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Love as Intimate Identification

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Abstract

It is widely acknowledged that love is a distinctively intimate form of concern in which we in some sense identify with our beloveds; it is common, moreover, to construe such identification in terms of the lover's taking on the interests of the beloved. From this starting point, Harry Frankfurt argues that the paradigm form of love is that between parents and infants or young children. I think this is mistaken: the kind of loving attitude or relationship we can have towards or with young children is distinct in kind from that which we can have towards adult persons, as is revealed by reflection on the depth of love and its phenomenology. My aim is to present an alternative conception of the sort of distinctively intimate identification at issue in love, arguing that this account makes better sense of love and our experience of love.

Harry Frankfurt claims that the paradigm form of love is that between parents and infants or young children. By contrast, I think infants and young children are not proper objects of love at all—at least not in the sense of “love” that applies to love among adult persons. Ultimately the point is that the sort of attitude or relationship we can have towards or with infants is distinct in kind from the sort of attitude or relationship we can have towards adult persons, and so it is best in our theorizing about these attitudes to call them different things. If only one of these forms of attitude has a claim to be called “love”, I submit it is our attitude towards adults, not that towards infants, which we might instead call “care” or “affection.”

Why should we think that love of adults and care of infants are distinct in kind? I shall start by considering Frankfurt's account of love in more detail, arguing that it leads to an unacceptable account of the nature of intimacy involved in love as well as our experience of love. In arguing for an alternative account of love and its phenomenology, I shall conclude that the kind of love that applies to adults cannot apply to infants as well.

1. Frankfurt and Identification

To love someone is to care about him in a certain way. Part of what we need to understand is precisely what that way is and how it differs from other ways in which we might care for someone, such as compassionate concern for disaster

victims or various forms of concern with ulterior motives, as when a nanny cares about his charge's welfare in order to keep his job. In articulating his account of love, Frankfurt distinguishes love from other forms of concern in two ways. First, he tells us, what distinguishes love from charitable concern is the way in which love is distinctively personal: love is not merely a response to a *particular* person (as opposed to my concern for victims of a recent earthquake), but it also involves a kind of identification with that person. That is, in loving someone,

a lover identifies himself with what he loves. In virtue of this identification, protecting the interests of his beloved is necessarily among the lover's own interests. The interests of his beloved are not actually other than his at all. They are his interests too. ... To the extent that he invests himself in what he loves, and in that way identifies with it, its interests are identical with his own. It is hardly surprising, then, that for the lover selflessness and self-interest coincide. (Frankfurt, 2004, 61–62)

Second, what distinguishes love from concern for ulterior motives is that love is “disinterested” in the sense that the lover has a non-instrumental concern for the good of the other (Frankfurt, 2004, 42). Indeed, it is because of such disinterest that Frankfurt thinks loves among adults is not “pure”: they “typically include a number of vividly distracting elements [including motives for the love], which do not belong to the essential nature of love as a mode of disinterested concern” (Frankfurt, 2004, 43). Thus romantic loves, for example, involve a mixture of disinterested concern and non-disinterested sexual desire, dependency, and so on: elements which make it “nearly impossible” to understand such cases. By contrast:

Among relationships between humans, the love of parents for their infants or small children is the species of caring that comes closest to offering recognizably pure instances of love. (Frankfurt, 2004, 43)

In short, love is a distinctively disinterested and personal form of concern for another.

I have already indicated that I think Frankfurt is wrong to turn to parental love of small children as a paradigm for love quite generally—that, indeed, young children are not proper objects of love at all. I think Frankfurt is led to this mistaken view by virtue of a mistaken understanding of identification. Frankfurt construes the lover's identification with the beloved in terms of the lover's taking over the beloved's interests as the lover's own: if “the interests of his beloved are not actually other than his at all”, if “its interests are identical with his own”, then the lover is essentially assimilating his beloved into himself, which Jennifer Whiting has rightly derided as a “potentially objectionable colonization” (Whiting, 1991, 10). What we need to say is not that the lover comes to have the beloved's

interests as his own but rather that he comes to have an interest in the beloved's interests *for her sake*, as a part of his concern for her, without losing the distinction between her interests and his.

I suspect that Frankfurt would reply that this would be no longer to have a notion of identification in view. Taking on the interests of our beloveds just is our being “*invested*” in them (rather than “being austere-ly detached” from them; Frankfurt, 2004, 61). And this seems to be a point about *intimacy*: the only way to make sense of the kind of intimate attachment we have to our beloveds is to blur the boundaries between our interests. I have argued elsewhere that this is an egocentric conception of intimacy that we ought to do without (Helm, 2010). Rather than construing the intimacy of identification as a matter of incorporating her interests into my own, as on Frankfurt's egocentric account, we should instead understand the intimacy of my identification with my beloved in terms of my caring about her and her interests in a way that is somehow merely analogous to my concern for my own identity.

Part of the point here is that there are really two distinct senses of “identification”¹ that ought to be kept separate. In the first, egocentric sense I “identify” myself with a concern for philosophy, for example, where what we mean by this is that I have incorporated this concern into my own *identity*, my own sense of the person I am and the kind of life I should live. In this sense, identifying with something is a matter of determining my own identity; it is, we might say, a matter of *valuing* it. Yet in the sense of identification relevant to love of another person, however, the *determination* of my own identity is not at issue so much as the *concern* I have for the identity of another person. This is why in plumping for a non-egocentric conception of identification, I said that you must have a concern for your beloved's identity that is analogous to your concern for your own.

The trouble is that Frankfurt does not distinguish those concerns you have that are a part of (and indeed constitute) your identity from those concerns that, while genuinely yours, are relatively peripheral to your identity,² and he therefore is unable to make sense of how your concern for someone else—your “investment in” him—can amount to identification except in egocentric terms. Consequently, Frankfurt's model is too weak because it is unable to distinguish among the senses in which I identify with a desire, with an institution or principle, with a creature like a dog that does not have an identity and so is not a person, and with a person that has a sense of the kind of life worth its living: according to Frankfurt, in each case the identification is a matter of making that thing's interests be a part of my own, egocentrically. Yet once we distinguish a non-egocentric conception of identification, along the lines I have proposed, we see that there really is a big difference: my identification with my wife, which is a part of my loving her, just is my taking to heart *her* identity, her sense of what cares and concerns are central

to making her be who she is, and such identification is simply not possible with a dog or young child or institution or principle.

If love essentially involves a kind of intimate identification, and if we should not construe such intimate identification in egocentric terms, then the proper object of love must itself have an identity—must, in this technical sense, be a person. Young children have not yet defined their identities and so have not yet developed into persons (in this technical sense) and are not yet proper objects of love: we do not love young children in the same way we love adult persons. This means our concern for young children is not at all a good paradigm of love in general, contrary to what Frankfurt suggests in saying that it is “the species of caring that comes closest to offering recognizably pure instances of love” (Frankfurt, 2004, 43).

It should be clear that at issue here is not some abstract philosophical definition of love or some merely verbal dispute about how to understand “love.” My claim is both that love for adults is distinct in kind from the “love” of small children or of institutions or principles precisely because the former but not the latter involves intimate identification, and that this distinction informs not only our philosophical understanding of love but also our everyday experience of it. To fail to recognize this—as Frankfurt does—is to impoverish not just philosophy but our loves themselves.

My aim in the remainder of this paper, therefore, will be to present an alternative account of love that places a non-egocentric notion of intimate identification at its center, thereby taking mature adult love as the paradigm. To love someone is intimately to identify with him and thereby to care about and value the things he cares about and values for his sake. Fleshing out this account will require saying something about what caring and valuing are and how we can in effect share the cares and values of someone else for his sake, without thereby taking over these cares and values for ourselves. I shall do this by first, in §2, presenting my account of caring in terms of a certain kind of pattern in one’s emotions. In §3 I shall discuss what it is to value something as a part of one’s concern for one’s own identity—as a mode of self-love. All of this will provide necessary background for my discussion of love as intimate identification in §4.

2. Caring, Import, and the Emotions

As I have argued at length elsewhere (Helm, 2001), to *care* about something, for it to have *import* to you, is to have a concern for its well being. This implies that it is worthy of both attention and action on its behalf. For example, if I care about the tomatoes I am growing in my garden, I ought to pay attention to what happens to them. Other things being equal, my failure to notice when their well being is affected, as when they are getting eaten by the rabbits, undermines the

idea that I really care about them. Similarly, even if I notice the rabbits eating my tomatoes, to fail to act on their behalf by, for example, building a fence to keep the rabbits out also tends to undermine the idea that I care about them. In general, therefore, caring about something requires being both *vigilant* for what affects its well being and *prepared to act* on its behalf, where such vigilance and preparedness to act are rationally required, other things being equal, insofar as I care about it.

My claim is that we can understand the sense in which something is worthy of both attention and action in terms of the emotions. How, then, should we understand the emotions? Philosophers of emotions have generally understood emotions to be a distinctive kind of response to one's circumstances, a response that has a couple of distinct kinds of objects. First is the emotion's target: that at which the emotion is directed. Thus, when the rabbits eat my tomatoes, my anger is directed at them: they are the target of my emotion. Second is the emotion's *formal object*: the evaluation of the target that is characteristic of each emotion type. Thus in feeling angry at the rabbits, I evaluate them as offensive, the formal object of anger. If instead I were afraid of the rabbits, I would evaluate them as dangerous, the formal object of fear. Yet in addition to these two commonly recognized objects of emotions, I have argued that there is a third object, namely the emotion's *focus*: the background object whose import to the subject makes intelligible the evaluation of the target in light of the formal object. Thus we might ask: how are rabbits, the target of my fear, intelligible as dangerous?—Because of what they threaten to do to my tomatoes, which I care about. My tomatoes, therefore, are the focus of my fear.

The notion of an emotion's focus is important because in feeling an emotion one is in effect committing oneself to the import of its focus. This can be seen when we consider the transitions that occur between emotions. Thus, having built a fence to keep the rabbits out of my garden, my hope that the fence will do the trick will typically become relief when it does or disappointment when it fails. This typical transition from hope to relief or disappointment is a *rational* one: for me to fail to have my hope transition to relief or disappointment when the circumstances are otherwise appropriate indicates that something has gone wrong with my underlying commitment to the import of the tomatoes. Indeed, my commitment to the import of the tomatoes likewise commits me to feeling such emotions as fear that the groundhogs will dig under the fence, worry that the cold, wet spring will rot their roots, excitement as the tomatoes finally start ripening, anger at the neighbor kids who throw my ripe tomatoes at each other, and joy at finally having juicy tomatoes to eat.

Such an emotional commitment to the import of the focus therefore normally results in a more general pattern of emotions with a common focus. (See Figure 1.)

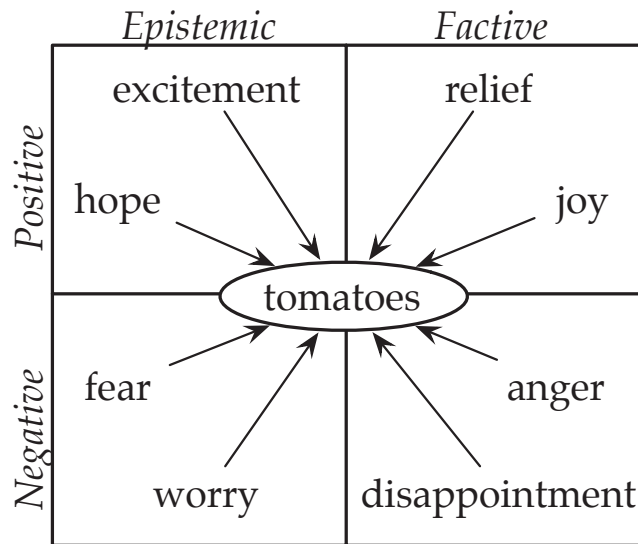


Figure 1: Pattern of emotions with a common focus.
Solid arrows represent the focus of the emotions.

On the one hand, this pattern of emotions is *projectible* insofar as one's commitment to the common focus ought to extend not only into the future but also into counterfactual situations: were there to be a hailstorm, I ought to be upset about the resulting damage to my tomatoes. On the other hand, it is *rational* insofar as these emotional commitments make it that one ought, other things being equal, to have the other emotions that fit into the pattern. The result is that the projectibility of such a pattern of emotions ensures that one is consistently attending to the focus of that pattern in a way that makes sense of the sort of vigilance and preparedness to act required by import. Moreover, the rationality of such a pattern ensures that the focus is worthy of such vigilance and preparedness: one *ought* to attend and respond emotionally to that focus. Consequently, I claim, to *care* about something, for it to have *import* to you, just is for it to be the focus of a projectible, rational pattern of emotions.³

Before I turn to think about love in §§3–4, I need to introduce one complication to this account of caring or import. To care about something is to have a concern for its well being. However, what something's well being is depends on how it is described, and this means that to care about something is always to care about it *as* something. For example, if I care about my tomatoes as something delicious to eat, then taste is paramount; that their skins split when we get a lot of rain just before they ripen is for the most part irrelevant to how they taste—to their well being as such—and so should not affect me emotionally. Yet if I instead care about my tomatoes as something to sell, then appearance becomes much more important, and their splitting ought to lead me to become upset. In short, the pattern of emotions constituting one's caring must be structured by a particular understanding of the kind of thing it is, and different understandings of it will structure that pattern in different ways.

3. Values and Self-Love: Constituting Your Identity

I claimed in §1 that we should understand love to be a matter of intimately caring about someone as the particular person she is, where this means having a concern for her well being as this person. Now a person's well being is defined in part by her identity, her sense of the kind of life worth her living, where the particular constituents of such a life are what I have called one's *values*. Consequently, having this concern for another's well being means having a concern for her as having this particular identity, where this identity and the values that make it up must thereby structure the way I care about her. But how is my beloved's identity to structure my caring about her? The answer must be given in a way that makes sense of the *intimacy* of love: my concern for my beloved's identity must be the same in kind as my concern for my own. My suggestion now is that we can understand this in terms of my sharing my beloved's values as a way of "taking her identity to heart".

At this point one might object to this suggestion as a way of making sense of love that is genuinely intimate while simultaneously being non-egocentric. For on the one hand it might seem that the thought that I share my beloved's values would amount to my simply appropriating them for my own, thereby coming to define my own identity in terms of them. Isn't this precisely the sort of egocentric account for which I criticized Frankfurt? On the other hand, if we reject that egocentrism, doesn't that mean also rejecting the sharing of values and so the intimacy of love?

In reply, what is needed is to understand my sharing my beloved's values to be a part of my caring about her identity, for *her* sake. This needs to be distinguished from the sense in which I value particular things as a part of my caring about my own identity, for *my* sake. This distinction, I shall argue, is one we can make by thinking in more detail about how my caring in each case is structured by her identity and by my identity, respectively, thereby leading to a non-egocentric account of identification. In order to understand this more clearly, we need to answer two questions. First, what is it to care about your own identity, about the kind of life worth your living, and so to value particular things as a part of your concern for your own identity? Answering this will enable us to see how my identity can structure my valuing. Second, how can this account be extended so as to include caring about someone else's identity for her sake in such a way as to make sense of the relevant intimacy of love? I shall address these in turn.

I claimed that to *value* something is to care about it as a part of the kind of life worth living. In some intuitive sense, therefore, valuing is "deeper" than mere caring: it is a matter of finding something worth attending to and acting on behalf of in some more "meaningful" way. Consequently, it is plausible to think, the projectible, rational pattern of emotions constitutive of valuing must

involve a special class of emotions that can make sense of this intuitive “depth”, emotions such as pride, shame, anxiety, and self-confidence.⁴ In particular, for me to value being a professor, I ought not merely to be satisfied at receiving tenure but rather to be *proud* of myself for doing so. I ought not merely to be upset or angry at myself for violating standards of academic honesty, but rather *ashamed* of doing so. While grading, as I come to discover mounting evidence that the star quarterback plagiarized his paper, I ought to feel not merely fear of reprisals by supporters of the athletics department, but rather *anxiety* (or, if I am more optimistic, to feel not merely an expectation that I will do the right thing but rather *self-confidence*). Indeed, we find these emotions to form the relevant sort of rational pattern: my anxiety about whether I can muster the courage to charge the quarterback with plagiarism ought to become pride when I do or shame when I fail. Such a projectible, rational pattern of such emotions constitutes my *valuing* being a professor.

My claim is that what marks these emotions of pride, shame, anxiety, and so on as belonging to a special class of emotions is that they are all *person-focused emotions*: they are all focused on a particular person as such and *subfocused* on a particular value that enters into that person’s identity. Thus, my pride in receiving tenure is an emotion that targets receiving tenure, evaluating that as ennobling (the formal object of pride) in light of the relationship between the target and both the focus and subfocus: the relationship between my getting tenure and myself given the value I find in being a professor. One might object here that this appeal to a distinction between a focus and a subfocus is an unnecessary complication. Why not say simply that the focus of these emotions is the thing valued and instead understand both the “depth” such emotions have and the way these emotions belong together as a distinct class in terms of the kind of target and formal object they have? Why not, that is, understand the pride, shame, and so on as targeting oneself and so evaluating oneself as ennobled, degraded, and so on in light of one’s conduct towards the focus, being a professor, where it is the reflexivity and the distinctive character of the evaluation that carries the relevant “depth”?⁵ The answer is three-fold.

First, the distinction between focus and subfocus is needed in other cases in which we want to understand how we can care about one thing as a part of caring about something else. Consider instrumental caring: if I care about buying a house, I ought to care about my credit score, about having enough money for a down payment, about assembling my financial records for the loan application, and so on. Yet each of these things I care about only because I care about buying a house: if I did not care about buying a house, I would not care about any of these other things. In other words, we might say, I care about them only as a

part of caring about buying a house. How can we make sense of such caring in terms of patterns of emotions? We should not say that my caring about my credit score is constituted by projectible, rational patterns of emotions focused on my credit score, for that would not make sense of the way in which I care about it only as a part of caring about buying a house. Rather, there is a single pattern of emotions here, focused on my buying a house, and within that pattern we find subpatterns of emotions “clustered” around my credit score, assembling financial records, and so on. That is, my credit score, financial records, etc., are all *subfocuses* of this overall pattern focused on buying a house.

In the same way, I claim, I value being a professor only as a part of an overall concern for the kind of life worth my living, and so being a professor is the subfocus of the relevant pattern for which my own identity is the focus. Indeed, in this way we can understand how in valuing something I thereby *identify* myself with it: I find that value to have a place within my overall understanding of the kind of life worth living. It is because person-focused emotions are focused on the particular person, having a particular identity, and subfocused on the things valued—because they involve in their implicit commitment to import a commitment to identify in this way with their subfocus—that we can understand these emotions to have an intuitive “depth” in relation to non-person-focused emotions.

This leads to the second reason why we should maintain the distinction between focus and subfocus and so should understand valuing something to be a part of an overall concern for one’s identity: to make sense of various conflicts among values. Assume that in addition to valuing being a professor I also value being a father. Thus, I am proud of myself for resolving a crisis in my daughter’s life, ashamed of my selfish disregard of my son during the big game, anxious over whether I’ll be able to accept my daughter’s choices in boyfriends, and so on. What happens when my daughter breaks her leg when I must go to class? Given my value of being a professor, I ordinarily ought to be ashamed for neglecting my teaching duties; should I therefore feel ashamed when, taking my daughter to the emergency room, I miss class? Surely not: acting this way just is living as I ought, and it is to my living this kind of life that my feelings of pride, shame, anxiety, and so on are responsive. In this way, the pattern of emotions constituting the things I value is structured by and subordinate to my overall commitment to my identity: I value these things as a part of my concern for my identity. (See Figure 2.)

Once again we find that making sense of the structure of these emotions requires

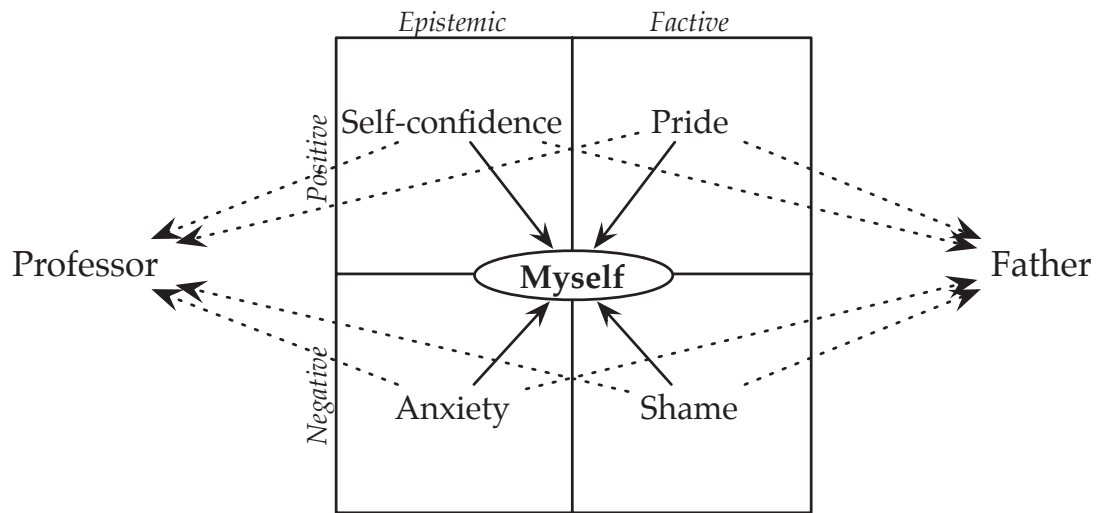


Figure 2: Pattern of person-focused emotions with myself as the common focus (solid arrows) and things I value as the subfocuses (dotted arrows).

understanding them to be focused on particular persons and subfocused on the things that person values: they are essentially person-focused emotions.

A final reason for accepting this understanding of person-focused emotions is the sense it is able to make of love. To exhibit a projectible, rational pattern of person-focused emotions focused on yourself and subfocused on the things you value just is to find yourself as this particular person, with this identity, to have import—just is to care about yourself and your well being as the particular person you are. This attitude towards oneself, this caring for one's own identity, I submit, just is *self-love*. Yet understanding this evaluative attitude towards oneself as that of self-love depends on the sense it is able to make of love quite generally, including love of other persons. Here the account of pride, shame, etc. as person-focused emotions comes into its own. Understanding self-love in terms of patterns of person-focused emotions focused on oneself makes room for the possibility of having patterns of person-focused emotions focused on others. This will provide an account of the love of others, an account that is both non-egocentric (because focused on others) and intimate (because analogous to one's concern for oneself). It is in part the cogency of this more general account of love that justifies both this understanding of self-love and the account of pride and shame as person-focused. Fleshing this out is my task for §4.

4. Love as Intimate Identification

I claimed that to love another person is to have a concern for her well being as the particular person she is and that this is a matter of caring about her identity and so sharing her values. Recall, however, the objection from §3 that this

“sharing of values” sounds like simply appropriating these values as your own. My initial attempt and responding to this objection involved making the distinction between valuing something as a part of your own identity, egocentrically, and sharing another person’s values for *her* sake, where this latter involves a kind of non-egocentric identification with her. I have already discussed what it is to value something as a part of your own identity; we are now in a position to understand more clearly what it is to value something for the sake of someone else. Not surprisingly, this distinction is to be made in terms of the focus of the relevant pattern of emotions.

Most accounts of emotions like pride and shame understand them to be essentially reflexive, always evaluating their targets in ways that reflect well or poorly on *oneself* (Isenberg, 1973; Davidson, 1980; Taylor, 1985; Helm, 2001). I now think this is a mistake. When I am proud of my wife, I am not evaluating her in a way that reflects well on me. Although in being proud of her I thereby feel good about her, I do not thereby come to feel better about myself as a result. Of course, I might: I might be proud of having such a fine trophy wife, where my pride in my wife targets her but is focused on myself; such pride would be egocentric in a way that, if pervasive in my relationship with her, is at odds with a genuine love of her. My claim, however, is that there is a distinct kind of case in which the focus of my pride is not myself but her. Thus, when my wife is proud of herself for winning a bagpipe competition, I am proud of her, too, and my pride here is a reflection of the place piping has within *her* life and so is an evaluation of her winning in light of the import *she* has as the person she is.

Such a feeling of pride—*loving pride*, we might call it in anticipation of my conclusion—differs from the pride we might feel as a sympathetic response to a courageous athlete’s overcoming of adversity. For such sympathetic pride is something we feel only in response to the expressed emotions of another, whereas loving pride need not be.⁶ Unlike sympathetic pride, loving pride involves a genuine commitment to the import of its focus (and consequently to the import of its subfocus) and therefore to feeling a broad pattern of other emotions with a common focus. Assuming such a pattern is already in place, its projectibility ensures that one will normally feel pride in the appropriate circumstances even when the person who is the focus of that pride does not. For example, at the bagpipe competition I may see the list of winners before my wife does and so come to be proud of her for winning the competition before she is proud of herself.

That my pride in my wife fits into such a projectible, rational pattern of emotions means in part that I ought, for example, to be anxious on her behalf before a performance that might launch her recording career, ashamed of her for compromising her musical integrity in an attempt to appeal to the bland musical taste of the public, and so on. In short, the pattern of emotions I ought

to exhibit looks very much like the same rational pattern of emotions she exhibits that constitutes her valuing piping. This does not mean, however, that I thereby come to value piping for my sake, as a part of my identity; I am not appropriating piping as one of my values. For insofar as the focus of these emotions is her rather than myself, the relevant pattern of emotions subfocused on piping must be embedded within a broader pattern of emotions responsive to her well being as this is defined by her identity, not mine, and constituting the import she has to me—constituting, that is, my concern for her. This broader pattern will therefore include subpatterns of emotions focused on her and subfocused on other things she values. Consequently, my valuing piping is a part of my overall concern for her as the particular person she is; it is in this sense that I share this value with her for her sake. (See Figure 3.)

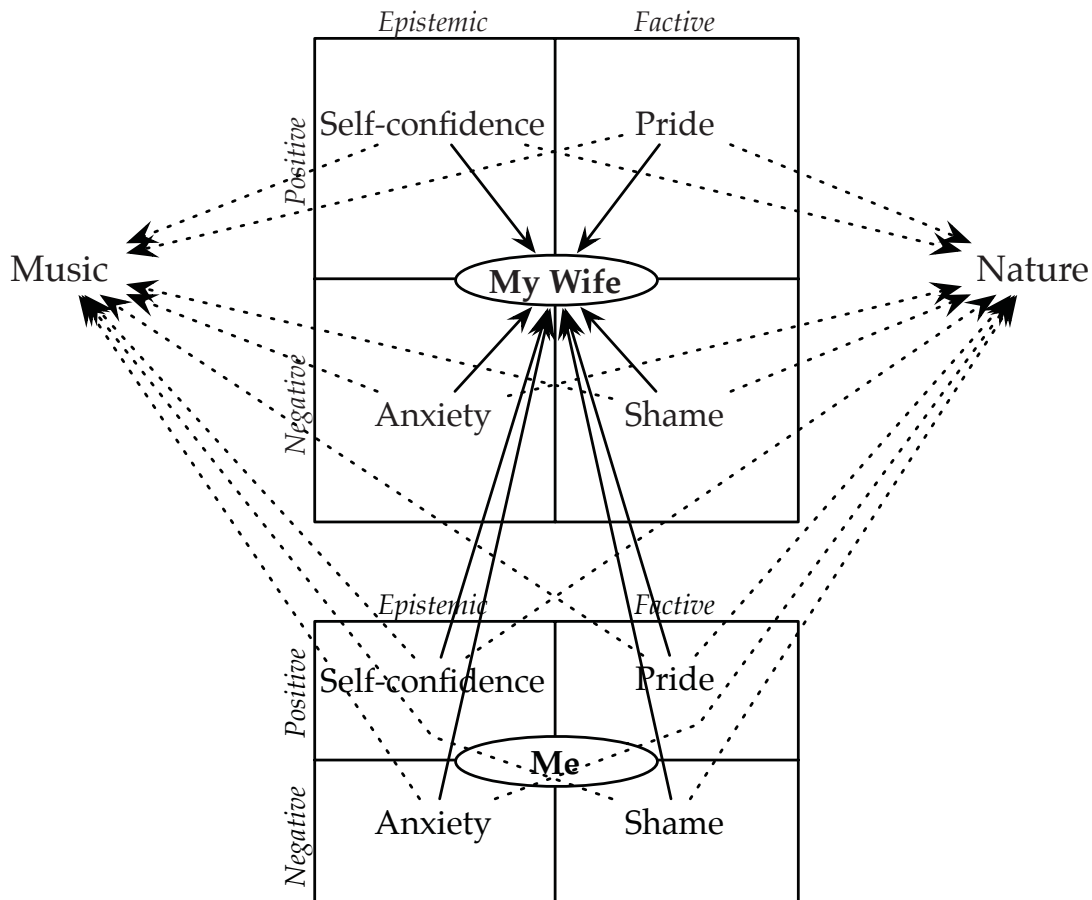


Figure 2: Sharing values for the sake of another as a part of love.
 Solid arrows indicate the focus; dotted arrows indicate the subfocus.

At issue in such a rational pattern of person-focused emotions focused on someone else is not merely the sharing of her values; it is the sharing of her identity. For just as my valuing something is intelligible only as a part of my overall concern for my own identity, for my sake, so too when I share the values of someone else, I do so as a part of a concern for her identity, for her sake and not for my own. Insofar as her identity is constituted by the way her values fit into an overall conception of the kind of life worth living, sharing her values in this way just is sharing her identity as the particular person she is, again for her sake. It is, in short, to *identify* with her non-egocentrically, and it is such identification that explains the intuitive “depth” of loving pride: such pride presupposes as a condition of its warrant that the subject identify with the focus and thereby share her values for her sake, non-egocentrically.

Such concern for the identity of another is not merely non-egocentric; it is also *intimate* in that it is a concern that is analogous to one’s concern for one’s own identity. For just as in my concern for my own identity, my identification with another consists of my valuing various things as a part of an overall concern for the person’s identity, and I do this by feeling the relevant projectible, rational patterns of person-focused emotions; this just is to take his identity to heart. Nonetheless, it should be acknowledged that there is an important disanalogy between the two cases—a disanalogy that reinforces the non-egocentricity of identification with another. My concern for my own identity, because it is reflexive, constitutes that very identity, for the projectible, rational patterns of reflexive person-focused emotions at issue constitute my concern for the kind of life worth my living, a concern that just is my identity itself. By contrast, my concern for someone else’s identity, because it is not reflexive, merely responds to without constituting his identity. Consequently, such non-reflexive identification does not involve the sort of appropriation of the interests of the beloved that Frankfurt’s account of identification does.

Intimately to identify with someone, thereby having a concern for his identity for his sake, non-egocentrically, just is to *love* him. Love, therefore, is the attitude towards someone constituted by projectible, rational patterns of person-focused emotions focused on him.

In offering this account of love, I have focused on the idea that to love someone is to care about him as the particular person he is, thereby sharing his values and indeed his identity for his sake. Yet it might seem that this account of both self-love and love of others leaves out one important ingredient in love, its phenomenology, that is surely fundamental to any account of love. Nonetheless, the phenomenology of love is implicit in the phenomenology of the person-focused emotions that constitute that love.

In sketching an account of emotions, I stressed the way they are evaluations: simultaneously responsive to and constitutive of import. As responsive to import,

emotions are a kind of passive receptivity to the import impressing itself on one, much like color perception is a passive receptivity to the colors of objects impressing themselves on one; in this sense, emotions are *felt evaluations*. As I have argued elsewhere (Helm, 2002), to feel the positive or negative import of something impressing itself upon you—to feel good or bad in response to it—just is to be pleased or pained by it. Moreover, the character of the pleasure or pain is partly defined by the formal object of the emotion—by the type of evaluation at issue and its bearing on the import of the focus. Thus, to feel fear is to be pained by danger, and to feel joy is to be pleased by some good, for it is that danger or that good in relation to the focus of the fear or joy that impresses itself on one in feeling the emotion. Indeed, as I have argued, such pleasures and pains are not isolable components of the emotions but are rather *identical* to the emotions: emotions just are felt evaluations of this sort.

I have characterized person-focused emotions like pride and shame as “deep” given the way their essential connection to the identities of persons, to the kind of life each finds worth living. Such depth applies to the phenomenology of these emotions as well and distinguishes their phenomenology from that of non-person-focused emotions. For to be proud of someone is to feel pleased not simply by the circumstances but by the way these circumstances bear on that person’s identity. That is, the pleasure we feel in being proud of someone arises from the way the import of that person’s identity (and so the particular value that is the subfocus of the pride) impresses itself on us, for the feeling of pleasure here cannot be understood apart from my awareness of that import. The phenomenology of love, then, consists of the complex and sometimes ambivalent amalgam of the complex pattern of person-focused emotions that define love, including both pleasant and painful feelings. Our experience of love is therefore deeper and richer than our experience of the corresponding patterns of non-person-focused emotions precisely because of the complexity and intimacy of the relevant patterns of person-focused emotions that constitute it.

5. Conclusion

I have argued that love is a matter of intimate identification and so consists in sharing the values and identity of your beloved for his sake and so non-egocentrically, without appropriating them as your own, and I have provided an analysis of such identification in terms of projectible, rational patterns of person-focused emotions. Understood this way, love presupposes that its object is a person, with a sense of her own identity. To fail to acknowledge this essential connection to persons, as Frankfurt does in understanding the paradigm form of love to be the kind of concern parents have for their infants or young children, would be to ignore the distinctions I have drawn between person-focused and non-person-focused

emotions, thereby both assimilating loving to caring and impoverishing not only our philosophical understanding of love but also our experience of love itself. Rather, we must carefully make a distinction in kind between our affectionate concern for young children and love precisely because young children, lacking an identity, are not yet persons.

This conclusion should not be thought to involve any denigration of the status of young children nor of our affectionate concern for them. In particular, I am not suggesting that our concern for young children is just like our concern for other mere agents, such as dogs, for that would clearly be mistaken. For in having a concern for a young child as a particular agent, we must not forget that a child is a potential person, which we ought to be mindful of in our concern for the child. We must anticipate children's development into full-blown persons in part by increasingly coming to love them paternalistically as a way of encouraging them to form determinate identities and so to help them make the transformation. (For details on how I think this works, see Helm, forthcoming.) Such worries about distinguishing children as potential persons from mere agents should not lead us to deny the distinction between love and affectionate concern.

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Notes

¹ For similar claims, see Frankfurt, 2000, 14.

² Of course, Frankfurt distinguishes first-order desires from second-order volitions (Frankfurt, 1971), but this distinction is between desires that are potentially alien to you because they are not integrated into a wider set of mental states that you endorse, and desires that form your cares and concerns that are thus integrated. My claim is that he needs a further distinction between your *cares*, which are “wholeheartedly” yours but which can be relatively peripheral, and your *values*, which you find to be more central to your sense of who you are to be. For a similar claim (but made in a different context—free will—and with a very different account of the distinction between cares and values than what I shall provide below) see Watson, 1983.

³ For detailed arguments for this claim, see Helm, 2001, especially Chapters 3–4.

⁴ I shall shortly have something to say about how to understand both the intuitive “depth” or “meaningfulness” of valuing and why valuing is constituted by this class of emotions.

⁵ Indeed, I previously offered something like this account of valuing in Helm, 2001.

⁶ There are, of course, other kinds of pride that take others as objects than loving pride and sympathetic pride. What I have elsewhere called *directly reflexive pride* in a trophy wife would be one such example in which the focus is oneself; other examples include what I have called *indirectly reflexive pride* in which another represents something one values, as when one feels pride in an medal winning Olympic athlete who represents one’s country, citizenship in which one values. For details, see Helm, 2010, §5.1.

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