

Loving Impartially: Reconciling Partiality and Impartiality in Kantian Ethics

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This paper argues for a reading of Kantian ethics that establishes equal ethical concern for all humanity and, in doing so, provides one reasons to be partial towards the ends of special relations (friends and family) out of love. Instead of arguing that acting out of love is merely permissible, I argue that Kantian ethics establishes love, alongside respect, as a possible kind of moral relationship that one can have with another. The argument proceeds with an analysis of how Kant creates a generic account of value through his notion of ends in themselves and how this generic account of value establishes equal ethical concern for all humanity. I then consider some possible ways of understanding how Kant thinks we should treat ends in themselves and argue for the position that treating people as ends in themselves is a matter of recognizing them as self-existent ends according to Kant's own notion of self-existent ends. I go on to argue that Kant's notion of self-existent ends provides the basis for the distinction between the moral relationships of respect and love. I then argue that a distinction in kind between respect and love can be found in a notion of deep involvement, where deep involvement is understood as the provision of additional reasons to adopt and promote the ends of another person unique to love. Finally, I consider how these reasons help us to distinguish between the cases in which special relations do and do not think the same ends are important; when one should choose the ends of stranger over a special relation and the different kinds of pathological special relationships that prevent one from doing so; as well as what is owed to lonely people.

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Preface

First and foremost, I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Thomas Pendlebury, for all the help he has given me over the past two years and for showing me the joy that can come from philosophical research – even if it can be maddening at times. My research experience would have been greatly impoverished without his intellect, patience, and wit. I would like to thank Jeremy Fix (whose comments on earlier drafts of this paper were invaluable) for agreeing to take the time to join my defense committee, as well as Stephen Engstrom and Japa Pallikkathayil for doing the same. Further thanks are owed to Nathan Jordan and Patrick Koroly, both of whom provided many intellectually stimulating conversations on family, friendship, and love over the years. It is my hope that those conversations have only made our friendship stronger. I must also thank John Allen and Justin O'Connor. It is unlikely that this paper would have ever been written without their lessons on writing and philosophy during my formative high-school years. Lastly, I want to thank my mom, Christine Lovejoy, and my dad, Carl Lovejoy, for their unwavering support of all my endeavors, made possible only through their boundless love.

1.0 Introduction

It is common for people to claim that we ought to pay greater heed to the interests of those most dear to us; the love held between special relations (friends and family) is often cited as a reason to become more deeply involved in each other's interests compared to the interests of strangers. Moreover, as social beings, we form special relationships with some people and not others. The fact that people have a limited number of special relations is, in part, a consequence of the sheer impossibility of coming to intimately know most people and, consequently, love them. Beyond this practical reality, deep involvement must be constitutive of special relationships if they are to be special at all. If a friendship or marriage does not demand special treatment in some sense, then we lose sight of what makes those relationships special in the first place. To treat someone as a special relation is to say that your relationship itself provides reason to become more deeply involved in her interests.¹

Though people may become more deeply involved in the interests of their special relations in comparison to strangers, it is not uncommon for people to simultaneously hold that we ought to have some concern for the interests of everyone, regardless of the nature of their relationships to us. Such wide-reaching concern necessitates equal ethical concern for all humanity. This insistence on the basic equality of everyone is at the center of impartialist ethics. The stoic philosopher Hierocles provides one of the first and most useful analogies for understanding what impartialist ethics would demand in the extreme:

¹ For an analysis of the content of special relationships, see Samuel Scheffler, *Boundaries and Allegiances: Problems of Justice and Responsibility in Liberal Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 123.

Each one of us is as it were entirely encompassed by many circles, some smaller, others larger, the latter enclosing the former on the basis of their different and unequal dispositions relative to each other. The first and closest circle is the one which a person has drawn as though around a center, his own mind. This circle encloses the body and anything taken for the sake of the body. [...] Next, the second one further removed from the center but enclosing the first circle; this contains parents, siblings, wife, and children. [...] The next circle includes the other relatives, and this is followed by the circle of local residents, then the circle of fellow tribesmen, next that of fellow citizens, and then in the same way the circle of people from neighboring towns, and then the circle of fellow-countrymen. The outermost and largest circle, which encompasses all the rest, is that of the whole human race. Once these have all been surveyed, it is the task of a well-tempered man, in his proper treatment of each group, to draw the circles together somehow towards the center [...] It is incumbent on us to respect people from the third circle as if they were those from the second, and again to respect our other relatives as if they were those from the third circle.²

What makes this analogy so striking is that it starts with a very parochial view of ethical obligations – with a well-defined hierarchy of value – and ends with a universal notion of cosmopolitanism. Not only does Hierocles ask us to equally value all humanity, but he also asks us to give equal ethical weight to the interests of all people. How you ought to act towards a friend is, in principle, the same as how you ought to act towards the proverbial furthest Mysian. This extreme impartiality in both ethical concern and obligations leads to a conception of impartialist ethics that calls for a strict equal consideration of interests.

According to the vision of impartiality that Hierocles presents, everyone must become radically impartial and strive to become equally involved in the interests of everyone. After all, if both your friend and a stranger can make the same claim to your attention, then there seems to be no reason that justifies partiality towards either person, perhaps outside of practical concerns. To show partiality to the interests of anyone would be equivalent to establishing an unjustified hierarchy of value, wherein your deeper involvement in another's interests necessitates seeing that

² Anthony Long and David Sedley. *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 349.

person as more valuable. In other words, if ethics is to be impartial, radical impartiality asserts that we must deny and subvert deep involvement within special relationships. From the perspective of radical impartiality, morality and love conflict with one another³ because, as Bernard Williams argues, when we act towards our special relations, we have an additional reason (personal love) that is not present in our actions towards strangers and that asks us to be partial towards their interests.⁴

In the face of radical impartiality, one might wonder what a non-impartialist view of ethics might look like. One possibility, as Mary McCabe presents in her account of stoic altruism, is a kind of egoism: extension. The principle of extension suggests that our concern for others is wholly undergirded by concern for oneself in a sympathetic response.⁵ This approach firstly claims that you show concern for yourself simply because you are you – you, just by your bare self, see yourself as the condition of all value. Secondly, it claims that if you see yourself suitably reflected in others (whether through physicality, temperament, character, or any other manner of personal description), then you will also care for them. Extension seemingly allows one to care for other people, but this is only a self-deception, as showing concern for another person becomes only an expression of concern for oneself.

Radical impartiality and extension provide possible answers for how to navigate the interests of others, with the former proposing that we abandon our special relationships to equally promote the interests of all and the latter claiming that we only must promote the interests of those

³ If one adopted a utilitarian approach, then one could argue that that things would turn out for the best if everyone focused on promoting the interests of those closest to them.

⁴ Which implies that morality and personal love are not the same thing at all. Some conceptions of radical impartiality may permit special relations more so than others and some may even go so far as to claim that we should treat everyone as a special relation, but even then, any conception must insist that there is no reason to be partial towards the interests of anyone outside of striving to promote the interests of all equally.

⁵ Mary McCabe, “Extend or identify: Two Stoic Accounts of Altruism,” in *Metaphysics, Soul, and Ethics in Ancient Thought Themes from the Work of Richard Sorabji*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 415.

most like us. I propose that we need not adopt radical impartiality or extension either for the sake of adopting impartialist ethics or for the sake of justifying deeper involvement in the interests of special relations. To account for impartiality and partiality in ethics, I first propose that radical impartiality is not a necessary part of impartialist ethics, as once this illusion is dispelled, then we need not agree that special relationships create an unjustified hierarchy of value.

I further propose that Kantian ethics can dispel the conflation of radical impartiality and impartialist ethics by providing the grounds for two distinct kinds of moral relationships – respect and love – with each providing different reasons for different levels of involvement. If I say someone is more important *to me* than someone else, I do not have to be making a claim about the *absolute* ethical status of that person. While Christine Korsgaard argues for this point within the context of human-animal relations,⁶ it has applicability to the reconciliation of morality and personal love. If loving another is simply a different kind of moral relationship from the one that can be held with everyone, then special relationships need not cause any subversion of impartiality.

However, Kantian ethics may not initially seem like a promising candidate for providing such a distinction. Firstly, as Barbara Herman argues, Kant’s insistence on universal ethical principles leaves little room to support “special pleading” for moral exemptions when it comes to doing something more for special relations.⁷ If you truly believe that you should never proceed except in such a way that you could “will that [your] maxim should become a universal law” (*GM*, 4:402), then you should judge the actions you take towards anyone according to the same standard. Secondly, there may be, in principle, instances where it is permissible to act out of love according to Herman’s standard (so morality will sanction some instances of partiality), but mere

⁶ See Christine Korsgaard, *Fellow Creatures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 15.

⁷ Barbara Herman, “Integrity and Impartiality,” *The Monist* 66, no. 2 (1983): 248.

permissibility does not thereby establish love as a unique kind of moral relationship.⁸ A husband can give the love shared between him and his wife as a reason for his partiality towards her, but his justification, for Herman, would be non-moral. Thirdly, the judicious Kantian would seem to question whether an action motivated by emotion has any moral content at all.⁹ After all, personally loving relationships consist of actions motivated by a certain emotional affect.

I argue that we need not attribute radical impartiality to Kant, nor accept Herman's account of the mere permissibility of partiality in love in doing so. Towards this end, I begin by dedicating Section 2.0 to demonstrating how Kant presents a generic account of value through the principle of identification. This generic account ultimately provides the foundation for treating people as ends in themselves within Kantian ethics. In Section 3.0, I argue against the position that treating people as ends in themselves is a matter of benefiting them. I go onto argue that treating people as ends in themselves is a matter of recognizing them as self-existent ends. In Section 4.0, I argue that Kant's notions of price and dignity ward off the misunderstanding that loving someone is a matter of valuing them more than another person; with this misunderstanding addressed, we can acknowledge that non-intimate and intimate relationships are simply two different kinds of moral relationships – respect and love respectively – because of the incomparable value of self-existent ends. This distinction between respect and love ultimately refutes Herman's account of special relations in Kantian ethics.

Sections 5.0-5.4 are dedicated to finding a distinction in kind between respect and love. Throughout these sections, I argue that respect and love are distinguished through deep involvement, which is to say that special relationships require that you fit into the ends of another

⁸ For a more detailed account of the mere permissibility of partiality, see Herman, "Integrity," 246-48.

⁹ Ibid, 234.

person in a way not possible between strangers. Section 5.0 begins with some preliminary remarks on what deep involvement precisely means by comparing David Velleman's and Korsgaard's notions of reciprocity. In Section 5.1, I present Kyla Ebels-Duggan's account of shared important ends¹⁰ as a more precise characterization of deep involvement but I argue that her account makes it too easy to condescend towards a special relation. In the pursuit of a different account of sharing important ends, I first present Allison Hills' argument for why happiness is a second-ordered end and Stephen Engstrom's argument for why happiness as an end can be safely attributed to everyone in Section 5.2. After presenting these accounts of happiness, I argue that deep involvement can be defined as understanding how someone's ends fit into her conception of happiness and the adoption of those ends in the right way in Section 5.3. In Section 5.4, I consider a possible Kantian objection to deep involvement and argue that while Kantian ethics does require that we aspire towards a universal kingdom of ends, a universal kingdom of ends does not require that everyone treat each other as special relations.

With a precise distinction between respect and love in hand, I dedicate Section 6.0-8.2 to considering some consequences of my account of deep involvement. In Section 6.0, I argue that my account of deep involvement allows us to distinguish between sharing ends in the strong sense (seeing the same ends as important) and in the weak sense (not seeing the same ends as important), all while not reducing people to mere means in special relationships. Both ways of sharing ends are different ways of demonstrating deep involvement: definitional involvement and reaffirmation. In Section 7.0, I argue for the co-authorship view of special relations in contradistinction to the

¹⁰ For my purposes, I will use the term 'end' instead of 'interest.' A person's interests are the objects and activities she desires for herself. If a person's interest is playing tennis, that interest is hers only if *she* makes it so. Similarly for Kant, when you adopt an end, if it is to be your end, it must be set "in accordance with [your] own concepts" (*MM*, 6:386), which means that your ends are only yours if they are set by you.

possession view of love. Rather than just being a matter of understanding another's ends in the right way, special relationships are also about agreeing to live together in a particular way. In Section 8.0, I consider some cases of when it would be right to choose the ends of a stranger over the ends of special relation. In Section 8.1, I consider some pathological cases of personal love that prevent people from choosing a stranger over a special relation in all circumstances and how those cases undermine special relationships as a whole. In Section 8.2, I consider what obligations we have towards lonely people even if they are strangers.

2.0 Seeing People as Ends in Themselves

There must be, according to Kantian ethics, some generic source of concern that can be recognized as equally instantiated in all people if one is to have equal ethical concern for all humanity. This object (whatever it may be) must be seen as conferring value upon people. This approach towards ethical concern can be termed identification¹¹: concern for oneself and for others is justified by something that can be identified as instantiated in both. Identification does not call on you to see yourself as worthy of ethical concern just because you can say ‘I am me,’ but rather because you recognize that there is some general category applicable to you and others that conveys value. The question of whether the identification approach will require equal or varying involvement in the ends of others is a separate issue that will be addressed in Sections 5.0-5.4. For now, it is necessary to show that the identification approach allows Kant to present an ethical framework that is, in principle, universalizable, as seen through the Formula of Humanity.

If we want to directly address the Formula of Humanity, we must first elucidate the purpose of Kant’s ethical project. The central premise of Kant’s ethics is that “a law, if it is to hold morally, i.e. as the ground of an obligation, must carry with it absolute necessity” (*GM*, 4:389). ‘Absolute necessity,’ here, is equivalent to universality. For example, the law ‘thou shall not kill’ can only be a moral principle – containing absolute necessity – if it holds for all humanity; it cannot be that murder is bad in one place in the world and not another. Moreover, a moral principle cannot be derived from human experience, and instead must be derived “*a priori* solely in concepts of pure reason” (*GM*, 4:389). Morality must not only be universal within the domain of human beings, but

¹¹ I owe this terminology to Mary McCabe. See Mary McCabe, “Identify,” 432.

also the domain of rational beings as such. For Kant, any appeal to the peculiarities of human nature in establishing moral principles only produces subjective principles of human experience.

Kant further claims that the establishment of moral principles requires a notion of duty and that this notion must be expressed in terms of categorical imperatives, with all categorical imperatives being united under the Formula of Universal Law (FUL): “I ought never to proceed except in such a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law” (*GM*, 4:402). The FUL outlines what the categorical imperative would look like if one existed, but it does not establish “*a priori* that such an imperative is actually in place, that there is a practical law, which commands of itself, absolutely and without any incentives, and that following this law is one’s duty” (*GM*, 4:425). If there is a categorical imperative, then there must be an answer to whether it is “a necessary law for all rational beings always to judge their actions according to maxims of which they themselves can will that they serve as universal laws” (*GM*, 4:426), which is to say that the categorical imperative must be tied up in what it means to be a rational being as such. Whatever the categorical imperative is, it cannot be defined by subjective ends:

Now, what serves the will as the objective ground for its action upon itself is an end, and if it is given by reason alone it must be an end for all rational beings [...] The ends that a rational being intends at its discretion as effects of its actions (material ends) are one and all only relative; for merely their relation to a particular kind of desiderative capacity of the subject gives them their worth, which can therefore furnish no universal principles that are valid as well as necessary for all rational beings, or for all willing, i.e. practical laws. That is why all these relative ends are the grounds of hypothetical imperatives. (*GM*, 4:427-8)

The ends described here are all tied to human inclination. You can choose to eat cake for dessert, go on a run, or go to bed because it makes you feel better or for any other number of reasons, but you are not required to have any of these ends in view. Perhaps you eat cake one night because you feel an irrepressible craving for sweets, but if you had no such craving, then you might not. In

other words, eating cake only has value for you in a particular context and as a means to satiate a desire, and therefore it is not a necessary maxim for rational beings as such.

If an end is to be necessary, then it must be an obligatory end: an end that any rational being, in virtue of their rationality, ought to adopt. Kant defines obligatory ends further as ends in themselves: “But suppose there were something the existence of which in itself has an absolute worth, that, as an end in itself, could be a ground of the determinate laws, then the ground of a possible categorical imperative [...] would lie in it (*GM*, 4:428). An end in itself is not good insofar as it is a means to something else – it is good intrinsically (good in itself) and without limitation. Kant defines a good will as the only end in itself and further claims that it is the only object that is good without qualification: “It is impossible to think of anything at all in the world, or indeed even beyond it, that could be taken to be good without limitation, except a good will” (*GM*, 4:393). The goodness of everything else, whether it be skills, power, or even happiness, are all conditioned upon the notion of a good will.¹²

However, it is one thing to say that a good will is unconditionally valuable and another thing to say that humanity (rational nature) is as well. A will (rational nature) can only become a good will insofar as a moral principle is the “determining ground” of its ends (*GM*, 4:401). Kant is ultimately permitted to attribute absolute worth to rational nature regardless of its state because rational nature is the capacity for rational choice and rational nature is fully realized when a choice is fully rational, which is to say that it is determined by a moral principle. In other words, a good will is a possible state of rational nature which is conducive to a good exercise of it. Consequently,

¹² The appeal of Kant’s claim is supposed to be that it agrees with the intuition that “a rational impartial spectator can nevermore take any delight in the sight of uninterrupted prosperity of a being adorned with no feature of a pure and good will, and that a good will thus appears to constitute the [...] condition even of the worthiness to be happy” (*GM*, 4:393).

rational nature, as the capacity to become a good will, can be treated as possessing absolute worth.¹³

For Kant, “rational nature exists as an end in itself. That is how a human being by necessity represents his own existence; to that extent it is thus a subjective principle” (*GM*, 4:429). Kant makes the even broader claim that “every other rational being also” views itself in this way, and thus it becomes an objective principle (*GM*, 4:429). In other words, because each of us acts as if our rational choice is the condition of the goodness of all our ends, we must recognize that other people’s rational choices confer value in the same way. However, as Korsgaard argues, rational choice can only act as the “unconditioned condition” of the goodness of anything if it is an end in itself.¹⁴ In the process of justifying the goodness of any object, there must be some ultimate object that, when present in other objects, is the source of the goodness in question; that source must be unconditionally valuable because if it is to be such a source of goodness, there cannot be something above and beyond it that makes it good. When you say some conditionally good object is good, it is not so much that you are saying the object possesses some inherent quality of goodness, only that it is related to or possessive of something of absolute worth.¹⁵

If you recognize that you possess something of absolute worth, then you must acknowledge that other people possess such a worth as well if you identify that same object within them. It is this principle of identification that derives the Formula of Humanity (FH): “So act that you use humanity, in your own person as well as in the person of any other, always at the same time as an

¹³ This connection between the good will and rational nature is crucial because it allows for the possession of rational nature and the capacity to become a good will to be sufficient grounds for seeing something as possessing absolute worth. If not, then it would be practically impossible to see anyone as an end in themselves, given that most people’s ends are not fully determined by moral principles.

¹⁴ Christine Korsgaard, *Creating the Kingdom of Ends* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 123.

¹⁵ One could argue that rational nature (and its exercise) does not have to be unconditionally good for its ends to be good – there may be some other process. For my purposes, I will work under the guise that rational nature makes its ends good by being present within them through its exercise.

end, never merely as a means” (*GM*, 4:429). The FH distinguishes itself from extension in that extension calls upon you to value yourself just because you are you, whereas the FH requires you to value yourself insofar as you are an instantiation of rational nature. Absent rational nature, your value is only conditional. Rational nature, instead of your bare self, acts as the metric for the value of any object, so if you value your rational nature as unconditionally valuable, then you must acknowledge that same value in all instantiations of it. Nonetheless, one could adopt a pathological kind of “egotistical self-esteem” (*MM*, 6:441) that exalts one’s own rational nature at the cost of the rational natures of others. Ironically, this attempt to exalt the self takes away all objective value from it, for the principle ‘I will act as if only my own humanity is an end in itself’ is not a universalizable principle. If everyone acted in this way, then everyone would always use you as a means and never as an end, defeating the purpose of becoming the only end in itself.¹⁶

Beyond the question of universalizability, valuing something good in itself in one instance and not in others reveals a deeper misunderstanding of what it means to value something in itself. If you acknowledge that rational nature is good in itself and only value your own rational nature, then you value rational nature only insofar as it is yours. A good in itself possesses a dignity that places it above price and equivalence to any other object (*GM*, 4:434); any comparison of the worth of rational nature according to who possesses it fails to appreciate just what it means to value rational nature as intrinsically good. Consequently, what Kant asks of his reader is to view the value of herself and others as conditional on possessing a rational nature, hence why we should equally judge rational nature as intrinsically valuable in all instantiations of it.

¹⁶ The FH reveals that extension is not universalizable in the Kantian context. This is not to say that an egoist who adopts the principle of extension is wrong, only that extension is not compatible with Kantian ethics. An egoist remains entitled to not accept a Kantian notion of ends in themselves and, consequently, the premise that maxims ought to be universalizable.

However, a question remains in how the FH informs our interactions with others. The FH, first and foremost, acts as “the supreme limiting condition of all subjective ends” (*GM*, 4:431). In other words, the FH acts as a negative condition that limits what ends we can adopt. This means, as alluded to earlier, that you must limit your self-esteem “by the dignity of humanity in another person” (*MM*, 6:449). If you exalt yourself at the cost of the dignity of others, then you may adopt certain ends, the achievement of which will require you to use others as mere means. Importantly, this exaltation and degradation can also work in the opposite direction, as it is possible that you could exalt others at the cost of your own dignity. In either case, you fail to respect rational nature as an end in itself by attempting to judge its worth in one instance by comparing its worth in another; rational nature demands equal dignity wherever it is identified and any attempt to make comparisons degrades it to a relative good. And so, you must always view rational nature instantiated in yourself and others as an end in itself and never merely as a means, or else risk losing the very quality that makes rational nature the basis of moral reasoning in Kantian ethics.

The FH also imposes certain positive duties towards both us and others and, like in the negative case, identification plays an integral part in establishing concern for the ends of all. Just as your rational nature confers value onto the ends you adopt, so too does it for all humanity, which means that we must recognize the ends of others as good. One’s recognition of this equality leads to respect: a recognition of the value of humanity in general and a willingness to promote anyone’s ends (*MM*, 6:393). Importantly, the ends of others have value insofar as we view humanity as an end in itself; recognizing something as an end in itself is nothing other than recognizing it as the source of value, so if you do not adopt their ends as your own, then the concept of an end in itself fails to “have its full effect” on you (*GM*, 4:430). More importantly, we do recognize our own ends as good and deserving of our pursuit, and so we will also want others to adopt our ends. Our

desire for others to adopt our ends is nothing other than the desire for others to be benevolent towards us but this is only a universalizable principle “on the condition of your being benevolent to every other as well” (*MM*, 6:451). As before, this condition must act in both directions for the principle to be universalizable: you can wish for others to be benevolent to yourself if and only if you are benevolent towards all humanity. The equality that identification holds in the negative case also holds for the positive one.

However, this positive duty derived from respect is limited in scope, in that the ends anyone adopts can only be achieved by the people who adopt them. This is not to say that you cannot adopt an end which necessitates help from other people, only that when you adopt an end, it is your end, set “in accordance with [your] own concepts” (*MM*, 6:386). What it means to adopt an end is that the end becomes yours and is, in some sense, only achievable by you. For example, you cannot cultivate a person’s mental faculties for them – she must adopt the cultivation of them as an end for herself if it is to be *her* end at all.

3.0 Keeping the Other Person in View

We now know that, within Kantian ethics, equal ethical concern for all humanity is a matter of treating them as ends in themselves. The fact that the former is dependent upon the latter is captured in Kant's FH. According to the FH, if both your wife and a stranger need a ride to their respective workplaces, then each could make the same claim to your assistance ('I am a rational being'), which gives credence to a radically impartialist reading of Kant. However, this radically impartialist reading of Kant, as David Velleman argues, relies on an understanding of love that is defined by a quantitative comparison of people's absolute ethical value, wherein special relations perceive each other's statements of 'I am a rational being' to have greater ethical weight than those of strangers.¹⁷ For Kant, the fact that your wife is more important to you than a stranger does not necessitate that you take your wife to hold a greater absolute ethical value because people do not admit of comparison under Kantian ethics.

Before we can come to a better understanding of what it means to not compare the value of people, we need a better understanding of what Kant means when he says that we should treat others as ends in themselves. One could adopt the benefactor view, which claims that treating people as ends in themselves is a matter of promoting their well-being. Under this assumption, you, for example, treat your wife as an end in herself only insofar as the end that you adopt is 'producing X benefit for your wife.' However, this end does not require that you take your wife as an end herself, so the benefactor view's understanding of 'for the sake of,' as Velleman argues,

¹⁷ David Velleman, "Love as a Moral Emotion," *Ethics* 109, no. 2 (1999): 364.

loses sight of people as ends in themselves.¹⁸ In other words, if you are to act for the sake of your wife, your wife must be your end first and foremost.¹⁹

In opposition to the benefactor view, Kant's notion of a self-existent end provides the grounds for placing your wife as your end:

But since, in the idea of a will absolutely good without any limiting condition [...] one must abstract altogether from every end to be affected (which would make every will only relatively good), the end must here be thought not as an end to be effected but as an independently existing [self-existing] end. (*GM* 4:437)

Your relation to a self-existent end is defined by recognizing its value in its own right. To only focus on how to benefit a self-existent end obscures the fact that its value has already been actualized by its very existence. If you try to acknowledge the value of a self-existent end only by trying to produce some benefit for it, then you fail to understand just what it means for something to be a self-existent end, given that they demand to be valued as they already are, not as possibilities to be brought about. To return to the wife case, you now have an end over and above providing for her well-being. The action of benefiting your wife is secondary to your respect for her rational nature, and so the latter does not entail the former. It could be that when you act for the sake of your wife there must be some corresponding end which you seek to achieve, but that does not mean that valuing your wife as an end collapses into valuing an aim.²⁰ Your wife herself acts as the foundation for wanting to produce an effect for her sake.

Beyond failing to value people properly, the benefactor view, as Kyla Ebels-Duggan argues, can also cause us to become condescending towards our special relations.²¹ This is not to

¹⁸ Ibid, 355.

¹⁹ This, however, does not imply benefiting your wife is never an end, only that the end of benefiting her is subordinated to your wife herself.

²⁰ Velleman, "Emotion," 359.

²¹ Kyla Ebels-Duggan, "Against Beneficence: A Normative Account of Love," *Ethics* 119, no. 1 (2008): 153.

say that benefiting a special relation in general is condescending. It is reasonable for special relations to request aid or even expect it in certain situations. The pressing issue is that the benefactor view licenses undue interference in the ends of others.²² Take Ebels-Duggan's favored example of condescension: the doting husband. The doting husband believes that he loves his wife by benefiting her, so he can internally justify preventing his wife from attaining some aim under the assumption that whatever she is aiming at is harmful to her well-being. This attitude can be expanded to the point where the husband takes full authority over the completion of his wife's ends, meaning his wife loses all say in her own life. In either instance, it would be reasonable to say that the husband is condescending in the sense that he does not treat his wife as an independent person capable of adopting, ordering, and attaining her own ends.²³ Put another way, the husband does not really have his wife in view as his end.

²² Ibid, 152.

²³ In his incessant desire to help, the husband also fails to really have his wife's ends in view because her ends are her own only insofar as she adopts them herself.

4.0 Seeing People as Self-Existent Ends

Now that we have addressed the benefactor view, we know that treating people as ends in themselves is a matter of acknowledging them as self-existent ends, but we still do not know how Kant's notion of self-existent ends applies to the reconciliation of morality and personal love. One could still take Herman's route of claiming that Kant allows people to act for non-moral reasons.²⁴ Herman accepts the premise that morality is "unconditional"²⁵ and personal love possesses no moral content; however, given that the categorical imperative is used to assess the permissibility of maxims (which are subjective principles of action), Kantian ethics will be sensitive to the particulars of any given decision and the love held between people is one such particularity.²⁶ Herman's approach does allow you to acknowledge people as self-existent ends and act out of love in certain circumstances, but it also means that you must see your partiality as merely permissible. Herman's approach cedes too much ground in attempting to show that morality and personal love can coexist within the Kantian framework. If love is understood as recognizing another person as a self-existent end, then special relationships can be understood as a different kind of moral relationship, not as merely permissible.²⁷

²⁴ Herman, "Integrity," 245.

²⁵ Ibid, 243.

²⁶ Ibid, 247-48.

²⁷ Beyond questions about the morality of personal love, one may object and claim that loving someone as a self-existent end is not enough – that no generic account of value yields an individual. Loving an individual is a matter of loving the collection of all her traits, warts and all. For a more thorough examination of this argument, see Gregory Vlastos, "The Individual as Object of Love in Plato," in *Platonic Studies*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981) 3-42. However, it seems strange that one would want to be loved in virtue of their warts. It would be much preferable to be loved for one's admirable qualities in lieu of one's negative traits. For an addressal of fetishism and love, see Velleman, "Emotion," 370.

One could argue that what makes special relationships a different kind of moral relationship is that special relations see each other as more valuable than strangers, but this approach fails to acknowledge people as self-existent ends, as shown by Kant's distinction between price and dignity. For Kant, every object "has a price or a dignity. What has a price can be replaced with something else, as its equivalent, whereas what is elevated above price, and hence allows of no equivalent, has a dignity" (*GM* 4:434). Objects that have a price are the subjective ends that we individually adopt; you can adopt the toasting of bread as a subjective end, but the value (the price) you place on the toasting of bread is relative to your "incentive" (your desire for, in this case, toast) (*GM* 4:427). However, you may desire fried eggs more so than toast, so you would choose the former over the latter. Put simply, the value of toast and fried eggs can be compared because they are both possible objects, which are nothing but the objects of preference. There is no sense in which the eating of toast or eggs are obligatory ends; each only stands as alternatives to one another, the value of which is to be weighed and balanced in each person. After all, one could substitute one dish of fried eggs for another.

In contrast to possibilities, self-existent ends possess dignity. In Section 3.0, I have already presented Kant's claim that self-existent ends demand to be valued as they already are, but this requirement further necessitates that self-existent ends not be viewed as alternatives to one another:

[A self-existent end] must itself have a dignity, i.e. unconditional, incomparable worth, for which the word respect alone makes a befitting expression of the estimation a rational being is to give of it. (*GM* 4:436)

Kant calls on us to value self-existent ends by not comparing them to each other or to other kinds of ends. Insofar as we value people as self-existent ends, then we will necessarily see them as valuable for whom they are in their own right, meaning that you cannot trade one person for

another or for an object. The moment you compare the worth of one person to another, you no longer see her as possessing a dignity, only a price.²⁸

While everyone may embody a self-existent end, a question remains in how this helps distinguish respect and love as two possible kinds of moral relationships. For Kant, the only necessary condition for morality is that we treat other people as limiting conditions on our own actions – to never see them as a mere means. Nonetheless, this negative condition of morality also places each person as a bearer of unique value. If every person is a bearer of unique value, then love, I claim, is a matter of recognizing the unique value of a specific person in a particular way. If people are incomparable, then the way in which you recognize the value of one person can be distinct from the way in which you recognize the value of another. Within Kantian ethics, the only thing that is required of you is to respect each person; if you do not, then you risk undermining the absolute worth of rational nature in yourself and others. However, a Kantian ought to accept the possibility of recognizing the value of people in different ways because each person admits of no equivalence, so if you say that you value a stranger only half as much as you value your wife, then you do not recognize that both are incomparable objects. The stranger and your wife are (to borrow Velleman’s phrasing) “special,” hence why you must not compare the value of both to each other.²⁹

If love is the recognition of the unique value of others’ rational nature in a particular way, then we love in reference to their humanity – hence why love is a moral emotion, as Velleman claims.³⁰ Consequently, loving some people is perfectly compatible with respecting everyone

²⁸ This does not mean that you cannot compare people in any respect. If you, for example, want to win a football game, you want to choose the most skilled players.

²⁹ Velleman, “Emotion,” 369. This concept of recognizing the value of each person in their own right fits in well with the common notion that when you say you want to be loved, you want to be loved for your bare individuality. The fact that each person can make the same claim to individuality means that everyone can make the same claim to your involvement in their ends (“I am a rational being”), but one must remember that Kantian ethics claims that we should not be comparing people’s value in the first place. See Velleman, “Emotion,” 370.

³⁰ Ibid, 341.

without needing to appeal to Herman's account of personal love, but I must emphasize that even though every person is uniquely valuable, this does not simply mean that everyone is equally valuable (as a radically impartialist ethics might claim) – rather, they are *incomparable*. My claim is that the incomparability of people can be leveraged to create a distinction between respect and love. Whereas respect can be understood as a recognition of the value of humanity in general and a willingness to become involved in anyone's ends, personal love is the recognition of a person's incomparable value in a particular way; this unique kind of recognition of value then provides an additional reason to be partial toward the ends of certain people. You can intellectually grasp everyone's rational nature as "a rational concept" (*GM* 4:401) and thus respect everyone, but it is much harder for such an exercise to have an emotional effect upon you.

5.0 Problems with Differentiating between Special Relations and Strangers

According to Kant's notions of price and dignity, we now know that respect and love can be conceived of as distinct kinds of moral relationships that consist in recognizing the unique value of others in different ways, but we do not know precisely what that distinction is or even that it exists; if it does, then we need not accept Herman's claim that love can only fit into the Kantian story insofar as it is merely permissible. However, for this distinction in kind to exist, there must be a further distinction between the reasons why one would be partial toward the ends of some people and not others.³¹ For the sake of developing these different reasons, I will first consider some of Kant's own comments on friendship.

First and foremost, Kant presents friendship as reciprocal in nature by claiming that an ideal friendship is one in which two people have complete confidence in "revealing their secret judgements to one another" (*MM* 6:471); he reaffirms this ideal when he goes on to describe how a person, in attempting to cultivate his social status, will feel strongly "the need to reveal himself to others [...] [b]ut on the other hand, hemmed in [...] by fear of the misuse others may make of his disclosing thoughts, he finds himself constrained to lock up in himself a good part of his judgements" (*MM* 6:472).

Kant's definition of friendship can be understood as his attempt to describe a psychological phenomenon in which, if faced with the possibility of bad faith actors, a person will construct certain social and emotional barriers to prevent herself from being manipulated by others (to not

³¹ I acknowledge the fact that respect entails both a negative condition (that being we should not interfere in the ends of others) and a weak positive condition. Just because someone is a stranger does not mean you should ignore her ends. I address the question of when you should choose a stranger over a special relation in Section 8.0.

be treated with the respect due to her). Additionally, reciprocal confidence can be generalized to suggest the reciprocal entrusting of ends, given that Kant further defines an ideal friendship as the “union of persons through equal mutual love [...] of each participating and sharing sympathetically in the other’s well-being” (*MM* 6:469).³² In Kant’s words, I would want to assure myself that if I entrust my ends to others, they will entrust their ends in turn, and so restore “to me that with which I part and I come back to myself again” (*LE* 202). If personally loving relationships are a matter of people mutually entrusting their ends to one another, then it would be wise for everyone involved to make sure of other people’s attitudes before attempting to form such a union of wills.

Given Kant’s characterization of friendship, the problem of establishing special relationships is knowing whether another person is able and willing to engage in reciprocity – to, in Korsgaard’s words, know that she will freely “choose whether [she] will contribute to” the success of your ends³³ and that she will do so out of personal love³⁴; concomitantly, if she is willing to freely involve herself in your ends, then she must ask herself the same question of you, wondering if you too would freely do the same out of a recognition of her unique value, or else risk subordinating her own ends (her own will) to yours.³⁵ Special relationships ultimately require confidence in the reasons according to which other people act – reasons grounded in the recognition of one’s incomparable value.

³² When you entrust a secret to a friend, you already adopt the preservation of that secret as an end yourself. In other words, there is no conceptual difference between entrusting a secret to a friend or some other kind of end. I may trust my friend to keep a secret, but I also may not trust her to help me with other ends because of some practical concern. Regardless of what I believe she can help me with, I am still entrusting one of my ends to her.

³³ Korsgaard, *Kingdom*, 193.

³⁴ You would hope that your friend, when becoming involved in your ends, did not entertain one thought too many, which is to say that she acted out of a sense of love rather, not only respect.

³⁵ To act out of respect for the dignity of others, you must also respect your own dignity as well. Rational nature is equally instantiated in all humanity, and you are a part of humanity, after all. On pain of contradiction, you must value yourself in the same way and never let yourself be used merely as a means.

Before exploring how reciprocity helps to make sense of becoming deeply involved in the ends of some and not others, more must be said on the relation between respect and personal love. Both Korsgaard and Velleman provide a similar way of making sense of this relationship. To begin, Korsgaard places respect as a minimum required for moral relations between humans in general and love as the upper positive limit of morality.³⁶ The thought is that we must do something for all people, but love allows us to do something more. Velleman makes a similar point about the relationship between respect and love, in that we are required to respect everyone, but love presents us with an opportunity to act in reference to the same thing (people's humanity) in a different way, with additional reasons for action.³⁷ Both Korsgaard and Velleman place love as something that makes human beings go above and beyond respect to do something that makes our "relations with one another morally worthy."³⁸ This does not mean that acting from respect is not of moral worth, only that it is limited in its scope. You may be required to lend aid to a stranger every so often, but your involvement in the life of a stranger is limited in comparison between friends, where it is assumed that they will regularly and without reservation live intimately. Velleman ultimately agrees with Korsgaard on the place of love within the Kantian framework, but Korsgaard explicitly points towards degrees of reciprocity as the distinguishing feature between respect-based and personally loving relationships.

³⁶ Ibid, 194.

³⁷ Velleman, "Emotion," 365.

³⁸ Korsgaard, *Kingdom*, 194.

5.1 From Degrees of Reciprocity to Sharing Ends

If we accept Velleman's and Korsgaard's positions that special relationships are reciprocal relationships, then a question remains in what that reciprocity entails. I propose that reciprocity in special relationships takes on two forms: reciprocity in recognition and reciprocity in ends. The former involves a mutual recognition of incomparable value and the latter involves a mutual deep involvement. People may respect one another and agree to participate in each other's ends to some degree, but that does not mean that they love one another.

To understand the difference, consider a cashier. Assume that you go to the grocery store almost every day and check out with the same cashier, Michael, every time you shop. The fact that Michael bags your food and rings you out does not mean that he wants to be your friend. While entering a good-faith transaction with you may reveal that he acts out of respect, there is nothing in that transaction that necessarily suggests that he has your incomparable value in view in the way a friend should. If he is acting out of respect, then he would do the same for any other customer. Insofar as he does not act with your incomparable value in view in the right way, there is not the right kind of reciprocity in recognition. Additionally, there is nothing in the transaction that suggests Michael's deep involvement in your ends, so he also does not engage in the right kind of reciprocity in ends. For you and Michael to be friends, brief and routine transactions are simply not enough.

However, we still do not have a precise definition of deep involvement. Although Ebels-Duggan argues for this point in the context of arguing against the benefactor view of love and producing a non-condescending account of love, she provides a possible definition of deep

involvement: seeing another's ends as important.³⁹ This concept of importance provides two further criteria. The first is selection authority, which states that you have reasons for promoting the end of a special relation (either by playing an active role in the completion of the end itself or by providing the conditions for the special relation to attain her end) just by the bare fact that she has chosen the end; the second criterion, authority in judgement, entails treating "her choice of an end as if it were evidence that the end is worthwhile," which means that you take her ends to be important in the relevant sense to her as well.⁴⁰

Crucially, authority in judgment requires that you do not see a special relation's end as foolish or worthless. For Ebels-Duggan, sharing someone's important ends is intended to prevent you from being condescending towards her. From the perspective of your special relation, sharing her important ends would involve "not just [...] acting in accommodating ways but also [...] recognizing their value."⁴¹ Still, it is questionable whether selection authority and authority of judgment accurately describe what it means for special relations to become deeply involved in each other's ends. It is certainly easier to be friends with people who see the same ends as important, but it is hardly common for friends to share all the same interests. The fact that I do not care for tennis in the same way as my friend does not mean that I act condescendingly when I still drive her to a tennis tournament. If we adopt Ebels-Duggan's account of important ends in special relationships as our account of deep involvement, then it becomes all too easy to condescend to a special relation. However, important ends can still account for what deep involvement is if we adopt a different conception of sharing important ends, that being coming to understand (in the

³⁹ Ebels-Duggan, "Beneficence," 158.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 158-59.

⁴¹ Ibid, 160.

right way) the roles that someone's ends play in her conception of happiness and the adoption of those ends.

5.2 Happiness and Second-Ordered Ends

Before characterizing happiness in terms of important ends, more must be said on how happiness ought to be understood in relation to other possible ends. Happiness can be seen as an end that people pursue directly (like money or power), but Alison Hills provides a rather different account: happiness is something that orders other ends. Insofar as happiness can govern other ends, it plays an analogous function to that of the categorical imperative and its different formulations in moral decision making.⁴² You do not aim to attain the categorical imperative, but rather apply it to make sure that your actions are morally permissible. In much the same way, happiness can be understood as a concept that provides a structure to your ends such that, on the whole, you satisfy your inclinations.⁴³ To put the point in more explicit Kantian terms, happiness is a matter of "satisfaction with one's state" (*MM* 6:387), where that state can be considered to consist in your present and future inclinations.⁴⁴

Understood as a second-order end, happiness is primarily a matter of making sure that one goes about pursuing inclinations in a rationally ordered way. As Hills describes, happiness allows

⁴² Alison Hills, "Kant on Happiness and Reason," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 23, no. 3 (2006): 251.

⁴³ It is of course entirely possible that you fail to attain your ends even if you order them, whether it be because of chance, a personal failure, or other people.

⁴⁴ As Hills notes, it is not perfectly clear how Kant defines happiness. However, I agree with Hills' claim that because the sum of one's inclination is always indeterminate and Kant himself insists upon the indeterminacy of happiness, it is reasonable to identify the sum of one's inclination (as viewed at one time) with Kant's conception of happiness. See Hills 249-50.

us to unify ourselves as agents through time.⁴⁵ To understand this function, it is best to imagine someone who does not act under the guise of happiness. It is an empirical fact that humans tend to set the objects of their desire as ends for themselves, but due to their empirical, contingent nature those ends will often conflict with one another. Perhaps one minute you want to go to the movies with your friends and the next you want to stay at home reading a good book. While people may not make these kinds of drop-of-the-hat decisions terribly often, it also applies to other more long-term, putatively well-grounded ends. It is perfectly possible for someone to spend her life in one career only to find out, in the end, that her career was not what she really wanted all along and that she never really took the time to deliberate on her choice.

For Kant, there is also a further problem: there is no single definition of happiness. Beyond the limitations of finite ends, happiness is seemingly the most “indeterminate” concept that any human being could wish to achieve (*GMM* 4:418). One could say that there are as many conceptions of happiness as there are human beings. For Kant, it is the empirical nature of happiness that ultimately prevents it from being a categorical imperative at all (*GMM* 4:419), but it remains an end that can be attributed to human beings, as Kant himself readily admits (*GMM* 4:416).

While being a Kantian might come at the cost of having a very pessimistic view of human happiness, a Kantian can still recognize its significance. To be a human being is to be a finite rational being and to be such a being is to have agency – to make decisions and choose what ends are worth pursuing. It may be that no matter how much you deliberate and parse through your ends you will never achieve total satisfaction, but doing so allows you to minimize conflict between inclinations. If you are going to set the objects of your desire as your end, you should go about

⁴⁵ Ibid, 252.

pursuing them as a whole, not individually. Pursuing desires individually only makes it harder to find satisfaction in one's ends, but it also, as Stephen Engstrom argues, prevents one from being a singular person, given that to be one is to have "*one action* to which the diverse actions assignable to a person all belong" and for those diverse actions to belong to the pursuit of one end.⁴⁶ In other words, to be a person at all is to have a united collection of ends; that collection is united insofar as they are organized according to an overarching end, with that end being happiness. This is not to say that people always have happiness in view, only that to be a person is to *admit* of the capacity to order one's actions according to one's own conception of happiness – to act under the guise of happiness.

5.3 The Place of Happiness in Special Relationships

If our ends are important insofar as they are integral to our individual conceptions of happiness, then deep involvement in another's ends can be preliminarily defined as knowing of what her ends consist, knowing how those ends fit into her conception of happiness, and the adoption of her ends. This notion of deep involvement can be used to navigate one's relationships with anyone given that happiness can be attributed to everyone. Additionally, the acknowledgment of the fact that other people's ends are important to them outside of and within special relationships does not require that you yourself see those ends as an integral part of what it means to be happy because of the indeterminacy of happiness in Kantian ethics.⁴⁷ Someone who loves you is the kind

⁴⁶ Stephen Engstrom. "Fundamental Practical Judgments: The Wish for Happiness," in *The Form of Practical Knowledge: A Study of the Categorical Imperative*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 85.

⁴⁷ One can hold these two thoughts at the same time without being condescending towards another: X end is not conducive to happiness for me, and X end is conducive to happiness for another.

of person who would be willing to take the time to come to understand your reasons for having your ends and help you achieve them, which is to say that she has your incomparable value in view.

To put the issue in more explicitly Kantian terms, if you are not deeply involved in someone's ends, you primarily have the negative prescription of the Formula of Humanity to govern your interactions with her ends. It is possible to help people achieve their ends even if you do not understand them well, but your involvement in their ends would be limited because they have not allowed you to come to know how those ends fit into their conceptions of happiness.

To clarify, consider the example of tennis. Let us say that Alice and Thomas are friends. Alice loves tennis so much that it is integral to her conception of happiness, but Thomas is indifferent to the sport. Nonetheless, Thomas appreciates the importance of tennis to Alice, so they dedicate a portion of their free time on the weekends to playing tennis. Now along comes a stranger named Steven. Steven himself does not like tennis at all, but he fancies himself a very impartial man and believes that if he is to be impartial, he must be friends with everyone he comes across. Seeing Alice and Thomas playing, he attempts to insert himself into the tennis match and boldly declares that all three will be fast friends. To Steven's disappointment, Alice and Thomas are exasperated by the scene he caused and simply leave to play tennis on a different court.

Neither Thomas nor Steven particularly like tennis, but Steven only knows *what* is important to Alice and Thomas knows both what is important to her and *why* it is important. Thomas' privileged knowledge of Alice conception of happiness is, ideally, the consequence of intimacy between the two of them. In other words, Alice has made the choice to reveal details about herself after Thomas, either through his actions or words, has given Alice reason to make such a choice. Thomas could know all the details of Alice's end of playing tennis by reading her

biography or stalking her during her tennis matches, but it is hard to imagine that any information gained by either method would be conducive to forming a special relationship since Thomas does not treat Alice as an independent will in either case. Thomas' willingness to let Alice reveal the details of her ends of her own accord through direct interactions suggests that he does recognize her as an independent will: a person with her own agency and ends. Secondly, if Thomas acts upon his knowledge by adopting Alice's ends, that further reinforces the proposition that Thomas does take Alice's ends seriously, even if he does not personally find her ends to be fulfilling. The fact that Alice is the one who chooses those ends is what ultimately matters to Thomas. More simply, Thomas' knowledge and his acting upon that knowledge reaffirms that he sees *Alice* as an independent will, not as an abstraction of humanity.

Steven's mistake is that he does not really have Alice in view. Special relations are not simply a matter of being with just anyone – they are a matter of being with a particular person. Understanding a person's important ends affirms that you recognize her as an independent will and the intimacy required to arrive at that knowledge is suggestive of valuing her for her incomparable value as a self-existent end, thus elevating your relationship above mere permissibility.⁴⁸ Kant's notion of a self-existent end accounts for both the specificity of love and the actual experience of love, that being an affirmation of independence (and consequent uniqueness) through reciprocal intimacy. Steven, in his pursuit of impartiality, loses sight of Alice

⁴⁸ This is not to say that Thomas is obligated to be friends with Alice, only that there is more to the moral psychology of Thomas loving Alice than simply knowing that the categorical imperative permits him to do so. Neither Thomas' nor Alice's love is obligatory, but their relationship is a moral one insofar as both love one another in reference to their incomparable value.

and abstains from the very specificity that permits the simplest expression of affection afforded to Alice and Thomas: ‘I love *you*.’⁴⁹

5.4 Limiting the Scope of Special Relationships

The preeminence of reciprocity within the Kantian framework ultimately makes sense of why we do more for our loved ones than for strangers. Furthermore, reciprocity within the context of special relationships can be refined to a mutual recognition of incomparable value and the sharing of important ends. You are more deeply involved in your friend’s ends (and vice versa) than a stranger’s because both of you love the other for their incomparable value and both of you have agreed to be together in a particular way, with that agreement providing both of you confidence that each act with the other in view. You can and must respect the stranger, but you are, in contrast to your friend, unlikely to act out of love or perform an action befitting of personally loving relationships because you do not have the well-grounded expectation of the kind of reciprocity appropriate for special relationships. You do not know why strangers act the way they do, and neither do the strangers know why you act, hence why you are limited in the ways you can become involved in their ends. Consequently, there is a large degree of laxity that exists between friends – where they can easily and without reservation entrust their ends to one another – that cannot exist between unfamiliar people.

⁴⁹ Another aspect of special relationships that Steven fails to acknowledge is that Alice does not necessarily just want to play a game of tennis. She can also just want to spend time together with Thomas. The kinds of activities that Alice and Thomas enjoy will influence how they spend their time together (after all, each will be considerate of each other’s favorite pastimes), but if each truly acts with the other in view, then there will also be times when simply being together is enough. I address this possibility of simply being together in my notion of definitional involvement in Section 6.0.

While it might be true that personally loving relationships are not a matter of being with just anyone, one could still argue that we ought to strive to become deeply involved in the ends of everyone, nonetheless. The categorical imperative ultimately requires us to “conceive of the whole of ends (of rational beings as ends in themselves, as well as the ends of its own that each of them may set for itself) in systemic connection, i.e. a kingdom of ends” (*GM* 4:433). Kant implores us to create a kingdom of ends that encompasses all people in virtue of their rational nature, but one might claim such a societal state cannot be established if we are only deeply involved in the ends of special relations. As Korsgaard describes it, there exists a kingdom of ends between friends,⁵⁰ but there remains something to be said about a kingdom of ends between all people. One might take a universal kingdom of ends to imply a willingness to entrust your ends to and become involved in the ends of anyone, given that people in such a societal state would never see anyone as a mere means; furthermore, we remain duty bound to make such a universal kingdom of ends a reality.

To see the problems with this insistence on universal deep involvement, it is useful to return to the case of Steven. Steven may be perfectly willing to become deeply involved in the ends of complete strangers, but the ends of those strangers remain their own and part of what it means to have a universal kingdom of ends is to acknowledge and respect those ends, regardless of who may figure into them. Additionally, love requires affection for the unique value of an individual, whereas a universal kingdom of ends could exist with only respect for humanity in the abstract. Nonetheless, Steven’s naivety does hold one virtue: it reminds us that we cannot pre-emptively exclude the possibility of becoming friends with anyone, given that every person is a self-existent end. To return to Korsgaard’s point, it is right to say that there exists a kingdom of ends between

⁵⁰ Korsgaard, *Kingdom*, 194.

friends, but that claim must be qualified by illustrating the specificity that is peculiar to friendships and that does not necessarily exist between strangers in a universal kingdom of ends.

6.0 Differentiating between Ends in the Weak and Strong Sense

Deep involvement can be defined as coming to know of what someone's ends consist, knowing how those ends fit into her conception of happiness, and the adoption of those ends through her consent in direct interactions. To return to the case of Alice and Thomas, Alice is willing to invite Thomas to play tennis with her because Thomas has demonstrated that he has Alice in view. In both the sense of coming to know the importance of tennis to Alice and actually participating in the game, Thomas has come to share her end of playing tennis. However, there remains a question in how to differentiate between the cases where Thomas shares Alice's ends in *the weak sense* (not finding the same ends to be important) and in *the strong sense* (finding the same ends to be important).

Carrying on from my definition of deep involvement, one could argue that these two cases of sharing ends are distinguished insofar as the latter places Thomas in a better position (both because he has privileged knowledge about Alice's ends and already sees them as important to himself) to help Alice fulfill her ends. However, this distinction positions Thomas merely as a means for Alice to achieve her ends, not as an object of love; insofar as Thomas becomes a mere means, their relationship loses the moral element that elevates it beyond the realm of mere permissibility. I argue that both cases can be differentiated, all while preserving the moral character of special relationships, because both lend themselves to different ways of demonstrating that you act with another person in view: reaffirmation and definitional involvement.

Reaffirmation remains the primary way for Thomas to express his deep involvement in Alice's ends when he shares those ends in the weak sense.⁵¹ Here, reaffirmation involves Thomas again demonstrating his concern for Alice's ends. For Thomas, reaffirmation can be playing a game of tennis with Alice, but it can also be providing Alice the opportunity and environment to play a game of tennis (such as driving her to a tennis match or gifting her a new tennis racket). While Thomas may be able to play a sporting tennis match with Alice even if he does not find tennis fulfilling, the fact that he does not find it fulfilling means he runs the risk of half-heartedness. Even if he tries his hardest to enjoy the tennis match, there is still the possibility that he will not enjoy it, and so possibly fail to provide Alice with a *good* game of tennis. If Thomas only shares Alice's ends in the weak sense, then he will want to (at least sometimes) ere on the side of caution and primarily focus on providing the conditions for Alice to fulfill her ends.

However, sharing ends in the weak sense does not mean that Thomas is reduced to a mere means for Alice to pursue her ends more easily. If he was, then Alice could replace Thomas with any other person who knows what her ends are and how to best assist her in achieving those ends. Steven, the naïve stranger, could spy on Alice to learn all he could about her and swoop in at her hour of need. But Alice does not want help from just anyone with just any end: she wants Thomas to help her play tennis. Alice may not have reason to turn down help from a stranger (though perhaps she would not want to be driven by a stranger to a tennis match), but the help received is not expressive of a special relationship. Whereas a stranger's assistance is expressive of a generalized concern for the ends of everyone, Thomas' help draws Alice attention to the effort he has put forward to understand Alice's ends on her own terms and, consequently, to the fact that

⁵¹ However, reaffirmation and definitional involvement do not necessarily belong exclusively to the weak sense or the strong sense respectively. As shall become clearer in this section, definitional involvement is most often furnished by sharing ends in the strong sense.

Thomas acts with Alice in view. Put another way, it is not so much the help itself that matters to Alice, but rather the fact that Thomas is the one providing it for her particular end.

Sharing ends in the weak sense lends itself to reaffirmation as an expression of love, but it can also be a possible form of expression when it comes to sharing ends in the strong sense. Both Thomas and Alice can see tennis as equally important, but that does not mean that they will necessarily always play a game of tennis together. What makes sharing ends in the strong sense unique is that it lends itself to definitional involvement, which means that you are deeply involved in a person's ends and that your participation in her ends itself becomes a part of her conception of happiness.⁵² If both Thomas and Alice find tennis important, that means they are more likely to spend more time together; after playing all those games of tennis, it is more likely that Alice would become so used to Thomas' company or so appreciative of his involvement that she cannot imagine her life without him, which means that she would have to reorganize her ends to account for Thomas. This is not to say that Alice could never find a game of tennis satisfying without Thomas (though this is also possible)⁵³, but only that spending time with Thomas is, in itself, something that Alice pursues.

If special relations share each other's ends in the strong sense, they can, for better or for worse, leave their happiness in the hands of one another, but this vulnerability itself provides its own kind of reaffirmation. By letting Thomas' involvement become a part of her conception of

⁵² It is possible to be deeply involved in a person's ends and not be a constitutive part of her happiness. It is also possible to not be deeply involved in someone's ends and be a constitutive part of her happiness. However, the latter possibility would not be appropriate for a special relationship, as there would not be a mutual recognition of incomparable value. If you are a constitutive part of another person's conception of happiness within the context of definitional involvement, then the fact that *you* are a part of it is what matters; if not, then you could simply be replaced with someone else. Deep involvement helps to guarantee that everyone involved has each other's incomparable value in view, and thus each other as well.

⁵³ To spend time with a friend playing the same game or performing the same job only to have them leave (whether because of personal choice or circumstance) can often leave those once fulfilling activities feeling hollow. In a very real sense, your friends cannot smile without you.

happiness, Alice reaffirms that she has Thomas in view, once again avoiding the problem of turning Thomas into a mere means to an end. Thomas is not the only one who can help Alice pursue her happiness because he is the only one with the right knowledge and skills – he is the only one who can help because he is the only Thomas. Additionally, definitional involvement is not meant to invoke any idea of overbearingness. All special relationships aim for equality between people, where no person seeks to condescend to another by becoming overly protective or demean themselves by wholly subordinating their ends to one another. The sense of interconnectedness that corresponds with definitional involvement only requires that special relations recognize that each has agreed to place their happiness in one another's hands in virtue of their mutual deep involvement in each other's ends.⁵⁴

With definitional involvement addressed, one could still say that it is a possible expression of deep involvement even in the weak sense of sharing ends. Disregarding the possibility of other special relations, the fact that you understand a special relation's ends better than a stranger also means that you are best positioned to help her achieve her ends. By virtue of you being better positioned to help, your special relation could come to rely on you more and more to pursue her happiness, perhaps to the point where the fulfillment of many of her ends hinges upon your involvement in a practical sense. From the practical perspective, you are possibly the only one who can help your special relation achieve her ends. The problem with this practical perspective is that it misunderstands what definition involvement is.

⁵⁴ It is still possible for someone to come to understand of what another's important ends consist only to refuse becoming involved in them at all. The fact that you understand someone's important ends only makes it more likely that her incomparable value affects your emotional capacity. People may try to become friends or lovers only to find that one cannot come to love the other, but respect would still require the unaffectionate person to refrain from inhibiting the affectionate person from obtaining her ends.

Firstly, special relationships require that both parties act with each other's incomparable value in view, which does not necessarily exist between people who only rely upon each other practically. Whether you can successfully complete a report for your boss may depend upon the actions of your fellow workers, but that does not mean that when they help you compile the report, they do so with your incomparable value in view. Secondly, if you need someone's help only because they have the necessary skills or knowledge, then you could replace them with anyone else (it just so happens that this or that person does have the right qualifications). If Thomas is definitionally involved in Alice's ends, then Alice cannot simply replace Thomas.

With the practical understanding of definition involvement addressed, I must acknowledge that it is still possible for your help to become part of the content of your special relation's end even in the case of sharing ends in the weak sense weak. Even though Thomas may not find tennis enjoyable, let us say that he still comes to all of Alice's tennis tournaments to cheer her on. One day after another victory, Alice notices that Thomas was not in the crowd (perhaps his car broke down on his way to the tournament) and she cannot help but think her victory somewhat hollow. Alice achieved her end of winning the tournament, but she did not achieve her end of spending time with Thomas. Without even recognizing it, Alice had grown so used to knowing that Thomas was always there, but his presence did not necessitate the fact that he found playing tennis to be important, let alone his playing in the tournament. Put simply, sharing ends in the weak sense can lead to definitional involvement, but its practical aspect produces more distance between special relations, making it less likely for any involvement to go beyond the realm of reaffirmation.

7.0 Problems with the Possession View and the Place of Co-Authorship in Special Relationships

Reaffirmation and definitional involvement provide a distinction between sharing ends in the weak and in the strong sense that does not rely on reducing people to mere means. Nonetheless, reaffirmation tends towards greater distance between special relations, but I do not intend to argue from this that sharing ends in the weak sense is necessarily lesser than sharing ends in the strong sense. Given that each person is an independent will, it should not be surprising that special relationships will involve a degree of distance between special relations. For example, if Thomas does love Alice and shares her end of playing tennis in the strong sense, he implicitly accepts that Alice may come to no longer find tennis fulfilling, which would require that he changes how he shares her ends. However, this greater degree of distance does not mean that their relationship has become worse, but only that it is functioning as it should – a union of people acting in reference to their incomparable value. Still, if neither can help each other pursue their ends directly because neither finds the same ends important, then they run the risk of becoming too distanced in the hopes of not impeding each other.

In any case, negotiating the ways in which special relations share their ends remains their own prerogative, determined by the ends they want to pursue and the kind of relationship they want. In fact, this negotiation of ends reveals that a mutual recognition of independence in special relationships is nothing other than the co-authorship of ends. This acknowledgement of co-authorship in special relationships is relevant because it helps avoid the possession view of love (which is to say, as Gregory Vlastos would argue, that special relationships are grounded in people

possessing a certain collection of traits)⁵⁵ and it reveals that special relationships are not simply about understanding another's ends in the right way – they are also about agreeing to live in a particular way.

One could be tempted to adopt the possession view because love grounded in the recognition of another's incomparable value may seem too abstract of a concept to have any significant emotional effect. If one wanted to make the concept of a self-existent end more practicable, one could connect the concept to people's character: people are self-existent ends insofar as they are instantiations of rational nature and people's character is included within their rational nature. To return to Thomas and Alice, Thomas could point towards Alice's perceived character traits or her idiosyncratic elements in general, such as the expert way she holds a tennis racket or something as simple as the way she smiles, as reasons for why he loves her. All these elements certainly can make Alice *intriguing* to Thomas and someone he may want to pursue a friendship with, but it would be wrong to claim that Thomas' friendship with Alice is reducible to each possessing certain identifiable characteristics that are intriguing to each other, even if those characteristics are traceable back to their rational natures in some sense.

The possession view's reduction of people to a collection of traits ultimately leads to similar problems that arise with the benefactor view. Firstly, if Thomas loves Alice only because Alice can handle a tennis racket well in addition to a whole number of other traits, then Thomas could, in principle, replace her with anyone else with the same traits. Secondly, something like Alice's expertise in handling a tennis racket may be expressive of her status as a rational being, but the bare fact of her being able to do so at all is not the only possible thing that could denote such a status. It could have been that Alice learned to handle a golf club instead of a tennis racket,

⁵⁵ Vlastos, "Plato," 31. Vlastos does not use the phrase 'possession view,' but I will use it for ease of exposition.

and thereby have never embodied what Thomas found so desirable in the first place. If Thomas' relationship with Alice is only founded upon Alice possessing certain traits, the only way for him to preserve the relationship is by preserving those traits in Alice. The possession view, as with the benefactor view, arrives at a bizarre situation where the only way Thomas can love Alice is by preserving some part of her, even if Thomas finds that he must impose himself upon Alice. In other words, the possession view prevents Thomas from seeing Alice under a pile of certain traits.

As I have already argued with the case of Steven, if you recognize a person's incomparable value, then you also recognize her as an independent will. A special relation is not presented to you as an object to be merely rescued or appreciated in some aesthetic sense, but as a moral agent. The notion of an incomparable value remains necessary to differentiate between respect and love and maintain the morality of love, but the actual experience of special relationships is characterized by the co-authorship of ends. The possession and benefactor views fail to fully capture the content and experience of special relationships because they do not allow one to recognize the independence of other people, which is the very thing that provides the grounds for the co-authorship of ends in the first place. When Alice says she wants help from Thomas, she does not want it just because of contingent fact about Thomas, but because Thomas is a particular person who has agreed to be with Alice in a particular way. By agreeing to live with Alice in a particular way, Thomas further recognizes Alice as an independent will.

Beyond providing an alternative to the possession view, the co-authorship view also reveals how special relationships can go wrong and how they can be managed. To begin, co-authorship requires knowledge of what another's ends are. If special relations are ignorant of each other's ends, then they cannot come to an agreement on how exactly they will share their ends. These

misconceptions need not involve any form of malice,⁵⁶ but they reveal a failure to appreciate who another person is on that person's terms.

It is common for special relationships to be plagued with misconceptions and impositions from both parties, but these are not unapproachable issues. If special relationships are primarily a matter of coming to know other people for how they conceive of themselves, then misconceptions and impositions reveal less the failure of a relationship and more an opportunity to reaffirm one's love if one wants to spend time with the another *qua* self-existent (and, consequently, *qua* independent will). This is not to say that these issues are simple to solve, only that how each person manages their special relationships is a matter of the personal choices of everyone involved.

However, this is not to say that these questions of co-authorship are insensitive to the content of people's ends. In this regard, the possession view does hold an element of truth. A person's wants and desires may remain contingent facts, but they still govern the kinds of choices anyone makes, as already seen in the distinction between reaffirmation and definitional involvement. Still, if special relations cannot point to any shared interests, then they run the risk of becoming too distanced in the hopes of not impeding each other, such as in the case of sharing ends in the weak sense and reaffirmation, or because they simply cannot agree on an end to pursue in common. In any case, the ways in which special relations co-author their ends remain their own prerogative, determined by the ends they wish to pursue.

⁵⁶ It is possible for someone to understand a special relation's ends and actively refuse to recognize them as deserving of her concern. These cases would fall under the category of abusive relationships, where one party only feigns love for their own gratification.

8.0 Choosing the Stranger

Deep involvement, alongside reaffirmation and definitional involvement, are reasons for special relations to choose each other's ends over the ends of strangers and the co-authorship of ends further reaffirms that each acts with the other in view, but a Kantian must accept that the Formula of Humanity requires that we promote the ends of all people, not just special relations, if we are to respect anyone at all. The positive requirement of beneficence will not always conflict with choosing the ends of our special relations over the ends of strangers, but deep involvement, reaffirmation, and definitional involvement cannot always win out over every other possible moral consideration. If you are morally sensitive to the ends of strangers, then it seems like there must be some cases where you should choose a stranger over a friend, but this only returns us back to the central issue: there is no clear way of determining when you should and should not show preferential treatment towards special relations. It could be that there is simply no clear way of defining it, but I do not find that to be a satisfactory answer. More importantly, I think a more definitive answer can be provided.

While special relationships take on a moral quality insofar as they consist of a mutual recognition of unique value, their practical elements remain subject to the demands of moral duties. Beneficence is an imperfect duty and the "latitude" offered up by its imperfect quality (*MM* 6:393) provides an avenue for balancing the practical demands of respect and personal love; however, the latitude that Kant describes can only carry us so far when it comes to choosing between special relations and strangers. The latitude of beneficence, in the first instance that Kant introduces the concept, is too vague to provide a sufficient degree of guidance. If beneficence is understood merely as an imperfect duty, then everyone could, in principle, be genuinely charitable people, and

yet still let people starve or go homeless. As Korsgaard argues, imperfect duties do not provide a definitive answer as to who owes it to the less fortunate of world to make sure that they can live with freedom and autonomy, which means no one can be blamed when they do not.⁵⁷ However, we can start to approach an answer to the question of when one should choose the stranger over a special relation if we consider the case of rescue.

To demonstrate this case, let us return to Thomas and Alice. Say that Thomas and Alice both share the end of playing tennis in the strong sense. Every week, the two carve out some of their time to play a game not only because they both find tennis itself enjoyable, but also because it allows them to spend time together. As Thomas is driving to meet Alice for their weekly tennis match, he sees that a man crashed his car on the side of the road and is seriously injured. What is more pressing is that there is no one else around to help the man get to a hospital and an ambulance would certainly take too much time to come save him. Thomas is presented with a choice: continue driving to his tennis match and leave the man to die or drive the man to the nearest hospital and leave Alice unfulfilled.

Most people would probably agree that it would be monstrous of Thomas to leave the man on the side of the road regardless of the fact that he is a stranger to Thomas. Part of the baseline requirement of respect is a recognition that human beings (by virtue of being beings with autonomy) are deserving of reasonable provisions for the pursuit of their ends, with the most basic of those provisions being life. As Korsgaard argues, this right to life would be an imperfect right, which is to say that it is not necessarily clear who in particular owes it to the man in the car crash to save him but that he must still be saved; his right to life is held against humanity as a whole,

⁵⁷ Christine Korsgaard, "The Claims of Animals and the Needs of Strangers: Two Cases of Imperfect Right," *Journal of Practical Ethics* 6, no. 1 (2018): 31.

and it is humanity's duty to organize society in such a way that the right is protected because our own claims to rights presupposes such an organization.⁵⁸

Before considering what may prevent one from protecting the imperfect rights of others in Section 8.1, it is clear who, in the car crash case, owes it to the man to save him: Thomas. Perhaps given different circumstances Thomas could feel confident that a simple call to an ambulance would be enough to save the man's life, but the circumstances are such that the man's right to life can only be protected by Thomas. In other words, Thomas' duty to protect the man's right to life becomes perfected because the man has an imperfect right to life, and Thomas is the only one positioned to provide it. Still, there is something more to be said about Thomas' reasons to help the man beyond the bare fact that he has a perfected duty and that his duty towards Alice is imperfect.

I have argued so far that even though love and beneficence belong to two distinct kinds of moral relationships, we ought to be beneficent to everyone. Before you love anyone, you are, in principle, beneficent to them, as stipulated by the Formula of Humanity. Thomas may act in reference to Alice's unique value, but that requires his recognition of Alice as a self-existent end, which further requires that he respects everyone. If Thomas made the argument that he chose Alice over the man because of his love for her and his corresponding deep involvement in her ends, then he would undermine the very ground for loving her in the first place. For the same reason, Alice would want Thomas to choose the stranger over her. Ignoring the idea that Alice would ask Thomas to adopt an impermissible end if she insisted that he should have chosen her over the stranger, Alice wants Thomas to value her for incomparable value, so she must also want him to

⁵⁸ Ibid. Importantly, Korsgaard makes this argument for the duty of humanity to provide for the less fortunate within Kant's argument for the existence of property rights. For the full argument, see Korsgaard, "Strangers," 34-41.

have respect for all humanity as well. If respect is the foundation of personal love, then all parties partake in the joys of personal love insofar as they fulfill the duties of respect.

Put another way, it cannot be that your love for one person leads you to become completely insensitive to the well-being of strangers. The fortunate element of special relationships (beyond the necessity of meeting the demands of respect if personal love is to exist) is that they first and foremost consist of a mutual recognition of unique value, which means that so long as there is that assurance, the failure to live up to some of their practical elements (like promoting another's ends) does not principally threaten the existence of special relationships.

8.1 When Special Relationships Go Wrong

If the choice is between the ends of a special relation and the life and autonomy of a stranger, one must choose the stranger. However, when the well-being of a stranger is not a concern, the laxity of beneficence allows you preserve and maintain your special relationship according to reaffirmation and definitional involvement. Whether one does so for the sake reaffirmation or definitional involvement ultimately falls under the purview of the individual, but if you claim you are willing to render aid to anyone just in virtue of the bare respect you hold for all humanity, then you must back up your claim by rendering aid to strangers in some situations even when the well-being of strangers is not involved. The nature of deep involvement may limit how much you really ought to get involved in a stranger's ends and how much she ought to want you to become involved, but that does not mean that it is impossible to help in any way. Given that you must help strangers with their ends at least sometimes, I argue that an impermissible special relationship would be one that puts you into a position where you cannot ever become involved in

their ends. If we take Korsgaard's conception of imperfect rights into account, impermissible relationships can also be expanded to include relationships that prevent you from promoting a societal structure that protects the imperfect rights of everyone. These impermissible special relationships would be ones with no distance between relations – where each would make too strong of a commitment to share in each other's ends.⁵⁹

The kind of overcommitment that impermissible special relationships would require suggests one of two problems: insecurity or overattachment.⁶⁰ In the case of insecurity, one person would become so concerned with whether her special relations recognize her unique value that she would try to coax out constant affirmation by making every attempt to spend time with them. The case of overattachment would involve non-moral⁶¹ infatuation with another, to the point where one could not emotionally or physically bear separation from another. Both cases often overlap (imagine a sickened lover incessantly asking his beloved to spend more time together), but each ultimately requires that something specific has gone deeply wrong in the relationship. Insecurity suggests a breakdown in communication or a mistaken conception of what is and is not an assurance of a proper mutual recognition of value. Overattachment suggests that one or both parties no longer really aim at a shared recognition of unique value and instead are blinded by their desire, motivated to share their ends only according to overpowering, non-moral reasons.

⁵⁹ I consider these two examples of pathological special relationships because they are a natural extension of the car crash example in Section 8.0. If Thomas chooses Alice over the stranger because he sees Alice as more valuable, then he misunderstands and undermines the very basis of his relationship with Alice: her incomparable value. Similarly, insecurity and overattachment involve a misunderstanding of another's incomparable value.

⁶⁰ These two cases prevent one from having a reason to choose a stranger over a special relation, but they also, as we shall see, complicate the problem of maintaining a special relationship because both cases involve some degree of overbearingness.

⁶¹ The infatuation would be non-moral in the sense that the duties of respect make moral love possible and overattachment blinds one to the duties of respect.

Regardless of the dysfunctional and pathological character of insecurity and overattachment, one could say that impermissible special relationships are possible even when things seem to have gone perfectly right: when there is a mutual recognition of unique value, when each person is confident in that mutual recognition, and when each person simply chooses to overcommit to each other's ends. However, I question this assumption. When you act in recognition of another's unique value, you must also acknowledge that everyone else is a self-existent end and deserving of your possible involvement in their ends as well. If you say you act in view of another's unique value all while ignoring the needs of strangers, then you do not fully understand what it means for something to be a self-existent end. In other words, the recognition of another's unique value necessitates that you are sensitive to the ends of strangers. Special relationships involve a commitment to sharing in the ends of a particular person in a particular way, but that commitment must be tempered if the special relationship is to be a healthy special relationship: one that consists of people acting in recognition of each other's unique value. This idealized case of overcommitment becomes just as self-defeating as the cases of insecurity and overattachment.

Overcommitment may be anathema to healthy special relationships, but a question remains in whether promises made between special relations could lead to overcommitment. To return to the car crash example, Thomas could have made the promise to Alice that he would play tennis, come what may. If Thomas chooses to save the stranger, then he would also have to break his promise to Alice. More importantly, the fact that Thomas makes the promise to Alice also seems perfectly compatible with a mutual recognition of incomparable value between the two. However, the problem in this example is that Thomas made a promise to play tennis with Alice *come what may*. It would be unreasonable for Alice to expect Thomas to make this promise because she, if

she has Thomas in view, must also recognize that a stranger can make the same claim to Thomas' attention. Additionally, the demands of beneficence come before love (as per the Formula of Humanity) and since Thomas helping the stranger is a matter of beneficence, she could not hold saving the stranger against Thomas. In fact, it would be more appropriate for Alice to actively encourage Thomas to help the strange not just because it is the right thing to do, but also because it reaffirms the fact that Thomas does recognize her incomparable value.

The situations where you are right to prefer the ends of special relationships over the ends of strangers remain blurred by the fact that beneficence is an imperfect duty, but the practical requirements of respect place a limit on just how extensive our commitments to our special relations can be. There must be instances where we involve ourselves in the ends of strangers and protect their imperfect rights if we are to be beneficent, but we remain free to construct our special relationships in such a way that they make room for beneficent actions. And as is made clear in the act of choosing the well-being of a stranger over the ends of s special relation, all that is required between special relations is a mutual recognition of unique value and honesty about how extensively they want to and ought to share in each other's ends. Moreover, the disposition against overcommitment seems natural to healthy special relationships. There will be instances where people will want a degree of distance between themselves and their special relations because of fact that people will almost inevitable not find the same ends to be important; it is also natural for special relations to worry over whether each other are acting morally, either because they do not want to end up participating in impermissible ends or because they worry about the moral well-being of one another. In any case, negotiating the needs of strangers and special relations remains the prerogative of each person, but there remains no insurmountable contradiction between the

laxity of beneficence and personal love in terms of both properly acknowledging the value of others and practical consequences.

8.2 Loneliness in Special Relationships

While the duties of respect require that we be sensitive to the ends of strangers, should we be sensitive to the ends of the lonely in a unique way? There are many people who yearn for a loving connection with another person, so it seems like we ought to also promote their ends in some way. One could return to the naivety of Steven and argue that we ought to become friends and lovers to lonely people; one could respond to that naivety by repeating the point that special relationships are founded upon on reciprocity in recognition and action, but I think a different and complementary point can be made within the context of limiting the strength of love-based moral reasoning.

Just as special relationships should be constructed such that they allow special relations to provide for the life and autonomy of strangers, so too should they be constructed to help the lonely. Special relationships are founded upon an openness to anyone becoming a special relation just by the bare fact of their incomparable value. Consequently, people ought to adopt a welcoming attitude towards everyone, even within special relationships. You do not have to be friends with everyone, but that does not mean you or your special relations can always be unfriendly or hostile towards strangers. By creating a welcoming and friendly environment, you give a lonely stranger the possibility of finding companionship at the very least, even if they do not find companionship with you.

Beyond helping lonely strangers find companionship, creating a welcoming and friendly environment also helps to show others the problems with having loneliness as the driving reason behind seeking a special relationship. Special relationships are founded upon a recognition of another's unique value and that recognition is a matter of acknowledging another person as an independent will with their own ends. The problem with overextending the recognition of unique value as a justification for completely ignoring the ends of some in favor of others is that it ultimately undermines the foundations of that recognition in the first place. Trying to pursue a relationship out of loneliness presents a similar problem. This is not to say that loneliness can never provide the impetus for pursuing and establishing a healthy special relationship, only that loneliness, in itself, is not conducive to love.

If the only reason you have for deeply involving yourself in the ends of another is your own loneliness, then you do not have that other person in view – you are exclusively concerned with your own end of not feeling lonely. Put another way, you do not really act in reference to another's unique value, which not only does a disservice to the other person insofar as you do not love them in the way they want to be loved, but a disservice to yourself because you are undermining anyone else's love for you. It is still true that reciprocity in recognition and action prevent the wanton friend-making of someone like Steven, but the failure of loneliness as self-sufficient reason for special relationships reinforces the fact that special relationships, regardless of their character, cannot be forced upon someone. By promoting the natural development of special relationships in a welcoming and friendly environment, you help to dispel the idea that special relationships must be forced.

9.0 Conclusion

While it may seem like radical impartiality is a natural part of impartialist ethics, Kantian ethics provides a possible alternative that accounts for both the equality of all humanity and partiality towards the ends of special relations. Valuing others insofar as they are instantiations of rational nature provides one with non-egotistical reasons for showing concern for the ends of anyone, including oneself. Kant's notion of self-existent ends further provides the foundations for distinguishing respect and love into different kinds of moral relationships. If love is a kind of moral relationship, then we may reject Herman's claim about the non-moral nature of special relationships. But while love can be conceived as a kind of moral relationship, a question remains in whether a distinction in kind does exist between respect and love. Deep involvement provides this distinction in kind and Ebels-Duggan points us towards the sharing of important ends as a possible answer for what deep involvement is, but her account of important ends makes it all too easy to act condescendingly towards special relations. Given the ambiguity of happiness and its attributability to all people under Kantian ethics, special relationships give one non-condescending reasons to become more deeply involved in the ends of a particular person, those reasons being that you know of what someone's ends consist, how those ends fit into her conception of happiness, and that you adopt those ends through her consent in direct interactions. Coming to understand a person's end in this way gives her the confidence that you act with her in view.

If deep involvement is a matter of coming to know of what someone's ends consist, knowing how those ends fit into her conception of happiness, and the adoption of those ends through her consent in direct interactions, then a question remains in how to differentiate between sharing ends in the weak and strong sense. While there can be multiple reasons for deep

involvement in either sense of sharing ends, the way in which people share ends is distinguished by reaffirmation and deep involvement. This distinction further helps to reveal that special relationships are not just a matter of deep involvement, but also co-authorship. Both deep involvement and co-authorship provide one with different ways of keeping another person in view. However, deep involvement and co-authorship do not justify completely ignoring the ends of strangers; love may be distinct from respect, but the morality of love remains predicated upon beneficence and the guarantee of freedom and life for all. And while loneliness may not threaten one's freedom and life, we remain obliged to create welcoming social environments where strangers can come to love and be loved.

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