

A Theory of Moral Obligation

by

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To my loving family

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Moral obligation is one of the most familiar features of our lives. It is commonplace to hear someone demand that he has a right to something or that he has a duty (obligation) to do something. Blaming a person when he fails to live up to his obligations¹ is equally common. What grounds any of this talk? Perhaps most perplexing is the normative force of obligation: to say that a person is obligated to do something is to say (among other things) that he *must* do it. But what grounds this mustness? Or, to really get a feel for the problem, what would one say to a person who shrugged his shoulders when told that he was obligated to do something and denied that he had any reason to do it? Sometimes fulfilling her obligations is in a person's own best interest, but frequently it isn't. Sometimes fulfilling an obligation is for the best, in a consequentialist sense, but again, it often isn't. And even if both of these things were true, it still wouldn't follow (without further argument) that the person *must* fulfill the obligation; there would simply be very good reasons for doing so.

Yet there are a host of things that commonsense suggests we are obligated to do. At a minimum, most people agree that we have obligations not to harm others. Strong intuitions also suggest that we have some duties to aid others in need, especially when asked. In this dissertation, I develop a theory of moral obligation, and specifically of the normativity of obligation. I also try to justify many of our commonsense intuitions about what we are obligated to do.

A word about scope is in order. By "moral obligation" I understand something similar to what Scanlon has in mind when he talks about "what we owe to each other",

¹ Throughout this dissertation, whenever I speak of "obligation", I mean specifically moral obligation unless I explicitly state otherwise.

namely, duties to other *people* (Scanlon 1998).² The examples listed above all fall into this category. I will not consider duties (if they exist) that are not directly concerned with others, such as duties to animals or to the environment.

I begin in §1.1 by describing four aspects of the authority of obligation that often get run together. Section 1.2 describes my overall approach and motivates it with some basic intuitions. I then turn in §1.3 to explaining how my theory grounds the four main features of moral obligation.

1.1 Features of Moral Obligation

1.1.1 Normative Force

Perhaps the most readily recognizable feature of moral obligations is their distinctive normative force. This force is commonly described by saying that obligations are things that a person *must* do or that he is *required* to do.³ Or again, it isn't "up to" him to decide whether to fulfill his obligations; to be obligated is to have a conclusive reason for acting. When Scanlon addresses "the problem of the moral must – the seeming necessity of moral demands," he says that "the fact that an action would be wrong constitutes *sufficient* reason not to do it (almost?) no matter what other considerations there might be in its favor" (Scanlon 1998, p. 148, my emphasis).⁴

² Scanlon eschews the term "obligation" because he thinks it "picks out a narrower field, mainly of requirements arising from specific actions or undertakings" (Scanlon 1998, p. 7). I have always understood the term as having a larger scope, though.

³ See, for example, Korsgaard in *The Sources of Normativity*:

"When you want to know what a philosopher's theory of normativity is, you must place yourself in the position of an agent on whom morality is making a difficult claim. You then ask the philosopher: *must* I really do this? Why *must* I do it? And his answer is his answer to the normative question" (Korsgaard 1996, p. 16, emphasis added).

Korsgaard is talking about normativity generally, but in this passage she clearly has in mind moral obligation.

⁴ Scanlon is correct in claiming that the wrongness of an act (that is, having an obligation not to do an action) constitutes a sufficient reason not to do it, but that fails to capture the distinctiveness of the reason-giving force of obligations. As Jonathan Dancy notes in his discussion of enticing reasons, a reason (of any sort) is sufficient if it makes its action worth doing. To be worth doing, in his sense, is simply for the reasons to be above a certain threshold (*i.e.*, for the action to be "good enough") (Dancy 2004, p. 95). Plenty of competing actions can be worth doing in this sense, however, and so one can have competing reasons all of which are sufficient. This is why I initially described obligations as providing *conclusive* reasons for acting: if one is obligated to do something, then the matter is settled; one must do it. As I discuss below, however, the fact that obligations give conclusive reasons for acting characterizes their normative *strength*, not their *force*.

Following Kant, this force is also sometimes characterized by distinguishing between hypothetical and categorical imperatives: moral obligations, which aren't conditional on an agent's ends, take the latter form. As Philippa Foot has pointed out, though, other norms, such as those of etiquette, are also expressed categorically (Foot 1972). Forks always go on the left, and this norm has nothing to do with any end that a person might have. Yet everyone agrees that a person has much greater reason to fulfill her obligations than to comply with the dictates of etiquette. Stephen Darwall picks up on this difference; when he discusses the "purported normative force" of moral obligation, he therefore speaks of obligations as being "supremely authoritative...that is, both categorical and overriding" (Darwall 2006, p. 26).

All of these ways of putting the point circle (more or less effectively) around the idea that there is something special about the normativity of moral obligation. We must be careful, however, to distinguish two aspects of it that often get run together. Darwall makes this distinction in describing obligation as both categorical and overriding. For the sake of clarity, I will identify these as describing the *force* and *strength* of obligations, respectively. As I am using these terms, the force of obligations refers to the categorical form of the reason; it is often captured by saying that obligations are things that one *must* do. The strength of obligations (which is the subject of §1.2) has to do with how they are weighed against competing reasons.⁵

To bring out the distinctive normative force of obligations, compare them to instrumental reasoning: if *m* is a necessary means to my end *E*, then I must use or do *m*. Of course, I must do *m* only so long as I'm committed to achieving *E*. If I give up *E*, I no longer have an instrumental reason for doing *m*. The same is not true of obligations: a person can't get out of them by giving up an end. This comparison with instrumental reasoning does, however, give us a sense of what we might call the "practical necessity" associated with normative force of obligation: so long as I am committed to *E*, then I have no choice but to take the necessary means *m*. Similarly, obligations also present

⁵ Scanlon, above, thus runs these two aspects together when he cashes out "the seeming necessity of moral demands" (that is, their force) in terms of obligations providing a sufficient reason for action regardless of other, countervailing considerations (that is, their strength).

themselves as things that I must do, albeit things that are not conditional on an agent's ends.

1.1.2 Strength

The strength of a reason, as I said, is a matter of how it is weighed against other reasons that a person has. Here, too, obligations are distinctive: if one is obligated to do something, then the matter is settled; one must do it, regardless of what other options exist. The only thing that can outweigh an obligation is another, stronger obligation.

This idea gets expressed in a variety of ways. We have already seen Scanlon describe obligations as giving a person *sufficient* reason to act (though, as I noted, it is better to speak of *conclusive* reasons). Seana Shiffrin describes the “overridingness” of moral obligations this way:

An all-things-considered moral requirement to perform (or refrain from) a certain act may genuinely conflict with nonmoral as well as moral, nonsupererogatory considerations against performing (or refraining from) that act, but will always outweigh or trump them. If one is a moral agent, one has most reason to perform that which is all-things-considered morally required...[f]urther, it would be contrary to reason to defy such a requirement...” (Shiffrin 1999, p. 772).

Similarly, what Samuel Scheffler calls “the thesis of overridingness” says that “it can never be rational knowingly to do what morality forbids” (Scheffler 1992, p. 52).⁶

Regardless of how it is expressed, the claim that moral obligations are overriding is quite audacious. As I will discuss in Chapter Three, for any given purported obligation, it is impossible to vindicate this claim *a priori*. One cannot say, in advance, whether a particular claim is morally obligating since whether it is depends upon whatever other reasons a person has (in particular, other, conflicting obligations). I will therefore argue that the overridingness of any particular reason is always relative to a set of competing claims.⁷

⁶ Though note that Sheffler thinks that the overridingness thesis is likely false since it requires externalism about reasons to be true (that is, something could be a reason for a person independently of her interests or desires).

⁷ So put, my theory appears to be in conflict with Absolutist views, according to which certain actions or types of actions are always required (or, more usually, forbidden). For example, Catholic moral theology holds that the intentional killing of innocent human life is always wrong. As another example, some think

1.1.3 Second-personal Nature

Although moral obligation's force and strength are certainly two of its hallmarks, they are not its only distinguishing characteristics. Darwall argues that obligations are also *second-personal* and that this fact is crucial to vindicating their force and strength.

The second-person standpoint, which takes its name from the grammatical second person, "is the perspective you and I take up when we make and acknowledge claims on one another's actions and will" (Darwall 2006, p. 3). Examples include "orders, requests, claims, reproaches, complaints, demands, promises, contracts, givings of consent, [and] commands," among others (*ibid*, p. 8). When I ask for your help, or blame you for carelessly hurting me, I am addressing you second-personally. All second-personal addresses purport to give a distinctive kind of reason, one that Darwall calls a second-personal reason, to the addressee. The key feature of a (valid) second-personal reason is that "it is grounded in authority relations that an addresser takes to hold between him and his addressee" (*ibid*, p. 4).

A paradigmatic example of such reasons are those present when an Army officer issues orders to his troops. When he commands them to march, for example, the reason for marching that he is giving them is grounded in his authority as commander. It might also be true that marching is instrumentally or prudentially good, but whether it is or not is beside the point. If the officer legitimately has authority, he can address commands to his troops and so give them a valid, second-personal reason for marching that depends only upon his authority as commander.

When second-personal reasons come in the form of commands, as in this example, they have the characteristic "mustness" of moral obligation.⁸ As the list above indicates, though, not all second-personal reasons have this normative force. We may

that one is always under an obligation to love God. For all I will say, it could turn out that these claims are correct: it could be the case that these obligations always do trump any other obligation or reason for acting that a person could have. I leave it as an open question whether we can know this fact *a priori*. For all practical purposes, however, claims of overridingness are relativized: when confronted with a purported obligation (say, whether I ought to help someone), I consider how it competes with all the reasons I have at that time, not how it competes with all possible reasons (of which I may not be aware).

⁸ Again, though, as Foot's etiquette example shows, not everything with this normative force is obligatory. As regards the present example, it's not clear that one is *morally* obligated to obey one's commander in the military, though he does have valid second-personal authority.

distinguish between those second-personal reasons that have this force and those that do not; I will call the first *demands* and the second *claims*. Requests, for example, are claims. If I ask, “can you please help me take out the trash,” I don’t presuppose that you must help me. I am, however, still addressing a second-personal reason to you. That is, in asking for your help, I’m giving you a reason to help me, which reason is distinct from (among other things) instrumental or prudential considerations. This reason also doesn’t depend upon the fact that it would be good to take out the trash.⁹

The important point here is that all (valid) second-personal reasons, whether they are claims or demands, are grounded in the authority of the person who issues them, and that this authority, in turn, is grounded in the relationship of that person to the addressee:

When someone attempts to give another a second-personal reason, she purports to stand in a relevant authority relation to her addressee. I shall say that her address presupposes this authority. By this, I just mean that her having the authority is a necessary condition of the validity of the reason she purports to address and thus a normative felicity condition of successfully giving her addressee the reason. *Qua* attempting to give her addressee the reason, then, she must assume this authority, as she must assume the satisfaction of any normative felicity conditions of addressing the reason (*ibid*, p. 4).

The relationship that grounds a commander’s authority with respect to his troops is especially perspicuous since the military is organized around a hierarchy of authority. It is also, perhaps, easy to understand why this relationship is the source of the commander’s authority in a volunteer military (roughly, in joining the military, one consents to this authority.) I will be arguing that other relationships – in particular, ones characterized by what I call corporate identity – also ground a kind of second-personal authority. Moreover, this authority is that needed to ground moral obligations (at least, the ones with which we will be concerned).

The connection between second-personal authority and moral obligation is, most directly, that obligations are the result of the demands that one person can make upon

⁹ *I.e.*, the reason is distinct from consequentialist considerations. The state of affairs in which the trash is taken out might be a good one, but that value is not what directly makes my request for help legitimate. See Darwall 2006, p. 21.

another. This point is brought out by considering the relationship between obligation and other second-personal ideas of accountability, blame, and guilt:

Morality involves a distinctive kind of accountability by its very nature. If I fail to act as I am morally required without adequate excuse, then I am answerable to others, and distinctively second-personal responses like blame and guilt are thereby warranted (Darwall 2006, p. 26).¹⁰

Another way of expressing this idea is to say that obligations are *owed to* others. The reason they are owed to others, and the reason why others have standing to demand our compliance, is that obligations result from demands that others can or do make. Note that obligations differ in this regard from the requirements of instrumental reasoning discussed earlier. If *m* is a necessary means to my end *E*, and I'm committed to achieving *E*, then I'm under a requirement of instrumental rationality to take means *m*. Unlike obligations, though, my fulfilling this requirement isn't owed to anyone; no one has standing to demand that I take *m*.¹¹

This last point is worth emphasizing. While its normative force and strength are certainly hallmarks of obligation, it is the connection to accountability, blame and guilt that marks *moral* obligation. Moral obligations are more than simply what one has most reason to do; they are also things for which one can be held responsible.¹² That is why moral obligations are inherently second-personal.

This second-personal nature is also relevant to obligation's normative force. Since obligations are grounded in the authority of another person, they are not optional in the sense that one cannot "get out from under them" (avoid their normative force) by giving up an end (as in instrumental reasoning).¹³ Other things being equal, one is free to set or give up personal goals as she sees fit; she is not, however, free to decide what

¹⁰ Part of Darwall's project is to argue for this claim. Rather than duplicate his efforts, I will take him to be correct. My project is concerned (in part) with explaining how second-personal authority is grounded in certain relationships.

¹¹ Moreover, I wouldn't feel guilty for failing to take *m*, either. What seems to be in order is shame or embarrassment at not having reasoned properly.

¹² In this regard, see Adams 1999, p. 238: "the role, and therefore the nature, of moral obligation cannot be understood apart from its relation to guilt."

¹³ Note that this is true for all second-personal reasons, both claims and demands. The fact that you may not want to help me with the trash doesn't invalidate the reason I address to you in my request. Of course this doesn't mean that you must help me; it just means that you must acknowledge that I have given you *a* reason for helping me, one that should be weighed alongside others that you have.

authority others have to make claims or demands on her, just as troops are not free to decide what authority their commander has.

Finally, this second-personal nature also has implications for the strength of obligations. When a person legitimately addresses a demand to another, she presupposes that her demand is at least a sufficient reason, and, other things being equal, a conclusive one, for the person to act. It would, after all, make no sense to hold someone responsible for doing something and yet think that he is perfectly well justified in doing something else. To hold another responsible for acting in a certain way just is to think that he must act in that way. (As I will discuss in Chapter Three, whether he is in fact obligated – whether the demand is a conclusive reason for him to act – depends on what other obligations he has.)

1.1.4 Scope

The last main feature of moral obligations that I wish to highlight is their *scope*. This is the issue of to whom an obligation applies. The institution of morality is often thought to apply to everyone; that is, moral reasons are reasons for everyone (even for those who eschew morality).¹⁴ This intuition is generally strongest for negative obligations, and especially for those against harming others. Common sense holds that murder is wrong, and by this it is meant that it's wrong for *anyone* to commit murder. The obligation not to murder thus has universal scope. Of course, not everyone stands under precisely the same obligations, and so not all obligations have universal scope.

Obligations are relative to people in several ways. First, we can distinguish between parochial and universal obligations. Some obligations, such as those not to murder or steal (and obligations against harming others generally) generally are held to be universal. That is, all moral agents have these obligations simply in virtue of being moral agents. Other obligations are parochial, emerging from specific relationships or roles that a person may have. Lifeguards, for example, have a special obligation to ensure the safety of the swimmers that a passerby does not have.

¹⁴ Shiffrin describes this as the *bindingness* of morality (Shiffrin 1999, p. 774).

Second, obligations provide *agent-relative* reasons for acting. Agent-relative reasons are reasons that necessarily include a reference to the agent whose reason it is. For example, parents have an obligation to take care of *their* children, not anyone else's. In other words, the obligation isn't just "to take care of children"; it is to take care of *one's own* children. The obligation is thus relative to the agent. Agent-relative reasons contrast with *agent-neutral* ones. These may be stated without any reference to an agent. The fact that some action would be beneficial to children, for example, is a reason for anyone to engage in it. In contrast, the fact that I promised my children to take them to the movies is a reason for *me* to take them to the movies, not a reason for anyone else.¹⁵ The former reason is agent-neutral, while the latter is agent-relative.

The distinction between agent-relative and agent-neutral reasons should not be confused with the distinction between parochial and universal reasons. In particular, agent-relative reasons can also have universal scope. Again, the obligation to take care of one's children is agent-relative, but it applies to all parents (let us suppose).

Finally, some obligations are clearly relative to time, place, and culture. In contemporary American society, a person may have very few (if any) obligations to her extended family. This has not been (and is not) true in many other cultures, however, where one's extended family often plays or played a much more prominent role in a person's life.¹⁶

Although obligations can be relative in these ways, it is nevertheless true that many obligations, especially those against harm or wrongful interference (as well as

¹⁵ For more on this distinction, see Parfit 1984, p. 143, where these terms are introduced, and Nagel 1986, where he appropriates these terms to mark a distinction he originally made in Nagel 1970. Korsgaard calls this distinction into question in Korsgaard 1996a.

¹⁶ There are actually two different things one might mean in speaking about the cultural relativity of obligations. The first concerns whether an obligation actually exists in a given culture. In the example just given, whether someone has certain obligations to extended family really does depend upon the culture. (In some cultures, for example, a person helps to care for his aging relatives; in other cultures, care for the elderly is assigned to others.) The second concerns whether a given culture properly countenances some obligation (from our point of view). Suppose a society thinks that there is an obligation to sacrifice virgins to appease the gods; from our point of view, not only are they wrong about that obligation, but they also run afoul of an obligation not to kill innocent people. The difference between these two senses is that between what obligations a person actually has and what obligations a person thinks that she has. Both of these can be relative to culture; in speaking about cultural relativity of obligations, I intend the first of these senses.

some requiring aid) are often thought to be universal in scope. Part of my project will be to vindicate this intuition.

1.2 Beginning intuitions

In what follows, I develop a theory that attempts to explain these four features by grounding moral obligation in personal relationships. More specifically, I will argue that obligations are *partially constitutive* of relationships: part of what it means to be in certain relationships is to have obligations towards the other person. To a certain extent, this claim isn't all that surprising; I think it is fairly obvious that relationships have built-in norms about how to treat others. Friends, for example, are supposed to be there for each other, help each other, and so forth. It would be very odd (to say the least) if someone claimed to be your friend and yet always refused to help you whenever you asked.

My claim is that some of these norms, such as that to help one's friends, take the form of obligations. To understand this claim, we need to get clear about the kinds of relationships I have in mind. One might call any interaction with another a "relationship", but that use of the word is much broader than what I intend. For example, in some very weak sense, we might say that I have a relationship with the cashier in a store when I'm buying products. I may indeed have obligations towards her, but they won't be in virtue of our cashier-customer relationship. Rather, I have in mind the more significant relationships in people's lives. These include family relationships, such as parent-child relationships, sibling relationships, and marriage, to name a few, and also friendships, specifically the kind that Aristotle calls *character friendships*. I shall argue that a careful examination of these relationships shows that being in them requires a person to recognize her family and friends as having second-personal authority to obligate her (and also that she has second-personal authority to demand things of them as well). Moreover, I shall argue that a person can reject these relationships only on pain of being unable to lead a recognizably human life.

In proceeding in this fashion, I am explicitly avoiding the argumentative strategy pursued by the dominant accounts of moral obligation today.¹⁷ These accounts take as their main task the derivation of duties that are owed to other people generally, simply in virtue of their being rational agents, or sentient beings, or in some other way essentially “creatures like us”. That is to say, they begin “from the top down”, as it were, seeking to derive our most general duties to others, thinly described. Only then (if ever) do they turn to what a person might owe to those closest to her, like her family and her friends.

Interestingly, this order is precisely the reverse of that in which a person usually comes to recognize her obligations to others. She typically first learns that there are norms about how to treat others in her own family; only later does she learn that she owes moral consideration to all others. Moreover, most of the specific obligations that a person has are owed to those closest to her. Commonsense does, of course, suggest that we have certain general obligations to everyone (*i.e.*, those against harming or wrongful interference, and perhaps also some minimal obligations to aid others). The more specific ones, though – the ones that really shape our lives, such as the ones involved in parenting, or in being married – are by their very nature owed to those closest to us. In seeking to ground moral obligations, then, it makes sense to begin not by considering what we owe to other persons simply *qua* persons but instead by thinking about these specific relationships in more detail. That is, rather than working from the top down, we can proceed from the bottom up, thinking first about our obligations to those closest to us and then about what we owe to people generally.¹⁸ This is the strategy that I shall pursue; I now turn to an overview of it.

1.3 Overview

To begin, it’s not too mysterious how relationships give us the *content* of many of our obligations. Many obligations reflect the expectations that people have of each other. Spouses expect their partners not to cheat; parents expect their children to obey; children expect their parents to take care of them; and so forth. Of course, not all expectations translate into obligations. I expect that my parents will buy me a Christmas present,

¹⁷ Among these accounts are those in Darwall 2006, Korsgaard 1996c, and Scanlon 1998.

¹⁸ I don’t mean to suggest that this is the *only* way to proceed, just that it is *a* way of proceeding.

though I don't think they're obligated to do so. Not all obligations are founded on expectations, either. An infant probably has no expectations of her parents, but it seems clear that they have obligations to her. What precisely these obligations are will vary from culture to culture, but whatever they are, they will come from the relationship. In general, the expectations that are the most fundamental or the most characteristic of a particular relationship are the ones likely to give rise to obligations.

Above, I claimed that obligations are partially constitutive of certain personal relationships, specifically certain family relationships and friendships. In fact, I will argue that obligations are partially constitutive of a special way of relating to others that I call corporate identity (CID). The relationships just mentioned are instances of CID relationships; as I discuss below, many other kinds of relationships, such as citizenship and religious group membership, can also be characterized by CID.

Corporate identity is essentially a special kind of group membership. It's easiest to see what I'm getting at by considering some specific examples. Suppose a family has a guest over for dinner, and one of the children makes a rude remark to the guest. His sister might apologize for him. When she does, it will not be just on his behalf, as though she were "taking on" guilt that is in the first instance rightly attributed to him, but rather as one who shares in the guilt.¹⁹ How can she do this? She – let's call her Sarah – is a member of the family, and thinks of herself as such, except that this thought is not of herself as a member but rather just of the family directly. The thought might be expressed by saying that there is a sense in which she thinks primarily in terms of *we* rather than *I*. In other words, she thinks from the point of view of the family and not from the point of view of herself as an individual. When one member of the family acts, there is a sense in which they all act, and when something happens to one, it happens to all.

I am not suggesting that Sarah forgoes any sense of individuality in identifying with her family. However, I do mean to suggest that there is a sense in which Sarah thinks in terms of her family acting and not (primarily) in terms of herself. The reason is

¹⁹ Elizabeth Anderson has pointed out to me that while the sibling can certainly offer an apology, doing so doesn't alleviate her sibling from the responsibility of offering an apology on his own. As I'll discuss below, this makes perfect sense since people have both personal (*i.e.*, as individuals to be distinguished from other individuals) and corporate identities.

that, on this conception of her family, and herself, her life is inextricably bound up with the lives of her other family members.

There is certainly a weak sense in which Sarah thinks of herself in terms of her family. The relationships in our lives help us to individuate ourselves from any other person (chosen at random, if you will). That is, they allow us to see ourselves as individuals to be distinguished from other individuals in the world at large. Family relationships are particularly important in this regard: I am the person who has *these* parents; who is married to *this* person; and so forth. (Of course, more general relationships can function in this regard, too: *e.g.*, I am the person who belongs to *this* religious community, *etc.*) However, corporate identity involves a much stronger sense of thinking of oneself in terms of a group.

Explicating this sense is the task of Chapter Two, where I characterize CID in terms of its most salient features. I have already gestured at two of them here. The first is *plural subjecthood*, a first-person plural perspective in which one thinks primarily in terms of the group and not solely from one's own individual perspective. This perspective permits another feature, the possibility of *shared and collective emotions*, as in the example above. A third feature that is especially prominent in family relationships and friendships is the *sharing of lives* among members. This feature describes the thorough-going way in which people in intimate CID relationships adopt the *we* perspective. It also distinguishes corporate identity from other kinds of group membership: I argue that by sharing her life with someone, a person's self-conception is enlarged to include the other. Finally, CID is marked by the care, concern, and sometimes love that the group members have for each other.

Familial relationships, and the parent-child relationship in particular, provide very good examples of corporate identity, but in fact I think that many of the relationships we have involve corporate identity to at least some degree. This is easier to see in past cultures, especially in tribal ones, where a person's identity was very bound up with community in which he lived. From the perspective of obligations, these cases are particularly interesting because the net cast by corporate identity is very wide: it involves everyone in the entire community, not just those with whom one has personal interactions. Another interesting feature is that it gets automatically extended to new

members (*e.g.*, those born into the community). The early Christian communities to whom St. Paul wrote also involved very strong senses of corporate identity (and, for that matter, modern religious orders are also very good examples). Aquinas makes striking use of corporate identity in his explanation of the transmission of Original Sin.²⁰ As I discuss below, these broader examples of CID are relevant both to explaining the more general obligations we have to people who are relative strangers (*i.e.*, those who aren't family or friends) and also to explaining the scope of these obligations.

With an explication of corporate identity in hand, Chapter Three turns to explaining why CID relationships are partially constituted by moral obligations. This chapter focuses on the first three features of obligations discussed above: their normative force, strength, and second-personal nature. In keeping with my approach, the discussion is centered on the paradigmatic instances of corporate identity in family relationships and friendship.

I first argue that second-personal reasons are necessarily a part of CID relationships in virtue of plural subjecthood. In adopting the *we* perspective, a person reasons with others about what to do, and such reasoning must include the ability to make claims upon other members of the group. Crucially, the care (including love) that she has for others, and the sharing of lives between members, also ground second-personal reasons. In order to share her life with another, a person must see the other as a distinct, autonomous individual who brings his own point of view to the relationship; otherwise, she isn't sharing her life with him but rather "colonizing" him. Some of these reasons will naturally take the form of demands; and per the discussion in §1.1.3 above, the normative force of these demands follows directly from their second-personal nature.

I next argue that some of these demands have the strength of obligations. Whether a specific demand is overriding (that is, trumps all other reasons a person has) depends upon what other reasons she has and in particular upon any other demands with which she is faced. With this caveat, I argue that the strength of demands that others

²⁰ See the *Summa Theologica*, IaIIae.81.1: "we must explain the matter [Original Sin] otherwise by saying that all men born of Adam may be considered as one man, inasmuch as they have one common nature, which they receive from their first parents; even as in civil matters, all who are members of one community are reputed as one body, and the whole community as one man." Aquinas's use of what I'm calling corporate identity may be more metaphysically heavy than what I have in mind, though.

make within a CID relationship depends upon the importance of those claims to the relationship. (And so strength is a matter *internal* to a relationship.) In order for the plural subjecthood and the other features of CID relationships to be possible, there are certain ways in which one must treat others on pain of compromising, harming, or abandoning the relationship. The more that failing to honor a claim would hurt the relationship in any of these ways, the greater the strength of that claim.

The arguments of Chapter Three ground the obligations a person has to her family and friends. Commonsense suggests that we also have general duties (both negative and positive) to all others. In Chapter Four, I develop a theory in which these obligations are grounded in a person's relationship to God (at least within the Christian tradition). Briefly, I argue that in order to love God properly, one must follow the famous command to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Mk 12:31, but found in all four Gospels). Although I argue that God's commands fill out the content of such love, I do not offer a divine command theory of obligation. Instead, I argue that one must love others out of love for God because God loves them.

Finally, Chapter Five considers several objections to the account developed in chapters Two through Four. In particular, I first consider what could be said to a person who refuses to be in any CID relationships at all.²¹ I argue that CID relationships are so fundamental to our lives that actively rejecting them is nearly impossible. I also take up the question of what could be said to a person who chooses to leave a particular relationship in order to get out of obligations he has to others. Unsurprisingly, of course, the people he intends to abandon have claims against his doing so. However, I argue that people in *other* CID relationships with him also have claims against his simply walking out on one of his relationships. Finally, I explain how certain obligations can persist even after a relationship legitimately ends. I argue that CID relationships require a person to see his loved ones as being valuable in their own right, independently of the relationship. This value, I argue, is capable of grounding certain obligations even after the relationship ends.

²¹ This is the issue of scope discussed in §1.1.4.

Chapter 2

Corporate Identity

“...moral and personal relations are not different in kind. The difference between them is the difference between the degree of reciprocity that is required of us as one human being relating to another, and the degree of reciprocity that we are capable of when our relations are at their best” (Korsgaard 1996b, p. 193).

“The primal scene of morality...is not one in which I do something to you or you do something to me, but one in which we do something together. The subject matter of morality is not what we should bring about, but how we should relate to one another” (Korsgaard 1996a, p. 275).

The heart of my view is that moral obligations are partially constitutive of certain kinds of relationships, ones which are characterized by something I call corporate identity (CID). It is within these relationships that we first become aware of obligation, and, more importantly, it is within these relationships that obligations are best grounded.

The relationships I have in mind are, in the first instance, our most important and intimate relationships – namely, familial (such as parent-child, sibling, and spousal) relationships and friendship. CID both gets its start and is most naturally at home in these relationships. CID can also appear in extended kinship relations and, more broadly still, in tribal and national affiliations. Finally, it often plays a role in religious identity, and I will argue later (in Chapter Four) that this can be an especially important form of CID.

In claiming that corporate identity is part of all of these varied kinds of relationships, I mean that it is a part of them in their best form. There are of course plenty of manifestations of all of these relationships which are only weakly, or even not at all, characterized by CID. There are two points here. First, while I will argue that CID is of the first importance in our most intimate relationships, it is certainly true that these relationships may in fact be nothing more than gross caricatures of what they should be (*e.g.*, the relationship between “dead-beat dads” and their children) and so lack any real

corporate aspect. I will deal later with the question of what obligations, if any, such defective relationships might support; here I am concerned with explaining why and how obligations are constitutively a part of CID relationships.

Second, the broader the relationship (i.e., the more people it encompasses), the weaker CID tends to be, generally speaking. It should thus not be a surprise if, at least in some cultures, many people fail to feel the pull of CID with, say, their extended kin. In contemporary American society, wealth and greatly increased mobility have reduced the need for families to “stick together” to sustain themselves and so a person may not feel as close to her extended family as she does to those with whom she lives. A similar distancing occurs as children become adults and start their own families. In both of these cases, the unique perspective of corporate identity, while it includes more distant relatives, may not be very strong. My point here, however, is merely that these relationships do have a corporate aspect, and so there is a valid perspective that one, as a family member, can take up. Here too, my strategy will be to deal first with idealized forms of these relationships which do involve CID. However, I note in passing that it is not a problem for my view if some actual instances of these relationships are not characterized by CID; my thesis is merely that corporate identity *can* be a part of wider relationships, such as citizenship, and that when it is these relationships will be partially constituted by obligations.¹

The goal of this chapter is to develop the idea of corporate identity. In §2.1 I will outline the five main features of CID relationships among family and friends. These features will be further developed in §2.2 and §2.3, first by contrasting CID with Gilbert’s theory of plural subjects and then by examining a particular form of CID, Aristotelian character friendship. I’ll close with some remarks on Kant’s view of marriage.

2.1 Corporate Identity (CID)

To begin, let’s focus on one of the most paradigmatic instantiation of CID, familial relationships. As I described it in Chapter one, CID is the thought that one is

¹ Chapter Four will take up the issue of wider CID relationships.

part of a group in a way that, to a greater or lesser extent, makes possible things such as shared pride and guilt. However, such collective emotions are not the most important part of any CID relationship. I initially highlighted this feature of CID simply because it is one of the most noticeable and because the possibility of collective emotion intuitively distinguishes CID from group membership *simpliciter*.² I am a member of many different groups: the set of people who live in my apartment building; the residents of Ann Arbor, Michigan; the set of people who bike to school; a philosophy of religion reading group; the set of people certified in scuba diving; and so forth. But none of these, at least for me, really support collective emotions at all, and so I do not corporately relate to any of these groups. In contrast, I certainly do experience collective emotions with my family and with my closest friends.

Beyond shared and collective emotions, there are four other defining features of corporate identity.³ One of the most important is *plural subjecthood* – the existence of a perspective in which one thinks primarily in terms of the group and not solely from one’s own individual perspective. In its strongest forms, a person sees her life as inextricably bound up with those of the others in the relationship, and the *we* perspective of CID can become her primary deliberative standpoint. Parent-child (on the parent’s side, anyway) and spousal relationships are the most propitious kinds of relationships for this to occur. A new mother, for example (or father, if he is the primary caregiver, or perhaps both together), will structure her daily life around her newborn. Almost everything she does is no longer done just for herself but for her and the baby. Something similar occurs with newlyweds as each makes the transition from planning his or her life to planning *their* life. The child-parent relationship is somewhat different: learning that there are reasons for acting (that is, acquiring *a* deliberative standpoint) is one of the major tasks of childhood; learning that others can give you reasons for acting (necessary to be able to

² The *possibility* of shared emotions is necessary, *but not sufficient*, for CID. Suppose that roughly the same group of people share a bus ride to work every morning, and suppose one day one of them is the victim of a purse-snatching just as the bus is pulling away. Some, perhaps all, of the people on the bus may feel as though they were all collectively assaulted somehow, but I doubt that this is sufficient to establish any lasting sense of CID. The paradigmatic cases of CID are ones that persist though time and that are grounded in the experience of living together. To the extent that collective emotions arise elsewhere, I conjecture that they are made possible (by extension) by the paradigmatic cases.

³ Note that I am here talking about the CID present in familial and friendship relationships. Not all of these features will necessarily apply to broader instances of CID. I’ll take up that issue in Chapter Four.

participate fully in CID) – indeed, learning that others have their own perspectives on life – is yet a further task. In this case, the corporate identity won't be characterized by the primacy of the *we* perspective for the simple reason that the *we* perspective (understood as a deliberative standpoint) simply doesn't exist, at least not in any full-fledged form. Nevertheless, it would of course be wrong to think that young children do not see their lives as bound up with those of their family members, and especially with their parents.⁴ To the extent that young children “locate themselves in the world,” relative to other people, they do so almost exclusively through their families.

Closely related to plural subjecthood is the sharing of lives among members. Here I have in mind a very specific use of “sharing.” In virtue of the nature of familial and friendship relations, members participate in each other's lives. For example, they may help each other with personal projects, and they confide their hopes, desires, plans, and other facets of their lives to each other. It's more than that, however: people in CID relationships do not merely participate in the others' lives; they *share* in them. To share *x* means to think of *x* as properly belonging not to any one person but to all. To share in another person's project, then, is to take on that project oneself. If, for example, I share in my friend's goal of climbing a mountain, then it is no longer just his goal but *our* goal, together. To put it another way, my goal is not merely to help him reach the summit (as it might be if I were merely participating in his goal) but rather for us to do so.⁵

Sharing in another person's life thus involves the deliberative standpoint of plural subjecthood. It is more than just that, however; as we will see in §2.2, one can adopt the *we* standpoint of plural subjecthood with anyone simply through making a joint commitment. The sharing of lives inherent to CID also involves a kind of care for the others. Moreover, as the phrase “sharing of *lives*” is meant to suggest, in robust CID relationships the scope of that in which a person shares is not limited to particular projects or commitments but is, rather, much more broad. If I am really friends with

⁴ This can remain true even if the parents do not live together (e.g., because of divorce), and even if the separation happens at an early age. My 7-year old cousin still has a very strong attachment to her father, even though her parents divorced several years ago and she doesn't see him often.

⁵ There are interesting questions about what sharing in goals requires. If I'm wheelchair bound, can I still share in my friend's goal of climbing a mountain? My intuition suggests that I can, but I won't argue for that claim; I'm concerned only with explaining what I mean by “sharing.”

another person, I won't share just in his desire to climb a mountain; I'll share in many other things, too. To what extent I'll share in my friend's life is an open question. My point is that this sharing will not be artificially limited by any specific commitment. Finally, and most importantly for our purposes, the sharing of lives in CID relationships effects a change in each person's self-conception such that it is "enlarged" to include the others. This aspect is absolutely critical, for it distinguishes corporate identity from other forms of plural subjecthood in which a person's self-conception is *not* changed.

Third, CID relationships are also characterized by the care, concern, and love that individuals have for each other. Importantly, a person cares for others not just as members of the group, but also as persons in their own right. In §2.3, I'll explain why caring for others for their own sakes is essential to CID relationships. Further – and fourth – this care is also personal (as opposed to impersonal) in nature. That is, the care is not simply a general attitude of beneficence, as one might have toward a stranger; as I will describe in the discussion of Aristotelian character friendship below, a person is vested in her friends and family, and they matter to her in a way that others do not. I pick out the personal nature of this care as a separate, distinguishing feature of CID because it plays an important role in the sharing of lives among members.

There are thus five defining (and, clearly, interrelated) features of corporate identity that appear in full-blooded friendships and familial relationships: plural subjecthood; the sharing of lives among members; care, concern, and love that members have for each other; the personal nature of this care; and the possibility of shared and collective emotions. To develop these features further, let's look at how CID compares to some other kinds of relationships to which it is related.

2.2 Corporate Identity and Plural Subjecthood

The *we* perspective that characterizes corporate identity is not just any kind of plural subjecthood; it's a very special sort, one that involves care and concern for other members of the group. To bring out this point, it will help to contrast CID with Margaret Gilbert's more general theory of plural subjects. (For ease of exposition, I'll refer to her theory as "generic plural subjecthood" or "plural subjecthood, generally considered" since CID is a special instance of it.) It is often the case that we see ourselves from a

collective point of view (corporate identity would, of course, be one such case). When this happens, we can pursue goals that are, properly speaking, “ours:” they aren’t goals held by individuals in a summative sense.⁶ In these cases, we understand ourselves to be members of a “plural subject” which is the subject of these goals. (And in fact, Gilbert thinks that the member individuals may not, as individuals, hold the goals of the plural subject at all.⁷) Plural subjects are founded through *joint commitments*:

Two or more people constitute the plural subject of a goal if they are jointly committed to accepting that goal together, or, as I have preferred to put it, *as a body*. Two or more people can accept a goal as a body without each one individually having it as a goal of his or her own. *E.g.*, we may, as a body, accept the goal of improving our department’s status within the university, without each of us having the improvement of our department’s status as a personal goal (Gilbert 1996, p. 2).

A joint commitment is set up when each participant openly expresses her commitment to the goal on the condition that all other members express their commitments to the goal, and all of these commitments are made with the common knowledge that, once they are made, the joint commitment will have been set up. In other words, each person commits only on the condition that everyone else does and with the knowledge that if everyone commits, the joint commitment will be in place.

Joint commitments have several interesting features.⁸ They can be dissolved, but all the members must agree; they cannot be unilaterally rescinded. If a person does back out of joint commitment, the commitment itself is not destroyed, although those remaining faithful to it can then back out themselves. As Gilbert puts it, the joint commitment is not voided, but it is at that point *voidable*.⁹ Joint commitments also

⁶ That is, for “us” to hold a goal together, it is neither necessary nor sufficient for each person in the group to hold that goal individually.

⁷ See Gilbert 1996, p. 10, where she discusses “a commitment that is not yours, nor mine, nor a composite of a commitment of yours and of mine, but rather the commitment of the two of us.”

⁸ Before going further, let me stipulate that I shall only consider joint commitments between small groups of people in order to facilitate the comparison with corporate identity. As I mentioned in the main text, in this paper I am focusing on “intimate relationships”, that is, family and friendship, and these typically do not involve very many people. On Gilbert’s view, the nature of joint commitment varies with the size of the group and the issues about which they’re committed; I don’t want to discuss these issues here.

⁹ She does think that in certain cases of two-person joint commitments that one person’s backing out does end the joint commitment (Gilbert 1996, p. 14). In any event, I believe that these points are best understood as being technical features of joint commitments. If, for example, a sufficiently large minority

generate obligations on the part of each participant to fulfill the commitment, but they are not *moral* obligations; she calls them “obligations of joint commitment” (Gilbert 1996, p. 11). When they conflict with moral obligations, they do not disappear; obligations of joint commitment remain in force for as long as the commitment remains.¹⁰ However, Gilbert allows that one can let them be overridden because joint commitments do not necessarily determine what must be done, all things considered.¹¹

I believe that this brief description of Gilbert’s view is enough to draw out the differences between it and corporate identity. While joint commitments certainly play a role in CID, they are only a part. Corporate identity is a deeper, stronger notion than joint commitment. Indeed, it had better be, or it wouldn’t be able to support *moral* obligations.

I will mention four major differences between joint commitments and corporate identity. The first is that joint commitments usually need to be explicit: in order for two people to form one, “each must express to the other his willingness to do so, in conditions of common knowledge. Both must therefore understand what a joint commitment is” (Gilbert 1996, p. 293). The commitment is in place when and only when each of the necessary expressions of willingness have been made. At a minimum, both parties need to be aware of the joint commitment, and this condition is most readily met when the expressions of willingness are explicit.

Corporate identity, especially in its stronger forms, is not like this at all; in fact, *explicit* agreement would rather miss the point. As I mentioned earlier, corporate identity is characterized in part by the care that members have for each other. Identifying with others in this sense comes by way of the bonds that develop between people and is not something that can be created by commitment. Corporate identity can certainly be reinforced or strengthened by commitment, but it can’t be generated by it. Marriage provides an excellent example of this phenomenon. One might think that it represents a

withdraws from a joint commitment, the commitment itself might be effectively destroyed for lack of people. In such a situation, Gilbert would claim that those who withdrew would still be technically under obligations of joint commitment, even though the group itself would have been dissolved for all practical purposes.

¹⁰ Gilbert even thinks that one can have an obligation of joint commitment to perform immoral actions, though she doesn’t think one should honor them: “it seems that people can become jointly committed to perform what are in fact immoral actions...They will then have obligations of joint commitment to perform [them].” See Gilbert 1999, p. 247.

¹¹ Gilbert 1996, p. 298.

counterexample to my theory since the relationship is, after all, created by means of the explicit consent in the wedding vows. But of course, that's not correct; the relationship existed before the vows were ever made—in fact, the relationship is what makes it possible to take the vows. While marriage is explicitly chosen, it's chosen in the sense of being affirmed, not in the sense that it comes about simply in virtue of an act of will. Further, corporate identity is not static; it can deepen over time (as one would hope in the case of a marriage), such that the identity one “chooses” at the beginning is not what one has ten years hence.

Arranged marriages are a trickier case since the explicit consent functions to initiate the relationship, not to affirm an existing one. However, it still doesn't *create* the relationship; the couple is understood as promising to *work* on creating a loving relationship, not as willing one into existence. Still, the idea of explicit consent functioning even just to initiate a CID relationship might seem problematic. It certainly is odd to think of explicitly choosing to care for others the way that one characteristically cares for family and friends. What's unsettling about that thought, though, is the idea that one can simply start caring deeply for others by a sheer act of will. Clearly that isn't right. However, it is not so uncommon to choose explicitly those whom one *will* care for in that way. Adoptive parents, for example, choose (more or less) whom they will love as a child.

Likewise, a joint commitment can sometimes precede and make possible corporate identity. A good example would be a decision to join a religious order. The feeling of belonging to the order probably often takes a long time to develop and is possible only because one makes the initial commitment. However, it is wrong to say that the commitment *generates* the corporate identity.¹² Voluntary military service is another case. Corporate identity is certainly present for those who are part of a fighting unit (in addition to the larger identity with the military generally). But it comes about gradually, in part being developed through boot camp.

¹² Also, the initial commitment is very weak. Final vows only come after one has been in the community for a considerable time (in the case of Jesuits, it can take 12 years or more—far more than the usual courtship before marriage!).

I have been arguing that corporate identity cannot be generated through explicit consent, whereas joint commitments often are. In fairness, Gilbert doesn't think that explicit consent is necessary for joint commitment. She offers as an example

two academic colleagues who, after many ad hoc arrangements, come to understand that they are jointly committed to having dinner together after departmental meetings. This is now established as their rule or practice. That it has become so established may be perfectly clear; precisely when it became so established may be hard to determine (Gilbert 1999, p. 243).¹³

This example, however, doesn't tell against my argument at all; my claim has been that corporate identity involves more than just consent, explicit or otherwise, whereas explicit consent under conditions of common knowledge *is* sufficient to generate joint commitments and the nonmoral obligations that arise from them. That some joint commitments might arise through established practices does not undercut the distinction between CID and generic plural subjecthood.

These considerations highlight the second major difference between generic plural subjecthood and CID: joint commitment (whether explicit or no) is both necessary and sufficient to create a generic plural subjecthood, whereas it is neither necessary nor sufficient for a CID relationship. It isn't necessary because CID can exist between, *e.g.*, a mother and her newborn child, and yet the child clearly cannot be party to any joint commitment. Joint commitments are sufficient for forming generic plural subjecthoods, but not every instance of generic plural subjecthood is an instance of CID; therefore, joint commitments also aren't sufficient for CID.

A third difference between Gilbert's joint commitments and corporate identity is that the former can be rescinded by agreement of all the participants. Gilbert does not think that this is true in all cases of joint agreements, but it is certainly true for most of them. So long as all the participants agree jointly to dissolve the agreement, it can be dissolved. This is not true of corporate identity involved in any of the intimate relationships I've been discussing. This does not quite amount to the claim that one cannot end friendships, marriages, and other family bonds by fiat. That can happen in

¹³ In the same passage she also considers joint commitments between much larger groups of people living on an island. However, as I said before, I don't want to consider these commitments in this paper.

some cases, and I discuss exiting from relationships in more detail in Chapter Five. For now I will just point out that part of what I have in mind is that corporate identity involves the care that members have for each other, and one can't simply end mutual care by agreement.

The fourth major difference is that joint commitments paradigmatically are founded on some common, usually specific goal (you need to be committed to *something*); corporate identity is not. It is certainly true that people who stand in the relation of corporate identity often are jointly committed to many different things. My claim is just that, *au fond*, corporate identity is not comprised simply by a joint commitment to anything in particular. As with the other differences I've discussed, there might be cases in which joint commitments more closely resemble corporate identity (so, in this case, there might be some very general joint commitments¹⁴); this possibility does not concern me. My point has been that corporate identity is more than just a joint commitment.

To see why, consider again the sense of corporate identity involved in a family. I do not think that it can be reduced to a very general joint commitment to live together as a family. Suppose we were to try to model it as such (though presumably the point of such a model would be to make use of the normative power of acts of commitment, whereas CID is meant to explain that very normative power). But that seems like the wrong place to look: surely the reason people stay together as a family is that they love each other and not that, in the first instance, they share an implicit joint commitment to live together. It *is* true that living together as a family itself involves many different (and relatively specific) joint commitments (*e.g.*, how domestic work is divided up, how child-rearing responsibilities are shared, and any number of other things). Such commitments are vital because they govern the mechanics of the relationship. But the CID involved in a family is more than just the set of these commitments, for these commitments only develop because the relationship is in place. Furthermore, a more general commitment to "living together as a family" would not be broad enough because families may not even live together. This is especially true when, *e.g.*, children go off to college. Rather than

¹⁴ All of Gilbert's paradigmatic examples of joint commitment that I've seen, though, involve a fairly specific goal—taking a walk together, dancing together, improving one's departmental standings.

reducing the corporate identity inherent in family relationships to a joint commitment (or even a set of joint commitments), the best way of understanding what's going on is by thinking in terms of a standing willingness to make joint commitments.¹⁵ I grant that other (non-CID) relationships may also be characterized by a standing willingness to make joint commitments; my point here is simply that this is characteristic of CID while it is not characteristic of generic plural subjecthood.

The purpose behind corporate identity is to explain how some of the norms characteristic of relationships take the form of obligations. Thus far I have characterized it as a way of relating to others in which one thinks in terms of *we* rather than *I*. Of course, such thoughts do not only occur in the context of corporate identity; Gilbert's joint commitments are another context, and I have argued that joint commitments are a part, but not the whole, of corporate identity. Among other differences, joint commitments are often explicit; they can be rescinded by agreement of all the participants; and they are usually aimed at something specific. None of these are true of corporate identity.

2.3 Aristotelian friendship

I mentioned at the outset that CID is also distinguished from plural subjecthood, generally considered, by the care and concern that a person has for the other members. To bring out the nature of this care, and to distinguish further the *we* of CID from that of generic plural subjecthood, I want to compare CID with Aristotle's account of friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aristotle famously characterized friends as "second selves:"

But the good man feels toward his friend as toward himself, since his friend is another self (Aristotle 1984, p. 1170b5).

¹⁵ Why not just say that there is a joint commitment to make other joint commitments? Aside from the fact that this really does seem hopelessly vague, it strikes me as phenomenologically inaccurate. It is true, I suppose, that my family is jointly committed to staying together as a family, "no matter what," but I certainly wouldn't put it like that. I'm much more inclined to say simply that I'm a part of my family and they are a part of me, and that this family unity may well result in some shared commitments. Moreover, families are held together by more than just joint commitments, anyway: also crucial are the affective bonds and the care that they have for each other.

The idea of friends as “second selves” seems to fit perfectly with my initial description of CID as thinking of the other members as “being a part of you, and you a part of them.” But what might Aristotle have in mind in calling a friend “another self?” Jennifer Whiting suggests that we understand the other-self doctrine in terms of kinds of reasons: thinking of a friend as another self means that a person’s reasons for caring for her friend are of the same kind as those she has to care for herself (Whiting 1991). That is to say, whatever grounds the reasons she has to care for herself will also ground reasons to care for her friend. There are two main ways this might happen. The first, which Whiting terms the “egocentric” strategy, “takes the nature of one’s reasons for concern to depend essentially on the nature of the *relationship* in which a potential object of concern stands to *oneself*” (*ibid*, p. 9, her emphasis). On this approach, the most obvious way of reading Aristotle’s other-self doctrine is to think of one’s friend as literally a part of oneself (hence, “another self”), at least insofar as her good, her faring well, is concerned. Concern for one’s friends then becomes an extension of self-concern.

The first way of making other-directed reasons for concern the same as self-directed reasons thus involves adopting the same, privileged point of view towards others that a person has towards herself. The second way, which Whiting labels the “generic” strategy, is just the opposite: it consists in taking the same impartial view towards oneself that one takes towards others. This approach, which is more Kantian in spirit, takes some characteristic, such as rationality, or sentience, or whatever, as being what grounds reasons for concern, and then observes that this characteristic is common to both oneself and others. As Whiting notes, this strategy “can operate at levels of greater and lesser specificity;” the characteristic chosen need not be common to all of humanity (*ibid*, p. 8). One might think (however implausibly) that only those people of a certain race, or only those people chosen by God, are worthy of care. Whiting herself pursues this route, taking the “substance or content” of a person’s character, as she puts it, as what grounds reasons for care (*ibid*, p. 11). On this view, one’s reasons for caring, either for oneself or others, result, in the first instance, from thinking of someone as a certain sort of person (for Whiting, as a virtuous person). Concern for others is therefore the same in kind as concern for oneself not because the former is an extension of the latter but because the latter has been reduced to the former.

One of the problems with taking the first route is that it suggests that the reasons we will have for liking friends, caring for them, and generally reasons concerning how we treat them will, in the end, be self-interested ones: if friends are truly “other selves,” whatever concern we have for *them* will ultimately derive from (that is, be a form of) concern we have for ourselves. But that seems incompatible with friendship, which is supposed to consist in care for your friends for their sakes. Whiting also argues that conceiving of others as part of yourself is a “potentially objectionable sort of colonization” (*ibid*, p. 10). While she doesn’t elaborate, part of what she might have in mind is that the other-self view would seem to preclude thinking of friends as independent persons. Depending on the accompanying change in your self-conception, the other-self view might also preclude thinking of yourself as an independent person as well: if thinking of the other person as “another self” is understood in terms of the merging of identities, it would appear that everyone involved in the friendship loses his individuality.

On the other hand, however, conceiving of another’s good as part of one’s own is motivationally rich since nearly everyone feels the force of self-interested considerations. Furthermore, my reasons for caring for my friend come out of the full-blooded relationship I have with her, not from apparently abstract considerations about her character. Though abstract ideals can certainly be motivating, they do not intuitively seem to be what drives the care that friends have for each other. In addition, the egocentric view – unlike the generic strategy – suggests a very intimate sort of relation: while it is easy to think of anyone as being a particular sort of person, it is much harder to think of another person as part of yourself. To put the point in Aristotelian terms, one cannot simply appropriate another’s good, making his faring well part of one’s own faring well simply by fiat.¹⁶ Finally, I note in passing that, while the egocentric strategy

¹⁶ Ironically, certain cases of CID might appear to be counterexamples. A soldier’s faring well is part of his army’s faring well, for example, and is so as soon as the soldier joins the army. And John Donne (Meditation 17) famously thought of all of humanity’s faring well as part of his own good. But notice that in each case, these identities aren’t ones that are adopted instantaneously. In a very limited sense, an army does “fare better” the more healthy soldiers it has (and so drafting another hundred people in some sense makes it stronger), but one isn’t instantaneously a part of the army; that’s part of the purpose of boot camp. Likewise, Donne’s very broad view of humanity is not a view that a person simply happens upon prereflectively.

does suffer from worries about independent agency, it does preclude thinking of the other simply as a *means* to one's own good since the other's good is *a part of one's own*.

Of these two, the egocentric strategy is naturally the one most amenable to CID: our reasons for caring for others do depend essentially upon the relationship we have to them, and indeed it is because we tend to think of others as being "a part of us" that our reasons are as strong as they are. What is left open, however, is the precise nature of the "part of us" thought that CID involves. Whiting is right to sound worries about thinking of others as *literally* a part of us, but in fact there are resources in Aristotle which, when combined with the idea of plural subjecthood characteristic of corporate identity, will support some form of this view. More specifically, one of the central aspects of Aristotelian friendship is the sharing of lives between friends. In what follows, I will argue that this sharing effects an "enlargement" of each person's identity or self-conception. A friend does not become a part of me through the merging of our identities or because I somehow "colonize" her. Rather, each undergoes a change in his identity in which he sees his life and his friend's life as being theirs, lived together. Because each person's identity is changed to include the other – though not in any sense that appropriates the other person – I characterize the change as an enlargement. Friendship, and CID more generally, thus stand in contrast to generic plural subjecthood, which involves merely the adoption of a different perspective (*viz.*, that of the group) and not a change of identity. Like Whiting, I am more concerned with developing a theory of friendship than I am with offering an interpretation of Aristotle (and in fact I doubt Aristotle would agree with my view). To see how this view works out, though, we need to consider what else Aristotle has to say about friendship. I will then explain what I mean by "identity" or "self-conception" (I use these terms interchangeably), characterizing it as something which provides a person both with the "raw material" for deliberation (desires, inclinations, interests, and so forth) and also with a perspective for thinking about the raw material. Finally, I will argue that the sharing of lives involved in friendship (and CID more generally) makes it something that contributes to a person's self-conception and so provides a perspective for deliberation – specifically, in a way that does justice to Aristotle's claim that a friend is "another self."

He argues first that to be a friend, one must care about the other in the right way. One cannot love his friend in the same way as he loves an object:

love for a lifeless object we do not call friendship. For there is no reciprocal love nor is there a good wish for the other. To bear a good wish for wine would be ridiculous. If anything, we wish that it may keep so that we may drink it. But we say that it is necessary to wish the good for a friend for his sake (Aristotle 1984, p. 1155b27-31).

Second, there must be mutually recognized reciprocal care; otherwise, there couldn't be a relationship:

For many people bear good wishes for those whom they have not seen but suppose to be good or useful. And someone among these may feel the same toward them. These people therefore seem to bear good will for one another. But how could someone call them friends when they do not recognize how they feel about themselves? (*ibid*, p. 1155b34-1156a3).

But even reciprocity and good wishes aren't enough; speaking about "sour and elderly people," he writes:

but such men may bear goodwill to each other; for they wish one another well and aid one another in need; but they are hardly *friends* because they do not spend their days together nor delight in each other, and these are thought the greatest marks of friendship (*ibid*, p. 1158a).

It is this last point, or rather, a related one, that is critical to corporate identity. Mutual goodwill, well-wishing, and aid are important characteristics of friendship, but, as Aristotle says, they are not the whole of it. A doctor wishes her patients well; and she hopefully provides them with critical aid; and her patients no doubt wish her well in return; but on these bases alone they are not friends, for all of these are consistent with mere impersonal or third-personal care for others. But friendship is not impersonal, disinterested care for others; rather, it is quite the opposite: it is *personal* care for others. Friends don't merely care for each other; they're vested in each other. A person cares for her friend not (primarily) out of impartial regard for her friend as being worthy of care but instead because she takes a personal interest in her friend. And that is because friends, through the sharing of their lives, experience an "enlargement" of their identities, or self-conceptions. Colloquially, we might say that they "make each other a part of their

lives” because each plays an important role in determining how his friend lives her life. This is the insight that Aristotle captures when says that friends “delight” in each other and want to “spend their days together:” in “delighting” in each other and spending time together, Aristotelian friends lead lives that revolve around each other.

What is a self-conception, and what is it for it to be enlarged? A person’s self-conception is the way in which she identifies herself, not primarily as against other people but rather in the sense of what it is to be her. It functions as an “agenda-setter,” determining, to a significant extent, what she thinks about and, more significantly, how she thinks about it. It determines *what* she thinks about because it includes her desires and inclinations as well as ends that she has. In this way, it is somewhat similar to what Williams calls a person’s “motivational set”.¹⁷ But whereas a person’s motivational set is supposed to include all of her desires, interests, and so forth, not all of these contribute to her self-conception: people have plenty of transient (or not so transient) desires, such as the ones I have to buy Zingerman’s cappuccinos, that don’t really affect how they conceive of themselves. But it should be clear that at least some of a person’s main desires, interests, and ends do play a role in her self-conception. A person’s self-conception will also determine *how* she thinks about things because, as I will discuss in a few paragraphs, it helps to determine what considerations will count as reasons.

Discerning whether something contributes to a person’s identity is a tricky matter and not one that I will try to resolve fully here. On the view I’m setting forth, a person’s self-conception is strongly informed by habitual ways of thinking. These can be both ones we intentionally form as well as ones acquired unintentionally. In either case, they provide a starting point for reflection on what to do. Importantly, habitual ways of thinking aren’t completely arbitrary; they’re habitual precisely because those ways of thinking have come to play a recurring role in a person’s life. A married man who constantly thinks in terms of his role as a husband, for example, hasn’t arbitrarily decided to think that way (as though he chanced upon it at random); he does so because being a husband is an important part of his life. It is this sort of thing that I have in mind when I say that a way of thinking contributes to a person’s self-conception.

¹⁷ See Williams 1981b.

We might be tempted to say, with Frankfurt, that it is simply what a person is committed to, or what she would endorse in a second-order volition, that contributes to her identity.¹⁸ However, it can't be merely an issue of second-order concern, for I could recognize that some vice plays a perhaps central role in my self-conception. Far from being something that I endorse, the vice will be something that I actively try to eliminate. Moreover, recognition of the vice as indeed playing a central role in my life is often the necessary first step towards its elimination. An alcoholic, for example, must come to grips with the fact of his alcoholism before he can begin to reject it properly. That is, he must actively conceive of himself as an alcoholic in order to be treated. Until he does, though, his being an alcoholic will continue to influence his decisions (at least as regards drinking). It, too, counts as a habitual way of thinking, though it is not one that he endorses.

Besides vices, other unendorsed habitual ways of thinking may also contribute to a person's self-conception. I know of an engineer who unconsciously approaches most of life's tasks as optimization problems. He once tried to optimize the serving line at a picnic. Undoubtedly he enjoys making things run more smoothly, but he doesn't obviously *endorse* this way of thinking; he just does think that way.

The point of the foregoing examples is to emphasize that a person's self-conception is not entirely up to her; she is not free to conceive of herself however she likes but instead must be guided by facts about her.¹⁹ However, she can form second-order volitions which, over time, will change her self-conception. For our purposes, it is not important to get completely clear about when endorsing something can make it part of a person's self-conception or when rejecting it can eliminate it from her self-conception. Examples abound. I could, for example, make some activity, such as writing or a martial art, a part of my self-conception through endorsing it and seeing myself as someone who does those things. Or a volunteer group that I join could also be a part of my self-conception. Most importantly, all of a person's CID relationships will contribute to her self-conception.

¹⁸ See, *e.g.*, Frankfurt 1988.

¹⁹ This feature echoes two of the differences between CID and generic plural subjecthood discussed in the previous section: just as CID relationships can neither be created nor rescinded by explicit agreement, self-conceptions cannot be instantaneously created or dispatched simply by second-order volitions.

Having something be a part of my self-conception stands in contrast to, we might say, merely having these things *in* my life or be true *of* my life. It's true, for example, that I'm capable of writing computer programs in several different languages, but I don't particularly think of myself as someone who can do that; nor does it guide my deliberations at all. And the mail carrier whom I rarely see is similarly in my life, but I hardly have a relationship with him that could influence my self-conception. This distinction is important since there is a myriad of things which, in a summative sense, pick out who I am – everything from my particular street address to the kind of hair styles I prefer. But while these things uniquely identify me, they do not, either individually or in a summative sense, play a role in making up my self-conception. Of course they won't do so individually; no one conceives of himself as having a particular numerical address or as someone who detests mullets. The conjunction of all of these facts about me also isn't a self-conception; it's just a list of facts about me, and no one conceives of himself simply in terms of all the things which can be said to be true of him.

The reason for belaboring the distinction between being a part of one's self-conception and merely being in one's life is to bring out the fact that the former affect how one reasons about things, while the latter do not. When something contributes to a person's self-conception, it provides a point of view or perspective from which the person thinks of herself and others. That is, she thinks of herself "as the person who x " – who is a member of a volunteer organization, who is friends with x , and so forth. Moreover, these will be the points of view which "count": they are the ones from which an agent reasons in deciding what to do. One can, after all, take up all sorts of perspectives on things or on life in general. I might take up the perspective of someone behind Rawls' veil of ignorance, or I might try to take up Nagel's "view from nowhere", to see what would follow. The perspectives generated by things that are a part of my life, however, aren't simply ones that I take up "to see what would follow". It isn't that I'm intentionally committed to taking up the perspectives generated by my self-conception; it's rather that I don't have any choice (or at least do not explicitly choose to do so). To see this point, consider the perspective of friendship. Suppose that you are good friends with someone, that you spend time with him, that you do things with him, and so forth. Now suppose that he moves away, and you can no longer do things together. While he

was present, you were used to taking him into account in your reasoning. Even after he's left, you'll continue, to a certain extent, to do this: you'll notice things that would make him laugh; if you frequented a certain place, you'll remember what it was like to go there together; if you often ate together, in choosing a restaurant you may instinctively assess the menu in terms of his food preferences. When you're used to thinking like a friend, it's hard to stop thinking in those terms, even after the relationship ends.

The point is that the perspectives generated by a person's self-conception are the "default" perspectives from which a person reasons. They aren't merely optional, in the sense that a person summons them up when convenient and dismisses them just as easily. That they can continue to function even when the conditions that make them relevant no longer exist (as in the friendship example) demonstrates how fundamental they can be.

None of this is to say that other facts about a person that do not play a role in his self-conception, such as that he's a computer programmer, are not also relevant to decision making. These facts, however, do not provide a "default" point of view from which the person reasons.

These perspectives are thus importantly different from the one an agent takes up when, by means of a joint commitment, she becomes a member of a generic plural subject. While one cannot "summon up" and "dispatch" joint commitments at will (that requires the cooperation of others), participation in them is always optional, if not always explicitly intentional. Recall Gilbert's example of two academic colleagues who, through many *ad hoc* arrangements, come to be jointly committed to post-meeting dinners. The commitment each makes isn't quite intentional since no explicit commitment at a time was made. However, the joint commitment is still optional, for it was open to the participants to stop the practice of weekly dinners. Until the joint commitment became into being, so to speak (and thereby created an "obligation of joint commitment" to engage in the dinners), either party could simply have called off the arrangement for a particular week.

To sharpen up what I mean by the "perspectives" generated by a person's self-conception, it will help to contrast my view with Korsgaard's practical identities. In her view, as on Kant's, a person's desires and inclinations provide the "raw material" for deliberation. They "[present] an action as worth doing," and the person decides, "in

accordance with a principle of choice or volition, whether to do the action or not” (Korsgaard 1996c, p. 243). For Kant, there are two possible such principles: the principle of self-love and the categorical imperative. Korsgaard modifies Kant’s view, deploying what she calls “practical identities” in place of the principle of self-love. Practical identities are points of view, or perspectives, that a person takes on herself and the world. So:

That Susan is in trouble is a reason for action from the perspective of Susan’s friend; that the law requires it is a reason for action from the perspective of a citizen, and so forth (*ibid*, p. 243).

Ultimately, it is through their connection to a person’s identity that these perspectives get their normative force. These perspectives aren’t simply ways one *can* view oneself; they are ways in which one *does*, and when a person is “unprepared to give up a certain way she looks at herself, a description under which she finds her life worth living and her actions worth undertaking,” acting in accordance with these perspectives becomes a matter of practical necessity (*ibid*, p. 249). Practical identities are therefore perspectives which, in my terminology, contribute to a person’s self-conception.

Thus far Korsgaard’s view sounds very similar to my own. However, since these practical identities function as replacements for a principle of choice, Velleman wonders whether these perspectives, or self-conceptions, are simply identical with other “principles of choice” specifying how to act:

[Korsgaard] appears to say that adopting the identity of Susan’s friend *just consists in* identifying with particular principles of choice, such as the principle of helping Susan when she’s in trouble. This view implies that insofar as the reason-giving import of Susan’s troubles depends on whether the agent is her friend, it depends on whether the agent adopts particular principles of choice, including the principle that explicitly specifies her troubles as reasons (Velleman 2004, p. 39, my emphasis).

Now, if this is Korsgaard’s view, it is certainly not mine. A person’s self-conception (or something that contributes to it) does not, on my view, reduce to an explicit principle, or even principles, of choice, for it also includes desires, inclinations, and even ends. Even beyond this, the reasoning that a person does from the perspectives provided by her self-conception cannot be codified in terms of a finite number of principles. Imagine, for

example, all the things involved in friendship. They range from providing emotional support to planning activities together to (possibly) remembering to send Christmas cards (a duty which somehow consistently eludes this author).

To be fair to Korsgaard, she acknowledges these points:

When we adopt (or come to wholeheartedly inhabit) a conception of practical identity, we also adopt a way of life and a set of projects, and the new desires which this brings in its wake (Korsgaard 1996, p. 239).

She also speaks of acting in ways which are compatible with one's practical identities. Such talk suggests that reflection on what to do from the perspective of a particular practical identity is done not in terms of explicit principles but rather in terms of, perhaps, an ideal, the content of which is informed by cultural practices and traditions. This view of practical identities is much closer to my own view of self-conceptions.

With this rough idea of self-conception in hand, we are ready to see how friends, though the sharing of their lives with each other, affect each other's self-conception. Let's return to Aristotle's claim that friends "delight" in each other and want to spend time together. Aristotle distinguishes among three kinds of friendship, all of which are (more or less) covered by the English word. There are useful friends, pleasant friends, and "character" friends, and it is of these last that he is speaking. To say that character friends include each other in their lives would, on his account, be an understatement: they do not simply wish to engage in activities together (as pleasant friends might), or work together to accomplish something (as useful friends might); they wish to *live* together and to share their lives with each other. What do I mean? Most prosaically, friends share their projects, their desires, their hopes, their dreams, and so forth with each other. If, for example, your friend shares one of your desires, then the two of you will desire the thing together, for both of you. That is, it won't be the case that you have the desire originally and that your friend comes to desire the thing for you *for your sake* (though she can do this). Instead, the two of you will jointly desire the thing directly, together, from the *we* point of view. Of course this won't be true of every desire, project, and dream. Even in the deepest of friendships, each person will have her own idiosyncratic desires that the other will want for that person. The point is just that

character friends can and do share *some* aims in this fashion (and this *some* need not even be *most*; it's enough that a few important things are shared).

Less prosaically, but more importantly, character friends think that the point of living life, of engaging in the various activities which humans do, is partly so that they can do them with their friends. In contrast, pleasant friends think that the point of spending time with each other is primarily that it's enjoyable. For example, pleasant friends will play games together, or go shopping, or whatever, because these things are enjoyable in their own right and even more enjoyable when done with pleasant people. Character friends, too, will do these things because they are enjoyable, but they will also do them because they are ways of spending time with their friends. Pleasant friends think that spending time together is a means to enjoyment; character friends think that enjoying activities are a means to (rather, a way of) spending time together. This is what I mean when I say that (character) friends want to live together and share their lives: the point of living, for them, is that they can experience life with each other.

The result of sharing aims, projects, desires, etc., in this fashion, and of wanting to live life with others is that a person's self-conception changes. He no longer thinks simply from the *I* point of view but also takes up the *we* point of view. Crucially, this new point of view involves neither the subsumption (merging) nor the relinquishing either of his identity into his friend's or of his friend's into his. Friends do not seek to possess or to be possessed but to live life *with* the other person. Living life *with* another requires the existence of two separate people, each with her own distinct point of view. It requires also that each be able to participate in the other's point of view, and finally that the two can take up a unified point of view together.

The result is that friendship is marked by a partial collapse of the distinction between egoism and altruism. By "egoism" I understand the doctrine that I should act for the satisfaction of my own self-interests and my own good, conceived of *as mine*. In contrast, to act on altruistic reasons is to act purely for the sake of another: it is to see that person's good, conceived of *as hers*, as providing sufficient reason for acting. The reasons of friendship are, properly speaking, neither strictly egoistic nor strictly altruistic. In sharing your life with another, you conceive of it not as purely your own, nor as purely your friend's, but as *yours*, together. The reasons you have to care for yourself are

therefore not egoistic because you are sharing your life – your pursuits, your happiness – with another, and so you no longer think of it simply as your own. Likewise, the reasons you have to care for your friend are also not egoistic since, again, you think of her life and its pursuits not as your own but as shared with her. These considerations explain why care for yourself or your friend is also not purely altruistic.

One might object at this point that, contrary to what I insisted earlier, this sharing of lives results in each person losing her individuality – perhaps not to the other, since neither person in a friendship is dominant – but losing it nonetheless. For if I can no longer think of my life as *my own*, have I not lost it? And if I do not think of my friend's life as her own, how can I be said to act for her sake, as Aristotle insists that friends do (Aristotle 1984, p. 1155b31)? The answer lies in the distinction between thinking of something as *my own* and thinking of it as *mine alone*. It is only the latter thought that friendship precludes. In sharing your life with another, you do not give it up but rather allow another to partake in it – that is the nature of sharing. Earlier I said that a person wants both to share her life with her friend and her friend to share his life with her. Conceiving of my life as *mine alone* (or as my friend's alone!) prevents me from sharing it; likewise, I cannot think of my friend's life as mine alone, either, for again I would not be sharing her life but rather taking it. This is why I said that friendship is marked by a *partial* collapse of the egoism/altruism distinction. The reasons of friendship are not of one kind or the other but rather a mixture of the two. And this leads me to characterize this change in point of view as an *enlarging* of one's own identity. Talk of enlargement suggests that in being friends a person gains, rather than loses, something of her identity.

Whiting's central objection to any form of the egocentric view is that “the good of my friends is good – and good for *them* – independently of their relation to me and of whether I happen to care; that's why I *should* care” (Whiting 1991, p. 10). It should hopefully be clear by now that thinking of friends as a part of myself in the way I have suggested does not preclude thinking of them as valuable in their own rights, independently of me. However, that thought isn't, in the first instance, the reason why I should care; I should care precisely because they're my friends, and I've made it my business to care about them – or rather, because they're my friends, it simply *is* my business to care about them.

2.4 Kant's view of marriage

Unfortunately, some common sense ways of talking about relationships seem to stand at odds with the foregoing account. This is particularly true of marriage, which is often characterized in terms of “giving oneself” to another. Such language, while it captures the depth and significance of the commitment to the other, also misleads since it suggests that one does not just “give” but “give up” – and thereby lose – oneself to the other. Certain theological conceptions of marriage don't help, either. In Catholicism, for example, one can't divorce because marriage is understood as a total gift of self, and one can't take back a gift once given (nor, apparently, can the other person return it, even if he or she wants to: “what God has joined, let no man separate” Mk 10:9).

Kant thinks that worries about losing oneself can be alleviated through reciprocity. In the *Lectures on Ethics*, he imagines a choice between acting from purely egoistic considerations and purely altruistic ones. He argues that friendship – which he is imagining as involving only altruistic considerations – is possible because

“If I...look solely to the other's happiness, in assurance that he is similarly looking to mine, then this is indeed a reciprocal love, whereby I am again required. Here each would be tending the other's happiness from generosity; I do not throw away my happiness, but merely place it in other hands...” (Kant 1997, p. 185).

And when speaking of marriage, he writes:

“...if I hand over my whole person to the other, and thereby obtain the person of the other in place of it, I get myself back again, and have thereby regained possession of myself; for I have given myself to be the other's property, but am in turn taking the other as my property, and thereby regain myself, for I gain the person to whom I gave myself as property” (Kant 1997, p. 159).

Kant's worry about friendship seems to be simply that it precludes acting out of self-interest (he here understands friendship as being purely altruistic), and so a person runs the risk of not having her own needs and desires fulfilled. Reciprocity solves this problem by ensuring that one's needs own will be met – just by someone else. In marriage the situation is more dramatic: one is in charge, not just of the other's happiness, but of her whole person.

In neither case, however, does reciprocity appear to solve the worry that concerns us, namely, that a person loses her individuality to her friend or spouse. For if I am concerned only for the other person, whether only for her happiness or whether for her completely (perhaps by coming to look at the world entirely from her point of view), I have lost myself. It does not matter that someone else might care for me or might take up my point of view; to be me, *I* must care for myself and take up my own point of view. Korsgaard, who endorses Kant's solution, herself admits that "more needs to be said about the sense in which one is restored to oneself in these relationships." She goes on to say that the reciprocity in question "is not mere exchange, from which one can walk away. What is exchanged is a part of one's practical identity, and what results is a transformation of that identity" (Korsgaard 1996b, p. 215, n.14).

Korsgaard (and Kant) are right to emphasize reciprocity, but what is needed is not reciprocity in the *exchange* of practical identities but, as I have argued, in the *sharing* of them.²⁰ Kant himself sometimes seems to recognize this point. Immediately after the passage on marriage cited above, he writes: "The two persons thus constitute a unity of will. Neither will be subject to happiness or misfortune, joy or displeasure, without the other taking a share in it" (Kant 1997, p. 159). So long as we understand "unity of will" in terms of the sharing of reasons, Kant is right. True lovers share not just their reasons for acting but substantial parts of their entire lives. They do not, however, "constitute a unity of will" in any sense that would require each to think of himself not as an individual but only as a member of the relationship. That would be inimical to marriage, for in so giving up her individuality, a person would have nothing to share with her spouse.

2.5 Concluding Remarks

In the last three sections, I've compared corporate identity with Margaret Gilbert's theory of plural subjects; with Aristotelian friendship; and with Kant's description of marriage in an effort to describe corporate identity beyond the level of

²⁰ This is pure speculation (and so I relegate it to a footnote), but part of the motivation for thinking in terms of "giving" or "exchange" instead of "sharing" could be that the former suggest, as Korsgaard writes, that what takes place is not something that one can simply walk away from. It's easier to stop sharing something with another than it is to get something back that you've given. But on my view, this motivation disappears, since sharing involves the enlarging – and therefore a transformation – of one's self-conception.

intuition. Gilbert's plural subjecthood is more general than CID, and so the contrast between the two helps to highlight the ways in which the latter is more robust. Aristotelian friendship, as I have described it, is an example of one of the strongest instances of CID possible, and it is by extension from these very strong instances that wider CID relationships (discussed in Chapter Four) are created. At this point, however, it is time to see how CID relationships are partially constituted by moral obligations. That is the task of Chapter Three.

Chapter 3

Moral Obligation

We are now in a position to see why CID relationships are partially constituted by moral obligations. Recall from Chapter One the main features of moral obligations: their distinctive normative force; their overriding strength; their second-personal nature; and their universal scope. What's distinctive about the normative force of obligations is that they purport to be things that one must do. Requests for favors that others make of you ("would you please hold open the door for me?"), or prudential considerations, or instrumental reasons, are also normative.¹ All of the actions they recommend, however, are optional: if a person gives up the relevant end, these considerations cease to be normative for him.² Instrumental reasoning, for example, dictates that if I want to buy a cappuccino at Zingerman's, I'd better take along some money. If I decide that I don't want coffee, though, then I cease to have that instrumental reason for taking money. Obligations, however, are not like this at all; a person can't get out from under them by giving up an end. The second-personal nature of obligations explains why: obligations arise not from ends a person adopts but rather from the second-personal claims that others can make on him. This is what is meant by saying that obligations (of the sort I am considering) are *owed to* other people. Another hallmark of obligations is their overriding strength: they (typically) trump other kinds of reasons, such as ones arising from self-interest. Finally, at least some obligations are considered to have universal scope; that is, everyone has them.

¹ Some requests will generate obligations, but certainly not all. I'll discuss this issue later in the chapter.

² As Stephen Darwall has pointed out to me, this isn't quite true in the case of prudential reasons; it can still be prudent of me to do something even if I don't care about it. However, prudential reasons are still optional in the sense that I needn't act on them, just as I needn't act to further my self-interest.

The features of corporate identity discussed in Chapter Two are central to explaining why CID relationships are partially constituted by obligations. In this chapter, I will show how these features can ground the first three characteristics of obligation mentioned above (normative force, strength, and second-personal nature). This chapter will be concerned with the specific CID relationships discussed in the last chapter (familial relationships and friendship); broader CID relationships will be discussed in Chapter Four. The fourth feature of obligations, scope, will be addressed in Chapters Four and Five.

It should be no surprise that relationships provide all sorts of reasons for action. There are things one does to sustain the relationship; things one does out of care for the other members; reasons derived from shared goals; and so forth. Intuition also suggests that relationships generate second-personal reasons, too, ones that range from requests and suggestions to demands. As Robert Adams puts it,

[t]o see myself as “belonging” to a community is to see the institution or other members of the group as “having something to say” about how I live and act – perhaps not about every department of my life, and only to a reasonable extent about any department of it, but it is part of the terms of the relationship that their demands on certain subjects are expected to have some weight with me (Adams 1999, p. 244).

It is a commonplace, Adams thinks, that seeing others as legitimately “having something to say” about how I act is part of what it is to belong to a community. Notice, however, that there is a qualitative difference between the demands of others “having some weight” and those demands having the strength of moral obligations. To distinguish these two, I’ve called the first *claims* and the second *demands*. The most we can say of claims is that they will pick out things that are good to do or for which one has strong reasons inside of a relationship (though again, their reason-giving force comes from the authority of the other person). Demands are therefore the proper subject of this chapter.

My argument for the partial constitution thesis will proceed as follows. I will first argue (§3.1) that second-personal reasons are a part of CID relationships. (I say “reasons” in order to be ambiguous between claims and demands; some of the reasons will be morally obligating, while some will be weaker.) Because second-personal claims

are grounded in the authority of another, they are non-optional in the sense described above; that is, their normativity does not come from an end that a person chooses to adopt. In §3.2 I will distinguish among three different senses of overriding strength and argue that some of the second-personal reasons in CID relationships are overriding in one or more of these senses. §3.3 will briefly compare my account to other theories of moral obligation. I will conclude the chapter in §3.4 by developing a list of potential objections.

3.1 CID Relationships and Second-Personal Reasons

The existence of second-personal reasons inside of CID relationships follows directly from the plural subjecthood that characterizes CID. This fact is nothing special about CID relationships; any generic plural subjecthood will countenance at least some second-personal reasons. The reason is simple: plural subjecthood involves joint reasoning, and such reasoning must include the ability to make claims upon other members of the group. If nothing else, each member must be able to call others to participate in joint reasoning or, more generally, the group project.³ Gilbert thinks that generic plural subjecthood even gives rise to obligations (albeit the less strong “obligations of joint commitment”).

This point is easiest to see in the case of fairly specific joint commitments. Consider the plural subject that consists of myself along with a faculty member and several other graduate students. We’re jointly committed to teaching a class together. Each of us has his or her own roles: the professor is responsible for the main lectures and the overall structure of the course, while the graduate students are responsible for most of the grading, among other things. The graduate students are also responsible for writing the homework assignments. Each of these responsibilities entails an obligation on the part of the person who has it. If I fail to write a homework assignment that is jointly designated as part of my contribution to the course, others can call me to task for it.

³ In large CID relationships, the task of calling others to participate might be delegated. For example, a community might assign this task to police officers. In this chapter, however, we’re thinking just about friendship and familial relationships, so this issue doesn’t arise.

When they do, they'll be addressing second-personal reasons to me. That is, each of the other members has the authority to address me and complain that I haven't done my part of the group task.

Although each person has this authority, one might worry that the obligation in question is owed only to the group and not to any member considered as individual. Yet intuition suggests that some obligations are owed in the first instance to group members directly rather than to the group (though the existence of the obligation is the result of group membership). This point is extremely important for moral obligation. Parents, for example, owe duties of care directly to their children and not just to the family as a whole. If the duties were owed just to the family as a whole, then all members would have equal standing to complain about duties not upheld. That's false, however; the children have special standing to complain since the duties are ones that are owed in the first instance to them.⁴ Or to put it another way, the duties of care don't just *concern* the children; they are also owed *to* them.

It's easy to see, however, that plural subjecthood can also involve duties owed directly to other members individually and not just to the group. To extend the previous example, I and another graduate student were given the task of generating unique sets of legal citations for each student to find in the law library. We agreed that he would find a large number of citations while I would write a computer program to generate random combinations of them for each student. Suppose that he failed to do his part, though. Any of us could complain to him, but I would have special standing since my part of the job depended upon his. He owed me a set of citations to use for my program. We can correctly say that his part of the job was owed to me, directly, as well as to the rest of the group. Of course, the reason that he owes me the citations depends upon us both being members of the plural subjecthood, but that fact is not in tension with the idea that within the plural subjecthood certain duties can be owed directly to individual members and not just to the group as a whole.

⁴ Sometimes children are not in a position to complain, either because they do not understand the issues or because they cannot yet talk. In these cases, someone else may complain on their behalf. When the person does so, he is invoking not his own authority but theirs.

Corporate identity thus clearly involves second-personal reasons. The examples of the previous paragraph, however, all concerned reasons grounded in specific commitments. Yet some of the most important second-personal reasons others can address to us, such as reasons not to harm, or reasons to aid, aren't the result of any specific project we share with them. Such reasons are grounded, not in joint reasoning, but in other features of CID relationships. In Chapter Two, I defended the claim that corporate identity is not comprised simply by a joint commitment or set of joint commitments to anything in particular. Of course, family and friends may be committed to any number of specific projects, but it is important to see that these are not the whole of the relationships. There is no possibility of joint reasoning with infants, for example, or with people afflicted with certain mental impairments,⁵ and yet each is properly seen as being a member of one's family.

Among the things that make them so are the love that one has for them and the sharing of lives involved in CID relationships (for a person can share her life even with an infant or other subrational persons). These features do more than make them a part of one's family, though. The love that a person has for her family and friends *presupposes* that the beloved has a certain amount of second-personal authority. Moreover, this authority will ground the very general claims of aid and claims against harm that family and friends have upon us.

To see why, recall the discussion of Aristotelian friendship from Chapter Two. At the heart of friendship is mutually recognized, reciprocated love and care in which a person comes to see her friend's welfare as a part of her own: what happens to her friend happens to her, too. Friends are sympathetic, understanding how the other feels. Friendship is thus a very intimate relationship. Among other things, this intimacy means that there is a bond of trust between friends. They may trust each other not just with their secrets but also, for example, with their emotional lives. Friends trust each other to take action when one of them is doing something harmful to herself.

Significantly, intimacy also includes shared values. Over time, friends influence each other's evaluative outlook. They find similar things important in life, and their

⁵ I will later argue, however, that one should engage in hypothetical joint reasoning with them.

moral views may draw closer together. What is crucial here is not that they come to have precisely the same values and motivations but rather that they sort out these things with each other. In doing so, they will undoubtedly come to share some values, and then these may be values that are properly *theirs*, held together. Notice that this influence that friends have on each other need not involve rational deliberation about their values (though it might); the process can be less explicit, occurring as friends observe what the other values and come to see situations through the other's eyes.

Together, these features help to make possible a sharing of lives that involves an enlargement of each person's self-conception such that the friends see their lives as being theirs, lived together.⁶ For their lives truly to be held jointly, however, each friend must presuppose that the other has some standing (second-personal authority) to direct the relationship, for it is part of the very concept of sharing that one recognizes that another has some claim to what is shared. In friendship, however, what is shared is not something specific but instead a person's life. In allowing her friend to influence her evaluative outlook, to share in her secrets, and, in general, to shape her understanding of her own life, a person must presuppose that her friend has a general standing to make claims upon her; otherwise, she is not sharing her life with another but rather, as Whiting worried, is colonizing her friend (or allowing herself to be colonized).

The importance of second-personal authority in Aristotelian friendship is especially easy to see by considering the beginnings of friendship. You cannot force a person to be your friend, for the result would not be friendship but forced association. Friendship must be entered into freely. Of course, one can't quite *choose* to be another's friend, either; affective bonds aren't so directly subject to the will. But the point is more than a psychological one: the very idea of trying to force a person to be your friend misses the point of friendship entirely, just as forcing someone to be your spouse misses the point of marriage. Even if love and affection could be summoned upon command, they wouldn't be what is wanted. Friendship (and, *mutatis mutandis*, other love relationships) requires seeing one's friend as a distinct, autonomous person who seeks the

⁶ Quite obviously, each of these things may happen to a greater or lesser extent in any actual friendship. My intent here, however, is to develop an ideal that real friendships approximate.

same thing as oneself: someone to share in one's life, someone who can bring her own point of view to the relationship and thereby enrich one's own life.

A variation on this last point is true of one's relationships to subrational persons, such as infants. Though infants are not autonomous agents with their own developed point of view, a person can certainly still share her life with them, as I noted above, and this sharing of lives does effect a change in the person's self-conception. This change is perhaps nowhere more obvious than in the case of a mother's love for her infant. She certainly does see herself as living her life with her child.

As I explained in Chapter Two, to share something with another person is to see it as properly belonging to both. To share something with another thus requires seeing the other person as distinct person with second-personal standing regarding the thing shared. In sharing her life with her infant, then, the mother must see it as having some standing. One might wonder whether the infant is actually capable of *sharing* its life with its mother, however. To be sure, the infant is a very important part of the mother's life, but one might think that *sharing* in that life requires more cognitive abilities than an infant possesses. It is certainly true, for example, that the infant cannot engage in joint reasoning with its mother and so cannot participate in her life and direct the relationship in the same way that a friend does.⁷

Although she cannot explicitly reason with her infant, a mother can still engage in *surrogate* reasoning with it. That is, she reasons for her infant about what is best for it (and what is best for them) to do. In doing so, she is sharing her life with her child, for she is treating it as having interests which ground claims upon her. The reason that she is able to share her life through surrogate reasoning is that, while her child is not presently able to voice any claims, it will be in the future. Moreover, there is no sharp divide between when a child is able to share in its mother's life (say, by joint reasoning, among many other ways) and when it isn't; rather, there's a continuum in which a child becomes progressively more capable of sharing in its mother's (and, generally, in family) life.

In fact, the surrogate reasoning a mother does for her child reasoning is a crucial way in which she shares her life with her child. It is through being around others who

⁷ The infant's *needs* will, of course, influence the relationship by giving the mother reasons to do all sorts of things.

reason for them and with them that children learn to reason for themselves; such reasoning is therefore critically important to them and also enables them, as they learn to reason, to enter into the CID relationship more deeply.⁸

Similar considerations apply to other subrational agents, such as the mentally impaired, though here things become more difficult. I'd like to focus on two cases: one in which a person has limited mental capacity (say, that of a five year old) because of birth defects, and another in which brain damage is brought on late in life by Alzheimer's disease. These cases are interesting because the ways in which one can relate to such people will be importantly different from other relationships. In the case of those suffering from birth defects, there will never be a chance of relating to them as adult humans. In the case of Alzheimer's victims, one can no longer have the full relationship with them that one might have had. And if one cannot relate to these people as full-blooded agents, why think as if one could?

There are two reasons for thinking that one should still see oneself as hypothetically⁹ reasoning jointly with these people, the first pragmatic and the second more speculative. First, despite their brain damage, the mentally impaired are still humans and are still a part of one's family. If one is to relate to them at all, one must do so in ways that are appropriate to humans. Though they might have mental capacity on par with, say, a dog, it would be entirely inappropriate to treat them as pets. Animals can easily be a part of CID, but they are so in their own distinctive way.

Second, while one may not be able to relate to these people as fully rational agents *in this life*, for Christians, there is no reason to think that one will not be able to do so in the next. Through engaging in hypothetical joint reasoning, one is not helping the mentally impaired to become practical reasoners, but that is of no consequence; one is treating them as members of one's human family, and that they certainly are and – more importantly – will be in heaven.¹⁰ Of course, this consideration won't move anyone who doesn't share this view of the afterlife.

⁸ I discuss this point in more detail in Chapter Five.

⁹ By *hypothetical* joint reasoning I simply mean reasoning about what others *would* claim on account of their own authority, were they able to do so. In §3.2 I consider another example of hypothetical reasoning in which it is not necessary to consult others since one already knows what they would say.

¹⁰ Peter van Inwagen made this point to me in conversation.

These intimate CID relationships thus necessarily involve second-personal authority. The specific claims that this second-personal authority countenances vary with the kind of relationship. Above I mentioned two general categories: claims against being harmed and claims for help. The first follow immediately from the relational love and concern that a person has for the beloved; it is simply inconsistent with these things to think that your friend or spouse or family member cannot demand that you not hurt him or her.¹¹ Moreover, loved ones also have claims against being hurt through negligence; this follows from the thought that, in sharing your life with someone, you don't simply care for the person but in fact look out for her well-being. We expect our friends, for example, to be worried about future harms that might befall us.

The thought that we should be proactive with respect to a friend's well-being helps to motivate the idea that friends also have special claims upon us to help them. David Annis offers the following example:

[suppose] you have an important job interview, but when you start to leave for it, your car won't start, you might legitimately expect your friend, who can easily drive you, to help. If your friend refuses, you would justifiably feel hurt and betrayed, and not understand how your friend could treat you this way. It isn't merely that decent or nice friends act this way, so that helping is supererogatory. Not helping seems inconsistent with the friendship, and if it happens often, the friendship has been abandoned. Notice that we wouldn't in general expect a stranger to drive us, and we would view it as being "awfully nice" of the person if he or she did help (Annis 1987, p. 352).

What is interesting about this example is that the help in question is not related to a project that you share with your friend, so the claim in question is not grounded in any particular joint commitment; it is instead grounded simply in the nature of friendship itself. I assume that most people share Annis's intuitions about this particular case; however, there are the more general questions of how much, and what kinds, of aid are owed to friends. As I discussed in Chapter One, what people owe to others in

¹¹ I will say more about this point in the next section. I note here the intuition that we have these claims against *everyone*, not just those with whom we are in intimate CID relationships. Elizabeth Anderson has pointed out to me that this suggests that intimate CID relationships are therefore superfluous to the validity of these claims. Nevertheless, the argument here is important for my view since (in Chapters Four and Five) I will argue that the claims that we have on others generally (and that others have on us) through broader CID relationships are based upon the claims in the more intimate CID relationships discussed in this chapter.

relationships is partly a function of the expectations that characterize that relationship. These expectations will of course vary not just with the kinds of relationships but also with specific instances of the relationships. My friendships are no doubt different from yours. However, it is important to notice that expectations aren't arbitrary, either: though two people may enter into a friendship with differing expectations, as their friendship grows deeper, they will arrive at a shared set of expectations because of their influences on each other. And whether these expectations arise from joint reasoning about specific projects or simply from the sharing of their lives, they will often be the source of second-personal claims that they make on each other. They therefore have the first two features of moral obligations discussed at the beginning of this chapter: their normative force comes, not from any optional end that a person holds, but rather from the authority of the other person; and as such, they are properly owed to the other person.¹²

3.2 Strength

Not all of these claims, however, will be morally obligating. To say that a (valid second-personal) claim is morally obligating is to say that it gives overriding reasons for acting. Since all valid claims are grounded in another's legitimate second-personal authority, their normative force cannot be defused by giving up any particular end. However, the *strength* of this normative force – how the claim is to be weighed against competing reasons – is a separate issue.

It is also a difficult one to isolate. The question of a claim's strength must be distinguished from two closely related issues. First, at the risk of belaboring the preceding point, the strength of a claim, or the strength of a person's second-personal authority, is distinct from the legitimacy of that authority itself. The arguments of §3.1 establish the existence of second-personal authority within CID relationships; *how much* authority a friend has, or how strong his claims are, is a separate issue. Second, an

¹² In a certain sense, the obligations of some of these relationships, such as friendship, are optional since there is no obligation to be in the relationship itself. Moreover, in some cases, one can unilaterally withdraw from one of these relationships, thereby disentangling oneself from some of the obligations of that relationship. However, *given that one is in the relationship*, these obligations will not be optional. Chapter Five discusses in detail the issue of when one can unilaterally exit a relationship and what obligations might still remain.

explanation of the strength of these claims inside of a CID relationship is distinct from an explanation of why a person ought to remain in the relationship. This point is crucial. The question of the strength of claims is one that must be asked *from inside* a CID relationship. In other words, we must ask: *given* that a person is in a relationship, what claims can another address to her, and how strong are they? What reasons she has for being in the relationship itself are separate from these questions. She may not be very committed at all to a relationship, and this lack of commitment may be a good reason for getting out of the relationship. However, the strength of the claims that others have on her does not depend on the strength of her reasons for being in the relationship itself; indeed, as I will argue, it can't. So long as she is in the relationship, others' claims will have a certain strength. Even if she questions whether she should be in the relationship, these claims will not lose their strength. It is only when she is no longer in the relationship that they cease to be reasons for her. And even then, as I discuss in Chapter Five, some obligations may remain.

Having distinguished the question of the strength of claims from these two issues, we can now ask about the question itself. There are several things that one might mean in asking about the strength of a claim. First, how does the claim compete against my reasons of self-interest? This is the issue that arises in Annis's example above: one person's claim on his friend for help is weighed against whatever personal reasons his friend might have had for doing something else. Second, how do claims compete against claims I might make on the other person? To modify Annis's example, suppose that my friend asks me for a ride to a job interview, but I, having fallen twenty feet out of a tree, need him to drive me to the emergency room. Here we each have claims of aid on the other. Third, how do claims from one friend compete against claims that *other* friends might make? To put it another way, how do claims from different CID relationships compete against each other?

I submit that each of these is a plausible understanding of what it means for a claim to provide an overriding reason for action and so to be morally obligating. In the first case, it seems right to say that I am obligated to stop whatever I'm doing and drive my friend to his interview (assuming that the only competing reasons are ones of self-interest, such as my desire to buy some coffee). In the second case, I'm not, but only

because my desperate need for his help outweighs his legitimate claim upon me (falling twenty feet usually results in serious injuries, such as a ruptured spleen). This second case, like many instances of the third, can be understood in terms of competing obligations. So, for example, a friend's claims to a person's time are often outweighed by the claims that the person's children have on him.

The distinctions among these three are important because the explanation for why a claim is morally obligating differs in each case. One cannot say, in advance, whether a particular claim is morally obligating since whether it is depends upon whatever other reasons a person has. To put it another way, the strength of an obligation is always relative to a set of competing claims. And as the examples above show, claims that would ordinarily be morally obligating may cease to be obligating in special circumstances. Since this section is concerned with explaining how some claims have overriding strength, I will speak of the obligations a person has, keeping in mind the fact that these may sometimes be overridden themselves.

Different obligations have different sources within CID relationships. Some are *preconditions* of CID relationships: they must be in place for the relationship to begin. Other obligations will arise through joint reasoning between and among members. Still others will be the result of different roles played by different members. Parents, for example, have certain obligations to their children in virtue of their role as parents (or, we could say, in virtue of the nature of the parent-child relationship itself, which is obviously different than, say, friendship). Finally, some obligations (such as, perhaps, an obligation actively to look out for a friend's well-being) arise simply from the love that members have for each other.

Running through all of these different sources, however, is a unifying theme: in order for the plural subjecthood and sharing of lives characteristic of CID relationships to be possible, there are certain ways in which one must treat others on pain of compromising, harming, or abandoning the relationship. The more that failing to honor a claim would hurt the relationship in any of these ways, the greater the strength of that claim. That is, the strength of a claim derives from its importance to the relationship and from how much failing to honor it would constitute a failure to recognize the other's authority. That much may seem obvious; the trick is in explaining what is important to a

relationship. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the reasoning involved is very similar to the reasoning involved in, for example, Scanlon's theory in determining what principles others couldn't reasonably reject (a point to which I shall return in the next section).

Before turning to this task, however, I want to preempt a possible confusion. The strength of these claims does *not* come from the fact that harming or destroying the relationship would be harmful to you. *That* consideration, as I will discuss in Chapter five, is properly a reason for staying in the relationship. However, it cannot be an explanation of the strength of the claims within a CID relationship, for it would be a reason of the wrong sort. The strength of these claims derives from the authority of the person who makes them, and the fact that failing to recognize a person's authority would somehow be detrimental to you is not a reason to think that she actually has such authority. It is, rather, a prudential reason for doing what she says. To repeat what I said at the beginning of this section, the strength of these claims must be assessed *from inside* the relationship; that is, *given that* you are committed to the relationship, to what do the sharing of lives, and the other features of CID relationships, commit you? The issue of whether you should be in the relationship is, as I said, a distinct question.

Let's turn now to the various sources of obligations within CID relationships. In §3.1 I already argued that some obligations arise out of the love and care involved in the relationship. Harming your friend, for example, is just inconsistent with caring for him.

Other obligations will be preconditions for CID relationships. They will help to make the various features of CID possible, but they won't be grounded in them directly. Entering into a relationship with the intention of deceiving the other person, for example, is directly opposed to the trustworthiness needed for these relationships. Obligations that remain after a relationship has ended may also be grounded in this way. For example, even if a person ceases to be friends with another, he should not divulge the other's secrets. If this were not the case, a person would be fearful of sharing his personal life with a friend for fear that it would become public knowledge should the relationship end.

But such fear would compromise the sharing of lives that is so critical to CID; it is therefore important that a person keep the confidences of others.¹³

I now turn to those obligations that emerge from the various kinds of reasoning, including joint reasoning, involved in CID. As I said earlier, this reasoning will closely resemble that involved in Scanlon's theory. Here, I want to emphasize the claims to which one is committed in virtue of joint reasoning. In particular, claims to "be a part of the group" – to participate in joint reasoning – will be the most important. Failure to heed these claims amounts to a rejection of the plural subjecthood altogether. Here I do not mean claims to participate in some specific project or other; of course one might back out of any given joint project for various reasons. What I have in mind are claims others make to be a part of the relationship generally. Joint reasoning (or sometimes *hypothetical* joint reasoning) plays an integral role in the sharing of lives. To ignore calls to participate in joint reasoning generally is therefore to remove oneself from the *we* of CID itself – it is to preclude the relationship continuing.

By itself, this is a very abstract claim. What does it mean to refuse to engage in joint reasoning, such that one precludes the possibility of it? First, some ground-clearing: in saying that one must call others to reasoning (and be susceptible to others' calls), I don't mean that everyone in a group must always engage in the group's reasoning or that everyone must be called to do so by everyone else. There are many ways joint reasoning can work; the important point is that there must always be the possibility of issuing such calls when appropriate. Consider the ordering of supplies in a philosophy department.¹⁴ All the members of a department – faculty, staff, and students – are jointly committed to the department's mission, and supplies are certainly needed. Suppose that the division of labor assigns the task of ordering supplies to the chair, but suppose further that the secretary, noticing the supplies running low, simply takes the task of ordering new ones upon herself so as not to burden the overly busy chair with the task. The secretary need not be seen here as abandoning the group; she, like everyone else, is committed to making the department run, and she correctly reasons that the other members of the

¹³ Alternatively, as I will discuss in Chapter Five, obligations that persist after a relationship ends can be grounded in implicit agreements made when one enters the relationship.

¹⁴ Thanks to Elizabeth Anderson for this example.

department would agree with her in this reallocation of tasks. That she does not actually consult with anyone else is irrelevant if she already knows what they would say (or at least can reasonably anticipate what they would think). Because she knows what they will say, she can reason in response to their claims, even if those claims aren't actually made in dialogue with the others. One person, then, can *hypothetically* reason jointly with others who aren't actively deliberating with her so long as she sees herself as acting on reasons that the other group members would endorse. And just as she need not worry about consulting everyone else, so no one else is compelled to offer input if what to do is reasonably obvious. The other department members aren't in any way *refusing* to help with the decision; it's simply that their input just isn't needed.

What, then, *would* count as refusing to engage in joint reasoning or as precluding the possibility of it? Ignoring others' calls to participate in it, when there are no mitigating factors, certainly counts, but cases like this are, I suspect, relatively rare. Much more common is a refusal (intentional or otherwise) to give others reasons that they can recognize. Suppose a wife catches her husband cheating on her and demands that he stop. In making this demand, she's giving him a reason (which reason just is the second-personal demand itself), and surely it's one that he can recognize and share, at least to the extent that he's committed to the relationship. But suppose he responds, in all seriousness, by telling her that he's just bored or that he's suddenly decided that he needs other sexual partners. These might be reasons for him, but his wife can't possibly be expected to share these reasons; they're jointly committed to sharing their lives with each other, not to his philandering. To put it another way, the reason he's trying to give her isn't one that she can hold in virtue of being his wife.¹⁵ If, of course, she only cared about his happiness in an impersonal sort of way, then his desire to alleviate his boredom might count as a reason to endorse and even to assist his extra-marital pursuits; but then she wouldn't be in any CID relationship with him, for such a relationship would, among other things, lack the *personal* care central to corporate identity.

What I mean by refusal to engage in joint reasoning, then, is acting in such a way that either the plural subjecthood or the sharing of lives inherent to CID is compromised.

¹⁵ If they have an "open" marriage, this situation is somewhat different; what counts as cheating will depend upon how they conceive their marriage.

In these cases, other group members always have standing to call a person back to the group; they can always insist that she act on or offer reasons that they, too, can share, at least in those departments of her life that concern them.

To sum up the arguments of this section, the strength of the claims that others can make on a person within a CID relationship is grounded in the importance of those claims to sustaining the relationship. Some claims, such as those against being harmed, are so important that disregarding them is an explicit rejection of the relationship. Others, such as some claims to help, will be less important and may even be overridden by sufficiently strong self-interested reasons. That isn't a surprise; if something is incredibly important to a person, her friend should recognize it as such.

One might wonder, however, about just what it means to harm or compromise or abandon a relationship. There are two worries here. First, it may seem that not all violations of obligations actually harm the other person. Suppose that I steal a dollar from my relatively wealthy friend. Stealing is wrong, but the loss of a dollar won't harm him in any way. Second, on my account, an action becomes morally obligatory when failing to so act would compromise the CID relationship. This suggests that what is really doing the work is a need not to *destroy* the relationship. But not everything which harms a relationship destroys it, and this in turn suggests that we might weaken the priority of moral obligations a bit without making it impossible to have even deep CID relationships. No doubt the demands that others make on us are important, but why think that they must always take priority? Doing so might be ideal, but (one might think) it's not obvious that one must strive for the ideal. It is certainly true, for example, that one need not do everything in one's power to *promote* the relationship.

In response to the first worry, note that, regardless of whether a particular action (such as stealing a dollar from my wealthy friend) harms the other person, or whether the relationship can continue in spite of the harm, these actions are still inconsistent with (and therefore harm) the relationship itself. Stealing from my wealthy friend is still contrary to the care that I have for him, even if doing so causes him no harm. And while it may cause *him* no harm, it could certainly harm the *friendship* by violating the trust he has for me. Second, notice that these objections claim that one is free, upon occasion, to "reprioritize" the demands others make on the grounds that doing so is not fatal to the

relationship.¹⁶ Consider what this amounts to, however. In sharing your life with a friend, you recognize that each of you has some standing to direct the relationship. Thinking that you are even sometimes free unilaterally to reprioritize the demands of your friend, however, is to deny such standing; it is to reserve all the decision-making, ultimately, to oneself. And that thought is incompatible with friendship and any other CID relationship.

It is true that one can fail to fulfill obligations without thereby destroying a relationship. However, that's only possible if one works to reconcile oneself with the other person; given the nature of this objection, reconciliation will not be possible. If a person claimed that he is free to "reprioritize" others' demands at will (that is, for no other reason than that doing so is not fatal), he wouldn't think that reconciliation would be necessary. Furthermore, there would be no reason to attempt reconciliation with someone who expressed such an attitude since – even if he did ask for forgiveness – that asking could not itself be trusted.

3.3 Comparisons

As I have described it, reflection on what it means to refuse to engage in joint reasoning is what generates many of our substantial, specific obligations. Notice that it does so in much the same way that the Categorical Imperative, or Korsgaard's Reflective Endorsement procedure, or Scanlon's "reasonable rejection" criterion do. How, then, does my theory compare with these others?

All of these theories arrive at the obligatory through the "ruling out" of proposed actions, maxims, or principles. The grounds for rejecting proposed actions are different on each theory, but the basic idea is the same: an action which fails the CI test, or which can't be reflectively endorsed, or which is only permitted by principles that others could reasonably reject, is impermissible, and so one has an obligation not to do it. (Positive obligations are less straightforward; they emerge from considering whether it's

¹⁶ If the objection were leveled against Scanlon's theory, it would go: I should be free, upon occasion, not to act in ways that others couldn't reasonably reject, on the grounds that so acting wouldn't fatally compromise my relationship with them.

permissible *never* to do a certain action, such aiding one's friend, and finding that never doing so is impermissible.) More must be said, of course, about how one determines whether a proposed action compromises the sharing of lives in CID. However, I don't think that this notion is any less clear than, for example, Korsgaard's Reflective Endorsement procedure. (How does one, after all, determine whether a proposed maxim really is compatible with one – or more, or all! – of one's practical identities?)

This similarity between my view and Kantian and contractualist views should come as no surprise; all four formulations gesture at the idea that what we do (are permitted to do, must do) must in some way be acceptable to others. Beneath this similarity, however, are significantly different accounts of why we ought, or must, care about acceptability to others. Kant seeks to ground morality's authority in the conditions of rational agency (as do Korsgaard and Darwall). Scanlon decries such formal accounts, appealing instead to the value of standing in certain relations with our fellow humans:

The contractualist ideal of acting in accord with principles that others (similarly motivated) could not reasonably reject is meant to characterize the relation with others the value and appeal of which underlies our reasons to do what morality requires... Standing in this relation to others is appealing in itself—worth seeking for its own sake (Scanlon 1998, p. 162).

Central to this relation with others is the idea of justification: it is important that we be able to justify our actions to others, and “the idea that we have reason to avoid actions that could not be justified...accounts for the distinctive normative force of moral wrongness” (Scanlon 1998, p. 5).

I agree with Scanlon that justification to others is important; I have been arguing that one must trade in shareable reasons because doing so is not merely desirable but in fact a necessary condition of being in CID relationships. It is through the sharing of reasons, both in reasoning together and in joint reasoning, that people are able to share their lives with each other. However (like Darwall), I disagree with him when he says that the “value and appeal” of standing in a particular relation to others is what “underlies our reasons to do what morality requires.” As I will argue in Chapter Five, it is true that being in certain relationships with others (for me, CID relationships) is valuable. However, as I argued in §3.2, it cannot be a reason to do what morality requires because

it would be a reason of the wrong sort. That the relationship is valuable is not a reason that can explain another's having legitimate second-personal authority.

3.4 Concluding Worries

Before concluding, I'd like to mention some objections that will be addressed, either in Chapter Four or Chapter Five. What if a person loses interest in, or isn't deeply committed to, a relationship? Or even if a person is so committed, why must she remain committed? Can a person simply decide to leave a relationship and thereby absolve herself of any associated obligations? Does this theory have any resources for admonishing someone like Gauguin, who left his family in pursuit of his painting? These questions are the subject of Chapter Five. Briefly, the answer is yes: the need to allow for the possibility of having genuine CID relationships – to which one *is* committed – will militate against arbitrary dismissals of relationships. If a person could simply enter and leave CID relationships at will, thereby disentangling oneself from infelicitous obligations, no one would trust him; his actions would preclude him from being able to enter into relationships again. Significantly, pressure not to abandon CID relationships will also come from *other* CID relationships. I will also argue in Chapter Four that, given a person's commitment to Christianity, pressure will come from one's relationship with God.

One might also worry about the *content* of obligations. More precisely, on this view, what (if any) constraints on others' demands are available? As Adams rightly pointed out, belonging to a community (for our purposes, a CID relationship) means that others "have something to say" about how I live my life, but "only to a reasonable extent." There are several worries lurking in this neighborhood: among them, can someone demand that I do something I would ordinarily take to be wrong, such as hurting another, for the sake of our group? These questions, along with the scope of obligation, will be discussed in Chapter Four; and to these we now turn.

Chapter 4

Corporate Identity and Christianity

The church is Catholic, universal, so are all her actions; all that she does belongs to all. When she baptizes a child, that action concerns me; for that child is thereby connected to that body which is my head too, and ingrafted into that body whereof I am a member. And when she buries a man, that action concerns me: all mankind is of one author, and is one volume...

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were: any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bells tolls; it tolls for thee.¹

If the arguments from the previous two chapters work, we have an account of the moral obligations a person is commonly thought to have to her family and friends. This account, by itself, goes a long way towards vindicating commonsense morality² since most of our obligations concern those who are most important in our lives. But traditional morality also holds that we have a standard set of duties to all people. Most of these are negative – duties not to harm or otherwise to interfere with people's lives – though it is often also held that we have some minimal duties of aid as well. If you come across someone drowning in a pond, for example, you ought to save him. More controversially, perhaps we owe some aid to those unfortunates in far-off countries.

In addition to this set of duties that we have to everyone, one might also think that we have certain duties to humanity generally. I say "generally" because these duties aren't, properly speaking, owed to any specific person or even to any specific group of

¹ John Donne, *Meditation XVII*.

² By this I just mean a standard collection of fairly uncontroversial obligations, including negative duties not to harm as well as duties to help our friends and family.

people. Taking care of the environment, for example, might fall into this category. Working for social justice is another duty owed to humanity generally. In working to correct a system that unjustly distributes goods, you aren't merely trying to help those who are currently victims of the system; you're working to correct the system itself so that no one else is victimized.

The burden of this chapter is to show how these obligations might arise.³ Up to this point, we have focused on the most intimate kinds of CID relationships, namely, kinship and friendship. Corporate identity, however, can obtain among much larger groups. Three of the most readily recognizable instances are citizenship, ethnicity, and religious affiliation. Could one or more of these account for the two sets of duties mentioned above? I will argue that while the first two are certainly important instances of broad CID relationships, they cannot ground duties to everyone since they are, by their very nature, unable to encompass all of humanity. Religious identity, however, does hold out the possibility of explaining these duties, and in this chapter I shall offer an account of how it can do so, at least for believers. More specifically, I'll argue that Christianity can account for these duties, though not, perhaps, in the way one would expect.

To set the stage for my account, I will first briefly consider the differences between broader CID relationships and the more intimate ones discussed in the previous two chapters (§4.1). These differences will suggest two ways in which one might seek to ground the two sets of obligations mentioned above: one based on care for others, and one based on the idea that Christians are conceptually committed to presupposing the validity of certain norms. I will argue that neither of these strategies can work. Instead, I will argue in §4.2 that the right place to begin is not with the CID relationship among Christians but rather with the more intimate love relationship between a believer and God. In order to love God properly, a person must adopt God's love for her fellow humans. A believer's love for God thus informs not just her relationship to other Christians but also her relationship to the rest of humanity. While I will not offer a Divine Command Theory (DCT) of obligation – in fact, I will explicitly reject that

³ In Chapter One I explicitly restricted the scope of my project to just those duties that are owed to specific others. While I will suggest in passing a way in which my theory can ground duties to humanity generally, such duties will not be the focus of this chapter.

strategy – I will argue in §4.3 that the requirements of this love for humanity are partially filled in by divine commands.

4.1 Broader CID Relationships

Three of the most obvious instances of broader CID relationships are citizenship, ethnicity, and religious identity. To give but a few examples: I, as an American, can and sometimes do feel personally insulted when others criticize our culture or government. I also feel embarrassed by some of my fellow Americans' rude and uncivilized behavior in other countries, to the point that I occasionally fall over myself to be polite when traveling abroad. Feelings of patriotism can be a strong motivator – witness, for example, the sudden (albeit brief) upsurge in military enlistment (even among non-citizens!) in the U.S. immediately after the attacks of Sept. 11th. Race and ethnicity can be equally powerful; consider the anger that Arabs throughout the Middle East feel over the treatment of the Palestinians by Israel. There are also plenty of examples where appeal is made to more than one of these categories – think of the long-standing conflict between Belfast and Dublin, traditionally couched as a conflict between Protestants and Catholics, but which is also a conflict between the British and the Irish.

What's common to all of the foregoing examples is the idea of a group membership that legitimately supports shared emotions and responsibilities (among other things). There really is a legitimate sense in which I can feel embarrassed by my fellow Americans' untoward actions abroad, or in which Arabs can feel compelled to act on behalf of all Arabs, or in which an Irish Catholic can feel that *she* has been attacked whenever her fellow countrymen and co-religionists are attacked on account of being Catholic. Notice that this group membership isn't merely the recognition that one shares a certain characteristic or identity with others. The Irishwoman, for example, doesn't take offense only because she realizes that it could have been she who was attacked, on account of being Catholic (though that much is true), but rather because, in a sense, *she was attacked* – just as I might consider myself as personally under attack should anyone assault my family, or as many Americans felt that *they* were attacked in the tragedy of Sept. 11th.

Corporate identity thus seems to extend quite naturally to much larger groups beyond family and friends. Do these CIDs generate moral obligations? They are certainly often thought to do so. Citizenship (patriotism) is invoked to explain many purported obligations: to fight for one's country; to aid one's compatriots; even to vote and to participate in government. John Kennedy famously called Americans to ask what they could do for their country. Ethnicity, too, might be thought to ground obligations, though this kind of CID is trickier. Quite apart from the problems of determining whether a person is of a particular race or ethnicity, common sense suggests that ethnicity by itself may not be enough to obligate. Do I, as a white person, have any obligations to other whites? This seems doubtful. The intuition is perhaps stronger in cases where a group suffers from persecution or discrimination, but even then one may not feel obligated. What is at issue, of course, is not whether someone feels obligated but rather whether a person is in fact obligated. At the moment, however, I just wish to explore what our intuitions might suggest, and it is certainly true that ethnicity, especially in combination with either or both of the other CIDs mentioned above, is used to call people to action.

Religious identity is especially interesting. Given the arguments of this chapter, I will focus only on Christianity. Unlike citizenship or ethnicity, it is centered around a complex system of beliefs. For that reason, it can be open to anyone, regardless of physical characteristics (such as skin color) or place of origin.⁴ Also for that reason, religious identity can underwrite many different obligations, the contents of which can be quite specific. Catholics, for example, are obliged (in theory) to undertake an examination of conscience, and to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation if necessary, before receiving Communion at Mass. Obligations of *that* sort aren't the subject of this chapter, but the complexity of Christian belief does make it a particularly good candidate for explaining the intuitions I noted at the outset. It may be that we owe certain negative

⁴ Of course neither of these claims is true of every religion. Arguably, one can't really be Jewish unless one is descended from the right people, for example. And there is great debate about just what sort of belief (if any) is required to be a member of some religions. Some Protestants seem to think that, at base, one need only believe that Jesus is one's saviour to be a Christian. I think that's false. In any event, these claims *are* true of the religious identity with which I will be most concerned, namely, Catholicism (and, I will argue, Christianity by extension).

obligations to everyone in virtue of divine commands. For example, as it is usually read, the Decalogue – the Ten Commandments – prohibits the killing of others generally, not just the killing of other Jews or Christians. In addition, within at least some Christian circles, humans are understood to have stewardship of the rest of creation. Among other things, this means that Christians have some duties with respect to the environment. What these might be is subject to much debate; my point here is just that one can at least see how duties to humanity generally might be countenanced by Christian belief.

Christian identity thus has two significant advantages over citizenship and ethnicity with respect to accounting for duties owed to everyone. First, it can explain why these duties are owed to everyone and not just to other Christians. Second, unlike citizenship and ethnicity, which by their very nature are limited to only a portion of humanity, Christianity is open to anyone. Although grounding these duties in Christianity may not directly explain how non-believers have them, there is at least the possibility of explaining how anyone *could* have them.

4.1.1 Broader and Narrower Forms of CID

But can religious identity actually supply the normative force that, I've argued, is possessed by moral obligation? As a first step towards answering this question, we should consider how this broader form of CID differs from the more intimate ones of the last two chapters. I identified five major characteristics of CID: (1) plural subjecthood; (2) the sharing of lives among members, which is marked by (3) the care, concern, and love they have for each other; (4) the personal nature of this care; and (5) shared and collective emotions. In the previous chapter, I argued that what is most important in our intimate relationships is the sharing of lives (which sharing requires a certain amount of justification). An essential part of this sharing is joint reasoning, along with reasoning together and surrogate reasoning. Such reasoning necessarily requires second-personal accountability. But none of these need be present in Christianity's broader CID relationship.

For example, consider the kind of plural subjecthood that characterizes specifically Catholicism. I think it is possible to understand this plural subjecthood as being formed through acts of joint commitment. For many people, the act of joining is

undertaken on their behalf by their parents at their baptism. Nevertheless, this plural subjecthood does not centrally involve joint reasoning among all participants. It can't, in virtue of the sheer number of people. To be sure, subsets of the members can engage in joint reasoning. The gathering of the ordinary magisterium (that is, essentially the bishops) at Church councils is an example of such reasoning.

For the same reason, while there can be an intimate sharing of lives at a local level (say, among small numbers of parishioners), there simply cannot be a sharing of lives among all Catholics. Of course, such sharing is not necessary for membership; unlike friendship or kinship, which require a certain amount of intimacy and sharing, one can be a part of a much larger group without knowing anyone very well. To be friends with another requires spending time with her and getting to know her. To be a Catholic, though, only requires (roughly) a profession of faith and reception of certain Sacraments. Of course, one probably will know some of one's fellow Catholics quite well, but that will be on account of kinship or friendship, not on account of being Catholic.

Plural subjecthood and sharing of lives thus show up in modified or attenuated forms in the broader Christian CID. As crucial as these are, however, they are not the entire story; care is also important, and that is certainly present in Christianity. Indeed, it seems hard to identify yourself as a Christian without also thinking that you don't care about your fellow Christians at all. One approach to deriving obligations, then, would be to ground them in the requirements of care.

4.1.2 Obligations of Care?

The most obvious problem with this approach, however, is that caring about someone does not obviously generate obligations to her. It can give rise to reasons for acting, though. I say "can" because it need not. Velleman draws a distinction between caring *for* someone and caring *about* her. He characterizes "caring for" as seeing oneself as an agent of another's interests and "being moved to do him good" (Velleman 1999, p. 353). In contrast, "caring about" another means simply that his welfare matters to you. The latter seems to be the kind of care appropriate to broader CIDs, but it is only the former which necessarily gives reasons to act. Velleman, in fact, thinks that one can care about (and even love) another without thinking that one should do anything at all to

benefit her. In certain cases, this is correct. I care a great deal about the fortunes of Notre Dame's football team, but there isn't anything that I can do to help the team. (And I'm fairly certain that the Irish will manage to sell out the stadium without my help.) Or consider the situation of a parent watching his child playing in a little league game. Despite what some parents seem to think, it would be wholly inappropriate for him to intervene on his child's behalf, just as it would be inappropriate for a parent to do his child's homework. Intervening in these situations rather misses the point, which is that the child should succeed on his own.

In the case of my favorite sports team, caring about it doesn't give reasons for me to do anything to help the team because there isn't anything that I can do. In the other two cases, caring about again does not give a person reason to assist because such assistance would be somehow inappropriate. The caring about present in religious identity is not like either of these cases, however. There is plenty I could do to help my fellow Catholics, and further, such help is often appropriate. Natural disasters highlight this point well: Catholic parishes throughout the country took up collections to help the New Orleans parishes affected by Hurricane Katrina. That assistance was definitely needed by the victims, and it was quite appropriate.⁵ In fact, it was one of the reasons that Catholic schools in New Orleans were the very first to reopen in the aftermath of the hurricane.⁶

In caring about others *in the context of a CID relationship*, then, you ought to see their plights as giving you some reason to act. More generally, you ought to see their welfare as giving you some reason to act. To think otherwise would amount to utter indifference towards them. These reasons may not be very strong ones, of course. A person has her own projects to consider, and then there are obligations to family and friends as well. Still, when one is able to help, and when such help is appropriate, it is conceptually incompatible with caring about another to think that one truly has no reason

⁵ Arguably, it was the *most* appropriate response by those Americans not otherwise related to the victims. Other options, such as becoming personally involved in their lives, might be too invasive. Thanks to Elizabeth Anderson for making this point.

⁶ Here I do not mean to suggest that the only reason that, say, Catholics gave money was to help other Catholics. That's clearly false. Much of the money collected in churches (Catholic and otherwise) throughout the country went to aiding people generally, independent of creed. The point is just that there was a special emphasis in dioceses throughout the country to aid the Catholic parishes affected.

at all to act. Moreover, far from being just some reasons among many others, the reasons of broader CIDs can appear to be quite powerful, as already discussed at the beginning of this chapter. The point now is that, in virtue of the care inherent to CID, the reason-giving appearance of the Christian CID (and, indeed, the other broad CIDs mentioned as well) is legitimate: these broader CIDs really do generate reasons for acting, and these reasons really can be quite powerful.

Precisely what reasons they generate remains more controversial. I've suggested that a person has reason to help her fellow compatriots or co-believers when they are under attack or persecution by outsiders. It seems reasonable to think that a person will also have reason to respect the standard negative duties of traditional morality. In fact I think that these negative duties contribute to our understanding of just what it is to care about other people. That is, the idea that a person shouldn't steal another's property doesn't follow immediately from the primitive notion of caring about the other. One can, perhaps, imagine a society in which nearly everything is shared freely among all. The idea of not stealing only makes sense with the advent of personal property. Nonetheless, once such an idea shows up, it is easy to see how caring about others can motivate adherence to such a principle. In this way the idea of care gets fleshed out, and I see no compelling reason why what is demanded by the care inherent to broad CIDs could not, in theory, account for much, perhaps even most, of our moral intuitions.

I will not, however, pursue such a project here. No matter how much of the content of traditional morality might be gotten out of these broad CIDs, two main problems remain. First, care can at most underwrite very strong *reasons* for acting. The purpose of this chapter, however, is to vindicate *obligations*. Second, the reasons generated by care will extend only as far as the CID itself does: that is, only as far as one's fellow Christians. Yet we owe some obligations to everyone.

4.1.3 Obligations from Conceptual Commitments?

Care is not the only thing that can motivate action, however. As I mentioned at the beginning, Christian religious belief is conceptually complex and includes divine injunctions that govern a believer's behavior towards everyone. To focus our intuitions, let's again restrict our scope just to Catholicism. What it is to be Catholic is, strictly

speaking, quite complex; it involves assent to a large set of metaphysical and moral beliefs (hence the book-long Catholic Catechism). Ignore, for the sake of argument, the question of whether actual assent to all of them is necessary for being Catholic (I think it assuredly is not). Among these is the idea that the Holy Spirit guides the Church and ensures the reliability of its teachings on faith and morals. The doctrine of Papal Infallibility is one (admittedly controversial) aspect of this claim. Without engaging in an exhaustive cataloging of our moral intuitions, it seems safe to say that the standard set of both negative and positive duties is enjoined by Church teaching. If anything, one might worry that the duties endorsed by the Church are actually too demanding. But no matter; the point is just that, unlike the obligations entailed by national identity or ethnicity, it is far more obvious what Catholics are morally required to do.

Much more importantly, these duties are *not* motivated simply by a general “caring about” other Catholics or Christians. Being Catholic is not a matter of place of birth, or skin color, or any other physical property; it’s a matter of belief (well, that, and being baptized). And that belief includes the idea that the norms with which we’re concerned are valid. That is, *in order to be Catholic*, one must think that these norms are valid: they are taught by the Church, and the Church is a reliable guide on matters of morality. There is no question of how much reason one has to follow the norms; they are understood to be binding and to have obligatory force.⁷

Now this may seem like cheating. What we want is an explanation of how corporate identity can supply the normative force of moral obligations. But by insisting that Catholics must presuppose that these norms have genuine authority, we haven’t in the least explained why these norms are authoritative. At most, we’ve explained why Catholics are committed to thinking them authoritative. The philosophically sophisticated Catholic, however, is not in a happy place at all. His situation is a bit like that of the perplexed mathematics student who has turned to the back of the book to see the answer to his (odd-numbered, of course) problem. He believes that the answer

⁷ I’m ignoring two issues here. First, there is a question of whether to obey them; the Church teaches that one must ultimately follow one’s conscience. Second, there is always a lively debate as to just what these norms are. Is abortion always wrong? Or are there times when the principle of double-effect makes it permissible? But the main point should hopefully be clear: once a principle is sufficiently articulated and applied, the resulting norms are understood as binding.

printed there is correct, but he hasn't the slightest idea of how to derive it. Similarly, the Catholic knows *that* he is morally obligated to do thus-and-so, in virtue of the teaching authority of the Church, but he may not have a clue about *why* he is so obligated. And unless he has a nicely worked out divine command theory of obligation, knowing that God has enjoined him to do something won't be of much help.

Further, this explanation – to the extent that it even is an explanation – of the authority of moral norms seems to be an explanation of the wrong sort, for it does not rely upon any of the distinctive features of corporate identity. A lack of any further explanation may even make more pressing the question of whether he should remain Catholic. If believing the inexplicable is required for group membership, perhaps it is the group membership that ought to go. Thinking about much more controversial CIDs throws this problem into sharp relief. Worrying about the justification of intuitively agreeable norms is one thing; but what if group membership commits one to norms that are repugnant? One might, for example, need to be committed to a “killing Jews” principle in order to be a Nazi. From this, however, it doesn't follow that such a norm has any authority at all. Indeed, if being a Nazi really does commit one to that principle, the obvious response is that one shouldn't be a Nazi.

In sum, this attempt to justify norms by arguing that one must presuppose their validity within a CID is beset by at least four problems: it does not obviously make any use of the distinctive features of CID; it doesn't appear to provide a genuine explanation of the authority of the norms to which one is committed; it leaves open the question of why one would want to be in the relationship; and it has no resources for criticizing norms that strike us as wrong.

4.2 Christianity and Love for God

So far we've focused just on the care a person should have for her fellow Christians and on the distinctive content of Christian belief. Beyond the conceptual complexity of Christian belief, however, there is something else that sets it apart from the any other CID. Christianity, as Evangelical Protestants like to say, is first and foremost about one's personal relationship with God. To put it another way, the Christian CID is a broad CID that is rooted in a much more intimate one between a Christian and God. This

fact is of the first importance, for it means that Christians are united by something much more than a set of beliefs; they are related to each other also by their love for God. To understand how the broad Christian CID generates obligations to others, we must first understand the more intimate relationship between God and person.

A consideration of that relationship will yield an account of the norms to which Christians are committed that avoids the four problems listed above. I will argue that loving God commits one to loving one's neighbor in a CID relationship. That relationship, of course, will have its own obligations. I'll argue that the content of these obligations is best filled out by God's commands, though I will not offer a Divine Command Theory (DCT) of obligation. Instead, I'll argue that a person's love for God commits her to allowing God to shape the nature of her relationship to others in a way analogous to that in which parents have a say in how a person treats her siblings. As I will explain, this strategy thus makes integral use of the features of CID to provide a genuine explanation of the normativity both of obligations to all persons and to humanity generally. In what follows, I'll be thinking primarily of Catholics, though what I say should be equally applicable to Christians generally.

Given that this account turns on a person's relationship with God, we should begin by asking about the nature of that relationship. Even a cursory reading of the Bible suggests that it is multi-faceted. There is talk of fearing God, and of worship, and certainly of obedience; but there is also talk of love. The God of the Old Testament is often caricatured as a stern authoritarian concerned only with the first three, while the God of the New Testament is reduced to a benign, grandfatherly deity who loves all. Yet there are not two Gods, but one: and it is love which dominates and which shapes all other facets of the relationship. Hence Pope Benedict XVI:

“God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him” (1 Jn 4:16). These words from the First Letter of John express with remarkable clarity the heart of the Christian faith: the Christian image of God and the resulting image of mankind and its destiny. In the same verse, Saint John also offers a kind of summary of the Christian life: “We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us”.

So run the opening lines of *Deus Caritas Est*, the Pope's first Encyclical. They make clear the idea that a person's relationship with God is above all characterized by love.

But what, precisely, does this mean? As Benedict goes on to note, the word “love” has today taken on many different meanings. Even restricting ourselves to philosophical usage, several possibilities exist: there are the three main loves among which the Greeks distinguished, *eros*, *agape* and *philia* (friendship love); philosophers also speak of self-love and benevolence, which are the same kind of love but with different objects. We also understand differences in love for various people: romantic love, parent-child love, sibling love, *etc.*

Of these, *agape* is generally used to refer to what is distinctive about Christian love. Though the word isn’t used much by ancient Greek writers (outside of the Bible), *agape* occurs often in the New Testament. In contrast, *eros* does not appear at all in the New Testament, and it shows up only twice in the Greek Old Testament. *Agape* is used, in the first instance, to refer to God’s love for us. One dominant understanding of *agape* holds that, since humans have done nothing to merit love, God’s love for us is entirely gratuitous. As such, Nygren argues that agapeistic love does not respond to the value of its object; instead, it “creates” value in its object. Further, since God’s love is bestowed upon everyone, *agape* is supposed to be an impersonal love in as much as it is independent of (not motivated by) the particular characteristics of people. Finally, in addition to being gratuitous and impersonal, *agape* is supposed to be selfless, concerned only with its object. The paradigmatic instance of it, of course, is Christ’s death on the Cross for the sins of all humanity.

In virtue of these characteristics, *agape* is often seen as an unemotional, detached kind of love. *Eros*, in contrast, is passionate and often (though not always) sexual. Unlike *agape*, it is not gratuitous but rather desire-based, responding to particular attractive features of the beloved. It thus does not create value but rather responds to it. It is therefore not at all impersonal. *Eros* is also characterized as a jealous, selfish love that seeks to possess the beloved for itself, not sharing it with anyone else.

Philia is similar to *eros*, and it is difficult to draw a firm distinction between the two. Like *eros*, *philia* responds to particular traits in the beloved, though it is usually understood to lack the sexual desire of the former. Benedict notes that *philia* “is used with added depth of meaning in Saint John's Gospel in order to express the relationship between Jesus and his disciples.”

Given that it is agapeistic love that is supposed to be distinctively Christian, there is a tendency to understand the love of the New Testament God as being *only* agapeistic. That understanding is woefully inadequate and fails to take notice of the fact that God desires a personal relationship with each of us. *Eros* is particularly important, and the Old Testament is full of erotic imagery. To list but one example:

My soul yearns, even faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God (Psalm 84:2).⁸

Plantinga notes that “[t]he Hebrew word for knowledge, as in knowledge of God, is also a word for sexual intercourse; and when the children of Israel are unfaithful, turning aside to false gods, this is represented as adultery” (Plantinga 2000, p. 311). Both the Old and New Testaments compare God’s relationship to his people to that between a husband and wife.⁹ Clearly the love in question is not some generalized benevolence towards all of creation, as the caricature would have it. Instead, the love is modeled on perhaps the most intimate of human relationships. What’s more, there is reason for thinking that even the marriage relationship fails to do justice to the designs God has on us; the great spiritual masters often describe God’s love as all-consuming, as evidenced by Augustine’s famous plea from the *Confessions*, “Our hearts are restless ‘till they rest in you, O Lord.” No matter how satisfying a person’s relationship with her spouse is, it will never be able to match the one God desires to have with her.

All this is not to downplay the importance of *agape*. Benedict writes:

Even if *eros* is at first mainly covetous and ascending, a fascination for the great promise of happiness, in drawing near to the other, it is less and less concerned with itself, increasingly seeks the happiness of the other, is concerned more and more with the beloved, bestows itself and wants to “be there for” the other. The element of *agape* thus enters into this love, for otherwise *eros* is impoverished and even loses its own nature (Benedict 2006, §7).

Without *agape*, *eros* would degenerate into mere lust: it would cease to value the beloved for its own sake and instead see it merely as the object of desire. *Agape* is more

⁸ Cited in Plantinga 2000. See pp. 311-313 for a bevy of further examples; the rest of my Biblical citations in this section are also taken from Plantinga.

⁹ See Isaiah 62:5 and Ephesians 5:28-32.

than just a counterweight to *eros*, of course; this kind of selfless love is, as I remarked, what is truly distinctive about Christianity. Moreover, it is not just God who has agapeistic love for us; Christ's life and death are held up as a model for all Christians and so our love is to be agapeistic as well. It may be less clear how one can selflessly love God, at least in the sense of "being there" for him. God, as traditionally understood, has need of nothing. However, our love for our fellow humans is also supposed to be characterized by *agape*, and as I shall argue, loving others in this way is also a way of loving God.

The Bible also compares God's love for us to the love a parent has for her child. Closely related is the repeated imagery of a shepherd caring for his flock. We needn't waste time trying to unpack all of these analogies. The main point should be clear: God's love for us is hardly to be characterized as mere impartial benevolence. On the contrary, the relationship God desires with us is as full-blooded – and then some – a relationship as any we could possibly have on Earth.¹⁰ Furthermore, we are to echo God's multifaceted love for us, both back to God and also to the rest of humanity.¹¹

To characterize the love relationship a person has with God as full-blooded is, in fact, to understate the matter. Robert Adams observes that "[r]eligious devotion is more than wholeheartedness or unconflicted enthusiasm. It is supposed to occupy a person's life so fully that nothing is left outside the realm in which it reigns" (Adams 1986, p. 109). As he goes on to put the point, God is not supposed to be merely the first among a number of independent interests, as perhaps one's spouse might be. Our love for God is supposed to be our only concern, and everything else must somehow find a place within that love. Adams was therefore concerned with how an all-consuming love for God could possibly leave room for love of neighbor. We aren't worried about that problem, but his insights are useful for understanding how a person's relationship with God shapes her relationship with others – that is, how the intimate CID between God and individual

¹⁰ If this is really true, then why doesn't God make himself more apparent to us? This isn't just an issue of wanting more evidence or warrant for *belief* in God; why isn't God more *present* to us, in (say) a physical sense, so that we can love him? This is the "Problem of Divine Hiddenness". Though it is worth exploring, it is beyond the scope of this chapter. For further reading, see Howard-Snyder and Moser 2002.

¹¹ The fact that this love is *relational* is important. Per the arguments of the last chapter, love within the context of a CID relationship grounds obligations. Velleman's complaint that love by itself does not necessarily generate reasons (much less obligations) for acting thus does not apply.

shapes both the broader Christian CID and any relationship she might, or should, have with others.

That a person's relationship with God must have an impact on her relationship to others is manifestly clear from the New Testament. Most prominently, there is the command to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Mk 12:31; Mt 22:39; Lk 10:27; c.f. Jn 15:17).¹² *A fortiori*, you are commanded to "love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you" (Mt 5:44; c.f. Lk 6:35). Why should you treat your enemies in this way? Because God himself "is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked," and so you should "be merciful just as your Father is merciful" (Lk 6:35-6). Here the idea seems to be that God's love for all is to be a model for us.¹³ This idea is echoed in 1 John 4:11: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also must love one another."

Thus far we apparently have only commands on how to treat others. Yet the passage from 1 John hints at something deeper: God's love for us *requires* us to love others – significantly, *not because of a command*, but out of some kind of necessity. But how could that be? Matthew 25:31-45 gives us an answer. In that passage, Jesus tells his disciples that "whatever you [do] for one of these least brothers of mine, you [do] for me" (Mt 25:40). In loving someone else, you are loving God. This idea is consonant with 1 John 20-21:

If anyone says, "I love God," but hates his brother, he is a liar; for whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

¹² Here I will simply help myself to the usual interpretation of "neighbor" as referring to all other humans. This interpretation is motivated by, *e.g.*, the parable of the Good Samaritan. See also *Deus Caritas Est*, §15.

¹³ Is this too much to ask? Whether it is depends on what exactly loving your enemies requires, of course. It almost certainly doesn't mean romantic love, for example. Below I'll try to say something about what this love demands, but for now we can at least note that if we are to do justice at all to a command to *love* enemies (instead of, say, merely treating them as rational agents), this command is going to require a lot. I suspect it will require praying for their eternal salvation – but who would want to do that for truly awful people like Hitler? Still, suppose the command does require this – is that too much to ask? It isn't clear why. According to Christian theology, the ultimate *teleos* of human life is communion with God, and (as I shall argue) this will require loving all of your fellow creatures. Perhaps that is impossible for us in this life. Even so, I'm not sure why it shouldn't be commanded. It may be impossible for a quarterback to throw the game-winning touchdown, but that doesn't stop the coach from telling him to try. What would be the point of aiming for an "almost touchdown" that fails to win the game? Loving many others, instead of all, wouldn't exactly be "losing the game," of course. In giving us this command, though, God is pointing us to what we should be doing, ideally. He is giving us a vision of how the world, ultimately, will be.

This is the commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

Commenting on this verse, Pope Benedict writes:

The unbreakable bond between love of God and love of neighbour is emphasized. One is so closely connected to the other that to say that we love God becomes a lie if we are closed to our neighbour or hate him altogether. Saint John's words should rather be interpreted to mean that love of neighbour is a path that leads to the encounter with God, and that closing our eyes to our neighbour also blinds us to God (Benedict 2006, §16).

If the most that a person's relationship with God generated were divine commands to love others, we would be (absent a well worked out divine command theory of obligation) still left wondering why we should obey the commands even of a loving God. The passages from John and Matthew, however, suggest that something more is going on than just a commandment to love neighbor. We should love others because so doing is a *way of loving God himself*. More specifically, I shall argue that it is a *necessary* way of loving God. In short, as Pope Benedict says, if we do not love our neighbor, we fail to love God. Benedict does not, I think, mean that loving others is a necessary *path* towards loving God; rather, what he means is that a person's love for God must motivate love for his neighbor. If it does not, we are failing to love God properly.

It is, of course, one thing to assert that loving others is a way of loving God and quite another to understand why that is so and how it can be. That it is so seems to me sufficiently clear from both Scripture and Tradition. In trying to understand why this is so, I initially want to follow the lead of Robert Adams, who suggests three ways in which, given a Christian's antecedent love for God, loving one's neighbor is a way of loving God.¹⁴ I will first show how loving another person can be a way of loving God at all (§4.2.1); I will then show that loving others is a necessary way of loving God such that one fails to love God properly if one does not love others (§4.2.2 and §4.2.3). As St. John says, then, whoever truly loves God must also love his brother – not because of any divine command, but because of what it is to love God. Once these claims are

¹⁴ He actually has some further alternatives, but I won't discuss those because they do not seem promising to me.

established, we can then begin to investigate what kind of obligations this love for neighbor grounds (§4.3).

4.2.1 Loving God together

In saying that loving others is a way of loving God, I mean that one loves others *for their own sakes* and not just for God's sake. As Adams discusses, this approach troubled St. Augustine, who thought that one should love God alone for his sake and everything else only insofar as it was a means to loving God. He was haunted by the problem of idolatry: to love anything else for its own sake would be to risk letting it become the center of one's life. This fear can certainly be warranted, but the solution, to adopt a Kantian way of speaking, cannot be to think of everything as a mere means to loving God. God explicitly instructs us to love our neighbor; but "where something is regarded only as a means or instrument, we can say that we 'value' it but not that we 'love' it" (Adams 1986, p. 112).

On the other hand, if I truly love another person for her own sake, how can I, in that very act of love, also love another person entirely? In fact I think that this idea is not as counterintuitive as it may seem at first blush. Let us think about the love I have for a friend. Adams' initial suggestion is that I can love God in loving her because one of the things that I will desire to share with her is my love for God. That is, I want to love God not just by myself but also with her. The key is to recognize that we do not prize simply two-membered relationships. For consider friendship itself: unlike romantic love, which is possessive and seeks privacy, *philia* is happy when someone new comes along to share in the friendship.¹⁵ Lovers wish to be left alone, but friends throw dinner parties and invite other friends so that they may all enjoy each other's company.

Now, this may seem a strange argument to make, given that I spent so much time explaining how *eros* is a part of a person's relationship with God. But *eros* is not to be

¹⁵ See here C. S. Lewis's vision of the difference:

If one who was first, in the deep and full sense, your Friend, is then gradually or suddenly revealed as your lover you will certainly not want to share the Beloved's erotic love with any third. But you will have no jealousy at all about sharing the Friendship. Nothing so enriches an erotic love as the discovery that the Beloved can deeply, truly and spontaneously enter into Friendship with Friends you already had: to feel that not only are we two united by erotic love but we three or four or five are all travelers on the same quest, have all a common vision (Lewis 1960, p. 43).

identified simply with romantic love, though it does contribute to it. *Eros*, as it figures in a relationship with God, refers (at least) rather to the passionate, emotional aspect of that love. Imagine the situation of someone caught up in the thrall of this love of God. In the first place, she will want to share her joy with those she cares about, just as someone newly fallen in love will often want to share her happiness with her friends. Yet there is more – for the person in love with God will realize that God loves everyone else, too. Not only is she happy, but the cause of her joy is one that manifestly should be shared with her friends since they too are loved by God. As the dinner party example is meant to suggest, she will want more than just for her friend to come to love God; she will want to share in her friend's newfound joy (her friend is, after all, her friend, no?). Each person in a group of friends does not love each other person in the group only as an individual, distinct from the group of friends. Love for each person is also love for the other members as well. Indeed, this is the way it ought to be, for friends help us to love our other friends. As Lewis observes:

If, of three friends (A, B, and C), A should die, then B loses not only A but “A's part in C,” while C loses not only A but “A's part in B.” In each of my friends there is something that only some other friend can fully bring out...Now that Charles is dead, I shall never again see Ronald's reaction to a specifically Caroline joke. Far from having more of Ronald,...I have less of Ronald (Lewis 1960, p. 41).

Lewis is speaking of *philia*, and it makes sense to think that in loving one of a group of my friends, I love them all. The CID of friendship can easily scale upwards beyond two. What concerns us, however, is how my love for God, with all its many dimensions, might be expressed in my love for anyone else. And here friendship may seem a poor model, for of all the many different images used to express the relationship between God and his creatures, friendship is usually not one of them. Yet Lewis thinks the idea of shared love is especially applicable in heaven:

In this, Friendship exhibits a glorious “nearness by resemblance” to Heaven itself where the very multitude of the blessed (which no man can number) increases the fruition which each has of God. For every soul, seeing Him in her own way, doubtless communicates that unique vision to all the rest. That, says an old author, is why the Seraphim in Isaiah's vision are crying “Holy, Holy, Holy” *to one another* (Lewis 1960, p. 41, his emphasis).

In heaven, the CID relationship between God and creatures will be most evident, and each will rejoice, not just in God's love for him, but in God's love for all. The right image to conjure up, I think, is that of a loving family. One's love for the family as a whole is expressed in one's love for each individual member. It is surely true, then, that in loving one's fellow Christians, one is loving God as well.

A Christian's love for God is perhaps most evident in his love for his fellow Christians since they will quite explicitly rejoice in their love for God together. However, his love for other persons generally – believers or otherwise – can also be an expression of his love for God since he believes that they, too, are created and loved by God. This point will be developed more fully below in the discussion of Adams' third suggestion.

4.2.2 Sharing God's interest in others

Let me anticipate an objection: even if this argument works, at best it seems to show that, *given antecedent love for my friends*, I'll want them to share in my love for God. But that's hardly an argument for loving everyone. That's correct. The goal of the foregoing argument is simply to show how it is even possible for you to love God in loving your friend. St. John's claim, however, was stronger: whoever loves God must love others. Or as I asked earlier, why it is that you must love your friends (and everyone else) in order to love God properly?

Adam's second suggestion, which is closely related to his first, will help to address this question. One of the ways of loving my friend is to share her interests. Suppose my friend likes ballroom dancing: I may take up this pursuit, too, in order to share it with her. I can, of course, dance with her simply because she enjoys it, and then this activity will be a pleasant way of spending time together. For me really to share in that part of her life, though, I must come to appreciate ballroom dancing for its own sake

and not just for hers. Then each of us will have an independent commitment to it that we can share with each other.¹⁶

Sharing another's interests in this way is, I have argued, part of the very foundation of friendship and love relationships.¹⁷ Loving another person does indeed consist in a certain valuing of the other (the kind of valuing in question varies with the kind of love), but it must be more than that; it would be a very odd love indeed that did not value what the beloved valued, that did not seek to share at all in the beloved's life.¹⁸ Lovers do not simply want to stand in rapt contemplation of each other; they want to *be with* each other.¹⁹

If this is true of friendship and romance, it is *a fortiori* true of one's relationship with God. Christians pray that their will may be brought into conformity with God's, that their hearts may desire what God desires. And among the things that God desires is that all may come to love him. Moreover, God also desires that we love each other (hence the commandment to love your neighbor). If a Christian truly desires to love God, then it would seem that he has every motivation to love his neighbor. And in coming to share God's passion for his neighbor, he is drawing closer to God and loving him more deeply.

Two objections come to mind. First, and less seriously, is this motivation to love one's neighbor a motivation of the right sort? Adams points out that some motivations "have no direct path to their fulfillment:" the desire to be unconcerned about one's motivational state is one example (121). A person acting on that desire can't possibly

¹⁶ This is the very way in which C. S. Lewis thinks friendships are formed: two strangers each come to find that the other shares the same passion or (as he puts it) sees the same truth. They together rejoice that they've found someone else with whom to share that vision.

¹⁷ Adams thinks this point fairly obvious: "It is a familiar phenomenon that we can enjoy a person we love in enjoying something else...there is not a sharp line between enjoying something *with* another person and enjoying the other person" (124).

¹⁸ David Velleman (1999) disagrees. As already discussed, he thinks you can care *about* someone without at all being moved to do something for him. Even more strongly, he thinks that "surely, it is easy enough to love someone whom one cannot stand to be with" (353). Think of teenagers who can't stand to be around their parents, or perhaps an elderly parent in the advanced stages of dementia. This claim might be true in these cases (I'm less willing to separate love from a "particular syndrome of motives" than Velleman is), but in any event it's *not* true in the case of friendship, and it's even less true in the case of one's relationship with God.

¹⁹ Perhaps there are limits. The more confirmed in love a person is with her spouse, the freer she is to pursue outside activities. From what I understand, independent pursuits are good; they allow a person to retain her individuality and, perhaps, prevent boredom within the marriage. Still, I don't think this affects my basic point, and in any event it won't be true of a person's relationship with God – at least not if Adams is right about it occupying a person's entire life.

achieve it, for she will be concerned about at least one motivational state – namely, the one not to be concerned about motivational states. More importantly, how can a desire to do God’s will, or to value what God values out of love for God, lead a person to love another for her own sake?

This problem needn’t detain us. I may begin studying ballroom because my friend likes it, and I want to share it with her, but though that might be my initial motivation, I can surely come to appreciate it for its own sake. Suppose Alvin Plantinga takes me mountain climbing, and I become captivated by the beauty about which he likes to write; I may have begun the climb for the company, but I can appreciate the beauty independently of him.²⁰ Similarly, my love for God can lead me to love others, at first for God’s sake and then for their own sakes.

Second: this account certainly shows how love for God can motivate love for neighbor: but does it show that such love is really *necessary*? Oftentimes, of course, this sharing in what the beloved likes needs no motivation; it is part of love’s desire. What the beloved likes tends to get cast in a favorable light. Yet this does not always happen. Sometimes, no matter how much one tries to share the beloved’s passion, things just don’t work out. I may try to share in my friend’s love of ballroom dancing, but if (as fate indeed has it) I am colossally inept at it, I may just give up, and my relationship will probably be none the worse for my giving up. Love of neighbor, though, is essential to loving God. It is a part of God’s life in which we must participate. But why is that?

Consider the situation of a man who falls in love with a woman who has dependent children. Though he loves her, he may not, especially at first, love her children at all. Yet he understands that she loves her children, and if he is truly to love her, he must come to accept and love her children, for they are an essential part of her life. And when he does come to love her children, he will be loving her in loving them. So it is with loving God and loving neighbor: God loves us all, and if a person is truly to love God, she must not only accept God’s love for her neighbor but also come to share in that love. Strikingly, what makes loving one’s neighbor essential on this model is *not* that God commands love of neighbor but rather simply that God loves one’s neighbor.

²⁰ Adams speaks in terms of inspiration: God’s love for my fellow humans can inspire me to love them (for their own sakes).

The mother may never explicitly demand that the man love her children; indeed, she shouldn't have to do so. Her life is, to some extent, dedicated to her children. They are a part of her life, and if the man is to love her, he must make them a part of his life, too. Analogously, God, especially through Christ, seeks a relationship with all of humanity, and the person who wants to love God cannot simply ignore those others. On the contrary: as I mentioned before, he should *want* to love them, for that is a way of loving God.

This example shows, first, how a person can come to love others for their sake (the children) as a way of loving someone else for her sake (the mother). More importantly, it also shows how a person can be *obligated* to love the others as a way of loving someone else. It isn't just that it would be nice if the man loved the woman's children; he must do so if he is to love her fully.

To understand why it is that God's love for all of humanity requires love of neighbor on the part of a Christian, we need to understand more fully why it is that the woman's love for her children makes it necessary for the man to love them, too. Now, the fact that she's committed to or passionate about her children is not enough to make love required on the man's part since she could also be committed to or passionate about some project or career, and it's doubtful that he must share that part of her life. Perhaps she's a world-renown cardiologist; he needn't be a physician to love her. However, her children, unlike a career, are persons with whom she has a relationship, and persons demand a kind of regard that careers and projects do not. More specifically, the CID relationship she has with her dependent children is the source of an important set of obligations. In other words, there is more here than just the pressure of consistency to stick by one's first-personal commitments; there are also the second-personal claims (some of which are obligations) that her children have on her. What's more, these claims, in virtue of her children's dependency upon her, are overriding of obligations she may have towards others, including her lover. That is, the woman's relationship with her children is not simply "one relationship among others" (of equal importance); it is one of the most important in her life. This importance means that to love her fully, he must recognize these obligations and, in virtue of the relationship *he* wants to have with her, integrate them into his own life. In loving her children, he does just that: the man and

woman's mutual love for each other and her (their!) children forms a larger CID relationship, a family.

To see why he must integrate them into his life, consider what happens if he does not. In that case, he seeks to have an intimate love relationship with her, but he wishes to bracket off the part of her life involving her children. Trying to have a relationship with her, but not with her dependent children, puts his relationship with her in competition with her relationship to her children. Rather than sharing in her life, he sets himself in direct opposition to part of it, for his demands on her time, attention, and so forth will inevitably conflict with those of her children. It is only by sharing her love for her children, and entering into a CID relationship with them, that he can love her fully.

Notice that the nature of the relationships in question plays an important role here. It isn't merely that the woman has obligations, even overriding ones, towards her children. If she's a cardiologist, she has very important obligations of confidentiality and care towards her patients, and he obviously should not share in these. Not sharing in those obligations does not put him in competition with her patients, however, whereas not sharing in her relationship with her children does. While spousal and parent-child relationships are of course distinct, they are related and complimentary. The physician-patient relationship is of a different kind.

This point is important because it plays a pivotal role in the divine case. There are marked differences between the Christian who loves God and the aspiring husband. While Christian theology traditionally holds that we are dependent upon God for many things, including our existence, this dependence does not put us in competition with each other for God's attention or time in virtue of God's omnipotence. Yet it is clear that God, especially through Christ, desires a certain kind of love relationship with all of humanity. In particular, he desires not just that each individual love him, but that we also all love each other. The reason is that he loves us, not just as individuals, but as a community. "We are God's people" is a common enough sentiment expressed in hymns. For a Christian truly to love God, he must love his neighbor, for it is only in that way that he will fully participate in God's love for him. Or to put it another way: the Christian who does not love his neighbor is unable to be a part of the broader CID relationship that God has with humanity. This recalcitrant Christian is like the child who refuses to love his

siblings and so fails properly to love his parents, who love each of the children not only individually but also as members of the family.²¹

Adams' first suggestion showed us how it can be that loving another person (specifically, your friend) can be a way of loving God: in loving God together, and wanting to share that joy with each other, you are both, in one act, loving each other and God. His second suggestion gives us a better idea of why loving others is necessary. God loves every person, and he desires that we do so as well. As we just saw, sharing another's passion is a way of drawing closer to, and loving, that other person. Moreover, love for others isn't just some interest that God happens to have; as the author of 1 John puts it, "God is love," and he has commanded us to love one another. Quite apart from the issue of God's authority to issue the command, the fact that he issues it tells us that it is very important to him. Finally, while the first way leveraged a person's antecedent love for her friend, this second way doesn't require any prior love for friend (or neighbor); the point is that a person has a reason to acquire love for neighbor in virtue of his love for God. And as the example of the mother with dependent children was meant to show, this reason to love neighbor is a decisive reason: loving neighbor is essential to loving God.

4.2.3 Love for others as God's creations

Fair enough; but what have these two arguments actually shown? In the case of the mother, it seems clear what's required: the man needs to love her children. But what of the Christian? "Neighbor" is, as I've said, understood to refer to the rest of humanity. Does this mean that a Christian must love the rest of humanity? Assuming that's possible, in what would such love consist? How would one go about doing it? While it

²¹ One might wonder how far a person must share in her beloved's interests, given their importance to loving him. In particular, must she also share in his *hatred* of things or (even worse) people? Must the wife of a racist share in his racism, for example? The answer is no. First, I haven't argued that a person must share in all of her beloved's interests – think of the ballroom dancing example. If I'm really no good at it, or altogether lack interest, then I probably won't bother to share in it. Second, hatred, unlike love, is not relational. (Even though two people may reciprocally hate each other, this hate doesn't ground a relationship, and certainly isn't the basis for a CID relationship.) But it is the fact that the woman is in a CID relationship with her children, and that God is in one with each of us (and that he seeks to love us together, as a community) that necessitates the man's love for her children and our love for neighbor. This reasoning doesn't apply in the example of the racist husband.

is easy to see how you might love God with your family, friends, and fellow parishioners, and how you might take an interest in these people out of a desire to share in God's love for them, it is far less easy to see how one can do either of these things with complete strangers. Family and friends are those with whom one already shares many other things; it is only natural to share God's love, too. Strangers – especially ones who may not even believe in God – are another matter entirely.

Further, we may be left wanting an explanation of why it is necessary to love *everyone*. Am I not loving God in loving my family and friends? Is it really so important that I try to love every single person who comes into my life (let alone every other human being!)? Suppose my spouse is a passionate runner and competes in several marathons a year. I may come to share her joy of running, but this need not mean that I run every race with her, or that I'm as passionate about it as she is. I may prefer to spend more time in my armchair, thinking about moral philosophy. One's relationship with God is, of course, supposed to dominate one's life more fully than any human relationship. Yet that doesn't obviously explain why a failure to love everyone else is a failure to love God. In not running every race with my spouse, I'm not failing to love her; at most I'm failing to take advantage of every opportunity to share in her passion. But the command in Mark 12:31 isn't to love *many* or even *most* of your neighbors; it is (as traditionally read) to love all your neighbors – that is, the rest of humanity.

Pursuant to this point, the fact that your relationship with God is all-encompassing doesn't quite explain how it is that “whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me” (Mt 25:40). The corporate identity relationship between a mother and her children makes it easy to see how, in loving her children, the aspiring husband loves her as well. What of those who do not love God, though? What of those who have never even heard of God? While God loves them, it seems less likely that a CID relationship exists since they do not return that love: so how can one love God in loving them?

To summarize, we are left wondering just what love of neighbor requires; in what it consists; and why one must actually love everyone in order to love God properly. As an ancillary issue, the text of Matthew 25:40 also wants an explanation.

One could understand neighbor love in terms of Kantian respect. Respect is owed to all rational creatures, and it may involve no more than adopting a certain attitude: Velleman describes respect as suspending one's self-interested designs on another (1999, p. 361). In more familiar language, respect requires at least that a person not treat others as mere means to one's personal ends. In addition to ruling out the exploitation of others, respect also forbids harming others through negligence. In acting negligently, one doesn't make use of others, but one acts without any regard for their interests.²² Respect also requires some concern for a person's well-being: Kant thought that one has an imperfect duty to help others in achieving some of their aims. Since the duty is an imperfect one, a person needn't always help others achieve their aims, and he needn't even help *everyone* in that manner; it suffices that he help some people some of the time. Just how many people he should help, and how much help he should give, are open questions. This weak understanding of neighbor love makes it easy to understand how a person might love everyone, but it doesn't have much else to recommend it. The Christian tradition is fairly consonant in understanding love for neighbor as requiring a great deal more than Kantian respect. Philip Quinn thinks that love is commanded precisely because it is so demanding: "the love of neighbor of which Jesus speaks is extremely difficult for humans in their present condition. It does not spontaneously engage their affections..." (Quinn 2000, p. 58).

Usually, love for neighbor is identified with *agape*. Quinn follows Kierkegaard in distinguishing between erotic love (*eros*) and *philia*, on the one hand, and love of neighbor, on the other. The first two "play favorites" while "the love of neighbor Christians are commanded to display is completely impartial" (Quinn 2000, p. 58). Additionally, this impartial love is supposed to be immune to changes in its object. While friendship and other loves may rise and fall on shared interests, love for neighbor remains constant, altering not when it alteration finds.²³ Because it is commanded, and because it is supposed to be completely impartial and constant, neighbor love is

²² Thanks to Elizabeth Anderson for bringing this point to my attention.

²³ To paraphrase a line from Shakespeare's Sonnet 116.

commonly thought to be purely a matter of the will and not the sentiments. *Agape* thus resembles nothing so much as impersonal beneficence.²⁴

This interpretation of neighbor love is tempting because it does seem possible – however difficult – to hold an attitude of impersonal beneficence towards all of humanity. This reading of the commandment has its own problems, though. First, knowing that neighbor love requires that we will others' good tells us virtually nothing except that more than respect is required. (An attitude of impersonal beneficence towards others is compatible with, but distinct from, respect for others. The latter requires us to help some people some of the time; the former requires us to help everyone some of the time.) Second, and more importantly, a stance of impersonal beneficence seems exactly the wrong attitude to take if you are supposed to love your neighbor *as yourself*. Who takes an impersonal attitude towards himself? Kierkegaard, who championed this interpretation, recognized this problem and thought that the neighbor love commandment was actually supposed to teach us about appropriate self-love: we are to love ourselves in a way that is universalizable (c.f. Murphy 2002, p. 185).

It is no doubt true that I ought to value myself with a mode of valuation that is applicable to all of humanity (Kantian respect is one such valuation), but that cannot be the whole of how I value myself. I take my desires and interests uniquely to give me reasons for action, and not simply because I am better placed than others to respond to them. As we saw in the discussion of friendship, friends can also come to share these reasons, but even the closest of friends or lovers won't share all of them. However, as I also argued, that you won't share *all* of your friend's reasons doesn't mean that you can't see him as, to speak colloquially, a part of yourself. Many of the reasons you have will be shared, resulting in a partial collapse of the egoism/altruism distinction. Your friend remains a distinct person, but you do love her as yourself.

That, of course, is just what corporate identity is, and my suggestion is that we understand the neighbor love commandment in terms of corporate identity. In other words, by being in a CID relationship with the rest of humanity, one can, in a limited

²⁴ Why impersonal? If, as Kierkegaard wants, *agape* remains constant throughout all changes in its object, then it cannot value any of the mutable aspects of the object; yet it is the valuing of those contingent aspects that makes love personal. I may love a friend for her witty personality, but *agape* cannot do that; it must value her, witty personality or no.

sense, love others as oneself. Now, this should come as no surprise: we began this section by inquiring into what obligations the Christian CID might generate. That broad CID, I said, is founded on an intimate one between a Christian and God, and the neighbor love commandment tells us that loving God requires loving the rest of humanity. In the first two of Adams' suggestions, we've already seen how (1) loving others can be a way of loving God and (2) why loving God requires loving others. What I am claiming now is that the best way of understanding what it is in which this love consists, and how a person can love everyone as she loves herself, is in terms of a CID relationship with the rest of humanity that is motivated by her relationship with God. We have thus bypassed the Christian CID to examine the possibility of being in a CID relationship with all of humanity.

This seems a tall order: on what could such a relationship be based, apart from species membership? Moreover, what would this relationship be like? Friendship, for example, is a poor model for this CID relationship since there are constitutional and physical limits to the number of friends one can have. Adams' third suggestion for how one can love God in loving others provides a better model. The idea here is that one can appreciate an artist or creator in his works and also – crucially for our purposes – one's love for the creator can motivate love for his works. One way of loving others is to see them as the creative works of God. This should not seem strange; Christians often talk about seeing the glory of God in others.²⁵ Because one loves God, one will appreciate what he has done (see his glory in his creatures); and in appreciating his creative works, one loves God. The CID relationship with others that the neighbor love commandment urges, in other words, is that in which we see others not just as fellow humans but also as fellow creatures of God.

How does this help us to understand what it would be to love all of humanity (and in a way that can ground obligations)? Once again, analogies to human endeavors help. For example, you might appreciate a dancer in enjoying her routine. In this case, the converse relationship may not hold: even if you love the dancer, you may dislike a particular routine (though love for the dancer may motivate you to watch the dance).

²⁵ C.f. Adams 1986, p. 126.

There are limits; Adams thinks that one probably doesn't enjoy a painter in enjoying his paintings. That may be true when one bears no special relationship to the painter, but consider the following special case. Parents of young children often put up their art work on their office doors. The art, however awful it is, has sentimental value. It is appreciated precisely because it is produced by the child. Moreover, it seems at least possible to me that the art can be appreciated for its own sake, too: perhaps it gives insight into how the child sees the world, or his family, and it's neat to see how the child's evolving understanding is reflected in its art. Here, then, the valuing runs both directions: love for the child can motivate appreciation of the art, and appreciating the art itself can be a way of appreciating and loving the child.²⁶

This analogy to art should not be pushed too far: I do not mean to suggest that appreciating others as creatures of God amounts to an aesthetic appreciation of them. Just as one can appreciate a person through her artwork, so too one might appreciate an engineer in his design, or a physicist in his theory, or an auto mechanic in his handiwork, *etc.*, and in these cases the appreciation in question is not always aesthetic. The core idea is that we are all the product of God's creative act(s), and we can value each other as such. The example of a child and its artwork is merely particularly useful because it illustrates both how love for the creator can motivate love for its creations and how independent love for the creations themselves can be a way of loving the creator.

Of course, a Christian does not bear the same relationship to God and his creations that a parent bears to his child and its artwork. However, it isn't true that she bears no relationship at all to God and his creations. The right analogy again seems to be that of a family: in a sense, all of humanity is related as siblings, with God as our parent. The question is now: which or both directions of valuing will this relationship support? Is love for others as sibling creations a way of loving God? And can prior love for God motivate love for others as God's creatures? Adams' second suggestion has already shown us that the latter is possible, so let us consider the former.

²⁶ There isn't perfect symmetry here. One values the art because of prior love for the child. Prior love for the art does not motivate love for the child. However, appreciating the art can be a way of loving the child, or so it seems to me. This is all I need: the Christian's prior love for God can motivate love for her fellow human beings as creatures of God. When she comes to love them as creatures of God, that love will be a way of loving God as well.

Plausibly, I can appreciate a person's parents in appreciating that person. In loving my girlfriend, I think that I also loved her parents for the job they had done in raising her. I saw their (good) influence on her. Of course, I need not appreciate a person's parents at all in appreciating that person, especially if they had been bad parents; my point is just that it's possible. It seems to me that a person can also appreciate his own parents in appreciating and loving his siblings.

The right model, then, for the CID relationship among oneself, one's fellow human beings, and God is that of a family, at least insofar as it gets the relationships between humans and God approximately correct. To be sure, I am related to some of my fellow humans more than others, but the fact that someone is a complete stranger to me should not prevent me from seeing her as another of God's creations. This, in fact, is the strength of Adam's third suggestion: it allows us to see how we can value complete strangers in a way that simultaneously goes beyond impersonal beneficence and reflects love for God (and therefore is motivated by love for God).

In what does loving others as fellow creations of God consist? As we saw earlier in this section, God's love for each of us is hardly impersonal. To see others as God's creatures, then, is at least to see them as the object of God's very personal and intense love. Since we also know that God intends for all of humanity to be a community of believers, seeing others as God's creatures is also to see each of them as potential fellow Christians with whom one can share in the love of God. In this life, one of the primary ways of acting on this vision is to evangelize – indeed, we've been told and given authority to do so: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (c.f. Mt 28:16-20). Lest one think that the object of this command is only non-Christians, note that one can even evangelize to those who are already Christian but who are, say, struggling with their faith (so far as I can see, this last condition applies to nearly everyone). Evangelizing to others, and seeing them as personally loved by God, strike me as going far beyond an attitude of impersonal beneficence (consider that neither of these are required by seeing others as rational agents). In particular, these urge us to develop relationships with people where we can.

I haven't the space here to explore the idea of evangelization in any detail. Suffice it to say that evangelization certainly cannot consist simply in presenting a series of facts to others, as though one were expounding a mathematical theory. The main purpose of evangelization is to reveal God's love to others. Theological instruction plays a part in revealing this love, but of course one can no more explain God's love to a person than one can explain her family's love for her. Love, ultimately, must be experienced, and that can only happen through relationships. Evangelization thus cannot be reduced to simple impersonal teaching; nor can it be understood as being generated by, *e.g.*, a Kantian duty of beneficence.

It is impossible for a person to enter into a personal relationship with every other human being. A life with a family and even one or two very close friends is, in my view, an extremely successful life. Fortunately, intimate personal relationships with everyone aren't required by the neighbor love commandment. However, that commandment, on this reading, does tell us that more is required than just impersonal care for others. Quinn is right to think that Christian love is very demanding, but he is wrong to think that it consists only in impersonal beneficence. It consists in wanting to share God's love with others as much as one can. Evangelization is one such way. Even though a person cannot actually evangelize to everyone else, he ought to see his fellow humans as appropriate recipients of evangelization. And as Mark Murphy insightfully points out, the scope of one's efforts on this account really can extend to all of humanity through petitionary prayer (Murphy 2002, p. 185 note 10).

I began the discussion of Adams' third suggestion with three questions: what love of neighbor requires; in what it consists; and why one must actually love everyone in order to love God properly. We can now begin to answer these questions. Love of neighbor consists in seeing others as fellow creatures of God and acting accordingly, within a loving CID relationship that takes others to be as siblings in relation to God the Father. I will shortly argue (next section) that what that requires is what God has commanded, through both Scripture and Church teaching. As to why one must love everyone: the example of the aspiring husband has already provided a model for why such love is required. The man needs to love the woman's children because she is committed to them; they are an integral part of her life. *A fortiori*, God is committed to

humanity through Christ's death and resurrection. God seeks out a relationship with all of humanity, and one must love him on those terms.

There were two stumbling blocks to understanding this analogy. The first was that it wasn't clear how a person could even go about loving all humans; in what would such love consist? In particular, how could a person love those he hasn't even met? That question is now answered: it consists in seeing them as fellow creatures of God (and acting accordingly). Seeing them as such renders them appropriate objects (an unfortunate term) both of evangelization and petitionary prayer; the latter, clearly, can be done for those one has never met. The second stumbling block was that, given my previous arguments, it is true that the Christian is already loving God in loving his friends and family. Why must he try to pursue love for everyone? If he fails to do so, does it invalidate his love for God? Or to put it another way, why a failure to love others is a failure to love God rather than a failure to maximize every opportunity to love God (recall the marathon analogy).

This last way of putting the problem is misleading. If a person fails to see some others as creatures of God, he isn't so much failing to maximize the ways he can love God as he is failing to love God properly. Likewise, if the aspiring husband fails to love the woman's children, he isn't failing to love her at all; he's failing to love her properly. As I pointed out earlier, this failure results not from any demand she might make on him to love her children but rather simply from the fact that she loves them. I think a similar claim is true in the theological case: a little reflection shows that, given God's relationship with us, it just doesn't make sense to apply the neighbor love commandment parochially.

There isn't much debate on the interpretation of the neighbor love commandment as far as the scope of "neighbor" is concerned; it's well understood to enjoin love for all humans. It's fairly easy to see why God would make this demand: consider what it is like in Heaven, so far as we are able to know. Necessarily, if a person is in Heaven, she loves God and all of her fellow creatures in Heaven; all of them together are rejoicing in God's love. Despite its modal strength, this claim is obviously true. Would it make

sense for some creature to be in Heaven and yet be indifferent to its companions there?²⁷ That would be, I think, like being a part of a loving family, except that you want to exclude or ignore some members because you simply don't like them or are indifferent to them. People do that all the time; but let's grant for the sake of argument that such motivations would not exist in Heaven (such a claim seems plausible enough to me). If ever there were a case of a perfect corporate identity, one where there was no animosity among members, Heaven would surely be it.

For Christians, Heaven is no mere ideal; it's a reality. The beatific vision is precisely that for which she lives. Since that vision includes love for all others as well as for God, any parochial application of neighbor love simply doesn't make sense. That said, I don't think that the neighbor love commandment or the command to evangelize are superfluous. On the contrary, these commandments make explicit the kind of relationship that God desires to have with us and the relationship that he desires for us to have with each other. In commanding neighbor love, God is drawing our attention to the necessity of loving our neighbor, a point which might otherwise be missed. This commandment, and the parable of the Good Samaritan, represented a significant departure from the norms of Jesus's time, in which obligations of love really were restricted to the tribal level. Moreover, as Quinn pointed out, neighbor love can be an incredibly difficult thing to achieve; "if it were merely permissible, [we] would not love our neighbors. It is therefore no accident that the love of neighbor Jesus endorses is a commanded love" (Quinn 2000, p. 58).

To conclude: the love that a Christian has for God is a multifaceted love, one that generates an obligation to love one's neighbor, not because, or not simply because, God has commanded it but rather because loving one's neighbor is a necessary way of loving God. A broader CID relationship to the rest of humanity is thus created by the intimate CID relationship between a Christian and God.

4.3 Love's Obligations

²⁷ Recall the point in §4.2.2 that God loves each of us, not just individually, but as a community. Loving each other is thus an essential part of heavenly life.

The Christian who loves God is thus obliged to love his neighbors as well. At a minimum, that consists in seeing them as fellow creatures of God. It isn't hard to figure out more specifically what God has in mind by loving one's neighbor. The New Testament fills in the requirements of this love with more concrete obligations: we are to feed and clothe others; welcome strangers; care for the ill; and visit those in prison (c.f. Mt 26:35-36). The ten commandments are – more or less – a list of negative obligations. Catholics can speak with a good deal of certitude about the various obligations they are under because of the teaching authority of the Church. All of these commands require interpretation, of course. The injunction to feed the hungry, for example, probably doesn't mean that each person is responsible for trying to feed as many as he possibly can; there are other obligations, and then, too, there are a person's own projects, and so forth. What this command does enjoin, I think, is the necessity of caring for the hungry across the world in some capacity. Similar points can be made about the negative obligations of the Decalogue. While I won't pursue these interpretive questions further, it seems to me safe to say that the negative and positive duties that intuition suggests that we have are enjoined either directly by divine command (Scripture) or by Church teaching.

As before, we can still ask: where does God get the authority to issue these commands? Love relationships, as discussed in Chapters Two and Three, do generate obligations on each side, but – at least in the case of human relationships – they certainly do not underwrite the kind of sweeping authority that God is thought to have. Yet my claim is that the content of many of the obligations we have, including at least some of those owed to “humanity in general,” is derived from divine commands. Or to put it another way: the love relationship that a Christian has with God is such that God has the authority to shape our relationship with others in a way analogous to that in which a parent has the authority to shape his children's relationships with each other.

Notice that, on this view, these obligations (say, to feed the hungry) are owed *both to the individuals and also to God*. This is consonant with the Christian tradition, which sees failure to live up to obligations as a sin both against person and against God. Divine commands thus serve to fill in the requirements of the love for neighbor that a person must have. Because God commands them, the duties are, properly speaking,

owed to him; but because of the love relationship that a person is supposed to have with his fellow humans, the duties are also, properly speaking, owed to them as well. Something similar can be said of the aspiring husband who needs to love the woman's children in order to love her properly. His love for the children will enjoin certain duties, and these are owed both to the woman and to the children: they are owed to the children since he loves them for their own sakes. At the same time, however, they can also be said to be owed to the woman because a failure to observe these obligations – and so a failure to love the children – is also a failure to love her properly.

On this model, obligations a person owes to everyone, such as not murdering, are in fact owed to each individual (and also to God). Those obligations thought to be owed to humanity in general will also be owed to God as well as to humanity. The fact that these latter obligations are also owed to God is, I think, a slight advantage that my theory has over non-theologically grounded accounts. Consider obligations to take care of the environment. Though the obligations are owed to humanity generally, it isn't clear to me that just anyone has the authority to hold others accountable for transgressions, and it is even less clear that just anyone can punish others. Perhaps holding accountable, and more probably any kind of punishing, must be done by some group of people charged with handling such matters by the whole community. Since the obligations are also owed directly to God, however, we can say that he definitely has the requisite authority.²⁸ Precisely how he holds, or plans to hold, people accountable for these obligations is a different matter, of course. The point is just that on the current theory, one can always point to someone specific (God) who has the authority to hold others accountable.

So where does God get this authority? Or rather: what is it about the love relationship between a Christian and God that explains this authority? The answer depends upon the specific commands in question. Let's first consider just those duties that are owed to every person individually. Here it will be useful to distinguish between negative and positive obligations. I realize that this distinction is not entirely clear; it will be sufficient for our purposes to gloss it in terms of obligations not to harm and

²⁸ Perhaps obligations to take care of the environment are not the best example here since they might rather be understood as being owed in the first instance to God, as creator of the environment, rather than to humanity generally.

obligations to aid. Accounting for God's authority with respect to the first set is straightforward and follows directly from the obligation to love one's neighbor. Whatever else love involves, it certainly includes not harming others, not stealing from them, *etc.* These things are just conceptually incompatible with loving another person. It should come as no surprise that God commands them since these obligations of love are owed both to humans and to God.

Accounting for obligations of aid is more difficult. Here I have in mind such things as the commands to feed the hungry, take care of the sick, and so forth. While these commands do not produce an obligation to, say, feed as many as one can, they do mean that one's care cannot be simply parochial: one has an obligation to care for people generally. Even so, these commands are significant. In the last section, I argued that the family provides the best analogy for a person's relationship to God and to other humans. On this model, it seems reasonable to think that God would also have a say in what positive obligations a person has to others, just as parents have authority over their dependent children. A parent can insist that an older child help a younger one with her homework, for example. Parents can also rebuke their children for fighting, demand that they treat each other with kindness, and so forth.

At least part of the reason that parents have this authority over their dependent children, however, is that children are not yet emotionally mature and do not yet have the ability to guide their lives. Part of a parent's job is to teach his children how to relate to others. Such training quite appropriately begins with one's own family.

These reasons don't apply to an adult's relationship with God. Nevertheless, it doesn't follow that God has no authority to shape a person's relationship to others. Recall the story of the man who wishes to marry the single mother. It's reasonable to think that she has some authority to shape the relationship that the man has with her children. Likewise, God has some authority to shape a person's relationship to others, even to those halfway across the world. That's hardly surprising; given that a Christian's relationship with God is supposed to be all-encompassing and characterized by complete devotion, it makes sense to think that God would have something to say about how we relate to all those whom he loves. Furthermore, one who loves God in this fashion will have very good reasons – reasons of love – for doing what he asks.

Still, does this love relationship mean that God's commands actually generate *obligations*? Even granting that one who loves God wholeheartedly and unconditionally²⁹ will want to do whatever God asks, it is one thing to have decisive reasons for following God's commands and another actually to be obligated to follow them.

I do not see any easy way of determining what sorts of things God might legitimately command – and so obligate us – to do and what sorts of things we have merely decisive, but not obligating, reasons to do. Fortunately, however, I don't think we need to worry too much about it, for Mark Murphy has suggested an interesting alternative. On his view,

we humans are not born under God's authority, but each of us is bound to submit to the divine rule and to make God authoritative over him or her. Each of us builds up God's kingdom by taking his or her place in it as a divine subject (Murphy 2002, p. 152).

Murphy thinks that God does not necessarily have second-personal authority³⁰ over any of us. However, a person can make him authoritative by submitting to divine rule, just as one could join the army and so give a drill sergeant some limited second-personal authority. In the case of divine rule, Murphy thinks that this authority is total: one's submission to God “involves a thorough-going willingness to surrender one's decision-making to God: it is allowing God entirely to complete one's determinations for one” (Murphy 2002, p. 169). Further, one is in some sense “bound” to submit to this authority. Murphy thinks that there are decisive (*i.e.*, all things considered) reasons for submitting to God such that one is, at the very least, guilty of practical irrationality for failing to submit; sometimes he makes the stronger claim that one would be *morally* guilty for not submitting to God. While this account of divine authority certainly diverges from the standard view (in which God's authority is decidedly *not* dependent upon one's voluntary

²⁹ There is a further worry about what limits, if any, there are to what God can command. If there aren't, as some writers have held, can anyone, even God, be worthy of such obedience? For now I will note only that God is worthy of maximal obedience (whatever that maximum is) since, unlike any human, God is perfectly good and perfectly loving.

³⁰ Murphy does not use Darwall's “second-personal” terminology, but it is clear that it is what he has in mind.

submission to him), if Murphy can make good on the claim that one is morally guilty for failing to submit to God, then we needn't resolve the issue of what God has authority to command, for we will explicitly give him such authority.

I do not think that Murphy can make good on this claim, though; or more appropriately, I do not think that he *does* make good on it (whether it's possible in theory is an open question). His view is hardly without interest, though. On the contrary, it suggests an excellent way to account both for positive duties to others and also for duties to humanity generally. Instead of arguing that we ought to submit totally to God, I shall argue that we have morally obligating reasons of love to submit to partial obedience to God. In particular, we have reasons to obey the commands that God has given to us already in Scripture, and we can expect to have reason to obey commands God might give to us in the future.

To develop this argument, I'll first discuss Murphy's position and explain where I think he goes wrong; I will then take up one of his suggestions and show that it can underwrite limited consent to God.

For our purposes, four questions about Murphy's account are important: what is it to submit to God's authority; why is this submission binding; what decisive reasons are there for submitting; and how do these reasons make it morally obligatory to submit? I will briefly outline Murphy's answers to each of these, paying special attention to the last two. Although it is certainly *reasonable* to submit to God's authority, I'll argue that Murphy does not show that a person has decisive reasons for submission, much less morally obligating ones. However, such reasons are in the offing for one who loves God. Throughout, then, I'll be speaking of the Christian who does love God.

First: Murphy understands submission to divine authority in terms of what he calls "consent in the acceptance sense" (Murphy 2002, p. 160). In doing so, he explicitly rejects understanding submission in terms of promising. He follows Scanlon in rejecting social practice accounts of promising, and he also rejects Scanlon's view, in which "what is essential to the wrongness of promise-breaking is its involving the inviting of others' reliance upon one" and then failing to deliver that on which they're relying (Murphy 2002, p. 155). Perhaps Scanlon's account will work for most instances of promising

among humans, but an omniscient God could not suffer the harm of having his expectations not met since he would know whether someone would keep a promise.

Instead, consent in the acceptance sense consists, in this case, simply in deciding to follow God's dictates as a way of determining more precisely what to do. Murphy thinks that the practical principles on which we act are largely indeterminate, needing to be rendered more specific before we can act on them. Here is one of his examples: "one ought not drink to excess." How is one to determine what counts as excessive? One way of so doing would be to let someone else (say, one's spouse!) specify limits. There are of course other ways (principled and not) of choosing such limits; the point is just that letting someone else specify them is one of those ways. With limits in hand, it is possible to act on this principle.

Second: Murphy further argues that once one chooses a way of specifying the principle, one now has a reason to act on that determination. To make a decision but then not to act on it leaves one open to rational criticism:

Decisions made by rational agents stand until there is adequate reason to revisit them, where by 'adequate reason' I mean considerations that were not appropriately considered in the deliberation that led to the initial decision (Murphy 2002, p. 164).

Assuming that a person has appropriately weighed relevant considerations, not to act on her considered judgment would undermine the point of deliberation.

Letting one's spouse specify drinking limits cedes some amount of decision making to him or her. The case of the drill sergeant is another instance in which one cedes some (larger amount of) decision making to another. Submission to divine authority is like these two cases, only it is far more comprehensive: one allows God to have a say in all, or nearly all, aspects of one's life. Once a person decides to let God have this say, then God has second-personal authority over her. And now – crucially – she has a new kind of reason for acting as God dictates, namely, a second-personal reason. The divine commands themselves constitute reasons for acting as they dictate. There are thus two kinds of reasons at issue: reasons for consenting to God's authority in

the first place, and the second-personal reasons that such consent creates. If the reasons for consenting are decisive, then the second-personal reasons are themselves decisive.³¹

To answer the first two questions, then: submission to God's authority consists in choosing to accept his dictates about how to act. This submission is binding in the sense that once a person has chosen to accept his dictates, she would be open to rational criticism for failing to act on this decision. If she has decisive reasons for choosing to accept God's authority, then divine commands provide decisive reasons for action.

This sketch of Murphy's view should be adequate to our purposes. What reasons would a person have for submitting to divine authority? Murphy gives three: an argument from good practical reasoning; an argument from gratitude; and one from coordination.

His first argument is that, from a practical reasoning point of view, it makes good sense for a person to turn her deliberative burden over to God, who is an ideal practical deliberator. Given the Christian understanding of God as loving and caring for her, and as intensely interested in her good, she can trust him to make the right decisions about how she ought to act since he is capable of identifying and properly weighing all the relevant considerations. On this line of reasoning, God mainly acts in an epistemic capacity, telling a person about the balance of reasons that already obtains. Where the relevant considerations do not specify any one particular action (more than one act is permissible), God's authority is used to choose among the set of possible acts.

Murphy considers the objection that surrendering all of one's decision making to God is simply to forgo one's agency entirely. Knowing what we do about God, though, that isn't correct. I know plenty of people who wish to surrender their will to God, but I know of none who are thereby alleviated of all decision making. There is surely a great good in exercising our own autonomy; God knows this, and he takes it into account, issuing only a limited set of commands.

³¹ Consent to follow someone else's dictates by itself does not generate an obligation to follow that person's dictates (though if a person really does consent, she is open to rational criticism if she then backs out on the decision, per the citation from Murphy above). However, consent *within the context of a CID relationship* can (but need not always) generate this obligation, for then it is an instance of joint reasoning. Later I will have more to say about why one should consent to give God authority over her life.

However, there is a more serious problem with this argument. Recall my criticism of the attempt to justify norms by arguing that Catholics must presuppose their validity in virtue of the teaching authority of the Church. That attempt didn't offer us an explanation of *why* those norms were authoritative; it just told us that they were. A similar point applies here. Perhaps, as many are, a Catholic is unable to see how abortion is immoral. She knows that it is in virtue of the Church's teaching (for our purposes, an extension of divine commands). But once again, knowing the end result of practical reasoning is not the same as understanding the reasoning itself. It does not help if we here add, following Murphy, that the reason God's commands are authoritative is that she's submitted to divine rule. For on the argument from good practical reasoning, the very reason for submitting to divine rule is to gain an epistemic advantage: we can be sure that God's commands track the balance of reasons that already exists. Even if she didn't submit to divine rule, the balance of reasons would still militate against abortion. On this argument, then, the submission to divine authority route fails to explain why a person has the obligations that she does.

One might think that the argument from good practical reasoning is not entirely without use. Suppose that some obligation – say, not to have premarital sex – is one of those obligations that results from God's choosing among a set of permissible acts. That is, perhaps the entire set of reasons (prior to any divine commands) is such that both premarital sex and abstention from it are permissible. God resolves the ambiguity for us by commanding the latter. If one has submitted to divine authority, then one does have a reason for abstaining from premarital sex. But is this a decisive reason? Murphy offers the following comparison:

It is important to see that this appeal to divine authority is not a desperate turn to divine authority as a stopgap where a theory of normative ethics has failed, any more than an appeal to the existence of a civil law prohibiting driving over sixty-five miles per hour is a desperate turn to the civil law to remedy normative theory's 'failure' to explain why certain people are bound not to drive more than sixty-five miles per hour. Just as human legislators can give reasons rooted in the human good for laying down such a human law, even if the human good does not dictate a particular speed limit, we can provide some account, grounded in the

good of rational creatures, of why God would lay down this sort of command (Murphy 2002, p. 182).³²

I find this comparison instructive. I do think that traffic laws give some reason to do what they say, but I hardly think it's a decisive reason; and judging from the way that those around me drive on I94, almost no one else does, either. A similar point applies in the theological case. I might in general let God choose among the range of permissible actions for me, but I do not see that this commits me always to letting God so choose.

The second argument is one from gratitude. According to Murphy, "gratitude requires one who has received gratuitous benefits from another to be willing to perform beneficial acts for that other" (Murphy 2002, p. 104; p. 173). The Christian certainly owes a debt of gratitude to God both for his existence and also, one might think, for the love which God has for him. What can he do in return? It isn't clear that one can properly benefit God. He can, however, give something to God that God could not otherwise have, namely, his obedience. He can freely submit to divine authority.

The chief problem with this argument is that the principle of gratitude strikes me as dubious. Gratitude, in my view, requires being appropriately thankful for what another has done for you. Gratuitous actions or benefits are things that a person does for another without expecting any kind of repayment. If Murphy's principle of gratitude held, however, gratuitous acts should be repaid, thereby creating an obligation for the person who receives the benefits. This is problematic for two reasons. First, if one expects, in virtue of this principle, to receive a good turn for one given, then one isn't really acting gratuitously. Of course, a person might well expect that her good-hearted friend will try to repay the good turn out of gratitude while not being motivated by that expectation, so gratuitous actions are still possible. But second, and more importantly, we often perform gratuitous acts precisely when we do *not* want someone to repay them in any form. Suppose, for example, that my friend is in the process of moving and is just overwhelmed by everything that needs to be done. I may help her pack and carry things unasked just because I want to relieve some of her stress. Her being grateful to me is an appropriate response, but I emphatically do not want her to feel burdened by any debt or need to

³² Here he is speaking of the proscription against homosexual sodomy, but his point extends to my example.

repay me in some form; the whole point of helping her is to make her feel less overwhelmed. She may indeed help me at some point later, but whether she does is entirely irrelevant. Gratitude as thankfulness is a sufficient response on her part.

Further, even if some principle of gratitude were normative, it also isn't clear that what it would require is submission to divine authority. Given what God has done for us, and given further the kind of relationship he seeks to have with us, *loving* God seems more appropriate. Perhaps this love requires submission to divine authority – I will argue that it does – but if so, that argument must be supplied; submission itself does not follow from gratitude.

Murphy's third argument is that submission to divine authority can be a way of solving coordination problems. Just as one submits to the rule of the state to coordinate group action, so one could submit to God as well. The state, for example, dictates that everyone should drive on the right side of the road. With everyone following this rule, driving becomes possible. On this line of reasoning, submitting to God makes even more sense since God, unlike the state, created the world, cares for it, and has ordered it providently. Furthermore, God is not subject to the failings of human political agents: among other things, he is not susceptible to error, and he cares for all of us without fail.

This argument is stronger than the other two, but it is limited in scope. Only a small number of divine commands can really be seen as solving coordination problems. Murphy himself recognizes this fact (Murphy 2002, p. 146), which is presumably why he offers the first two arguments.

Murphy thinks that these three arguments provide “decisive reasons for rational beings to subject themselves to divine authority” (Murphy 2002, p. 174). I have argued that they do not, but even if they do, do these decisive reasons make it *morally* obligatory to submit oneself to divine authority? Murphy himself seems to vacillate on whether a Christian is morally obligated to submit. After giving these three arguments, he takes up the question of what can be said in criticism of someone who fails to submit. Since he thinks his arguments are decisive,

[w]hether one is under divine authority is not a practically neutral matter; one is *required* in reason to subject oneself to God's rule. And so while it is always

open to one to free oneself from divine authority, one can do so only by engaging in the deepest unreasonableness... (Murphy 2002, p. 175, his emphasis).

Later, however, when discussing the proscription against homosexual sex, he writes:

Those who are not subject to divine authority [on account of not submitting] and perform acts of sodomy are *morally* guilty, but not for disobeying God's command; they are guilty of practical unreasonableness for failing to submit themselves to divine authority (Murphy 2002, p. 183, my emphasis).

One can be guilty of practical unreasonableness without being morally guilty, though. Of the three arguments he gives, only the second, the argument from gratitude, comes closest to supporting moral guilt. A failure to be grateful does seem like a moral failing of some sort. Unfortunately, the argument from gratitude is also the weakest of the three arguments he gives. I conclude that his arguments provide neither decisive reasons nor morally obligating reasons for submitting oneself to divine rule.

Interestingly, however, Murphy does mention a fourth reason in passing:

It might be that allowing another to complete one's determination for one [*i.e.*, submitting to divine authority] is itself a benefit to that other; or, if it is not exactly a benefit, an expression of one's regard, respect, or love for the other (Murphy 2002, p. 166).

He doesn't elaborate on this point, but I think that this is the right way to proceed.³³ To start, consider again the husband who allows his wife to set drinking limits. Many people are quite aware of their own limits and have no trouble sticking to them. Still, he may consent to follow his wife's dictates because he knows that it will reassure her. Allowing her to set the boundaries can be an expression of his love for her. In fact, I think that this kind of consent can be a very powerful expression of love. Among other things, it

³³ See here Robert Adams:

valuing one's social bonds gives one, under certain conditions, a reason to do what is required of one by one's associates or one's community... The reason I have in mind is not one that arises from a desire to obtain or maintain a certain kind of relationship, though such a desire can obviously be a motive for complying with social requirements. The reason I have in mind is rather that I value the relationship which I see myself as actually having, and my complying is an *expression* of my valuing and respecting the relationship (Adams 1999, p. 242, his emphasis).

demonstrates his trust in her to make a good decision. Allowing another to have a say in how one lives one's life is a very significant concession.³⁴

Consenting to others' wishes can also be one of the only ways we have of expressing love for someone else. When the subject of church music comes up, my mother occasionally remarks that she despises the hymn "Amazing Grace" and does not want it played at her funeral. That gives me a strong reason to ensure that her wish is fulfilled.³⁵ But why? She won't experience her own funeral. The answer is that honoring her wishes is a way of expressing love for her, even if she isn't there to appreciate the expression.

In the divine case, this point is especially relevant. God is, of course, present in a certain sense to us, but, with a few exceptions, God is not *physically* present to humans. Consider here especially the Apostle's situation: they saw Jesus die, and then they saw him rise from the dead, only to leave again. He promised to return but in the meanwhile he told them to evangelize to all nations. With him no longer present to them, one of the only ways the Apostles could express their love for Jesus was to carry out his commands. Moreover, those commands essentially dictated how they were to treat others – *others whom they knew that God also loved*. In acting on those commands, they were able to take up and make their own something that they knew was tremendously important to God, namely, the care and concern that God had for all humans. Post-Apostolic Christians are in the same situation, though of course few of them have seen Jesus (Augustine, for example, is reputed to have had a vision of the Trinity). They await his return; in the meantime, they carry out his commandments out of love for him.

This motive (reason) is far stronger than any of the three that Murphy develops. Moreover, it offers a much better connection to moral obligation than any of those three. It may indeed be true that following God's commands is a way of acting on correct practical principles, but as I remarked earlier, erring in practical reason is not the same

³⁴ Note that if he is really consenting out of love – and out of care, too, in order to reassure her – he should, *ceteris paribus*, see himself as being under an obligation to obey her dictates. To think otherwise isn't really to cede control to her and so fails to be an expression of love.

³⁵ Note that I do not act for the sake of fulfilling my mother's wishes; I act for *her* sake. The former is something that is done by, *e.g.*, clerks, car mechanics, *etc.*, none of whom act for her sake. David Velleman makes this point in Velleman (1999), p. 356. It is because I act for her sake that my act is an expression of love.

thing as being morally guilty. If your beloved asks you to do something, however, you have, *ceteris paribus*, a fairly strong reason for so acting. Assuming that there are no countervailing considerations, I think it is a moral failing simply to ignore your beloved's request.

This point is true of at least three of the personal relationships considered over the last three chapters. Spouses, as we just discussed, can demand certain things beyond what, say, Kantian respect requires. Parents have a certain authority over their children. Friends, too, can ask their friends to do certain things. Of course these people all have some second-personal authority in virtue of the personal relationship; that was the burden of the previous two chapters. My point here is that they can also have authority to make other requests, such as the wife setting drinking limits for her husband. To put the point in Murphy's terms, one gives them authority by submitting to their wishes out of love for them.

I think that love provides a very strong reason for the limited consent to submission in these cases. Can love for God provide not just a decisive but a morally obligating reason for limited submission to divine rule, though? I think it can. A Christian's relationship with God has parallels to each of the three personal relationships just mentioned, but ultimately all comparisons to human relationships fail. It is a *sui generis* relationship. God loves each of us far more intensely than any human could, and in fact he has created us to be in communion with him – not just individually, but as a whole people. Moreover, as I've remarked several times already, he does not make unreasonable demands. To be sure, neighbor love is quite demanding, but it is hard to see how it is *bad*; the relationship it requires is in a certain sense ideal and one that does exist in heaven. Further, while submission to divine rule is an exceptional thing to ask, for reasons already given it doesn't amount to a complete surrender of one's autonomy to God.

What, then, would be the objection to submitting to divine authority for the person who loves God? Indeed, given the characterization of God's love in §4.2, it seems almost petulant not to follow God's commands. Consider carefully the Christian who loves God and who recognizes all of these things. He realizes (as best he can) the extent and depth of God's love; he understands how much God loves others, and how God loves

us as a community; and he recognizes the inherent goodness in what God commands. For such a person, I think it would be certainly be true that submitting to divine authority would be a very powerful expression of his love for God. But his reasons run deeper than that; knowing all of the above, and yet failing to submit – failing to allow God providentially to guide his relationship with his fellow humans – would amount to a rejection of the relationship God seeks. It would be one thing if, lacking any relationship to God at all, he decided that *this* sort of love just wasn't what he wanted. But that is not his situation; he is already in love with God. From that perspective, not to submit to God's will is not to trust God. Knowing what he does about God, it amounts to a violation of his love relationship with God. It amounts, that is, to a violation of a moral obligation.

4.4 Concluding remarks

I've put a great deal of weight on God's goodness and on the concomitant idea that he would not command anything bad. But how are we to know what he does command, or what he might command in the future? So far as I can see, this is an epistemic worry that is entirely distinct from my account of the normativity of God's commands. Its answer is fairly straightforward. Catholics recognize two main sources of information concerning God's commands: Scripture and the teaching of the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit. Catholics also recognize that both of these sources require interpretation. One might object, for example, that throughout history people have committed horrible atrocities under the guise of doing God's will. People may claim whatever they like, of course; it hardly makes them right or impugns God. I do not deny that the interpretation involved can sometimes be difficult and take a long time. We may sometimes get it wrong. But none of that counts against the idea that a Christian who loves God ought prayerfully to submit to his will.

In §4.2, I set forth four criticisms of an attempt at justifying norms which relies on showing that one must presuppose their validity: it did not obviously make any use of the distinctive features of CID; it didn't appear to provide a genuine explanation of the authority of the norms to which one is committed; it left open the question of why one

would want to be in the relationship; and it had no resources for criticizing norms that strike us as wrong. Does the theory I've set forth fare any better?

First, it obviously makes use of the features of CID, though not in the way one might have expected. It does *not* make use of any CID that a Christian has as a member of a religious group, all of whom share similar beliefs. It begins with her relationship to God and shows that to love God properly, she must also love the rest of humanity. That puts her in a CID relationship with all of her fellow humans, Christian or otherwise.

Second: what is that relationship? Or more specifically, what obligations does that relationship generate? A person is obligated to do certain things – such as not killing other people, for example – just out of love for God and for neighbor. Not all of the obligations we have, though, are of that sort. Some of the obligations of neighbor love are those commanded by God.³⁶ God's commands are obligatory because of one's submission to divine rule. I do not find it unreasonable to think that one of love's obligations is that of obeying divine commands. If so, then one indeed has a moral obligation to obey God's commands, and hence a moral obligation to do whatever is commanded.

Third: why should one want to be in the relationship? I take it that, for the Christian, the answer to this question is obvious. One might object to this relationship, but here it seems to me that the burden is on the objector. The most promising source of these objections is probably the problem of evil, or perhaps the problem of divine hiddenness. I agree that these are legitimate problems, but they are well beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Fourth: are there any resources for criticizing immoral norms? This theory certainly has resources for criticizing *other* immoral relationships (*e.g.*, being a Nazi): such relationships and the norms they require run contrary to the commands of God, the demands of neighbor love, or both. Since a person's relationship with God is supposed to be the most important relationship in her life, all other relationships must be guided by it. More interestingly: does this theory have resources for criticizing immoral norms that it

³⁶ Notice, then, that there are two distinct sources of obligation to all of humanity. The first is neighbor love itself, and the second is divine commands obeyed out of love for God. This model is markedly different than that in divine command theories.

might be thought to generate? The most problematic ones are probably certain divine commands from the Old Testament. I think it does; there is a long interpretative tradition that deals with these questions. Once again, I agree that these are legitimate problems, but they too are beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Chapter 5

The Importance of CID Relationships

The account of moral obligation that I have developed in Chapters Two through Four grounds obligation, not in rational agency, or in humanity as such, or in any other property essential to personhood, but in relationships that people have with each other. This strategy naturally raises several questions. Most seriously, if obligations are grounded in relationships, does it follow that a person can avoid all moral obligations simply by avoiding CID relationships? Such a result would certainly run contrary to intuition, which suggests that, at a minimum, we have certain negative obligations (against harming, for example) to everyone. Even if a person doesn't reject CID relationships altogether, can he get out of obligations simply by leaving certain relationships? Again intuition suggests that a person can't shirk obligations to others simply by walking out on a relationship. Of course, people do leave relationships: marriages break up; friendships fade; family members grow apart. So when is it permissible to leave a relationship?

These questions divide into two distinct lines of objection or problems for my theory: worries about whether a person can *reject* CID relationships, and worries about when and how a person can *leave* CID relationships. To reject these relationships is to refuse to enter into them altogether. Here I don't mean the rejection simply of one or more types of CID relationships (friendships, family relationships, *etc.*); I mean the wholesale rejection of these relationships. As I will argue, it seems almost impossible that someone *would* reject them altogether, but supposing that a person did, would it follow that he would not have any obligations?

Questions about leaving relationships, on the other hand, presume that a person already is in CID relationships. Though he wants to leave or exit a particular one, he isn't precluding their possibility altogether. When is it permissible for someone to end a

relationship, though? If his commitment to the relationship fades – say, because he falls out of love – does it follow that he no longer has any obligations in that relationship? Moreover, it is sometimes the case (*e.g.*, with marriage) that a person promises to remain in the relationship. The relationship itself cannot ground the promise to remain in it, though. What grounds such promises, and when can a person be released from them?¹

5.1 Rejecting CID Relationships

A person might reject CID relationships for several reasons. One is that, while he accepts the arguments of the preceding chapters, he does not wish to be obligated to anyone, and so he refuses to enter into these relationships. Such a person need not deny that these relationships are valuable, but he does not think that they are necessary. Alternatively, he may be skeptical even of their value to life. Though he is willing to obey laws in order to live in society, he thinks that he can lead a perfectly happy life without encumbering himself with these relationships. Or again, a person might more specifically doubt the value of sharing his life with others. He would, for example, prefer Aristotle's pleasant friends and useful friends over character friends.

What can be said to a person who either denies the value of, or is simply not interested in, CID relationships? To begin, consider a parallel with Scanlon's contractualism. In *What We Owe to Each Other*, Scanlon argues that judgments about right and wrong are judgments about "what would be permitted by principles that could not reasonably be rejected, by people who were moved to find principles for the general regulation of behavior that others, similarly motivated, could not reasonably reject" (Scanlon 1998, p. 4). Notice that the principles in question are ones that couldn't be reasonably rejected by people who are committed to finding such principles. What does his theory have to say to those who aren't motivated to find such principles? Scanlon rightly appeals to the great value of standing in the contractualist relationship with others. In the final analysis, however, he concedes that only so much can be said to someone who would deny the importance of being in such a relation. Scanlon says that it is

¹ As all of these questions suggest, I am concerned about the intimate CID relationships (again, family relationships and friendships) that were the subject of Chapters Two and Three. I will not be concerned with broader CID relationships in this chapter.

misleading to say that we are looking for a way of justifying the morality of right and wrong to someone who does not care about it—an ‘amoralist’—because this suggests that what we are looking for is an argument that begins from something to which such a person must be already committed and shows that anyone who accepts this starting point must recognize the authority of the morality of right and wrong. I myself doubt whether such a justification can always be provided. What we can provide, and what seems to me sufficient to answer our reasonable concerns, is a fuller explanation of the reasons for action that moral conclusions supply (Scanlon 1998, p. 148).

My response to someone who rejects CID relationships will, like Scanlon’s response to the amoralist, involve an appeal to the value of these relationships. In addition, I will argue that CID relationships are actually unavoidable early in life. At the end of the day, however, there may be nothing that can either persuade or rationally compel such a person to have any CID relationships with others.

Even if a person is not rationally committed to being in CID relationships, it is nevertheless true that these relationships are an immensely important, and so valuable, part of human life. C. S. Lewis famously said of friendship that it “is unnecessary, like philosophy, like art...It has no survival value; rather, it is one of those things which give value to survival” (Lewis 1960, p. 71). To say merely that CID relationships add value to life, however, is to understate the point. To preclude them is to preclude having any real friends; it is to preclude romantic love; it is to preclude being a part of a family, at least as these relationships were described in Chapter Two. New parents, for example, structure their lives around their child. Almost everything they do is no longer done just for themselves but for them *and their child*. They are proud when their child begins crawling and when it utters its first word. If someone were to hurt their child, they would consider themselves hurt, too. In sum, the kind of care they have for their child is anything but an impersonal care. Quite the contrary: the way that parents love and care for their children requires seeing their children as members of the family. Similar things can be said of other the other CID relationships discussed.

I mean this as a descriptively accurate account of families in modern Western culture. Corporate identity, as developed in Chapter Two, is meant to characterize not just ideal relationships but the actual relationships that nearly all of us have. To reject it really is to preclude the possibility of family relationships and friendships. One might

object, however, that other cultures or other times will have differing conceptions of these relationships. For example, the notion of fatherhood has clearly evolved, with fathers only very recently having child-rearing responsibilities and the attendant bonds of intimacy.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to examine how the features of CID are manifested across time and culture. However, there are two things worth noting. First, part of the thrust of Chapter Two is that the various features of CID – plural subjecthood, sharing of lives, and so on – are conceptually a part of these relationships. One needn't think that all of one's friends are "second selves" to realize that (character) friendship inherently involves some amount of reciprocity in personal care between friends. If what we might identify as, *e.g.*, parenthood or friendship in another culture or at another time really lacks all the features of CID, that's a reason for thinking that, whatever the relationship is, it isn't to be identified with parenthood or friendship.

In many cases, such as the evolving conception of fatherhood, the relationship clearly is properly identified as an instance of a CID relationship, albeit one that may lack certain features of corporate identity. But – and this is the second point – from this, it doesn't follow that the analysis of Chapter Two is wrong. To the extent that we can explain the great value of more robust CID relationships, we can give reasons for preferring them to more deficient forms.

All this is not yet to say that CID relationships add important value to life, for someone may concede that he really cannot be a parent or a friend or a spouse without entering into a CID relationship with those people and yet deny that these relationships are important to him. Suppose, for example, that he thinks pleasant and useful friends sufficient and decides that he has no need or desire for character friends. Without further speculating on what might motivate a person to live in this way, I suspect that such a life would be harder to maintain than he might think.

In rejecting all CID relationships, he rejects the possibility of confiding in others, for to do so invites the bonds of intimacy and trust that characterize CID relationships. He also cannot rely on (nor would he wish) others to come to his aid out of friendship. Pleasant friends are only acquaintances with whom one has a good time. While useful friends aid each other, it is only because they are compensated (one would not be a useful

friend with another if he was not in turn useful himself). To have someone assist you out of *friendship*, however, is for another to care about you personally. He would not want that kind of care, again because it invites a CID relationship.²

This last point is worth emphasizing. Just as he rejects *being cared for* in a certain personal way, he also rejects caring for others in that way. As discussed in Chapter Two, one hallmark of personal care is that it matters who is doing the helping and caring. That is, a person isn't indifferent as to who helps his friend, so long as the friend gets helped; *he* wants to be the one helping (insofar as that's possible). Another hallmark of personal care is that it matters *who* is helped. Someone who cares for others only impersonally is somewhat indifferent as to who is helped. The target of aid might be thinly described as "whoever needs the most help" or "whoever it is easiest to help". Obviously personal care for one's friend does not involve such indifference. The person who rejects CID relationships also rejects this kind of personal care for others. There can be no one who really matters to him, and if he finds himself caring for someone in this way, he must stop. In general, he will need to keep all of his friends (and family) at arm's length lest they become too intimate.

Of course he might acknowledge all of this and yet insist that these things do not matter to him. In describing what he is giving up, I mean to highlight the strangeness of the life he embraces. It is the most common thing to be attracted to and to care for others, for it to matter to you that someone else's life goes well for her own sake in a way that extends beyond general beneficence. Indeed, this is how our lives ordinarily go. Moreover, along with one's vocation, it is these relationships that typically structure one's life, to the point that people "locate themselves in the world" through these relationships. In rejecting these relationships, then, a person rejects a very large and important part of human life. Doing so is not easy.

² Even if he did not care for the other person as a friend, and took care not to treat the other as a friend, he still wouldn't want the other person caring for him in that manner. Having someone treat you as a friend, when you are not friends *and do not want to be friends*, can be uncomfortable. This discomfort may partly be the result of feeling pressure to return the feelings of good will to the person, though presumably a person who rejects CID relationships would not feel any such pressure. However, he still would not want someone to try to be friends with him (invite him into a relationship). And most importantly, he does not want to be in a situation where he *may* come to care for others as friends, against his avowed rejection of such relationships.

To highlight further just how critical CID relationships are to a person's life, I would like to follow a line of thought pursued by Alasdair MacIntyre in *Dependent Rational Animals* (MacIntyre 1999). MacIntyre urges us to take seriously the idea that vulnerability and dependence are part of the human condition. Doing so, he argues, will help us to realize how deeply intertwined our individual lives are with others. For our purposes, his most important insight is that we need each other both to become and to continue being what he calls "independent practical reasoners" (which I believe amounts to just full-blooded rational agency). The idea is that, in addition to the obvious fact that we depend upon our parents and others for material needs, the kind of relationship that we have with them is also critical, for it is through reasoning with others that we become able to reason ourselves.

As we grow up, we make a transition from asking "What do I want?" to "What is best for me to do?" According to MacIntyre, this transition involves three related components:

1. Acquiring an ability to evaluate our reasons for action: that is, making the move from merely having reasons to being able to evaluate those reasons as being good or bad.
2. Acquiring an ability to distance ourselves from our present desires.
3. Moving from an awareness only of the present to an awareness informed by an imagined future (MacIntyre 1999, pp. 72-75).

I list these three components because they highlight just how dependent upon others we are. Consider the third, for example. Learning how to plan our lives is part of answering the question "How is it best for me to live?" (for Aristotle, the fundamental question of practical reasoning).

But our ability to imagine possible futures, and so to plan our lives, depends a great deal upon the opportunities which others either give to us or make possible for us (by, for example, educating us). Notice that the demands parents make of their children – some of which, on my theory, are obligating – can play a significant role here. Children whose parents demand that they do well in school often do perform well and learn. Of course there is much more to the story, but it is important not to miss the role played by these demands, especially the fact that they give children reasons to do what their parents demand *over and above* whatever reasons the parents have for making the demand.

Parents demand that their children do well in school because it's to their children's benefit in many different ways. Quite obviously, kids have many different prudential reasons (at least) for doing well in school. However, we'd be wrong in thinking that parents issue their demands only to point out these reasons to their children. No; for many kids, these reasons are probably completely inaccessible, especially at a young age. By demanding that their young children do well in school, parents make it possible for them to recognize these reasons later in life. They also make it possible for their children to recognize a different sort of reason: learning is a valuable activity, worth pursuing in its own right. Arguably, however, a person can't really grasp this intrinsic value until she actually engages in the activity and has some success. By demanding that their children do well in school, parents make it possible for their children to experience this success and to come to see the value of learning.

Turning to the first two items listed above, MacIntyre suggests that we learn how to step back from our current desires and to assess them when others do it for us and with us. The same is true for our reasons. (MacIntyre thus distinguishes between desires and reasons for acting. Following Scanlon, I'll take the latter as more important.) Prudential reasons are among the most obvious examples here: the child who is about to rush heedlessly after his toy learns that he should look both ways before venturing into the street. There are two points: first, and more prosaically, others are sometimes more knowledgeable about what's good for us, and so they can direct our attention to important goods. They can, as in the example above, point out reasons (say, not to cross the street) that may not occur to us. Second, we learn *that we need* to assess our desires and reasons for acting when others do it for us. A child learns that there's something to think about when his parents tell him to "Stop doing that!" (Or, more bluntly, "NO!!!") This is different from others merely calling our attention to reasons that have escaped our notice. In an important way, *we don't have access to reasons* until others help us. For a large part of our developmental years, practical reasoning is not something we do by ourselves;

we can't. Rather, it's something that we learn to do, and then do, with others, within the context of a CID relationship.³

CID relationships are thus unavoidably part of the early stages of a person's life, and not simply because we are dependent upon others for material needs. This point is significant because it means that the decision to reject CID relationships cannot be made "from the outside", as it were. It is not as though someone could reflect on his life and decide that these relationships wouldn't add any value; for him even to be able to reflect on them requires having been in them. From this, of course, it doesn't follow that he can't reject them. My point is simply that rejecting CID relationships involves more than deciding not to enter into them; it also involves *giving them up*. That is, it involves an active repudiation of parts of a person's life.⁴ Rejecting CID relationships is therefore no trivial task.

And yet, for all that, some people seem to do so. Consider hermits who wish to live in solitude. Here we must be careful to exclude those who do so for religious reasons, such as John Chrysostom (an early Christian). Since they are retreating to solitude in order to spend time with God, they are hardly rejecting CID relationships. To those not motivated by religious reasons, I admit that my theory does not have much to say. However, it may not need to say anything to them, either: if a person truly removes himself from society, it is plausible to think that he has no obligations to others – at least, not on my theory.⁵

To sum up the argument, while a person is not rationally committed to being in CID relationships, there is quite a lot that can be said to someone who wants to reject them. They can be rejected only on pain of precluding some of the most important

³ As David Blankenhorn quips, emphasizing just how dependent we are upon others as children, "we are loved into loving and smiled into smiling" (Blankenhorn 2007).

⁴ This will be true even of someone who has no close friends and no family. Such a person would have had family (or intimate caretakers) at one point. Rejecting CID relationships would mean rejecting those prior relationships.

⁵ Surely, one would think, he has minimal obligations not to harm others. If he has truly removed himself from society and relationships with others, my theory will have nothing to say to him on this point. Neither will Scanlon's or (I think) Darwall's. If a person removes himself from society, he will have no interest in the contractualist search for principles, nor will he have interest in any second-personal interaction with others. However, this is not to say that we cannot offer him good reasons (*e.g.*, instrumental and prudential ones) against harming others. Perhaps the most we can do is try to make him see how irrational it would be to harm others.

relationships in our lives. This, in turn, precludes central features of human life such as caring for, and being cared by, others personally; and confiding in others. It seems to me that the cost of giving these up is incredibly high.

It may, however, be misleading to speak of the “cost” of giving up CID relationships. Although these relationships are certainly instrumentally valuable, and although there are prudential reasons for having them, these are not the primary reasons a person has friends or family. In fact, if pressed to explain why they have friends or family, most people probably wouldn’t cite them at all. CID relationships are primarily intrinsically valuable. They are, indeed, constitutive of life for nearly everyone.

5.2 Leaving CID Relationships

Even if someone doesn’t reject CID relationships wholesale, it doesn’t follow that she can’t leave some of them; and indeed she might have good reason to do so. A married couple may find that their relationship just isn’t working. Friends may move or grow apart. A victim of domestic violence might have to end the relationship for safety’s sake. Just as these are or can be good reasons for leaving a relationship, some reasons are clearly bad. Bernard Williams famously discussed the case of Paul Gauguin, who abandoned his wife and children to spend his time painting.⁶

At least three distinct questions arise here. First, when is it permissible to leave a CID relationship? Second, what can be said to someone who impermissibly leaves a relationship? Though he isn’t justified in leaving it, it would seem that once he does, the features of CID that ground obligation and – more importantly – blame will no longer be present. Does it follow that, once he leaves the relationship itself, there will be no grounds on which to blame him? Finally, can obligations survive the death of a relationship (even one not left impermissibly)? To recall an example from Chapter Three, intuition suggests that even after a friendship ends, the former friends still have an obligation to keep the confidences that were shared in the relationship. Alimony

⁶ See Williams 1981a.

payments after a marriage ends are another example.⁷ What grounds these obligations if there is no relationship?

To begin with the first of these questions, I will not offer a complete theory of when it is permissible to leave a relationship. In fact, I doubt such a theory can be had; when a person can permissibly leave will depend on both the kind of relationship in question (*e.g.*, friendship, sibling relationship) and the nature of the specific relationship itself. I will instead rest content with citing some examples in order to pump our intuitions. People who are friends in college may go their separate ways at graduation, intending but failing to stay in touch, without acting immorally. If siblings move away from each other, however, there is often a stronger expectation that they will remain in touch. The reason is that family ties are often deeper than the bonds of friendship.

The two examples just cited are cases in which all the members of the relationship unintentionally let it dissolve more or less at the same time.⁸ The situation is even more straightforward if they all explicitly agree to forgo staying in contact. Likewise, spouses can jointly agree to end their marriage if things aren't working out. Of more interest is the case where a person unilaterally wants to leave the relationship. In her theory of generic plural subjecthood, Gilbert argues that a person generally cannot unilaterally dissolve a joint commitment. Though he can leave, he would still under the obligations of the joint commitment.

Something similar is also true of corporate identity. A person generally cannot unilaterally withdraw from them. The most obvious circumstances under which she could would be when the characteristic features of CID are not present for her. Even here, however, we must proceed cautiously. Imagine, for example, a marriage in which one partner is no longer in love with the other. Suppose that she finds herself not caring for the other person and is no longer interested in sharing her life with him. In this situation, much depends upon a fuller description of the case. It is important to note that

⁷ Of course there is a legal requirement to pay alimony, but intuition suggests that one has a moral obligation as well. Furthermore, this moral obligation is not grounded in a more general moral obligation to obey the law (if such a moral obligation even exists).

⁸ The unintentionality is an important qualifier. Even if all the members contingently happen to let the relationship dissolve, none obviously does so with the knowledge that the others are doing the same. In this respect, the situation thus resembles each member unilaterally "leaving" the relationship.

the love which characterizes CID is not a simply an emotion; it is also a practical stance towards another.⁹ Marriage, in particular, involves an explicit commitment to the other person. One cannot unilaterally back out of this commitment simply because emotional ties have faltered. This is especially true if she loses interest in the relationship because she hasn't worked to cultivate it. If it truly the case that she no longer cares for her husband – if she can't continue in the relationship in good faith – then she has no choice but to leave the relationship. However, as I argue below, it doesn't follow that she is thereby relieved of her obligations.¹⁰

Under certain conditions, a person can also leave a relationship when others are not fulfilling their obligations. Domestic violence is a particularly egregious example. If one's spouse is consistently unfaithful, that too can be a reason for leaving the relationship. The reason is that these failures to live up to obligations harm the relationship, as described in Chapter Three. If the failures are sufficiently bad, it will become impossible to be in a CID relationship, and so the person may have no choice but to leave. Even if it is not, strictly speaking, impossible to be in the relationship, it may be practically too difficult to be in it. Others do not have unlimited claims on us to forgive their transgressions.¹¹

⁹ The distinction Kant makes between pathological and practical love is useful here: "Love as inclination cannot be commanded; but beneficence from duty when no inclination impels us and even when a natural and unconquerable aversion opposes such beneficence is practical and not pathological love. Such love resides in the will and not in the propensities of feeling, in principles of action and not in tender sympathy" (Kant 1996b, p. 55).

¹⁰ In particular, consider the case in which her husband has end-stage Alzheimer's. Let us stipulate that it is no longer possible for her to be in a CID relationship with him. Even so, it doesn't follow that she can simply abandon him. She will still have substantial obligations of care, even if she is no longer obligated to be faithful to him. I am grateful to Elizabeth Anderson for suggesting this example.

¹¹ It is important that the reason it is impossible for her to stay in the relationship is due to the transgressions of the other person. When one person consistently disrespects the claims of another, especially as this occurs in domestic violence, he loses standing to demand that the other person stay in the relationship. This example is therefore tricky since it isn't quite an instance of someone unilaterally leaving the relationship. In this regard, Margaret Gilbert argues that in certain cases of two-person relationships, "one person's default amounts to the end of the joint commitment" (Gilbert 1996, p. 14). I suggest that we can understand cases of systemic domestic violence as ones in which the abuser effectively "defaults" on the relationship, thereby ending the other's obligation to be in it. This raises the very interesting question of what constitutes "defaulting" on a CID relationship (especially one such as marriage). With the more specific, explicit and limited joint commitments in generic plural subjecthood, it is more clear what constitutes abandoning the commitment. The marriage commitment is far more broad and pervasive, though. Unfortunately, I won't be able to address this issue here, and so I will simply appeal to some intuitions in the text.

This is, admittedly, the briefest of sketches about when it is permissible to leave a CID relationship. Rather than try to develop it in any greater detail, I will note that this standard for leaving is extremely high. In particular, it rules out leaving a relationship for the reasons had by Bernard Williams' Gauguin. As Williams depicts Gauguin, the painter loved his family and was not unhappy in the relationship. However, his desire to focus on his painting lead him to abandon his family in order to live on an island in the South Seas, where he thought that the environment would help him to develop his artistic abilities. In doing so, Gauguin unjustifiably prioritizes his own desires over the claims of his wife and children.¹²

To that extent, it is clear why what he does is wrong. Chapter Three already dealt with the question of why a person cannot arbitrarily privilege his own desires over the claims of others in a CID relationship. What makes Gauguin's case interesting is that he doesn't simply prioritize his interests over his family's claims; he takes his desire to be a painter as a reason to leave the relationship entirely. To develop the problem, let's assume that his reason for leaving his family is that he thinks that his family obligations will get in the way of his efforts to become a great painter. In other words, this is not a case in which the features of CID have disappeared or in which Gauguin thinks that he cannot continue in the relationship in good faith. Rather, he recognizes that if he stays in the relationship, he will have obligations to his family. We may even add that, absent his drive to be a painter, he would want to fulfill these obligations because he does love his family. But he is driven, and that passion for painting is more important to him than his family; and so he opts to leave the relationship in order to free himself from family obligations.

The problem is this: because it is the relationship itself that he is rejecting, it isn't sufficient to appeal to the commitments that he has from inside of the relationship, as the arguments in Chapter Three did. This point is a bit subtle. Imagine Gauguin in the throes of deliberating about whether to leave his family. Though he is presently committed to his family, he is questioning that commitment. *Given* that he is committed to the relationship, he will recognize his family as having claims upon him that override

¹² Unlike Williams, I am not interested in the question of whether Gauguin was *rational* in moving to the South Seas, though I think he wasn't. My point is just that he acted immorally.

his specific plans to pursue painting. In calling into question that commitment itself, though, he is trying to ask about the relationship from the outside. Even from that point, it is true that his love for his family gives him a reason to continue being in the relationship.¹³ But what he is questioning at the moment is how to weigh that reason against others. What he (thinks he) needs is an Archimedean point outside of the relationship from which he can weigh his personal projects against his love for his family. When he does this, an appeal to claims internal to the relationship is not by itself sufficient to explain why it is immoral for him to abandon his family. Furthermore, once he does decide to leave, it appears that he will not be able to see himself as blameworthy. Once he leaves the relationship, the features of CID that ground obligation and blame will no longer be present;¹⁴ on what grounds, then, is he blameworthy?

Let us stipulate that Gauguin is not someone who rejects all CID relationships, either. What is needed is an explanation of why he cannot legitimately abandon a particular CID relationship¹⁵ on the grounds that his painting is (or has become) more important to him, not an explanation of why he should be committed to CID relationships at all.

This point is at the heart of a response to someone like Gauguin. Because he does not reject CID relationships, there will be pressure (whether actual or simply theoretical) from his other CID relationships not to abandon his family. Minimally, if Gauguin loves God, then, by the arguments of Chapter Four, that relationship will provide a reason not to abandon his family. These reasons stem in part from the fact that God loves Gauguin's family, too. However, those in other CID relationships with him also have standing to demand that he not abandon his family, even if they do not love or even know Gauguin's wife and children.

In failing to respect his commitment to his family, Gauguin is also failing to respect his other CID relationships, such as his friendships. Though he may not actually

¹³ The reason it gives, however, is not a second-personal one. It is the same kind of reason as the reason that his love for painting is for him to paint.

¹⁴ This may well be false; bonds of affection and love aren't destroyed by a simple act of the will. For the purposes of this example, however, I will ignore these psychological complexities.

¹⁵ Strictly speaking, he's abandoning a set of related CID relationships: the marriage relation he has with his wife and the parent-child relationship he has with his children.

be questioning them, if he thinks that his commitment to his family extends only as far as his personal interests dictate, there is no reason to think that he may not similarly back out of his friendships. This is not merely a prudential reason for his friends not to trust him: a person who allows his personal projects to override the claims of his family to the point that he takes them (improperly) to give him reasons to leave the relationship does not value his family in the same way as someone who does not so prioritize his projects. In abandoning his family, Gauguin is in the same action devaluing his friends as well. He furthermore hurts his friends by making himself less trustworthy and, generally, less virtuous. (Consider how you would feel if you discovered that your trusted friend were also an unrepentant murderer.)

Because his abandonment of his family adversely affects his other relationships, those people have some claim on him not to do so. The point runs deeper still, though. Even if Gauguin has no friends or relations who would object (perhaps he leaves behind everyone he knows to go to the South Seas, or perhaps they don't like his family and so support his decision), the need to allow for the possibility of having genuine CID relationships – ones which he does not wish to leave – will militate against arbitrary dismissals of relationships. If a person could simply enter and leave CID relationships at will, thereby disentangling himself from infelicitous obligations, no one could trust him; his actions would preclude him from being able to enter into relationships again. I mean this not just as a pragmatic consideration but also as a conceptual one. In order to be in a CID relationship, he must value others properly. Otherwise, he is not the kind of person with whom one *could* have a CID relationship (even though he may be able to deceive people into thinking otherwise).¹⁶ Even more importantly, regardless of whether anyone *would* trust him, and regardless of whether his friends would object to the way he treats his family, Gauguin would not be *morally worthy* of that trust.¹⁷

One might object that, however powerful these reasons are, they are reasons of the wrong sort. Surely the primary reason that Gauguin should not abandon his family derives from claims that *they* have on him, not from claims that anyone else has on him

¹⁶ Consider, for example, that you can't be in a romantic love relationship with someone who doesn't properly love you in return. This is a conceptual point about these relationships.

¹⁷ I am grateful to Elizabeth Anderson for making this point to me.

and not from prudential reasons. It is true that his family has claims on him, and, when he is thinking about whether to leave his family from inside the relationship, Gauguin will be able to recognize this fact. Moreover, given that he is committed to the relationship when he begins to question it, his family's claims will be authoritative no matter how he asks the question. It is therefore true that his primary reason for remaining in the relationship – when the question is properly asked – derives from the claims his family has on him.

As I said, though, when he tries to ask the question “from outside” the relationship, those claims will not appear relevant. What the forgoing arguments show, however, is that Gauguin is wrong to try to ask the question from the outside. For when he tries to do this, he finds that his friends have claims on him not to do so. Even to approach the question in that way devalues his friendships; actually to leave the relationship makes him even more blameworthy.

Let's turn now to the third of the questions I asked at the beginning of this section. When one does leave a relationship, it does not follow that all of the obligations of the relationship cease. Certain ones remain, such as keeping confidences, paying alimony in the case of a divorce, and keeping promises already made. In Chapter Three, I suggested that some of these are grounded in preconditions for a CID relationship. That is to say, a commitment to honoring them is necessary for the relationship to begin. Why must a person continue to honor this commitment after the relationship ends?

This commitment signals that a person will continue to regard his friends or loved ones as having some moral standing even after the relationship ends. Indeed, it would be very odd if a person thought that all such standing ended promptly with the end of the CID relationship. One of the main features of CID is the love and care that one has for others. By the arguments of Chapter Three, this love commits a person to seeing another as having a general standing to make claims upon him. Corporate identity requires more than this, however. I shall argue that it also requires a person to see his loved ones as being valuable in their own right, independently of the CID relationship itself.¹⁸ To put it another way, a person can't think that his friend is valuable only because she is his friend,

¹⁸ More specifically, I will argue that he must see them as being ends in themselves.

for he cannot share his life with her, and do things for her sake – indeed, he cannot enter into a CID relationship with her at all – unless he recognizes her as possessing such value. Finally, I will argue that this value should be understood in terms of giving her standing to demand that he honor commitments even after the relationship ends.

Joseph Raz argues along similar lines in his discussion of the amoralist, a person who (for Raz) is defined by the fact that he denies that people have value in themselves.¹⁹ Raz's goal is to get the amoralist to admit that, so long as he is open to friendship and other relationships of the sort I have been describing, he must recognize people as being valuable in themselves.²⁰ It is worth taking a moment to review Raz's argument because doing so will help us to get clear both about why CID relationships require a person to value his friends in themselves and also about the nature of this value.

Raz imagines the amoralist insisting that he need only see his friends as valuable because they are his friends and not because they have any value in their own right. In the most sophisticated form of this position, the amoralist acknowledges that friendship requires him to care for his friends for their sakes and not merely for any benefit that he may derive from the friendships. Still, he claims that he need only care for them because they are his friends. To illustrate how this position is supposed to work, Raz draws an analogy with care for a tree. Suppose the amoralist cares for a tree outside of his window. In caring for it, he acts so that things go better for it: he waters and fertilizes it, and so forth. Let us suppose that he does these things not because the tree benefits him in any way (though it does), but simply because he happens to care for the tree. In doing so, however, the amoralist claims that he need not think that the tree has any value apart from what his care imparts to it. His caring for the tree does not give anyone else a reason to care for it, and it also doesn't commit him to caring about any other tree. Caring for the tree for its sake thus does not commit him to thinking it has any value independently of his care. Likewise, the care he has for his friends in virtue of the friendship does not commit him to thinking that they are independently valuable.

¹⁹ As we will see, Raz isn't sure about what precisely is being denied by the amoralist. My argument is intended to explain this idea further.

²⁰ Raz focuses on friendship in his article. While he obviously does not speak in terms of CID, it is clear that Aristotelian character friendship is what he has in mind. See, *e.g.*, Raz 1997, p. 390.

In response, Raz argues that care for someone or something presupposes that the person or thing is worth caring about:

I agree that being attached to an object, person, activity, or project can endow them with a value which they would not otherwise have. They will have that value for the people who are attached to them and not for others. But one can only be attached to something if one believes it to be valuable, and the attachment endows the object with extra value only if that object is indeed valuable” (Raz 1997, p. 386).

With respect to the issue at hand, it is of course true that friendship does confer additional value on a person; one cares about his friends more than he cares about others generally precisely because they are his friends. Raz’s claim, however, is that for this additional valuing to be possible, a person must first recognize his friends as valuable in themselves.

I will not attempt to summarize Raz’s justification for this claim, nor will I seek to defend it in full generality.²¹ However, the following seems clear. First, in valuing something, a person must take the thing to be an appropriate object of the value. An attempt to treat a tree as a friend would fail because trees are not the sort of thing that can be friends.

Second, consider what it is to be a friend. As I argued in Chapter Two, friendship involves a change in a person’s self-conception. Self-conceptions, recall, function as “agenda-setters”, determining (roughly) how a person lives her life, including the projects she pursues. In being friends with someone, what one pursues changes, since friends take account of their friends’ projects. Indeed, friendship, and especially love, can lead a person to be deeply self-sacrificial, sometimes even to the point of giving up his life. The point is that friends consider the care they have for their friends, and the things they do on their behalf, as being *worthwhile*. It isn’t just that one’s friends are an appropriate object of friendship; it’s that they are worth caring about in a life-defining way. But to think that is to think that they are valuable in their own right. What’s more, friendship is generally considered to be more than worthwhile. If the arguments of the preceding chapters are correct, CID relationships are an ineliminable part of a good human life.

²¹ And indeed, he only gestures at his argument in the article.

Compare this attitude to the one the amoralist claims to have about his tree. Let's grant, for the moment, that (contrary to Raz's claim) the tree has value only in virtue of his caring about it. If the amoralist takes this position, he can't think that the tree is *worth* caring about since there is no independent value that he is pursuing in caring for it; the most he can say is that he finds himself caring for the tree (and that this care gives him a reason to act on its behalf). But this attitude, I have argued, is incompatible with CID friendship.

The relevance of these arguments against the amoralist is this: if a person has value independently of the relationship, this value does not disappear once the relationship ends. And it is this value that grounds obligations after the relationship ends.

However, there is a question about the nature of this value. What obligations, if any, can it ground? As Raz himself admits, his arguments also show that if collecting medieval musical instruments is a valuable activity for a collector, then it must follow that such collecting is a valuable activity in itself, independently of whether someone else values it (Raz 1997, p. 391). A collector will not (one hopes) value his friends in the same way that he values collecting. As it stands, though, Raz's argument doesn't distinguish between the way a person must value collecting and the way he ought to value his friends. We need a fuller account of the kind of value to which a person is committed in virtue of friendship.

The difference between the value of collecting musical instruments and the value of a friend can be marked by saying that the former is intrinsically valuable, while friends must be valued, as I have been saying, as ends in themselves. Though an intrinsically valuable thing does not depend on anything else for its value (unlike the instrumentally or extrinsically valuable), things are not usually done for its sake.²² Thus, while collecting medieval musical instruments may be a worthwhile thing to do, the collector does it for his own sake, not for the sake of the instruments (or for the sake of the collecting itself).

This distinction helps to clarify what is meant by a person being valuable in her own right, but it doesn't yet explain what obligations this valuing grounds. Raz is

²² There are exceptions. To use Raz's example, one plays tennis because it's a good thing to do (tennis is intrinsically valuable), but playing tennis is not generally good for tennis itself. It might be, however, if the game is in danger of being forgotten, and one's playing it keeps it from being lost.

skeptical whether, by itself, it can ground anything.²³ Our question, however, is whether a person can be obligated to someone with whom he was once in a CID relationship. More specifically, our question concerns obligations that derive from preconditions of a relationship – obligations to which one must agree in order for the relationship to begin.²⁴ In agreeing to them, one already recognizes the person as having standing before the relationship begins (otherwise one couldn't understand one's action as entering into an agreement).

What, then, is the point of the forgoing arguments? Someone like the amoralist might acknowledge that, for the purposes of entering into the relationship, he must treat his friend *as if* she were an end in herself (that is, as if she had standing), independently of the friendship. Once the friendship ends, however, he would see no reason to continue so to treat her. If my arguments are correct, however, that can't be. He is committed to seeing her as an end in herself irrespective of the relationship. It is because he sees her as an end in herself that he can enter into the relationship at all. Agreements he makes in entering the relationship are grounded in a valuing of her that is independent of the relationship, and these agreements are the source of the content of the obligations that persist after the relationship ends.²⁵

²³ See p. 395, where he says that he never did understand what it meant to say that person is valuable in himself. He doesn't, for example, think that it forbids ever torturing an innocent person. Whether such an act is ever permissible is the subject of a debate between different moral theories.

²⁴ Another way of putting this is to say that they are components of agreement to the relationship itself.

²⁵ These obligations are therefore not derived simply from her value as an end in herself (though they are grounded in this value) but also from the nature of the specific relationship. That is why he will have specific obligations to her that a stranger (who also recognized her as an end in herself) would not.

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