

LOVE AND EXPLOITATION: ANOTHER SELF AS A GIFT

James Thomas

The main title of this paper describes a common predicament: to love another is to want to benefit the other, but to benefit the other, one needs to know the other, which seems to imply reducing the other to something inferior to one's self as the subject of knowledge. Another cannot be known, it seems, other than as something to be used for one's own purposes, and the acts intended to benefit the other can seem to the other exploitive. Sartre developed this issue, and I examine Paul Gilbert's contemporary response to it. There is a problem with Gilbert's theory of intimate relationships, which suggests turning to the work of Maritain and Emmanuel Mounier.¹ "Another Self as a Gift," is a phrase taken from Maritain² that describes both his and Mounier's solution to the issue in Sartre in a recognition of the other's personality and freedom.

Distinguishing the individual from the person, they develop an idea of love among persons that implicitly or explicitly explains the issue in Sartre as one of a failure to recognize the person, as opposed to an individual. They can be read as developing Aquinas's distinction of the love of concupiscence and that of friendship, as examined by James McEvoy;³ they can thus be said to understand the difficulty as resulting from our attending to the accidental properties through which other persons are related to ourselves, rather than to their substantive nature of a person.

A problem with this analysis is that the substantive nature of a person understood in the sense either of the abstract or of the concrete universal is so

¹ Jacques Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, trans. John J. Fitzgerald (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966); Emmanuel Mounier, *Personalism*, trans., Philip Mairet (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1952).

² Maritain, *The Person* 39.

³ James McEvoy, "Amitié, attirance et amour chez S Thomas d'Aquin", *Revue Philosophique de Louvain* 91 (1991): 383-408.

unrelated to persons as individuals that to act for the sake of the substantive nature of the person can again seem to be to exploit persons for ends other than themselves. An adequate solution can be developed through a re-examination of the individuating matter and form of a person, and I try to close the gap between the substantive nature of a person and the individual by making the matter of a person an intuition informed by an idea of the community of living perspectives.

Sartre drew our attention to a dilemma: the lover of a person needs to know the object of love as a free being, but to succeed in knowing this being seems to render him or her unfree. Gilbert⁴ explains this problem as stemming from a lack of objective values; every attempt to know factually and to act on the factual knowledge of another person seems exploitive or confrontational because the whole endeavour is influenced by one's own subjective evaluation, and peoples' subjective evaluations tend to differ. "Since, on Sartre's view, there are no independently existing values, any attempt to share them will inevitably give rise to a conflict as to whose values, whose choices, are to prevail."⁵ That is to say, any attempt to express love may turn out to be only an expression of one's own evaluation of the good for another, and the recipient feels used for the sake of ends they do not share.

Knowledge is important to intimate friendship, according to Gilbert, but it is knowledge of a special kind, intimate knowledge, which is more like an intuitive understanding of how to do something, i.e., relate to the people you care for; it involves trust and the revelation of intimate aspects of one's self:

I trust others with my feelings only if they would thereby be committed to an appropriate attitude towards them. They would not, other things being equal, scoff or sneer or take advantage of me. ... we shall only understand these [spontaneous expressions of feeling] if we can to some degree imaginatively enter into those reactions and this requires some sharing of what we are both able to find desirable. ... such knowledge is, I have argued, disinterested, not acquired for further ends. It must then, like knowledge in general, be something we value for its own sake. ... we cannot explain this in terms of the superiority of knowledge to ignorance or of truth to error, for propositional knowledge is not involved. ... my reliability about them [ideas of others' feelings] comes out in my behaviour rather than [than; *sic*] in my judgements.⁶

Intimate relationships are exchanges of feeling, and lovers' ability to sympathize with each other's feelings and to respond in ways that seem appropriate is due to each one's capacity to imaginatively enter into the circumstances of the other. One's imaginatively entering into another's circumstances can be expected to issue in appropriate knowledge of another's feelings, a sympathetic one, only if one shares the other's desire, as this desire is what gives rise to these feelings in

⁴ Paul Gilbert, *Human Relationships* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991) 47.

⁵ Gilbert 50.

⁶ Gilbert 98-101.

those circumstances. So in understanding another's feelings, one is lead also to sympathize and to act in appropriate, sympathetic ways.

However, a solution to the problem on the basis merely of shared desire seems open to Plutarch's charge against the Epicureans, that this type of friendship legitimizes flattery and the failure of friends to promote each other's self-knowledge and their development of character, as many desires can be fulfilled in this way.⁷ A shared desire can be very obscure and unfulfilling. One may also argue that insofar as we share an objective understanding, this is similarly indeterminate, without a shared fundamental desire. C.S. Lewis thus objected to the idea of friendship as a community of people merely sharing an understanding of the world. This is an attribute our friendships may share with the associations of the most uninteresting people.⁸

Charity, as Aquinas understood it, responds to both these difficulties. Charity is a love of the other for the sake of God, for the sake of the person insofar as their desire is fulfilled in God. Each individual's desire is for the universal good; particular goods, according to Aquinas, are desirable insofar as they resemble, or participate in, the universal good (Ia IIae 3, 8).⁹ The solution in these terms can be said to rest on loving another as a person, as it is as a person that the other resembles and participates in God's nature (Ia 29, 3). A solution such as this rests on Aquinas's distinction of the love of concupiscence (*amor concupiscentiae*) and that of friendship (*amor amicitiae*), which is charity, or the love of God, together with being the love most appropriately directed to persons.

Aquinas distinguished natural love, as unconscious of the nature of its object, from sensitive and intellectual love, which involve a knowledge of their object. In both, love is a tendency to movement toward the object (Ia IIae 26, 2). To know something or someone, one must bring the intelligible aspect of the object into one's self, but to love is to wish to go out into the world to form a unity with the object known. Aquinas distinguished two kinds of this second type of love, depending on the understanding of the object. The love of concupiscence is the desire of objects to be appropriately used for one's own ends. The love of friendship is a desire more appropriate to persons, as it is also a wish for the well-being of the other (IIa IIae 23, 1).

This conception of the love of persons derived from Aristotle, who objected, it seems to Plato, that love is "a feeling, friendship a state of character; for love

⁷ Arthur Richard Silleto, trans., "How One May Discern a Flatterer from a Friend," *Plutarch's Morals: Ethical Essays*. (London: George Bell and Sons, 1888). See 165 and 167.

⁸ C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (London: Bles, 1960). See the chapter on the love of friendship.

⁹ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger, 1948).

may be felt just as much towards lifeless things, but mutual love involves choice and choice springs from a state of character; and men wish well to those whom they love, for their sake, not as a result of feeling but as a result of a state of character” (1157b).¹⁰ This is the third of Aristotle’s three forms of the friendship: friendships of utility, pleasure and the good in the character of friends. Aquinas’ love of friendship corresponds most to the third form of friendship and is opposed to the friendship of utility, which is also evident from the ways Aquinas described the love of friendship, opposing it to the “love of wine, or a horse, or the like” (IIa IIae 23, 1). Therefore, McEvoy is justified in emphasizing the use that is made of another in the love of concupiscence. According to McEvoy, the difference is also in the appropriate objects of these two types of love: the love of concupiscence is directed to the accidental properties of a person, which derive from the ways individuals are related, the ways people appear to each other and are otherwise related to each other in the world. These accidents of the person can be of use to the other as the bearer of these accidents, as well as to one’s self. But the love of friendship is directed to the substantive nature of the person underlying these accidents.¹¹

There is an ambivalence in the love of concupiscence, or the wish for one’s own benefit. It can be good to have toward things to which it is appropriate, or it can be an instrument of abuse or exploitation when directed to a person.¹² On this understanding of the love of concupiscence, it is possible to view Sartre’s difficulties as arising in a process through which one learns the self-defeating character of the attempt to love a person with the love of concupiscence, or attempting to establish a unity with a person through a unity with the image of a person appearing solely within one’s own experience.

Maritain and Mounier developed this solution to these difficulties in the recognition of the substantive nature of a person, as opposed to the properties of persons arising from their interactions as individuals. Copleston seemed to be correct to hold that Maritain used the Thomistic idea of matter as the essential characteristic of the individual because the individual is distinguished from the point of view of matter, or spacial position, from other individuals,¹³ and matter

¹⁰ David Ross, trans. (revised by J. L. Ackrill and J. O. Urmson), *Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1980). See also J. Solomon, trans., “Ethica Eudemia,” *The Works of Aristotle*, ed. W.D. Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press) Bk. 7, for a parallel but more systematic discussion of friendship.

¹¹ McEvoy 387.

¹² McEvoy 391-392.

¹³ Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday, 1974) 9: 260.

is also, according to Maritain, a potentiality of being that is realized through having the form of a person:

We have characterized matter as an avidity for being, having of itself no determination and deriving all of its determinations from form. In each of us, individuality, being that which excludes from oneself all that other men are, could be described as the narrowness of the ego, forever threatened and forever eager to grasp for itself.¹⁴

Two aspects of matter come into this description: 1) that of being the potentiality of being, or of being the recipient of form; and 2) that of being the principle of the individuation of form, by adding a certain spacial position to the universal. But the person is realized in a type of subjectivity, clearly, for Maritain, a subjectivity arising from matter, as egotistic self-interest is a kind of craving for being that opposes itself to the realization of the same desires in other individuals. But the individual, in Maritain's view, is something insubstantial. To be substantial is to be like a mind: "outside the mind only individual realities exist. ... And also collective realities constituted of individuals, such as a society (*unum per accidens*)."¹⁵ The mark of a substance, or substantial reality, is a unity characteristic of mind, but Maritain was quick to remark that this is not Descartes' unity of thought taken independently of body, as the soul is united to the body as its form.

Also, it is interesting to remark, Aquinas opposed the distinction of the person and the individual that Boëthius apparently developed, holding that (Ia 29, 2) only the individual that has the essence, rather than the essence, or form, subsists; thus, the individual that has the essence, i.e., the person, is not the same as the essence. Aquinas defended Boëthius on grounds that he meant that the essence subsists only in the individual: Boëthius "says that genera and species subsist, inasmuch as it belongs to individual things to subsist ... but not because the species and genera themselves subsist" (Ia 29, 2). The substantive nature, or form, of the person must therefore be not only distinct but also (in some sense of identity in difference) united to the individual that has the form.

Thus, Maritain argued that in the case of the matter and form of the soul-body complex,

subsistence adds nothing to the quidditative order of its own line Y. But subsistence adds something utterly real, most real of all, to the quidditative order—outside the proper line of this order. It makes what is such, to be I; it makes a certain depth of reality and intelligibility to be also a depth for itself.¹⁶

In other words, the matter provides the person, as an essentially self-reflective being, with something to reflect on. Also, the subsistence of the form of a person

¹⁴ Maritain, *The Person* 37.

¹⁵ Maritain, *The Person* 34, n.

¹⁶ Jacques Maritain, *Distinguish to Unite or the Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. Gerald B. Phelan (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959) 433.

in the individuating matter “brings with it a positive perfection of a higher order. Let us say it is then a state of active and autonomous exercise, proper to a whole which envelops itself (in this sense that the totality is in each of its parts), therefore interior to itself, and possessing itself.”¹⁷ That is to say, self-reflection animates the matter, and the subjectivity of the individual, together with the difference made by mind in the development of a person, suggests that this occurs in two ways, depending on whether the emphasis is on the individuating matter or the substantial form of a person. Accordingly, the identity in difference of the matter and form of a person can be read as one of self-reflection occurring in two ways. According to one way of reflecting on experience, elements in experience are united through the idea of a greater whole, the substantial form of a person, in which otherwise disparate elements are united in the manner in which the clear-thinking mind integrates its ideas—ultimately, this must refer to the way one’s mind functions in God’s understanding. On the other hand, the same experience might be said to comprise elements externally related, insofar as a person is an individual. Externally related, these elements appear as sensations and instinctual drives coming from without. Insofar as one interprets one’s self and others in these terms, these are the accidental properties of a person, defining a person as an individual, rather than as a person in the sense of the substantial form.

A person is thus essentially a rational being, or one capable of forming a self-conception, who is most fully realized in an idea in God’s mind. Maritain cited Thomas,¹⁸ who wrote that “*person* signifies [signifies; *sic*] what is most perfect in all nature—that is, a subsistent individual of a rational nature” and that “this name *person* is fittingly applied to God; not, however, as it is applied to creatures, but in a more excellent way” (Ia 29, 3). We are persons in a less excellent way because only God is “self-subsistent” (Ia 29, 4), whereas finite persons depend for existence on God. Finite persons are nevertheless self-interpretive, and the solution Maritain’s view implies for Sartre’s issue is to remark that interpreting ourselves as persons, rather than merely as individuals, we are more able to be charitable to each other, whereas interpreting ourselves as individuals brings us to treat each other in ways more appropriate to wines and horses.

In knowing another as a rational being, one can know the other as free, as one’s freedom is to be found in self-reflection and in being independent of the sensual bodies in which our individuality is determined. Maritain thus contrasted the self-development of individuals with that of persons: “man will be truly a person insofar as the life of the spirit and of liberty reigns over that of the sense and passions.”¹⁹ To the extent that a person can perceive his or her self as

¹⁷ Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 438-439.

¹⁸ Maritain, *The Person* 32, 41.

¹⁹ Maritain, *The Person* 45.

rational, it is possible to be self-determining, rather than determined by objects of desire independently of the intellect. The individual person, however, remains within the mind-body complex, and the body can only be conceived in these terms as something useful in expressing the intentions of a person, just as Charles De Koninck suggested that the organism in biology must have a purpose to be related to the intellect.²⁰

This rationality, an ability to reflect on one's self, explains our freedom, in the sense of both enabling a person to be self-determining and being the ground for an indeterminate variety of forms of self-determination, ensuring a person is more than a set of qualities, more even than any self-definition can give:

Love seeks out this center, not, to be sure, as separated from its qualities, but as one with them. This is a center inexhaustible, so to speak, of existence, bounty and action; capable of giving and of giving itself; capable of receiving not only this or that gift bestowed by another, but even another self as a gift, another self which bestows itself.²¹

The object of love is therefore the substantive nature of a person, as freely self-interpreting and self-determining, and to see one's self and the other in these terms changes the way relationships among people develop. One cannot, then, exploit the object of love, or *achieve* a satisfaction of desire.

Writing in 1950, about four years after Maritain's *La personne et le bien commun* (with the essay, "Individualité et Personnalité"), Mounier described the relation of the matter and form of a person in similar terms, writing "my body ... is my exposition—to myself, to the world, to everyone else By its refusal to leave me wholly transparent to myself, the body takes me constantly out of myself into the problems of the world." In denying the full implications of Marxism, moreover, Mounier added that "a being which was nothing but objective would fall short ... of the personal life."²² Mounier also made direct reference to both Heidegger and Sartre. "When individualism reigns," according to Mounier,

all the efforts of comradeship, of friendship and love seem futile against the vast obstacles to human brotherhood. Heidegger and Sartre make much of this in their philosophy. For them, the need to possess and to overcome everlastingly obstructs communication. Associated man is necessarily a tyrant or slave. The very look of another steals somewhat of my universe, his presence restricts my liberty, his promotion is my demotion. As for love, it is a mutual disease, an inferno.²³

This passage alludes to the lovers in the early cantos of Dante's *Inferno*, who are wafted forever on the winds of their passions, rather than rooted in the love of the

²⁰ Charles De Koninck, *The Hollow Universe* (Québec, PQ: Les Presses de L'Université Laval, 1964) 94-96.

²¹ Maritain 39.

²² Mounier 11.

²³ Mounier 17.

other in God (Canto 5).²⁴ On Heidegger in relation to Sartre, Gilbert remarks that “Sartre explicitly denies that the experience of a shared purpose—as of the crew of a boat, of friends or of a couple—can (as his existentialist predecessor, Heidegger, thought) be a fundamental aspect of their relationship, rather than something which needs to be explained in terms of its underlying conflictual character.”²⁵ A shared purpose is open to Lewis’s objection, and Mounier implicitly objected to this solution on grounds that it fails to explain caring for another as an element in personal relationships.

Although Mounier emphasized the pervasiveness of the individualistic attitude and the ways it seems inevitable, a love of the person develops through caring for another. We know each other as individuals, we organize society as a society of individuals. Moreover, the capacity for self-reflection is insufficient to resolve this difficulty, as it is necessary to enter into mutually caring relationships to realize one’s own personality and those of others. Our ability to do this, again, depends on the grace of God: the sense of community is not for any one individual to create, and friendship with God is needed to make one able to establish this community with others.

A community with others depends on one’s self being a person, or, as Mounier remarked,

the person is only growing in so far as he is continually purifying himself from the individual within him. He cannot do this by force of self-attention, but on the contrary by making himself available ... and thereby more transparent both to himself and to others. Things then happen as though the person, no longer ‘occupied with himself’ or ‘full of himself’, were becoming able—then and thus only—to be someone else and to enter into grace.²⁶

The individual needs the mutual love of persons in community to be a person but needs to be a person to have this mutual love, and Mounier suggested that this vicious circle is broken by a friendship with God. The individual becomes a person fit to enter into community through God’s making it possible to form a community with him. Any attempt to love one’s self to make one’s self a person involves realizing one’s self to some extent independently of others. As a person is realized through interaction with others as individuals, this seems to be absurd. Mounier thus emphasized the need for God to transform the character of the individual. I take it that *to be available* is to overcome the preoccupations of the individual to enable one to accept this grace.

One is reminded in this way of Aristotle’s insistence that a good person must be capable of self-love in order to love another, and in Mounier this suggests that God’s grace dissolves the self-hatred that divides the malignant person. One’s self

²⁴ Dorothy L. Sayers, trans., *The Comedy of Dante Alighieri the Florentine. Cantica I: Hell* (London: Penguin, 1949).

²⁵ Gilbert 50.

²⁶ Mounier 19.

becomes acceptable to God, leading to the self-love needed to love others. Although Aristotle's conception of the friendship of character differs in the source of self-love and largely assumes our ability to form communities, rather than explaining it through God, the idea of the friendship of character reveals a flaw in Maritain's and Mounier's account of the love of a person.

A friendship of character is based, for Aristotle, on self-love, or self-acceptance, and the condition for this type of friendship is that friends be virtuous enough to accept themselves. As with friendships of utility and pleasure, a friendship of this type is conditional. It depends on each being without the extremes of character through which they might hurt themselves or each other and having an ability to accept themselves prior to entering into a friendship. Aristotle suggested that friendship is self-love shared by another, where each is able to accept the other's assessment of his or her self on grounds that they are each able to accept their assessments of themselves. Only with this self-acceptance are they able to live together, which, for Aristotle, was essential to friendship (1165b). Another's acceptance works as a confirmation of one's own self-acceptance, and the value of a friend, for Aristotle, is that of finding another virtuous self: the ability to respond to situations appropriately and to accept one's self "belong to the good man in relation to himself, and he is related to his friend as to himself" (1166a). According to Aristotle, a virtuous person wants friends because a virtuous person's "purpose is to contemplate worthy actions and actions that are his own" (1170a), which suggests that the love of character overlooks the uniqueness of persons.

Aristotle also stated that "the good man will need people to do well by" (1169a) and that "a certain training in virtue arises also from the company of the good" (1170a), which suggests that the friendship of character is actually very selfish. One can argue that to benefit the universal person is also to benefit the individual because the universal is instantiated in the individual. This reading of Aristotle is confirmed by Sir David Ross, who wrote that "the attempt to find within the self static elements of which one can be interested in and sympathise with the other is a failure; these relations involve two distinct selves." Ross remarked that in other places, Aristotle seemed to be correct to suggest that "the self is not a static thing but capable of indefinite extension. ... a man may so extend his interests that the welfare of another may become as direct an object of interest to him as his own."²⁷

The idea of the universal bears little relation to any actually existing individual. If the universal form of a person is a definition any individual potentially meets, then it difficult to determine this idea, as many people form differing conceptions of the ideal human type, which was Spinoza's objection to

²⁷ Sir David Ross, *Aristotle*, Intro., John L. Ackrill (London, UK: Routledge, 1995) 237.

abstract ideas.²⁸ One can argue for the ideal human type on grounds that it is functional, but then it is still impossible to justify this characterization of the ideal human without reference to subjective preferences.

A rejoinder to this objection to this conception of the friendship of character would be to remark that in the concrete universal the individuating properties of a person are retained in a modified form. Aquinas also, like Aristotle, argued that “likeness, properly speaking, is the cause of love” (Ia IIae 27, 3) and that “when a man loves another with the love of friendship, he wills good to him, just as he wills good to himself: wherefore he apprehends him as his other self” (Ia IIae 28, 1). As Maritain suggested, this similarity can be defined through a concrete idea of self-reflection. Although the idea of a person as a form of self-reflection can be said to more concretely define the subjectivity and intersubjectivity of persons, it is nevertheless abstract from the point of view of the integration of empirical intuition, which remains subjective, as it involves empirical intuition and the individual’s evaluation of it. If the attempt is made to justify the concrete idea of this subjectivity, such as in describing the way it relates one to the community, one again resorts to a justification on grounds of a subjective interpretation of the individual’s appropriate contribution to the community and the value of the community to the individual. Therefore, acts intended to benefit the other as the concrete universal involve subjective preferences regarding the ways empirical intuition is integrated in a person, and the problem of the subjective assessments of the other’s good that lead to exploitive affection remains unresolved. It therefore seems worth re-examining the relation of the individuating matter to the form, or idea, of a person.

The argument for the identity of the individuating matter and form of the person is found in Aristotle, who argued that 1) the principle of a thing’s activity is its form; 2) the mind is the principle of the activity of the body; and therefore, 3) the mind is the form of the body (414a, 4B15).²⁹ This argument is used by Aquinas (Ia 76,1), on grounds that the “soul is the primary principle of our nourishment, sensation, and local movement; and likewise of our understanding,” and it is easy to see how Maritain’s interpretation of the matter and form of a person fits this argument. The mind is the principle expressed through the body in fulfilling the mind’s purpose, and the external relations constituting the body are made sense of in terms of the mind’s purpose.

Aristotle went on to suggest that “mind is itself thinkable in exactly the same way as its objects are in the case of objects which involve no matter, what

²⁸ See Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics, Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect and Selected Letters*, trans. Samuel Shirley, ed., intro. Seymour Feldman (Cambridge, MA: Hackett, 1992) E2 P40 Schol 1.

²⁹ See “De Anima,” *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed., intro. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941).

thinks and what is thought are identical; for speculative knowledge and its object are identical” (430a2B5). Aquinas explained that here Aristotle should have remarked that there are things, such as our selves, “whose essences are not wholly immaterial but only abstract likenesses there of” (Ia 87,1). We are not like the angels, who are form without matter, and to know our selves is to know our selves in act, the realization in matter of the idea of the self. Maritain’s interpretation assists in dealing with the apparent tension in Aquinas’s thought between saying this and also that the active intellect, that is the idea of the mind in which its powers of abstraction are explained is God (Ia 79, 5). One’s mind’s ways of making sense of its experience is made sense of in God’s idea of one in the same way as this experience is made sense of through one’s own mind, the form of the body.

The argument for this is that 1) the object of the mind’s knowledge is the form of a body; 2) the mind knows itself; therefore, 3) the idea of the mind is a form of a body. Spinoza constructed this argument from the premise that the object of any idea is a body (E2P12 and E2P13), with the consequence that the idea of the mind is the idea of a body (E2P21). Also, Donald Davidson³⁰ developed the argument to show that the idea of the mind is the idea of the body as it is studied in mathematical physics, or as the neurophysiological body.³¹ A difficulty about Davidson’s version is that it fails to account for the self-reflection involved in premise 2, which as De Koninck remarked is evident from the paradoxes implied in attempts to make mathematics self-reflective.³²

Sartre objected to Spinoza’s idea of idea on grounds that the idea of idea always modifies the idea: “we always bump up against a nonself-conscious reflection and a final term. Or else we affirm the necessity of an infinite regress (*idea ideae ideae, etc.*), which is absurd.”³³ Spinoza argued that this infinite regress is unnecessary, since to form an adequate idea of idea is sufficient to know the mind. It is arguable that the adequate idea of self-reflection is the idea of the community of thinking and feeling subjects. This idea of idea is implied in the symbolic character of the self-reflection of the subject, but it in no way distorts the nature of the mind, because the mind is among these subjects with which it is compared in the idea of idea, and this can be known immediately in

³⁰ D. Davidson, “Mental Events,” *Experience and Theory*, ed. L. Foster and J.W. Swanson (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1970).

³¹ Davidson 99.

³² De Koninck 26. J.R. Lucas argued that Gödel’s theorem makes noncontradictory self-reference in mathematics; nevertheless it leaves the system of mathematics incomplete and indeterminate. See J.R. Lucas, *Freedom of the Will* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970) 124-129.

³³ Hazel E. Barnes, trans., intro., *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology* (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1956) 12.

one's self. However, Sartre's objection applies to any idea one might form of the ways the community makes sense to other individuals, as the concrete idea of idea is abstract with respect to other individuals' empirical intuition, the ways other individuals interpret their experience and their role in the community, and the relationship of the given in another individual's experience and the contribution of the community to an individual's nature. Sartre's objection applies in this way to Maritain's version of the idea of idea, as every attempt to interpret these elements in experience in terms of the concrete idea gives rise to a further idea of idea, which must be in turn related to the original through one's unique interpretation of one's self. Ultimately, an idea of the community of thinking and feeling subjects places only a necessary condition on one's understanding of one's experience.

One can otherwise argue that the object of knowledge is an intuition informed by an idea and that this is the same intuition that is informed by an idea of self-reflection. Accordingly, a person is an intuition informed by an idea of the community of thinking, experiencing and feeling subjects, or the community of living perspectives. On this view of the matter and form of a person, it is possible to account for the self-reflective character of persons, needed to understand them as self-determining, as well as the sensory experience, varying degrees of comprehension, and feelings needed to mark off a person as an individual. The ways people integrate empirical intuition to satisfactorily respond to events in their perspectives are their "unique ends." The unique end for a person is determined in the same way as the idea of the community is made meaningful to a person as an individual, through one's inability to conceive of one's experience otherwise without believing what one does not believe or trying to clearly imagine what one cannot clearly imagine. One's unique end is the most complete realization of the *conatus* of being that is compatible with one's circumstances, one's having already a certain self-conception, and the requirement that it be realized through a clearly imaginable and internally coherent intuition of being.

An intuition of being ensures that the separate natures of individual persons are not merely comparable, as in their respective concepts, but that they dynamically interact to produce their ideas of themselves. An intuition of being in this way performs the functions of matter: 1) the *conatus* of the intuition of being explains its potentiality for form; and 2) it allows us to identify individuals in a system of living perspectives insofar as it is a specifically spacial intuition, and thus it separates individuals in a spacial manifold. But it does this in a way that both is compatible with the idea, or quiddity, of a person containing every feature contributing to a person's uniqueness and helps us to understand how opposition in space contributes to the unique character of persons. On this account, it is moreover possible to know what it is like to be another person, as a person is intuition informed by a certain self-conception. One can know what it is like to be another person to the extent that the other makes his or her self-

conception accessible. Such knowledge depends on a shared intuition of being, rather than on a shared desire, as differences in desire can be understood through differences in self-conception. One can thus develop an idea of a person and his or her potential for development and interaction in much the same way as a geometer develops the idea of a theorem in plane geometry, exploring an intuition with given assumptions about a person's circumstances and his or her self-conception.

This differs from Maritain's connatural knowledge, as well as from the type of intuition Maritain argued for as a ground for the meaning of the arguments for God's existence, although it is in one respect like the "lived contradiction" between eternity and time in our experience, as the ground for the sixth way.³⁴ Also, it is similar in one respect to the intuition underlying philosophical reasoning, as one that "comes about in everyday life and in our relationship with person to person."³⁵ However, connatural knowledge is knowledge through inclination to a good independently of any self-interest,³⁶ for Maritain, and both connatural knowledge and the intuition underlying philosophical reasoning, according to Maritain, are ways of directly intuiting an order of being, whereas 1) the intuition underlying the idea of idea is a given quality of experience, on the basis on which an idea of the order of being is developed; 2) it involves more than the quality of coherence among ideas, also a quality of being clearly imaginable; and 3) while it is the basis for the order of discovery, it also provides a ground for developing ideas of the self in the order of demonstration, i.e., on the basis of the structure of ideas, rather than on one's intuited involvement in that structure. An argument for point 2 is that these attributes of being are some of those without which one is unable to conceive of things related to consciousness. As they are thus attributes in this way of consciousness, any self-conception must be compatible with them or depart in some respect from the reality of a person.

In these terms, Sartre's issue can be more adequately resolved. To love another as a unique person is to wish to act in ways comprehensible to the other, as expressions of both a will to benefit the other and a knowledge of his or her unique end. The issue developed by Sartre arises owing to an attempt to access the good for another in abstract terms, or subjectively, rather than in terms of his or her unique end. This solution ensures that the uniqueness of a person is recognized, together with the conditions on a person's self-realization deriving from the nature of self-reflection. One might have two objections. One might object that the concrete idea implies the individuality of the idea's object: it is a unity developed through difference. Consequently, all talk of intuition is unnecessary, as Sartre's objection to the idea of idea does not hold. However, this

³⁴ Peter O'Reilly, trans., *Approaches to God* (New York: Macmillan, 1954) 71.

³⁵ Jacques Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1953)

³⁶ Maritain, *Range of Reason* 67.

implies with respect to the love of persons that the other is compelled to be different. But the extent of the difference, along with the extent of one's own comprehension of one's self, is something one discovers. One might object that this account fails to adequately answer questions that for Maritain and Mounier are readily answered: How is one to respond to the concerns expressed by Plutarch and Lewis about friends' obligations to help each other achieve the good in some objective sense? Why is it that the love of a person must be mutual? What is the relation of the love of self to one's love of another person? Why should I love myself? Why should I love another person?

This objection misrepresents the significance of the idea of a person as a self-reflective intuition of being, which has more to do with the way a concrete idea of a person is established than with its results. Both Maritain's and Mounier's view and the one developed here construct the idea of a person as an interpretation of the active nature of the individual, but the latter undercuts to some extent the indeterminacy of the concrete idea with respect to the individual, by grounding it in a clearly imaginable and internally coherent intuition. But it has many of the same results. For example, to benefit the other as a person, one's efforts cannot be allowed to discount the nature of a person as self-reflective and free. Consequently, one normally cannot benefit the other in ways incomprehensible to the other. A person or one who is potentially or partially a person but who cannot be made to understand these acts is exceptional. Efforts to benefit such people must obviously concentrate on making them able to comprehend their good. To benefit rational beings, it is also necessary to promote their unique ends only insofar as this is compatible with their continuing to be free, with the result that Maritain is correct to abhor a preoccupation with the senses and instincts to the extent that this detracts from one's freedom.

The common good for rational beings as individuals must be derived through their interdependence, rather than through each one's being another self. The admonition to love another as one's self is a pragmatic rule of thumb, necessary to the extent of the failure of intimate knowledge and functional to the extent of the conformity of individuals to a universal. Insofar as people are variable within and between themselves, our common good is a social order in which the entire diversity of existing ends compatible with the freedom and love of persons is promoted. However, for this to be other than a mere compromise to the variability within and between persons or an agreement to be exploited for each other's separate ends, it has to be a mutual love among persons.

One's love of persons can only be mutual in the sense that to love another as a person, you must be willing to make yourself a function of the other's unique end, but for this endeavour to be to any degree successful, the other must be disposed to love you and to love you as a person. One would in this way make one's self a necessary element in the way the other makes sense of his or her experience. Such love does seem to manifest itself through the recognition of the

other as another self. However, it is not because the other resembles one in any but exceedingly abstract ways but because a concern for the other's unique affirmation of life is made essential to one's own, which may also justify a certain extraordinary altruism.

One can understand Mounier's concern in suggesting one is usually unable to have a directly personal relationship with the majority of people. One doesn't have to reassess the particular nature and importance of one's own life when any one of the majority of people dies, whereas with one's lover or one's child, the matter is usually different. However, it is unnecessary to love one's self through another, as one can identify and love one's self as a unique subject through the idea of the community and the way one makes unique sense of one's experience. An *idea* in this sense is both Cartesian and neo-Platonic, involving an experience of the subject of the idea as well as an order of being in God's intellect. This is an order of being determined through the intuition of being, which is to some extent the order of a concrete but relatively abstract idea directly intuited but to some extent depends on the individual's involvement in this structure of reality, even as it is formed in the infinite intellect. To love another person is to will to concretely realize the idea of the community among individuals in the world. The requirements that it be clearly imaginable and internally coherent help ensure that it is objective, or that however concrete or abstract the idea, it defines the same intelligible community of individuals for each, with each contributing to the realization of the idea in ways comprehensible to every other.

To love one's self is therefore to will to act in ways conducive to one's freedom and the satisfaction of one's unique end. It is arguably self-defeating to deny under every conception one's own affirmation of life, at least insofar as this is compatible with the common good for persons, which is an argument for a certain conditional love of one's self. Self-love is necessary to the love of another person, as offering one's self as a benefit to another implies that there is a reason to love one's self. Thus, it is also arguable that for a person to will less than the common good for persons as the mutual love of persons would be self-defeating, as it implies an unnecessarily restricted love of one's self. This is an argument for a certain conditional love of other persons, at least insofar as such love can be mutual. However, it is also a reason to view the common good for persons as individuals—the social order that promotes the widest diversity of free ends compatible with the love of persons—as something more than a compromise to each one's variability or an agreement to be exploited for each other's separate ends. It provides a reason to say, with seeming paradox, that although none of the unique ends of the majority of people can be directly essential, the common good for persons as individuals is, if it is the only available order among individuals to even partially satisfy one's inherent desire to realize the mutual love of persons.

This understanding of love among persons retains much of Maritain's and Mounier's view, especially an understanding of a person as a self-reflective,

essentially rational being. One recognizes, according to either view, another self as a gift. My point is that knowledge of a person as a ground for love cannot be developed through comparison with an ideal but through exploring modes of self-reflection compatible with the ideal, through a clearly imaginable and internally coherent intuition of being. Understanding a person in this way enables one to recognize a person not only as rational but also as someone whose way of being rational is in important respects unique.