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Second-Personal Desire

ABSTRACT: *This paper concerns desires with a distinctive interpersonal structure. 'Second-personal desire' seeks something of or from a particular person who is the irreplaceable, intrinsic object of the desire by virtue of his or her significance to the desirer as a participant in an interpersonal relationship in which what is desired carries interpersonal significance. Such desires involve a wish that the other person will experience one's desire as a reason in a way that involves positive interpersonally directed emotional responsiveness to one's desire. Second-personal desire thus renders one vulnerable to distinctive forms of disappointment and to the possibility that the other person is neither positively motivated by, nor positively emotionally responsive to, the possibility of such disappointment. A distinctive form of positive emotional regard is thus always at issue in second-personal desire. This form of regard is not always owed, despite our craving for it—a fact that considerably complicates interpersonal interaction. The paper concludes with an argument that the participant reactive attitudes cannot be understood without the notion of second-personal desire and that second-personal desire is consequently crucial for an adequate understanding of the normative structure of interpersonal interaction.*

KEYWORDS: second person, interpersonal relationships, reactive attitudes, philosophical psychology, nondeontic normativity, bipolar normativity

Introduction: The Phenomenon and Its Significance

We each pursue or resist particular desires, struggle with their frustration, enjoy or fail to enjoy their satisfaction, and cope with the results. Some of these desires have a distinctive interpersonal structure. Though this structure contributes fundamentally to the texture and normative contours of interpersonal life, it has not yet been explored in the philosophical literature.

Suppose I want my spouse to make a favorite meal for my birthday. It is important to me that it be *her*, this particular person, who responds to this wish,

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and that she do so because she cares that I want this. I would not be satisfied in certain key respects if—without any positive responsiveness on her part—someone else made the meal. If she is too busy, it might suffice if she offered to take me out or do something else instead. And if she flatly refused, with no consideration for my feelings, I would be devastated. In these ways, the prospect of her willingly satisfying this desire matters to me in the context of our interpersonal relationship as an expression of her attitude toward me.

I will call such desires 'second-personal desires' because the desire is *directed toward* the other person in a manner similar to that of second-person address. I will say that this person is the *object* of the desire, in the sense that something is desired *of* or *from* this person. In the case of the reactive attitudes, the term 'object' is understood to pick out the person toward whom an attitude such as anger is directed and from whom a response is sought (Darwall 2006:70 ff.). Freud and the later psychoanalytic tradition similarly use the term with regard to desire. Without a notion playing this role, we lose the distinctive *interpersonal directedness* involved in second-personal desire.

In the example above, my spouse is irreplaceable as the object of the desire—as I will put it, she is its 'intrinsic object'—insofar as positive responsiveness from her, in particular, is essential to my satisfaction. In a formula that will be elaborated in the course of this paper:

> A 'second-personal desire' seeks something *of* or *from* a particular person who is its irreplaceable, intrinsic object in virtue of the person's significance to the desirer as a participant in an interpersonal relationship with the desirer. It includes a wish that the other person be motivated by positive emotional responsiveness to one's desire. What is desired thus carries interpersonal significance in the relational context.

The issue of each party's attitude toward the other is always brought to the fore in second-personal desire.

Here are a few more examples. Not all second-personal desires are reasonable. We sometimes find ourselves wanting things from others that we regard as quite outrageous.

* A college student's desire for his parents to attend his graduation.
* The desire expressed in a newlywed's request that his spouse spend every evening with him rather than preparing for the bar exam.
* The desire expressed by a young teenager pleading with another teenager to stop teasing her.
* The desire expressed in a wronged person's angry complaint to the wrongdoer that he has expressed regret to third parties but has not apologized to *her*.

As these show, second-personal desires should not be presumed to be 'ultimate desires'. Consider, for instance, that the college student might invite

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his parents to attend graduation in part because he wants them to meet his girlfriend.

As I will argue, second-personal desire highlights one of the things about which we care most in our interpersonal interactions. Second-personal desires involve a wish for the other person to experience one's desire as a distinctive kind of reason and, in particular, for the other person to be motivated by what one experiences as positive emotional responsiveness to one's desire and to the possibility of one's disappointment. Second-personal desires thereby reflect a distinctive way in which we want to be valued by others. Though often craved, this form of regard is not generally owed. However, it is easily mistaken in situ for something—such as Kantian respect—that is owed; for example, consider the rage that can sometimes be felt in response to interpersonal disappointment. Such confusion both complicates interpersonal relationships and obscures the theoretical shape of the realm of ethically significant interpersonal phenomena.

The topic is of interest in its own right. In addition, it connects closely with issues relating to the reactive attitudes and the normative structure of interpersonal interaction. Second-personal desires are not reactive attitudes, nor do they always generate second-personal reasons.[1] Still, the realm of interpersonal relations is broader than the realm of obligation and accountability that Strawson, Darwall, Scanlon, Wallace, and others have explored, and it is broader even than the realm of nondeontic, interpersonally directed, action- and character-focused evaluative responses that have recently attracted attention in the literature on the reactive attitudes (Mason 2010; Abramson and Leite 2011; Wallace 1994). Second-personal desires are part of this broader realm. At the same time, I will propose that they are essential for an understanding of the participant reactive attitudes. As I shall suggest, without the notion of second-personal desire we lose our ability to understand many characteristic features of interpersonal relationships, including the nature and content of many of the normative expectations appearing in them.

I have already stated what I mean by 'second-personal desire', but I doubt that any mere definition will bring the topic clearly into view. My method will accordingly be to build up a rich characterization of the phenomenon—to paint an accurate portrait, if you will—by approaching it from various angles and in various contexts. Crucial here is the consideration of examples, in section 1 and later, to help identify the phenomenon and illuminate its key features. Sections 2 through 8 focus on various of these features: second-personal desire's *interpersonal directedness* (section 2); its relations to role-obligations and relationship-based apt normative expectations (section 3); the wish that the other person will satisfy the desire because that person experiences one's having of the desire as a reason to satisfy it (section 4); the underlying wish for positive emotional responsiveness to one's desire and to the

1 A second-personal reason is a person-relative reason generated for one person through interpersonal interaction by virtue of the relational authority possessed by the other person, as when an army captain gives a soldier a reason to march by issuing the command, 'March!' (Darwall 2006). The participant reactive attitudes are forms of interpersonally directed emotional response—including anger, resentment, gratitude, and love—to expressions of good and bad will and certain traits of character (Strawson 1982; Abramson and Leite 2011). These attitudes have been held to be central to second-personal reasons and relations of accountability (Darwall 2006) and blame (Wallace 1994; compare Scanlon 2010).

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possibility of one's disappointment, and the distinctive interpersonal vulnerabilities thus generated (section 5); the distinctness of these vulnerabilities from a desire to be loved (section 6); and their relation to a distinctive way—different from Kantian respect—in which we seek to be valued by others (section 7). I close (sections 8 and 9) by considering the relation between the participant reactive attitudes and second-personal desire, suggesting that we cannot fully understand the underlying normative structure of interpersonal interaction without understanding second-personal desire.

1. The Irreplaceability of the Object of the Desire

Suppose I want a clean house. Because I am especially swamped with work, I hope my spouse will vacuum. This desire would naturally be expressed using the grammatical second-person, 'Would you do the vacuuming this week?' This is not yet what I mean by 'second-personal desire'. Contrast this case with one in which it is essential—quite objectionably, for reasons of sexism among others—that it be my *wife*, in particular, who vacuums because of the significance I see in her doing so in response to my wishes in the context of our relationship. One crucial difference is this. In the first case, but not the second, it is incidental that my desire fastens on my spouse as its object: any competent person would do as well.

The same point applies even if I think that as things are only one person can fill the bill. Suppose I always want the cleaning service to send Rita because only she does a really good job. Still, any equally competent person would suffice, if only there were another. My attitude thus does not involve her *intrinsically*: it is not essential to an adequate specification of what I want that it include that it is *this person*, in particular, who is the object of my desire. Instead, it would be enough to say that I want some really competent person to vacuum. (If someone else does a terrific job, I would be pleasantly surprised, not disappointed.) By contrast, if I have a thing about Rita and it is essential to my satisfaction that it be *Rita* who cleans, then she is the intrinsic object of my desire.

The notion of a desire's *intrinsic object* cuts across the distinction between 'intrinsic' (or 'ultimate') versus 'instrumental' and 'realizer' desires. That it be *this particular person* might be essential to one's satisfaction, in the above-specified sense, even if the desire in question is instrumental. For instance, if George blocks your way to the theater, then George is the intrinsic and irreplaceable object of your desire that George move, because your desire that this particular person move does not derive from an underlying desire *that someone or other move*. No relevant difference is made either by the fact that your wish regarding George is an instrumental desire relative to your wish to get to the theater or by the fact that if someone else were blocking your way, you would want that other person to move instead.

However, not every desire that intrinsically and irreplaceably involves a particular person is thereby a second-personal desire. I might desire to see Isabella Rossellini play Lady Macbeth. This could very well be a desire in which Rossellini, in particular, figures intrinsically and irreplaceably. But there is a crucial difference

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between desiring a state of affairs that involves a person and desiring something *from* a particular person. This desire is only *about* Rossellini; it is not interpersonally directed, and it does not configure any of her choices or actions as anything like a response to a request from me. Unlike a second-personal desire, this desire thus lacks certain distinctive varieties of significance for the interpersonal dimensions of a relationship between the desirer and the person singled out by the desire.

Consider, for example, how I would feel if I learned that Rossellini declined the role: I would be disappointed, in much the way that I am disappointed when a long-anticipated event is rained out. With second-personal desire, by contrast, a further dimension is added to simple disappointment: the other person's choosing or intentionally acting to satisfy or not satisfy the desire is configured for the desirer as an interpersonally directed move akin to a response to a request. In this way both the desire and the response have distinctive forms of significance for the interpersonal dimensions of the relationship.

We talk, for instance, about being 'disappointed *by*' a person. Suppose that Rossellini declines the part, and I, with no actual relationship to her, react—as though she had intentionally done something to hurt me—with an interpersonally directed emotional response, such as hurt feelings, anger, or resentment. Such a response, if severe, would be a recognizable form of madness. But its very recognizability highlights the phenomenon I have in mind. This is a second-personal desire felt in the context of a fantasy of a relationship.

As this example emphasizes, second-personal desires configure the interpersonal context in such a way that reactive attitudes are intelligibly elicited by the other person's choices and actions in response. For example, gratitude, loving responses, and the like are among characteristic responses to the fulfillment of such desires, just as anger, resentment, and hurt feelings are to their nonfulfillment. While such reactions are not always warranted, as the example above makes evident, these characteristic reactions reflect (1) the relational directedness of second-personal desires; (2) the fact that these desires are felt against the background of an actual, possible, or imagined interpersonal relationship; and (3) the fact that these desires are understood by the desirer both as having relational significance and as bringing to the fore the issue of the other person's attitude and emotional orientation toward the desirer.

2. The Centrality of Interpersonal Directedness

It should be uncontroversial that there can be interpersonally directed thoughts and attitudes. Unexpressed anger, for instance, is often felt as being directed *at* or *toward* a particular person and not as merely *about* that person. When one feels rage toward another person, this is very different from angry frustration, directed at no one at all, that things have not worked out as one wished in one's interaction with someone.

Second-personal desire is likewise directed at or toward its object. This shows up, for instance, in the fact that people often regard their unexpressed second-personal desires as being interpersonally significant moves. Think, for example,

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about the guilt one can feel upon desiring one's beloved to do something that one fears he or she will dislike: one can feel that in merely having the desire, one has already thereby burdened, harmed, or even degraded the other person. The interpersonal directedness of desire can show up in other ways as well. An angry teenager might say to a puzzled parent, 'I know I didn't say anything, but you should have known I wanted you to do that anyway!' Such resentment indicates that the desire itself was directed to its object prior to and independently of its expression; otherwise, nothing more than disappointment or frustration would be intelligible in such cases. Of course, unexpressed second-personal desires need not have precisely the interpersonal significance that they gain by being expressed, any more than unexpressed anger or resentment does.

Here is the point of referring to some unexpressed attitudes as 'interpersonal moves'. Interpersonally directed attitudes sometimes *change the interpersonal situation* in distinctive ways relating to the attitude's interpersonal directedness even if the other person is unaware of the attitude. For instance, the attitude might impact the interpersonal significance of either party's subsequent actions or warrant certain participant reactive attitudes on the other person's part. One person might ask another, 'Do you hate me? I want to know what the situation is between us.' If the person asked has come to hate the questioner, then the situation between them has already been changed even before the question is asked or the hatred is expressed. This is recognizably different from the way in which, e.g., getting an aggressive cancer can change the relationship. Getting cancer is not interpersonally directed, and it is not the sort of thing to which the other person could warrantedly respond with a reactive attitude such as interpersonally directed anger.

Second-personal desire cannot be understood apart from this interpersonal structure. It is not simply that it is essential to the desire's satisfaction that a certain state of affairs come about involving a certain person nor even that this person bring about a desired state of affairs. Rather, the desire has a place within a real or imagined interpersonal, relational structure, as something directed toward the other person for him or her to fulfill or fail to fulfill, and the desired response is understood as a corresponding interpersonally directed move. In this sense, something is desired *of* or *from* that particular person in the context of an interpersonal interaction, and space is opened for disappointment or gratification *by* the other person, with all the characteristic interpersonally significant results.

3. Role Obligation and Apt Normative Expectations

Not every case in which one might care about lack of response will be a second-personal desire, however. Suppose a departmental secretary does not fulfill a request I was within my rights to make. I may be irritated, but here my response concerns simply what I am owed in virtue of our roles. By contrast, however, I might slide into 'taking it personally', as though the failure manifested something like a disappointing lack of special concern for my feelings and wishes. Here I would be inappropriately turning a legitimate expectation generated by professional roles into a second-personal desire.

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In relations of love and friendship, role obligations and responsiveness to second-personal desire are often entangled. But not all second-personal desires mirror role obligations. For instance, the desires bound up with wanting to initiate a friendship (wanting someone to join one for lunch, for example) are second-personal even though there is no relevant role obligation.

Moreover, many apt normative expectations within close personal relationships only arise in a context of second-personal desire. Why would hurt feelings ever be reasonable (as they surely can be) if one's spouse refuses to make a favorite birthday meal? There is no general apt normative expectation that spouses will make favorite birthday meals for their partners; the existence of an apt normative expectation about this in any particular case depends, inter alia, upon the person's having some such second-personal desire. Likewise, there is a general (defeasible) apt normative expectation—perhaps even obligation—that spouses, friends, and other intimates will be somehow positively responsive to one's second-personal desires (even if not necessarily by fulfilling them). Second-personal desire is thus independent of and analytically prior to role obligation in this regard.

The independence of second-personal desire from normative expectations shows up sharply in certain interactions between complete strangers. Suppose that one takes a fancy to a stranger sitting nearby at a bar and so forms a second-personal desire to talk with this person in particular. There is neither role obligation here nor any relationship-based apt normative expectation, and in other regards the stranger owes one nothing more than minimal civility in declining to talk. Still, insofar as one wants to talk with *this person in particular*, one will nonetheless feel disappointed by a refusal. Anger, resentment, annoyance, and even hurt feelings would be inappropriate responses. But the space for such responses has been opened, as it were, by the structure of the interaction: their appearance would now be intelligible. Here we see the basic structure of second-personal desire where nothing much is at stake. Add that the desirer cares to a greater extent about the stranger's response, and the fuller range of interpersonally directed responses can then intelligibly come into play—even if they would not be warranted.

4. Interpersonal Significance

Second-personal desires are always felt against the background of an actual, possible, or fantasized interpersonal relationship. 'Relationship' here means something very thin: two people interacting in a way that has a *me-you* structure, so that even two people who hate and do not want to interact with each other count as being in a relationship. (Contrast two young children engaged in 'parallel play'.) Within any such context, whatever the second person does in the face of a recognized interpersonal move by the first person will count for that first person as prima facie interpersonally significant. In one way or another, it will appear to the first person to manifest something of the second person's attitude toward the first.

One can feel a second-personal desire without any desire to maintain such a relationship. Suppose that because of how someone has treated me, I hate

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him and desire him never to interact with me again. Once he knows about this desire, his intentionally placing himself in my presence becomes an interpersonally significant move. If there is no good reason for his behavior, my irritation will not merely be frustration consequent on this desire going unsatisfied. Rather, I shall experience a further distinctive kind of irritation, irritation at him, along with additional characteristic reactive attitudes—even though I would experience no disappointment at the loss of this relationship.

Such examples also highlight a second crucial point. In second-personal desire, the significance of the other person's response for the desirer does not derive simply from how much the desirer wants whatever might be—in some narrowly specified sense—the content of the desire. Having a particular meal on her birthday might itself matter little to the desirer, but her beloved's refusal to make it might be devastating. Likewise, suppose the other person makes the breakfast that I request but adds, 'I didn't do it because you wanted me to.' Whatever satisfaction results, it might well be overwhelmed by the accompanying insult. What is at issue is the other person's *responsiveness* to one's desire, with all that such responsiveness conveys.

It would be wrong to draw from this the lesson that there are two entirely distinct desires here, such as one for a particular meal and another for the other person's general responsiveness. In many cases, what is wanted cannot be adequately specified except in terms of the other person's responsiveness, as when one wants one's beloved to make love out of responsiveness to one's desire. Here one does not have a freestanding desire for sex that is entirely independent from any consideration of one's partner's responsiveness to one's wishes. It is thus misleading to attempt to decompose second-personal desire in this way in general. The same holds even when a clearer analytical distinction can be drawn. I might want the breakfast, and I might want my spouse to be responsive to me (in general), and I might also want my spouse to make this breakfast (in particular) in response to my desire that my spouse do so. There is clearly a structural unity to the latter desire, since I could have the first two without it. Moreover, I might have a desire with this kind of structural unity without having a general desire that the other person be responsive to my desires.

In second-personal desire, then, an integral part of what one desires, expects, hopes, or wishes is that the other person will satisfy the desire because he or she experiences one's having the desire as a reason to fulfill it. This is a defining feature of second-personal desire. It creates the possibility of the distinctive kind of interpersonally directed disappointment discussed above. This second structural component of second-personal desire is not always readily apparent and is sometimes mistakenly taken to be present. It thus gives rise to familiar interpersonal difficulties and confusions in everyday life.

Many desires share much of the structure I have been describing but lack this last feature. To use an example from an anonymous referee, David might want to be kissed by Jamie in a way that flows from Jamie's positive feelings for him, but he may want Jamie to kiss him spontaneously, not because Jamie recognizes his desire to be kissed. Here David wants something from Jamie that is of interpersonal significance in the context of the relationship, but does *not* want Jamie to experience this desire as a reason. He does not even want Jamie to know about it.

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This sort of case does not directly involve certain distinctive vulnerabilities characteristic of second-personal desire. In wishing Jamie would kiss him in a way independently motivated by positive feelings for him, David is vulnerable to the discovery that Jamie has no such motivations. That is a genuine vulnerability. But it is different from being vulnerable to the discovery that Jamie is not positively responsive to his desire. This further sort of vulnerability is of immense significance in interpersonal interaction.

In fact, even a desire like David's cannot be understood fully unless we have this latter sort of vulnerability in view. For instance, to grasp what David wants in the imagined case we have to keep in mind that if, in the midst of the hoped-for kiss, David wants Jamie to stop so that David can catch his breath, he will want Jamie to be responsive to this desire. (Consider how David would feel if in response to his request that Jamie stop so that he can breathe, Jamie only kissed him more insistently!) The full structure of second-personal desire is thus in play in generating the distinctive kind of interpersonal vulnerability that is involved even in these ostensibly simpler cases, and this broader context of second-personal desires cannot be abrogated. For this reason, the full structure of second-personal desire characterized above has explanatory centrality.

5. The Motivational Structure that is Sought and the Vulnerabilities Thereby Engendered

Interpersonally directed attitudes generally invite or demand particular, correlative, interpersonally directed responses. Interpersonally directed anger, for instance, paradigmatically invites or demands contrition, and this is so even if the anger is not expressed. (This can be seen in the fact that if the other person spontaneously apologizes, one's unexpressed anger can thereby be appropriately assuaged.)

In the case of second-personal desire, the crucial issue is the other person's motivation. The sought-for correlate is that the other person *do the desired thing motivated in a way that involves positive interpersonally directed emotional responsiveness to one's so desiring*. Second-personal desire is bound up with one's emotional response to the other person and to the (actual, possible, or imagined) relationship; what is wanted is felt to be of emotional significance in this interpersonal context and is wanted within a larger network of actual and possible emotional responses. The desire seeks fulfillment made of the same cloth: fulfillment through the person doing what is desired out of a broader network of positive, interpersonally directed emotional responses to the desirer, to the fact of his or her desiring, and to the significance of what is desired within the context of the relationship.

Suppose, for instance, that you conclude that making my favorite birthday meal would be disastrous for me, and so you give it to me out of spite in response to my second-personal desire that you do so. I will hardly be satisfied when I find out! Alternatively, imagine that you calculate that making the meal will placate me and thereby help you achieve your goals. That is not what I was hoping for—

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again, imagine my reaction if I were to find out what your motivation was. The same point applies if I find out that while feeling great emotional antipathy to me, you did what was desired because you judged it your duty to take account of my desires in your practical reasoning: even your taking a nonderivative positive evaluative attitude toward my desiring need not satisfy. Or suppose that you have an impersonal emotional response. You feel it important that my desire, with its particular content, be satisfied in the context of this particular relationship because the universe will be a better place if it is. You consequently do what is desired. Still, you have not emotionally responded in an interpersonally directed way *to me*, and for that reason your response would disappoint in the sorts of cases I have been discussing. (Consider, too, the feelings of a child whose parent primarily responds in this impersonal way.) It is a *second-personal, interpersonally directed*, *positive* emotional response that is paradigmatically sought as the correlate of second-personal desire.

Often what is desired on this score is that the other person be motivated out of loving feelings. In other cases the relevant positive emotional responsiveness involves respect or concern. Complication is introduced by the fact that various forms of response—including servility, abject humiliation, and terror at the desirer's power—may be experienced as forms of positive emotional regard by certain desirers on certain occasions. (Thanks here to Ingrid Salvatore). Moreover, as Allen Wood has pointed out to me, there can be variation in other aspects of the desired motivational structure as well. Sometimes what is wanted is that the other person form a reciprocating desire, as when in response to my desire that you go out to lunch with me, you develop a desire on your own part to do so. (I might be troubled if I learned that you went to lunch merely to please me.) In other cases, one knows that what is sought is not something the other person would desire in her own right, and so one will be satisfied simply by her willingness to do one a favor.

Precisely because it has the structure I have highlighted, second-personal desire generates distinctive vulnerabilities. If I have a second-personal desire that you do *X*, I open myself to the possibility of your intentionally not doing *X* (or not doing it out of positive emotional responsiveness to my desire) in full awareness of my desire. I am thus vulnerable to disappointment by you. I am consequently vulnerable to characteristic interpersonally directed painful and negative feelings, such as feeling hurt *by* you—feelings that differ not only from the dissatisfaction I would feel in any case of nonfulfillment of desire, but also from the characteristic interpersonally directed negative feelings I would have whenever someone prevents satisfaction of my desire. The vulnerability to such feelings is an ineliminable aspect of second-personal desire quite independently from whether these feelings would be warranted in the particular case. Such vulnerability is the flipside of having the desire itself.

Further vulnerabilities are thereby brought into play. Imagine what you would feel if your beloved manifestly felt no concern about the possibility of your disappointment regarding your wish for a special birthday meal. The possibility of being disappointed by another person is a genuine vulnerability, and in wanting that person to be motivated out of positive emotional responsiveness to your

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desire, you also want the other person to be positively emotionally sensitive to this vulnerability. This is an additional layer of structure in second-personal desire.

This is not to say that one necessarily wants the other person to be motivated out of concern to avoid disappointment. In general terms, what is sought is rather that the other person be motivated by positive emotional responsiveness to the possibility that one might be disappointed: a motivation that might lead to apology, expressions of concern, an attempt to find some other mutually acceptable form of satisfaction, etc. This further concern regarding the other person's motivation plays a significant role in the particular vulnerabilities and possibilities of interpersonal difficulty that second-personal desires inevitably introduce. For instance, as Katy Abramson pointed out to me, it creates the possibility of distinctive forms of manipulation, emotional blackmail, and the like.

This further layer of structure in second-personal desire is clearly displayed in certain cases of hatred. Suppose that because of someone's bad treatment of you, you want him to avoid your presence out of responsiveness to your desire never to interact with him. If he forces his presence upon you in full awareness of your desire and without any attempt at apology, excuse, or compensatory gesture, this will be experienced as involving a further affront in addition to the pain caused by his presence and the frustration of your desire, an affront arising in part from his lack of concern or even delight that he has created further hurt feelings by ignoring your wishes. He has not been responsive in the desired way to the possibility of your disappointment.

This is not simply a matter of a violation of the moral requirements of respect. There is no general requirement for other people to be specially emotionally responsive to the possibility of one's feelings of disappointment. Although I would feel hurt, someone has not wronged me if he happens to seat himself nearby in a café knowing full well that I want him nowhere near me. True, if he acts in this way in order to bring about distress, then he violates fundamental moral requirements even if he was under no obligation to avoid my presence or to be positively emotionally responsive to the possibility of my disappointment. But his ability to cause distress in precisely this way is dependent upon the interpersonal context created by second-personal desire and the form of responsiveness at issue in that context. We will thus miss the precise scope and nature of the moral violation unless we have in clear view the distinctive structure of second-personal desire and the vulnerabilities it involves.

In sum, second-personal desires bring vulnerability to a distinctive further hurt: feelings of being humiliated, unvalued, rejected, or diminished by the other person's lack of interpersonally directed concern about the possibility of one's feeling disappointed by him or her. This vulnerability is internal to the structure of second-personal desire because if you did not care about the other person's emotional orientation toward you, then you would not have the second-personal desire to begin with. And given that you *do* care in this way about the other person's attitude toward you, the revelation that the other person does not care about your feelings of disappointment cannot but hurt. Second-personal desire thus inherently involves a yearning for a distinctive form of positive interpersonal regard.

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6. Second-Personal Desire and the Wish to be Loved

It might be objected that what I am describing is simply the phenomenon of wanting certain people to care about or love us, and that (as an anonymous referee suggested) 'it is merely because we want a more general sort of loving or caring regard from our intimates that interpersonal relationships involve particular vulnerability to disappointment and hurt feelings'. This line of thinking is mistaken. The distinctive structure of second-personal desire shows up equally easily in cases in which one has no interest in the other person's love or affection. It is an independent interpersonal phenomenon. We have seen this already in the case of hatred discussed above, in which someone who knows full well that I want him nowhere near me intentionally places himself in my presence without good reason. There is a distinctive affront in that case, an affront that is made possible by the structure of my second-personal desire. This has nothing to do with a desire for love or affection, because I hate that person and have no such desire.

Of course, matters are not always so tidy. In a wide variety of intimate relationships, second-personal desires and the wish for loving care are deeply, inextricably, and unavoidably entangled. Loving motivations are often what we seek in such contexts, and positive emotional responsiveness to our desires and concern about our disappointment can themselves be appropriate and crucially salient expressions of love.

7. What Form of Positive Regard is at Issue Here?

Flat refusal of an expressed second-personal desire sharply highlights the form of positive regard at issue. Certain special cases aside, responding to a second-personal desire by intentionally doing something that brings about the desirer's disappointment without any reparative gesture constitutes an interpersonal move signaling to the desirer that his or her feelings and desires are felt to be of no particular significance. Such responses can be deeply painful and sometimes amount to complete interpersonal rejection. What is missing here is a distinctive way in which we want to be valued by others: an interpersonal emotional recognition and positive regard that is attuned to the possibility of our feeling disappointed by them and responds in the same register. It is the form of valuing that would answer to the vulnerabilities generated by this dimension of our emotional interdependence.

While this form of valuing is not in itself love, it is also distinct from the demands of politeness and common courtesy. If a stranger asks me out, I might simply say, 'No thank you; I'm not interested', and turn back to my work. While perfectly polite, this reply manifests no positive emotional responsiveness to the other person's disappointment; it leaves him to deal with that disappointment alone. Often, we owe nothing more than that. The form of regard sought in second-personal desire thus goes beyond the common courtesy we reasonably demand of each other.

Nor is this form of regard Kantian respect. Someone might honor his promises, meet the requirements of imperfect duties of aid, treat me civilly, and not lie to

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me, manipulate me, or in any way treat me as a mere means. Nevertheless, I might quite reasonably feel rejected by him, for instance, if it is plain that he both feels no inclination to be in my company despite my indication that I desire it and also feels no positive interpersonally directed emotional responsiveness on that account. It would not help matters if the person were willing to be in my company because duty requires it. That could itself be chilling. There need be no ground for moral blame; in many such cases the person owes nothing more. Still, one might well feel crestfallen despite the other person's proper respect for one's personhood. What goes missing in such a case is something at the level of genuine interpersonally directed, positive emotional response.

Kantians would be right to say that this form of regard is generally not something we are owed. Other people are under no general obligation to feel positive concern regarding my capacity to feel disappointed by them. Indeed, in certain cases (e.g., fantasies of relationship or abusive relationships) such a demand is manifestly outrageous. For instance, think about acceptable forms of response to a sexual harasser's second-personal desires. Interpersonal rejection is not, merely as such, necessarily a violation of our obligations to others; it is sometimes even appropriate. Still, this form of positive regard is something we often deeply crave. That is part of what makes interpersonal relationships the distinctively difficult sorts of relationship they are.

In many cases it is morally laudable when people do feel such responsiveness. These cases cannot be brought under the Kantian category of nonobligatory meritorious duties of respect for persons. A Kantian duty of respect is something one can constrain oneself to do (*Metaphysics of Morals*, Introduction, sect. 1 par. 1), and one cannot constrain oneself to have positive emotional responsiveness to the possibility of another person's disappointment. A Kantian approach would consequently account for the moral worth of such responses derivatively, in terms of the way they support the person's aptitude for recognizing, respecting, and acting out of response to the moral law. As Allen Wood pointed out to me, it is not obvious that this approach would yield the expected or desired results in particular cases. (Moreover, such an account might be thought oddly roundabout in comparison to that offered by, e.g., a character-focused view such as Hume's.)

Admittedly, failure to provide this form of regard can, on occasion, constitute a moral violation. A parent's flat refusal of a young child's second-personal desire that he attend her recital, for instance, violates his parental obligations even if he does not intend to be cruel. But it is only because of the underlying structure of second-personal desire, the vulnerabilities it involves, and the positive regard it seeks that some other form of response is required here. If the child did not want her parent to come to her recital out of positive emotional responsiveness to her desires, then his flat refusal would not be the kind of violation it is: without second-personal desires on the scene, there would not be the same feelings for the parent's response to crush. His parental obligations here thus presuppose the underlying structure and form of regard at issue in second-personal desire. This interpersonal structure—and a yearning for this form of regard—can equally figure in situations where no such obligations are in play.

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This form of regard likewise differs from 'recognition respect' (Darwall 1977). Both forms of regard are fundamental valuing responses to a person *as a person*. However, recognition respect is a disposition concerning deliberation and conduct (Darwall 1977: 38). The positive regard sought in second-personal desire, by contrast, is primarily at the level of emotional engagement. Moreover, it is responsive not to the capacity for practical rationality but rather to vulnerability to feelings of disappointment by another person. Again, such regard—unlike recognition respect—is not always mandatory.

In Darwall's (2006) recent work, respect for personhood is reinterpreted as respect for one's equal authority to issue second-personal reasons. The form of regard at stake in second-personal desire, however, concerns vulnerabilities distinct from those arising simply from the issuance of second-personal reasons, and it is focused upon the possibility of disappointment rather than upon interpersonal authority, with attendant emotional differences. In ordinary life, however, the two are easily confused, precisely because of the way in which second-personal desire involves a yearning that the other person will experience one's desire as generating a fully sufficient reason even if one lacks authority to dictate the other's response.

Both this form of regard and the vulnerabilities to which it relates have shown up obliquely in the literature, but in a fashion that confuses such matters with considerations of recognition respect and what we owe to each other. Consider these passages from Buss's work on the ethical significance of everyday courtesy:

> Even if I were confident that everyone in my community respected my right to choose and act 'autonomously,' someone could still fail to treat me with respect if she stared off into the middle distance, or carefully examined her fingernails, whenever I tried to engage her in conversation.... She fails to treat me with respect if she makes no effort to hide her disinterest in... my feelings. When she treats me this way, she implies that my concerns, my feelings, my point of view do not matter, that is, that I have no intrinsic value, after all.... When our words and deeds tell someone that it does not matter whether we hurt her feelings, we offend against her dignity by directly offending her. (Buss 1999: 804)

Several distinct forms of regard are brought together here. The central example—trying to engage someone in conversation when one cares about talking with this particular person—points toward second-personal desire and the form of regard distinctively at issue in that context. In concluding that there is an *offense against the person's dignity* in relation to hurt feelings in all such cases, however, Buss elides the crucial difference between this form of regard and a form of regard that every person is owed on every occasion. This is a mistake. One does not owe a sexual harasser consideration about the possibility of hurt feelings arising from disappointment.

In sum, the form of regard sought in second-personal desire is an interpersonally directed, motivationally effective, nonderivative positive emotional responsiveness that is not intelligible from anyone other than the person who is the object of the

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desire and is focused upon the possibility of the desirer's feelings of interpersonal disappointment. It cannot be understood apart from this distinctive interpersonal structure. Though often deeply desired, this form of regard is not always obligatory. It is a distinctive way of treating the person as having intrinsic value. How the details get filled in can vary widely across persons, relational contexts, and particular cases. The structural and functional features maintained across these variations are what distinguish this distinctive form of positive regard.

8. Second-Personal Desire and the Participant Reactive Attitudes

Thus far I have been engaged in elucidating the structure of second-personal desire: desire that implicates another person as its irreplaceable, intrinsic object by virtue of her or his significance to the desirer as a participant in a relationship with the desirer in which what is desired carries interpersonal significance. Though second-personal desires do not always generate reasons, they nonetheless involve a wish that the other person will do the desired thing motivated in a way that involves (what one experiences as) positive, interpersonally directed, emotional responsiveness to one's desire. A distinctive form of interpersonal regard is always at issue here.

Second-personal desires, other people's responses to them, and the desirer's responses to satisfaction or dissatisfaction are all subject to ethical evaluation, and one's tendencies in these regards are centrally important to evaluations of one's character. Further philosophical questions likewise emerge about the nature and grounds of these desires' ethical status in general and on occasion, the nature of the reasons they generate, their relation to the reactive attitudes, and their relation to the normative structure and normative presuppositions of interpersonal interaction more generally.

I shall close by exploring one such issue: the relation between the participant reactive attitudes and second-personal desire. (I will not consider Strawson's 'vicarious' or 'impersonal' reactive attitudes nor their relation to the participant reactive attitudes.) The negative participant reactive attitudes—such as anger, resentment, hurt feelings—are attitudes appropriately directed by a wronged party at the person who wronged her.[2] These reactive attitudes are widely agreed to have three crucial features. First, they not only respond to the absence of goodwill (to use Strawson's phrase), but also seek—among their satisfaction conditions—a manifestation of goodwill through some interpersonally directed response on the part of the wrongdoer. As Strawson puts it, they 'involve, or express, a certain sort of demand for interpersonal regard' (1982: 72; see also Darwall [2006] on the sense in which the reactive attitudes involve an 'RSVP'). Second, in seeking such a response, they are ways in which we hold people responsible *to us* with regard to their moral

2 For convenience I speak of 'wrongdoers' and 'wronged parties', but it must be remembered that the relevant forms of normative standards go beyond what we owe to each other and include both apt normative expectation and matters of character.

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failings in their relations with us. Finally, they thereby make a bid to restructure the relationship going forward.

There is good reason to think that paradigm cases of these attitudes implicate second-personal desires in significant ways. For instance, the form of goodwill that these attitudes paradigmatically seek includes the form of positive emotional responsiveness at issue in second-personal desire. This can be seen by considering cases in which the wrongdoer offers everything except this form of emotional responsiveness. Suppose someone betrays a colleague's trust. Even if the wrongdoer later recognizes the wrong, apologizes, makes restitution, and commits to doing better, the colleague might quite reasonably continue to be angry if it is apparent that the wrongdoer is not at all positively emotionally responsive to the colleague's interpersonally directed wishes and feelings regarding the impact of the betrayal and its aftermath on the interpersonal dimensions of the relationship. This is not to say that the wrongdoer owes this form of responsiveness. The point is simply that such anger—anger that seeks the form of regard at issue in second-personal desire—would not be unreasonable in these circumstances. By contrast, continuing anger often becomes a manifestation of some moral defect when, in addition, the wrongdoer has had, as is said, a 'change of heart'—that is, when the wrongdoer has become positively emotionally responsive to an appropriate range of the wronged party's interpersonally directed wishes, feelings, and related vulnerabilities regarding the wrongdoer, the wrongdoing, and their relationship.

Second-personal desire likewise shows up in the way in which the participant reactive attitudes paradigmatically hold wrongdoers accountable. Reactive anger, for instance, does so through an implicit interpersonally directed demand for apology, restitution, or contrition. Yet typically what is sought *as part of the satisfaction conditions of the angry desire for apology* is an apology born not just of a recognition of wrongdoing, but also of positive emotional responsiveness to the wronged person's pain, justified desire for apology, and related vulnerabilities. For instance, it would ordinarily be galling if a colleague apologized for betraying your trust even while making plain in his tone and manner that he feels no emotional responsiveness whatsoever to your reasonable desire for apology. You might be glad he recognized his wrongdoing, but you would nonetheless be left feeling that he had no real concern for *you* in this regard.

Even when we do not care whether a wrongdoer apologizes out of positive responsiveness to our desire for apology, second-personal desires are typically implicated in the structure of reactive anger in other ways. For instance, an angry desire for apology will often include second-personal desires regarding the apology's time, place, and manner—even when the interaction is between strangers. If I do not want the apology right now because I am emotionally overwhelmed, I will want the wrongdoer to be positively sensitive to that. If he responds to my wishes and feelings regarding the apology with an audible sigh, roll of the eyes, or manifest lack of concern, this can quite reasonably aggravate my angry feeling of having been diminished. And that can be true even if his apology, when offered, is otherwise everything I wanted.

In interactions between complete strangers we sometimes do not want even that much. You might be knocked down on the train by someone running for a seat,

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and you might want an apology simply as a way of being shown the respect you are owed as a person. You might not care whether or not the wrongdoer is positively emotionally responsive even to your wishes regarding the time, place, and manner of the apology, so long as he takes them into account (for instance, by not making you stand waiting while he finishes playing a game on his phone). Even here, though, we will typically find second-personal desire latent in the structure of the angry desire for apology. For example, consider a case in which it is not unreasonable for the wrongdoer to fail to accord with the wronged party's preferences regarding time, place, or manner, but those preferences are not unreasonable either. The curt, dismissive refusal, 'I'd rather not' will not satisfy in such circumstances; it fails to treat one as someone who has been wronged and whose wishes matter. In fact, *any* response that betrays a complete lack of concern for one's possible disappointment will add to or at least chime in with one's angry feeling that the wrongdoer is being a jerk.

For these reasons, it is very hard to imagine holding a wrongdoer accountable in the way distinctive of reactive anger without having any desire whatsoever regarding the wrongdoer's positive emotional responsiveness to one's desires. Indeed, it is very hard to imagine that it is *anger* one is feeling if one is *entirely* indifferent to the other person's emotional orientation toward one's wishes, feelings, and possible disappointment.

But suppose that is wrong. Suppose there are cases of reactive anger that in no way implicate second-personal desires regarding the wrongdoer nor any wish for the kind of positive regard second-personal desire seeks. Even if such cases are possible, second-personal desire must have a central place in our understanding of reactive anger nonetheless.

For one thing, as we have seen, in a great many cases second-personal desire does play a central role in reactive anger. Without an understanding of second-personal desire, we will not be able to understand fully this aspect of our interpersonal lives.

What's more, cases of reactive anger that neither involve any second-personal desire nor seek positive emotional responsiveness to one's wishes and feelings—assuming such cases are possible—should not be regarded as central or paradigmatic for analytic purposes. Otherwise, one faces significant explanatory challenges of two sorts. First, if one takes these cases as the analytical core of reactive anger, then the cases in which more is sought look like instances of reactive anger *along with* certain second-personal desires and a wish for the other person's positive emotional regard. But then one would lose the structural unity of these instances of reactive anger: the fact that in many cases—even in interactions with complete strangers—positive emotional responsiveness to one's desires and feelings is a significant part of what is sought by one's angry response to wrongdoing, not merely something that is present alongside one's anger. One now faces the substantial theoretical task of bringing together what has been torn asunder.

Second, a normative challenge arises for this approach as well. Whenever one has been wronged, it is normatively acceptable to respond with reactive anger that involves second-personal desire and seeks the wrongdoer's positive emotional regard in relation to some range of one's wishes, feelings, emotional vulnerabilities,

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and possible disappointment. It is hard to see why this should be so, if the analytically central case of reactive anger does not involve such things at all. If the less demanding form of anger is the paradigm, why would the form that has richer interpersonal structure and makes more stringent interpersonal claims be warranted whenever the less demanding form is called for?

By contrast, if we understand reactive anger as paradigmatically involving second-personal desire and seeking positive emotional responsiveness, we do not face these challenges. If there is reactive anger that does not involve these things, it is easily seen as derivative from the richer phenomenon: it is just like the richer cases in being an emotional response to wrongdoing that seeks goodwill expressed via such things as apology and compensation, and it thereby aims to shape the relationship in a certain way going forward. It simply lacks any wish for the other person's positive emotional responsiveness to one's wishes and feelings and instead makes do with 'thinner' forms of goodwill that are sought in the more complex reactive attitudes as well.

Similarly, no normative puzzle arises if we take the paradigm of reactive anger to involve second-personal desire and its wish for positive emotional responsiveness. The thinner form of reactive anger—if it exists—would then be warranted when it is because (1) the more complex form is warranted but not required, and (2) the thinner form is derived from the more complex form simply by omitting a nonrequired wish for this particular form of positive emotional regard.

A straightforward and appealing picture thus emerges. Reactive anger and the other negative reactive attitudes paradigmatically seek a form of goodwill that includes positive emotional responsiveness to some appropriate range of the wronged party's wishes, feelings, and vulnerabilities, as determined by the nature of the wrongdoing and the relationship between the parties. They paradigmatically hold the wrongdoer accountable to the wronged party by demanding an acknowledgment of wrongdoing—perhaps in the form of an apology—the provision of which is itself a manifestation of this complex form of goodwill. Structurally speaking, the participant reactive attitudes are thus bids for reciprocal emotional vulnerability. They paradigmatically seek accountability through emotional *rapprochement*.

Strikingly, in many cases the wrongdoer does not owe this particular form of positive emotional responsiveness; often, nothing more is owed than, say, restitution and apology in the form of acknowledgement of wrongdoing. Justified participant reactive attitudes thus typically seek accountability in a way that goes beyond what is strictly owed. They are thus a distinctive kind of bid to shape the possibilities for the relationship going forward.

9. A Closing Conjecture

The considerations above suggest a further conjecture: that second-personal desire is crucially implicated in the underlying normative structure of interpersonal interaction. Here, in closing, is a rough line of argument that would support and give content to this suggestion.

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According to a familiar line of thinking, the reactive attitudes are essential in the normative structure of interpersonal interaction (see, e.g., Strawson 1982; Wallace 1994; Darwall 2006). For instance, Darwall contends that we cannot comprehend moral culpability, relations of accountability, and moral obligation if we do not bring the participant reactive attitudes into the story (2006: ch. 4–5). Alternatively, we might say: a world without reactive attitudes would not be a world containing anything like moral culpability, moral accountability, or moral obligation as we know them. (If we leave moral obligation off this list, it now appears that despite the view put forward in *Moral Dimensions* (2010), even Scanlon inclines in this direction (Scanlon 2013.) If any such claim is right, then given the place of second-personal desire at the heart of the reactive attitudes, second-personal desire will be integral to central, defining moral phenomena and hence to the normative structure of interpersonal interaction.

Darwall has argued, moreover, that these moral phenomena are inevitably implicated in the very notion of a second-personal reason because in addressing a second-personal reason to another person one makes a bid for respect for one's standing to thus generate second-personal reasons—a bid that is incomprehensible without the notions of moral culpability, accountability, obligation, and the reactive attitudes (2006: esp. ch. 6 and 10–12). If this is right, then the participant reactive attitudes, and hence second-personal desires, are essential in an adequate account of the very phenomenon of agent-relative reasons generated through relational authority in interpersonal interaction.

Indeed, this link can be seen more directly. Not every second-personal reason (or address thereof) expresses or arises from second-personal desire. The sergeant who orders a private to march need not thereby express any wish for positive emotional responsiveness to her desires. Nevertheless, second-personal desire lies in wait in the very structure of the interaction and helps make order-giving intelligible as what it is. Just consider the sergeant's justified resentment at the private's mocking, insubordinate challenge to the sergeant's right to give him orders. What is legitimately desired in many such cases of resentment is that the private stop his mockery out of appropriate emotional responsiveness to the desire that he stop. Of course, he does not *owe it to* the sergeant to be emotionally responsive in this way; all he owes is that he treat the sergeant as a legitimate authority. In experiencing justified resentment the sergeant thus legitimately wants more than is owed. (The capacity to play upon this fact is part of the interpersonal genius of mockery in its duel with authority.) The possibility of such vulnerability—arising from the link between interpersonal authority and the possibility of resentment—is central to the very phenomenon of interpersonal authority. It is part of what makes interpersonal authority the difficult matter it so often is.

Of course, it would be problematic if the sergeant demanded that the private act from some general, overarching positive emotional orientation such as love. But without the richer structure provided by second-personal desire, we cannot make sense of the distinctive affront involved in the private's continued mockery in the face of resentment at his insubordination. His mockery involves certain moral wrongs (including intentionally inflicting emotional pain), but the very possibility of his wronging the sergeant in precisely these ways depends upon both the sergeant's

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second-personal desires regarding him and the vulnerabilities those desires create—desires and vulnerabilities that, as we just saw, are integral to the phenomenon of interpersonal authority. Thus, if we assume the centrality of second-personal reasons in interpersonal interaction, then the normative structure of interpersonal interaction fundamentally depends upon second-personal desire and its yearning for positive emotional regard beyond anything we are owed.

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