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**Morality and the Person: The Person is the Touchstone for Morality**

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**Morality and the Person: The Person is the Touchstone for Morality**

by

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# Morality and the Person: The Person is the Touchstone for Morality

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This thesis is concerned with tracing out the manifold connections between personhood and morality to argue that morality is based on fundamental properties of the person, and therefore a moral philosophy that ignores or truncates the person is one that fails to understand the central function of morality in our social practices and understanding of the self. It is at the same time to argue that morality is integral to personhood and enters the construct of the person at the most basic level. My method is to exploit our sense that our concept of the person exists to capture that which makes us more than natural beings.

First, persons must self-define. What it is to be a person is not given. Persons, and each person, must create an ideal of the person to act, and through action try to realize that ideal and through that process in fact realize themselves. Second, the human psyche has its own needs and drives unrelated to those of the physical being that propel the being towards personhood. Third, persons have depth. When we recognize a being to be a person, it is evidence of depth that we recognize. Without depth persons would not be. We have evolved a specialized vocabulary -- a moral vocabulary -- that both recognizes that depth and facilitates its creation. Together these entail that the person cannot be constructed without that construct being eventually set in moral terms, and that sociality is a basic unit of analysis of the person: persons exist as beings who recognize each other and exist in a matrix of recognition within which persons come to be. In as much as existing as a person is the proper form of existence for our kind and personhood is dependent on the voluntary activity of other persons, existence as a person must as far as possible be guaranteed. This is the foundational task of morality and the source of its basic requirements.

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## Introduction

Understanding moral responsiveness -- that we take and make moral judgments and considerations seriously and are often enough motivated to act on them, even against strong desires or interests otherwise -- is a long-standing philosophical problem. In this thesis I suggest that our difficulties in understanding moral responsiveness stem, at least in part, from both an incorrect, at least, incomplete understanding of morality and an inadequate understanding of our nature as persons. I believe that the moral enterprise is only superficially captured in such understandings of morality as “what is right and wrong in conduct,” “the claims others legitimately have on you,” or “how we are to relate to one another,” and that we are unlikely to get the understandings we are after from this, in my view, truncated understanding of morality.

What the prevailing understandings of morality miss is a fundamental connection between the existence of morality and our existence as persons such that the moral enterprise can't be understood apart from an understanding of the person nor can the human person be understood independently of the moral enterprise. I will argue from an understanding of ourselves as persons to an understanding of morality, the enterprise, and its proper place in human life, a position from which moral responsiveness can be more fruitfully illuminated.

However before I begin I would like to say just a bit more about the modern understanding of morality, in particular, as expressed by Kant. His account is particularly important for my purposes because his also rested on an understanding of the nature of the person. In brief, Kant (rightly) saw essential connections between morality, rationality, and personhood but erred in how he explicated those connections. He correctly saw that human beings were distinguished from other animals by a capacity for autonomous rational choice; but then made too much of that insight by defining morality

(doing the right thing because it was the right thing) *as* acting according to the dictates of autonomous rational choice, and then defined the person as that being capable of acting morally. This made rationality both the central moral concept and the defining feature of personhood. In addition, the concept of the person became the concept of a transcendent *form* of being -- the person was a wholly moral being in contrast to an empirical being -- and morality was the characteristic activity of a person.

While I believe Kant was correct to understand our existence as persons as an ontologically special form of existence and correct to see that existence in moral terms, I believe he erred by understanding personhood in exclusively moral terms, and erred particularly by identifying both morality and personhood so closely with the exercise of a single capacity, rational decision-making.

This error has had several far reaching consequences. The first is a radically atomistic view of the moral judge, who is in this case identical with the person, as one who, given data, arrives at the action any rational being would take. A second is a presentation of morality as something foreign, imposed and imposing on our lives (by consisting in rules derived by pure reason that, because universalizable, are unavoidable). A third is the consequence that someone who chooses not to do as morality requires -- but does not thereby do something we would judge immoral -- thereby shows himself degraded. Because personhood has been defined as engagement in the single activity of autonomous rational choosing, to choose on any other basis is to function as less than a person. What has persisted from Kant is an understanding of morality as rule-generating and of moral behavior as rule-following, and an atomistic understanding of the person as self-contained and self-sufficient. He was in error to reduce morality to rational responsiveness and persons to rational agents.

I contend that a moral philosophy that ignores or truncates the person is one that fails to understand the central function of morality in our social practices and understanding of the self. Therefore, in this thesis I will be concerned with tracing out the manifold connections between personhood and morality to argue that morality is based

on fundamental properties of the person. I will begin with an ontology of the person, showing in particular that the person can be plausibly separated from the human being, while maintaining an intrinsic connection. This will provide the ground to claim that a whole different set of conditions apply to the existence and recognition of a person than of a human being. I will establish the idea of the person as a primarily non-natural entity -- an entity not caused to be by physical forces -- by highlighting the fundamental role played by the biologically based capacity for self-reflexivity. I will show self-reflexivity to be the basic proposition by which to understand personhood.

Next I will show that although non-natural, the person is phenomenally distinct, an existence in its own right by showing the psyche has its own needs and drives, distinct from those of the human being -- in particular, its own survival drive capable of overriding the drive for physical survival, even as it depend, for its existence, on physical existence. Following that I will show that the psyche is not just phenomenally distinct but phenomenally real -- i.e., the psyche has depth. Without depth our personhood would be in question. Depth evolves through the application of a specific set of evaluative attitudes, the reactive attitudes, directed only at persons; a language of character and motivation; a self-reflexive consciousness and the kind of questioning it requires and the ideas created give us that depth. It is a real, not fictitious, property of persons, and we can conclude persons are inherently moral and ontologically real.

Then, having established the person as having a “special ontological status” as metaphysically real and inherently moral, I will show how the non-naturalness of the person requires a recognition requirement (an essential sociality condition for personhood). This will show recognition is a basic unit in the analysis of the person. This means that the person cannot be correctly conceived as the self-sufficient, bare individual, a construal which takes the end-point -- the fully constituted person -- as the starting point of the analysis. It does not consider that personhood might be a generated state.

An essential sociality requirement means that we are fundamentally situated, as persons, in relationships of recognition with other persons, without which persons would cease to be. This circumstance means that personhood is dependent by definition on voluntary activity of other persons, which means persons are fundamentally situated in a moral problematic, and that morality exists necessarily when persons exist.

I then explore this problematic through the idea of absolute needs for personhood, what they require of other persons and how they ground fundamental structures of morality. The absolute needs of persons are the needs persons have, which, if radically unmet, will result in the person ceasing to be. Exploring these needs will highlight just how embedded in morality the person is and how central morality is to our distinctive existence as persons.

Finally, I will conclude with some remarks about a distinctive mode of moral failure highlighted by the analysis of the person that is generally obscured under the prevailing, atomistic conception of the person and the resulting failure to put recognition at the center of morality. The generally highlighted and much discussed moral failure is moral weakness -- the failure to act on one's (sound) moral judgments. The failure this analysis highlights, centered as it is on recognition, is that of moral neglect -- the failure to see moral concerns that are there. I will call this: the neglected problem of moral neglect.

## Section 1: The Special Ontological Status of the Person

### 1.1 The Person is Non-Natural

I am beginning this exploration of the person's special ontological status with the idea that the person is a non-natural entity because that idea has been attached to the concept from its genesis. We know that we are a species of animal, and as animals are materially caused to be and function under the sway of physical law; but for as long as we have been self-aware we have known that we are not simply animals, we are something more than animals, signaled by that very self-awareness. However we have tried to explain it we have used the concept of the person to capture it.

Our concept of the person has evolved over time, beginning as an inter-relational status term and then to a mark of legal status and then, with the arrival of the modern era, the person has become increasingly conceived as a psychological entity.<sup>1</sup> The transition has been from a construal of the person as a public social entity to that of a private individual entity, but its original sense contains an important insight worth preserving. Originally 'person' represented a status. It came from 'persona,' which meant facade or assumed character. One who donned a persona acted under the rubric of that persona rather than as his private self. In an early Greek use, 'persons' were those men with the leisure and resources to participate in public life. They did so under the guise of personhood to emphasize that they were participating not as private citizens with their private concerns, but as public voices who deliberated disinterestedly, but not necessarily dispassionately, about matters of common concern.

The primary activity of persons was to make normative judgments: What should we do with our resources? Should we build more schools or more roads? How should we

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<sup>1</sup> Poole, R. (1996). "On Being a Person." *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 74(1): 38-56.

respond to the posturing of our near neighbor? How should we treat the young? The old? The infirm? Yes, these are social-political questions, but they are also questions of public identity and what vision of what was possible for people they wanted to express. Settling practical matters often involves larger visions of what is important in life and how a people wants to present itself to other people. The point is that they were equally persons with the same reflective, deliberative capabilities and (ideally) respected and related to each other on that recognition.

The earliest understanding of the person, and ourselves as persons was as rational deliberator -- Man was the reasoning animal -- but emphasis on the ability to function with reasons generally as Man's distinctive ability and that which made him more than an animal, obscures the even more distinctive and unnatural ability -- and need -- to function with normative terms such as worth and importance, in this instance to create a species persona. Man was the rational animal because he needed reasons to determine values. This early conception of the person captures an irremovable normative aspect to personhood.

Some of the earliest and most persistent philosophical questions were addressed to our own identity, proof that we have long been both fascinated and puzzled by the sheer fact of our existence. What is Man? How ought a Man to live (as a Man)? How ought we to live (as Men together)? These were among those earliest questions. The sense was that Humankind was not "at home" in the world the way that other creatures were. He didn't belong and had to both figure out and in some sense justify his existence. These opening questions of philosophy are the outward signs of the special ontological status of the person, and they are the beginning of ethics.

These questions suggest his constitution is incomplete and that he, himself, must supply what is lacking. What he senses himself as without -- as not having been endowed with by nature -- is an essence, an identity, and some central purposes by which to guide himself in his practical life. Who he is, or rather what he is, is up to him. In this sense,

that his nature -- what he is and that he is -- is not decisively set by nature and entirely caused by physical forces, the person is non-natural.

This puts the person outside the Newtonian causal order, which is a status we have long recognized ourselves to have, which as I've said, the concept 'person' evolved specifically in response to. The classification 'personhood' is a classification based on features not found in nature and not determined by nature. The feature that has historically stood out is an ability to intervene in causal processes in a way that is itself non-conditioned, often described as our ability to "overcome" or "transcend" nature through motivationally effective rational processes. This is the self-determining ability that constitutes "the power of intellectual being to determine their own wills from reflective judgments with motivational force" -- a power to suspend acting on desires and consider their objects, to examine them, weigh them, and form reflectively informed practical judgments.<sup>2</sup> In virtue of this unnatural ability we are "free," and we account for this capability by positing the logical construct of the rational agent (sometimes also called the self), an entity who "acts on choice and chooses using reasons."<sup>3</sup> Because this feature, the rational agent or self, "is not something that can be absorbed into the class of events (even though how the self stands apart from events, and what the self is, is very unclear)" the self is the seat of moral responsibility.<sup>4</sup> -- providing an initial understanding of the enterprise of morality as one required by, and addressed to, that very non-naturalness that sets us apart.

The modern era in philosophy has been characterized by a tendency to focus excessively on rational agency in a very narrow sense as the quintessential signal of

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<sup>2</sup> Darwall, S. (1995). The British Moralists and the Internal "Ought", 1640-1740. New York, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>3</sup> Searle, J. R. (2001). Rationality in Action. Cambridge, MA, MIT Press.

<sup>4</sup> Nagel, T., in Hampton, J. (1989). "The Nature of Immorality." Social Philosophy and Politics 7(1): 22-44.

personhood, but thankfully we are now moving away from that.<sup>5</sup> The narrow focus neglects other capabilities essential to and signaling of personhood and is false to our experience of each other as persons and how we recognize others to be persons. Two capacities definitive of persons left out by the narrow focus on the person as a being capable of being convinced by reasons are a capacity for depth and one for imaginative invention.<sup>6</sup> Without depth, the presence of a complex inner life, the person would not be; without imagination we would not have ideals or conceive of how life might be different from what it is and ourselves different from how we are (among many other things). All of these capabilities have their source in the biology-based feature of reflexivity. It makes sense to consider the person as centrally self-reflexive and to locate the source of his non-naturalness in the self-reflexive consciousness and the questions that result.

The predicament of the self-aware being is this. He is aware that he must make practical choices, and he is aware of his options as choices that he can examine and qualitatively evaluate; but if he is to act out of self-awareness he can't simply choose as a natural being would, he can't simply act on his strongest desire.<sup>7</sup> His choice will be filtered through that self-awareness. He will ask: *Should* I satisfy my strongest desire? Is that really what is best for me? -- but if he doesn't know who *he* is, if he has no idea what sort of being he is or is trying to be, how can he effectively choose to best benefit himself? If he doesn't know what his existence is about or what he wants to do with it, again, how can he choose? If he doesn't know what he is trying to be, he won't know what he should

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<sup>5</sup>Frankfurt, H. G. (1988). Identification and Wholeheartedness. [The Importance of What We Care About](#). New York, Cambridge University Press: 159-176. Also Korsgaard, C. M. (1996). [The Sources of Normativity](#). New York, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>6</sup> Hampshire, S. (1983). *Morality and Conflict*. [Morality and Conflict](#). Oxford, Basil Blackwell: 140-169. Vico distinguished the two as the power to put thoughts in order (intellectual understanding) and the creative power to generate new meanings and new forms of language and culture (imaginative invention). Hampshire, following Vico, saw no reason to elevate intellectual understanding over imaginative invention and no reason to think intellectual understanding was more distinctive of human beings.

<sup>7</sup> Wolf, Korsgaard, Taylor, and Frankfurt all identify the capacity to qualitatively evaluate as our distinguishing capacity. That is, they all see a self-reflexive consciousness as our key structural feature.

be trying to do. To choose, he needs to know what he is about -- what his character and dispositions are, what his central purposes are, what he holds dear, and what he aspires to.

Frankfurt expresses this in his conception of what persons essentially are. We are, he says, the sort of creature who cares about the sort of creature we are. Persons are beings who understand themselves not only by their desires and attractions but by what they consider important as well. Persons can ask if what attracts them is really important to them, and they care about what they do, think, feel, and aim at.<sup>8</sup>

He needs to know what *he* should do, and without a nature or identity, *he* does not refer to anything. The formal structure of the person as centrally self-reflexive requires that he create for himself some coherent evaluative and motivational structure to go on in life -- and if he is going to understand himself as a unitary being he needs to provide himself with the idea of one. Thus, persons must self define. Persons, therefore, are beings so constituted structurally that a person must have an ideal of the person to be a person and nature does not provide one.

An ideal of the person is necessary because it addresses the whole being; it paints a complete picture of a particular nature and identity and a motivational and evaluative core. The question of the self-reflexive being is not simply how should I move myself and what should be important and more important to me, but who am I, what sort of being am I and what sort of life is possible for that sort of being? He needs a conception of a whole discrete entity. The ideal must be one he can hold dear because holding to it will require effort and because it will be the core of his identity; it is his conception of the kind of being he is and what he should be aspiring to and expecting of himself in his conduct. A deep attachment to the ideal will yield commitments to the character traits and principles of conduct required by that ideal.<sup>9</sup> A set of commitments or norms alone won't

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<sup>8</sup> Frankfurt, H. G. (1993). On the Necessity of Ideals. Necessity, Volition, and Love. New York, Cambridge University Press: 108-116.others?

<sup>9</sup> Scheffler, S. (1979). "Moral Scepticism and Ideals of the Person." Monist 62: 288-303, Scheffler, S. (1992). Human Morality. New York, Oxford University Press, Velleman, J. D. (2002). "Motivation by Ideal." Philosophical Explorations 5(2): 89-103.others?

be sufficient because he will just ask why those norms and why those as a complete set. An ideal of the person is a stopping point to such questioning because it is a starting point. In this way persons are non-natural: their nature is an ideal, a moral product.

As signaled in this section's opening questions, persons are centrally self-reflexive, and that capacity for awareness of their mental content is the source of their special ontological status. Persons cannot avoid asking basic questions about their essence, identity, and central purposes, and must provide for themselves answers, which they do with an ideal of the person, a conception of a species nature and the kind of life such beings would live that would be both enticing and meaningful. Persons have a special ontological status because although biologically based they are inherently moral.

In logical terms, self-reflexivity implies that the person cannot be philosophically constructed without some idea of morality.

## **1.2 The Person is Phenomenally Distinct**

My aim in this section is to establish that psychic existence is an existence in its own right, which I will do by arguing that the psyche has needs and drives of its own, distinct from those of the human being and not aimed at benefitting the human being. Achieving this further supports the plausibility of separating the person and the human being such that we may speak of a distinct act of "seeing the person" that is not an act of seeing the human being.

Just to be clear, there is no suggestion of dualism here. The person is not separable from the human being empirically; personhood is a consequence of the physiology of the human being, which is such that, under the right conditions, a self-reflexive consciousness develops. The separation is a logical one to draw out the specialness of personhood as a form of existence.

We know that the person is an embodied thing, but the person is not simply an animal with states of consciousness. To have a person those states of consciousness must form their own whole and be the states of consciousness of a unitary self (the "I" that is

the referent for the mental states of any single consciousness). To understand the psyche as a unified, persisting entity with its own needs and drives that it seeks to satisfy and express, we should begin with the nature of the mind.<sup>10</sup>

Let's consider that the mind, as a whole, has a nature, that the word "mind" does not just name a receptacle in which a variety of functions are located but that the mind is itself an entity with a function or a character, and that character is rationality. We know that various rational processes occur in the mind, but what if the mind as a whole is also a rational processor? If so, then it would function to apply norms of rationality -- such as consistency, coherence, stability, and significance (rational sense or meaning) -- to whatever it contacted, be it sense perceptions; thoughts, feelings, and desires; intentions and possible intentions.<sup>11</sup>

With thoughts, feelings, desires and other produced mental states, the effect will be to tend to accept those that meet the norms and reject those that do not. Similarly for possible behaviors. Now, consistency, coherence, stability and significance have to be in response to something. It assess against what has been accepted so far. This does not mean the structure becomes ever more fixed, only that change is more likely to be incremental rather than wholesale.

So we will say that human mind functions with two types of rationality: active and reactive. The active rationalities are the variety of reasoning and choice-making processes we engage in when we think. Reactive rationality, the reasoning that characterizes the mind as a whole is not a process or calculating method at all but a mode of experiencing (which is why what is perceived as rational -- overwhelmingly

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<sup>10</sup> I use "mind" and "psyche" interchangeably, but I prefer "psyche" because I am identifying personhood as a psychic form of existence and "mind" has connotations of a property of persons which "psyche" does not have. I am not identifying the person with the mind and wish to side step issues regarding unconscious mental content or a tight connection between personhood and consciousness.

<sup>11</sup> Searle, J. R. (2001). Rationality in Action. Cambridge, MA, MIT Press. He argues there is no separate cognitive faculty of rationality; that once you have intentional states, and especially language, you already have constraints of rationality. They are the way we coordinate our mentality. Also Frankfurt, H. G. (1958). "The Dependence of Mind." Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 19: 16-26. Intelligibility and logical coherence are needs we have: our minds are constrained by rationality. Bratman, M. E. (2003). "Reflection, Planning, and Temporally Extended Agency." Philosophical Review 109(1): 35-61.

reasonable -- has greater motivating force than what has been rationalized into reasonableness). Reactive rationality is the distinctive mode of experiencing of a self-reflexive being, that is, it is our distinctively human form of rationality that is also our distinctive mode of experiencing.

The rationality of the mental drives the psyche towards unity and subsequently to a stable character and personality structure. The resulting unified psyche is the self -- the unitary agent that represents the coherence of the mental activities of a single person.<sup>12</sup> The drive is biological in origin but once the brain-mind is sufficiently organized for rational processes to be in place becomes an independent psychological drive impelled by the rationality that characterizes the mental.

The drive to achieve and maintain psychic unity drives a motive of self-consistency in both thought and action, a tendency to do what we know and to behave in accord with our self-concept.<sup>13</sup> This often involves telling a story. If the story makes sense to us then the action makes sense for us as one we would do and we become motivated.<sup>14</sup> Out of this impulsion of the mind to sense and coherence a character emerges, and this impelling is very strong. Making sense of psychic stimuli (which includes our own behavior, which we can both observe and imagine, and the content generated by the mind's own processes) is not something we can choose not to do. In practice, we become very disturbed and frustrated when we cannot succeed in making rational sense of something or are blocked from doing so.<sup>15</sup> We will invent a sense rather than accept nonsense or confusion.

I have so far described this rational character of the mental as a "reactive" rationality because it functions conservatively. It does not produce a something new, as

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<sup>12</sup> Gaskin, R. (1990). "Do Homeric Heroes Make Real Decisions?" *Classical Quarterly* **40**(i): 1-15. Gaskin Homeric Heroes

<sup>13</sup> Velleman, J. D. (2000). "From Self Psychology to Moral Psychology." *Philosophical Perspectives* **14**: 349-377. Velleman, J. D. (1985). "Practical Reflection." *Philosophical Review* **94**: 33-61.

<sup>14</sup> Velleman, J. D. (1999). "A Rational Superego." *Philosophical Review* **108**(4).

<sup>15</sup> Velleman, J. D. (1985). "Practical Reflection." *Philosophical Review* **94**: 33-61.

reasoning processes do. Instead it accepts or rejects content in so far as it can or cannot make sense of it against its rational norms, which themselves refer to rational structures and their associated content already in place.

The rationality of the mental, and its reactive functioning, supports recent proposals by Frankfurt that a capacity to identify with, to accept as his own, his tendencies to be moved is essential to personhood.<sup>16</sup> The function of the mind is consistent with this idea of “identifying” with some content rather than others as being “of the person” or not, and a sense of connection to certain objects that has its source *in the person*, not just in the mind. What we experience as the tendency to identify with some motivations -- as being of us -- and to disavow others as simply occurrences is just this functioning in action.

This reactive rationality also functions as a drive, a conservative drive of the structured psyche to maintain its unity, which is to say, its identity as a persisting thing -- and because it is a drive grounded in rationality it is a distinctly psychic drive, a psychic survival drive or psychic drive to persistence.<sup>17</sup> New information, new possible actions, will be examined against the stable, coherent, consistent structures of character, motivation, evaluation, self-conceptions, ideals and experiences already in place and permitted or rejected on that basis.<sup>18</sup> In this way, these rational mental forces can give us the experience of certain behaviors and actions being “required” by an ideal, that it is difficult to do otherwise; it feels somehow “wrong” or a “betrayal” to do otherwise.

We see this drive to persistence at work whenever we want to do something and find that we cannot until we find a reason that makes the action makes sense as one that we would do. I may want to perform the actions and yet, until I can explain it sensibly as

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<sup>16</sup> Frankfurt, H. G. (2002). Reply to Gary Watson. Contours of Agency: Essays on Themes from Frankfurt. S. Buss and L. Overton. Cambridge, MIT Press: 160-164.

<sup>17</sup> Hampshire, S. (1971). Spinoza and the Idea of Freedom. Freedom of Mind. Princeton, Princeton University Press.

<sup>18</sup> This is not the only ground for choosing actions; it is just how this one works. It’s results would be just one consideration among others, though it would, by its nature, be a strong one.

an action I would do I am stuck, even if I am aware of generally good reasons for performing the action. This is a common experience. Once we hit on an acceptable account our mind seems to allow us to do it. We also see it quite often in everyday self-defeating behavior when the psyche's drive to persist and maintain unity inclines toward permitting actions consistent with the established self-concept and overrides rational considerations favoring a healthy change.

To establish the psyche as a distinct existence from that of the human being, though, we must go further. Consider our experience. We do experience some things as threats specifically to our personhood that are not threats to our physical survival. One example is terror. We are terrified of becoming terrified. It is the state of being terrified that we principally fear. Initially our fear was of the object, but once having experienced terror our fear becomes of the state itself, and of the object only because we fear it may bring on the state. What, specifically, we are terrified of is becoming so overwhelmed by sheer panic that our psychic unity dissolves. We know that when in a sheer panic we do lose all sense of self. Generally this lasts for only a short time, but we remember and realize it is possible that if the state lasted longer psychic unity, the self, the person might not return and in effect we would have died. Not the body but the person.

We are also aware that we are capable of self-sacrifice for an ideal or other cherished attachment; that for some, how they live, what they express with their actions and choices is more important than that they live. This behavior, in which needs and drives of the psyche to in some sense preserve itself appear to contradict and override the self-preservation drive of the human being. In these instances it the overriding need is for behavior consistent with the requirements of the ideal, and especially with the ideal of oneself as a person (one's conception of what a person well-representing personhood would do) that ultimately motives -- and what is this but the psyche acting to preserve its own existence and identity? In these instances reasons of psychic survival can and do override reasons of physical survival (even while fully realizing that the psychic entity will cease to exist with the cessation of the physical one).

When the action is done consciously (rather than in moment of overwhelming and unthinking zeal) several processes are involved. Reflection and imagination work to put the proposed action into a pleasing and motivating narrative that makes rational sense of the act as one he would perform given his history and self-conception, and to show it as consistent with and furthering larger cherished ends. The reflective imaginative task is necessary because the psyche, as a rational entity, imposes its own conditions of rationality on any proposed action and will tend not to permit an act that don't make sense under those conditions. If the attachment is strong enough to be integrated into the person's personality structure or identity, the action would be permitted under the aspect of preserving that identity.

Over time an identity and character become established -- and core to the structure will be an ideal of the person, as demonstrated in the previous section. Once an ideal of the person is established it becomes important that our actions not only are instrumentally successful but that they are consistent with or "express" our beliefs about what sort of being a person ought to be or be aspiring toward. In this way ideals, which often direct us toward changing our current dispositions, can accomplish such change in this otherwise conservative setting.

That the psyche must "allow" a choice so that choice must make rational sense within the context of that psyche does not mean that the psyche (person) cannot act on external or justifying, reasons or is not responsive to reality in the reasons it finds salient. It would be among rational norms to tend to act on the perceived true and to be committed to truth. One of the norms of rationality is significance, and one way of finding meaning or making rational sense of something is by finding reasons.

Let's back up a step. Recall what the mind essentially mind is -- an organ of awareness. The mind exists in so far as awareness occurs.<sup>19</sup> For there to be space in the mind for thinking to occur, the mind must become selective about what will be permitted

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<sup>19</sup>Frankfurt, H. G. (1958). "The Dependence of Mind." Philosophy and Phenomenological Research **19**: 16-26.

into conscious awareness. In this way a criterion of importance enters and we begin “seeing with interest” and seeing concerning our interests. This is not just a passive filtering but an active orientation, particularly when it is motivated by a need for answers -- in our particular case of an idea of the person and of how to move oneself through life as a thinking being who must live important and their way of being helpful to their experience rather than harmful -- there is a motivation to find and assess ways of being, and action is required to assess them. In this way an original drive to psychic unity evolves into a drive to character and its display to provide the answers required by a reflexive self-consciousness.

In this way reactive rationality, which functions to make sense of stimuli and possible behavior according to norms of rationality, also functions as an outward impelling force. The need for reasons propels this outward, seeking, investigative orientation. The motive is conservative and self-serving, but the result is an expanded awareness and openness to reality as it is. In this way this reactive rationality becomes an active force. By compelling questioning and so awareness of, and desire to seek, reasons, this rational function acts as a distinctively psychic drive on which a person moves out into the world (and brings the world into himself).

We have now two distinctly psychic drives, one to the unity and persistence of the psyche, and the other, an outward reason-seeking drive that serves the need of a reflexive consciousness for rational grounds on which to make choices. Both exist to address needs of the psyche rather than the natural being.

There is one other, which I shall call a psychic drive to presence, or alternately a drive to self-assertion. This distinctly social drive has long been recognized and often regarded as a problematic drive. Hobbes called it the “desire for glory,” and went so far as to describe it as a “craving” for esteem in the eyes of others.<sup>20</sup> He described glory as:

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<sup>20</sup> Hampton, J. (1989). Hobbesian Reflections on Glory as a Cause of Conflict. *The Causes of Quarrel*. P. Caws. Boston, Beacon Press: 78-96.

A desire for personal advancement that is somehow biologically intrinsic and that is so strong in us that when we cannot see it satisfied by the reality of our own powers and abilities in the world, we lie to ourselves or seek out the lies of others in order to inflate our sense of who, and what, we are.<sup>21</sup>

Bishop Butler lists “fame” among the basic human desires, right along with food and sex, and it is not a desire based in self-love.<sup>22</sup> Instead it is an outward directed desire for social esteem. It seems clear they are identifying the same drive and is quite telling that both see it as a biologically based drive that clearly presupposes sociality. It seems universally accepted that a desire to be liked and admired is a universal endowment of persons. Anyone observing a young child would be hard pressed to deny a basic drive to self-display and a desire for recognition. The general understanding is as a desire to be recognized, esteemed, and thought highly of. In a negative sense it is to have social power. However, I think a drive to social power would be a different drive with a different source. A drive to, or desire for, social power is more like the animal drive to dominance, which has primarily a sexual function than a drive aimed at self-constitution through self-display. It might come out of desires not to be pushed around by others. One the other hand “fame” and “glory” seem terms more appropriate for social power drives of the kind just described and seem rooted in a desire *not* to have to obey anyone or account to anyone. In a sense, then, it is an antisocial drive, the opposite of what we are seeking.

The drive I wish to isolate and recognize is that one of the young child -- a psychological drive to insert itself into the world and be recognized as existing and as the author of its actions. Usually this desire constitutes about the time the child grasps that it is a self and its mental content is private and only known by others if she makes it known. In other words, a drive to presence or self-display or self-assertion becomes operative when the child realizes it is a person, a being with both agency and depth.

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<sup>21</sup> Leviathan chapter 6 in *ibid*.

<sup>22</sup> Butler, 5 Sermons p. 16 in Frankena, W. K. (1973). Ethics. Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall. p. 21

This drive-desire pair is plausibly biologically based and survival oriented, because persons exist as public entities. Persons come about in the context of relationships and are recognized as existing with a vocabulary that applies only to persons.<sup>23</sup> This drive has two aims, constitution of the person and membership in the larger community of persons, a community of recognition within which persons come to be.

This drive to presence or to self-assertion is clearly a psychic drive originating from a self-reflexive consciousness and the activity it requires. This activity includes constructing a coherent, viable ideal of the person, something that requires display followed by correction or adjustment (by himself or others); and arriving at a sense of himself that is not an ideal of conduct but the actuality of likes and dislikes through which he constitutes himself as an individual object that he can address and guide as an object.

For the child, once he realizes persons (and so he himself) are private entities, and that others are also persons just as he is and can be known to him and he to them, but only by revealing himself and engaging others such that they reveal themselves, he will be motivated to self-display and discovery. Persons among persons is the proper mode of existence for persons and so it stands to reason persons (and nascent persons) have within themselves resources to propel them towards that proper form of existence.

In this section I have shown that psychic existence is a distinct existence; that it has its own drives, grounded in rationality though expressed through biology, aimed at securing its own existence. I have further shown these independent psychic drives produce personhood and therefore that the person is distinct from the human being but inseparable from it.

### **1.3 The Person is Phenomenally Real**

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<sup>23</sup> These points, only hinted at so far, will be developed in sections 1.3 and 1.4.

The aim in this section is to establish the person as not only ontologically real but phenomenally real to further establish the person as a distinct entity, intangible but there for immediate perception. This account challenges any view that equates personhood with a legal or political status, a function or faculty of the mind (the person as of bare rational agency), or a point of view. Showing persons to be phenomenally real will support the position that recognizing the existence of a person -- “seeing” the person -- is a different act than seeing the human being, and is the primitive moral act.

Persons are phenomenally real because persons have depth. Persons have traditionally been identified by agency, but along with agency persons can be identified by evidence of an “inner life” of some complexity. If we were to imagine meeting some being, what would be our most direct evidence we were meeting a person? Assuming some means of communication (itself a necessary but not sufficient condition for personhood) we would determine the being a person based on the kinds of thinking it could engage in. We would note whether it had a self-concept and referred to itself in the first person, whether it could examine and qualitatively evaluate its mental states (not simply have them), whether it judged its own behavior and that of others in moral terms, whether it had a conception of itself as having a life that was its own to direct as it could within its circumstances, whether it was a source of action (an agent), could apprehend and act from reasons, and whether it cared about some things and was guided by those cares. In other words, if it revealed itself to be self-aware, self-evaluative, with cares and concerns, a multifaceted and layered mentality, and a life to live according to some conception of “well,” we would judge it a person.

Depth or “inner being” is evidence of personhood. Depth has its source in reflexive self-consciousness and the questions formed and ideas required by that embodied consciousness.

Earlier I argued that the person was non-natural because the person could not be constructed without that construction eventually being set in moral terms because of an essential dependence on an ideal of the person, which itself is set in a moral vocabulary.

Now I am going to argue that those moral terms are exactly what realizes the person. That is, persons are phenomenally real because they are inherently moral.

The vocabulary of character and motive (vices and virtues for example) and the vocabulary of reactive attitudes (praise and blame, but also admiration, indignation, gratitude, respect, contempt, and shame, to name a few) -- inherently moral vocabularies -- are the vocabularies with which we realize persons.<sup>24</sup> These vocabularies function because persons have the structure that they do. A reflexive self-consciousness and the questions it requires in turn requires a vocabulary suitable to both posing and answering those questions. We needed a vocabulary to conceive an ideal of the person and so we needed to name behavioral tendencies and became conscious of them under those names to consciously direct ourselves by them and to both recognize them and instill them in others (most notably our children). We also needed a vocabulary suitable for judging behavior and actions by its worthy or unworthiness according to an ideal of conduct.

We created a vocabulary that both describes and reifies persons. It marks beings out as persons because it is a vocabulary that only applies to and would only be recognized by beings that could see their mental states and their actions as objects that could be judged, and were beings who defined their own essence and identity.

The existence of reactive attitudes in particular indicates that there are ways we think about persons and ways we think about objects and they are not the same ways. We address reactive attitudes to the person not at her action. Even though they are responses to the action they address the person, as accountable self, and they address the quality of the intention behind the action. Without them we can only address the action as a happening in the world. We can't address it as *an expression by* a person that does or does not reflect well against some idea of how a person ought or ought not conduct herself. We can't praise or disapprove the thinking that led to her choice, the considerations she

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<sup>24</sup> Wolf, S. (1981). "The Importance of Free Will." *Mind* 90: 386-405. Strawson, P. (1974). Freedom and Resentment. *Freedom and Resentment*. London, Methuen & Co.: 1-25. Murdoch, I. (1971). The Idea of Perfection. *The Sovereignty of the Good*. New York, Schocken Books: 1-45. Hampshire, S. (1983). Two Kinds of Explanation. *Morality and Conflict*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell: 69-81.

thought relevant, or what stood out to her as important. That is, we can't evaluate it in a way that brings *her* into it. The vocabulary of reactive attitudes recognizes persons have depth and addresses them on that very supposition. We can only note what she considered and whether her choice sensibly followed.

Reactive attitudes are our way of nudging each other along, for obvious social reasons of not wanting those we share a community with to fall far short of the behavior that makes communal life successful, but also because having lived up to an ideal, even in just in this action is something that seems to mean much to us. When an action meets the inner ideal that is a mentally satisfying experience, as such. To have another recognize it is another recognizing that as well. Reactive attitudes presuppose ideals (and so presuppose inwardness, self-reflexive consciousness and the questions that arise). This is our only vocabulary for this function. It is a vocabulary that recognizes this normative feature of all actions of persons. It is vital for its obvious regulatory function but it is also vital for its purely recognition function. It recognizes that persons have depth. Without this recognition of their depth (which is the basic truth about persons) persons will cease to be. Recognition of a foundational motivating ideal is participation in the ongoing conversation about personhood that realizes persons. "To drop this vocabulary of reactive attitudes is to drop the vocabulary responsive to and representative of an intangible but non the less real mode of existence."<sup>25</sup> With reactive attitudes we remind each other of what we should and should not be and how well we are doing in that regard. We use them to instruct, which presupposes we use them to recognize -- and they are constant reminders that personhood is a community effort and being a person is a kind of trying (to be a person is to try to be a certain kind of person). Without these reminders we may stop evaluating against our ideal (we would cease evaluating according to what we believed was important and worthy and valuable generally and regarding the life we were trying to lead and the kind of person we were striving to become) and the ideal itself

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<sup>25</sup> Wolf, S. (1981). "The Importance of Free Will." *Mind* 90: 386-405.

become opaque. We would lose our depth and our personhood itself would be in question.

#### **1.4 The Person is Essentially Social**

The previous sections have shown that, contrary to the traditional construction of the person as an isolated, discrete entity, the construction of the person is deeply social. Intrinsic sociality is a basic unit of the analysis of the person. Intrinsic sociality means persons are fundamentally situated, as persons, in relations of recognition without which the person would cease to be. It also means that personhood is dependent by definition on the voluntary activity of other persons. Let me trace the ways.

First, infant human beings are dependent on the activity of persons to become persons themselves. The current view among developmental neuroscientists and developmental psychologists is that human beings are not born “minded” (with minds). They are born with the potential to become minded and in the normal course of events do so. A mind “emerges” as the brain undergoes a massive self-organizing in response to external and internal stimuli. In ways we may never understand, mechanical processes in the brain become the rational processes of the mind. The research shows it is crucially important to the emergence of a healthy, stable individual from this process, that it occur in the context of consistent, affectionate relationships with caregivers. The infant (nascent person) becomes a person by being affirmed as a person (though she is not yet one) and treated as a person (by recognizing and encouraging minded behaviors).<sup>26</sup> Young children are further encouraged into personhood by being treated as a person (in age appropriate ways) and having the (age appropriate) responses of a person expected. It would seem that person-among-persons is foundational to human consciousness.

Second, self-reflexivity implies the need for an ideal of the person and that ideal must come from somewhere; third, self-reflexivity and the requirement for an ideal of the

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<sup>26</sup> Siegel, D. J., MD (1999). The Developing Mind. New York, Guilford Press.

person implies the need for a specialized vocabulary that realizes us as persons and allows persons to address each other in that recognition; and fourth, the requirement of recognition itself implies the need for a community within which persons exist as beings who recognize and are recognized by other persons.

In the previous several sections I made a case for plausibly separating the person from the human being while maintaining an intrinsic connection by locating the source of our personhood in the biologically based phenomenon of a self-reflexive consciousness. My aim was to highlight personhood as a distinct form of existence with its own needs and existence conditions distinct from those of the human being. Doing so drew out the deep dependence of personhood on sociality, and especially recognition.

I also drew out the special ontological status of the person which consists in an intrinsic sociality or intrinsic morality. Considering sociality, persons have a special ontological status because persons, although biologically based, exist as beings who recognize each other and live within a matrix of recognition within which human beings become persons. Their special ontological status is signaled by the questioning, and the kinds of questions, self-reflexivity forces, but its source is the sociality requirement. Considering morality, self-reflexivity places demands that must be met and one of those is for an ideal of the person. The second order nature of self-reflexivity means the motivations supplied by nature are insufficient they can be called into question and subjected to qualitative evaluation and something is needed to evaluate them against, and that something needs to function as a cohering myth about what a person is, how a person should live and what should a person be concerned with: an ideal of the person.

This special ontological status has moral entailments. Morality is inescapably part of the logic of the person: it is not possible to construct the person without any idea of

morality.<sup>27</sup> An ideal of the person is a moral ideal because “having a moral ideal is wanting to be a certain kind of person; wanting to have one character trait rather than another, having at least some motivation to live in a certain way and having something to guide him in so living” and this precisely describes the function of an ideal of the person.<sup>28</sup> Persons presupposed to be centrally motivated by an ideal of the person and our responses to them presume that they are acting out of an ideal, rather than natural cause. That is part of our presupposition of agency. Therefore, if persons exist then necessarily morality exists.

This special status has consequences for our understanding of community as well. Persons emerge and acquire an identity in the context of a community. Because the community does all of supplying the vocabulary with which persons are realized, overseeing its application, and supplying or assessing the ideal, the community is inherently a moral community.

The most important moral entailment, though, of intrinsic sociality is the person’s dependence for his existence by definition on the voluntary activity of other persons. Personhood requires recognition and recognition cannot be compelled. Therefore, recognition by a person that some other being is also a person is the primitive moral activity and the basis for a moral claim on recognition.

This analysis of the person reveals the person as dependent by definition on recognition and the ability to recognize. This essential and constitutive dependence on recognition is implied by reflexivity (the distinctive feature of persons) and so we cannot even begin to talking about persons as isolated, discrete entities.

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<sup>27</sup> See Scheffler, S. (1992). Human Morality. New York, Oxford University Press. Scheffler argues that a commitment to some ideal of the person underlies morality: Moral rules are best understood as the rules of conduct it is rational to abide by if one “prizes” some chosen ideal of the person and society. To function in this way the idea must be one that has been internalized and incorporated into the will itself. See also Frankena, W. K. (1973). Ethics. Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall. for a similar view that there is no complete understanding of morality without a notion of moral ideals.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. See Also Taylor, C. (1982). Responsibility for Self. Free Will. G. Watson. New York, Oxford University Press: 111-126.

The modern idea of the person starts from an abstract, fully individual personhood and then claims the person's relations to others are accidental features of personhood, rather than intrinsic and essential ones. This view has two problems that the analysis here reveals. One is that construing the person as an isolated, discrete entity misses the core feature of the unity of the person, which requires a social context. A unified psyche is a precondition for personhood and emerges in the context of warm and responsive relationships. Also, autonomy requires a unified psyche because autonomy requires an effective evaluative and motivational standpoint. Thus the autonomous agent is an intrinsically social construct as recognition is necessary to produce that very autonomy. The other is that constructing the person from the bare individual and treating relationships of recognition are treated as secondary or contingent rather than intrinsic and essential both distorts how personhood is constructed and distorts the relationship of morality to the person. Rather than central and inseparable from our identity morality is conceived of as law-like external constraints and requirements that, while we acknowledge as necessary, we have a hard time explaining how they should fit into our lives and that we are and should be moved by them, even when he don't wish to be. The individualistic construal of the person has let to a preoccupation with the philosophical problem of the Other and an emphasis on weakness and obscuring of neglect as sources of moral failure.

Lastly, this analysis of the person suggests a moral naturalism based on the following pair of claims: one, that morality is involved essentially and constitutively in personhood; and two, that the person is the foundation for morality and the source of its basic structure. This naturalistic account has the advantage of accommodating the aspiration feature of morality that rightly must be part of any correct understanding of morality.

## Section 2: The Dynamic Requirements for Personhood

### 2.1 The Absolute Needs of the Person

Thus far, the following has been established. First, the static construction of the person reveals needs and lacks which must be satisfied and fulfilled to achieve personhood. Alone, the static construction is insufficient. The static conditions for personhood must be augmented with dynamic conditions. Second, the person has existence requirements distinct from those of the human being and can be plausibly separated from the human being. Third, the fundamental feature of the person is intrinsic sociality: The person cannot be constructed independent reference to other persons. Fourth, personhood is logically and empirically dependent on recognition, rendering recognition by a person that another is also a person the primitive moral act.

The static construction of the person shows lacks which must be addressed: the lack of an essence, an identity, a motivational core and set of evaluative commitments, and a presence in the world, which a being must have to be a person. The person is radically dependent on sociality to fill these lacks. He is dependent on sociality as well for opportunities to participate in certain activities that further his self-constitution and are constant reminders of his personhood. Those constituting activities include forming and maintaining cared about attachments; acting, and reflectively acting in particular; and recognizing and being recognized by others. This and the following sections address why opportunities to engage in these activities are absolute needs for personhood.<sup>29</sup>

As I define it, an absolute need is an unconditional need, a need which must be met for the maintenance of the organism. If it is not met, the organism will be absolutely

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<sup>29</sup> Foot, P. (2002). Rationality and Virtue. *Moral Dilemmas*. New York, Oxford University Press: 159-174. Term introduced by David Wiggins, "Claims of Need," in *Truth, Values, Truth* (Oxford:Blackwell 1987) but I am using it in my own way, more similar to Foot's use than Wiggins' but not identical with either.

harmful. In addition (although this is already implied in “maintenance” condition) absolute needs are needs of individuals as members of their kind. That is, they are needs for species existence. This means my claim is that we have specific, absolute needs as persons distinct from any other absolute needs we may have. That is, I am considering persons to be a species or species-like. If we do have absolute needs as persons, those needs must meet whatever conditions other absolute needs meet.

Before I consider whether they do qualify as absolute needs, let me set out why I think they should. First, as I will argue in the following sections, if these needs for recognition, to act, and to form caring attachments are not met, the person will experience absolute harm as a person. His personhood may become called into question and he may even cease to be. Second, they are modes of engagement with the world that are unique to persons, so that when a person acts and accounts for his action, recognizes or is recognized by another person as also a person, or cares about his cared about attachments he is functioning quintessentially as a person. Furthermore, opportunities to engage in those activities that signal personhood and so one status as a person can be affirmed are paramount because personhood is an intangible form of existence. These are absolute needs for personhood.

Still, if they are to qualify as absolute needs specifically of persons then they must meet any other conditions on something’s being an absolute need. So let’s examine other absolute needs we have and what, if any additional conditions must be met for need to qualify as absolute. As physical beings we have absolute needs for nutritious food, clean water, adequate shelter and clothing, and adequate sleep. If these needs go unmet for long enough we will die.

As social animals we have further absolute needs for affection and for mental and emotional stimulation. As with physical needs, if these social, emotional and intellectual needs are not met the social animal will suffer harm, and if radically unmet will die. The harm suffered by the social animal is specifically to its status and functioning as a social animal. When a social animal infant is denied affectionate caregiving it fails to learn the

essential skills for appropriate social functioning. It is in this way denied the proper life for its form of being, and instead lives a fearful, miserable life. The absolute needs of social animals are, therefore, existence requirements for them. That these physical and social needs are absolute is well known in the physical case and becoming well established in the social case.

In the case of physical existence needs we know that they have associated with them physical drives aimed precisely at fulfilling those needs. This is a perfectly natural and sensible arrangement and is what we would presume. Hunger and thirst propel animals towards food and water, shivering propels them towards shelter and clothing, and fatigue towards sleep. In the case of social existence, feelings of loneliness and isolation propel the animal towards the embrace of others, and boredom towards stimulating activities. It should be noted though that affectionate contact does require appropriate responses from others -- others prepared to embrace the social seeker, to initiate contact with the lonely one, or to push the bored one toward a stimulating activity. In both cases, the alleged absolute needs have associated natural drives to their fulfillment. Reasonably, if the suggested absolute needs of the person are indeed absolute needs they should have associated natural drives to their fulfillment as well. Since these needs are of the person for personhood, the associated drives should also be of the person and therefore psychic drives.

We already know of several psychic drives aimed at benefitting the person. Two of them are rooted in the rational character of the mental and function to constitute the person. One is the rationality based impelling force towards psychic unity and continuity, in virtue of which we are selves; the other is the rationality based impelling force that pushes our attention outwards in search of answers and experiences to constitute a nature and a motivational and evaluative core. However, once the person is constituted, they become drives of the person, as explained. In both cases, though, the drive has its source in central self-reflexivity and the needs it reveals, so both drives can be said to be of the person. The third is the self-assertion or presence drive that impels the person to go

public with himself to be recognized by and to recognize other persons to affirm his reality and identity and belonging in the world. These drives together impel the person to act, to form attachments, and to recognize other persons and attempt to be recognized by them, all to confirm and sustain their own personhood.

The absolute needs of the person are the avenues through which the person is constituted as a subject and becomes present in the world as an object -- the ways in which persons become real, to others and to themselves.

## **2.2 For Cared About Attachments**

In section one we considered the idea of personhood and if the person could be plausibly conceived as a distinct entity, separable from, but intrinsically connected to, the human being and found it could be done. This result as an existential and moral import: 1) that personhood has existence requirements distinct from and beyond those for existence of the human being and 2) the resources of the human being are not sufficient to produce personhood. Personhood requires participation by other persons, without which persons cannot be, the insight that was the ground for calling persons non-natural entities and personhood a non-natural form of existence.

If we return to the circumstance of the bare self-reflexive consciousness, we find it situated as follows. The biological endowments of the person are not self-sufficient for personhood. The self-reflexive psyche finds it has no essence or identity to appeal to in orienting itself to objects or choosing what to do with itself. It must have these as well as a motivational core and evaluative commitments, and a presence in the world -- and the psyche is naturally driven to fill those lacks.

A mind whose nature is rationality will exist only in so far as it engages with the world, and it will engage with the world only in so far as it is drawn into such engagement. Thus, such engagement has a clear self-preserving function. Caring about is that feature, or set of features, of the mind that permits and motivates engagement with

features of the world. This activity is essential to unifying the psychic and creating a subject. To thwart the formation of such attachments, is to deny the psyche the means to its self-preservation -- and we have always seen satisfying foundational preservation drives as an obligation we all have to each other. Therefore, the need for cared about attachments is absolute.

I am using 'cared about attachment' in Frankfurt's sense of a motivationally effective attachment *of the person* to the object.<sup>30</sup> Cared about attachments can be *of the person* because as states of mind they are not simply cognitive (as in valuing) or conative (as in desiring) but volitional (as in commitment) and emotional as well.<sup>31</sup> The volitional component, its primary component, locates it within the motivational and evaluative structures that constitute him as a person. This makes sense also because cares, by definition persist, while persistence is not definitive of either desires or values.<sup>32</sup> The emotion component makes it a whole mind attachment. Emotions are often a way of having conscious experience of mental content we do not have direct access to because it is not located in area of the brain that with consciousness. It is of the essence of caring to be a persisting cognitive and motivational orientation. Lacking both the affective and the persistence elements, neither values nor desires will bring the person into the world or the world into the person.

Cared about attachments are the means to creating a subject out of a bare reflexive self-consciousness. This they do by effecting internal coherence of mental content and directing the will efficaciously.<sup>33</sup> They effectively bring the psyche, or later the person, into the world of objects in a coherent way, not as a wanton pushed and pulled by desires

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<sup>30</sup> Frankfurt, H. G. (1988). The Importance of What We Care About. The Importance of What We Care About. New York, Cambridge University Press: 80-94, Frankfurt, H. G. (1993). On the Necessity of Ideals. Necessity, Volition, and Love. New York, Cambridge University Press: 108-116, Frankfurt, H. G. (1997). On Caring. Necessity, Volition, and Love. New York, Cambridge University Press: 155-180.

<sup>31</sup> Shoemaker, K. W. (2003). "Caring, Identification, and Agency." Ethics **114**: 88-118.

<sup>32</sup> Frankfurt, H. G. (1993). On the Necessity of Ideals. Necessity, Volition, and Love. New York, Cambridge University Press: 108-116.

<sup>33</sup> Arendt, H. (1996). Love and Saint Augustine. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

such that the psyche becomes dispersed rather than unified, and coherency of self is lost rather than gained.<sup>34</sup> Without motivating, cohering attachments the person loses the coherence by which he is a person. He loses a sense of having boundaries -- an "I" and a "not I."<sup>35</sup> Without cares to direct his interest and attention and activities into the future and to anticipate it, he loses his sense of being in time, and without that he loses his sense of his own reality. Thus, caring attachments are essential to realizing and shaping persons as objects in the world. They organize the psyche by providing structuring themes on which to build a stable, coherent identity.<sup>36</sup>

They function motivationally to direct interest, attention, and action to present an entity that behaves coherently over time and is thus identifiable to others as well as to itself. They bring the person into the world as an object and enable him to anchor to other objects, allowing him to practically locate and orient himself.<sup>37</sup> Cared about attachments are also the means to a person's becoming part of the world by bringing the world into himself. They function to attach the person motivationally to objects outside himself (including ideals and principles) and thereby motivating the person to live and to think it important to live.<sup>38</sup> Recalling the earlier discussion of the person's quandary, making living important and it important for him to live were two things he needed to do to live, and caring about attachments effect this.

Objects of care can be almost anything that counts as an object. This would include persons; activities, interests and pursuits; things; moral ideals and principles (social justice, charity, fairness for some examples); and ideals of conduct (honesty,

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Frankfurt, H. G. (1997). On Caring. Necessity, Volition, and Love. New York, Cambridge University Press: 155-180. Frankfurt, H. G. (1993). On the Necessity of Ideals. Necessity, Volition, and Love. New York, Cambridge University Press: 108-116.

<sup>37</sup> Frankfurt, H. G. (1988). The Importance of What We Care About. The Importance of What We Care About. New York, Cambridge University Press: 80-94.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. Wolf, S. (1997). "Meaning and Morality." Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society 97: 299-316.

integrity, kindness, bravery, conscientiousness, forthrightness for some examples of these).<sup>39</sup> The care often expresses as a cared about attachment to a reason for action, such that the person tries to act on that reason whenever possible and cares that others act on it as well. He would likely care that others were aware of it as a reason for action and actively promote its dissemination. Objects of care can include features of oneself. A person can care about his thoughts, wanting things to go well with them and wanting them to flourish, being pleased when they do and disappointed when they don't. A person can care about his feelings and his actions in the same way, as well as what others think of him or how they feel about him.<sup>40</sup>

Caring about is an intrinsically healthy activity -- the psyche is active, aware, alert, and drawn outward into the world. The mental orientation is one of concern, attentiveness, sensitivity, and receptivity to the object of care and what may concern it. Cares create opportunities for action and for reflection (particularly when things are going ill for the object of your care); and it doesn't just create opportunities for action, it requires action because once you become personally attached or invested in the object, its needs become your obligations, because you see it that way.<sup>41</sup> The flourishing of that object has become part of your identity, but as a commitment to its flourishing, not as an extension of you.

Cared about attachments naturally encourage development of character traits that would likely be part of any viable ideal of the person, such as responsibility (considered a hallmark of personhood), but also dedication, self-discipline, persistence, attentiveness, and joy. This is regardless of the content of one's ideal of the person; but, simply because they are character traits caring about attachments require, reinforce, and reward, they

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<sup>39</sup> Frankfurt, H. G. (1988). The Importance of What We Care About. The Importance of What We Care About. New York, Cambridge University Press: 80-94. Frankfurt, H. G. (1993). On the Necessity of Ideals. Necessity, Volition, and Love. New York, Cambridge University Press: 108-116.

<sup>40</sup> Frankfurt

<sup>41</sup> Frankfurt, H. G. (1988). The Importance of What We Care About. The Importance of What We Care About. New York, Cambridge University Press: 80-94. Wolf, S. (1997). "Meaning and Morality." Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society **97**: 299-316.

would likely be part of the ideal. If they were not, it seem one would be at cross purposes with oneself. It would be a self-defeating position, which tells us that not anything can function as an ideal of the person, and the personal qualities caring about attachments promote are necessarily components of any viable ideal of the person.

Without cared about attachments, many admired character traits would lose their underpinning, and their presence in the world compromised. Furthermore, not everyone will care about the same things -- that, together, we care about many different things -- is good for everyone: it creates a world with variety, with many topics for conversation, and ensures that the manifold components of the world are recognized.

In this regard, the value status of the objects of care is immaterial. Unworthy, even immoral objects of care -- hate, revenge, mere accumulation of material goods, perfectly ordered files -- can all perform the function. Granted it is better to have better cares, and it is hoped a person would realize that. Unworthy, especially immoral, cares are destructive in the long run, but it cannot be denied they can fulfill the anchoring function, at least for a time.<sup>42</sup>

Cared about attachments create a stable identity that manifests itself as such in worldly activity that can be recognized as such -- as a distinct individual with identifiable motivating attachments that both he and others can recognize as *him*. Our understanding of the person is as a being who cares about having a future and cares about the world having a future. When we meet with someone we know to be a person who genuinely does not seem to care about either himself or anything else having a future, we worry about that person's personhood. We might try to get them interested in something again, and we would see it as a survival matter for that person. Caring attachments provide opportunities for self-expression and self-originating actions, vital activities by which

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<sup>42</sup> Wolf, S. (2002). The True, the Good and the Lovable: Frankfurt's Avoidance of Objectivity. Contours of Agency. S. Buss and L. Overton. Cambridge, MIT Press: 227-244. Frankfurt, H. G. (2002). Reply to Susan Wolf. Contours of Agency: Essays on Themes from Frankfurt. S. Buss and L. Overton. Cambridge, MIT Press: 245-252.

persons connect to the world and to each other, and have a presence in the world and to each other.

Through cared about attachments persons acquire the depth that marks them out as persons and constitutes them as objects of attachment for other persons who may be intrigued by one or more of their cares and drawn into exploration of them. In this way both people are brought out of isolation and into that very matrix of recognition through which our personhood is both constituted and maintained. They may be indirectly brought into a matrix of recognition if they realize they are similarly attached to some object, in which case there is both a recognition of sameness in that respect (and so of personhood) followed by mutual engagement in exploration of the mutually cared about object.

Our set of cared about attachments make us individuals. What stands out to one person such that he cares about it may not stand out to another. The singularity of persons in this respect is a highly valued feature of our species.<sup>43</sup> It makes us interesting to each other and draws us into the exploration of one another and in this way realize each other's depth, hence personhood.

We have established that the person is motivated differently from the human being and that he must effect his own motivational structure -- and because the person is centrally self-reflexive that motivational structure must be informed by an evaluative stance. Forming cared about attachments is central to this project. Many things can qualify as objects of care and effect the creation of an identity and a life, but there is one care you must have, and that is to an ideal of the person. When you care about an ideal you are committed to realizing that ideal. To become a person that is the relation you must have to some core cohering sense of yourself as a kind of being. If you don't it can't function as it must, as a core, cohering action guiding and motivating device.

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<sup>43</sup> Hampton, J. (1993). "Selflessness and Loss of Self." *Social Philosophy and Policy* **10**(1): 135-165.

Without an ideal of the person, you would not be aspiring to any particular kind of life, would not be aspiring to be any particular way and so would have no reason for consistency in your behavior. You would be neutral toward your behavior and your personality, and unaffected by the evaluations by others. With no ideal of conduct you were trying to realize you would have no reason to realize any particular conduct.<sup>44</sup> In so far as you had a caring about attachment to something you might display those traits in your activity toward that object, but you would have no reason to generalize it.

Is this possible? Whether you wanted it or not, the nature of the mind is such that consistency in behavior would arise, but it would not be by choice or conscious direction. It would be based only on the behaviors that happened to occur. Thus your volitional (motivational and evaluative) structures would express how you had behaved but not how you thought you ought to, or a person ought to, behave. It would be a conditioned structure, not a chosen one or an instilled one, and you would be a conditioned being and not a person.

### **2.3 To Act**

As caring about attachments bring the person into the world of objects and relationships, acting bring the person into the community of persons. Both are means to displaying agency, or agent authority, but more so both are means of displaying depth, or “inner being” to be recognized as such by other persons. In the case of cared about attachments, as the person takes an interest in things, and is drawn into exploration of them, and he finds this pleasurable and is excited by it, those interests, over time, become part of his mental orientation (by the conservative, reactive rationality characterizing the mental), and these both become part of his structure as a person and orient him outwardly to be receptive to and seek out those objects and ways to be involved with them. In the case of reflective action, we are naturally constituted as persons to have an interest in asking

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<sup>44</sup> Scheffler, S. (1979). "Moral Scepticism and Ideals of the Person." *Monist* 62: 288-303.

questions -- especially about our own and other's behavior -- in seeking the behavioral standards we should and want to have. This is a project we are biologically impelled toward and it is one that requires responsive judgements from others.

What it is to be a person is not given. Persons, and each person, must create an ideal of the person to act, and through action try to realize that ideal and through that process in fact realize themselves. This is why acting is an absolute need of the person. This process occurs in the context of a community, in which talk of judgment concerning actions presupposes a being who can and does think for himself and whose dealings with other's reflects the supposition that other's also think for themselves.

Specifically, acting is the means to satisfy the basic personal drive to self-assertion (or presence) to satisfy a basic desire for recognition, that is to say, reality. By acting a person affirms to himself as well as others his reality. In accounting for his action the person reveals his depth and affirms himself as an agent. His account may even amount to a self-discovery, and through acting he constitutes his character. What is more important, by acting he participates in creating that very community that in turn maintains his existence; therefore, by acting he participates in that form of life proper for his kind. He also participates in an ongoing community-wide project of species definition -- What is being a person; what should we be about as persons; and how do we make living as a person important and it important to live as a person?

By evincing some way of being that is open to persons the actions of persons are inherently moral: "Whenever we make choices we enter the domain of the moral. Our choices and the reasons for and against options are statements about how conduct should be viewed."<sup>45</sup> Behind our choices is our cohering, orienting ideal of the person, and as the earlier discussion of the psyche showed, once possessing an ideal of the person, aspiration towards that ideal naturally follows.

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<sup>45</sup> Hampshire, S. (1983). *Morality and Pessimism*. Morality and Conflict. Oxford, Basil Blackwell: 82-100.

The inherent morality in the construal of the person has practical consequences. One is that the acts of persons are inherently open to judgment and action itself is distinguished from mere happening by its moral context. A second is that a presupposition for our judgment of acts is that the actor is a being who can and does think for herself and whose dealings with other persons has encoded a presupposition that they think for themselves too -- i.e. talk of judgment concerning acts presupposes a person (i.e., a self-reflexive being and self-reflexivity presupposes sociality).

Actions generally, but reflective rational actions particularly, are inherently communicative outside of their manifest content: they are inherently moral (by suggesting a way of being that is open to persons) and so inherently open to judgment. For example, the acts of persons communicate attitudes, towards oneself, towards others, towards oneself and others together.<sup>46</sup> They communicate what the person cared most about (at least in that situation); what, ultimately, was most important as that is what ultimately moved him. Grasping this larger communicative aspect of actions as addressing personhood is grasping their moral dimension and is grasping action as a moral domain.<sup>47</sup> The vocabulary of reactive attitudes is part of a vocabulary for apprehending this larger communicative context, itself a narrative about personhood and what sort of being a person a person ought to be. It is reflected in the Kantian idea of "thinking morally for the first time," taking the big picture view and understanding why the action is required and what one is endorsing as human conduct.<sup>48</sup> Judgment itself signals recognition of that larger communication, and thereby that the actor is a person.

Persons can take this point of view that their actions will be viewed in this moral context (which is not the same as the context of right and wrong with respect to a

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<sup>46</sup> Stocker, M. (1976). "Agent and Other: Against Ethical Universalism." *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 54(3): 206-220.

<sup>47</sup> Kant also saw the whole of the practical domain as a moral domain (though he used this insight quite differently), and this was the classical understanding as well.

<sup>48</sup> Baron, M. (1984). "The Alleged Repugnance of Acting from the Motive of Duty." *Journal of Philosophy*: 197-220. Herman, Nagel, Wolf

standard but of noble and base, or simply new, as an action) specifically in their own reflecting, but they also take it simply in so far as they grasp that other persons will evaluate their action from this context/judge their action from this point of view. One is thinking morally (not necessarily of the morally good, but just in a moral sense) in so far as she considers her action in the context of it as a statement about what a way for a person to be and acts or does not act on that ground. This is a level of exchange that only happens among persons, so in so far as a person takes this perspective on his own actions and those of other persons, he is participating with others in a way that only persons can. Thus, with their actions, persons participate in a moral conversation with other persons, each recognizing and being recognized. Through acting and being judged (subjecting their actions to interpretation) persons create the community of persons. When persons, and each person, recognizes the personhood of other persons the reality of both persons is reinforced as is the reality of persons as a kind.

Opportunities to reflectively act is absolutely necessary for personhood because in doing so the person is acting quintessentially as a person, functioning directly out of his nature as a person -- accessing his own evaluative and motivational structures to express and so disclose them in his chosen action and the account he gives. In these instances he is also most aware that his actions will be understood as expressions of conduct open to and found acceptable by a person and that may be judged by others and that possibility is included in his deliberation. Thus he is aware of himself as a person among persons and that by acting he is participating in this larger community of recognition.

When engaging in thoughtful, rational action he becomes aware of his interpretive framework and his own persistent motivations. He becomes aware of cared about attachments and their strength as well as commitments unconsciously made. Most of all he experiences himself -- the person -- as the source of worldly effects, and therefore himself as a distinct, coherent, object or presence in the world. When other persons apprehend that, that act of apprehension is a recognition of personhood, and when expressed publicly in a judgment is an affirmation of personhood, a recognition of a fact.

Asking for and receiving an account is a quintessential person to person exchange: the one presupposes the other is a self-reflexive being who can and does think for himself and the other responds on the same presupposition, and in the exchange their presuppositions are validated.

Reflective action is an absolute need of the person because of the way reasons connect persons to actions and thereby realize persons in the world, and the way reasons open the world to the person, and most especially the way reasons open the person to the moral reality that is other persons. Reasons connect the person to the action by explaining how the person saw the circumstances what stood out about it, what other beliefs he thought relevant to a decision, what he saw as more and less important and why he thought them so. Through this process he becomes aware of his own persistent motivations and interpretive framework, his cared about attachments and their strengths, and any unconscious commitments. He becomes conscious of his depth and acquires it.

When a person takes acting and deliberating seriously and thoughtfully, he becomes, through the process acquainted with many kinds of reasons of many kinds. The more he becomes open to reasons and to the realities that supply them, and the more he learns to respond appropriately to them and the more fully he comes to know both himself and the world. This usefulness does not go to supporting existence of the person directly but it does to making it important to live as a person -- to pay attention and be stimulated by and engage with things in the world (including other people) to make living worthwhile and entice one to continue living, which was one of the problems originally posed by the self-reflexive consciousness.

Reflective action and the opportunities it provides to express his thought in an account realizes the person by connecting the person to the behavior by showing it an action, which is done by giving an account of his reasons. I.e., an account to show it was a choice and a choice made for reasons that seemed suitable to him. By accounting, the person reveals how he saw the situation, what he saw as important and what he say as most important, what he saw as relevant background considerations, what he brought to

bear in the determination, and what ultimately motivated his particular choice, he makes public some of his inner nature, and so himself (assuming the account is honest and accurate to the best of his ability). Because this kind of action is purest, in the sense of drawing most strongly on the person's evaluative resources, they are most expressive of that structure. It brings it to light to others but also to the person himself that he is a person (centrally self-reflexive with a unified and structured psyche, and an ideal of the person at the center of that structure) but also who he is as a particular understanding of personhood.

It is also very often the case that practical situations require that choices be made on insufficient evidence -- unavoidable breakdowns in reasoning occur and second order desires turn out to be unreconcilable -- but the person must choose a course of action anyway.<sup>49</sup> These situations are particularly revealing because he must simply take a stand on something.

The characteristic and appropriate form of life for empirical beings with reflexive self-consciousness is a life in community where they can acquire depth and become agents -- i.e., become persons -- and where their personhood is recognized and responded to by others. If the development and use of the capability to reflectively act is denied, the person cannot experience and participate in that distinctive way of life, the proper way of life for his kind. This is absolute harm in itself. If he is excluded from living as his nature requires he will fail to develop the traits, in this case character traits, to live successfully as a person. In particular, rational self-control, which is essential to constituting a life out of your activities and a signal capacity of persons, without which he fails to qualify as a person.

If he is denied the opportunity to act or if his actions go unrecognized as actions, then the opportunity to account, an activity central to our functioning as persons, is also denied. By providing our reasons for action and the details of our deliberation we show

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<sup>49</sup> Hampshire, S. (1983). Public and Private Morality. *Morality and Conflict*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell: 101-125.

how we say the situation, what we say as salient, the background beliefs and attitudes we brought to bear, where we were conflicted, and how we resolved those conflicts. In providing our reasons we open possibilities for others to recognize similarities in attitude, belief, likes and dislikes, and in that way we find others that are not only just like us in being persons but further like us in their particularity, drawing the person out into the world and more concrete relationship with others. When some are denied the opportunity to act or their actions are disregarded as actions, opportunities for other people to function as persons (by recognizing personhood in another) are reduced.

Since persons are recognized by having their behaviors recognized as actions, if a person's actions go chronically unrecognized as actions that person is likely to eventually lose the desire, having lost an important incentive, to put the required effort and thoughtfulness into his practical deliberation. Over time, his practical structures may weaken at which point acting unreflectively out of habit or for near-term desire satisfaction may come to dominate. If he ceases to act out of his volitional capacity, that capability will eventually diminish. If he then needs to or wants to, he may find himself immobilized. He becomes shallow, acting mindlessly out of habit or to satisfy desires, and he further loses his structure and unity as a person, perhaps eventually finding his identity a question to himself.

## **2.4 For Recognition**

Part one of this work showed that intrinsic sociality is a basic unit of the analysis of the person. Persons are dependent by definition on recognition and the ability to recognize. The source of intrinsic sociality lies in central self-reflexivity with its implied need for an ideal of the person, which has to come from somewhere. We saw also that persons are both recognized and realized with a vocabulary that is specific to persons, which again requires other people. Without an ideal of the person it would be difficult to see how a being could qualify as a person. It would lack essential motivations and organizing

structures, such as a life plan, a code of personal conduct, a vocabulary for assessing that conduct. It would not use or be responsive to reactive attitudes -- and we saw that without our person specific vocabulary we would lose a key means to expressing recognition. Persons would go unrecognized and so unrealized, which would call their personhood into question.

In this section I address the act of recognition itself -- what recognition consists in. There are two things we can recognize: we can recognize agency and we can recognize depth.

Recognizing a person by recognizing depth is a different act than recognizing a person by recognizing agency. When recognizing agency one treats the other *as* a person with the expectation of the response of a person. If that response is forthcoming it confirms the initial supposition. You treat the other *as* a being who can think for herself, can be held responsible, can take responsibility and see if their behavior conforms. Recognition of depth is direct recognition of personhood. You recognize that she also functions with ideals, in particular some ideal of the person that guides her motivation evaluations; is reflexively self-conscious and therefore subject to the same foundational questions and concerns as you and has come up with her own answers; and, like you, has cared about attachments, some of which are central to her identity and motivational core.

Josiah Royce wrote of “realizing the existence” of others this way, “What then is thy neighbor? He too is a mass of states, of experiences, thoughts and desires, just as concrete, as thou art ... Dost thou believe this? Art thou sure what it means? This is for thee the turning-point of thy whole conduct towards him.” Henry James wrote similarly, “The higher the vision of an inner significance in what, until then, we had realized only in the dead external way, often comes over a person suddenly; and, when it does so, it makes an epoch in his history.”<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Frankena, W. K. (1973). *Ethics*. Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall. p. 69

The emphasis in the literature has long been on recognition of agency, but recognition of depth is the more fundamental recognition as it is not, as with recognition of agency, a recognition that *you* are a person or an assertion that *I* am a person but a recognition that you are *like me*, a person, with cares and concerns as important to you as mine are to me. The closest thing with agency might be the case of mutual promising (mutual holding responsible), but even there the recognition of personhood would consist in the recognition of similar cared about ideals of conduct rather than agency itself.

The discussion so far has focused on the need for recognition and what is recognized when something is recognized to be a person. What remains is the act of recognition itself.

The absolute need of a person is very specific: to have his reality affirmed. His reality is a fact and he needs that fact made public. Thus, the act of recognition should be existence affirmation. Your act of recognition should “make firm” his reality as a person. This supports recognition of depth as the primal recognition. It also makes sense as a foundational act because, unlike respect, affirmation can be demanded. Existence affirmation involves no attitude. It is simply a seeing clearly and affirming the truth that is there. Also, rationality presupposes a commitment to truth and therefore requires an openness to truth, existence affirmation can be demanded on rational as well as moral grounds. The same doesn’t hold for respect, which is essentially an attitude. Affirmation is also a slightly stronger form of recognition than mere recognition. To recognize is merely to acknowledge, to affirm is to assert publicly as a fact. So affirm is the proper form for recognition of a person to take.

An example of existence affirmation can be found in Alexander Pushkin’s short novel, *The Captain’s Daughter*. In it there is a song, a real song that was at the time very popular among the serf class. In the song a horse thief is brought before the Czar and asked to acquit himself. He replies, I stole the horses, it was my choice, I acted alone, and the Czar replies, You have acquitted yourself well before your Czar, for that I commend you. However, you are a horse thief and for that you must hang. I think this song touched

a nerve just because it captures the idea of existence affirmation. The Czar spoke as a person to a person and the thief responded the same. The Czar's commendation affirms the thief as a person and therefore as a person among persons. The deep desire is to have "that one is" (present) more so than "who one is."<sup>51</sup>

Recognition is not an easy task. We have many things to attend to at any one time, and when we do interact with other people, the person, and the interaction, is generally not the end but a means, or often an impediment. We interact to get information, give information, negotiate something; even in social situations other people mainly serve, from your perspective, to fill out the activity, making it possible. It is a continual task to keep it in mind to affirm personhood in others and be cognizant of the effects of our actions on their lives.

I defined recognition as affirmation of existence, in other words, I defined recognition as the public assertion of the fact of another person's existence, so I need to say something about what that would consist in. Public assertion means only that the assertion must have some expression outside the head of the one who recognized, as the recognition only fulfills its function if the one recognized realizes she has been recognized. We only need to look back on the absolute needs of the person for behavior that would support the existence of the person recognized, and to the recognizer as well. Here are some: 1) recognizing that she too has cared about attachments important to her as yours are to you; 2) permitting her the space to make autonomous free choices and act on them; 3) asking her to account; 4) exchanging reasons; 5) recognizing her actions as actions; 6) recognizing that her actions are also disclosures; and 7) recognizing her efforts to live by her ideal by displaying reactive attitudes. Also, since recognition is of depth there are many small ways -- subtle physical clues to personhood learned as infants, such as a smile or recognition, a certain eye gaze -- to show you've recognized she is a person too.

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<sup>51</sup> Pushkin, A. (1997). *The Captain's Daughter. The Queen of Spades and Other Stories*. A. Kahn. New York, Oxford University Press: 101-208.

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