground—to have little care regarding the ever-passing and exchange of friendships throughout one's life. For friendship

is not but a mere momentary pleasure, or mere pleasant company for the time, no matter how long it may be. Rather, it is something much more substantial.

8. Conclusion: The Cases Made Explicit

Summer and Autumn instantiate the ideal case of other-discovery, while both April and May and June and August fail to do so. For April and May, the failure consists in stunting the development of their relationship.[47] While they start upon the process of other-discovery, entangling themselves in one of their projects, May fails to see April as a whole person, a self constituted by many projects. For this reason, she never actually meets the other in all of her vastness. But it's not just that she never gets there, she doesn't even aim to. We might describe this case as a failure of other-discovery due to May's lack of the aim to come to know April across all dimensions of value.

For June and August, once their relationship changes, the failure consists in failing to get a relationship dynamic off the ground in the first place.[48] June confuses the background with the foreground, thus failing to make herself discoverable at all. She doesn't just lack the aim of relating across all dimensions of value, but she fails to make good on other-discovery with August entirely. She is no longer interested in seeing any substantive facet of August. Rather, she

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[47] Earlier I described the mistake as a conflict between practical identities. Now that Korsgaardian practical identity has dropped out of the picture for relationships, this is no longer readily transparent. While I do think it is a mistake to talk about Korsgaardian practical identity concerning relationships, I believe it is possible to construe the mistakes in terms of practical identity, however I will not do so here, as I have argued against it.

[48] Perhaps the case would be more straightforward if June and August had never initially had a promising relationship in which other-discovery gets off the ground and goes well.

is caught up in her process of other-discovery with July, just in the wrong time and place. Perhaps she has even lost herself to the process with July, thus creating her predicament with August.

At least April and May have allegedly gotten other-discovery off the ground, and the process attaches to the right persons. June and August, on the other hand, fail to get other-discovery off the ground the moment their relationship changes. There is no attempt to get at the self consciousness or what flows from it at all, not even a stunted one. This is the sense in which their mistake is greater than that of April and May.

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This chapter is dedicated to CW Pencil Enterprise

and to the city of New York[49]

Chapter 3

Embodied Friendship:

Selves in Communication

1. Introduction

After being preoccupied with much a priori theorizing, whether philosophically or commonsensically, this investigation will constitute somewhat of a departure. That is, after theorizing the nature of friendship as a relationship which possesses the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship and described by the process of other-discovery, I will now turn toward the more contingent.[50] After having just theorized the nature of the self and relationships, my topic for this particular examination will be that of the communication between selves. If my previous chapter explained the nature of the commitment to other-discovery, this one deals with its actual instantiation. Put even less theoretically and more commonsensically: I will now be concerned with the topic of communication between friends.

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[49] Though this chapter breaks the seasonal theme of the dissertation up to this point—it will return afterward—it does so in dedication to a place contingently subject to their effects in high degree. The author has unfortunately been based in Los Angeles for the duration of this graduate program. Nevertheless, I owe this chapter's conception and inspiration to the influence of my interactions with Caroline Weaver and CW Pencil Enterprise, as well as to my other New York City friends and relationships. Thanks is owed to Andrew, Greg, Christina, Beatrice, among others. But I also owe thanks to my experiences in the city itself. Less seriously, I begrudge both of my parents whom are each natives of New York City for moving to Los Angeles before starting a family.

[50] It may strike the reader that the central case, or example in the case of this paper, is a deeply contingent one.

Methodologically the course of my investigation will take the following structure. I will start from the a priori and gradually turn toward the more contingent, applying these principles to ever increasingly contingent cases. First I will describe what I will call embodied friendship, a standard sort of physical interaction between friends. Next I will proceed toward the contingent approximations of embodied friendship. Lastly, I will have something evaluative to say about each of the contingent substitutes that I examine as modes of communication themselves, and not merely as an approximation for embodied friendship. I take it that this methodological approach is of interest not merely for how it makes its way through the a priori to the contingent, but also for its scope and subject matter. It is here that I mean to plant myself firmly within the world which I find myself at the time of writing and all of its contingencies.[51]

2. Deep Physicality

Caroline Weaver, owner of a pencil shop in New York City and author of *The Pencil Perfect: The Untold Story of a Cultural Icon*, writes of the pencil:

> With a pencil, one can experience an intimacy that can't be found elsewhere. Each part of the pencil—as simple as those parts are—stimulates a different sense. The wood smells of the tree it came from, the graphite feels a certain way to write with, the eraser uses friction and heat to remove the marks, and the whole thing can disappear after a finite number of words and a quick spin in a pencil sharpener. A combination of each action creates a soundtrack unique to that pencil. The interaction is purely physical and

[51] There is a sense in which the philosopher sometimes has some resistance to doing this kind of work, or to engage in this kind of methodological approach. I must admit some discomfort with the enterprise myself. But I think that these discomforts are largely unfounded and often prejudicial as a matter of arrogance surrounding philosophical work conceived of as some kind of a priori and timeless matter standing above the mere contingencies of the day.

completely connected to the thoughts and ideas in the user's mind. A person is completely free to use their pencil in in any way possible—after all, it's erasable (2).[52]

Oddly, the situation is much the same between persons.

What Weaver highlights in the passage above is the sense of physicality of a particular object and of our particular actions performed with it. What is particularly notable in her description of the pencil is her use of the concept of intimacy in connection with physicality. A pencil is intimate, according to Weaver, at least in part for its deeply physical nature. But of course many things are physical that are obviously not pencils. For pens are physical objects, too, yet Weaver is focused only on the pencil as having a particular kind of intimacy tied to its physicality.[53] Part of this can be explained by the fact that this is a book focused on the pencil. But Weaver uniquely appreciates the pencil, beyond other objects like the pen, for instance.[54] This seems more likely explained by her claim that the pencil stimulates many senses, or that each of its components stimulates a sense, perhaps an even stronger claim. Call the pencil a deeply physical object. It is deeply physical in that it matters to us, in a physical sense, in many ways.

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[52] If you find yourself in New York City, do check out CW Pencil Enterprise.

[53] I note that my use of the quote constitutes a starting point for theoretical and philosophical discussion. While I am familiar with Caroline and perhaps even know enough about her to have an idea of what her views might be more completely on the subject matter, and I suspect that she would not be in complete agreement with me, I will analyze the quote neutrally, personal connections to its author aside.

[54] Since the publication of Weaver's book, CW Pencil Enterprise has since been reinvented as a more general stationery and office supply store that does, indeed, sell pens and many other office and stationery objects, however, pencils retain their most special focus.

But not only is the pencil a deeply physical object, but it is also one that's deep physicality transcends our mere sensory appreciation of it. When Weaver notes that "The interaction is purely physical and completely connected to the thoughts and ideas in the user's mind," she points toward something rather remarkable and often overlooked, or even taken for granted (2). The physical, even what we might be tempted to describe as the purely physical, is deeply and completely psychologically meaningful. In a sense this claim is one that is so basic that it is hardly ever articulated directly. It is the stuff of first principles, or axiomatic metaphysics. More familiar is the famous cartesian inquiry into what kind of thing a self is given the storied history of the line of inquiry and its unfolding over the history of philosophy. But less often is this most basic claim articulated.[55]

That is, the pencil's deep physicality is imbued with deep psychological meaning. But it is its deep physicality that imbues this deep psychological meaning in the first place. Of course the opposite direction may hold as well. Perhaps Weaver's love for the pencil and nostalgia for it help to imbue it with meaning. But that hardly precludes the primacy of the first claim, for Weaver's love of the pencil is merely contingent as far as the metaphysical matter is concerned, even if not the psychological one. And certainly there, holds a contingency, too. Not everyone is

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[55] And at least in part perhaps having to do with its metaphysical opposition to the more familiar cartesian line of inquiry about the basics of the self. Obviously, the cartesian picture traditionally vociferously divorces the self from the physical. And accounts that take our physicality to be more basically connected to the self tend to have much less patience for the cartesian, individualist account of the self. My own view, as I hope emerges implicitly by the totality of this chapter and the previous, is a hybrid cartesian, individualistic conceptualization of the self based upon the complete and total centrality of the physical. More careful scholars of the cartesian self or of the philosophy of mind may have much more to say about this, but I hope my popular, or folk, conception of the phenomena at least helps clarify what my own views entail.

antecedently a lover of the pencil.[56] Yet, it is the case that its deep physicality produces deep psychological meaning. I suspect that many fall in love with the pencil exactly for this reason: its deep physicality.

Why is this? Part of answering this question is to state even more of what is obvious. We are deeply physical things ourselves.[57] We exist, as a thing—a self—in the world in a deeply physical way.[58] Skepticism aside, there is no plausible denial of this. It is simply the situation that every one of us finds herself to be in. Situated as physical selves in a physical world, we appreciate the physical very much. When put this way the thought sounds rather strange. It sounds much more ordinary and normal when put like this: we appreciate our surroundings. What I have said up to this point is essentially a kind of theoretical formalization of this thought. To return to even more common sense: we often have fun in our surroundings. Our surroundings occupy us when they are especially interesting. And what it is for our surroundings to be particularly interesting, at least in part or at least in one way, is for there to be a lot going on of interest or of appreciation in them. That is, surroundings that meet this characterization engage us substantially. But now, to bring in more theoretical notions again, this means that what it is for us to appreciate our surroundings to a greater degree, in this sense, is for something to be deeply

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[56] I am sure this is the case, though neither the author of the quote nor the author of this chapter fall into this category.

[57] Whatever one's metaphysics of the self, it is difficult to imagine one who denies the physical nature of the self qua body except for certain varieties of skeptics. But I would be surprised if such skeptics make it far along enough to find the enterprise of value theory a worthwhile endeavor, anyway.

[58] I ask the reader to please read this in a very commonsensical manner, and not one that reminds her of Heidegger. I mean to make no such allusion. I would rather that the reader invoke the problem of other minds than invoke Heidegger.

physical. I take it that this is at least part of what makes the pencil so compelling. Of course there is much more, including its unique history, uses, and potential. Weaver's book explores the rest of this.

Persons, it turns out, have much in common with the pencil by way of their deep physicality. This is not to say that the two are alike in their physical attributes. That would be entirely silly. But on a deeply serious level, it is to situate us within the deeply physical and within its deep meaning to us. By considering the deep physically of a pencil, an object, we find ourselves to be in much the same situation as the pencil: at one level of basicness, a thing in the world. Of course we find ourselves to be a *self* in the world, rather than an object in the world. Odd as this comparison may be, it should hardly be startling. There is a long tradition of comparing persons to the physical. For William Shakespeare famously asks "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" I merely instead ask the question: shall I compare thee to a pencil?

3. Embodied Friendship

Selves, or persons, are deeply physical. Call the unique deep physicality of a person an *embodied self*. As a corollary of embodied selfhood, it holds that friendship is a relationship between two embodied selves. Thus we can say that friendship is embodied. This is another one of those very metaphysically basic claims, one that perhaps would not ordinary be articulated for any commonsensical purpose. Nevertheless it is simply a basic fact of our relationships with other persons. If it is simply a part of our selfhood that we are embodied, the corollary states that it is simply a part of our relationships that they are embodied. Of course this claim is not as simply straightforward as the last claim. For clearly a person, or a self, is embodied in a basic respect. But a relationship, on the other hand, is something more abstract. What is meant by

abstract, in this sense, is that it endures above its actual deep physicality. The deep physicality of a relationship consists in the actual physical interaction of two selves, or persons.

But clearly a relationship is more than this physical state of affairs, for two selves who are separated are certainly still in possession of their relationship beyond the mere physical fact that the two still exist physically within the same world, though spaced further apart when not in direct physical contact! But to worry about this *as a problem* would be to make much metaphysics out of nothing of consequence at all. The point is not to generate a metaphysical puzzle about how a relationship can endure over space and time if it is constituted by physical persons. Indeed, my theory has a ready answer to that question anyway: as long as the two are committed to other-discovery, or possess the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship, they are friends.[59] But the question is silly. Rather, the point is to give special theoretical consequence to actual physical interaction between friends. Call this actual physical interaction *embodied friendship*.[60]

Embodied friendship is the paradigm of friendship. Put another way, embodied friendship may be said to be friendship at its purest. Recall the claim that persons are vast. Often their vastness was described as a matter of their interests, imagination, emotions, humor, dispositions, motivations, ambitions, and so on. And this is, of course, true. But it is only part of the story. The vastness of a person extends into the deeply physical as well. When we think of our friends, we

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[59] This doesn't answer the "metaphysical puzzle" about acquaintanceship. But those are scare quotes. No more will be made of the issue. It is a philosophical non-problem that any proper Wittgensteinian ought not entertain, and I hope even those whom are not inclined toward Wittgensteinianism will agree.

[60] Recall that in the previous chapter I noted that other-discovery is not merely a commitment to a process that may or may not ever be acted upon, but rather that it must actually be instantiated. Embodied friendship constitutes the paradigm of instantiating other-discovery.

do not typically envision them as a set of abstract qualities, but rather we think of them in terms of the embodied self that our friend actually constitutes. That is, we think of the physical person that we are used to seeing, that we actually physically interact with, and that we know is a part of the world, somewhere, even when she is not with us. Just as friendship is not but an abstract intellectual exercise, neither our our friends themselves. They are not merely an intellectual set of descriptions about their characteristics, whether psychological or physical, but rather, they are embodied selves, things in the worlds themselves. *And that matters.*

While this is all easy enough to recognize, it is substantially more difficult to say why it is that this actually matters to us. Yet, the answers are numerous. First, recall the pencil and its psycho-sensory appeal to us. We are intrigued by deep physicality, deeply physical things that we are. Part of what makes the other wonderful is just simply, all of her being, deep physicality included. And while what matters to us is usually—and ought to be—the other's psychological personhood foremost, it comes to us *inseparably* with the physical. We are comforted by the sight of our friends, by the touch of their hand, or by the sound of their laugh. We can't wait to see them again after a long absence. We can't wait to embrace them when we are particularly close in certain kinds of close relationships. And we take pains to physically comfort them when they are feeling vulnerable.

Secondly, we understand on a deep and fundamental level—and again, as one of those very basic truths that hardly demand articulation—that just like we find ourselves situated in the world as physical selves surrounded by other physical selves in a physical environment, so are our friends. We care about their own journey through the world and their growth, prosperity, and even safety within it qua physical beings. We know that we are all finite in the world we find

ourselves in, and we understand the joys, frustrations, and limits that come with that finite physicality. Our joys, frustrations, suffering, limits, and experiences are simply embodied. That is just the world that we find ourselves in.

But perhaps most importantly, this matters because our humanity is physical. This claim is partly a summation of what has been said before. These deeply basic metaphysical facts that have been odd to articulate might well be described as mere basic facts about the nature of our humanity. We are simply deeply physical things and the deeply physical matters to us. It is ourselves and it is our world.

Friendship is in virtue of all of this. That is, it holds because we actually do physically interact with one another. Even though we don't always engage in embodied friendship, friendship exists only because of embodied friendship. That is, embodied friendship is primary. All other modes of interaction within friendship are secondary. Friendship may be thought of as the communication between selves, the paradigm case of which is embodied friendship. Of course our world is permeated with contingency, and we are often separated in time and space from our friends. I will soon turn to an examination of more contingent modes of communication. However, first, there is one more a priori matter to get clear on before doing so: intimacy.

4. Intimacy

It is no coincidence that discussions of intimacy are often bound up with physicality in both metaphor and a literal sense. Return to Weaver's claim that "With a pencil, one can experience an intimacy that can't be found elsewhere" (2). Intimacy, it seems, is deeply intertwined with the physical, though it is not yet clear whether it inheres solely within the

domain of the physical itself. On Weaver's suggestion, at least, this seems not to be the case, hence the complete connection between the physical and the mind. This is true on my own account as well. My suspicious is that intimacy is found where the physical meets the psychological.[61] What exactly it amounts to will take some additional thought to state.

Whatever intimacy is, it seems to be commonplace in some of our most physical experiences. For people often describe physical interaction as intimate. The act of holding one another's hand is often thought to constitute a kind of intimacy between friends. This is particularly true of some more specific types of friendships as well. For certain physical acts like holding hands in the context of a romantic relationship may possess a special degree of intimacy conferred by the expectations of that particular kind of friendship. Or, within the parent-child relationship, the act of patting one's child on the shoulder to comfort her may possess a special sort of intimacy unique to the relationship.

But intimacy clearly is not a purely physical matter between embodied selves. For two persons may bump shoulders on a crowded New York City street and the incident will hardly be an intimate one. In such a context it is likely to be hardly noticed. Other times bumping into a stranger might be noticed yet deeply unappreciated, even resented. But entertaining as much is likely not very charitable anyway. A more plausible candidate for intimacy might be something like physicality, or perhaps, better yet, deep physicality, between friends. But this seems incorrect

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[61] There is, of course, a dualism found throughout my discussion of these issues. I do not mean to presuppose a certain metaphysical picture insofar as whether the world is entirely physical or whether some nonphysical entities exist. While I am a physicalist myself, I believe that both a physicalist or a non-physicalist can find my view compatible with their own worldview. When my conceptual apparatus effects a dualism between the physical and psychological I intend to remain neutral on whether the psychological is ultimately part of the physical or is ultimately constituted by something nonphysical.

as well. For we also consider more clearly psychological exchanges of vulnerability to constitute intimacy between friends. When I share something deeply meaningful to me it may easily constitute a kind of intimacy with you.

Furthermore, whatever intimacy is, it may be shared well beyond the domain of friendship. For I can very well conceive of exchanging an intimate moment with the very same stranger that I have bumped into on the sidewalk. Perhaps we are both on our way to Danbury, after all it is October 20th, and we are each fanatical enough to be visiting Charles Ives' gravesite on the same day, Ives' birthday, and we learn this of one another after we exchange some brief words following an apology after the walking accident. We take our exchange to be an intimate moment, of sorts, because we think to ourselves "what are the odds!" given the unusualness of the situation. Or perhaps I exchange a comforting glance with a young child almost in tears about some matter or another. Such interactions with strangers seem to plausibly constitute intimacy, or at least intimate moments.

It seems difficult to provide an account of intimacy that that captures all of these pretheoretical intuitions that we might hold about the experience. But if there is one thing that can unify our intuitions from pencils to sidewalk accidents, it ought to be specific, yet broad enough to capture many types of interactions. In other words, it ought to be a generalizable phenomenon. What all of these experiences of intimacy seem to share, I suggest, is a sense of understanding, no matter how fleeting, of the other.

Intimacy, then, is one's ability to gaze into the vastness of the other. Or, put perhaps more pragmatically and less poetically, it is our ability to comprehend, or understand, the vastness of the other. Intimacy may be fleeting, such as when found in a momentary and likely never to be

reproduced encounter with a stranger, or it may be a lifelong project. When expressed between friends intimacy is a lifelong—or at least friendship-long—endeavor due to the aims of friendship.

Intimacy is psychophysical. Part of this follows directly from the metaphysical account developed earlier in the course of my argument. For what it is to be a person is to be a deeply physical thing in the world, and one's vastness extend in all directions, including into the physical domain of existence just as it does into the psychological domain. Furthermore, recall that one is constituted at least in part by her projects, and, in a way, built or made-up out of them. They come onboard oneself. They do so through the physical. Part of what enables my projects to come onboard myself in a way that a person cannot is that a project, though complex, is more akin to an object than it is to a person. While much of a project may be abstract, much of it belongs to the domain of the physical itself. I can take onboard myself, psychophysical duality that I am, a thing which belongs in whole to the physical, but not one that belongs to the psychological or the psychophysical. But, of course, another person belongs to the psychophysical, and I cannot take them onboard myself as such.[62] So how am I to approximate taking them onboard myself? That is, how am I to make them a part of my life?

The answer is to gaze into the other's vastness as completely as I can. And in order to do this, I need to be able to see them fully. The sight metaphors here, "gaze" and "see," are not merely metaphors, but quite literal, too. For I have just argued that persons are deeply physical and that our embodied interaction qua embodied friendship—at least in the case of friendship—

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[62] Note that I am having the same conversation had in my previous chapter in terms of self consciousness, but now I am developing it in terms of the duality between the physical and psychological or psychophysical.

is primary. But there is more to this as well. Abandoning high abstraction, it is just plainly wonderful to be in the company of the other. And this is not merely because the other is a physical person, but rather because she is what she is: a complex psychophysical thing and this is the world that we find ourselves in.

One can put herself in a certain perverse frame of mind in which this either becomes deeply troubling, hence the traditional philosophical problem of other minds and skepticism, or she may let these deeply odd thoughts take her to a rather transcendent place of wonder. How incredible is it that I am a person, and that I exist in this crazy world, in which other persons just like me also exist, and we exist together not just as a brute fact about the world, but in all sorts of deeply meaningful ways? It is all so wonderful, really, when one manages to get herself in such a frame of mind. It is a perversion of the traditional problem of other minds, or a perversion of a traditional perversion of philosophy, if the reader will indulge me in perhaps some excess for but a moment. Intimacy helps us make sense of the deeply odd circumstances that we find ourselves in upon too much introspection. Or, it helps us make sense of the deeply ordinary circumstances we find ourselves in when we haven't yet overthought the most basic facts about the world we find ourselves living in! It is simply a thing of wonder.

But perhaps this has all been way too much high abstraction and metaphysical excess; complications of stating the obvious. If this is the case I have this to offer: some of our most intimate moments are those that are neither solely constituted by physical interaction nor psychological interaction itself. Rather, many of our most intimate experiences involve a mix of

both. Sitting silently on a park bench together constitutes one such interaction.[63] It is a deeply physical action, yet also one with deep psychological import. A conversation had together in person shares much of the same features as well. But so does a pat on the shoulder under nervous circumstances. Now, however, something interesting has emerged. These examples are beginning to once again look like the kinds of cases that we either used to demonstrate physical intimacy or psychological intimacy, but not both. But, on the contrary now, they are being used to the opposite effect: to constitute cases in which the physical and psychological together effect intimacy. Hence we reach a seeming contradiction. The way out is to realize that intimacy is only really achieved at the point of psychophysical interaction, or in embodied friendship. But this is merely why embodied friendship it primary. For it is the only way that we can truly come to comprehend the vastness of the other.

5. Contingencies and Approximation

After much high abstraction and perversion of the ordinary, enter real life, as experienced by all of us.[64] Enter time, space, finite, and the business of individual life and daily living. None

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[63] I find the case of sitting together in silence particularly compelling. Perhaps this has to do with the way the action tries to defy to impossible in such a restrained, humble manner. Recall the distinction between selves by way of self consciousness and the impenetrable boundary that it effects between persons discussed in the previous chapter. Rather than doing whatever one can —"*flailing*"—to meet the other short of the impossible, sitting together in silence is composed. It is restrained. It is quite the opposite of flailing. Yet it is also one of the most powerful forms of shared action, one that falls just a hair short of the impossible. If I know you well, and you know me well, and we sit together in silence, then we each have a pretty good idea of what it is that the other experiences in psychophysical space-time at that moment. We may each possess a dramatic, immediate kind of mutual knowledge of the other, and what it is to be like her, in that particular moment. We reach this point just shy of the impossible by way of our antecedent deep mutual knowledge of the other *in conjunction with* our shared, silent, remarkably similar, physical situation in the world at that precise moment.

[64] Even the philosopher might find that discussion of the contingent can provide a refreshing break in face of the highly abstract preceding discussion.

of us can engage in embodied friendship all of the time. It is simply not compatible with the way that our contemporary lives are structured. Nor is it likely even compatible with our value structure.[65] In light of the real world, then, we find ourselves *approximating* embodied friendship. An approximation of embodied friendship is simply any non paradigmatic way for selves to communicate with one another. Many contingent methods and technologies exist to accomplish this end. Chronicling or cataloging them all as a historical matter is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, I will examine a few prominent contingent approximations of embodied friendship that are found within today's world. I will chronicle them in terms of their historical development first, treating them as approximations of embodied friendship, and then proceeding to evaluate how well they affect intimacy. Though, of course, intimacy cannot be achieved in full through an approximation of embodied friendship, it can succeed better in some modes of communication rather than others.

5.1 Modes of Communication

The contingent modes of communication that I will address will be the following: written letters, telephone communications, electronic text-based communications, and electronic video-based telecommunications programs. I will ultimately conclude that not all of these modes of communication are equally good at approximating embodied friendship. I will argue that written letters best approximate embodied friendship, followed by telephone communications. Electronic text based communications will be more varied and complicated, though generally less well able

[65] We find ourselves spending more and less time with given individuals based upon the structure of our web. This is discussed in the previous chapter.

to approximate embodied friendship than their hand-written versions. Electronic video-based communications will end up being the worst of all approximations.

5.2 Text-Based Modes of Communication

Though less popular than they once were, and perhaps considered antiquated by some at the time of writing this, hand-written letters have the longest and most storied history of all forms of approximation of embodied communication. They constitute an artistic enterprise even, at least on some conceptions: the epistolary art. Their precise history will be outside the scope of this examination, but it will be worthwhile to note that the medium seemingly served as the de facto form of approximation for centuries. To examine the particularities of communication in the letter would in part be to engage in sociocultural and psychological study beyond mere philosophical inquiry. Instead, I will examine this mode of communication for how well it approximates embodied communication.

Letters constitute a particularly focused environment in which to communicate one's thoughts directly to the other. At first thought, one might think that this means that letters belong to the psychological domain in terms of the duality that has permeated this discussion. But, before being tempted by such an intuition, return to the pencil and its deep physicality. Writing a letter is itself a deeply physical action, and receiving one is too—whether written with a pencil or not. In a tangible sense, I imbue some of my own deep physicality into a letter in much the same way that I imbue my deep physicality *into* you when I physically interact with you. Of course this happens instead at a distance and is not the same as our direct physical interaction, but it flows from my own deep physicality, qua physical being that I am, into the mode of communication in question.

Put another way, my act is one that is deeply physical. When I handwrite a letter, I pick up a writing instrument, I take the writing instrument to the paper, or writing surface, in a tangible way, producing the strokes of my handwriting that communicate my thoughts. This should sound familiar: recall the kind of connection Weaver posits between mind and pencil, and the intimacy found within that interaction. And this is exactly the reason why handwriting a letter is a deeply intimate form of communication. When one handwrites a letter, she not only communicates her thoughts qua psychological being that she is, but she also approximates her deep physicality through her very act of writing the letter. Handwriting a letter is a deeply psychophysical process and a deeply intimate one because of this. Because of this, handwriting a letter preserves an important component of our *humanity*.

Furthermore, the act of *writing* a letter is not the only psychophysical part of the process; so is the act of *reading* a handwritten letter. That is, both sides of the mode of communication are intimate. When I receive your letter to me, I receive a psychophysical derivative of you. I recognize the effort you put into writing the letter, even if not in a robustly explicit way. But more often than not, I do recognize much of it, even *explicitly*. I may find your handwriting wonderful in much a similar vein to how I may find your body language or your mannerisms wonderful in person. The way you dot your "i"s and cross your "t"s has the power to convey I special sort of intimacy to me, despite the fact that neither one of us are in direct spatiotemporal physical contact. Of course you come through psychologically much the same in your letter…Or maybe you don't. Maybe you have a way with the written word that you don't with your spoken words. Or maybe the way you communicate in writing is subtly different from the way in which you communicate in speech. Hence the psychophysicality of our letters may even be a unique

one not expressed in person. Whether or not this is the case, it is certainly true that your psychological mannerisms with words come through, but so do your physical, handwritten ones, alike or not psychologically to your speech. Thus physical handwritten letters preserve a substantial degree of intimacy between the two of us, and perhaps even effect a unique one, though we are not actually physically in the presence of one another.

But just as you recognize me in all sorts of ways when reading my letter, I recognize that I am conveying myself to you when I write you a letter. That is, I *present* myself to you in a letter. This preserves a sense of mutuality across our exchange, though it does not transpire in direct spatiotemporal proximity.

Presentation is a thorny matter. Presentation is partly a natural component of relating to the other, whether in embodied communication or through some other mode of communication that approximates it. We all want to be seen in our best light, and we tend to put our best foot forward. But we ought not want to do this in our friendships, or at least it should be something that we quickly abandon in the context of our friendships. For if we become too conscious of our presentation to the other then we prevent the other from being able to fully engage in other-discovery, and thereby thwart the aims of friendship, cutting off our own attitude of openness to development of the relationship. This is because when we present ourselves in a deliberate manner, we specifically make some of our facets more prominent while obscuring others. But the aim of other-discovery, of course, is to discovery the other all her facets in all her entirely. On the other hand, presentation may be more likely to be found in circumscribed relationships, such as acquaintanceship. In fact, presentation may constitute a deliberate way of circumscribing a

relationship.[66] Other times presentation may be an artifact of insecurity or of unfamiliarity, which one may begin to shed once she warms up to the other.

Presentationalism, or the over-employment of presentation in relating oneself to the other, may be a danger hidden within the nature of the way that letter writing approximates embodied communication. It is a unique danger of text-based approximations of embodied communication. For I may engage in presentationalism, whether deliberately or not, when I reduce my physicality to that of the imbued physicality of the written page. That is, it is easy to obscure a more accurate representation of the state of myself behind a text-based mode of communication. This is at least in part because traditional text-based approximations of embodied communication lack *spontaneity*.

Spontaneity effectively prevents the over-employment of presentationalism. Spontaneity is one component of embodied communication that the mode of letter writing does not preserve, or really approximate at all to any degree. It constitutes an effective antidote to presentationalism by rendering one in less control over her own image. That is, one surrenders her actions and the way in which she relates to the other to the physicality of the world, the other, and time and space, at that particular moment. Her presentation of self is still within her control, of course, but it is not something to which she is in sole possession of anymore. She gives up part of her control —and her *self*—to the other, to the world, to time and space, and to the moment.[67] This is what

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[66] Circumscription of one's relationships by deliberate presentation may be engaged in for varied reasons. It may be deceitful and may constitute a way to gain favor of another in a manipulative manner. Or, it may be engaged in for more benevolent reasons. Perhaps a person in a position of authority may hide her fear from someone to who is under her care so that she is able to feel at ease and reassured.

[67] Giving oneself up to the other, or surrender to the other, will be discussed in more detail in the final chapter of this dissertation.

spontaneity amounts to: it is a kind of giving oneself up to the moment, and to the other, in the context of friendship.

Lack of spontaneity and risk of presentationalism aside, what letter writing does provide one with—certainly at the cost of these attributes—is a highly focused environment upon which to bend one's web toward the other.[68] That is, letter writing puts selves in highly focused and substantial conversation with one another. It constitutes a kind of focused intimacy. But, of course, it is not without its costs. Nevertheless, if one learns to manage the threat of presentationalism, then letter writing possesses many advantages. Certainly, learning to write letters well and effectively is an art, but it is one that may readily be acquired with some time and practice. Letter writing, then, can be optimized to preserve intimacy, potentially even present unique forms of it, and provide a highly focused environment in which to communicate with the other. It comes at the cost of spontaneity.

But what of letter-writing's modern electronic alternatives? Modern text-based electronic communications share some in common with letter writing and have the potential to approximate some respects of embodied communication better than traditional analogue text-based approximations. Yet, as we will come to see with each mode, what one does better than the other in some respect, it does worse in another.

The most obvious advantage of the modern electronic equivalents of letter writing consist in their ability to shrink the temporal contingencies between persons that are often wide with tradition letter writing. An electronic-mail communication may be sent in a matter of seconds

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[68] To use the language of my formulation from the previous chapter, the act of sitting down to write a letter—of reserving time and space to do so—to the other is a particularly strong and focused form of setting the foreground within the context of one's web.

whereas a letter may take days or weeks to reach its recipient, even in our current age. This enables a sense of spontaneity to be approximated in text-based communication. This is especially notable in the format of modern telecommunications and internet based texting platforms in which text-based representations may be exchanged in a near instantaneous manner. Of course this still does not constitute true spontaneity, for the time that it takes to type a reply is not the same as if two were engaged in real-time spoken conversation. Nevertheless its proponents may find this to be a kind of near spontaneity and may find it satisfying.

Of course electronic text based systems need not be used in a way to approximate spontaneity. They may be used instead for their convenience, yet replied to in a a temporally extended manner much like analogue letters. Some may prefer electronic communications for what they find to be a kind of convenience inherent to them. I am highly wary of this as a dimension of value. To reduce human interaction to matters of convenience is to treat relationships *transactionally*. This, I think, is to completely miss the point of communication *with the other* entirely. Rather than to approximate embodied communication, it is to further divorce itself from it. It is even to dehumanize communication between individuals.

But viewing electronic text-based communication as a matter of convenience is far from the only way in which this type of communication is dehumanizing. It is dehumanizing in that it removes our humanity from the act of communication by way of removing our deep physicality from it. Unlike the act of handwriting a letter, the act of typing into a machine is not an action that possesses deep physicality. It possesses physicality, but it is a rather trivial kind of physicality. The way that I bump my fingers into keys of a machine is far more similar to the way in which I bump into a stranger on the crowded street than it is to the way in which I write

my thoughts on a piece of paper. But if the reader finds this too uncharitable and objects that typing into a machine still possesses intention, whereas bumping into a stranger does not, I have another comparison to offer: the physicality of typing my thoughts into a machine is like that of pressing a button in an elevator to get to the desired building floor—hardly intimate and trivially physical.[69]

But perhaps the reader will object that I have been uncharitable or have romanticized the physical too much, or to an unreasonable degree. To such an objector I appeal to the utter basicness of our physicality in the world. But perhaps this is still unsatisfying. Even if one accepts my metaphysics she may object that the world we find ourselves in is simply one in which things have become too frantic, too fast paced. Adoption of these technologies are pragmatic, even if alienating. To this I will concede, but I will contest that the objection constitutes the difference between theorizing the ideal and contending with the world in its actuality. There is a place for both kinds of theory, but this investigation is an exercise in the former. I fault no one for adopting these technologies.

A more serious objection to this view is that such technologies may actually effect good. An objector might contend that these forms of communication enable us to establish a wider network of friendships and to engage in our friendships more often. Perhaps this is true. I will refrain from speculating at what cost this might come at for it falls outside of the scope of my investigation. However, I will again remark that this objection does not actually directly address

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[69] A child might enjoy pressing the buttons of an elevator, however, that is because a child is still discovering her own physicality and the peculiarity—and wondrousness—of being a psychophysical being in the world. But then again a child can hardly handle a pencil right away, and usually must start with a jumbo pencil…

the substance of my argument in much the same way that the first objection did not. Furthermore, once a friendship is off the ground, these modes of communication are hardly the ones that sustain its development. But rather, ones that preserve intimacy are.

That said, I have established relationships with these forms of communication, however, I have a few remarks to offer. First, I find that few of them actually constitute friendship in the technical sense described by this theory. Secondly, the ones that may be a kind of friendship depend on the actual possibility, and in fact likelihood, of actual embodied interaction. That is, they have become friendships once we have met in embodied relationships. Third, this raises a deep, and quite massive, topic itself that I will not pursue here but merely recognize the significance of: the extent to which one's community is local or extended.[70]

But I should also add that these cases were highly atypical. One was constituted by the interest of a friend of a friend toward my remarks, and with that friend's encouragement, a rapport of conversation started. The friendship, however, was only started once we actually met in person for the first time. After this, our embodied interaction was able to form the grounds as primary, effecting a friendship. Though I have some other relationships that consist in friendly rapport between myself and the other in which I have not yet met that other, I find that I would be hesitant to call them friendships until we have met in person. I think of one such case in which an exchange of text-based electronic communications were first effected, then even an exchange of physical handwritten letter, and now there are plans to meet one another in person. An

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[70] I have, up to this point in my life, lived in the city of Los Angeles since birth. These relationships have primarily been effected in New York City, though I have never lived there at any point in my life. This however, is even a very limited sense of what I mean by the remark. The remark leads to a deep issue about whether one lives primarily in a community based manner or a global one.

instance like this seems to hold more potential toward becoming a friendship, though it still perhaps depends on having actually established embodied communication and not merely planning to someday instantiate it. Thus in a very real sense, embodied communication is needed in order to effect a friendship.

Additionally, electronic text-based communication may be subject to its own dangers in addition to traditional presentationalism—which may not be as effectively ameliorated by the spontaneity it effects as compared to embodied spontaneity. These types of text-based modes of communication seem especially prone to *shallowness*. In fact, they seem to often facilitate the opposite environment that a handwritten letter does. Rather than facilitating a a focused foreground upon which to engage in other-discovery, they seem to effect a rather fleeting and weak space upon which to engage the other. Further, I believe this is often due to the nature of viewing this kind of interaction as a matter of convenience, already discussed to be problematic. However, this is perhaps avoidable. In a manner similar to how one may learn to become a better letter writer, perhaps one may learn how to become a better text-sender.[71]

It should be glaringly obvious by now that I believe traditional handwritten letters to be a far superior mode of communication to approximate embodied communication than I do its modern electronic alternatives. But why is this exactly? While I take it that the answer to this question has ultimately emerged implicitly in the course of my argument, it is worth making

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[71] But even this I am skeptical of. Often these kinds of text-based technologies are designed to entice frequent use, not to facilitate depth. By design they don't bring out the best in us. Of course we might develop better text-based electronic modes of communicate that are in fact designed to facilitate depth. This technology is at least conceivable.

explicitly clear before moving on. Intimacy is the most important approximation that a mode of communication may effect.

5.3 Speech-Based and Video-Based Modes of Communication

While not entirely alike, the dialectic between speech-based and video-based communications will mirror that between handwritten letters and electronic text-based communication in terms of value. Speech-based communication will be to handwritten letters as video-based communication is to electronic text-based communication. That is, the first will emerge as possessing far better qualities of approximation than the the second.

Speech-based electronic telephone technology has enabled the approximation of a uniquely new component of the physical that letters cannot capture: physical quality of voice. While still an approximation, this certainly has its benefits. First of all, it preserves a substantial kind of intimacy within the mode of communication. For the other's voice is simply wonderful. It is part of you, qua deeply physical thing that you are. In embodied friendship it is perhaps your most important and robust way of expressing yourself to me, not only through your speech alone, but through all sorts of qualities of your voice ranging from your inflections to your tone. It enables one another to hear our laughs, to sense a glimpse of our happiness, or to feel one another's pain. The voice conveys so much. It is itself a deeply powerful psychophysical component of a person's deep physicality. Furthermore, it can be deeply reassuring to hear a friend's voice. There is something special, even magical, about hearing the other's voice across the spatiotemporal divide.

What speech-based telephone communication provides is the fullest recreation of spontaneity so far considered within the within the contingent modes of communication. It is a

robust, though of course not complete, approximation of spontaneity. This mitigates the potential effects of presentationalism, whether intended or not, on a relationship, and also allows for communications of the same approximate depth that friends would engage in during spoken embodied communication. Furthermore, it has the potential to provide the same robust foreground establishing effects that letter writing does, so long as one is in a quiet, focused environment and state of mind when engaging in her call to the other.

What speech-based telephone communication provides, in fact, is much like what the handwritten letter provides but along a different physical dimension. Instead of approximating oneself to the other through text, it does so through the voice. It is a deeply intimate form of communication, much like the handwritten letter. But unlike the letter, this intimacy is not derivative of my own deep physicality, but rather it puts me directly in spontaneous psychophysical contact with you through our voices. Speech-based telephone technology is a wonderful innovation, making much intimacy possible in ways previously unable to be had outside of embodied communication. It provides a unique alternative mode to the handwritten letter in which to experience intimacy through the voice.

One might object to my praise of this mode of communication as overly hasty or as inconsistent with my rejection of electronic text-based communication for its robbing us of our humanity by way of machine. But here I find no such objectionable interference by the machines which make this technology possible. For speech production is not hampered in a manner that text production is by way of a machine. That is, the machine responsible for this mode of communication does not reduce my deep physicality by way of my own speech production in the way that it does when I type as opposed to when I write by hand. Of course, my speech is

mediated by a device, and it is distorted and subject to various kinds of interference contingent to the technology. This makes it less ideal than embodied communication, but such is the nature of its approximation. Furthermore, I hope that my embrace of speech-based telephone technology is enough to perhaps allay at least some of a skeptical reader's potential objections that I have overly romanticized a certain kind of physical action of the self or of the body. Sometimes I believe that this matters, as in the case of our deep physicality imbued to our writing, and other times I think it matters less, such as when a machine enables us to transfer, albeit by way of digital reproduction, our voices to one another over great distances.

Unfortunately, I find the situation to be quite the opposite for video-based electronic modes of communication. These modes of communication try to carry over all the benefits of communication by way of telephone, but add video, or a dimension of sight, to their modality. This mode of communication tries to approximate the other not merely by way of speech and voice, but also by way of sight and of appearance. But the results are less impressive. Video-based electronic communications creates a simulacrum of the other. They reduce her deep physical to an *intangible* simulation of the other. The effect is one that robs us of our humanity.

The technology even effects a kind of category mistake. Rather than to effect a kind of approximation of our embodied communication it represents it in a way that totally misses the point. What we strive to approximate in modes of communication is our deep physicality qua deeply physical beings that we are. In other words, effective modes of communication that approximate embodied communication actually approximate our inherent physicality. But vide-based communications devices do not approximate our physicality, they distort it. This is the

category mistake that they make: they try to engage the physical by representing it in a deeply non-physical way that feels both foreign and alienating to us as physical beings.

These claims are strong, and perhaps a skeptical reader may feel less negatively toward video-based communication than I do. But to any potentially skeptical reader I remind her that my remarks are made by way of evaluation of a mode of communication's ability to *approximate* embodied communication. And I do have more to say.

A commonsensical way to try to get at the thought I have in mind is this: I ask the reader to think about how many times she has found herself staring at a screen-based representation of the other, only for the illusion to break and for her to ask herself "*What* am I actually doing here?" I know that I find myself in this situation constantly; that is, the illusion shatters not once, but constantly, even continuously, throughout the experience. And this is not merely a contingent matter nor a limitation of the technology. I cannot *immerse* myself in a screen—nor any non-physical, non-actual-person representation conceivable, whether it currently exists or not—the way in which I can immerse myself in the physical. For I am a psychophysical being, and so are you. And we each know what is *real*, that is, what actually constitutes the other's psychophysicality manifested in the world. And we know that it is *not* the screen that manifests this. In fact, I even find myself far more immersed by what is happening *around* the screen, *in*

front of it, *behind it—anywhere that is a real part of the physical, anywhere but the screen—* rather than by what is represented on it.[72]

The physical has a totality to it. It is a totalizing experience to be a psychophysical thing, and to be a part of the physical world. This is exactly why the alleged spontaneity of electronic text-based approximations and video-based approximations fail so spectacularly. They cannot ever approximate the totality of the physical, and rather than stand in as an acceptable substitute, they instead *distract*. These modes of communication distract us from the physical, and thereby distract us from a substantial component of our nature.

Video-based electronic communications neglect our psychophysical nature. That is, they reduce ourselves to psychological entities, while ignoring how important it is that our physicality is a deeply tangible one. Their representation of the other in terms of a visual presentation on a screen is largely psychological and intellectual. We can't *feel* the other through her sightly—or rather unsightly—representation, but rather we can come to have a sort of intellectual appreciation of her situation by what is represented to us visually. This is to charitably interpret the phenomena, but even still something seems deeply amiss.

The whole point of approximation of embodied interaction by way of a mode of communication is to approximate our psychophysicality, not merely our psychological nature. The representation that the video-based communication tries to effect through our physical

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[72] Though I will not pursue it, here I have also set the groundwork for an argument for the vast—a word chosen by no coincidence—superiority of theater to film. Live theater is simply immersive in a way that film simply cannot—can *never*—be. Likewise, going to a live concert is superior to watching, or listening to, a recording of one; that is, live music, viewed and listened to in person, is vastly superior to recorded music. Attending a sporting event in person is vastly superior to watching one on television. Simply put: *real*, *physical—psychophysical*—life is vastly superior to representations of it.

nature occurs by taking a psychological route to its presentation. But this is entirely to miss the point. Unlike speech based communication which represents the voice to us through reconstructed sound that actually feels immediate to us, creating an effective illusion of intimacy, a video image on a screen does no such thing. Part of why reconstructed sound works is exactly because it leaves us to do the rest—we imagine the other and exercise our intimate knowledge of her physicality in doing so. It is engaging and it captures us, immerses us, and absorbs us.

On the other hand, it is impossible to create even so much as an effective illusion of the other by way of visual representation.[73] And even if it were possible to do so with some not-yet conceivable technology, it would likely produce a similarly unsatisfying simulacrum. For our physicality can never be replaced. It is irreducibly a part of us. It seems to me that rather than approximation, video-based representations of the other aim to replace the other's presence. The strategy is deeply flawed. It leaves one feeling cold and *even inhuman*, quite literally. In fact, I would go as far as to describe video-based modes of communication as an *affront* to our humanity, not just a merely ineffective way of approximating it.

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[73] This claim is strong. Perhaps one immediately has an objection ready: photography (or even drawn portraits) of the other successfully represents the other. I do think that photos of the other are better approximations of the other than video-based approximations, and I do think that it is *video* representation rather than purely visual representation that effects the unique failure of this mode of communication—more to come on that soon. But I do have one comment to push back on such an objection. While it's true that a photograph of the other may have the power to remind us of the other and her presence in our lives, it may also be somewhat unsatisfying to see a mere photograph of the other, for no approximation of *communication* inheres in a photograph, or at least not in the same way as the other modes discussed. I often find myself longing for and missing the company of the photographed other upon looking at her image. What the photograph does, along with reminding me of pleasant and meaningful memories and company, is remind me to communicate with the other by way of an approximate mode. Perhaps I am unusual, but I find photographs of the other to be quite bittersweet.

But the reader may still be at the behest of a nagging objection: why do my remarks apply only to video-based representations of the other and not speech-based voice representations of the other sans-video? In other words, how is it that by contingently adding a video representation of the other that the situation suddenly deteriorates so rapidly and to such depths? My first answer to this objection is to appeal to the kind of category mistake that I have just described and the badness that it entails. But there is a further point to make as well. The two modes of communication would have us interact differently with the world. A speech-based telephone call does not have us separate from the world and take its approximation to be primary to our experience of the world in the moment that we experience it in the way that a video-based technology does. The video based technology, on the other hand, asserts a kind of totality over our experience, if only for the moment, that divorces us from the world, and thereby from our physicality, our deeply physical natures, and from our humanity. It is an affront to our nature and the very experience that we find ourselves to have: that of being some thing in the world, and situated in it with others.

In order to see this more clearly, consider the example of observing those who ride the bus, in an earlier time before the proliferation and popularity of texting, when phone calls were more common. It would be incredibly easy to eavesdrop on the conversations of others speaking on the phone on the bus.[74] Those on the phone find themselves absorbed in the other's psychophysicality. It is almost as if they look-through the strangers in their immediate surroundings and instead see, albeit with their mind's imagination, the other, in her

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[74] Thanks to AJ Julius for this charming and insightful example—those were his observations on the bus, not mine. I was likely among those preoccupied with a phone call so I had not noticed!

circumstances, as they speak on the phone. Perhaps somewhat paradoxically, then, speech-based voice representations of the other are more totalizing than video-based ones, but, of course, they approximate totality much more effectively. By involving the other's imagination and directing it toward the other, they better approximate the totality of the psychophysical rather than video, which tries to offload the work of representing the other from the mind to the screen. Pretheoretically, the difference might amount to the degree of active versus passive listening. It is easier to be an active listener when you are absorbed, mentally and emotionally, with the other's presence in your imagination than it is when you are confronted with the other by way of a deeply distracting screen!

One might also object to what it is that is so objectionable about adding the visual component to a video-based mode of communication that effects this all. After all, I have voiced no objection to the art of photography, so what makes video so especially pernicious? This objection misunderstand the previous response. It is not the visual representation of a person itself that is objectionable, but it is the use of a visual-based simulation of the other qua mode of communication meant to approximate the other in embodied communication that I find so objectionable for the reasons I have just argued. Photography is not used to this same end, and instead constitutes an artistic enterprise in its own right.[75]

Before concluding my examination of modes of communication, however, I am now in a position to offer a further defense of the handwritten letter. It is honest. It simply does not

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[75] Maybe one has begun to wonder where I stand on film. I'll be upfront: I loathe it. But I do think that my theory need not commit one to thinking that film is at fault for its video-based representations of the other, for we may make the same intellectual move that I have appealed to regarding photography: the enterprise constitutes an art, not a mode of communication.

pretend to be something that it is not. Unlike video-based modes of communication, the handwritten letter has no pretense of totality. It does not attempt to approximate any sense of shared space, time, nor spontaneity. But this is not negative, for we have seen that it is difficult, even impossible, to approximate the totality of the psychophysical, space, time, spontaneity, and all. Instead, the handwritten letter is quite endearing for its honestly.

6. The Power of the Pencil (and the Physical)

I hope that my exploration of the contingent modes of communication considered has yielded a deeper appreciation of the pencil, and, of course, of the physical, too.[76] What I hope to have demonstrated is the utter irreducibility and centrality of the physical to our interaction with other selves, and to our humanity simpliciter. In part I hope that I have done so by compellingly, or at least plausibly, suggesting an account of intimacy that is tied to our nature as psychophysical beings in the world. I would like to conclude with a few remarks centering around intimacy and the physical more specifically focused on the self, as opposed to relationships.

While intimacy takes place within the context of our relationships, it also takes place within the context of the self alone. When I direct my action toward that of the psychophysical, that is, when I engage myself in enterprises that embrace my psychophysicality, my action is intimate. This is yet another sense in which I assume that Weaver takes the pencil to effect intimacy. That is, I take it that Weaver has this in mind regardless of whether one's actions with the pencil are inherently social, as between selves, or not. This is why things that may at first

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[76] If the preceding philosophical considerations have failed to yield a greater appreciation for the pencil, then perhaps the historical and cultural considerations outlined in Weaver's book will better accomplish this task.

appear trivial like writing a grocery list to oneself or a reminder note can constitute deeply intimate actions. In fact, this particular example involves quite a complex set of reasons and actions, for it involves a spatiotemporal and psychophysical conversation had with oneself over a given duration and place. But yet even more complex actions, pursuits, and projects that are self directed emerge as intimate as well. Journaling may constitute an intimate action as well for similar reasons, for instance.

Engagement in one's art may be particularly intimate, even when not inherently social. The visual arts in particular come to mind in this respect. Painting, drawing, and sculpting are particularly acute examples of this phenomena. They are in part instances of the transition from the psychological to the physical, or from mind to world, and then back again. And to take this path is to thoroughly live within the world, physical thing in a the world that we find ourselves to be. Life lived in this manner is is thoroughgoing and through-going.

Furthermore, appreciation of the world around us is intimate as well, even when done alone. My appreciation of my surroundings, whether architectural or natural is a particularly intimate kind because in it inheres in the place where the psychophysical gets off the ground, or where the psychological and the physical meet in my understanding of the world that I find myself in. When I appreciate the splendor of of a deciduous forest in its peak color at the height of fall it is a particularly intimate kind of appreciation. For the colors of the leaves mean not much—nothing at all—on their own. But they mean a great deal to me, and that is where the psychophysical inheres.

But it is not merely actions that can be particularly intimate by way of their psychophysicality; thoughts can be, too. When I contemplate my own mortality, for example, I

engage in deeply intimate thoughts. Perhaps a perversion of the case of sitting together is one in which we sit together acutely aware of our own mortality. Consider the following untitled poem of Rilke's in translation by Stephen Mitchell for a good instance of this sentiment, albeit lying down together in lieu of sitting:

> *Again and again, however we know the landscape of love*
> *and the little churchyard there, with its sorrowing names,*
> *and the frighteningly silent abyss into which the others*
> *fall: again and again the two of us walk out together*
> *under the ancient trees, lie down again and again*
> *among the flowers, face to face with the sky* (Rilke lines 1-6).

Hence our thoughts can lead the way to where the psychophysical inheres as well. Of course this case is one of joint action again, but one might just as well have the same thoughts on her own.

Of course these things are not unique to appreciation alone, by oneself. They are made far more complex and far better for it when appreciated in the context of friendship. For in friendship we are each appreciating the psychophysicality of one another and of the world all at once. The physical is only brightened by one another, made more vivid, and imbued with further meaning. I hope the reader will consider this all when next she reaches for a pencil.

7. Epilogue: The Weather

Perhaps that venture into contingency was a little more heady than my initial setting of expectations might have suggested. I hope then, that some final remarks that often find their place in the realm of mere small talk will make up for some of that. I would like to toy with one final argument using some of the pieces assembled within the course of this chapter's main argument. It concerns the weather.

Of course one radical difference between the climates of Los Angeles and New York City is the weather. Los Angeles is in possession of a mild climate with relatively little variation throughout the year, at least as compared to what is found on the east coast of the country. New York City, on the other hand, is subject to far more notable weather and seasonal variation.

The weather is a very basic part of our physical situation in the world. Hence, just as I can come to appreciate the world around me, natural or otherwise, I may appreciate the weather. This remains true regardless of what kind of weather one may prefer, whether mild weather or more prominent, poignant weather. But there is something to say for mild weather being *less physical* than prominent weather. The seasonal variation is less prominently a part of the physical world that we find ourselves in in Los Angeles than it is in New York. In Los Angeles there's hardly a summer's day to compare one to that is distinct from a spring day, a late fall day, or even, sometimes, a mid-winter's day. While partly one's weather preferences may be excusable, and may be matters of mere aesthetic preference or bodily concern, there is something to be said for being situated in a more physically interesting climate, *physical* beings that we are. Hence, not only do I find the climate of New York City more interesting, and preferable, to that of Los Angeles, but I also find that a person attracted to more extreme weather conditions and a less mild climate is often a more interesting person, qua *psycho*physical being that she is. I hope the claim, at very least, serves for some more provocative small talk!

If the reader is unmoved by appeal to small talk, however, then perhaps the reader will find it hard to imagine the weather of Los Angeles as being suited for the inspiration of the

poetic.[77] I am skeptical that Rita Dove's "November for Beginners" would have been written with the inspiration of Los Angeles in mind:

> *Snow would be the easy*
> *way out - that softening*
> *sky like a sigh of relief*
> *at finally being allowed*
> *to yield. No dice.*
> *We stack twigs for burning*
> *in glistening patches*
> *but the rain won't give.*
>
> *So we wait, breeding*
> *mood, making music*
> *of decline. We sit down*
> *in the smell of the past*
> *and rise in a light*
> *that is already leaving.*
> *We ache in secret,*
> *memorizing*
>
> *a gloomy line*
> *or two of German.*
> *When spring comes*
> *we promise to act*
> *the fool. Pour,*
> *rain! Sail, wind,*
> *with your cargo of zithers!*

Quite the contrary, you would have to be *lucky* for the weather to fall under 80 degrees on a November's day in Los Angeles. If that, however, is the reader's want, she may keep to the California coast while knowing where to find me.

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[77] I know there are many well-known Los Angeles based and Los Angeles-inspired poets and literary figures. I don't mean to summarily dismiss them, but rather to suggest that the city's weather is not suitable for certain kinds of poetic contemplation or themes.

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This chapter is dedicated to composer and music theorist David S. Lefkowitz's music theory course sequence, which inspired the conceptual framework that I use to theorize mutual recognition.[78]

Chapter 4

Relationship's End and Other Vantage Points

1. Introduction

"The only danger in Friendship is that it will end."

Thoreau, A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers

Sometimes for the better, other times for the worse, and often for neither the better nor the worse, relationships end. Certainly this is a trite observation, but nevertheless a true one. Relationship's end can be a lonesome vantage point.

I will describe three kinds of relationship endings, and explain what my theory of friendship has to say about each case. The first case I describe will be what I call a relationship plateau rather than an end, per se, and it will involve a mutual acceptance of a kind of complacency in one another's life. The second case will be that of divergence, or perhaps, more colloquially, drifting-apart. This might be thought of as the most natural and common case of

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[78] Note that it is the conceptual framework behind my account of mutual recognition that was inspired by the music theory course sequence. The content by way of topic, that of relationship ends, has nothing to do with my wonderful experience over my two years of enrollment in Lefkowitz's music theory course sequence. This chapter existed in another form before I ever enrolled in the course sequence, however, I began rewriting it the summer after the quarter on musical form concluded and overhauled my thinking on these topics entirely. Perhaps this inspiration, and even more specifically the analogy that I draw, may strike the reader as odd. I find it to make sense completely and hope that it may clarify some of the high level abstraction used in theorizing the topic. In any case, it was an honor and a pleasure to take the music theory series with David S. Lefkowitz.

relationship end. The last case I will consider needs no introduction and is probably what comes to mind first when thinking of relationship endings: in a word, breakups. In one more word: explicit endings.

After introducing these cases I will introduce a distinction between episodic and teleological conceptions of relationships. I will argue that while temping, a teleological framework is both mistaken and the source of more woes than needed when it comes to relationship's end. Once relationships are viewed as fundamentally episodic in nature, much like the nature of our own lives, their endings will be put into better perspective. However, it will first be through thinking about relationship endings that a theory of mutuality will emerge; this will be the strategy of my argument. That is, from the end we trace the beginning, or perhaps even the middle. Put another way: from what did not endure, it will become clear what it takes for a relationship to endure. Then, perhaps, my opening remarks will, hopefully, begin to sound more true than trite.

I cannot conclude this introduction, however, without warning the reader of a curious methodological approach that will be employed within the course of my investigation. I will analogize the account of mutual recognition that emergences to that of an analytic tool used to explain form within the context of music theory: arc diagrams. While I will be engaged in philosophical investigation throughout the course of this chapter, it would be disingenuous for me to conceal that my framework was distinctly inspired by analytic work within the context of music theory. Odd as it may sound, I ask the reader to *hear* me out.[79]

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[79] Puns aside, philosophy, just like music theory, ought to be grounded thoroughly within a perceptual framework. If I am tempted to get lost by way of abstraction, perhaps theory grounded in the perceptible will help to guide the reader back.

2. Three Cases of Relationship Ends

1) January and February are friends. Perhaps they have been friends for some time, or perhaps their relationship is relatively nascent; either way, no matter. January and February's relationship is one that both mutually appreciate and find worthwhile, sustaining, and valuable. However, they are content with their relationship as it stands. That is, they share no additional mutual desire to further entangle their lives. They have entangled their lives far enough to reasonably come to know and appreciate each other, and might even find it suspect if one or the other were to probe any further. They have set their boundaries, it is mutual, and their relationship stands in place where it is. January and February have reached a a relationship plateau.

2) January and February are friends. While it will do for them to have been friends for even a short time, the situation I have in mind will be more typical of a friendship that has lasted for some time.[80] Over time, however, the two diverge or drift apart. Perhaps the dynamic of their relationship has changed and they are no longer immediately within one another's daily lives, or perhaps one or both has changed in such a way as to affect the dynamic of the relationship such that further life entanglement is no longer desirable to either one. But there are no hard feelings, nor even any explicit ones. The process has occurred implicitly as each simply drifts further out

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[80] A case in which January and February have not long been friends only for the relationship to diverge might better be thought of as an additional kind of case rather than a standard one of divergence. It seems to constitute something more like a failure of the relationship to ever really get off the ground in any substantial way. Exactly why this is will be discussed in greater detail elsewhere, but it is at least in part twofold: perhaps most obviously, it takes an amount of time and effort to get a relationship off the ground—closeness begets closeness— and it hardly seems likely that the two could have gotten very far along the process of entangling their live if the relationship is too short. Secondly, and perhaps more fundamentally, it is unclear whether such a commitment to process is achieved immediately in such an instance.

of the other's life. Perhaps the one writes to the other less often, and the other responds—or rather doesn't—in kind, writing less often, too. Eventually the two no longer are entangled in one another's lives, nor do they expend effort to keep up with the other. January becomes but a memory in the life of February.

3) January and February were friends. Perhaps a rift has torn apart their relationship. Or maybe one or both have come to realize that the relationship is simply not working out. And, unfortunately, the two realize that it is one that cannot be overcome. The relationship explicitly comes to an end.

These cases are not meant to be philosophically loaded, but rather they are intended to be descriptive our our ordinary experiences concerning relationship endings. Of course, they are abstract and they lack the messiness and strong emotions often coupled with relationship's end. Filling in more detail regarding each sort of relationship-ending case will be useful in theorizing the phenomenon, and I hope in coming to terms with it as well.[81]

2.1 Relationship Plateau

Recall that friendship involves coming to know the other in her entirety, or at least it involves this in aim. That is, friendship involves a commitment to one another that entails coming to know the other in her entirety. What relationship plateau seems to be, then, is what I have previously described as acquaintanceship.[82] Or, at very least it is a prime candidate for it. Recall that acquaintanceship is a kind of circumscribed relationship. It is a relationship in which the participants lack the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship. Certainly in

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[81] This remark is meant to be more than just cavalier. I do believe that conceptualizing the end of a relationship in this manner has not only theoretical import but psychological as well.

[82] cf. Relationships Egalitarianism.

a relationship plateau this is likewise the case. But if it remains unclear why this phenomenon ought to be considered in the course of discussing relationship endings, then consider that the phenomenon might even be stated in the following way: often friendships end as acquaintanceships.[83]

2.3 Divergence

If relationship plateau is a kind of failure of friendship to ever fully manifest itself, divergence is a failure of friendship to sustain itself. In this case individuals initially are committed to the aims of friendship but gradually lose them as their lives begin to individually unfold, eventually separating. While divergence can occur for all sorts of reasons, it is important to recognize it as more than a mere contingent phenomenon. While divergence is likely the most commonplace and simple case of relationship ending in the course of a lifetime, it poses perhaps the most theoretically difficult questions of the three types of relationship endings.

2.3 Explicit Endings

Explicit endings are so common and well known in pretheoretical imagination that they hardly need a word of introduction. Perhaps there is little more by way of introduction to do than dress up the phenomenon as an "explicit ending" rather than a breakup. Ubiquitous in life and culture, they are standard fare from classical Romanticism to modern day popular culture and everywhere in between. They are just as likely to break the heart of youth and adult, though hopefully the two are not alike in their response to the phenomenon. Somewhat more philosophically, however, it is worthwhile to note that despite their prominent role in the popular

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[83] This does not constitute a value judgement. Sometimes it is regrettable that friendship ends as acquaintanceship. Sometimes we were it could be more, but other times it is just so, and we are satisfied with it.

imagination as a distinct ending to romantic relationships, they are an ending that may befall any close relationship, whether platonic friendship or romantic relationship.[84]

3. The Difficulties of Divergence

Perhaps the reader might be tempted to imagine the paradigm of divergence to consist of friends losing touch over time. This might be especially temping when thought of in terms of the metaphor of drifting apart. The line of thought goes something like this: as each friend continues on her own trajectory through life she becomes busier until she gently lets go of the relationship. She meets new people, commits to new projects, and no longer sees the other in her immediate daily life or surroundings anymore. Time and circumstances have pulled the relationship apart ever further until it is no more.

While such an experience may at first seem to comport with the reader's ordinary experience, I would like to suggest that this reaction is but initial. I ask a reader in this position to consider her relationships. Likely it is the case that not all of her friendships have gone this way

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[84] Here the reader ought to recall that I have tended to take non-romantic, platonic friendship as paradigmatic of close relationships. However, my theory is meant to cover all forms of adult close relationships, whether romantic or platonic. I do admit a bias in favor of platonic friendship over romantic relationship. Personal bias aside, recall that I have argued for friendship as the primary instance of close relationships, and romantic relationship as secondary. Or, as Thoreau nicely puts it in his Journal, "All romance is grounded on friendship." Romantic relationship, on my view, is a matter of affect giving rise to certain expectations. The framework has been discussed in the first chapter. I think that it is platonic friendship that is more valuable, and in fact makes life more worth living, than romantic close relationship does. For typically a person with many friends but no romantic partner is far happier than a person with a romantic partner but few friends. But if the reader disagrees that this is commonsensical I can appeal to my earlier argument for the worth of friendship as a unique relationship possessing the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship. Romantic relationship is not a fundamentally different relationship, but merely a contingently different one. That is, it is a secondary phenomena, not a primary one. But here, I ask the reader to apply all remarks generally to both sorts of relationships, regardless of her intuitions regarding the matter.

as time, distance, and projects separate her from her friend's immediate and timely presence. In fact, many times it is the case that we maintain relationships despite time and distance. It would be highly unusual, unlucky, or deficient, even, if a person were to lose every one of her friends as a matter of temporal and spatial difference, suggesting instead a different cause of relationship end. Hence it must be the case that divergence is more than a mere contingent ending to relationships. There is something further than time, distance, and other life projects in virtue of which some friendships eventually end in divergence while others do not.

Perhaps one might still insist that it really is busy-ness and lack of time and daily interaction that causes friends to diverge. Such an objection might go something like this: there are others in my life whom I truly wish I could maintain relationships with, but I simply can no longer due to the circumstances of our lives; I just don't have the time for everyone anymore. To this I ask the objector to once again consider her current relationships. Is it the case that she is only currently friends with those in her immediate surroundings and daily experience? Again, if so, this seems to constitute a particular unusual circumstance constituted by either some kind of personal deficiency in ability to maintain relationships or perhaps misfortune. If not, then why is it that she has maintained some of these friends and not others? There must be something more. But this is unsatisfying to the objector and proponent, as it seems to merely have iterated the conversation again. What the objector really means, in her insistence, is quite literal. It is that her time is limited and she is finite; she only possesses so many resources temporally and psychologically that limit the number of her relationships that she can maintain. She has performed a triage of her relationships, holding onto her most cherished, and letting all others diverge.

Perhaps the immediate reply to this form of objection is the same: there must be something more that, in this case, underlies the objector's so-called relationship triage. The objector and I are in agreement, but she does not realize as much. Sure some of her relationships have been maintained while others have not been, but she fails to recognize what is behind her process of maintaining some of these relationships but not others. Perhaps this still leaves the objector dissatisfied. The objector continues to insist that she has deliberately chosen which relationships are to succeed and which are to be let go of by some sort of value metric. Here the reply is to show that treating friendships in this way is to have no friendships at all, recalling my earlier arguments concerning the necessity of the non-hierarchical structure of one's friendships.[85]

But what, then, is responsible for divergence? I will tentatively suggest that it has to do with the timescale at which a relationship unfolds. Some relationships are enduring, and demand less "upkeep," or regular interaction than others. Those which demand more are instances in which the relationship has not sufficiently advanced far along enough in order for other-discovery to be sustained across time and distance, or they are cases in which imbalances in mutuality, affect, or the like make it difficult to do so.[86]

There may be all sorts of reasons why some relationships diverge and others do not. But with the notion of the timescale on which other-discovery unfolds in mind, we are now in a better position to theorize why some relationships diverge and others do not. Relationships which diverge are those which cannot survive, or withstand, significant alterations in timescale. In order

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[85] cf. Relationships Egalitarianism.

[86] Often it seems like other-discovery requires more contingent work at its outset.

to illustrate the distinctions between relationships which cannot withstand significant alteration of timescale and those which can, consider the following two cases.

Suppose that January and December are friends. Their relationship is such that they have regular contact, or, put more theoretically, their relationships possesses a high degree of temporally and spatially contiguous life-entanglement. Perhaps they see each other on a daily or weekly basis. Now suppose, however, that circumstances change so that the two now see each other on a monthly basis. Perhaps this will not cause the relationship to diverge. It is not a significant alteration in the timescale of the relationship. What is to count as a significant alteration will be personal and unique to individual relationships. But now suppose that they see each other annually. Perhaps this will be a significant enough alteration to the timescale of the relationship such that the two will diverge; ultimately, December and January will not survive the new year.

Now consider an alternate relationship, perhaps between January and February, in which a similar change in the timescale of the relationship has been effected by circumstance. This pair of friends, however, does not diverge.

For this example to be meaningful two questions must first be answered. Foremost is the obvious: what is present in January and February's relationship that is not in January and December's relationship which causes one to be maintained and the other to diverge? But perhaps somewhat less immediate is an almost equally serious question: does the fact that January and February's relationship did not diverge mean that the alteration in the timescale of the two's relationship does not count as significant? I will first address the second question, and in doing so my answer will suggest a way into the sort of considerations needed to answer the

first. Perhaps one might be tempted to think—object even—that the alteration in timescale of January and February's relationship cannot be significant if it did not lead to divergence. But my account is not committed to the underlying inference driving this objection. It is not the case that a significant alteration in the timescale of the relationship necessitates divergence, nor is it the case that if a relationship has not diverged it must be the case that there has not been a significant alteration in its timescale.

This leads us in a direction toward a tentative answer to the first question. What one relationship has that the other lacks is a tolerance for, or ability to adapt to, a significant alteration in the timescale of the relationship. In one sense, it is theoretically useful to appeal to the nature of other-discovery and closeness as a continually unfolding process by which lives become entangled. Doing so helps free us of the underlying contingency inherent to the notion of a timescale in the first place. That is, if the aim of other-discovery is to continually entangle one another's lives, it is an ever-unfolding aim. Its ever-unfolding nature is what frees it of being beholden to the contingencies of a timescale. Ultimately, then, this is to say that if one is properly engaged in other-discovery, the contingencies of timescale should not interfere with the process. Put even more directly, if one is committed to other-discovery, relationships should not diverge. Perhaps this claim is startling, and appears too strong. I hope that by the end of my investigation of relationship endings that it will appear less startling, at least within the framework that has already been previously described.[87]

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[87] To allay the most startled reader, I will briefly justify this remark with the following conditional, and hope it does not cause even more agitation or unease. If other-discovery is going well, then even the most contingently distanced relationships ought to be able to be picked back up in the course of the ever-unfolding process.

In another sense, and more generally, too, it is useful to appeal to a less theoretical notion: the ability to accept change within the context of a relationship. Here I ask the reader to appeal to common experience. Certainly no relationship stays the same.[88] Further, not only do relationships change, but, there is a sense in which relationships that weather the change are some of the best. Different relationships respond to different circumstantial changes differently. Those in which circumstances radically change yet the fundamental core of the relationship stays ever the same are often some of our best. While this is all rather pre-theoretical, I hope that an appeal to a more colloquial approach is helpful in getting onto what is present in January and February's relationship that is not in January and December's relationship.

4. Theorizing Relationship's End: Mutual Recognition

However, there is more to say by way of theory if colloquialism has not been direct enough.[89] Perhaps it will at first appear that the process of other-discovery and its aims to come to know the other in her entirety will recall a sort of teleological approach, or at very least that it might appear to sit more comfortably with one. However, to think of other-discovery as a teleological approach would be mistaken. Only when viewing it from the highest explanatory level and down might it appear this way, as the aims of friendship aim toward the other, all her facets in all her entirety. But this is not to say that relationships unfold toward a singular end, drawing ever closer upon a sort of simple recursion allegedly prescribed by openness to the development of the relationship. To see the process as an uncomplicated, teleological unfolding

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[88] The best candidate for an unchanging relationship is an acquaintanceship centered around a single facet of life entanglement, e.g. stamp-collector friends. But even these relationships change. Persons grow old, and so, too, do stamps, as they hopefully collect more value.

[89] However, it is my hope that some colloquialism here and there is *more direct* and yields *more explanatory value* than theory…

of two lives drawing ever closer is to miss the point, and, even more importantly, it is to miss the vastness of an individual life and the expanse between any two.

For what relationship is ever simple? Before answering the question—perhaps better left rhetorical—I ask the reader to recall the foundational point at which I started from in order to build a picture of the self, and from there I will work up to a common sense pre-theoretical answer. At its most basic level, I proposed a Cartesian and individualistic basis upon which to build the self that enters into relationships with another self: a self-conscious enactor that enters relationships with other self-conscious enactors. I find myself to be a self-conscious enactor with all sorts of psychological attitudes and commitments to my own projects that I bring as a kind of substrate to my relationships with other self-conscious enactors who do the same.[90] From here the expanse between any two selves can be made into as much or as little as any philosopher or theorist would like given her disposition.[91] The expanse may be made as intractable as the traditional Cartesian problem of other minds or as empirical as the study of the pragmatics of communication between individuals, or it may range through all sorts of intermediate possibilities. The point of my account here is not to commit to more metaphysical details than

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[90] Recall that the claim is not that my position qua self-in-possesion-of-a-psychology-and-projects is metaphysically prior to that of other my interaction with selfs, but rather that it is taxonomically, and in fact contingently, prior to my entering into any given relationship in my adult life. I discuss the wide circular feedback loop between interaction with other selves and my coming to be my pre-relationship self. The account I give is not meant as a developmental etiology of the self, nor as a basic metaphysical inquiry into the ultimate kind of thing that I am in the way that Descartes investigates the manner, for example.

[91] That is, her disposition as a self-conscious enactor with all sorts of psychological attitudes and *philosophical* commitments!

need be, but rather to describe a starting point from which two separate individuals must come together. I hope this comports with common sense.[92]

Now it is time to put theory aside and approach the problem commonsensically once again. While the abstract conceptual apparatus alluded to above is meant to recommend, and even be filled-in by, the ordinary sort of concrete particulars of lives, it might just as well have made sense to start here in the first place. Any given individual has all sorts of commitments or projects that she is devoted to throughout her life and at any one point in time in particular. Some of these commitments will be longterm, or long-lasting, and others will be fleeting or circumstantial. Likewise this will be the case with aspects of an individual's psychological constitution. Given any two persons, they will each be on life trajectories that involves these longterm or long-lasting and circumstantial projects as well as varying psychological states and constitutions. There will naturally be an *expanse* between the two life trajectories. One way of conceptualizing a relationship in terms of the notion of this expanse, then, is to think of that expanse as widening and narrowing over time as the two proceed on their own life trajectories. A relationship is the bridging of this expanse over time, as both continue across their life trajectories. What the actual bridging of this expanse is at any given time is a very particular and

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[92] There exists some philosophical literature that would like to do away with the notion of a self, trying to explain away our ordinary intuitions regarding the nature of our personhood as unique individual selves. I think such attempts are deeply misguided and constitute a philosophical methodology that I think is fundamentally unhelpful. The task of philosophy should not be to start with a commonsensical, ordinary conception and try to disabuse the reader of it in favor of something more metaphysically heady and radical, but rather the reverse. The philosopher is not a magician ought to refrain from performing these types of magic tricks! One should start from a place of commonsense and try to diffuse potential confusion surrounding it. I believe that a broadly Cartesian and individualistic conception of the self best comports with commonsense and the experience of most individuals.

personal matter of meeting the other's relational needs. It is this that constitutes the substance of mutual recognition.

If the above is less metaphysical but still too metaphorical, now consider this conceptualization by way of a particular example. January is committed to many projects of her own, some short term and some long term. In the short term she is committed to winning a snow sculpture contest, finishing her current landscape portrait before the snow melts, and finishing her friend's ice cream cake in time for her birthday. Some of these projects may be shorter than others, such as making the cake, and competing in the contest. Perhaps the portrait takes a greater amount of time to complete. Some of them overlap with longer-term projects or may instead be thought of as instances of longterm projects or commitments. January's winter portrait may belong to her greater project of producing visual art, or it may be part of the expression of her project toward conserving the natural landscape, etc. Projects are complex and may overlap in both instance, kind, and duration. February on the other hand, may be committed to shoveling away the snow, baking warm deserts, a love of urban landscapes, and, especially, to visiting the concert hall. Perhaps her snow shoveling is an instance of her project or commitment to urban landscapes, and is a longterm, recurring practice every winter. And maybe still it is but one instance of this wider commitment meant to keep the natural landscape in check throughout the seasons: snow shoveling in the winter, a trimmed, maintained garden in the spring, a mowed and carefully kept-in-check lawn in the summer, and a raked sidewalk in the fall.

In a very practical sense January and February's own projects may keep them apart, effecting an expanse. When January is away painting a snowy landscape in the winter wilderness, February comes inside as soon as she has finished shoveling the snow so she can

bake warm desserts. And what it is for January and February to recognize one another at this time of year is particular to their projects at this time. Maybe they recognize each other's winter habits and there is a temporary lapse in their communication over the winter as each devotes their time to rather different and somewhat incompatible pursuits. Or maybe they have agreed to send each other competing postcards for the season, with January's showcasing a cold outdoor landscape and February's a warm indoor home. The particulars of the expanse are bridged according to each's own place across their life trajectory, their psychological preferences, and the history of their relationship. All of these factors come together in a complex, individual, and personal negotiation across the relationship, or expanse, some of which is explicit and some implicit. January and February thus come to mutually recognize one another.

But now it is important to turn attention toward less contingent, or at least shallow, expanses and more fundamental ones that reflect deeper choices regarding one's life trajectory. Perhaps January has devoted her life to her artistic pursuits and lives alone happily while February has chosen to create a family. Such different life trajectories are sure to effect more substantial expanses. It is here, at deeper or more fundamental expanses, that relationships can be distinguished as successful or not. For here is where some relationships either begin to diverge or end and others are maintained. Which diverge and which are maintained is a matter of mutual recognition.

With this notion of mutual recognition in mind, it is now possible to see the way in which relationships may better be described as episodic at a more fine-grained, individual level rather than teleological. For each self is not merely an end drawing ever closer over the span of the process of other-discovery, but each self is *a moving target* as each unfolds on her own life

trajectory. In other words, two selves each move along their own separate life trajectories, ever-adapting in self along the way. The task of a relationship then, is to mutually recognize the other across all of this movement, change, and unfolding. And that task is largely one of meeting the other where she stands along each other's point in her life trajectory.

Ultimately then, while I have not spelled out necessary and sufficient conditions nor provided a heavy-handed definition of mutual recognition, I have described the process of openness to the development of the relationship at the most individual level in my project up to this point. For mutual recognition is a process, according to my account. Hence what it is to be open to the development of the relationship is ultimately to be able mutually recognize the other. But to do this requires sensitivity to circumstance, and is episodic by nature. For what it is for January to mutually recognize February at one time in her life may come to differ over time along the two's life trajectories. Properly described, then, mutual recognition may better be thought of as an arc traversing any two entangled points across each's life trajectories than as an individual instance of any relational negotiation that happens at any particular time, as relationships are not constituted by *ahistorical* interpersonal interactions, but rather are deeply personal-context-dependent. These arcs, across any particular point in a relationship, are both future oriented and historical in the context of the relationship. Hence it is also more appropriate to consider relationships in terms of episodic arcs of mutual recognition than it is to consider them top-down as teleological arcs over the course of a lifetime that aim at ever increasing entanglement with the other. For such an overarching teleological arc is illusory; rather, the only way toward the ultimate end of other-discovery is through episodic arcs of mutual recognition.

But what of the ultimate aim of other-discovery, to come to know the other all her facets in all her entirety? Is that not straightforwardly teleological, at least in the sense that one aims ever closer toward a specified *end* of value? Perhaps one might object: how could it be that there are multiple, overlapping, even, arcs of mutual recognition if mutual recognition operates in the service of knowing the other all her facets in all her entirety? Surely that aim entails an overarching arc of mutual recognition. Otherwise, how is it that one can ever come to know the other all her facets in all her entirety? These arcs never seem to lead to an *end*, especially if they can be effected from any vantage point and overlap. Put simply, they are going nowhere, and certainly not toward the end of other-discovery, an end so overly ambitious from the start!

This objection ought to be diffused by further explaining why it is that a single ever-unfolding overarching arc of mutual recognition is merely illusory. While the objector seems to assume that such an arc would capture all the twists and turns, the tumult[93], of each unfolding life, it lacks the fine grained conceptual resources of my own account. My reply is threefold. First, such an account is not prepared to adequately explain the difference between divergence and a maintained relationship over a more distal timescale. For why is it that one overarching arc has broken down in one case but survived in another? Here it seems that we reach the same iterative discourse considered at the outset of our puzzle concerning divergence.

But maybe I have so far failed to address the objector's concern. The objector, at this point, has no stake in whether or not my account can adequately capture the difference between the two cases. Instead the objector accuses me of both an internal inconsistency and prima facie

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[93] From here forward I use "tumult" in a quasi-technical shorthand sense meant to capture all of the changes that unfold over time in an individual life. I hope the reader will forgive me if the word carries too negative a connotation to describe a life!

implausibility. The objector alleges that my account of other-discovery is inconsistent with my account of mutual recognition. Other-discovery is teleological, the objector alleges, but mutual recognition is not, yet it is supposed to be but another explanation of the process of other-discovery. Further, the objection seems to view my claim that a non-teleological notion can explain other-discovery's end to be plainly implausible, anyway. In other words, the aim of coming to know the other all her facets in all her entirety is simply a teleological aim.

In order to address the objection we ought to first get clearer on what teleology might actually look like according to this concern. It seems that teleology arises from two places. First it may seem to arise from how I seem to have described my own account. However, secondly, I will suggest that it arises from a commonsensical notion hidden behind our pretheoretical idea of relationships. I will address the latter now and return to the former afterward.

We seem to intuitively think that close relationships are *meant* to last. This is especially common with respect to romantic relationships, but it is also true of friendships or familial relationships as well. For instance, take the standard western, often heterosexual, notion of a romantic partnership.[94] One typically searches for a monogamous life partner, for which they wish their relationship with will endure longterm. In fact, they often think that anything less constitutes a kind of failure, or at least is not consistent with their desired outcome. When one breaks up with a romantic partner it is seen as a loss, not only for the loss of the loved individual herself, but also for the loss of the prospect of a future spent together. It is here that we find a

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[94] I have in mind polyamorous relationships as a contrast class here, and though they may certainly take place in heterosexual relationships, it seems to me that queer communities have been at the forefront of exploring alternative romantic relationship arrangements. This is unsurprising considering that LGBTQ individuals have been excluded from the traditional recognitions of romantic relationships for so long.

creeping notion of teleology in relationships; it is an idea that relationships, or at least ideal and valuable ones, are structured toward a lasting end.

We even find this idea reinforced in commonsensical sayings and language. Romantic partners often express statements, or at least sentiments, to the effect that they were "*meant* to be," or the like. While this kind of thinking finds its most obvious home in romantic relationships, it is likewise apparent in much commonsensical thinking about friendship as well. Common is the thought that it would be a tragedy, or at least unfortunate, for a good friendship to end. Thoughts like "friends are always there for one another," or "you can count on your friends" also seem to contain much of the same teleological thinking, if not in the foreground then certainly in the background, at least. It seems that notions of relationship teleology are best thought of in these terms. That is, relationship teleology is the notion that relationships are structured to last, and that it is constitutive of their value that they endure. Put another way, the sought after end of a relationship is endurance.

This ought to immediately strike the reader as familiar. For this notion of teleology has led us right back into the center of our initial concern, namely the endurance of some relationships and the divergence of others. Clearly all of these issues are closely intertwined. But that should not push us in the direction of one type of explanation over another without argument; and I have supplied argument for my episodic approach. We have seen no likewise argument in favor of teleology, but only some potential intuitions that might nudge an objector toward a teleological account of relationships.

With the pretheoretical source of—or perhaps temptation toward—teleology now identified, I am more comfortable answering whether my account of other-discovery actually

recommends a teleological treatment of relationships. Clearly it seems that to aim toward knowing the other all her facets in all her entirety is not the exact same endeavor as effecting an enduring relationship. Perhaps it might be reasonable to think that this objective might better be attained over the course of an enduring relationship, and that I have no trouble admitting; for other-discovery is an unfolding process, or a long-term goal to speak pretheoretically. But what it is not is a commitment to endurance itself. However, care must be taken at this point to reconcile this claim with my earlier claim that a relationship properly engaged in other-discovery will not diverge. Other-discovery is a process which is built to weather contingency, but initiation of the process does not make it an invulnerable one. For other-discovery is a continual commitment, and not one that simply unfolds effortlessly upon initiation.

To better understand this last claim, I will now state directly why a single overarching arc of mutual recognition is illusory. Consider any arc of mutual recognition, that is, any agential contextualized understanding that can be traced from a given point forward-looking or backward-looking within the relationship. From any such arc the idea of an end, namely the state of coming to know the other all her facets in all her entirety, may be theoretically visible, or at least imaginable. But as soon as one shifts perspective to a new arc of mutual recognition, or an agential contextualized understanding that can be traced from a given point forward or backward within the relationship, that initial imaginable end vanishes in favor of a new one that develops based upon that new agential contextualized understanding that can be traced from a given point forward or backward within the relationship. That is, from any one vantage point, that imaginable end vanishes in favor of another end. Such is the nature of an individual human life, unfolding, tumult and all; hence is likewise the nature of a relationship. Commitment to the

relationship must be continually renewed throughout the course of each's ever unfolding life. Such is *our work together* in bridging the expanse across *our own* lives. This is the work of mutual recognition.

Put simply, and summarily: relationships are historical, context-driven, and future-oriented moving targets. While this might sound complicated, it ought not sound paradoxical. For relationships are complex entities; and now, we return to the initial question: what relationship is ever simple? By recognizing the complex conceptual structure of a relationship I hope to capture what is likely obvious to most readers at a pretheoretical level: relationships are complicated and have many moving pieces.

It is mutual recognition that is the key to answering in full why some relationships end in divergence while others are maintained. Before doing so, however, notice that while I previously discussed divergence in terms of a temporal framework and an ability to adapt, it can now be explained using the language of the expanse. Doing so enables us to make more of the difference between enduring relationships and divergent ones than mere contingency. In other words, the notion of the expanse is a more powerful one than that of the framework of timescale, for it subsumes the initial intuition and more: it effects a multidimensional framework on which timescale is but one axis. But first it will serve most useful to connect the notion of timescale directly to that of mutual recognition.

The timescale of a relationship unfolds both locally and distally over the course of a relationship. To view a timescale locally is to view it in terms of a particularly given arc of mutual recognition spanning from some *vantage point* of the relationship to another, whether that arc is conceived from present looking backward toward the history of the relationship or is future

oriented from either present or some past vantage point. A vantage point is any point from which an arc of mutual recognition can be traced. It is a contextualized agential stance, or understanding, of the relationship as it has been, as it has come to be, and as it might be—in other words, a contextualized understanding of the relationship as spanning from the past, to the present, and as being open to the future. For a relationship to unfold distally is to be able to trace further reaching arcs, in either backward looking or future oriented paths. What it is, then, to be unable to progress to a point where the relationship can endure across a more distal timescale is for the parties to be unable to trace more distal arcs of mutual recognition across their relationship. What it is to progress to a point where the relationship can endure across a more distal timescale is to progress to a further vantage point. Put another way, the individuals lack the appropriate vantage point from which to conceive of the relationship and its continued unfolding as being both effective and valuable. That is, they lack a sufficient contextualized understanding of the relationship such that it endures over a significant alteration in timescale and all the contingencies that such a temporal change effects.

As for earlier discussion of the ability to adapt to changing circumstances across a relationship, it should be obvious that this is exactly what the essence of mutual recognition entails. For mutual recognition is the process by which we both understand the contextual history of our relationship and project its value and existence into the future across all the tumult that life effects for each of us on our own independent trajectories. Adaptability, in the context of relationships, is our ability to bridge the expanse, moving targets, tumult, and all.

5. An Analogy: Analyzing Musical Form, Arc Diagrams, and Mutual Recognition

But if this is all too abstract then I would like to introduce an analogy meant to help elucidate the notion of an arc of mutual recognition. Consider the analysis of musical form. For a standard eighteenth century sonata, a particular analysis may be given in terms of the harmonic and thematic content of the work, based upon the various sections that they effect.[95] The precise details of how sonata form works are beyond the scope of the discussion here, however, the particular *analytic tool* used to evaluate these musical works provides a helpful analogy. In order to better understand that analytic tool, however, I must spend some time briefly filling in those details in short.[96]

David S. Lefkowitz writes of sonata form in his textbook *Music Theory: Syntax, Form and Function:*

> *Sonata form*, sometimes also called *sonata-allegro* or *first-movement form*, was one of the most important forms in the Classical and Romantic eras. As suggested by the terms "sonata" and "first-movement," it is common for the first movement of a sonata to be in sonata form; nevertheless it is also common for other movements of a sonata, symphony, or string quartet to be in the same type of form. Furthermore, although it is common for the first movement of symphonies to be in an allegro tempo (thus "sonata-allegro"), many

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[95] This is a vastly oversimplified account of the situation.

[96] This explanation is brief and is intended for an audience who does not have much of a background in music theory. It will, however, be necessary to assume that the reader has some understanding of the basics of functional approaches to tonal harmony, lest this chapter become an introductory text on the basics of music theory! Something that is perhaps even more worthwhile than the current investigation, but certainly outside of its scope. However, if the reader is in need of such an introduction, she ought to read Lefkowitz's text—she will not find a better introduction.

> movements in sonata form are *not* allegro. The more neutral term "sonata form" is therefore preferable (636).

This broadly situates the concept of sonata form within its place in music history and the sorts of works in which it is often found.[97] Sonata form has a particular thematic and harmonic structure:

> Thus, in sonata form we usually see two different themes (or groups of themes) that contrast with each other in terms of key area, melodic shape, texture, dynamics, and character. In a typical sonata-form work, the first theme (or theme group) tends to be bold, aggressive, quick, and *forte,* while the second theme (or theme group) tends to be more lyrical, *cantabile*, sustained, and *piano.* The difference between the two are heightened by contrast in key area (637).

Sonata form consists of an exposition section, followed by a development section, and is concluded by a recapitulation section. In the exposition section all, or most, of the main thematic material is presented, both primary and secondary. In the development section any of the material presented in the exposition, though particularly material from the beginnings of either the primary or secondary theme groups, may be subjected to developmental treatment (638). The recapitulation section restates, or recapitulates, the thematic material (639).

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[97] Of course Lefkowitz's presentation of sonata form is from a textbook on music theory—and quite a remarkable one at that—and thus its presentation of sonata form is pedagogical, rather than one more fully historical or more compactly presented theoretically. The definition continues to unfold historically and theoretically over the next few pages of the textbook, building on previously introduced material. I do not have the space to accommodate its full presentation over the course of these pages, and, of course, my purpose is different—I am not engaged in music theory pedagogy as my goal of writing—hence I will piece-together the remainder of the core components of sonata theory needed to ultimately draw my intended analogy.

Within each of these sections there are certain more specific harmonic and thematic or motivic structures that are typically found. Within the exposition the primary theme or theme group states the main themes in the tonic, while the secondary theme or theme group states the secondary, contrasting, material in the secondary key area, usually the dominant if the tonic is a major key or the relative minor if the tonic is a minor key (659). In between the two we find a transition section that moves the music from the primary key area to the secondary. Harmonically, we often see this manifested by the transition section moving from the tonic to the dominant of the dominant in order to move us to the harmonic area of the dominant for the secondary theme.

Within the development section any material from the exposition may be developed and often we find unstable harmonies, usually ones that are minor-key oriented (660).[98] The development section is "characterized by its tonal instability" and often the harmonies involved will be vi, iii, or ii if the sonata's home key is major and iv or v if it is minor (Lefkowitz 639). Furthermore, "The development section ends with a retransition" and serves to transition back to the original tonic key" (639). The retransition usually features a progression to the dominant, usually a dominant seventh, and represents the culmination of the development. Once the dominant is reached, it is usually prolonged, and the harmonic instability of the development section usually serves the purpose of "driving to the dominant" (639).

Within the recapitulation we encounter the return of the main thematic material. A typical recapitulation section involves the "simultaneous return of the Primary Theme(s) *and* the original

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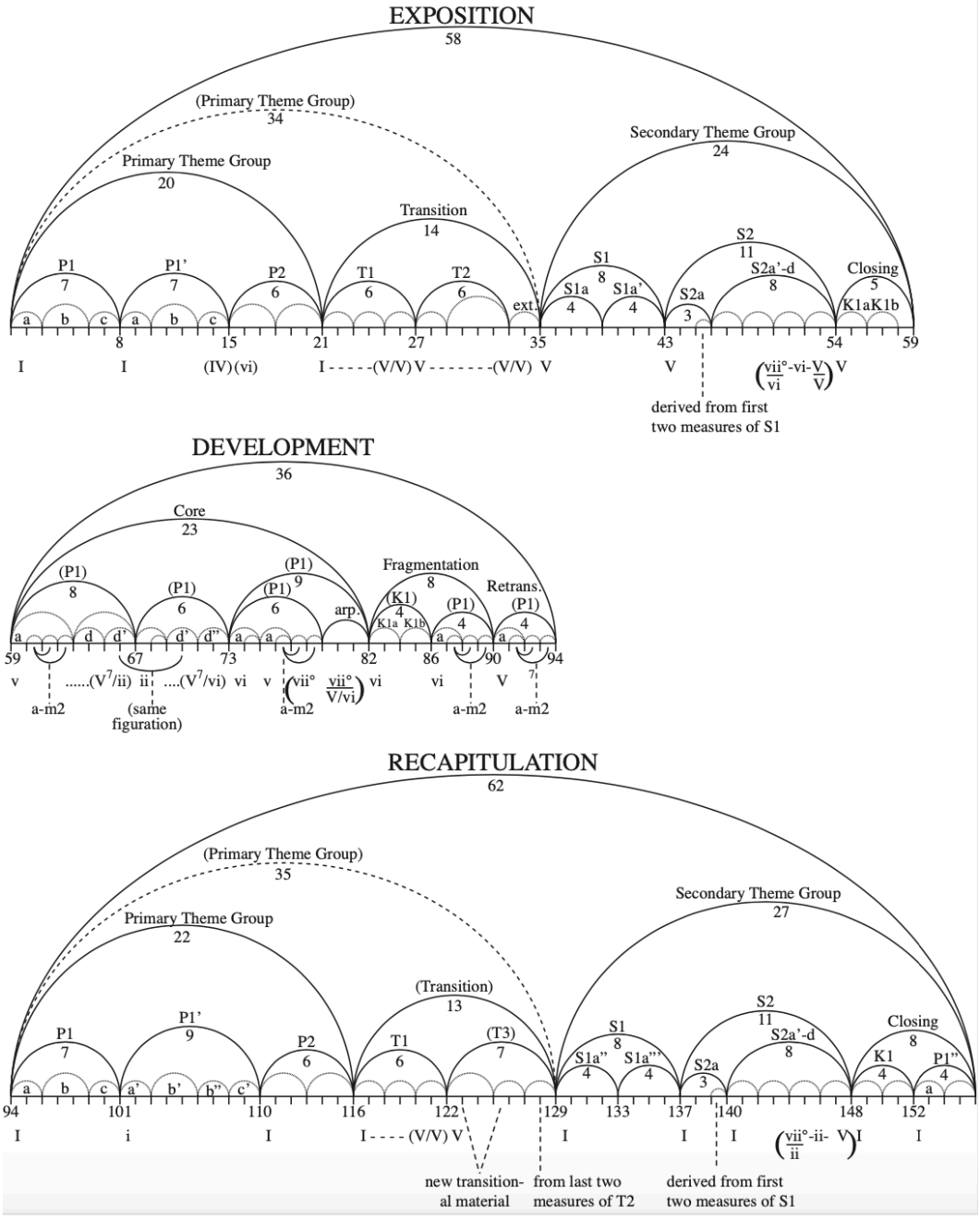
[98] Some pieces contain more structured development sections, however, this is outside of the scope of the discussion.

Tonic Key" and "the presentation of the Secondary Theme(s) *in the Tonic Key*, which represents a harmonic subsuming of the contrasting material into the Primary key area" (Lefkowitz 639). There is a restatement of the transition between the restatement of the two themes, however, this time the transition remains in the key of the tonic, usually ending on the dominant and not the dominant of the dominant as in the exposition's transition (639). The retransition then ends with a coda. A coda is "usually an extended restatement of the Exposition's Closing section, but in the Tonic key" (Lefkowitz 640).

Sonata form is sometimes graphically represented by what is called an *arc diagram.* According to Lefkowitz, "arcs (typically semi-circles) demonstrat[e] how phrases are comprised of motives, how they combine to produce periods, sections, and how those sections combine and relate to produce forms" (650). Thus the construction of an arc diagram represents the musical objects discussed previously, and more[99], and their relationships to one another. It does so in a way that represents the overall structure of the form of a piece. In order to better understand how this works, consider Figure 28.4 from Lefkowitz's text and his explanation of it. The figure presents an arc diagram analysis of the first movement of Mozart's Piano Sonata No. 7 in C (K. 309). The figure is reproduced below with permission from the author:

[99] It is beyond the scope of setting up this analogy to explain what these musical structures are. I assume that part of the basic background of the reader is an understanding of motives, periods, and sections.

Figure 28.4 Mozart, Piano Sonata No.7 in C (K.309)
First Movement, Arc Diagram



Lefkowitz explains the arc diagram in Figure 28.4:

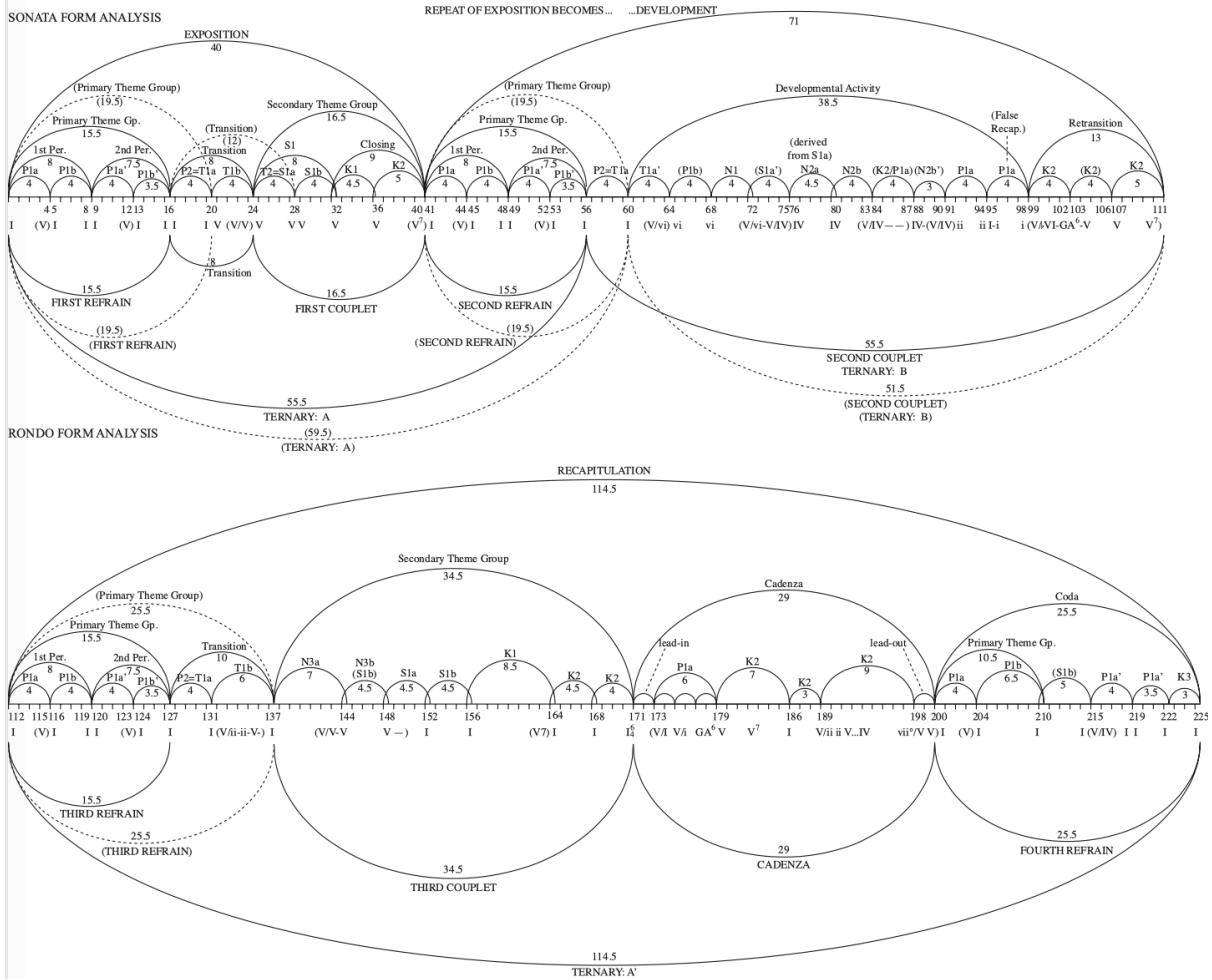
> in this particular arc diagram, motivic correspondences—when not obvious from the thematic labeling above the main horizontal line—are shown with arcs drawn *below* the horizontal line. *Phrase segments* are shown with dotted arcs; the appropriate lowercase letter for the phrase segments of the P1 theme are written *inside the arc* (rather than above it, in the interest of reducing visual clutter; since the phrase segments are short and since each measure is marked off with a vertical line, the number of measures of each phrase segment is omitted). Comments are given below the harmonic analysis (651).

Further, consider an even more detailed arc diagram analysis that Lefkowitz provides for the third movement of Mozart's Piano Sonata No. 13 in B flat (K. 333), reproduced below with permission of the author[100]:

[100] This analysis includes alternate analytic explanations of the form. The precise details of which are outside the scope of this discussion.

Figure 28.8

Mozart, Piano Sonata No.13 in B♭ (K.333)
Third Movement, Arc Diagram



At this point enough of the musical details are in place to draw the analogy between the music theoretic analytic tool of an arc diagram and my own arc-like discussion of mutual recognition.[101]

The resemblance is not merely superficial. That is, I do not merely mean to claim that because I have appealed to some other formal system which employs graphical arcs toward explaining some structure that I hope to use it to elucidate the conceptual structure behind my own appeal to arcs used to elucidate a conceptual structure. But rather, I take it that the analogy inheres in the way we graph out the specific sections by way of the musical objects that effect them. That is, the themes, the harmonic areas and specific important chordal harmonies, phrases, periods, and the like whose relationships together form a kind of structure on the whole can be analogized to the agential construction of a stance that constitutes a vantage point, and effects an arc.

Of course there are dissimilarities involved here. The musical objects and their relationships to one another are obviously predetermined in a manner that is unlike any given constructed agential vantage point. Put another way, an agential vantage point may be spontaneously constructed, and the underlying musical objects that effect the structures from which we conceptualize an emergent whole demarcated by an arc are not. But, crucially, what

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[101] I recognize that my account will depend on a certain picture of the ontology of music and of composition that I will not argue for or justify here, but instead will merely presuppose. This presupposition is merely practical, for it is outside the scope of this chapter to investigate these topics. But the discussion of musical ontology underlying the presuppositions I have made here is an especially interesting topic and certainly is worthwhile in pursuing in an investigation of its own.

both share in common is this: they are both a kind of fundamental underlying point from which an emergent structure can be demarcated. And they are both intentional and holistic.

That is, both the musical objects effecting the structures demarcated by arcs are produced intentionally and related to other musical objects deliberately, and this is done so in a way that imagines them not as singular instances of individual musical objects, but rather as objects whose individuation depend at least in part constitutively on their relationships to other objects. It is from this that an arc emerges. But it is *exactly* from this same structure of dependence and emergence that an arc of mutual recognition arises, too. That is, vantage points are like the musical objects which are individuated at least in part by their relationships to other vantage points, dependent on a kind of holism of the relationship as emerging from the conceptualization of any two given vantage points. And this is where mutual recognition *emerges*. It is an abstract, emergent kind of phenomena in this way, that ultimately depends for its existence on more fundamental underlying structures. It is my hope that this analogy is helpful in clarifying the rather abstract nature of mutual recognition.

But an immediate objection must now be faced: isn't this comparison strongly suggestive of a teleological phenomena? After all, sonata form implies a kind of teleological structure toward a particular goal, that of a specific form, and one which structures our experience of time in music in a rather particular, and even teleological way. Perhaps the skeptical reader will immediately have become suspicious that I have let teleology creep back into my account by relying so heavily on a teleological subject matter for my analogy.

I have two immediate responses to this objection. First, even if the kind of pieces analyzed by an arc diagram which constitute eighteenth century sonata form do have a kind of

teleology to be found within them, it is not this that I mean to compare to that of mutual recognition. Furthermore, I am not merely comparing an eighteenth century form, sonata form more specifically, to that of mutual recognition, but rather I am comparing *a particular analytic tool*, an arc diagram, to that of mutual recognition. It is the more complex metaphysical and epistemic relationship between the tool that we employ to analyze musical form and the piece, including its form, that I mean to compare to the process of mutual recognition; or, put more analogously, it is the *process* by which we use an arc diagram to analyze the form of a piece that I have analogized to the *process* of mutual recognition. Furthermore, arc diagrams are not merely useful when applied to sonata form style pieces alone. Their application is broader. But perhaps this reply leaves the reader wanting more, or is in some way unsatisfying as it skirts the issue rather than facing it head on. If that is the case, I have more to offer by way of music theory.

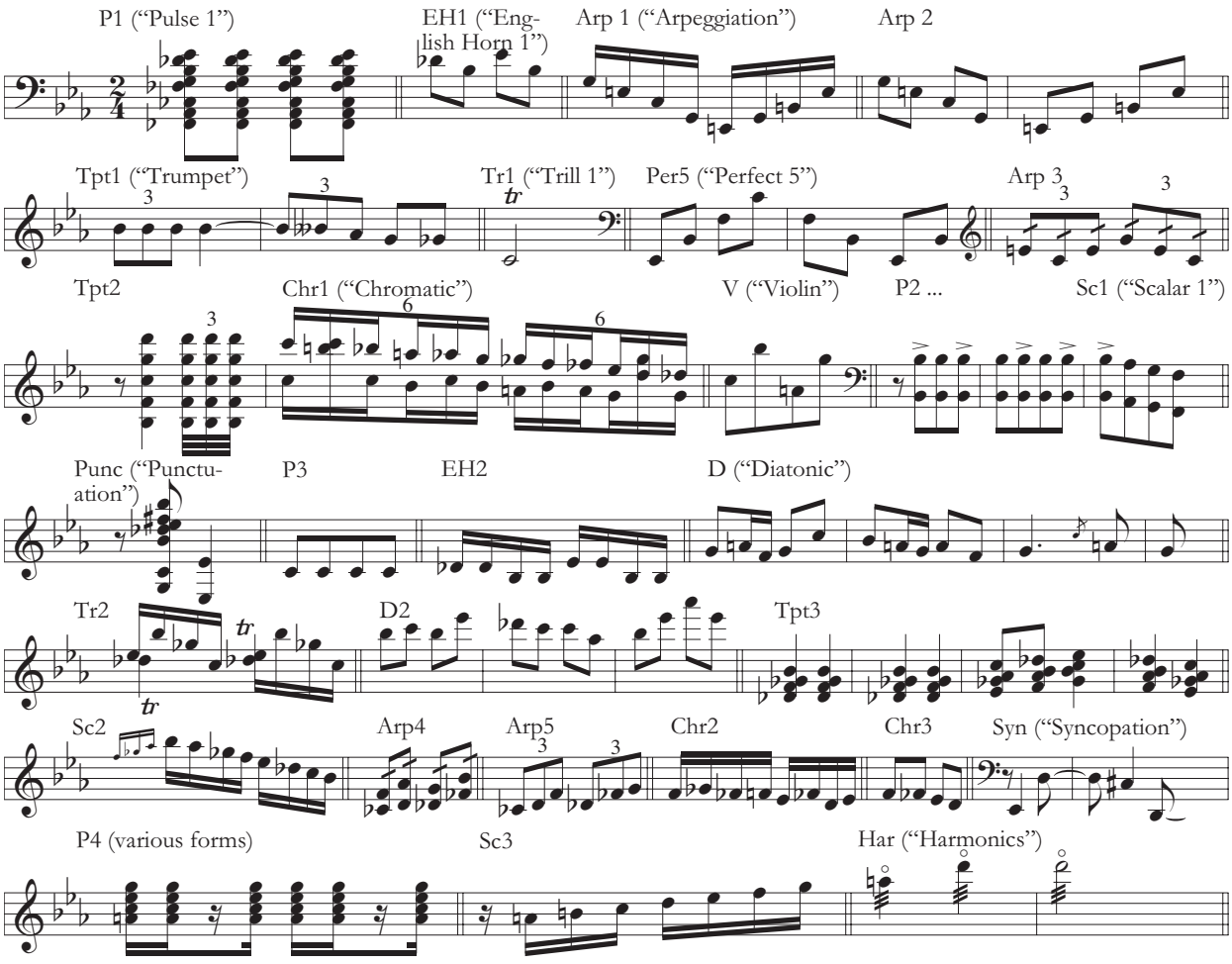
Consider musical form in the twentieth century. In *Analysis of Post-Tonal Music: A Parametric Approach*, Lefkowitz considers different types of musical form employed within the twentieth century. Among them, he considers the block form found in Stravinsky's rite of Spring in the *Dance of the Adolescents* in Figure 10.5, reproduced below with permission of the author:

Figure 10.5: Augurs of Spring/Dance of the Adolescents

Reh.	13	14		15		16					17	18	19			
Mm.	1	9	13	17	18	23	24	26	27	28	30	35	43	45	46	48
	P1		P1			Per5		Per5	V	Per5	V	P1				
		EH1		EH1												
					Tpt1			Tpt2	Chr1		Chr1		P2	Sc		Sc
		Arp1				Tr										
		Arp2					Arp3									

Reh.	20		21		22		23	24		25			26		27
Mm.	52	56	60	70	72	74	78	83	87	89	93	97	99	105	106
	P1					EH1			EH2						
	Sc		Sc	Punc		Tr	Punc	Tr							
					Arp1		Arp1	P3							
										D	D’		Tpt1		D

Reh.	28			29	30	31				32		33	34	35	36
Mm.	114	118	120	124	132	140	142	144	146	148	154	156	160	164	168
				EH1’	EH1										
	Per5’														
	Tr				Chr2						Chr1				
	Tr2				Chr3	Syn-									
	D					D	Punc	D	Punc	D’					
	D2				Arp4	Arp4’				Arp4”					
		Tpt3			Arp5	P1				P4					
			Sc2							Sc3		Har			



Lefkowitz says of the form, “Despite the metric conflicts wherever Theme P1 occurs, note how metrically regular this passage is: in 2/4 throughout, most of the motives begin on the downbeat. The composition modules—the bricks or blocks—thus nearly always line up metrically” (201). Of course, regularity like this is not always found in twentieth century compositions and Lefkowitz goes on to explain this and gives an example that demonstrates this, too. However, despite the metric regularity of “Dance of the Adolescents,” Lefkowitz notes the importance in twentieth century composer’s ability to shape listener’s perception of time within the music:

> These features—module repetition and development, continuity and discontinuity—enable the composer to control the balance between *motion* and *stasis*. Listen to the *Dance of the Adolescents:* are there moments at which the music seems to *move forward*, while others where it seems to *remain still*—to “spin its wheels?” This, in turn, allows the composer to *control and shape the progress of the music through time* (201).

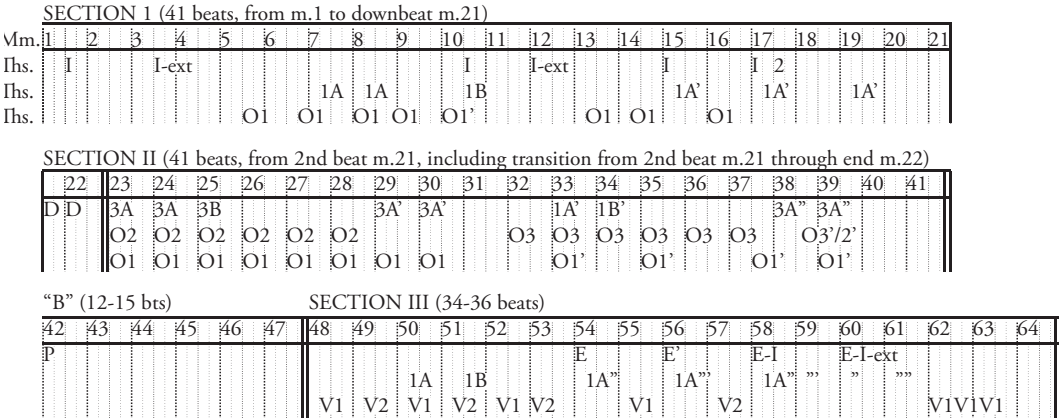
Furthermore, Lefkowitz also explains that:

> Whereas in the pre-20th-century (tonal) conception, form may be thought of as an *architectural superstructure* of *sequence of events,* in this later conception, form is a *structuring of time*, resulting from the repetition, development, overlapping, and contrasting *modules* (201).

But perhaps most damningly, at least toward the earlier objection, Lefkowitz finally notes “The mature music of both Debussy and Stravinsky is typically non-developmental and non-teleological—that is, not “goal-oriented” as most 19th-century music is—formally, harmonically, and melodically” (201).

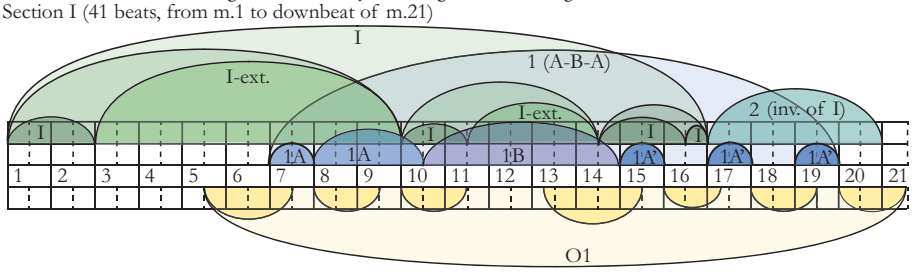
Now consider what might be the best analytic tool for drawing the analogy between music theory and mutual recognition: an arc diagram employed for the analysis of a 20th century composition. Consider Lefkowitz's arc diagram from Debussy's *Voiles*, an "almost completely whole-tone work" reproduced below with permission from the author (195-198):

Fig.10.3 a) Formal/Motivic Chart of Debussy *Voiles*, against metrical grid

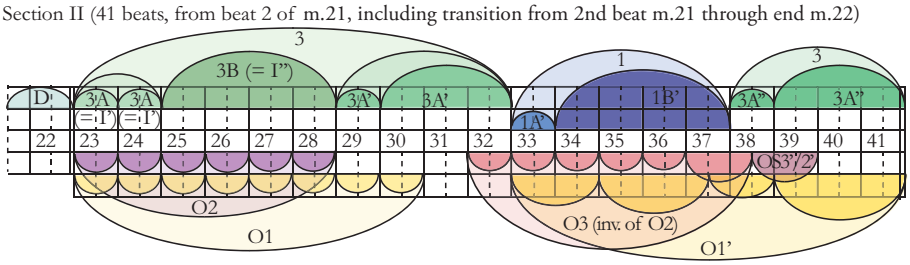


b) Formal/Motivic Arc Diagram of Debussy *Voiles*, against metrical grid

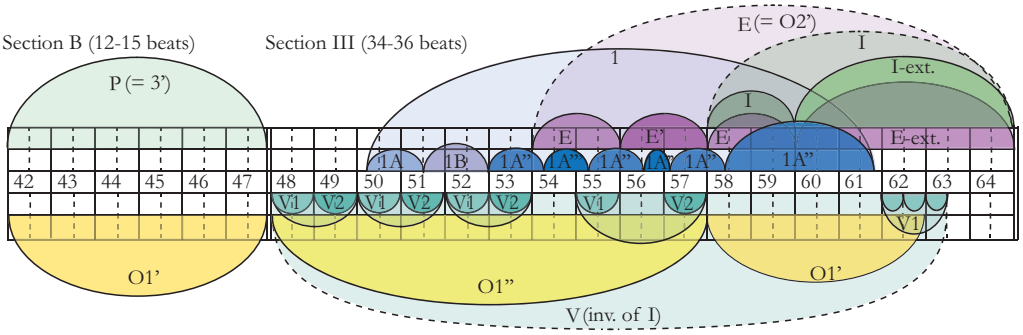
Section I (41 beats, from m.1 to downbeat of m.21)



Section II (41 beats, from beat 2 of m.21, including transition from 2nd beat m.21 through end m.22)



Section B (12-15 beats) Section III (34-36 beats)



In Debussy's *Voiles*, the music is made up of a series of motivic blocks (199). in the above figure Lefkowitz shows that the "motivic blocks overlap, combine, and recombine in many different ways" (199). Compare this motivic analysis by way of arc diagram to the one earlier. Lefkowitz contrasts the two:

> These motivic overlaps and relationships makes the form of *Voiles* into something much more like a *wall,* built up out of similarly-sized bricks or blocks. Even if such a wall makes a 90 [degree] turn at one point or another, such a structure is quite different from the 18th- and 19th-century models built upon the *structural pillars* of contrasting themes and keys. We call this *block form* (199).

Block form has several different manifestations. The bricks may line up regularly with respect to their metric aspects, or they may not, thus "the modules in a block form may 'slip' forward or backward with respect to one another," and when this occurs, Lefkowitz refers to it as "*slippery block form*" (201).

With even more musical details considered, we are now in a position to further strengthen the analogy. It is the underlying "structural pillars," to borrow from Lefkowitz's terminology, that effect the greater form that we thereby analyze as an arc. But, of course, these underlying pillars are not always determined by a pre-established form likened to an architectural superstructure, but rather one that is up to the composer. Put another way, the composer has *agency* in how she is to structure time by way of her act of composing. This, now, yields an even stronger analogy to how an agent effects a vantage point, a likewise agentially determined act. The analogy may be stated more directly as this: the musical objects employed by a composer, which in turn effect form by their relation to one another, are much like the agential stance

employed by a friend in the course of the relationship, which in turn effect a kind of form, too, what we have so far been describing as an arc of mutual recognition. Much like the composer structures time through her compositions, a friend *structures* time in a relationship by way of adopting an abstract stance between "structural pillars" of the relationship. This is the sense in which time is destabilized in a relationship.

But what exactly does a structural pillar look like in a relationship? It is easy to engage in the enterprise of musical analysis, to describe the particular musical objects and their relationships to one another within a given compositional space. In doing so we determine what the structural pillars are within a given compositional space. But what does this look like within the context of a relationship? Perhaps a tentative answer might be to point to particular instances of our relationship. Perhaps two friends might consider the time they learned species counterpoint together almost two years ago and relate it to another time, by way of an adopted agential stance, to the time that they learned about procedural forms about a year later. Or, if blurring the boundary between music theory and *engaging* in musical theory, that is, between the content of one side of our analogy and the other, between music theory and human action, is confusing consider a more distinct case.

Perhaps I hold a stance directed toward our sitting together on a stone wall several years ago, though I am not sure exactly when, nor exactly where the wall was located. The details are fuzzy, but I related that interaction, or moment, to some time that we sat together on a large rock. That brings to mind the time we sat together on the edge of a rocky cliff. And it all reminds me, oddly, of the wooden bench that we are sitting on now. I wonder whether it'll be all wooden benches from now, or whether we will once again find opportunity to sit together on those rocky

surfaces, despite the ways in which our lives have changed. I wonder, "will it be benches from now on? Or are there more stones to come?" Of course this stance is not adopted on my end alone, we find ourselves wondering something much like it on both sides of the relationship, for our sitting-together has effected profound meaning to the two of us.

Perhaps each of these moments, constituted by actual interactions that we have had together constitute the structural pillars of our relationship. We effect these pillars together because we *value* our sitting-together and the places and spaces we find ourselves seated with one another. It is our valuing these specifics, these structural pillars, of our relationship in the way that we do that effects our arc of mutual recognition, much like the musical objects employed by a 20th century composer, or so the analogy goes.

This is a start, but it is mistaken if thought to constitute the entirety of what it is for us to effect an arc of mutual recognition together. For music is not merely a moment to moment enterprise, at least not perceptually. We perceive a kind of continuous flow through time. That is, we don't experience music as fundamentally disconnected moments of time that stand in no relation to one another. If so, form would hardly emerge. Even composers face fundamental limits: the constraints of our perception of time. For we are all situated within time, and our perception of it may be manipulated phenomenologically, or the way in which we experience time may come to possess specific and special meaning associated with its passage. But we cannot literally remove ourselves from it.

The situation is much the same with our relationships. But it is not the constrains of an ever-flowing time nor even of our perceptual capabilities that makes mutual recognition more than a mere moment-to-moment experience. Rather, it is the nature of friendship itself that

transcends a distinct, moment-to-moment nature. It is, rather, the very nature of *openness* to the development of the relationship that transcends mere *discrete and distinct* moment-to-moment experience. Rather, it is openness that threads us through those moments. Openness is flowing. It is much like the flow of time that interacts with our perceptual capabilities that moves music from musical object to musical object, from structural pillar to structural pillar. It is openness that informs our constructed agential stances and effects arcs of mutual recognition.

Musical form is not itself merely a music-theoretic notion that exists merely as an abstraction, but rather it is an abstraction employed in service of *describing our actual experience qua perceivers of the music*. Musical analysis is never an abstract enterprise that is simply about notes on the page, but rather, it is about real music, actually performed and played, as it exists in the world.[102] Put simply, it is not a mere abstraction. Neither is mutual recognition. Mutual recognition is an expression of our openness. It is an abstraction employed in the service of conceptualizing the way that we experience the openness of friendship.

6. Relationship's End: Navigating the Expanse

Now, however, it is time to return to the notion of the expanse. All three cases of relationship endings can be conceived of in terms of the expanse. That is, they are all matters of how we chose to navigate the expanse. Put another way, we can think of each ending as a distinct

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[102] Of course the situation is more complex than the course of this argument portrays it to be. A certain musical analysis may, of course, influence a particular performance, and compositional goals may influence all of this. Music is not simply something that we find naturally occurring in the world, but is rather the consequence of a deliberate human action. It belongs to the realm of value theory more than that of metaphysics, for it is not a natural kind—of course *sound* is a natural kind, and may be analyzed as such, but to do so is its own distinct enterprise, though it may overlap with the analysis of music. But I admit that I am a philosopher by degree, and a hopeful musicologist by modest training, as of now, but I am not a music theorist or music analyst. My conception of music is doubtlessly influenced by the tools of my trade(s).

kind of answer posed by the questions effected by the expanse. In order to see this, I will once again argue from contingency to a more fundamental structure.

Both on the level of our individual relationships throughout life and as a matter of the more general changes that the progression of life in modern western society effects, we are forced to reckon with the expanse. Perhaps it will first be helpful to trace a modern etiology of our reckoning with the expanse in the average contingent social development of a life. In one's youth one is typically surrounded by many friends by way of her social setting. A child typically enters school, often receives 12 years of standard education, at least in the United States, over the course of her childhood and adolescence. Such conditions effect a robust social setting, one in which the child, through adolescence, and perhaps beyond depending on her trajectory—university provides a likewise social setting, for instance, through one's years of young adulthood—is in immediate, frequent, even daily, contact with her friends. However, she soon realizes as she moves through different standard life transitions—graduations, home moves, new careers, new relationships, and the like—that her social surrounding changes, and she no longer enjoys the same immediate and frequent access to her friends.[103] She must navigate all the effects that these changes bring upon her relationship; that is, at each stage she must reckon with the expanse.

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[103] Such an etiology traces a typical progression of one's reckoning with the expanse throughout the course of a typical trajectory in at least one typical course of modern life. Obviously this example is deeply seeded with contingency. This itself is not a problem so far. For theorizing may be abstract, but it is fundamentally about individuals lives, which are fundamentally wrapped up in contingency. To theorize is to generalize across contingency, but it is not to erase it.

Of course some of our relationships are maintained and others are not. Recall that I accused the earlier objector of some kind of deficiency had she maintained none of her relationships across the expanse. Indeed, it would be exceptional to find someone who had not carried at least some of her relationships from the past over to her present circumstances. But now I am positioned to describe in detail why it constitutes a deficiency: such a failure to maintain any of one's relationships would constitute a failure to appropriately reckon with the expanse. While one does not have to maintain all of her relationships, or even some of them—sometimes a break from one's past will be entirely appropriate—one at very least must face the *choice* of whether to maintain her relationships, or reckon with the fact that her relationships must change. To simply and automatically let one's relationships lapse, and thereby diverge, for want of time and the constraints of finitude is to fail to reckon with the expanse at all. In fact, I will argue that such a case, if possible at all, is truly rare. In order to see this, however, we first need to make explicit how each kind of relationship end constitutes an answer to the expanse.

Individual agents as parties of a relationship must make choices when faced with the expanse. When the expanse grows we may have a vantage point from which to contextualize that growth and the relationship may endure. On the other hand, no such vantage point may be available. When no such vantage point is available a relationship ends, but the way in which it ends depends upon the particular negotiation effected—both implicitly and explicitly—within the process of mutual recognition. When the parties come to an *explicit* realization that no such vantage point is available the relationship reaches an *explicit ending*, or a breakup. When no such realization is ever explicitly reached, but rather becomes manifest as a matter of implicit reflection on the relationship, divergence occurs. When the parties decide, whether explicitly or

implicitly, to effect boundaries that preclude the arrival of such a vantage point the relationship reaches a plateau, or becomes an acquaintanceship.

However, regardless of how one reaches relationship's end, one is forced to reckon, whether explicitly or implicitly, with the expanse. That is, one must reflect on the negotiation and state of her relationship. For one to simply lose her relationships to want of time and finitude, instead, would entail that one has never engaged in any sort of this reflection. She, quite literally, became lost, or forgetful, in her time and finitude, forgetting the relationship entirely, or never giving it any further thought at all beyond its immediate circumstance. In a very literal sense: out of sight, out of mind! Such a situation seems implausible at the very least. What happens to our relationships, whether they endure or end, and how they end, is a matter of our reckoning with the expanse.

7. Episodicity and Conceiving of Temporality in Relationships

If music theory has not been quite enough, I now appeal to an analogy from a more traditional philosophical context. Though employed in a much different context, I now ask the reader to consider the following remark from Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*: "If we take eternity to mean not infinite temporal duration but timelessness, then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present."[104] I will use the pretheoretical idea expressed in this quote to build an appropriate analogy to the abstract structure of time in my conception of relationships.

Episodicity has peculiar effects on how we ought to conceive of the temporality within relationships. It has the unique and perhaps even quasi-paradoxical effect of both centralizing the

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[104] Wittgenstein is, of course, concerned with an entirely different topic in *TLP* involving the general form of the proposition and, here, is considering an argument specifically about death and temporality. Its context will not be relevant for my purposes.

notion temporality to that of a relationship while at the same time destabilizing it, at least in a traditional linear sense. Here we can cast an analogy between eternity as infinite temporal duration versus eternity as timelessness with the structure of relationships I have outlined. According to this analogy, infinite temporal duration parallels the notion of relationships centered around teleology or endurance, while timelessness corresponds with episodicity. As we have seen, there is a strong temptation to think of relationships primarily in terms of their temporal duration. However, what the quote helps to bring to the forefront of this conception of relationships is the notion of *linearity* found in temporal duration. Infinite temporal duration implies a *linearly* unfolding progression from a starting point toward an end. Of course, there is no conception of infinitude or eternity relevant to the relationship side of the analogy, however, this should not obscure the more general distinction. Episodicity, on the other hand, corresponds to *timelessness*.

To see how this distinction relates to relationships we need only consider how the structure of mutual recognition operates with respect to temporality. Mutual recognition is temporally bidirectional. That is, it is constituted by agential stances that are both forward and backward looking. Furthermore, these agential stances may arise from any agentially constructed vantage point so long as an arc can be traced from the given vantage point to some other one, whether forward looking or backward looking. Put another way, agents situated in a relationship are fundamentally caught in a timeless process when it comes to their mutual recognition of one another. For they are not carried forward linearly across an ever unfolding constructed set of unidirectional forward looking agential stances, but rather they are unbound by temporal direction as far as the construction of their contextualized agential stances are concerned. For

agential stances aim not unidirectionally forward, but they aim at one another, whether that be forward looking or backward looking. A successful relationship will in fact contain overlapping and simultaneously constructed agential stances looking in opposite directions. For this is merely what it is for an agential stance to emerge as being thoroughly contextualized. Hence the timelessness of episodicity.

This timelessness can further be thought of as a radical destabilization of the notion of temporality within the context of a relationship, not unlike the way in which twentieth century composers used various formal techniques to control and manipulate the listener's sense of the flow of time in their compositions. For a particular arc constructed from one vantage point to another may very well derive its meaning only from its backward looking agential content, and that may make it worth projection into the future. If this abstraction has become too heady it can be as simple as this: a seemingly trivial or insignificant act may seem meaningless to bystanders, but to the parties of a relationship it may be deeply imbued with meaning simply for its backward looking content. Such is the case with many relationship rituals. And perhaps a paradigm case of such an instance is that of an inside joke, only imbued with meaning to the parties due to their history, but yet, at the same time, certainly worth repeating far into the future; or perhaps at least until the joke has lost some of its luster.[105]

Perhaps a spatial metaphor will be of use if both musical and philosophical analogy have failed to make clear the kind of destabilization of temporality that relationships effect. Imagine a relationship as mapped onto the points of a line. Any given point on that line is able to reflect a

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[105] Some jokes are obviously better than others. Some people will recognize this footnote to constitute an inside joke.

vantage point. That is, any given point on that line may represent a constructed agential contextualized stance toward the other, so long as that point is connected to some other point on the line via an arc of mutual recognition, whether that point be forward or behind the point in question. At any time, an agent may construct a vantage point that traces her past stance to her present, her present to her past, or her projected future stance to her past, or her projected future stance to her present, or any combination thereof. Contrast this spatial representation with one in which the line now represents a traditionally unfolding axis of time, such that as time moves forward the agent is bound such that she only has access to constructing points of contextualized understanding that represent her present moment. Such is a line of infinite temporal duration, or teleology, while the former is one of timelessness, or episodicity.

But there is more within this analogy, too. Left as simply stated in this way, the situation is much as we left the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by way of music theory. However, we would have to go back much farther in time to contrast the contingent time periods from which the following mathematical analogy finds its home. Imagine one line as being the line constituted by the natural numbers, beginning on 1 and continuing infinitely. The natural number line is the number line of teleology. Now imagine a line as described earlier, a moment ago, in which one may appeal to points backward and forward looking. This is the line of the initial analogy; it is the integer number line. But in order to add openness to the picture, or line, we need to appeal to at least the rational numbers, or maybe even the real numbers.[106] For this better captures our intuition that our experience of relationships, and mutual recognition, is not merely a moment-to-

[106] No, I will not entertain Zeno's paradox.

moment one. That is, it is not the experience of discrete, distinct, and disconnected moments that we thread together ad hoc.

Of course one might object here that the lines I have just described are meaningless by way of our actual experience. They are mathematical niceties, abstractions. The objection is that my former line is incoherent. For of course we are all bound by the flow of time! What, then, would it even mean for an agent to construct a vantage point from outside of her present point of access to the line? Such a conceptualization is caught between meaningless and triviality. For obviously one cannot transcend the present moment and travel through time forward nor backward; no, at best the suggestion must be metaphorical. But then, if it is metaphorical, the statement is merely trivial. For of course one can put herself in the place of her former state of mind and conceive of a vantage point from that perspective. Likewise she might even be able to imagine what her perspective might be like some time from now and conceive of a vantage point from the future by doing so, limited only by her powers of conceivability and imagination.

However, this objection merely engages my conceptualization on the wrong level. Certainly my conceptualization is not a claim about the physical (im)possibility of having access to vantage points that are temporally located outside the present, but nor is it a merely psychological one. Rather, it is a point about how we ought to conceive of the reality of the relationship as an entity. The destabilization of temporality within a relationship consists not in physical manipulation of time nor in the mere psychological manipulation of it either. But rather, it consists in a deprivileging, or decentering, of the present moment as defining the relationship. It is a taxonomical claim, and one with phenomenological implications as well. I take it that the situation is much the same with the destabilization of time that composers in the twentieth

century have effected through various techniques of producing form. Twentieth century composers were just as bound by the constraints of time as anyone else. It would be to misunderstand their intent to structure the listeners experience of time to think that they were somehow trying to escape the basic constraints of the physical world. The line of thought is silly and obviously uncharitable.

Thus properly explained there is no paradox in my conceptualization of the destabilization of temporality within relationships. Time proceeds as normal, and our awareness of it does not perceptually change on any basic, fundamental physical level that we are constrained by merely by the most basic physical constraints we find ourselves to be in as part of the world. But, rather, the sense of timelessness is a phenomenological awareness of relationship-entirety, contextualized. *The destabilization of time, the timelessness of our relationships, is the phenomenology of openness to the development of the relationship.*

At least on a basic pretheoretical level, this must also be what is going on in Wittgenstein's claim. Life does not extend for infinite temporal duration, but we can phenomenologically find a timelessness to our existence if we are able to destabilize our own life trajectories from the ordinary flow of time.

8. Finding Value at Relationship's End

Now for the latter part of Wittgenstein's quote. One application of all this theorizing is to make room for the value of episodicity in relationships. Much like the way that a life takes all sorts of twists and turns, with some of them effecting longterm consequences and others merely mattering for a shorter duration, relationships do much the same. And just like life, even some of our non-lasting turns are filled with value and meaning. For meaning is not constructed nor

bestowed solely through longterm projects. The briefest episodes can be just as filled with wonder, meaning, and beauty. Much is the same with our relationships.

Once we adopt an episodic view of relationships it is easier to see even those relationships which did not endure to be valuable, no matter which kind of ending they ultimately met, and this is where it becomes appropriate to draw another analogy. Corresponding to Wittgenstein's eternal life for those who live in the present, is the notion of lasting—or even eternal—value after the end of a relationship. We merely need to apply the previously discussed conceptual scheme to a relationship that has now ended.

The same timelessness that is felt phenomenologically can lead to appreciation of a former relationship that failed to endure. While the preceding discussion may not immediately map onto this one, I will conclude by laying the groundwork to show how it remains applicable to these circumstances as well. For if our relationships can be seen to be timeless against the backdrop of an ever-flowing and forward march of time, so too can our previous relationships be appreciated against such a backdrop. Freed from both the constraints of linear temporality and teleology, there is no reason not to revel in the good, in the derived value from, and the wonder yielded from an episode of other-discovery, even when it did not endure. Furthermore, this is not even to mention the impact that our involvement with the vastness of another person imparts upon us by way of value.[107] Put another way, the phenomenology of openness leaves us with an ever-accessible, timeless sense of meaning and value of a relationship. For the *meaning* of a relationship has been freed from the straightforward flow of linear time.

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[107] cf. Other-Discovery.

9. Episodicity in an Individual Life

But if this is still left too imprecise then it is worth introducing a new conceptualization analogous to that of a vantage point found in mutual recognition. We can conceive of a contextualized agential stance not as part of a joint construction aimed at one another across the expanse of a relationship, but rather at the level of one's own life. Such an agential stance simply has a different target. Unlike the other-directed target of another person, or another life, this conceptualized understanding takes as its target some point in one's own life. But much like the original notion of a vantage point found within relationships, it creates its own kind of conceptual arc from one vantage point to the next, whether forward or backward looking. Call this a self directed vantage point.

But with the notion of a self directed vantage point in mind, we face the same persistent question hanging in the background that we have discussed at length in the context of relationships. Is a life best conceived of teleologically or episodically? While I likewise believe that one's own individual life is best conceived of episodically, it is first appropriate to get clear on what a teleological notion of an individual life might entail. This, however, is less immediately clear than what teleology might entail regarding relationships. For the notion that one's own life is structured toward some end likely sounds incomprehensible to many modern readers.

Perhaps it will be helpful to look toward examples in order to get a better idea of what a teleological notion might look like when applied to an individual life. Certain forms of religion might constitute one such paradigm. Consider for example, the religious adherent who has decided to devote her life to the worship of a god or the fulfillment of her religion's values,

norms, or ethical prescriptions. An individual in this situation may very well describe her life in a teleological sense. That is, she may insist that the end of her life is to serve her god, or that her life is devoted to her religion. But outside of the specific adherents of a religion like this, it is difficult to conceive of a conception on which to attribute a general concept of teleology in this manner to an individual life. That is, while it might be a psychologically motivating factor for certain religious individuals to view their own life as being structured or even motivated by a goal to serve their god or religion, it is implausible to posit some more generalized notion of teleology on this basis without accepting the metaphysical premises of a religion that give rise to such a phenomenological perception of one's life.[108]

Perhaps, instead, we can conform this example to a more neutral general phenomena discussed in earlier in this dissertation. The teleology found within religious adherence might best be able to be described in a neutral way as a kind of project.[109] Thus it might then be the case that projects are the best candidate to structure a life toward a teleological style of end. While it might be that religious adherence is one such project for some, there are many others ranging from engaging oneself in gardening to musical composition. But if we recall the

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[108] I hope to remain neutral on the adoption of metaphysical claims that entail the existence of a god or the truth of a religion. While I do not personally believe in a god nor the truth of the metaphysical claims behind any religion, I ask a religiously inclined reader to accept the argument on a conditional basis. That is, I ask such a reader to at least accept the premise as a conditional premised on the antecedent condition that we have not presupposed the truth of any religious claims about a god(s) and meaning imbued upon life based upon a religious faith. I remain neutral here on substantive matters within the purview of the philosophy of religion.

[109] Here is another music theory analogy: tonal systems of functional harmonic analysis are to conceiving of religion as the paradigmatic case of teleology in a human life as set theoretic analysis is to conceiving of projects, neutrally, as the paradigmatic case of teleology in a human life. Set theory is neural in regards to presupposing a tonal or non-tonal (whether post-tonal or more properly atonal) context, much like projects are neutral on supposing a religion or secular context.

discussion of projects previously presented at length, they are hardly the sort of thing upon which one might find an overarching sort of teleological commitment to. It would be mistaken to think, for example, that human life is directed toward the end of gardening in some cases, the end of musical composition in others, or perhaps the end of migratory bird photography in yet others; and further, it just so happens that these ends may overlap and be found in multiplicity in any individual human life.

But perhaps it is still premature to dismiss the notion that projects form a teleological style end to center life around. After all, we find common locutions such as "follow your passion" or "make the most of your dreams" tritely offered to our young on a regular basis. Perhaps this notion might be a more serious contender for a teleological life end than it first appears, at least within the popular imagination.[110] That is, more charitably conceived, one might hold the view that the end goal of a life is to pursue the project, or projects, that matters most to you. There might be no one teleological-style generalizable form of an end to a life such as a religion or an Aristotelian conception of living a good life posits. Instead, there is in fact such a teleological end, but it is relative to one's self, or to one's dispositions and values.

But this all seems like excess at best. It seems a lot of work to keep a sense of teleology present in one's life. After all, who really ends up living a (children's) storybook-style life in which one discovers her true passion, and then devotes her whole life to the fulfillment of that project, whether successful or not?[111] Life is often far more complex and much more of a mess

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[110] I do find that the popular imagination—or rather ordinary and common beliefs found to be widespread throughout a society—is often more insightful than the work of technical philosophers.

[111] If you are a reader whose life has unfolded in this manner I extend to you my sincere condolences.

than that. It is intertwined with all sorts of many projects and other persons, all tangled together.[112] Rather than think of projects in a teleological sense, they seem to fit an episodic picture much more readily. Episodicity accounts for the way in which we come to discover our projects and the way in which we conceptualize them: haphazardly. Much like the way in which I may conceptualize my relationship in terms of constructed agential stances and trace arcs from one such stance to another, I may construct a self directed agential stance toward my earlier, present, and future oriented *projects*. Put another way, self directed vantage points may be constructed as agential stances toward one's projects throughout her own life. [113]

Now consider this by way of example. Perhaps March has come to feel liberated. She feels as though she has emerged from a dark winter into the spring of her life. Growing up with her family she sought to one day form a traditional family based on the religious convictions of her upbringing. She held regressive views about gender roles and her place in society as a woman. Hence she held a lifelong project that consisted of starting a family and occupying a religiously traditional gender role of wife and mother in her family. But then as she grew older and became a young adult she discovered feminism, ardently read the seminal works of the movement and felt liberated from the confines that her former views effected upon her life. Being somewhat traditional still, however, maybe as a consequence of the teleological outlook of the religion of her youth, March still has a teleological outlook on life, so she frames her trajectory as an overarching commitment to a single, unified project of liberation. She sees

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[112] cf. Other-Discovery.

[113] This occurs with an analogous kind of openness to an individual-life unfolding present in her own stance directed toward her life. I will describe the kind of stance I have in mind in my next chapter. It will constitute play. For one to hold the individual version of the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship in one's own life will be to engage in play.

herself growing, freed from regressive ideology that limited her life formerly and believes her future is bright, having not yet reached the end of her personal enlightenment. She decides she will become a scholar of the feminist movement.

But she also remains devoted to her childhood passions as well. As a child she was utterly enthralled by dinosaurs. She collected dinosaur toys, learned all about them, and the like. It would be fair to describe herself as having a project devoted to dinosaurs as a child. She still remains fascinated by dinosaurs into adulthood, but perhaps not at the level that would constitute a project. She smiles every time she sees a dinosaur exhibit at a natural history museum or reads about a paleontological discovery in the *Bangor Daily News*, but her interest in them no longer rises to the level of a project. Still, teleologically inclined, however, she is not sure what to make of her past commitment to dinosaurs. Surely they must fit into her life's story of liberation from regressive gender role ideology to feminist liberation, but she simply is not sure how to trace a path from dinosaurs to feminism.

Perhaps one might object that I have painted too cartoonish a picture with my example.[114] However, it is not hard to imagine a more realistic one as well. Perhaps we can consider the life of someone who sees her past self as having little in common with herself presently for a myriad of reasons. Perhaps, she has changed vocations or changed political affiliation. Or it could be as seemingly minor as that she has changed her hair color and aspires toward a different aesthetic appearance now.[115] Or maybe she is a painter who has exclusively focused on portraiture but has

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[114] If I have been uncharitable to those committed to a teleological outlook on life I do extend my apologies. But I also must admit that I, too, like dinosaurs.

[115] This is actually not minor. Hair is an art with depth and transformative power. It is not merely superficial, nor is the more generalized way in which we express ourselves aesthetically in an embodied manner. This follows from much of the discussion present in the previous chapter.

now turned exclusively to landscapes. Or perhaps she has just grown-up, so to speak, and developed as a person in a way that her priorities, outlook, commitments, and projects are significantly different from what they were at an earlier age.[116] Clearly, however, not all of these shifts in projects, outlooks, or the like will entail the kind of progression from one state toward another that implies some kind or lurking teleology. While we certainly do hold longterm goals across our lives, on the whole, life looks a lot more like this; it is a series of sometimes disjointed, other times interconnected, yet others overlapping—and still others with relations not even obviously transparent to one another—projects. In other words, put simply, it is thoroughly episodic.[117]

10. Relationship's End: Now a Less Lonesome Vantage Point

Now I am prepared to leave the reader with a description of how this ought to work when it comes to conceptualizing our past, now-ended relationships. It will be the ending that perhaps most readers will have been in need of a reconceptualization most at some point or other in their

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[116] Use of the colloquialism "grown-up" is intentional here. I don't mean to load the conversation by using a word like "matured," which an unsympathetic reader might find to be hiding teleological leanings. Indeed, there is some delicacy here in providing examples so as not to beg the question in favor of teleological leanings. For any shift in projects and attitude can be potentially cast as progress toward an end in a teleological sense.

[117] This is a way in which life is *not* phenomenologically like our relationships. We may have psychological mechanisms to tie our phenomenological experience of it all together, but I find it far less plausible to think that there is some kind of fundamental structure or experience that unifies a life analogously to how the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship unifies a relationship. Life is messy, so to are relationships. The difference is that in a relationship we have *the other* to help us make sense of the mess. In the course of an individual life things are just much of a mess outside of the extent to which I entangle my life with another. Part of the beauty of both relationships and individual life is this messiness, hence we ought not clean it up too much. Perhaps this is a controversial aesthetic value, however. In any case, life entanglement actually makes life less messy, by adding a partner to help clean up the mess. I used to help the janitor sweep up campus in between periods during high school. We got much more done when the two of us participated. Life entanglement: go figure.

lives: a breakup. Quite typical of some of our sorrier breakup experiences involve pain and regret, and perhaps some wishing that we were not staring directly at relationship's end. Depending on which side of the breakup one falls—and let us assume it is the sorrier one for the moment—one might find herself wishing, usually for the worse, that she could find some way to rescue the relationship and make it endure.

But there is a sense in which feeling this way is mistaken. It is to fail to appropriately understand the arc of the relationship which has just ended explicitly because no further vantage point could be reached from which to contextualize its future. Instead, it would be better to understand that the expanse is no longer bridgeable, and wish to come to a point in which the now unbridgeable expanse no longer has its same emotional import that it does in the moment at relationship's end. Someday that unbridgeable expanse will likely no longer hurt, and rather than wishing for a vantage point that could not be, it would be wiser to wish oneself further along one's own life trajectory, having unfolded to a point where the loss of the relationship no longer hurts from a newly accessible self directed vantage point.

But why even wait that time? Remember that self directed vantage points are future directional, too! One might as well simply trace an arc from now to the time that she knows it will no longer hurt, whenever that time might actually manifest. Nevertheless, it can be traced from the present moment to a future oriented self vantage point, thus making relationship's end a

less lonesome place after all.[118] And if that fails to soothe one's pains she can always listen to some music, perhaps analyzing its form to take her mind off of her present state.

[118] What this actually looks like might be the following. One reassures herself, despite her emotional pain, that she will reach a point at which her pain is no longer acute, and at which she might even find her past self silly for having wished the relationship had endured. For how often have we found ourselves in this position? I know I have!

It is plausible that the structure of this chapter could be presented more clearly in a linear fashion, but as AJ Julius deftly remarks, perhaps it is an exercise in the destabilization of time itself. Maybe an arc diagram is in order.

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For all my friends, lovingly and playfully.

Chapter 5

Radical Openness:

Friendship and Play

0. Introduction

Out from the mundane emerges a moose in Elizabeth Bishop's poem "The Moose:"[119]

From narrow provinces
of fish and bread and tea,
home of the long tides
where the bay leaves the sea
twice a day and takes
the herrings long rides,

where if the river
enters or retreats
in a wall of brown foam
depends on if it meets
the bay coming in,
the bay not at home;

where, silted red,
sometimes the sun sets
facing a red sea,
and others, veins the flats'
lavender, rich mud
in burning rivulets;

on red, gravelly roads,
down rows of sugar maples,
past clapboard farmhouses
and neat, clapboard churches,
bleached, ridged as clamshells,
past twin silver birches,

through late afternoon

[119] It is worth reproducing in full.

a bus journeys west,
the windshield flashing pink,
pink glancing off of metal,
brushing the dented flank
of blue, beat-up enamel;

down hollows, up rises,
and waits, patient, while
a lone traveller gives
kisses and embraces
to seven relatives
and a collie supervises.

Goodbye to the elms,
to the farm, to the dog.
The bus starts. The light
grows richer; the fog,
shifting, salty, thin,
comes closing in.

Its cold, round crystals
form and slide and settle
in the white hens' feathers,
in gray glazed cabbages,
on the cabbage roses
and lupins like apostles;

the sweet peas cling
to their wet white string
on the whitewashed fences;
bumblebees creep
inside the foxgloves,
and evening commences.

One stop at Bass River.
Then the Economies—
Lower, Middle, Upper;
Five Islands, Five Houses,
where a woman shakes a tablecloth
out after supper.

A pale flickering. Gone.
The Tantramar marshes

and the smell of salt hay.
An iron bridge trembles
and a loose plank rattles
but doesn't give way.

On the left, a red light
swims through the dark:
a ship's port lantern.
Two rubber boots show,
illuminated, solemn.
A dog gives one bark.

A woman climbs in
with two market bags,
brisk, freckled, elderly.
"A grand night. Yes, sir,
all the way to Boston."
She regards us amicably.

Moonlight as we enter
the New Brunswick woods,
hairy, scratchy, splintery;
moonlight and mist
caught in them like lamb's wool
on bushes in a pasture.

The passengers lie back.
Snores. Some long sighs.
A dreamy divagation
begins in the night,
a gentle, auditory,
slow hallucination....

In the creakings and noises,
an old conversation
—not concerning us,
but recognizable, somewhere,
back in the bus:
Grandparents' voices

uninterruptedly
talking, in Eternity:
names being mentioned,

things cleared up finally;
what he said, what she said,
who got pensioned;

deaths, deaths and sicknesses;
the year he remarried;
the year (something) happened.
She died in childbirth.
That was the son lost
when the schooner foundered
.
He took to drink. Yes.
She went to the bad.
When Amos began to pray
even in the store and
finally the family had
to put him away.

"Yes ..." that peculiar
affirmative. "Yes ..."
A sharp, indrawn breath,
half groan, half acceptance,
that means "Life's like that.
We know it (also death)."

Talking the way they talked
in the old featherbed,
peacefully, on and on,
dim lamplight in the hall,
down in the kitchen, the dog
tucked in her shawl.

Now, it's all right now
even to fall asleep
just as on all those nights.
—Suddenly the bus driver
stops with a jolt,
turns off his lights.

A moose has come out of
the impenetrable wood
and stands there, looms, rather,
in the middle of the road.

It approaches; it sniffs at
the bus's hot hood.

Towering, antlerless,
high as a church,
homely as a house
(or, safe as houses).
A man's voice assures us
"Perfectly harmless...."

Some of the passengers
exclaim in whispers,
childishly, softly,
"Sure are big creatures."
"It's awful plain."
"Look! It's a she!"

Taking her time,
she looks the bus over,
grand, otherworldly.
Why, why do we feel
(we all feel) this sweet
sensation of joy?

"Curious creatures,"
says our quiet driver,
rolling his r's.
"Look at that, would you."
Then he shifts gears.
For a moment longer,

by craning backward,
the moose can be seen
on the moonlit macadam;
then there's a dim
smell of moose, an acrid
smell of gasoline.

The passengers of the bus turn from the mundane, perhaps even the serious, to a state that resembles something more inspired; something more *playful*.

1. The Case

"What could be more fun than jumping into a pile of crisp, yellow leaves!" September exclaims. "Well the leaves could be orange," mumbles October. "No, no, only red will do." November says affectionately, knowing that September's favorite color is yellow and October's is orange. Neither care much for red. The three friends proceed to enjoy the crisp fall day playfully. In fact, their brief interaction detailed above seems appropriately described as playful.

This brief image will form the starting point of my final investigation. Unlike prior discussion, however, this discussion will lay out little additional theory of friendship, and instead will trace out some consequences of the theory of friendship that I have spent the preceding chapters developing. The topic of my final investigation will be that of friendship and playfulness. Ultimately this will lead to some important unifying conclusions.

I will take as a philosophical, or conceptual, starting point some central notions common to many philosophical theories of play: a sense of freedom, voluntariness, non-seriousness, and the idea of games, structure, or rules; with more to follow. In contrast to my earlier approach, in the course of this investigation, I will focus on a single case. My case will be that of play between friends and will gradually be further developed and examined. An account of play as a general attitude, or stance, will be developed. After developing this account of play, I will then proceed to address the relationship between play and relationships. Doing this will ultimately further elucidate the concept of openness, as well as shared life.

My account of play will draw centrally upon the notion of *openness*, and hence will be intimately bound together with that of *openness to the development of the relationship*. With this notion of play in mind, I will argue that my conception of friendship takes play to be a

fundamental component of human relationships. Ultimately, then, I will conclude by suggesting that my account of friendship both descriptively accounts for the innate playfulness found within human relationships and provides a normative structure to ground even more of itself. Hence the situation will be much the same as I initially argued with regard to friendship: closeness begets closeness and play begets play.

2. Two Influential Notions of Playfulness in the Literature

I will begin by addressing two influential notions of play from major twentieth century examinations of the topic: those from Huizinga and Callois. While I will ultimately reject each definition they provide, their ideas will form a useful starting point from which to develop my own account. However, it will be important to keep in mind the very different sorts of context relevant to my own investigation of play to those of Huizinga and Callois. While the latter are focused on the concept of play in various social spheres, they are concerned with it at a much wider social scale than my own investigation. Furthermore, I will not address games much at all, and, at very least, the notion of a game will figure little into my own discussion of play. While much of the subsequent literature on play has treated the concept as being fundamentally, or at least closely, related to games, I mean to divorce the two concepts. While I will not spend time arguing for the separate treatment of the two, I hope to convince the reader skeptical of this separation that my account of play will be coherent on its own, without appeal to the notion of a game.

First consider the definition that Huizinga provides of play in *Homo Ludens*, in its entirety:

> Summing up the formal characteristics of play we might call it a free activity standing quite consciously outside "ordinary" life as being "not serious", but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner. It promotes the formation of social groupings which tend to surround themselves with secrecy and to stress their differences from the common world by disguise or other means (13).

Perhaps the most immediately striking feature of this definition of play is that Huizinga takes it to be fixed in some sense, yet free in another. It is this aspect of play that seems still stubbornly within the purview of games.[120] Though not part of his formal definition Huizinga also adds that play is intimately connected to fun, saying "this fun-element [ ] characterizes the essence of play" (3).

It is worthwhile spending some time considering Huizinga's remarks about seriousness and non-seriousness. To open his discussion of the topic he notes that "To our way of thinking, play is the direct opposite of seriousness" (5). But he then goes on to admit of significant nuance to this claim, acknowledging the difference between the claims "play is non-serious" and "play is not serious." The latter he dismisses with ease, citing the overt seriousness with which one may engage in the act of play. Despite this, the term, "non-serious" remains somewhat obscure, and at times Huizinga appears to end his inquiry without further investigation of the notion, instead

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[120] To be fair to Huizinga, he does intend to discuss both play itself and its broader situation within culture and society. The remainder of his book discusses play and its relation to various social settings without explicitly taking play to be constitutively related to games. Nevertheless, I find the insistence on play as being fixed as derivative of games troubling. More on this later.

admitting that the qualities of play "share the characteristic which we had to attribute to play, namely, that of resisting any attempt to reduce it to other terms" (6). Clearly this is unsatisfactory, and any account appealing to the alleged "non-seriousness" of play owes further explanation of what such a highly theory-laden notion precisely entails.

Rather obscurely, Huizinga returns to the contrast between play and seriousness some time later in order to claim that:

> The contrast between play and seriousness is always fluid. The inferiority of play is continually being offset by the corresponding superiority of seriousness. Play turns to seriousness and seriousness to play. Play may rise to heights of beauty and sublimity that leave seriousness far beneath (8).

Perhaps a charitable reading would have it that Huizinga has some kind of basic, pretheoretical notion of seriousness in mind with this contrast. After all, Huizinga is not a philosopher, and instead approaches the topic from a sociological perspective. Forgiving the differences of the trade, it seems necessary for any philosophical analysis to get clear on what "seriousness" and "ordinary life" entail first before proceeding to make any substantial claims about their relation to play.

As for the latter, "ordinary life," Huizing does supply the reader with more, "[ ] play is not 'ordinary,' or 'real' life. It is rather a stepping out of 'real' life into a temporary sphere of activity with a disposition all of its own" (8). Paradigmatic of departures from ordinary life, for Huizinga, are examples of child's play and pretense. Nevertheless, this leaves us with little of positive substance to infer about the nature of seriousness. Huizinga does talk of what he calls the disinterestedness of play, noting that play constitutes a departure from ordinary life in that it

"stands outside the immediate satisfaction of wants and appetites" and that it is a "temporary activity satisfying in itself and ending there" (9). He ultimately describes play as an interlude in daily life (9). It is here that it begins to feel as though we have enough to perhaps piece together a positive notion of seriousness. Seriousness, perhaps, is constituted by satisfaction of ordinary wants, appetites, and the engagement in whatever typical matter constitutes one's life.

The remainder of Huizinga's definition poses fewer philosophically interesting issues, at least by way of discerning what exactly the definition is meant to entail. Of course, whether one accepts his definition is another matter. However, before leaving the definition, I will highlight the more game-like, or game-derivative, aspects of play from his definition. Huizinga takes care to express the contrast between the freedom of play and its order, or movement. He says "All play moves and has its being within a play-ground marked off beforehand either materially or ideally, deliberately or as a matter of course" (10). He also notes of play that it "all is movement, change, alteration, succession, association, separation" (9). He notes firmly, as well, that "play: it creates order, *is* order" (10). And further, that "All play has its rules. They determine what 'holds' in the temporary world circumscribed by play" (11). In addition to rules, another game-like aspect of play, according to Huizinga, is an element of tension and release (11).

Callois, on the other hand, takes Huizinga as a starting point in *Man, Play, and Games*. He concurs with Huizinga in some regards and takes issue with some of his claims in others, instead producing his own definition of play. He gives the following set of formal of conditions constituting play:

1. *Free*: in which playing is not obligatory; if it were, it would at once lose its attractive and joyous quality as a diversion;

2. *Separate*: circumscribed within limits of space and time, defined and fixed in advance;

3. *Uncertain*: the course of which cannot be determined, nor the result attained beforehand, and some attitude for innovations being left to the player's initiative;

4. *Unproductive*: creating neither goods, nor wealth, nor new elements of any kind; and, except for the exchange of property among players, ending in a situation identical to that prevailing at the beginning of the game;

5. *Governed by the rules*: under conventions that suspend ordinary laws, and for the moment establish new legislation, which alone counts;

6. *Make-believe*: accompanied by a special awareness of a second reality or of a free unreality, as against real life (10).

It is immediately apparent that this definition is an improvement upon some of the uncertainties left in Huizinga's definition. Perhaps most prominent is the potential clarity that the sixth condition provides upon the seriousness question. While Huizinga and Callois are not in direct conversion qua this condition, make believe, for Callois, does seem to provide a somewhat clearer analogue for Huizinga's notion of non-seriousness. What was negatively described as an interlude or momentary departure from "ordinary life" is now given positive content as an awareness of a second reality.

However, the extent to which Huizinga and Callois are actually in conversation with one another—nor a comparative examination of the two accounts—is not directly relevant to the rest of my investigation. Rather, Huizinga and Callois provide a satisfactory starting point from which to theorize. Hence I will now turn back toward my own concerns.

3. Theorizing Play as an Attitude

Now we return to fall. September, October, and November do not straightforwardly appear to be *playing* according to either Huizinga's or Callois' criteria, at least not obviously so. Yet it does seem intuitively correct to describe their interaction as playful. What are we to make of this? Perhaps there are three immediately obvious answers to this question. First, we may simply deny that the interaction is playful or that the three engage in play. Second, we might agree that the interaction is in fact *playful*, but that the interaction of the three does not constitute *play*. This line of answer would have us distinguish play from playfulness, of course. Third, we may interpret the case as a counterexample to Huizinga and Callois, thinking that it disproves their accounts of play. But to do so would be premature, especially on the basis of a rather brief and even cartoonish example. Furthermore, I do not mean to enter the space of theorizing play itself by way of counterexample, necessary and sufficient conditions, or anything of the like. Rather, I position myself not directly in conversation with either of the two theorists. Instead, I develop my own account of play against quite a different backdrop than either theorist. Rather than develop play against the backdrop of games, as one might most naturally suspect to look first, I develop play against the backdrop of relationships and human interaction.[121] Huizinga and Callois serve not as theorists with whom I mean to directly object to, but rather as theorists with whom I may usefully compare and contrast my own approach.[122]

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[121] Perhaps it is most natural to look here first if only by mere habituation.

[122] I do disagree with these accounts, but the point is deeper than a mere disagreement between our accounts of play as if we are all in the same conceptual space in which to argue with one another about the appropriate definition of play. Rather, our disagreement not only concerns the content of a definition of play, but rather it concerns a deeper methodological approach. Huizinga and Callois' accounts emerge from the backdrop of games, while my own account does not. Thus we are not quite even in the same conceptual space for a straightforward disagreement. Our disagreement is perhaps methodological in a deeper respect that it is purely a disagreement about superficial content. We are engaged in somewhat different kinds of inquiries.

Certainly human interactions can properly be described as playful. That between September, October, and November seems to constitute one such instance. However, it is not clear yet exactly what explains this intuition. Perhaps the case is more complex than its brevity portends. The three seem to engage in playful action, something much more akin to that of Huizinga's and Callois' notions of play—though still without an entirely precise correspondence—when jumping into a pile of leaves. But they also seem to engage in playful rhetoric toward one another. They appear to tease one another, knowing that the colors they specify are intended to provoke a reaction from each other. But then there is also the form of their interaction. September sets the conversation in motion by noting the fun inherent in jumping into a pile of leaves. She does so via rhetorical question. October and November intentionally flout the convention surrounding the form of a rhetorical question, thereby steering the conversation in a new, and unexpected, direction. Which of these actions constitutes the interaction's playfulness and is it but one or multiple? Is one aspect more playful than the others?

My answer is that all of these aspects of the interaction make it playful. It will be useful to treat them each in turn. But before doing so it will be helpful to first propose my own definition, or notion, of play.[123] In order to do that, I first must introduce a distinction between play as an action and play as an attitude. Both Huizinga and Callois seem to view play as an action, or at least a type of action. This is unsurprising, natural even, given that their discussions of play are situated against a framework of games. Equally unsurprising, if not intuitively then certainly in light of my work up to this point in previous chapters, I find it most natural to

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[123] I admit some trepidation in calling my proposal a definition. I prefer the label of a "notion" so as to avoid the traditionally heavy philosophical connotations that accompany a definition. For instance, I will not engage in definition by formally precise necessary and sufficient condition!

conceive of play as a kind of stance or attitude when conceived against the backdrop of human relationships. But much like both Huizinga's and Callois' notions of play far exceed their background frameworks of games, so too does my own in the case of my own background framework.

With this in mind, I now propose my definition of play. I conceive of play as *an attitude of openness to unfolding freely*. Or, put another way, *play constitutes an attitude of openness to unfolding freely.* Perhaps one might prefer to think of my conception of play as *an attitude of play, or an attitude of playfulness*. I have no objection to this categorization, as long as it is recognized as a significant entity of its own, and not merely derivative of some existing account of play for which the attitude of playfulness that I describe depends upon.

Immediately this definition should sound familiar. Perhaps now knowing what I propose as the definition of play, one might not be surprised if I were to offer the following conditional: if friendship is the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship, then play is the attitude of openness to unfolding freely. But I will offer the unsurprised reader one thought further, that is, I will offer her a biconditional. If play is the attitude of openness to unfolding freely, then friendship is the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship. While my categorization of the relationship between play and friendship is meant to be partly glib, it underlies an important aspect of my theory: the intimate relationship between play and friendship, held together by the key notion of *openness*.

Now what of Huizinga and Callois? Well, first, where the two see constraints, I see openness and unboundedness. Where they see movement, I see unfolding. Perhaps most obviously, however, we share a sense of freedom common to our conceptions of play. What each

theorist categorizes as freedom I categorize as openness, and freedom figures into my own definition not centrally as a component *of agency* but rather of *unfolding*. Notably missing from my own definition is a contrast between seriousness and non-seriousness. But perhaps taking the place of non-seriousness is an equally mysterious and opaque notion of unfolding. More will be said of all of this. But first I will generalize upon the implications of my notion of play.

Play, or the attitude of playfulness, can constitute a stance that an agent may adopt generally. That is, while it may be adopted in the context of human interaction, it may also be taken more generally toward a myriad of spheres in one's life, or toward one's own projects. For instance, suppose that October finds herself raking leaves in her garden. Such an action may regularly constitute a kind of chore. But suppose, instead, that October takes the attitude of playfulness toward her action. That is, she views the action of raking up her leaves not as some kind of bothersome task ahead of her, or a chore, but rather in a way that construes it openly as if she is ready for the task as it comes to her, or as it unfolds. That is, she is up for whatever raking the leaves brings to her, or for whatever it entails. She feels a sense of openness about her task, as mundane as it sounds. She embraces this openness, letting the task take her wherever it will, rake in hand, leaves rustling in the crisp fall air. And as they say, life starts all over again in the fall…*while raking leaves*!

While this example may at first strike the reader as silly, it is exactly the kind of example I intentionally want to pursue. That is, I have chosen it in virtue of its very mundane nature. The attitude of play has a unique ability to transform the mundane. Or put another way, it empowers one who takes on the mundane to do so in a way that is fun, charming, and full of life. The attitude of playfulness is related to what is sometimes colloquially expressed as a sense of "being

ready for whatever comes one's way," or of "being ready to take on whatever comes one's way," or, perhaps even more colloquially, "being up for whatever!" When viewed in this manner even the mundane can become lively and fun. This is because the attitude imbues the unfolding of the ordinary with a kind of freedom, and one in turn takes a stance of openness toward that free unfolding. Crucially, on my definition, it is openness that is an agential attribute rather than freedom. Freedom is not an agential attribute, but is rather an attribute of whatever is the subject unfolding within the scope of play. Flipped on its head is the common notion of freedom in play, and that is exactly what is so freeing about play as a stance. And it is for this reason that play becomes an attitude that may be taken more generally in one's own life. Play is no longer confined to a single sphere or domain.

Closely related to the attitude of playfulness are several other attitudes or stances that a person may take. The first is that of curiosity. When a person adopts a stance of curiosity it is object oriented in the sense that the psychological stance of the agent is directed toward a certain object, person, event, state of affairs, etc. Curiosity, however, likewise involves a kind of openness. In its own case, curiosity involves a kind of openness to knowing or coming to know. Such a feeling is often bound up with excitement and even fun. The attitude of playfulness shares many of these attributes. Its orientation is likewise and it is often bound up with these very same emotions.

But it shares more than these more superficial attributes as well. Play might be thought of as a special case of a stance of curiosity. For openness and curiosity are intimately related. In fact, one way to develop more precisely what it is to be open to something is to think of openness

as a kind of curiosity combined with a kind of attitude of willingness to embrace.[124] So what it is, then, to be open to unfolding freely is to have a stance of curiosity and willingness to embrace whatever it is that is unfolding freely. Put another way, my curiosity and willing embrace is *of* an uncertainty of a kind. This uncertainty is effected by the *freeness* of unfolding of the object in question. Thus an agent is open to, or curious and willing to embrace, the uncertain, qua free unfolding of some object in question.

Perhaps more surprisingly, however, the other attitude closely related to the attitude of playfulness is that of an accepting resignation. While the two might at first seem to share little of the same emotions, at very least, they are more closely related in another dimension. Mirroring the structure of the attitude of playfulness, acceptance is to openness as resignation is to unfolding freely. That is, both involve a kind of stance taken toward an object, event, or state of affairs. But there is more in common than that, and the analogy runs deeper than mere structural correspondence. A kind of openness, though perhaps a perverse one, may be found within accepting resignation. That is, acceptance can yield a kind of openness to the inevitable.

Once again, to appeal to colloquialisms, I have in mind the sort of attitude that might be voiced by phrases like "Well, maybe not, but…" or "Well, okay, this is unfortunate, but it's time to face it or time to take care of it." In a way, it has much in common with the sort of "being up for whatever" attitude described earlier. Another colloquialism to take seriously in this case is that of a "can do" attitude in the face of an unfortunate and inevitable state of affairs. While maybe there is not actually much, or anything, that an agent can actually do in such a case, the

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[124] I am not claiming to strictly define openness in this way, but I am explicating it in terms of closely related notions. I am claiming that these notions constitute at least part of what openness entails.

attitude of accepting resignation nevertheless comforts one with a resigned kind of openness to the reality of the situation, instead producing an emotionally desirable alternative to feeling defeated by one's circumstances. Put another way, it is exactly openness to the inevitable, a kind of unfreedom, that provides an agent with a sense of freedom after all, or at least a kind of freeing subjectivity by way of openness. It is a freedom found in acceptance, or a freedom to face the inevitable, rather than to shy away from it.

From these examples we reach another peculiarity of my notion of play. Play involves a kind of giving oneself up to the greater totality of one's circumstances. While it involves facing them, and does not necessarily constitute a kind of passivity, it does involve a kind of surrender of full control. For recall that freedom is not attributed to the agent, but rather to the object that play is directed toward. Freedom involves autonomy and agency, and thereby it involves control. Yet it does not involve a surrender of autonomy. This distinction is important. For there is autonomy to be found in adopting a stance of openness. Admittedly, there is less control to be found in adopting a stance of openness than there is in possessing freedom. But this is not to be construed negatively. The invocation of the playful attitude is not one that is negative at all. Rather it is fun. Part of the fun even consists in this surrender. I hope that my above examples help to demonstrate this, but if not there is more to say.

While I have made a firm point to divorce play from games I will now appeal to the idea of a game in order to demonstrate how this kind of surrender of freedom may in fact be fun.[125] To the extent that games involves rules they involve a similar kind of surrender of at least some

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[125] I do not deny that play is often found in games, but I do not think that games ought to centrally establish the framework from which one must begin theorizing play.

of one's control. But this is exactly part of what makes a game fun. One surrenders part of her control and embraces what she is faced with. In the example of a game this constitutes the rules of the game. That is, one is faced with a set of rules to which one surrenders her control much like cases in which one faces an unfortunate situation that she has little control over.[126] But play enables one to view this surrender of control in a way that enlivens—and even has the power to create fun—whatever one must face.

But if the reader is wary of my invocation of games after I have painstakingly avoided them, I can supply another example, too, though perhaps at the risk of appearing to turn play into a rather darker than expected phenomena![127] This phenomenon explains why many individuals are tempted toward play in the face of the absurd or even the dark. Another case in which we see this dynamic at work is in that of gallows humor. This constitutes quite a poignant case of the temptation toward play as an impulse that grows out of a kind of fun generated by surrender of oneself to the greater circumstances of one's life, even when unfortunate. And it is closely related to the attitude of accepting resignation of the inevitable that I have described earlier. If one were engaged more properly in literary analysis one could look toward much theater of the absurd to find this dynamic employed as well. One prominent instance of this dynamic often occurs throughout the work of Samuel Beckett, for instance. One particularly poignant example comes from Beckett's play *Endgame*, in which Nell expresses the sentiment "Nothing is funnier than unhappiness, I grant you that" (102).

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[126] Hopefully it is not actually too much like this case…otherwise one is playing a game that she clearly must not like!

[127] I assure the reader that this is merely a joke. This paper will primarily be focused upon the beauty and good inherent to play in due course.

In a similarly perhaps less than happy sense, play can also be connected to instances of failure and insecurity. But it has the power to make failure and insecurity less unhappy. Sometimes failure can be fun. This can be seen when one fails to accomplish something but adopts the sort of attitude expressed by "oh well, maybe not this time, but next time." But it is deeper than even this sentiment. Sometimes we so badly fail to accomplish some task that we set out to that our failure can seem funny to us. Similarly, sometimes we embrace times that we feel insecure with a smile or even a laugh. Part of the fun and funniness of these situations can be thought of in terms of a confrontation with the absurd. In other part, it can be thought of as a way of taking oneself less seriously, and this is exactly where play enters failure and insecurity: play has the power to lower the stakes. When play is adopted toward instances of failure and insecurity, it can help us come to terms with an unfortunate outcome or feeling by lowering the stakes, and creating a kind of funniness or even fun by way of taking ourselves, and the situation, less seriously. We are open to our failures, which we allow to unfold before us. We surrender our control, ourselves, to our failures, and in doing so we can embrace them playfully.

But lest play start sounding too dreary an attitude, it is important to consider that this same closely related attitude of accepting resignation also has a more inspiring correlate as well. Play is likewise closely related to marvel.[128] And if it is possible to give oneself up to the greater totality of one's circumstances in resignation, it is just as easy to give oneself up in the act of marveling toward those circumstances. Perhaps we feel resignation when the greater totality of our circumstances are negative, but we marvel when they are positive.

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[128] It seems as if marvel is a good candidate for what happens when play enlivens an otherwise ordinary and mundane task, like when October finds herself suddenly enjoying raking leaves as an enlivened and charming activity.

My conception of Play is connected to some of the traditionally associated concepts that both Huizing and Callois posit, yet it disagrees with many of their most central claims. While I have already discussed what is perhaps the most surprising difference, namely that the freedom, or freeness, of play is not freedom possessed by the agent engaged in play, but rather it is found in the the object or state of affairs, etc., that the play is directed toward, I have said little about other features of their conceptions that I quite obviously seem committed to disagree with. And for the most part, I do in fact disagree with what the reader might suspect. Perhaps most significantly, I reject that play is rule-bound, or that it has many rules at all. Again, I believe that thinking of play as a fundamentally *structured* and *rule-governed* activity is a relic of theorizing it against a backdrop of games. It seems quite clear that the attitude of playfulness is not governed by the sort of rules that Huizinga has in mind, and certainly is not confined to a certain space, at least not in principle.[129] For openness seems to stand in rather stark contrast to rule governance, at least openness simpliciter. Any kind of confines effected by a play-ground or a play space would serve to circumscribe openness, thus preventing the attitude from getting off the ground in the first place.

But perhaps one might object that rules and openness are not in tension so long as openness is circumscribed by the rules in question. In other words, one can be permitted a stance of openness so long as it fits within the confines of the play-ground, to use Huizinga's terminology. But this argument misses the the generality of my notion of play. Play doesn't take as its starting point a game, or play-ground, but rather it takes as its starting point a kind of

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[129] More will be said about analogous constraints that may arise when play is considered within the context of relationships, but as a matter of play as a general attitude rules are not constitutive of it.

agential stance, independent of the object that the play is directed toward. Put another way, play may be effected toward many ends, and the agent chooses what to direct her play toward, which first establishes any relevant confines. Huizinga, on the other hand, has the situation reversed: the game, or play-space, sets the confines qua agent as player of the game, or player in the play-space. It is a question of priority, one on which Huizinga and I stand in opposition.

As for Huizinga's claim that play yields no good or the like, this is antithetical to my conception as well. For, rather, on my conception, play yields not only good, but also a highly unique one. Few attitudes, stances, abilities and the like have the power to radically shape one's interaction with her environment and her very conception of life the way that play can. In fact, we might say that *play is transformative*. Already discussed is the way in which play can transform the mundane as well as the unfortunate, but it also has the ability to imbue a special kind of vivacity upon any project, attitude, or sphere upon whatever one directs it toward. Of course one may choose not to direct play toward every component of her life, and it may very well be true that there are times in which directing play toward some component would be inappropriate.[130] But this does not negate that play can yield value when appropriate. The mere fact that humans engage in so much playful behavior is suggestive, though perhaps not of any

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[130] This constitutes a fruitful inquiry of its own. It seems to me that an agent who lived her life fully playfully would not be deficient in any kind of way that is injurious to herself. Or that she would not be missing out on any good in life if she managed to be a fully and completely playful agent. Of course the basics of human psychology might not allow any person to actually obtain such a state. Perhaps some things simply cannot be viewed playfully, or a person cannot be playful all the time. But more philosophically interesting is the question of whether one would be in violation of any demands of morality by being a fully playful agent. Perhaps play in some instances would turn out to be morally impermissible, e.g. perhaps play directed toward another's suffering would be a morally inappropriate attitude to adopt. Exactly what the demands of morality have to say about play would require an investigation of its own and will not be further pursued here.

sort of higher good. But as I have shown already, play does not merely satiate some low level desire, but rather it effects the kind of good connected to all sorts of desirable states ranging from liveliness, fun, charmingness, satiation and promotion of curiosity, and a general positive experience of an openness to take on the world or whatever one's life brings, or whatever one encounters.[131]

Before proceeding to what I take to be Huizinga's most interesting claims about play, namely that of its non-seriousness and that of its ability to form social grouping, I will first look to Callois' definition of play to evaluate whether it compares any more favorably with my own. The freedom Callois has in mind is better captured by the notion of voluntariness so as not to be confused with the more robust notion of freedom I have invoked throughout the course of my discussion. I have no disagreement with Callois here. Certainly I agree that play is a voluntary activity. The attitude of play would lose much if not all of its value when forced upon a person.[132] I can quite readily dismiss Callois' notions of separateness, unproductivity, and rule governance as they are much the same as Huizinga's.

But I do find Callois' notion of uncertainty particularly insightful, and I am largely in agreement that it forms a substantial component of play. It is worth spending a moment to examine the condition more closely. Callois defines uncertainty as something for which "the course of which cannot be determined, nor the result attained beforehand, and some attitude for innovations being left to the player's initiative" (9). This is fairly straightforwardly analogous to

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[131] It is hard to provide more precise analytic-style arguments for the connection of play to these various states of good without attempting to analyze each notion itself. That is beyond the scope of this argument, and I will instead rest satisfied with merely suggestive argumentation here.

[132] If it is even possible to force an attitude upon a person!

my own idea of openness to unfolding freely. In order to see this we need little more than to consider that the free unfolding of some object is, by its nature, unknown to the agent engaged in play, or the player, to use Callois' terminology.[133] But what is most interesting here is the latter portion of Callois' definition. What he describes as an *attitude* for innovations left to the player's initiative is the closest feature of either theorist's definition of play to my own. While Callois takes this to be merely one condition of play, I take it to be *the one central condition* of it. But note more than the mere difference as a matter of the content of our definitions. Rather, it is exemplary of the difference in our methodological approach to the topic of play as well. By centering this condition and giving it priority, play as a notion is immediately freed from the framework of games. But when thought of more specifically in the way that Callois formulates the premise, it highlights how much the notion of *uncertainty* plays a central role in my conception of play. The notion of unfolding freely, a metaphysical one, translates to a high degree of epistemic uncertainty. And again, one way of thinking of play on my account is to think of it as openness to a kind of uncertainty.

Also interesting is Callois' condition of make-believe. He describes it as the sense of being "accompanied by a special awareness of a second reality or of a free unreality, as against real life" (10). While I do not accept this condition literally, I think it is of use in drawing out the consequences that my own conception of play may have upon ordinary life. When October rakes leaves playfully she does not gain a second awareness that is in some way divorced from reality, but rather she *overlays*, or *imbues* reality, or ordinary life, with extra value. In Callois' terms, it

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[133] I prefer to speak of an agent engaged in play rather than to use the term "player" so as to avoid the connotation that play has with games.

might be said that she imputes an overlaid version of reality upon ordinary life. But, crucially, the way in which her overlaid version of reality differs from ordinary life and reality is not by some form of pretense or make-believe, but rather it is by *the addition* of ordinary value superimposed upon life under circumstances that would not ordinarily generate those values toward the action in question. That is, raking is not ordinarily a lively, charming, or even fun activity. It is a chore. But play, with its transformative power, enables October to access and overlay a second reality, not divorced in any way from ordinary life or reality, but rather only made special by the adoption of the play attitude. This overlay would be inaccessible in the sense that it would not ordinarily occur to an agent not engaged in play to view the action as possessing these extra attributes of value. That is, when October is not at play raking is but a chore, but when she plays she alters her reality without departing from it. Suddenly raking has become a lively and fun endeavor.

Methodological care must be taken here, however, to understand that I have produced a single account of play, but have approached it from multiple directions. Play, or the attitude of playfulness, simply is openness to further unfolding freely on my account. My methodological strategy has been to elucidate the concept by first appealing to closely related attitudes, then by appealing to ordinary, pretheoretical cases, such as October's raking of leaves. But, as I have just done above, I have also developed my account in terms of Callois' conception as well, or at least I have extended it in his terms. None of this is meant as a kind of aversion toward committing to a single conception, but rather it is meant to elucidate the conception that I have given from multiple conceptual points of view. In fact, methodologically my approach compares

interestingly with Huizinga's own. Huizina appeals to a constellation of concepts, for which he thinks are all unanalyzable themselves:

> the terms in this loosely connected group of ideas—play, laughter, folly, wit, jest, joke, the comic, etc.—share the characteristic which we had to attribute to play, namely, that of resisting any attempt to reduce it to other terms. Their rational and their mutual relationships must lie in a very deep layer of or mental being (6).

There is a sense in which we are each engaged in the same sort of methodological approach, analyzing neighboring, or closely related concepts in order to better elucidate the notion of play, thus ultimately yielding a definition. This is the sense in which my previous theorizing ought to be interpreted.

Before returning to Huizinga's distinction between seriousness and non-seriousness, however, it will be helpful to return to the sphere of human relationships. In doing this we will move from the present level of theoretical abstraction about the nature of play to at least a somewhat more familiar level level of theory, if not a more practical one. I will next proceed to connect the theory of play I have just developed with the theory of relationships that I have spent the last four chapters developing. In doing so I hope to turn more toward the practical, if not to depart at least slightly from the abstractions that have preoccupied my investigation up to this point.

But before doing so, I would like to make explicit something that I hope might have been implicit, or at least on the reader's mind, for some time. Adopting the attitude of play in one's own life constitutes the self-directed, individual-life analogue of the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship employed within a close relationship.

4. Play and Relationships

So far I have only briefly remarked upon the relationship between play and relationships by offering the reader a biconditional. While I admitted to some insincerity in offering as much at the time, there is a sense in which I do claim something of the sort. It is my aim to clarify these remarks by the end of my discussion of the relationship between play and relationships.[134] However, first I will need to do some basic conceptual cleaning-up in joining the two notions together.

First return to the initial most obviously apparent resemblance between play and relationships: openness. The notion of openness figures centrally into both friendship and play. However, it at least initially seems to be the case that openness figures into each definition somewhat separately, or at least that it was thought of paradigmatically in differing ways in each case. The notion of openness found in friendship, openness to the development of the relationship, was talked about in terms of recursion at first, while the notion of openness in play, openness to unfolding freely, seemed to have less to do with recursion and more to do with a kind of stance that an agent adopts. But these ways of thinking of openness are not mutually exclusive, even if they are different paradigmatic forms of the same concept when featured in different contexts. For being open to the development of the relationship meant being open to further closeness, which in turn entails being open to wherever or however the relationship

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[134] My apologies to the reader. I have no more efficient yet precise locution to offer other than "the relationship between play and relationships." Often I have used "relationship" and "friendship" synonymously throughout this dissertation. In order to avoid some redundancy in locution, I may at times prefer the phrasing "the relationship between play and friendship."

unfolds, free from prescribed-in-advance circumscription.[135] But notice that the notion of unfolding has appeared in my latest categorization of friendship: the two conceptualization are thoroughly intertwined.

But this still says nothing of the seeming difference between each notion of openness, even if they can both be seen to connect to the same notion of unfolding. Upon closer examination, however, it should become clear that openness as an underlying phenomenon is the same in each case. Rather, it is simply the context in which openness is employed in each definition that stresses one feature or the other of the concept. For openness as a willingness to relationship unfolding is also a kind of stance, but it is simply one taken specifically toward a relationship. But what then, of openness as an embrace of recursion, or further deepening of its target? This, too, can be found on the play side of the biconditional. For part of the stance of openness toward the greater totality of one's circumstances involves the same sort of embrace of whatever comes of something's unfolding. Unfolding is a continuous process, and until something's unfolding has ceased, one who takes a stance of openness toward it commits herself to an embrace of recursion in the unfolding process; put another way, recursion is embedded in the notion of unfolding. Hence we see that openness is the same in each definition, and, crucially, that each involves the same concept of unfolding.

There is a difference in the target of each notion's openness, however. That is, the openness is directed toward subtlety different sorts of unfolding. The kind of unfolding that play

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[135] Recall that openness to the development of the relationship was contrasted with a view that I termed relationships circumscription. In contrast to Relationships Egalitarianism—the view, not the chapter—relationships circumscription prevented a relationship from unfolding fully due to pre-prescribed constraints.

is directed toward is one that the agent, or player, has little control over. Hence the conceptualization of play as a kind of surrender of one's control to the greater totality of one's circumstances. But, on the other hand, the kind of unfolding that friendship's openness is directed at is at least initially not subject to the same surrender of one's control. For each has a substantial role to play in engaging in the process of other-discovery with one another. Hence each agent retains substantial control over the kind of unfolding involved within friendship.

Or so it seems. When examined more closely, however, this agential loss of control found in play has a parallel to be found in friendship as well. While each agent has a substantial role to play in other-discovery, and thus does, in fact, retain a strong sense of control, paradoxically, it may also be said that the agent surrenders her control at the same time. That is because the agent *surrenders her control to the other through the process of other-discovery*. Powerful and yet utterly powerless all the same, such is the beauty of friendship. It is an intimate negotiation between two agents, each with tremendous power with respect to the other and yet with none at all, all the same. Thus we reach a central claim: friendship is playful and it thereby entails a beautiful contradiction.

Perhaps one might be tempted to resolve the contradiction that I have just posited. Such an objector might claim that there is no contradiction, but instead there are two separate directional dimensions along which friendship unfolds, one of which constitutes me-toward-you and the other of which constitutes you-toward-me. But there are two immediate responses to this attempted resolution. First, it fundamentally misses the point of other discovery. This objection fails to understand the unifying and uniting force of other-discovery. It is a joint process, not one to be individuated by reference to two sides of the process. While it is true that there are two

perspectives and two distinct selves that underlie other-discovery, it is a mistake to individuate the process by any more fundamental level than that of the joint other-directed process I have argued for in earlier chapters.[136] Secondly, any attempt to eliminate the contradiction misses the *playfulness* inherent to its place within friendship. For the contradiction is a rather playful matter itself. What is an agent supposed to do when faced with the conundrum of wielding complete power and yet no power at all but resign herself, accept, or even marvel at the peculiar circumstances she finds herself in! It seems that play is an absolutely appropriate, even perfect, attitude to be adopted in light of the contradiction faced by the agent.[137]

But perhaps one accepts that the contradiction has its place and accepts its force, yet objects to my description of it as beautiful. Doing so amounts to pure vanity, and excessive pride in one's own theory the objector claims. However, I am not merely devolving into a kind of narcissistic solipsism, I assure the reader. Rather, my description of the contradiction in aesthetic terms is an artifact of its connection to play. If play it not straightforwardly an overtly aesthetic notion, or at least one deeply imbued with aesthetic import, then it is at very least one with frequent association to the domain of aesthetics. It is aesthetics which invites the description of the contradiction as such, by way of play.

But why beauty? Perhaps a reader uncomfortable with the idea of contradiction will attribute ugliness to play. I ask such a reader to consider her own experiences with play: do they tend toward experiences of beauty or experiences of ugliness? I suspect the former. Though I do not rule out the latter, as was discussed earlier in the case of gallows humor for instance; that

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[136] cf. Other-Discovery.

[137] How is that for recursion? Play creates the dilemma, which in turn creates an opportunity for yet more play.

which is ugly can indeed be quite playful. In face of such an objector I will not insist that the contradiction is inherently beautiful, but I will remain steadfast in advancing its aesthetic import.[138]

Contradiction, or not, we have nevertheless seen just how closely related play and relationships are. They share the same notion of openness and the same notion of unfolding. Friendship is openness to the development of the relationship, while play is openness to further unfolding. This is the sense in which the biconditional relationship holds. However, it is now time for me to confess the disingenuousness hidden behind my glib earliest suggestion of a biconditional relationship. What we have is not strictly a biconditional, though I find it helpful to compare the two concepts by initially thinking of their relationship as such.[139] What I would like to suggest is that play is a more general version of the same attitude found in friendship. The two attitudes both involve the attitude of openness to unfolding freely. But then, it becomes obvious that *friendship is a kind of play* on my view. This is the punchline, so to speak, of this entire dissertation.[140]

To see this even more convincingly, however, we may look toward specific pieces of other-discovery discussed in previous chapters and now give them play-theoretic analyses. I will

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[138] A reader uncomfortable with contradiction having a useful place in philosophical theorizing may accuse me of leaning into mysticism or obfuscation. While I do not have the space to allay the suspicious reader entirely, I urge such a reader to imagine my proposed contradiction as akin to accounts that posit an acceptable kind of uncertainty or indeterminacy in vagueness and related phenomena. While I understand that the claims are not entirely similar, I hope that many readers will at least admit that imprecision has its place in theory at times, and is not always something in need of resolution.

[139] A kind of Wittgensteinian throwing away of the latter, if you will.

[140] Reader, I have *played* quite a joke upon you, if you will.

talk of relationship dynamics that are closely related to play much in the same way that I previously talked of closely related attitudes to play in what follows.

Trust is intimately related to play. When I engage in play with you I trust you by way of my surrender of my control to you, and you trust me the same. But I don't just trust you when I engage in play with you, I also make myself vulnerable to you and you to me, for we each not only relinquish our control to the other, but also wield complete control upon the other. And in doing so, that is, in both trusting you and sharing vulnerability with you, I come to know how to engage in further play with you, thus we come to develop the recursive nature of relationships, but in terms of the concept of play.

But there is more, too. For recall play's close relationship to curiosity. Coming to know you, or rather aiming to come to know you entirely and all of your facets, entails a kind of curiosity, which in turn is related intimately to engaging in play with you. And the *vastness* of the other person, or the claim that persons are vast, an oft mentioned way of portraying one's relation to other persons or selves found throughout my earlier chapters, can be explained qua play through its relation to marvel. What we do when we appreciate the vastness of others is marvel. We imbue the very basic fact that we live in a world with other persons just like oneself with a sense of immense wonder. This is exactly what play has the power to do to the utterly mundane and ordinary. Thus it nicely explains even our relationship to and sense of wonder encapsulated by some of the most very basic facts of our existence, namely that we are a person surrounded by other persons with interior lives just like our own—the vastness of a person.

Lastly, the relationship between play and a sense of accepting resignation even has the power to make relationship's end a more playful place. For if we can find ourselves a vantage

point from which to conceptualize the now ended relationship from and do so with a stance of accepting resignation, we can manage not only to make relationship's end a less lonesome place, but also a more optimistic and playful one as well. Hence we see that play has the power to explain and account for much that I have already discussed throughout the course of this dissertation. It really is the punchline of the dissertation in this sense. It is the single unifying notion that connects all of the previously discussed phenomena together.

5. Play and Seriousness

At this point I owe it to the reader to own up to all kinds of objections in light of revealing the punchline to my joke above.[141] How could friendship be a kind of play? How could *relationships* be a kind of play?[142] Certainly some relationships are playful, but others are quite serious. And some individuals simply do not engage much in play at all, or are not very playful people. What of their relationships? And does considering relationships to be a form of play trivialize them or in some way fail to understand their significance, moral import, or perhaps most plainly, their basic seriousness?

Quite straightforwardly: it will become clearer upon additional considerations, their relationships are playful too, and no—answers in a word to each question. The key to answering these questions lies in coming to understand the relationship between play and seriousness, something I had promised to do after considering the relationship between play and relationships. But first, note that there is something very troubling about Huizinga's insistence on distinguishing play from seriousness: what exactly is seriousness? Huizing never provides a very

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[141] By "joke," I really mean "dissertation."

[142] I revert back to the original, more broad, locution here so as not to hide behind the pretheoretically more innocuous term "friendship."

robust positive definition of the notion. Piecing together Huizinga's claims about play and seriousness earlier, it seemed as though a good candidate for Huizinga's positive view of seriousness entailed something like the satisfaction of ordinary wants, appetites, and engagements in whatever typical matter they are satisfied in life. Seriousness, then, appears to be a kind of normative notion that depends upon the appropriate response or reaction to matters of life in some normatively prescribed manner, for Huizinga. Or, a kind of conformity to expectation or convention in the face of certain experiences.

So, perhaps, on this conception, October's enlivening of her raking the leaves would be considered non-serious since she does not react to the situation she faces in the conventionally expected manner. But it's not just a matter of her not reacting to the situation typically, but rather she does not merely perform her act for its instrumental value in pursuit of some end, or in obtaining some particular goal. Instead, she aestheticizes it; that is, she finds it to yield a separate, and distinctively *aesthetic*, value from the conventional aim of raking leaves. For Huizinga, it seems that seriousness also entails acting in accordance with the sort of standard manner best suitable for attaining some particular end of one's action. Put another way, to engage in something seriously is to act in accordance with the most expedient, and conventionally appropriate manner of attaining the desired end of one's actions or reactions. On the contrary, what October does in aestheticizing her raking of the leaves distinctively subverts this kind of serious action. At very least, this view comports with Huizinga's—and Callois' even more explicit language surrounding the topic—taking make-believe to be paradigmatic of the non-seriousness of play.

On this picture of seriousness the person who finds herself in sorrier circumstances who chooses a playful response akin to an accepting resignation or the sort of gallows humor of Nell's reply is equally non-serious. Such a person clearly does not respond to the circumstances in accordance with convention. Whether that be social convention or some psychological convention is not made clear by Huizinga's remarks. But it is not clear whether that ought to matter either. It seems obvious that such a case breaks with convention either way, regardless of exactly what kind of convention it breaks with. The first reaction of many individuals to sorry circumstances is probably not playful. On Huizinga's view, such an individual would once again be engaging in a kind of subversive attitude that undermines the normal, expected, or appropriate response to the circumstance in favor of an aestheticized response.

But here this model starts to break down, or at least begins to feel strained. Part of an action's being non-serious on this view is that it contrasts with acting in accordance with the sort of standard manner best suitable for attaining some particular end of one's action or some particular state. Yet it seems that the individual who is playful in response to sorry circumstance is in fact better equipped to deal with those circumstances and to ultimately produce a more desirable outcome for herself under such circumstances. As previously noted, adopting a playful attitude in the face of sorry circumstances is actually a rather desirable response to misfortune. However, it does not seem to be the most conventional or expected response in either a socially or psychologically conventional sense. In fact, we might first expect to comfort a friend grieving her circumstances and instead be surprised to see her laughing off the circumstances with little more than a shrug!

So how plausible is Huizinga's picture of serious and non-seriousness action that emerges? And how seriously does Huizinga appear to be committed to this account anyway? Recall Huizinga's claim about the border between play and seriousness being fluid, it will be helpful to reconsider it in full:

> The contrast between play and seriousness is always fluid. The inferiority of play is continually being offset by the corresponding superiority of seriousness. Play turns to seriousness and seriousness to play. Play may rise to heights of beauty and sublimity that leave seriousness far beneath (8).

It seems that even Huizinga would temper agreement with the account that I have attributed to him. Here, instead, it turns out that I almost completely agree with his characterization. But it is with respect to the contrast between play and ordinary life that I begin to disagree more thoroughly with Huizinga. Contrary to his claims, I do not think that play is not ordinary life, nor do I believe that it entails a stepping outside of reality nor any kind of interlude from real life. Rather, I think that play *is* real life and that so much of what we do in life constitutes play, or at least has the potential to.[143]

Huizinga is correct that the distinction between play and seriousness is fluid. In fact, it is *extremely* fluid. The attitude of playfulness may be embraced or disavowed in an instant. It is something that may be glimpsed fleetingly, even. It is not an uncommon experience to dread something outside of one's own control, and yet to momentarily feel a playful urge toward conceptualizing it as if it were funny, for instance, invoking the sort of accepting resignation or

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[143] I do not deny that some persons will be more inclined toward embracing the attitude of play and others less.

even dark humor described before. Similarly, a deeply important matter may fleetingly seem playful, such as the completion of a serious, but otherwise not fun-in-the-moment, task. Such is an experience that a student may have when taking a final exam, despite the high stakes for her grade, or the grueling weeks, days, and even hours in the final rush leading up to filing a dissertation.[144] Or perhaps the sleepless nights involved in the upbringing of an infant that are filled with stress and high stakes may become fun for some moments. One can move between viewing a situation or her circumstances as playful and serious very rapidly and blur the lines between the two conceptualizations very easily.

In fact, I think that the two may be blurred so readily that it hardly makes sense to speak of a distinction between play and seriousness at all. My negative, or darker, cases of related attitudes to play all constitute kinds of applications of play to highly serious matters of life, thus demonstrating not only high fluidity between a serious outlook and one of play, but rather the very application of a playful outlook to a highly serious matter. We are not only ready to easily switch between a serious outlook and a playful one, but we actually apply playful outlooks toward highly serious matters; no need to toggle back and forth. And the situation is much the same with the positive in life as well, or even the neutral. Romantic relationships constitute a good example of one such instance. Finding a romantic partner to spend one's life with is a

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[144] At least I have always found test-taking to be very fun. This is even true when the test constitutes a high-stress environment and I don't do as well as I had hoped in the end. It is even more true when I end up doing very well on an exam. I wouldn't be surprised if the experience were more common generally among students. During my own teaching years, I began telling students to "have fun" on their exams instead of wishing them good luck. Upon explaining the reason behind my well-wish for the exam, the point was usually well received by most of my students.

highly serious matter, yet it often involves a great deal of play throughout the endeavor.[145] Child rearing constitutes another such example; a highly serious endeavor that involves a great deal of play. Other cases include those of learning, and often the endeavor can be quite serious, as is the case in the work of a scientist, but nevertheless it often involves a degree of playful marvel at natural and scientific phenomena as well.

Play, it turns out, is the most serious thing in the word. At least if the overlap in our actions and attitudes is to be taken to be indicative, this appears to be the case. Play is not merely the aestheticization of something that does not ordinarily lend itself to an aesthetic viewpoint, for this appears implausible under more careful scrutiny. Furthermore, it does not comport with our own experience of the extreme fluidity with which one may engage and disengage in the aesthetic viewpoint. The boundary is just too blurred between play and seriousness to take seriously!

But what of the idea of viewing play as a kind subversiveness to seriousness? Suppose that we grant that seriousness is not totally well defined or even that it does not fully constitute its own mode, but still stands in opposition to play in some respect despite its appearance. I think that even if we can find it in ourselves to extend charitability so as to grant something like this, it would be mistake to think of play as some kind of subversive element. This is because those who appeal to it even in circumstances that do not appear to superficially comport with established convention hardly do so with the intention of subversiveness. Quite the contrary, the play attitude is adopted for quite a wide-ranging set of reasons. It may be found to be fun, charming, enlivening, comforting, etc. While it is conceivable that one might adopt the attitude in a

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[145] Flirting seems well suited for an analysis as a kind of play in such cases.

deliberate act of subversion, doing so appears to be far from the typical case. In fact, adopting the attitude subversively might better be thought of as belonging to a special case. For few actually set out to play for reasons of subversion. Perhaps a certain kind of contrarian might do so, but otherwise, it is hard to imagine that most playful people act with the ulterior motive of subversion.

But perhaps it is mistaken to be concerned with whether or not the agent herself adopts plays with subversive intent. Rather, the claim is that the agent's very adoption of the attitude constitutes a kind of subversion of norms, whether not not she intends as much. While this might in effect be true, sometimes, it does depend upon the plausibility of accepting seriousness in contrast to play. And as I have just argued, we have reason to think that this is not the case. Furthermore, even if it were the case, it is not clear how helpful or theoretically useful it would be to posit this kind of second order subversiveness that belongs not to any individual agent's intent, but rather to the characterization of the agent's situation with respect to the broader social norms of her society.

In any case, when I claim that play is the most serious thing in the world I mean to express a kind of skepticism about the nature of serious entirely. If there is such a thing as seriousness, it is certainly not something distinct enough to contrast as a separate mode from play.[146]

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[146] This might be a surprising claim to many readers. But even in matters that are good candidates for what people might typically describe as serious, I think that these matters are fully compatible with the playful attitude I have described. Once again, I remind the reader that it might not always be appropriate for an agent to be playful about all matters. In fact, I think it sometimes is certainly inappropriate to be playful in certain instances. Perhaps seriousness might better be construed as a kind of moral notion bound up with appropriateness, meaning, value, and the like rather than one that stands in contrast to play.

6. Particular Instances of Play in Relationships

While I have thus far argued the broad case for conceiving of relationships as a kind of play, I have not yet addressed some more particular and common instances of what might be thought of as specific instances of play found within relationships. With this in mind I will eventually return to the case I presented at the outset of the paper in order to analyze it for play in all dimensions. In doing so I will theorize two unique and common cases of play within friendship: inside jokes and teasing. I will also distinguish between what constitutes specific instances of play and play as a more general phenomena of relationships.

But first, there is a basic fact that anyone theorizing play in relationships should contend with from a very commonsensical point of view: friends often play with one another or engage in actual instances of play. When I say this, however, I mean it especially pretheoretically, and without appeal to the conceptual apparatus I have just spent most of my time developing until now. But qua Huizinga and Callois, friends do engage in many game-centric types of play, in fact. Of course this does not contradict what I have just described with my theory, but it does leave something to be desired: perhaps there has been too much theory and not enough commonsense.

I will now distinguish between two types of play. The account of play that I have just spent substantial time developing falls under a more robust form of play that I will simply call play. It is a kind of play that is deep and fundamental to human relationships according to my account. But there is another play that is more like that of Huizinga and Callois' conception that still arises within the course of human interaction. And here is explicitly where talk of a biconditional relationship between friendship and play explicitly breaks down even further. For

while all friendship involves play, not all play involves friendship. The two phenomena are intimately linked but they are not identical after all. It is possible to engage in play with another person and not be friends with her, of course.[147]

What play is between non-friends simply constitutes openness to the free unfolding of the object or situation that the play is directed toward, or, simply, the play object. Play in this sense is a simple, pretheoretical, and commonsensical kind of joint or shared action.[148] But it is not at all intertwined with the unfolding, or development, of the relationship, because the relationship simply lacks openness to its development as a constitutive norm as a non-friendship relationship. This ought to be completely unsurprising. For recall that the taxonomy I initially traced out drew a sharp distinction between what I termed friendship and mere acquaintanceship based upon whether the relationship was constituted by the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship or not. Furthermore, it was often paradigmatic of acquaintanceship that it was often centered around some project or activity that was shared between selves, but that did not transcend one another's facets beyond that mere shared project or activity. It is easy to imagine these shared projects centering primarily around play in some acquaintanceships. For example, there are many sports acquaintances, board game acquaintances, or acquaintanceships centered around game-playing together. Two acquaintances might be baseball friends, or chess friends, even gardening friends—any activity will do so long as it involves play. I do think that these

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[147] Perhaps this has been bothering the reader for much time. I claim nothing of the sort. Many persons engage in play with one another and yet do not constitute friends. Enemies, too, play with one another as do rivals. One need only look toward competitive sports to understand this.

[148] I qualify shared action here so carefully so that I distinguish it from the highly theoretical; analytic literature on the topic. I am not so puzzled by what shared action is on a commonsensical level, and I am willing to bet that most philosophers are not either.

forms of acquaintanceships often take as a paradigmatic form a relationship centered around play of some game, and this is the sense in which Huizinga and Callois' conception of play begins to feel familiar, but I must be both careful and clear: even in such instances of acquaintanceship-play, as I will term this form of play, I mean to conceive of the nature of play in terms of my own theory, and not Huizina and Callois' game-centric theories.[149]

The taxonomical distinction between play and acquaintanceship-play that I have just drawn raises a pressing question: does all play between friends constitute play, in the deep sense, merely by two friends being in a close relationship together? Certainly friends engage in the sort of instances of play that acquaintances do. Friends play baseball together and they play chess. They play all sorts of games together and engage in all sorts of instances of playful projects, game or not. In other words, what does the distinction between play and acquaintanceship-play amount to other than that when friends engage in a particular instance play it is simply called play, but when non-friends engage in play it is called acquaintanceship play? Not all play is theoretical. Friends *actually* play, they don't just spend time speculating about how the dynamic of their relationship qua being friends with one another constitutes a type of play![150] That is, they engage in playful behavior, or they actually play together.

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[149] Calling this type of play "acquaintanceship-play" does not presuppose anything about the nature of the relationship between the acquaintances engaged in play together since acquaintanceship sets a low bar for its instantiation. It is defined in the negative simply as a relationship which does not possess the attitude of openness to the development of the relationship. People who do not like one another may engage in play: rivals or enemies may be acquaintances who engage in acquaintanceship-play. People whose relationships are circumscribed by various social or professional norms may engage in acquaintanceship-play: colleagues may be acquaintances who engage in acquaintanceship-play.

[150] Friends almost never do this. Even most philosopher friends do not.

The answer to this question is simple. Instances of particular play between friends have consequences upon their relationship dynamic. Recall that friendship, or other-discovery, involves interaction, or actual instances of participating in the process of other-discovery. That is, other-discovery requires us to actually make good on our commitment to it.[151] Put more simply, it is a part of making good on one's friendship that friends actually engage in particular instances of play. But in engaging in particular instances of play with one another, friends are recursively engaged in other-discovery itself. Hence to be friends is simply, at least in part, to play. And when you are friends, to play is to be friends.[152]

7. A Play-Theoretic Analysis of The Case

We last left September, October, and November at the conclusion of their conversation, presented again below:

> September: "What could be more fun than jumping into a pile of crisp, yellow leaves!"
>
> October: "Well the leaves could be orange,"
>
> November "No, no, only red will do."

Knowing that September's favorite color is yellow and October's is orange but that neither care much for red led us to speculate the ways in which this case might be considered playful. We speculated that play might be found in September's action of jumping in a pile of leaves, or that it might be found in the teasing of one another that the three engage in, or that it might be found

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[151] cf. Other-Discovery.

[152] For a more detailed version of this argument see Other-Discovery. What I have said here in terms of play maps directly onto my earlier conversation about engaging in joint projects and interaction between selves.

in the nature of the rhetorical exchange between the three. We are now in a position to see that there are three aspects of their interaction that constitute play and to say precisely why that is.

It is rather straightforward how September's actions constitute play. For if something as mundane as raking leaves can be made playful by adopting the right attitude, then it is not hard to imagine that jumping into a pile of crisp, colorful fall leaves, an action that is on the face of it far more fun and pretheoretically playful, can be made playful with the adoption of the attitude I have described. I will assume that mere intuition regarding the act of jumping into a fall leaf pile is all that needs to be added to my theory in order to explain this case and move on.

Teasing between friends presents a particularly interesting case of play between friends. It involves instantiating multiple components of other-discovery. What happens when one friend teases another is that they channel their other-knowledge intricately to produce a kind of playful joke which they understand that the other will be affected by, or riled up by. But teasing is open-ended as well, because, there is a strong sense in which the joke, or the act of teasing, constitutes the object to which the play is directed at. Each friend is open to that joke, the tease, and lets it unfold from one friend to the other. That is, it unfolds from the teaser as an act instantiating her other-knowledge qua other-discovery to an act of other-knowledge qua other-discovery in receipt of the tease and her reaction to it. In a sense, then, I play with you and you play right back at me. But in this case, it is more specific: I tease you and you tease right back at me. Our teasing of one another is an intricate form of play with the other, drawing upon our other-discovery process and providing an opportunity for a spontaneous unfolding of each's reaction to the other.

But teasing is play between friends for reasons deeper than that, too. If that were the only reason why teasing constituted play between friends then it would be uninteresting. For any such

interaction between friends constitutes play for the same reasons. But with teasing I let go of a provocative joke, fling it toward you, and let it unfold. I surrender my control to you, but I do so *mischievously*, and that constitutes much of the fun in it. You, of course, having surrendered your control to me in the first place do not know what is coming toward you when my mischievous joke, my tease, is uttered at you. But then I have relinquished my control to you, as you mischievously respond to my mischief, and so it comes to be: the act of teasing.

But maybe you do see my joke coming. Maybe you know me well enough to know that I must be about to tease you. And so is born an inside joke. When you tease me, but I know you as well as I do, well enough to know what is coming, we meet together at an inside joke. Others do not know what is coming because they do not have the same established play dynamic that we do, thus keeping the inside joke between *us*. Interestingly, with the case of teasing, and by extension inside jokes, we have reached an analogue to Huizinga's claims about play often contributing to the formation of social groups. When I tease you, and when I do it often enough that you know what is coming your way, we form a kind of social grouping that separates us off from others, constituted by our inside joke.

Inside jokes are particularly interesting because, in a sense, they actually thwart the play dynamic between us. When I tease you, but the teasing is so familiar that it has become an inside joke, I prevent, or thwart, the unfolding of the object that our play is directed toward, namely the joke constituting the act of teasing. However, so far I have portrayed you as more clever than I. I likely know too that you know what is coming given that I know you well just as you know me well. So when I initiate a well-worn tease, I am not merely an unsuspecting participant shocked that you saw what was coming, but rather I intentionally thwart the play dynamic as do you.

There is a sense in which inside jokes constitute an act of needlessly surrendering oneself to the other, while each of us rejects that surrender because we know one another too well to accept such a surrender. Where teasing can be vulnerable and experimental in surrender, then, inside jokes cannot be. They are too well-worn to be so. Perhaps this explains why inside jokes are only funny when in the presence of others who witness them between us and do not understand. They quickly lose their luster, and comic appeal, when we rehash them between ourselves too often.

As for October and November's reaction to September's rhetorical question, this seems to either constitute a form of teasing, as just discussed, or perhaps it may be taken as a standalone phenomena. If taken as a standalone, separate phenomena, then it is plausible that play gets off the ground in establishing its joint object as the rhetorical question. October's and November's willful disregard of it involves the same dynamic of surrender and control, participants in the unfolding of the question and all.

Though not in the original example, I would like to address a related case as well. Arguing, too, can be fun among friends. While argument is often seen as paradigmatic of interpersonal conflict, that need not be its only role in relationships. When September, October, and November argue about what constitutes the most fun part of fall and whether it is watching the leaves first change colors and jumping into piles of them as according to September, carving Halloween pumpkins as according to October, or raking up the remaining leaves before the first

snow as according to November, the argument is the far from an interpersonal conflict.[153] Despite disagreement, it is simply fun.

8. Play, Art, Life, and Friendship

I will conclude by reflecting more substantially on a topic that I only briefly addressed earlier. I have developed my account of play against human interaction and relationships. That is, while Huizinga, Callois, and many contemporary analytic philosophers conceive of play with the notion of games as the paradigmatic instance in which play is found, I have instead theorized play as if it were paradigmatically found within human interaction and relationships. I do not think that this is in the least unnatural or less satisfactory than Huizinga, Callois, and company's game-centric approach. In theorizing just about any topic relevant to value theory one looks toward paradigmatic instances of it in order to initially gain insight upon it. While games and play obviously do have quite a storied history, and, even more charitably, they may intuitively seem closely related, they are not the only such pair in this privileged position. We speak commonly of *playing* a game. But we also speak commonly of *playing* music, *playing* in an ensemble, or *playing* and instrument. Yet, if we were to analyze play taking these uses of the term to be paradigmatic we would likely end up with a very different account of play.

There is room to argue whether we ought to take a given locution seriously as representative of what play is, or what the concept entails in itself. Perhaps one might think that

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[153] Clearly November loses this argument, but she seems to be employing play as an attitude toward the mundane very well in order to conceive of raking the leaves before the first snow as the most fun part of fall! The real contention is between September and October. Some may find leaf observation too quotidian, and others might think that one outgrows jumping into piles of leaves. I believe neither is the case. It is hard for me to imagine anyone sincerely arguing that carving Halloween pumpkins ever stops being fun, so perhaps October's proposal will be seen as least controversial by most readers.

the word "play" in these musical instances would better be replaced with the word "perform" so that we speak of performing music, performing in an ensemble, and performing on the violin. The claim is that use of the word play here is non-literal and that the notion of performance better reflects the case.[154] But how are we to settle this question? Is it with intuition alone? And, if so, how are we to adjudicate such intuitions?

Questions like these find their place in discussions of metaphilosophy.[155] But for now I will offer some brief remarks. One way to assess which conceptualization is preferable is to look toward its explanatory value. Huizinga and company produce an account of play that while far-reaching—the majority of Huizinga's book is preoccupied with explaining the many instances of play throughout society—is centered around the idea of games. My own account of play is centered in *life itself*. It is much broader and has much greater explanatory value. Perhaps it is true that because my own conception of it is broader too, that it is not as specific or precise as Huizinga's and company. But for what mine lacks in specificity, I will gladly take in the greater potential of its explanatory value.

But I do not mean for my conclusion to this discussion to merely become a contest between Huizinga and company and myself. Rather, I mean to draw out some of what I take to be the more remarkable repercussions of a theory of play that firmly situates itself within life itself. Because play is so general, it has the power to shape one's life in all sorts of ways. Much

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[154] I use this as an example, but I will not pursue the question as to whether music constitutes a kind of play. Performance can be playful, however, I will not pursue the issue in any depth. My apologies to Raymond Knapp and David S. Lefkowitz, who would be disappointed in me for neglecting the issue. In my defense, music is far too important to be sullied in a philosophy dissertation.

[155] And just as I did not go toward a discussion of music and play, I certainly am not going here!

of this has already been discussed. But one thing that I want to make explicit here is that play yields a unique and quite remarkable form of autonomy. While one may not ultimately have much control over the greater totality of her circumstances and the unfolding of her own life at many times, she does have the power to shape her experience of those circumstances by surrendering herself to them, and thereby invoking the play attitude. There is much curiosity, acceptance, marvel, and wonder to be gained from it.

The last attitude that I would like to compare play to is that of a sense of wonder. Recall that play has transformative power: it can transform the ordinary into the extraordinary. It does much of this by way of a sense of wonder. This is at least partly the sentiment well-expressed in Walt Whitman's famous line in "Song of Myself," "I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars" (Whitman, line 663). But there is more to the idea of play as a sense of wonder than even this.

I will conclude by speculating some about the relationship between play as a sense of wonder and the enjoyment of fiction. By fiction I have in mind something like a novel or a film as my paradigm. While play is certainly a component of fiction to some degree, and is also a component of the relationship between agent and fiction, I would like to draw attention to a phenomena that I believe is under-appreciated, or at least under-recognized. Fiction can be contrasted with other modes more common to other forms of art, on the other hand, such as music, visual art, fashion, and dance. While there is room for overlap, and fiction may be found in these forms of art as well, I hope that the contrast that I intend to draw is apparent at a

pretheoretical level. At very least, fiction employed through novels, films, or theater is more straightforwardly engaged in than in these other forms of art.[156]

First think about games. Now that play has been separated from games, it is easier to see how one can be playful throughout her life while abstaining from any engagement in games at all, even. While this would be unusual, and most people probably engage in games to some extent or other throughout the course of their lives, games are not needed at all in order to effect play. This is because life can just be so playful already. Furthermore, it is my suspicion that some subset of highly playful people, that is, people who adopt the play attitude often and in a wide-ranging manner, do not engage much at all in games or game-like activity because they are too busy playing already. That is, because their *ordinary* lives are already so playful.

An analogous argument can be made regarding fiction. Again, I speculate that there is some subset of highly playful people who are simply too engrossed in the play of their own lives to care much for fiction. Persons like this are often far more disposed to adopt the play attitude and its correlates—marvel, curiosity, resignation, and so on—in the face of *ordinary, real* life rather than the kind of make-believe that Huizinga, Callois, and company find essential to play. Hence another tenant traditionally central to play ends up—playfully—turned on its head. These people are too absorbed in the thrill of the mundane and their awe, marvel, and their sense of wonder is too readily engaged with the unfolding life in front of them for them to let go of the ordinary and real life to have time for fiction or for make believe. Their imagination is too

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[156] This paper does not constitute an in-depth exploration of art and hence does not explore these distinctions more deeply. I stay at a superficial level for my own purposes in the course of this discussion.

absorbed with daily living. These people, much like like November, are the ones likely to remark "No, no, only *real* and *ordinary* life will do."

On a more personal note, I confess that am one of these people myself. I have never cared much for fiction, and I chalk that up to simply being too engrossed with ordinary life. In this respect I am reminded of a line of reasoning from an anthropology professor whose class I took as an undergraduate. He expressed that real life was far more interesting than fiction, so he preoccupied himself much more often with it. Paradoxically, I am also reminded of a work of fiction, the last scene in Bill Watterson's famous Calvin and Hobbes, in which I find a paradigmatic example of the attitude of play employed, and even more, employed within friendship. Calvin and Hobbes are about to go sledding on a particularly snow filled hillside:

Calvin: Wow, it really snowed last night! Isn't it wonderful?

Hobbes: Everything familiar has disappeared! The world looks brand new!

Calvin: A New year…a fresh clean start!

Hobbes: It's like having a big white sheet of paper to draw on!

Calvin: A day full of possibilities!

Calvin: It's a magical world, Hobbes, ol' buddy.

Calvin: Let's go exploring! (481).

But even if the reader thinks that my dismissal of fiction has been too hasty and I have not given fair treatment to the topic as a form of art—and playful art form, at that—I would like to introduce a distinction. The late nineteenth and early twentieth century American modernist composer Charles Ives has this to say of the relationship between art and life:

> An interest in any art form from poetry to baseball is better, broadly speaking, if held as a part of life, or *of* a life, than if it sets itself up as a whole—a condition verging, perhaps, toward a monopoly or, possibly a kind of atrophy of the other important values and hence reacting unfavorably upon itself (Ives 260-261).

Charles Ives scholarship aside[157], what I would like to draw out from this quote is a sense of an art form's connectedness to life and how it engages its its audience.[158] The individual too preoccupied with play to engage in fiction does so not only because they are too busy playing in life already, but may also prefer art forms that are, to use Charles Ives' words, better "held as part of a life" rather than an art that sets itself up as a whole. For my own purpose here, an art that is held as part of a life is one that more readily assimilates itself into one's own play within her life and one that sets itself up as a whole is one that only engages her in play *on its own terms*. Arts that are not straightforwardly constituted by the mode of fiction better assimilate themselves into ones own play.[159]

And note, crucially, however, that *this is exactly what a game demands of a player*. It demands that one engage in play on the game's own terms qua the sort of rule based conditions thought to be central by the likes of Huizinga and Callois. There is something of deep importance

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[157] cf. Burkholder 1987 or Sherwood Magee 2008 for a more thorough consideration of the meaning of this quote in the context of Ives' philosophy of his music.

[158] I will not discuss the relationship between how art represents its subject matter and engages its audience here, but instead will stay at a pretheoretical level. For a more detailed account of the topic, see, for instance, Walton 1990.

[159] The topic of what forms of art engage in fiction and of what exactly fiction is is a vast topic itself that could easily be the topic of its own dissertation. The issue will not be pursued here, but I hope that the reader can at least grant my distinction on a commonsensical level.

lost in demanding that play be engaged in on the terms of someone else, as is the case in a kind of fiction that sets itself up as a whole in which the audience must engage in on its own terms.

But what then of surrender? And what then, especially of my claim that it is exactly this surrender to the other that is so important in the play involved in friendship? Have I not just claimed that it is surrender to something outside of one's own control that makes play less fulfilling in some instances of art rather than others?[160]

The answer to this involves looking more closely at the terms of any given surrender. In the case of surrender to an art that sets itself up as a whole something is crucially missing. While one may engage in analysis of a given form of fiction that sets itself up as a whole, and do so playfully, they nevertheless engage in it not as in an act of accepting resignation, but on the author's terms of that fiction. Even in the best fiction in which an author leaves much room for interpretation and ambiguity, hardly is the play a joint venture between the audience and the author of the fiction. Instead, it is one in which the audience must *play along* with the author's vision, and thus is effected the kind of game-like play space of Huizinga and Callois.[161] And, of

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[160] Note that I do not claim that art in which play is less fulfilling is lesser, or defective, in some way. Such art has value, but not for its inherent playfulness.

[161] I have in my mind an example that I think helps elucidate the difference between someone so engrossed in play within daily life that she takes less interest in fiction. I always think of the contrast between reading some author's novel and writing an entry in my journal and then rereading it. Sometimes I get myself in the mindset of thinking about the people whom I write about in my journals as characters. Of course, unlike the author, I have no control over what these characters do (and only control over how I represent them in writing about them in my journal). But I feel very differently about these "characters" who inhabit my journal than I do the ordinary characters of a work of fiction, and I do not think that it is explained merely by the fact that these people actually exist in my life. But rather I think that there is a further realization: when I'm in this mindset I feel a certain sense of agential playfulness toward these "characters" of my journal because I actually have been engrossed with them in play. They are, and were, a part of my life and, hence, *a part of my play*, in a way that the characters of a novel or film can never be.

course, if one embraces a theory of play that is tied to games this might not be so troubling, but as I hope to have shown, doing so impoverishes the possibilities of a more broadly adaptable and engaging kind of play.

But further considerations emerge as well when considering the structure of play as it appears in life and as it appears in friendship. Note that play as I have described it can be engaged in under a very wide-ranging set of circumstances. At least part of its power is that it is so adaptable. It is employable in both one's projects and pursuits and in those things that are distinctly not part of one's projects and pursuits: those things outside of one's control. The latter is part of what is so special about play. But it is not merely that play is employed in circumstances outside of ones control, it is *effected* or *created* even in those circumstances. In the case of fiction, however, the play is not effected or created by the agent, but rather it is more properly effected and created by the author of the fiction, and instead of effecting or creating the play itself, the agent instead only has the opportunity to play along, but not to create or enliven the world herself by way of her own play. There is a place for playing along, of course, and fiction has its merits, but it does not deserve the same status as the other sorts of playful arts that do not set themselves up as a whole, but rather more readily integrate themselves into a life. Fiction is fundamentally confined by a place space.

But what of friendship? Does this distinction not also threaten the good of friendship as a form of play? It seems that while one has the power to effect play on the one hand, they must surrender to play on the other, perhaps merely playing along with the interrelationship play effected by the other when she plays qua her mirrored role in the friendship. But to think that one friend merely plays along with the other's play is to misunderstand the interaction between

friends and their surrender toward one another. One friend does not merely effect play and then surrender to the other to play along with her effected play, merely volleying play and playing-along back and forth between one another. To think this is to fundamentally miss the power of play and friendship. For remember that play is the attitude of *openness* to unfolding freely and friendship is the attitude of *openness* to the development of the relationship. To play with another then, is to play with an openness itself. That is, to be an agent open to the development of the *relationship* and engaged in openness to unfolding freely with *the other*, qua object of play, who is likewise an agent open to the development of the *relationship* and engaged in openness to unfolding freely with *the other*, qua object of play is to be open to a kind of radical other-directed and other-dependent openness itself. Call this radical openness. It is the essence of friendship, and the ultimate punchline of my view and of this whole dissertation.

But why is radical openness different from merely playing along with another who effects play herself? To answer this question is to finally answer a question that has likely been nagging the reader for some time throughout much of this entire project. For an agent to be radically open with another agent is for the two agents to be *jointly* open, or for them to be open *together*. And, finally, here emerges my picture of shared action between friends. Shared action between friends is simply joint openness. On the other hand, playing along with one another is not a fundamentally shared action. For one could play along with the other by mere direction or mere by merely following prescribed rules as if they were those of a game. And though a sense of togetherness can arise within the context of games, especially ones that involve team membership, following the rules of a game while the other sets those rules is hardly a constitutively joint venture.

9. Radical Openness:

Shared Action, Projects, and Life

While radical openness may be somewhat of an unorthodox way of describing shared action within much of the existing philosophical literature on the topic, it should hardly be surprising in the context of my own theory developed over the course of this project. This is because much of my previous language describing projects, relationships, and shared living or life entanglement can now be cast in terms of radical openness as the fundamental unifying concept behind each of these pieces of my theory.

First note that on this view what it is to act jointly is rather broad. Shared action is made to be a very general phenomena. Something as simple as sitting silently together will count as shared action between friends, as will something more contingently complex like writing one another letters over some temporal duration. But this is exactly what ought to make a view of shared action desirable. I am happy to admit of very disparate and wide-ranging cases constituting shared action. I think it would be mistaken to view shared action as merely action that is contingently shared. That is, action that occurs both temporally and physically together at once. To limit a notion of shared action in this way would hardly comport with common sense. People commonly talk of having a conversation over both long distances and temporal durations, and I see no reason why this ought not be taken literally. An exchange of letters over the course of a year, no matter how sparse, for instance, seems plausibly described just as properly as shared action as does a conversation that occurs on a park bench face to face.

Furthermore, we commonly talk of shared action over the course of great temporal durations. For instance, we talk of raising a child together, or of building a better society

together. Such instances of shared action occur over great durations, lifetimes, or even generations. Given this wide range of activities commonly described as shared, it seems rather reasonable to construe shared action merely between friends broadly enough! It is these ways of conceptualizing shared action beyond merely contingent circumstance that make radical openness a particularly well suited candidate to describe jointly held *projects.*

It is not difficult to imagine how these cases work in detail. Consider our shared sitting in silence in terms of radical openness. I sit next to you as an agent open to the development of our relationship in that particular instant and engaged in openness to unfolding freely with you in that moment, and you, likewise sit next to me as an agent open to the development of our relationship in that particular instant and engaged in openness to unfolding freely with me in that moment. This is rather straightforward, being as contingently—that is, spatiotemporally—contiguous as it is. But contingency aside, so is our exchange of letters of some greater temporal and physical distance. I write you a letter as an agent open to the development of our relationship and engaged in openness to unfolding freely with you, and you, likewise an agent open to the development of our relationship and engaged in openness to unfolding freely with me write me back, *eventually*.[162] The removal of immediacy from our interaction clearly does not change its nature. Why would we be tempted to think that it no longer constitutes shared activity? For when shared activity is viewed in this manner, it shows us that what is really to count for our action's being shared is the way that it fits into our attitude of openness to the other.

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[162] If the reader is asking herself the question, "Who has time to write letters anymore these days?" Then she is likely not the target audience I have in mind for this project in the first place. More seriously, the example is constructed exactly to show the unimportance of contingency.

But if this is unsatisfying and leaves the unsympathetic reader inclined to accuse me of merely begging the question by offering these remarks in favor of my view, I think the best evidence in favor of taking seriously radical openness as constitutive of shared action is the case of joint projects.[163] For instance, it would be odd to say that something so intimate and which clearly involves the effort of two individuals—when there are in fact two in on the endeavor—as raising a child, for instance, is not to count as shared action.[164] But perhaps a reader will grant this case, but be skeptical of my taxonomy drawn at the very outset: that is, they think that a romantic relationship in the context of parenthood is too different from a more commonplace kind of friendship lacking those same affects. But surely such a worry would be misguided, for all sorts of friends engage in a myriad of intimate activities that would commonly be considered a kind of shared activity. One hardly needs to look beyond the ordinary: friends who write one another letters, cook together, style their hair together, perform music with one another, share

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[163] In the technical sense that I have previously defined the terms projects.

[164] There is a sense in which one may wonder if I am subject to some inconsistency in using child rearing as a case of a project given that I have taken care to argue for the separateness of relationships and projects earlier in this dissertation. My answer to this worry is twofold: first, I noted early on that the parent-child relationship involves some important asymmetries that make it importantly different from coequal adult relationships, and, second, there is a sense in which parents commit to themselves to raising a child as a matter of a project. Consider, for instance a couple considering the possibility of having a first child. They do so in large part by entertaining the idea of pursuing *the project of raising a child*, as they do not consider the proposition by way of some existing relationship to their own child. I think it is reasonable in the case of parenthood to think that the role is unique enough that, at least through the child's maturation, the parent never loses the sense of project involved in raising her child, though it likely becomes a more abstract notion that lies behind the relationship itself once the parent-child relationship exists. Furthermore, I think that this explains one important way in which a parent's non-parent friends can come to appreciate the significance of the parent-child relationship to their now-parent friend despite standing outside of that relationship: as a special project that the parent friend has embarked upon. This might be thought of a special overdetermined case of understanding the web in which the other stands discussed in the second chapter.

secrets with one another, or even share much of their daily living with one another through mere contingent circumstance, and so on. All of these activities can be intimate and can constitute long term shared projects, and when they do it seems appropriate to consider them instances of shared activity.

But an objection that has likely been on the skeptical reader's mind during the course of this argument must now be addressed: if radical openness constitutes shared action *within friendship*, what constitutes shared action between any two individuals, friends or not? That is, I have only provided an account of shared action accessible to friends, but I have said nothing of what shared action is itself. Certainly individuals engage in shared action without engaging in friendship.

I have two replies to this question. My first reply is to still straightforwardly deny that I am in the business of theorizing shared action simpliciter. That is simply not a topic of interest to me in the course of this project, and I do not believe that I owe the reader a general account of shared action in order to theorize friendship. It will do to provide a theory of shared action within the context of friendship rather than a general account simpliciter.

But, my second reply is to acknowledge that it does indeed feel like something is missing here, even on the taxonomy that I provide in my own account. For if friends engage in shared action in this manner, it seems that I owe the reader an account of how acquaintances engage in shared action. I do not merely owe this answer for the sake of completeness of my account, but,

rather, I owe it because I seem to have centered my very account of acquaintanceship around what might pretheoretically be thought of as the very paradigm of shared action![165]

It seems to me now that I have two options available in owning up to this alleged oversight. I may still invoke disinterestedness or maybe even ignorance, claiming that I simply am not in the business of and even do not know what it is to share action in this sense. I am in part tempted to take this route, offering the reader their own favorite account of shared action to fill in for cases of acquaintanceship.

But, instead, I do have more to offer. Recall that the acquaintanceship relationship does not aim at discovering the facets of the other's self, but rather it is about relating to the other across a single facet. While I will not provide a more detailed account here, I will gesture toward an answer: to share action with a non-friend is to engage in some activity with them which engages one facet of each's self. Crucially, shared action between acquaintances is not *person*-directed or *other*-directed action. Rather, it is action that two persons do engage in together, in a straightforward pretheoretical sense, but the target of that action is not the other her self. I hope that these remarks are enough to satisfy the unsympathetic reader, while reminding her that this project is fundamentally about friendship, and not acquaintanceship. A return to the topic at hand is in order—and justified.

Radical openness explains relationships in which the timescale has expanded beyond contingency at a higher, more abstracted level of the process of mutual recognition discussed previously.[166] For a relationship that survives an expanded timescale, and a greater expanse, is

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[165] Perhaps I had foreshadowed this claim previously in my discussion of the simple joint action in acquaintanceship. More below.

[166] cf. Relationship's End and Other Vantage Points.

one in which its shared activity can be conceptualized as involving, and even tolerating or permitting, a very general level of contingency. That is, as long as each agent is able to see her interaction as constituting her engagement in an openness to the development of the relationship and and engagement in openness to unfolding freely with the other, then the degree of the expanse will be able to be overcome, no matter how wide.[167] But this hardly needed to be spelled out in as much detail, as it was just previously shown that shared activity construed as radical openness is not delimited by contingency.

But perhaps the most important consequence of conceiving of shared action as radical openness is that it thereby accounts for shared life, or shared living simpliciter. For we have now reached the ultimate punchline of this dissertation. What it is to share one's life with one another is for one to be an agent open to the development of the *relationship* and engaged in openness to unfolding freely with *the other*, qua object of play, who is likewise an agent open to the development of the *relationship* and engaged in openness to unfolding freely with *the other*, qua object of play. Hence, what it is to share one's life with one another is simply to engage in play with the other.

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[167] Of course individual limits of each friend will come to define what degree of expanse can still generate radical openness. I do not claim that all expanses can automatically be overcome by adopting radical openness, but only that expanses that are overcome, no matter how wide, are bridged in this way.

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