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## The Transcendental-Phenomenological Ontology of Persons and the Singularity of Love

### Abstract:

Reference to persons with personal pronouns raises the issue of the primary referent and its nature. “I” does not refer to a property or cluster of properties. This contrasts with our identifying grasp of persons. A person is a radical singularity and thus stands in contrast to a kind or sortal term. The individuation of persons is not adequately grasped by “definite descriptions” or “eidetic singularities.” In spite of the seeming possibility of persons being wholly identical in terms of properties, in other words, “doubles,” the core referent of reference to persons is not to what is individuated merely by mere numerical differences or spatial-temporal, and essential-eidetic determinations. Rather we have to do with a “non-sortal unique essence.” What “I” refers to is a self-individuating substance. This raises questions for the proper referent of “love.” What is it that love intends or loves if persons are basically radical singularities. What does one love and why does one love if whom one loves is most essentially non-sortal? The question of the ontological status of persons requires integrating the status of being transcendental I’s, and thus being non-temporal, non-spatial, non-sortal, simple (non-composite) substances and thus not homogenous with the experienced world.

### Keywords:

Husserl, Sokolowski, Klawonn, first-person reference, substance, individuation, eidos, love, immortality

Part I  
The Radically Unique Referents of “I” and “You”

1. “Person” is a Non-Sortal Term

Robert Sokolowski has noted the strangeness of the noun “person.”<sup>1</sup> The reason for this strangeness is that “person” is a “radically individualized term” and its logical function is more like the demonstrative pronoun, *this*, than a general noun (“man”), name (“the USA”) or “title” (the prime minister) we use for the predicative assignment of qualities, attributes, properties, features, forms, and so forth. “Person,” like “this,” is a bearer or marker of what has, or is to receive, properties, but itself is not a property. Its manner of reference is “non-ascriptive.”

Sokolowski also states that the radical individual we refer to when we refer to persons is a “singularity.” And for this designation to become clear the first thing to note is that “person,” as Sokolowski with the help of Robert Spaemann observed, is not a “sortal” term, that is, it does not name a sort or kind of thing or being, as a genus or a species or type, like human, animal, female, republican or liberal. In these cases, we may single out “a human” or “raccoon,” as individuals of this sort or kind.

But surely, one might say, we may speak of persons as kinds, and we all single out individual persons or speak of “a person.” We may ask how many persons are in the room. Or we might overhear a government official saying to an underling: I want to learn how many tigers, elephants and persons were killed in the earthquake. Are these not instances of the kind we call “person”? And consider how we might say to someone quite unfamiliar with an animal, “Come, I want to show you an elephant.” Is this not essentially similar to saying to someone, who might be unfamiliar with the term “person,” and we might add, prior to looking in the mirror at both of our reflections, “Look here, I will show you a person.” Or imagine how someone might want to say, “Come, I want to show you a *Mensch*,” which would (certainly with the Yiddish overtone) have a different meaning, less ontological and rather more morally normative, than when the extra-terrestrial, upon returning to her home planet, says to her friends before presenting her digital images of humans, “Come, I want to show you a *Mensch*, also called ‘human.’” If we can speak of “person” as a kind, and if we can speak of individual persons, could one not similarly say, “Come, I want to show you a person”?<sup>2</sup>

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1) This paper is not only very much indebted to Robert Sokolowski, but as with much of this writer’s work Prof. Sokolowski has been a *sine qua non*. I want to once again thank him for his inspiration over the years. Furthermore, parts of this paper reflect some of the more ample analyses in my *Who One Is: Book 1, Meontology of the I* and *Book 2: Existenz and Transcendental Phenomenology*.

2) An anonymous reviewer of this paper made the important observation that this essay relies on the assumption of the compatibility of some forms of language analysis and a Husserlian theory of language, perhaps implying that the conventionality and contingency of language forms do not of themselves reflect a universal deep-structure that merit being used for essential philosophical distinctions or the showing of essences themselves. This pertains especially to our dependence on the forms of personal reference, especially when it is known that some languages use forms of personal reference by way of the mediation of the forms of address directed to the (second- or third- person interlocutor). And, in general, one might say that rules of language, whether in speaking or writing, are not of the nature that they have jurisdiction over facts and, a fortiori, essences. Of course, here we cannot address these issues at length, but I think it is important to say that Husserl and linguistic philosophers such as John Austin agree that there is a “performative” feature in making statements. And this point is not a matter of a pragmatic conception of meaning, but an essential one. This means that whereas a “locutionary act” of speaking a declarative sentence is not the same as the speech-act or illocutionary act like promising or commanding, nevertheless making a statement points, with its implicit positing of its truth, points to a responsible judgmental act by the speaker. This pointing facilitates the introduction to transcendental phenomenology via the “transcendental pre-fix” (see below in the text), that is to say, the way a declarative sentence implies the tacit “I believe,” “I think,” and so forth by the speaker. This may be said to supplement Husserl’s own early and sustained analyses of “occasional acts,” his word for “indexicals.” Another link of some forms of linguistic phenomenology with Husserl touch on the nature of Husserlian eidetic analysis in terms of free imaginative variation. Husserl always spoke of this as beginning with a given sense of the *analysandum* as surrounded by a field of indeterminate determinability which is

Yet Sokolowski calls attention to the resistance we have to a sortal use of the term “persons.” The mode of reference to the referent that is the singularity of “person” is closer to the mode of reference to *this* than the mode of reference to “human.” Consider how we would not know what was going on if someone said: “Come here, I want to show you a *this*.” The indefinite article “a” suggests an instance of a kind, and all we are going to get is an instance of something that is, as “this,” not an instance of a kind at all but what is bereft of kinds or just a particular serving as a place holder awaiting the ascription of a kind or property. And the oddness here would be no less if someone said, “Come here, I want to show you a Barack Obama.” Proper names, like “person,” similarly target radical individuals we call persons and the only way we are comfortable with the notion of meeting an instantiation of Barack Obama is to render this person we are meeting into an instance of a kind, for example, a smooth politician, a New Deal Democrat, and so forth. But the proper name, “Barack Obama,” does not refer to the sortal term, “smooth politician.” It refers to the radical individual, this person, Barack Obama.<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, “person” is not quite captured by the notion of *sui generis* if this is taken to mean “one of a kind” or a set having only one member. In such formulations one hears the dominance of a sortal term which contingently happens to be instantiated only by one member. This does not capture the radical nature of the individuality or singularity of “person.”

When we speak of “person” as a non-sortal term we speakers are referring in the third-person to what, or rather to whom, for herself or himself, is of necessity first-personal and capable of using “indexicals” (also called “occasional expressions,” “token reflexives,” etc.), that is, words which of necessity signify the speaker and the speaker’s situation. Thus “this,” “here,” “now,” and “I” are all examples of words which of necessity indicate the speaker using them and without knowing this we lack what is essential to the display brought about by the particular acts of reference. In this sense “person” resembles what has been called a “quasi-indexical” where we can use a third-personal pronoun in such a way as to refer to another’s first-personal experiencing. Thus: “The editor of *Eidos. A Journal for Philosophy of Culture* believes that he himself is a millionaire” may be contrasted with “The editor of *Eidos. A Journal for Philosophy of Culture* believes that he is a millionaire.” In the latter case the speaker does not secure that the one who believes he is a millionaire is *himself*, the editor, who is self-aware of himself in this respect. The speaker leaves open the possibility that the one whom the speaker refers to as the editor is in fact thinking that someone else, not he, the editor, is a millionaire. A quasi-indexical, such as the third-person term, “he himself,” indicates our, albeit necessary and fallible, access to others’ first-person experiences.<sup>4</sup>

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a kind of generic pre-giveness of what one wants, for example, the essence of a promise, imperialism, rudeness, and so forth, but the reflection advances by searching for the specifying differences which are brought to light in the course of the analysis. Here (e.g., *Ideen I*, §69) there is not yet what was obvious, the use of language, the right word, with of course the imagination, to bring forth the specifying differences which capture the “essence.” But this is evident in the actual working of Husserl, and his best disciples – as well as in the analyses of the best language philosophers like John Austin. A final connected observation on language and phenomenology. Husserl opposes the view that linguistic formulation is just accidental dress to the full-blown thoughts we already have pre-linguistically. Indeed, we do not know what we think until we put in words what we “mean to say,” what we “want to say.” Our meaning-consciousness has an essential connection with the material world by way of language, and therefore the manifestation of the necessities of being are tied to this vehicle which is so clearly relative to culture and history. For a more ample discussion of some of these points see my “Aspects of the Transcendental Phenomenology of Language,” *Eidos. A Journal for Philosophy of Culture* 3, no.1 (2019): 6–29.

3) I recall as a child being puzzled when I would meet another person with the same proper surname as someone I already knew with this name. After overcoming the conviction that the other person could simply not have this same name based on the recognition that here we had a singularity violated, I now had the conviction that there would have to be a certain sameness to all people named, for example, Harold or Dorothy. And thenceforth I always looked for what it was about this person with the proper name that made him a Harold or her a Dorothy. Now the singularity of the person was preserved but the singularity of the proper name was in danger of becoming a sortal term.

4) For this paragraph I am indebted to the work of my colleague Hector-Neri Castañeda, see Castañeda, *The Phenomeno-Logic of the I: Essays on Self-Consciousness*.

Similar to the quasi-indexical, the term “person” although a third-person term, of necessity refers to what has first-person experiences. When we refer to persons we are of necessity referring to what has first-personal experiences analogous to our own references to ourselves as ourselves. (This will be of interest when we later discuss “love.”)

“First-person” properly refers in grammar to the one speaking, not the one spoken to, or to what or whom one is speaking about. The first-person singular form in English is “I.” First-person singular experiences properly refer to what makes possible the achievement of “I.” If we may assume that each has a non-reflexive or at least pre-reflexive awareness of herself, that is, each is non- or pre-reflexively self-aware, we then may assume that, given this person’s linguistic competence, she may say “I” and thereby have indicated that this prior non-reflexive familiarity with herself. In short, she will have shown that I, and anyone else, through the act of reflection proper to saying “I” makes myself present to myself “as myself.”

As with all demonstrative pronouns, the personal pronouns refer non-ascriptively, that is, when they refer by themselves they do not ascribe or assign any properties. Thus “he,” “you,” “that,” “this,” and “I” are ways of referring non-ascriptively. Of course, typically they are used in a wider syntactical context. Thus Sokolowski and Castañeda both make the rich point that declarative sentences have an anonymous transcendental pre-fix or declarative “I” functioning as their condition. The achievement of “The plant is diseased” is always also, at least tacitly, “I believe that,” “I think that,” “I see that,” and so forth, “the plant is diseased.” The declarative sentence indicates not simply a mind-independent biological event in the tree, nor merely is there an anonymous “from nowhere” reporting of the state of affairs, that is, the plant’s being diseased; rather besides showing the state of affairs of the tree’s health, there is a signaling that the display of the tree’s condition is owed to the speaker who takes a measure of responsibility that is indicated in the way the declarative sentence is tacitly but necessarily framed by the transcendental pre-fix.

## 2. Non-Sortal Feature of “Person” is Founded in the Non-Sortal Feature of What “I” Refers To

In this Section we wish to attend to a distinction between “person” and what “I” refers to. Although “person” refers to what is non-sortal, there is also a clear sense in which what we mean by “persons” necessarily involves sortal terms. Think of how we identify one another in terms of distinctive bodily appearances and types, genders, races, traits, character, dispositions, and so forth. Think of how we change from being one sort of person to another. Think of how one’s (a person’s) identity is established by a recognizable, identifiable, constellation of properties, and think of the difficulty of prying one’s personal identity from one’s personality, which, typically, is more readily thought of as having changing qualities. Think of how our moral evaluation of persons is inseparable from the universally describable excellences we name virtues, and how the moral ugliness of human persons is described by the vitiating qualities we call vices, all of which are referred to with sortal terms. Even if we want to say that the identifiable person with the name, for example, Donald Trump, is the unique constellation of such common features or properties, even if we want to say that each has signature properties, we still acknowledge that persons are property-laden or are laced with properties, that is, are the bearers of such properties. When we refer to persons with personal pronouns and proper names, these refer not to the properties but to the person. When we use personal pronouns or proper names, we refer to “persons” and this is a non-sortal term. In such references we are referring not necessarily even implicitly to the sortal properties but to the one who has these properties, whether they be unique properties or not.

But how do we refer to the non-sortal aspect of the person if our knowledge of the person is laced with properties? Is not there a *Je-ne-sais-quoi*? Surely our referring to the person in relation to her properties is what or whom this person herself refers to in relating herself to her sortal features, that is, what (whom) she

refers to when she refers to herself with “I” and says something about herself. Yet, in our references to persons having such qualities we ultimately aim at what this person herself refers to when she says “I,” that is, not a “what,” but “whom.”

The referent of “I” is the lived agent of her life, as in her promising or in the agency of manifestation. “I” appears only implicitly for the philosopher in declaratives as “The tree is diseased.” Any such declarative involves the “I think,” “I believe,” and so forth, which is the implicit, not stated, necessary “transcendental pre-fix.” In the declarative sentence “The tree is diseased,” the focused on substrate of predication is “the tree.” The manifestation, “the being-diseased of the tree,” may not be said to be a predicate of the transcendental I. Yet reflection on this agency of manifestation enables us to refer to the I third-personally, and assign it the property, for example, of being a believer, thinker or a perceiver in regard to, for example, the health of the tree.

But actually “I” refers to “myself as myself” who is now or, more likely, prior to reflection, was actively doing or involved with such and such in a certain kind of engagement, for example, perceiving, judging, evaluating, and so forth.<sup>5</sup> For the phenomenological agent of manifestation what “I” refers to is the nominative source-pole of the stream of acts and sensa, all of which are kinds. In saying this we thus have rendered “I” in sortal terms, as source pole of the stream of acts and sensa. Similarly, the I may be assigned the status of source pole not as nominative but as dative of manifestation of what is manifested, that is, all appearances of... are to someone, explicated in most Roman languages with a first-person dative form (*mihi, gli, à moi, mir*, etc.). The manifestation of this occurs upon an act of reflection which, as an act presencing one’s own stream of acts and sensa (as one’s own stream of acts and sensa, subsequently becomes part of this stream.

Are these not sortal properties by which we know what “I” refers to? Yes, in so far as these are essential-sortal descriptions of the phenomenological agent. These issue forth from reflective acts which move the first-person referent into an object of reflection, amenable to third-personal noun-forms, as “the I” or “the myself.” But apart from and/or prior to reflection I am non-ascriptively self-present. And with “I” as in “I would like you to...” or “I think the tree is diseased” the reference is non-ascriptive to what is non-sortal.

“Myself as myself” brings to light the basic point that the saying of “I” is unlike any other act of manifestation where the transcendental pre-fix is in play but not itself a theme. Only with the achievement of “I” is “I” a referent and properly able to become a theme, but its being an object of reflection before me as an object in the world is implicitly negated because what is signaled is precisely its status as transcendental pre-fix, or as nominative agent of manifestation of all that is manifest, which when manifested, that is, made an accusative of reflection, shows itself. Now it is manifested, but at the same time it is manifest as manifesting and not manifested insofar as it is manifesting. Here in the pre- or non-reflective self-awareness I is *phainesthai*, not *phainomenon*.<sup>6</sup>

In this way I may reflect upon myself as a moral agent or as an agent of manifestation, and make myself a substrate of predication, and even render myself in the third-person, as “the only person in this room reflecting on the difference between the ‘I’ as a lived agent of manifestation and the ‘I’ as a substrate of which agency of manifestation is predicated.” Here we may merely mention that the obvious kinship here with classical discussions of substance from Aristotle to the present. Substances are that which exist by themselves and that in which accidents, for example, perceptual qualia, inhere. The Lockean substance was the unknown “I know not what” which itself was not given, not manifested, except as the non-given but postulated substrate for “givens,” for example, colors, sizes, surfaces, feelings, and so forth. In Husserl’s reflection on “things” he suggested we

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5) Dieter Henrich discovered Fichte’s discovery of the referent of “I” to be not so much in “*Das Ich setzt schlechthin sich selbst*” as more precisely, “*Das Ich setzt sich schlechthin als Sich-selbst-Setzen*.” See Henrich, for example, “Fichtes ‘Ich’” in his *Selbstverhältnisse*, 74.

6) See Hobbes, *De Corpore*, chapter 25, in *Human Nature and De Corpore Politico*, 213.

do not perceive directly the substance or thing itself in the very sense of the properties as accidents or aspects or profiles of the thing. The thing is “apperceived” through its appearings or manifestations which are always of. . ., in other words, something.

But in first-person reflection, as Kant perhaps was first to note, we have an immediate intuition of substance. Whereas in perceived things the substance is postulated or apperceived, that is, never intuited immediately, in the concept of “I” substance is originally and immediately intuited. Indeed, it is from the lived “intuited” experience of “I” that we, that is, the philosophical tradition, have borrowed the concept of substance.<sup>7</sup> We will be returning to the topic of “substance.”

We can further develop this theme of the non-sortal referent of “I.” Consider how the informative use of “I” by which we refer to ourselves as persons in the world (for example, in an autobiographical sketch as part of a job application), requires a categorical identifying perception or knowing that does not take place in our non-reflexive awareness of ourselves or in the non-ascriptive self-referential self-knowing in the achievement of “I.” Sydney Shoemaker<sup>8</sup> and H.-N. Castañeda (see note 3) have shown that efforts which do not employ indexicals, especially first-personal indexicals, to establish who I am in the sense that the description is a description of me, or that the person being described is myself, are doomed to failure. Thus, token-reflexive-free, third-personal descriptions, for example, a definitive biography of JG Hart, might be read by me with great interest but if I could not substitute “I,” “mine,” “me,” and so forth, for the descriptions of that person, JG Hart, it is not only conceivable that it be about someone else (who might happen to be named JG Hart) but it is conceivable that I honestly could state my ignorance, if not deny, that it refers to me.

A corollary of this consideration is that there is a kind of integrity to what “I” refers to in the first-person that does not require that I, in order to refer to me, use a third-person indexical-free term. Thus there is no third-person special characteristic that one has to think that one possesses, or which passes generally and personally for the indelible or signature mark of oneself, from which it would follow that this person is myself. Each property that would be singled out as decisively indicative of me and necessarily a property belonging to me would never be mine in such a way that it would identify me unless that property were already manifestly suffused with I myself and mineness and unless there was a sense of me and mine which enabled me to apply these indexical terms to the property or description in question.

This means that the condition for first-personal identifying knowledge is that there is a kind of self-awareness which ineluctably accompanies me and does not permit me to ask, at this level, such a question as “how do I know that the one I refer to with ‘I’ is me and not someone else?” “How do I know that when I say ‘I am in pain’ I am referring to me and not someone else?” “How do I know that these memories and retentions I am now having are mine and not someone else’s?” And as I am non-reflexively aware of myself without an identifying knowledge of myself as this person in the world with Others, so I say “I” without of necessity including in my reference my knowledge of myself as an identifiable person in the world. We may say that in non-reflective self-awareness as well as in the achievement of “I,” “if I am aware of myself without inferring this from anything else I know about myself, my knowledge that it is myself of whom I am aware has to be independent, at least in some respects, of knowing anything else about myself.” This means that in being a self-aware and achieving “I,” “I can be aware of myself as myself without being aware of myself as anything except – myself.”<sup>9</sup>

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7) See Kant, *Lectures on Metaphysics*, 45–46. See also Klawonn, *Mind and Death*, 55–61. Husserl himself honors Berkeley for refuting Locke’s “I know not what” by recognizing spirit or the I-subject, not physical things, as the proper place to display substance. See Husserl, *Erste Philosophie*, I, 152. See Berkeley, *Berkeley’s Philosophical Writings*, 191–196.

8) See Shoemaker, *The First-Person Perspective and Other Essays*, especially chapter 1.

9) See Brook, “Kant, Self-Awareness and Self-Reference.” <http://www.careleton.ca/~abrook//kant-self.htm>.

Indeed, a young child learns to use “I” without knowing much or anything at all about her identity in the world with Others; and an amnesiac says “I” inerrantly even though she might not know who in the world she is. Again she might read her definitive autobiography and several biographies that are about the person she is known to have been prior to the time of the accident causing the amnesia, and be without any recognition of herself being that person portrayed in the biography, and yet she can achieve “I” unfailingly in her first-person indexical avowal that she does not recognize that person who others have every reason to believe is she.<sup>10</sup>

Another famous contemporary example that enables us to think about the uniqueness of persons and I’s is that taken from fiction where the conditions are evoked which make, or strive to make, conceptually possible that one, in other words, a person, is doubled, or has a double, or that one person is many. Dostoevsky has a famous novella, *The Double*, but the most well-known contemporary philosophical discussion of this is that of Derek Parfit. However, I believe that the philosophically richest working out of the issue is that of the Danish philosopher, Erich Klawonn.<sup>11</sup>

Consider how, subsequent to my being beamed up from Star-Trek’s tele-transportation unit in Warsaw the officials in Warsaw are awaiting news of JG Hart’s safe arrival in Bloomington. The announcement comes that JG Hart has arrived. But unfortunately there is a glitch: JG Hart is still in Warsaw. Thus we have evoked for us the conceptual possibility of two absolutely identical JG Hart’s; the only difference between them for us observers in the second- and third-person is a numerical distinction. Permit us to overlook the difference between one’s being here and the other’s being there. Here we have a contemporary challenge to Leibniz’s, and perhaps Scotus’s, view, of the identity of indiscernibles: If two things are absolutely identical then they must be one thing. All the properties imaginable are the same, and, of course, because of the advanced nano-technology and particle physics involved in the teletransporter, the neurological structures upon which the streams of consciousness supervene are identical. The upshot of Klawonn’s discussion is that the analysis of the problem as it typically unfolds in the third-person enables that all the properties of the first JG Hart Warsaw may be evident in the second JG Hart Bloomington.

But the philosophical nugget most worth mining surfaces if the analysis is transposed from the third-person to include the first-person. Now I, the referent of whichever JG Hart, would say to the other JG Hart: “Whoever in the world you are, and regardless of what right you have to say that you are JG Hart, in other words, supposing your definite description coincides exactly with mine, you are not me and I am not you.”

Now there is a temptation to make little of this and say that this sense of the unique individuality is merely formal or merely numerical and that it does not really compare in richness or get at the more authentic and deep sense of individuality and individuation that we and others come to establish by identifying criteria and that we associate with our individuation by our being persons in the world with Others and by reason of our growth into authentic selves through virtue and personal relationships. One must grant the moral, psychological, and even ontological importance of these forms of individuality and individuation, (and also acknowledge the difficulty of grasping how the teletransporter can transport, e.g., someone’s generosity). Indeed, the richness of a person is precisely through this process of individuation of one’s life in the world with Others. I nevertheless want to urge that we think of this ineluctable non-criterial, non-identifying sense of oneself, especially as it emerges in the philosophical reflections on the prior non-reflexive, non-identifying self-awareness, but also in the conceivable situations of amnesia or being confronted with one’s double, as not “merely formal,” not

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10) An anonymous reviewer of this essay noted correctly that the necessary and interpersonal and intersubjective aspects of the ontology of persons are neglected. But I hope that my *The Person and the Common Life* plus both volumes of *Who One Is* partially make up for this deficit here without egregious inconsistencies to the claims here.

11) One can find the latest and final exposition of Erich Klawonn’s position in his *Mind and Death*; see note 7 above.

“merely numerical” differences, but rather materially rich – even though what this “material richness” means here is non-sortal. It is because the proper sense of “knowing” is precisely the articulation of properties, that the temptation is strong to dismiss this other non-sortal knowing through the non-ascriptive forms of reference as philosophically uninteresting, as a *nihil negativum*.

### 3. Radical Singularity and Eidetic Singularity

But it is not a *nihil negativum*. On the contrary, this non-ascriptive, non-sortal self-knowing is of considerable philosophical significance. And perhaps it even qualifies, in an appropriate situation, as an “existential declarative,” to use Robert Sokolowski’s terms. We have here a notion of individual or singularity which is *per se* and not *per accidens*, in other words, not an individual by reason of any consideration apart from itself. Much of the rest of this paper will strive to show that the reference to the non-sortal first- (and second-personal) referent is not a mere negation or merely formal matter but in its own way “materially” rich.

The notion of such a radical individual, in the rich sense of being aware of itself, in other words, oneself, without needing to think of anything else besides oneself, that is, that I am me myself in a way that is not dependent on my being any of the properties that make up JG Hart, is theologically hinted at for the Christian believer in *Ephesians* I: 4 when we hear that each is chosen (in Christ) before the foundation of the world. This perhaps may be taken to be stating that each is a singularity referred to as herself/himself which is more basic and prior to all the considerations of biology, history, culture, physics, and so forth, which we typically appeal to as the sources of our individuality. In *The New English Bible* translation of *Romans* VIII: 9 one finds: “For God knew his own before ever they were, and also ordained that they should be shaped to the likeness of his Son.” With the help of the Thomist thesis on the divine exemplarity of all creatures, Meister Eckhart will have each say, with Christ: “Before Abraham was I am”: Only as the eternal existing form of “myself” as one with the divine essence can it properly be said: “[*Der Vater*] gebiert mich nicht allein als seinen Sohn, er gebiert mich als sich und sich als mich und mich als sein Sein und als seine eigene Natur.” “I myself,” as originally one with the divine essence, do not need “God” nor was there “God” for “me, I myself.” As one with the divine essence, the exemplary “I myself” is not, was not, nor will be dependent on a transcendent creative principle.<sup>12</sup>

Another ancient theological speculation suggests that this position of transcendental phenomenology has had some possible adumbrations. One is in Plotinus’ proposal that proper names, such as “Socrates,” referred to a unique individual *eidōs*. Another adumbration is suggested in St. Thomas’ effort to give an ontological theory of angels. Each angel can say: I am me myself in my self, in my essential being, not through any (created) determination outside me, but by reason of my being named, called, and chosen. Here we have the theory that the angels, for example, Gabriel, Raphael, and Michael, differ not through being instances of kinds, that is, not through being different individuals within the same species, but rather they are radical individualities by being essentially different, in other words, radically distinct kinds from one another, kinds that themselves are individual essences. Thus Raphael differs from Michael not so much like the one human being differs from another by reason of having different *materia signata quantitate*, but rather it is more like species differ, for example, like an elephant differs from a fly. If this were Aquinas’ complete view he would seem to admit the possibility of *Doppelgänger*. But this is not the whole story for Aquinas because for him the most basic created principle of *esse* becomes the principle of personhood as a suppositum. That is, each person is individually created by a distinct creative act whereby its act of being, its *esse* accounts for a radi-

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12) See my “Die Individualität des wahren göttlichen Selbst,” in *Meister Eckhart: Erkenntnis und Mystik des Lebens: Forschung und Beiträge der Lebensphänomenologie*, 383–407.



cally individual being and to this extent Thomas's view seems to approach the one we are urging of a radical singularity in humans also.<sup>13</sup>

Of course, the most basic theological case for the richness of a knowing of a non-sortal unique essence is perhaps St. Thomas' view that with God *esse* and *essentia* are identical, and the infinity of God's being (*ipsum esse subsistens*) means that God can never be presented by the human capacity to articulate to-be or being itself in finite concepts.

But, someone might object: do we not have a jump start with metaphysics, that is, the knowing of being-as-being? But as Sokolowski has shown, this is an odd knowing which only appears at first glance to be the same as knowing a tree as a tree, or a diseased tree as diseased, this plant as a rose, this virus as coronavirus, and so forth.<sup>14</sup> In any case the theological concept of *Ipsum Esse Subsistens* is rich indeed, but it is not truly a knowing of being itself whose extension is infinite and absolute, but rather it is a concept of that of which all that is conceived is a finite participation. Thus our having the "concept of being" as well as that of "infinite subsisting being" are empty intentions for the finite thinker, and both are infinitely removed from a knowing involving a proper knowing through filled intention of "God."

But the theological theory and practice are based on somehow "knowing God" otherwise we would not know the revelation as divine. The basic teaching is that with grace one is enabled through faith and the special gifts instantiated in mystics, and we are invited to practice the inculcated disciplines of the contemplative tradition. In all this there would seem to be a profound appreciation of a non-sortal knowing, that is at the foundation of the spiritual and ecclesial life. This is manifest in the exhortation to pray and be alone with God, silently adoring, loving, and listening while banning all conceptual and imaginative activity. This is to be found, for example, in aspects of the Rhineland and Flemish mystics and the circle of the Friends of God, the great Spanish tradition, and especially the English tradition, in *The Cloud of Unknowing*.<sup>15</sup>

Husserl gives us insight into the unique non-sortal reality of the what "I" refers to by engaging us in considerations proximate to the contemporary versions of the *Doppelgänger*. We must first consider his theory of "eidetic singularities." These are the lowest specific differences that cannot be essentially determined by anything more specific. They are proximate to what analytic philosophy has called "definite descriptions" which strive to lasso descriptively an individual. As such they have general essences or genera above them, but they as "*infima species*" have nothing below them which would, in the course of the description or listing of properties, further particularize or determine the matter at hand. Consider, as an example of an eidetic singularity "my not well-balanced goose-necked elastic black reading lamp (made by... in 2000) with the insufficiently bright forty-watt energy-saving light bulb on the right side of my computer desk in my study room now on N. Dunn Street in Bloomington, Indiana."

The eidetic singularity, thus, is not an *abstractum*, like "bright" which cannot be conceived without its inhering in something, like a spatially extended colored thing; rather the eidetic singularity is a substrate that does not need any further feature for it to be itself in terms of what it is. It is thus called a *concretum*. But its being this essence does not amount to an equivalence with its existing. The eidetic singularity or concretum needs further-

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13) Edith Stein was one of the first moderns after Duns Scotus to show the weakness of St. Thomas' philosophical anthropology in its handling of personal individuation. See the fine doctoral dissertation by Francesco Alfieri, OFM, *La Presenza di Duns Scoto nel pensiero di Edith Stein: La questione dell'individualità*. Stein strives to show a qualitative principle at the core of the person which accounts for the unique individuality of the person; the scholastic notion of a quantitative principle, a principle of materiality, is incapable of doing the job.

14) See Sokolowski, "The Science of Being in Aristotle, Aquinas, and Wippel," in *The Science of Being as being*, 9–35.

15) See my "Trans-Sortal Knowing in *The Cloud of Unknowing* and *The Book of Privy Counselling*: Some Phenomenological Considerations," *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory* 17, no. 2 (2018): 368–95.

more a “this-here,” to be an existing individual. In our familiar ontology of things in the world, the eidetic singularities or definite descriptions are such that we think of them as inseparable from the “this-here’s.” Yet, as we saw above, it is *thinkable* that every individual whose essence is a concretum, that is, a lowest specific difference or definite description, is repeatable. This means that it could have its identical double. (There could be two such lamps, one in my study in Bloomington and in yours, for example, in Warsaw; the possessor of the lamp would differ as well as the location, but the lamps could be identical; the thought-experiment of the *Doppelgänger*, sustained by third-person reflection leans toward identifying the identifiable “JGH’s” of Warsaw and Bloomington with an eidetic singularity.) But the concretum or eidetic singularity is an eidos and thus not a radical individual or singularity but rather a universal and an ideality, and therefore is communicable, participatable, and repeatable.

But Husserl goes on to say that what is thinkable in terms of things is not thinkable in terms of “I.” Rather in the “I” there is a coincidence of the absolute concretum, the eidos, and the individual. The eidos of the I *cannot* be separated from the “this-here.” The I is not individuated by an increasingly more focused list of properties such as we might think constitutive of the person, that is, the incarnate I in the world with others. The person incarnate in the world with others may be said to be a person who refers to him-herself with “I,” and in this sense “a personal I,” but the non-ascriptive achievement of “I” has a non-sortal referent. This achievement is one of the points of entrance to the philosophical reflection on the “transcendental I.”

Again, if what we mean by “I” properly is non-sortal, the embodiment and immersion in the world with others, constituting an eidetic singularity abstracted from the transcendental I with others, requires the transcendental I but is not identical with it. This embodied enworlded person may be said to be for intersubjectivity a *concretum* or eidetic singularity. Nevertheless Husserl holds that what “I” properly refers to, *this* concretum, *this* anomalous eidetic singularity of the transcendental I, individuates itself.<sup>16</sup> The I is self-individuating and is not individuated by any consideration apart from itself and therefore the “I” is not repeatable in the way the far-fetched but useful thought-experiments regarding *Doppelgänger* permit us to think the intersubjectively identifiable persons are. In short, what I refers to is a *haecceity*, a this-here-nowness, which is one with the unique essence of the referent of “I.” Here we do not have the singularity of a this-here-nowness but at once and inseparably the richness of the radical singularity of what “I” refers to, namely a uniquely unique “essence.” Here essence and existence go together. If this unique non-sortal essence is encountered it is encountered as existing. (We will have occasion to return to this.)

A key way to appreciate how the unique non-sortal referent is richly *a priori* self-individualized and not individuated by its embodiment in the world with others is to consider the presence of “ownness” that pervades the I’s field of consciousness, that is, the luminous field of manifestation is “mine,” and of necessity not someone else’s. As G.M. Hopkins put it, each of us has this unique sense or “taste” of ourselves, “more distinct than alum, more distinctive than the smell of walnut leaf or camphor and it is incommunicable by any means to another man.”<sup>17</sup> Again, this being “more distinct than” itself is not a distinctiveness, qualia, or property which may itself be “duplicated.” We will return to this.

#### 4. “You” as the Second First Person

Others are present to us as actually or potentially first-personally present to themselves. But, as we have suggested, this presence to themselves which occurs in the ineluctable non-reflexive self-awareness as well as in the index-

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16) See Husserl, *Einleitung in die Philosophie. Vorlesungen 1922/23*, 261–62; 215–16. For a fuller discussion, see Book 1, chapter V, §2 of my *Who One Is*.

17) Hopkins, *A Hopkins Reader*, 396–97.

ical achievement of “I” is achieved “non-ascriptively,” that is, in this “indexical” first-personal reference there is no ascribing any properties of the person to herself. To say “I” one does not need property-criteria to achieve “I” and the properties one has occasion to assign never are the equivalent of what “I” refers to. Again, typically such an epistemic achievement is regarded as an impoverished form of reference to the point of not meriting any special philosophical consideration, thus seeming to be vacuous like the indexicals “this” or “now” or “that,” “then,” and so forth, or mere numerical individuality.

However, the position presented here is quite the contrary, as was indicated by our earlier brief excursions into theology, such as the faithful knowing of God and the metaphysical speculation on the nature of angels. One other excursus regarding the non-vacuity of the non-sortal referent of “I” in in order. Consider how first-person experience is the necessary condition for the manifestation of all that is of significance and importance. Consider that there is no perception of the world in the absence of at least some indexical reference. (For example, references seemingly from nowhere and without transcendental pre-fixes, as “The red barn,” or “Garage sale today” printed on a sign or said out loud presume listeners and readers. And the references of the sign or of the spoken “The red barn there” or “Garage sale today” always imply the signified as present here and now, that is, as present in first-personally lived perceptual standpoints foremost of the speaker or sign-maker. (Thus the confusion caused by, e.g., an apparently old worn sign indicating “Garage sale today.”) In short, there is no perceived world without perceptions, and all perceptions of the world are implicitly pervaded by indexicals, and all indexicals are dependent on “I” as the most fundamental indexical: without the lived “I” pole as the source of their reference none of them would mean anything. Granting that non-sortal is empty or vacuous in regard to properties nevertheless here is not a *nihil negativum*.

Let us return to our primary concern in this Section with unique features of second-person reference as reference to the “second first-person.” Consider that although the “I” is a non-ascriptive reference, the other ascriptive forms of reference are not free-floating but as properties they exist as modifications or qualities inhering in what “I” refers to and are qualities of what “I” refers to; what “I” refers to it is the substrate or “substance” for which they are accidents. (We will discuss substance in more detail later.) “Who” one is, the core sense of what “I” refers to, is not exhausted by all the properties. Indeed, the person may lose for himself all these ascriptions (as in amnesia), and thus not know who in the world she is, and still be capable of saying “I” inerrantly and meaningfully.

On these bases alone, as well as the reader’s potential interest in the supporting claims our theological excursions, it would seem that what is known in self-awareness and self-reflection has an excellence of its own transcending its modification and conceptual richness by assigned properties. This is what we are calling non-sortal: What “I” refers to in the non-ascriptive achievement of “I” is not something propertyed but a unique essence which itself is individuated *per se* and not *per accidens*, that is, a singularity in itself, and not through individuation from what is outside itself or by self-modifications.

When we direct ourselves to another person by speaking to him, address him, that is, implicitly or explicitly say “you,” our mind is directed to *him*. But what could possibly be the target of these acts if what I know is always in some sense a “what” or a property? If it were anything else than he himself, that is, if it were other than what he himself means by “I,” it would be odd and perhaps improper “reification.” When directed to him in the third-person, of course, we may well be directed at an aspect of him, for example, the discoloration of his skin. Addressing the stranger as “Hey Good Lookin” or “Hey Fatso” might be disrespectful. It would be so in so far as it would disguise the fact that “you” is implicit and a feature is elevated over what you refer to with “I” which/who transcends these features. In short, such forms of address can be an ontological diminishing. In perceiving others as Others, as persons whose proper sense is attending to them in the second-person I intend them as what they intend with “I.” In perceiving and addressing others as Others our minds and hearts

are “naturally” directed to what the Other ineluctably is aware of in saying “I.” But this, we have urged is not anything sortal, and in this sense not any thing.

Further, the analogies with the knowledge of spatial-temporal things help us only partially. I know, or my mind is intentionally directed to, this building through its aspects, but “the building” is itself never given to me all at once. Rather what is given are the aspects of sides which themselves are profiles and adumbrations of “the building.” I apperceive the building through and in the aspects. With persons, as “other I’s,” there is a more complex situation: Of course the person appears as a whole whose parts are displayed in space and in the course of time and, to use Husserl’s terminology, I “appresent” the person through present bodily aspects and manners of comportment. These are typically revelatory properties or qualities of the “personality” or character of the person I am presencing, but person is, foremost as I-substance, the bearer of the properties and, again, is not a kind, but a radical individual.

The appresentation of the Other has levels which we must indicate. “The building” (or any spatial-temporal object) is present in the apperception as a transcendent synthetic unity of all the parts or aspects which are themselves synthetic unities founded on the ongoing primal temporal passive syntheses. Indeed, it, as a physical thing, and not another person or even a living being, is present as complete in itself and all at once (unless we regard it as merely an exchange value, e.g., what the art object might bring if the market crashes). If it is alive we grasp it as necessarily developing in time – even though for some reason we may rest in its being there and now, and ignore its being not yet all of itself because its being is temporally extended. If we have not a special relationship to the non-personal living thing, as when we are merely passing by it, we may ignore the “profiles” which are part of its unfolding being in the world. But if, for example, the plant or animal is in a special relationship with us, we attend solicitously to its not-yet, and how its present being in the world might have futural consequences and be the result of recent ones.

The person, like the building, plant, or animal, is always inadequately presentable, that is, I cannot exhaust all the spatial-temporal profiles; I can never have all at once the transcendent synthetic unity of all the parts because there is an ongoing interplay of the present with the absent (e.g., future and past) aspects. But, in intending the person as “you,” whose aspects these are and whom I intend through the endless profiles or properties, the person is intended as adequately *self*-present, that is, pre-reflectively immediately, and profile-free, to herself.

Animals are similarly inadequately intended. The focus of our intending Others, foremost in the second-personal intending, whether human persons or the “mini-persons” of animals, is *not* on their enworldment and intersubjective involvements. Rather, especially in the distinctively human case, I intend necessarily with “you” what you intend when you refer to yourself with “I.”

Intending persons third-personally, for example, as “he” or “she,” is intending them as persons in the worlds with others facing infinite ideals, and foremost facing the absolute ought of realizing their true selves. Intending someone second-personally, for example, as when I address “you,” the immediate primary target is you as first-personally self-aware; that is, I target you who can refer to yourself *as yourself*. But I, as you, do not exist merely egoically as oneself, *solus ipse*. Being oneself is to be constitutively the “here” and “there” of the luminous endless field of being, that is, one is ineluctably an agent of manifestation and transformation of the world, one’s own world, illuminated by one’s being an intellectual consciousness exercising its power as agent of manifestation. Further, I, as you and the Others, am a person in the world facing infinite ideals emergent within this world and propelling us beyond what is given and finished in the world. And here there is a hierarchy, chief of which is the ideal of being truthful in regard to one’s being in the world with others.

In intending myself with “I” as in intending “you” one intends what is adequately present. My and your non-reflective self-presence is an adequate presence, quite in contrast to the presence of things in the world and

the world itself. It is this self-presence which, that is, whom, is the core target of my intentionality in saying “you,” but always mindful of your and my manifest enworldment.

Thus in being in the world with Others facing infinite ideals we are responsive to and responsible for heeding this wider horizon of being. This means the precise targeted intentionality of “you,” as a proper moral relationship, “ought” to be expanded to include the horizon of your intentionality, just as I must, both out of natural but also moral necessity intend the horizon of intentionality of my being in the world. In the general ineluctable circumstance of actual intersubjectivity, for example, of having neighbors, each lives with a general concern for the neighbor’s being well in her life in the world as well as with a concern for the world in which the neighbor lives. “He” or “she” is potentially “you,” but, in any case, each is intended as one who refers to her-himself with “I.”

But when we intend the Other second-personally with the unique form of intentionality we call “love,” one’s primary focus is what “you” refer to when you refer to yourself with “I.” However, the loving concern is mindful that you yourself are always also co-aware of, and concerned about, your true being in the world with others. Therefore, my lovingly intending you is necessarily also a concern for how you are in the world and how the world is in which you are.

Here in this paper we are focusing on the distinctive feature of love as it relates to the unique ontology of persons as having a kind of finished perfection in being what the “I” refers to, the unique self-aware essence. But, again, intending this is never separable from the person as an incarnate being in the world with others. But, in as much as the love-intention takes time and mutual agency where each is uniquely taken up with “you as you,” this kind of bond, like friendship, as Aristotle noted, is possible with only a very few others at any period of one’s life.

Before we discuss the loving relationship let us summarize the I-You relationship by way of returning to the peculiar intelligibility of the non-sortal target. We have said: In my being directed to what you refer to with “I” is not directed to what is comprised of knowable properties. But this is not to say that I do not make *you* yourself present, that you are merely the hidden substance, the “I know not what,” that I assume is underneath the perceived qualities. You are there throughout your bodily presence, gestures, words, and so forth. It is not that I see the physical body and infer what you refer to with “I.” All of my contact with you in your words, gestures, and touches is a contact with you yourself. Yet your whole incarnate personality, as tied to your being in the world with others facing infinite ideals as the transcendent synthetic unity, is not the target of my intentionality here. Even the handshake and caress do not involve the intention merely of the hand or the zone of intimacy. It is you I intend; my intention does not stop at your body’s surface or recessive parts. Similarly, in my appreciation of your personal qualities, it is not you merely as the transcendent synthetic regulative ideal unity of these qualities. I intend you as what you intend in saying “I” and this is not intending any thing properly objective or thingly in the world. We are here closer to the French *Je-ne-sais-quoi* (highlighted by Jankélévitch, see below) than the Lockean “I do not know what.”

Part of the problem is the sense of “knowing” in regard to many, perhaps most, matters of great philosophical importance. In “presencing” (knowing) persons what we make present is obviously and necessarily includes what we render with concepts; but of necessity it is also non-sortal and unbridgeably transcendent to our conceptual intentionality and thereby it eludes our conceptual grasp. *You* as lived by *you*, that is, as *I*, and whom I intend in addressing “you,” and foremost in loving you, is lived as anything but a *nihil negativum*. Rather as you yourself you are lived by yourself and by the one loving you as eluding any proper description in terms of property description. And this eluding is by way of excess, rather than paucity of meaning. Jankélévitch often points to the examples of both persons and charm. For him, the French *Je-ne-sais-quoi* points to how we can seemingly know everything about persons, interactions, events, pictorial, fictional, and musical artworks,

but have missed the most important things. He points out that a knowing, which in some respects lacks something is able to be true and knowledge in which nothing is lacking is false. In spite of having an encyclopedic knowledge of something one may miss the essential.<sup>18</sup>

## Part II

### Love's Manifestation of the Ontology of the Transcendental Person

#### 5. Love Intends the Beloved through, but Not in Respect of, the Qualities

The basic issue in our intending Others and foremost in the intentionality of love is what it means to intend the person herself. Pascal famously raised the question: If I am loved for my sterling qualities or my talents then am I myself loved? Rather is it not the case that in love the person is loved and not the qualities? Yet surely it is odd to think of loving someone bereft of loveable qualities.<sup>19</sup> Is not Aristotle's notion of friendship, which seems to encompass his understanding of love, a matter of befriending the other for the other's sake, that is, which seems to be for the other's intrinsic excellence, and not for reasons of utility or being a source of pleasure? And is this having an excellent friend not a matter of an affectionate being with and for another self if, and only if the other loves himself properly?<sup>20</sup> But consider how Elizabeth Barrett Browning's eleventh of the "Portuguese Sonnets" challenges a love that would appear to rest in the beloved's qualities. To think of our basic and generally most laudable stances toward Others as resting in their qualities verges on implying a bundle-theory of things or persons. We will return to this shortly.

Because we can be so taken with the properties or qualities, or taken with the aspect of, for example, kindness or generosity, or with the "look" of a person, that is his or her beauty, and because we might well acknowledge that we would not be so taken or even smitten were the person bereft of these qualities, we might be tempted to hold that what we love is indeed the beautiful at work or embodied in the person. But this might well be a "dispiriting conclusion" because it would seem to mean that we did not love the person but the impersonal form of the "beautiful."<sup>21</sup>

One of the best discussions of this matter is that of J. McTaggart.<sup>22</sup> McTaggart argued that we doubtless are drawn to people with attractive and loveable qualities, and we might come to love persons because of the loveable and admirable qualities. Thus in all of our positive stances toward others, there is a correlation between their esteemed qualities and our own position-takings, for example, those of gratitude, wonder, praise, finding pleasant, holding in esteem, admiration, lust, and so forth. And with the vanishing of these qualities in the esteemed person, the corresponding positive stance vanishes in the one holding the person in esteem. If that were not the case, that is, if we still admired someone who turned out to be a fraud, or if we continued to honor someone who was dishonorable, then our behavior might well be regarded as strangely inconsistent by any observer.

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18) This theme pervades the work of Jankélévitch. For the *Je-ne-sais-quoi* themes, see, for example, *Philosophie Première*, chapter VIII; and the 3 volume work: *Le Je-ne-sais-quoi et le Presque-rien*. A good introduction to this difficult author is de Montmollin, *La Philosophie de Vladimir Jankélévitch*, especially 101 ff.

19) Pascal, *Pensées et Opuscules*, #323.

20) Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books 8–9.

21) See the reflections of the Alexander McCall Smith character, Isabel, in *The Right Attitude*, 174.

22) McTaggart & McTaggart, *The Nature of Existence*, chapter XLI.

Yet, love in a most proper sense, perhaps in contrast even to Aristotelian friendship of the highest form, is not dependent on the Other having the excellent qualities. Whereas in cases of honor, admiration and perhaps Aristotle's noble befriending, when the founding qualities are missing there is expected that the particular relationship dissolves. The case is different in love. In some cases, we might think the lover is ill-advised, as in unrequited love, but we typically do not say that the lover as a matter of necessity cannot love the beloved when the displayed qualities of the beloved are not loveable – in the same way we would say that no one can continue to honor someone who has been unmasked as dishonorable. Consider how we not only do not find it reprehensible but often beautiful, noble and even exemplary that one continues to love the person when the reasons for which one initially was drawn to the person have vanished, as in old age, illness, injury, and so forth. Even moral weakness in the beloved does not seem to be a sufficient condition for the cessation of love.

As Robert Sokolowski has pointed out,<sup>23</sup> the emotions and life of the will have their own distinctive syntax, their own way of articulating the world categorially. Esteeming, admiring, befriending, and so forth, all seem to regard others in respect to their qualities or properties. But love, in contrast, intends the Other through but as beyond the qualities or properties. Further it takes joy in this ipseity as so transcendent. As Leibniz put it: *amare est gaudere esse alterius*. And, further, like friendship and perhaps unlike most forms of esteem and admiration, love intends the other as a unique individual, a singularity. For example, sports fans admire their heroes primarily on the basis of their achievements, indifferent to a remarkable degree to whom it is who performs so remarkably. When the performance vanishes, so, often enough, does the admiration. Love, in contrast, cherishes the properties precisely as properties of the beloved. And yet, the negative reprehensible properties do not absolutely affect the cherishing of whose they are, unless the love is conditioned by the person having the sterling qualities. (This raises the question of whether our analysis is vulnerable to the charge of crypto-theology, i.e., the view that claims pagans never loved. But that suspicion may be somewhat defused if it one permits the question to surface of whether the phenomenon of love was properly articulated by the pagans.)

In friendship and love, as Sokolowski notes, the singularity of the beloved is conspicuous. And the radical singularity of persons was not an explicit theme among the Greeks, perhaps until Plotinus. But love, in contrast to friendship, need not be a “reciprocal benevolence that is mutually recognized.”<sup>24</sup> The love of parents, that of unrequited lovers, and of spouses of their mentally ill or brain-damaged spouses, and so on, are some of the obvious examples of how love may be bereft of mutuality and reciprocity of love and recognition.

The fact that love moves through the attractive or even unattractive qualities to the person loved is demonstrated when after the beloved person has been long absent through death, we have difficulties conjuring up what precisely her or his physical presence was like. As we may have engaged in an intense conversation with a stranger, and believe that we have come to know the person, and yet when asked later, “What did she look like?” we were unable to say even what color her eyes were, so after a loved one dies, we may not be able to evoke how she looked. Even when we see the photographs of the beloved there is a lingering sense of the disconnection. In E.M. Forster's *Passage to India*<sup>25</sup> we find Dr. Assiz reflecting on or “communing” with his dead wife through looking at a brown cardboard photograph:

And unlocking a drawer, he took out his wife's photograph. He gazed at it, and tears spouted from his eyes. He thought, “How unhappy I am!” But because he really was unhappy, another emotion

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23) See Sokolowski, *The Phenomenology of the Human Person*, 267–69; the theme of the way syntax pervades the display of the world is basic for this work.

24) See *ibid.*

25) In Forster's *Passage to India*, 58.

soon mingled with his self-pity: he desired to remember his wife and could not. Why could he remember people whom he did not love? They were always so vivid to him, whereas the more he looked at this photograph, the less he saw. She had eluded him thus, ever since they had carried her to her tomb. He had known that she would pass from his hands and eyes, but had thought she could live in his mind, not realizing that the very fact that we have loved the dead increases their unreality, and that the more passionately we invoke them the further they recede. A piece of brown cardboard and three children – that was all that was left of his wife.

What Forster's narrator regards as an increase in "unreality," which we may take to be the result of the failure to conjure up the propertied presence of the deceased beloved, is in part the result of love. This passage is perhaps best understood as hinting at how love moves to the non-sortal referent of the beloved's self-presence which the lover habitually targets *through* her properties, that is, where the signature features for non-lovers are nearly transparent. What of our perceptual experiences we are able to recall for purposes of perceptual detail is what we can describe, that is, what has ready categoriality, what has properties. Thus we may well remember in a highly delineated manner someone we do not love. But it is not in these memorable features that the one loving habitually dwells and one can recall *her* even in the absence of these features. The faintness of the features does not diminish the deft presencing of the beloved.

In reflecting on related matters, Louis Lavelle notes how the rupture of separation can effect something extraordinary. When the beloved is bodily present, we take it for granted that we can always realize this presence, and we do not need to recall the details of the beloved's actual presence and her or his signature properties. We take this presence for granted – until death. With death and its unique irrevocable absence there seems to be a contradiction of sorts: now that the person is absent through death we are able to have through the absencing of death a revelation of presence: the traits by which the beloved is publically known recede and fade from our minds, but in the measure in which we love the person we discover more perhaps than before the true essence of the person bereft of all the visible public signature features, and we carry this essence in the depth of our hearts.<sup>26</sup>

If we say that what love loves is the loveable properties we are close to saying that when we love someone, whom we take as the whole or sum of the properties, we love the Gestalt or constellation of properties. Therefore: the person is the bundle of properties. If we could immortalize the properties, then presumably the beloved would be immortalized. Thus when a partner, spouse, friend, child, and so forth, would die, we could then get a clone of the properties. We could visit the local factory attached to the Multi-National Laboratory for Personality Traits and we could have our beloved one back and end our bereavement. Similarly, if after a death, or even a break-up with a lover, friend, spouse, and so on, we decided what we missed was a unique constellation of certain properties, we could put a want-ad in the "Personals" section, listing these properties with the appropriate finesse that amounted to an eidetic singularity or definite description. All we then would have to do is to wait for the appropriate partner-candidate to show up.

Now perhaps without exception we all would find this not only an unacceptable and inadequate way of overcoming the loss, but we also would find it eerie. Consider the case where an identical twin showed up at the house of his brother's beloved pretending to be his brother. Because the lights were out the woman was induced to mistake her lover. But the next day when she realized it, she, of course, felt betrayed and was furious. Such cases of mistaken identity, as in love comedies, are interesting because of this deep sense of disappointment

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26) See the extract from of Lavelle's *Nachlass* manuscript, "La Réalité de L'Esprit, in Louis Lavelle. *Acts du Colloque International d'Agen*, 116–17.



and betrayal even though there was a successful presentation of the qualities of the beloved. They suggest that the directedness of love of necessity goes through the properties but beyond them to the beloved herself. When there is the mistaken identity, when the lover is taken in by the properties, which she, in the case mentioned, took in every respect to be the same as those of her beloved, she still withdraws the love because her love went to someone else and not her beloved. The love was not true in the sense that the true love (beloved) was not its recipient but someone else.

Further, there is the consideration that when we think about the loveable qualities of our loved ones, and perhaps of our friends too, the qualities appear to be loved precisely because they are the properties of the one we love, and it is not that we love this one because of his or her properties. Thus the proposal that we retrieve the lost deceased partner through the personal column want-ad where we will have listed the properties would be utterly misguided because it is not so much the properties by themselves in which we delight but we delight in them precisely because they belong (or, in the case of death, belonged) to our loved one. The properties considered in themselves may be replicated; perhaps even their unique constellation can be, at least in a thought experiment, flawlessly repeated. But it is she or he who cannot be replicated. And we would post such a list of precisely these qualities not primarily because of the qualities by themselves but because these qualities are those of the loved one and because their being so owned transforms them. (We will soon return to this theme in this Section and Section 6.)

If these brief remarks are on the right track they suggest how a bundle-theory ontology is inadequate and that some sense of substance is called for, and that it is the I myself of the beloved which unites and in some sense underlies the esteemed qualities. (We return to the theory of substance in Sections 7 and 8 below.)

There are many rich issues here which we must skip over. But as a way of shoring up this position let us attend to a text from Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*.<sup>27</sup> Here the central character, who is the artist, Charles Ryder, in reflecting upon his rediscovering later in life Julia, the sister of his dear friend, Sebastian, observes:

The head that I used to think *quattrocento*, which sat a little oddly on her was now part of herself and not at all Florentine; not connected in any way with painting or the arts or with anything except herself, so that it would be idle to itemize and dissect her beauty, which was her own essence, and could only be known in her and by her authority and in the love I was soon to have for her.

Ryder saw Julia previously through the lens of aesthetics and his knowledge of art history and was able to dissect her beauty in terms of repeatable, communicable properties. Now he loves her in her very own unique essence. And what before appeared as the aesthetic form of her beauty, detachable from her as a theme in itself, now was she herself in her unique essence pervading authoritatively how she was present to Ryder. The qualities she had were revelatory of her beauty which was inseparably the revelation of her own unique essence. This beauty, manifest through the properties, was available only "in her and by her authority," that is, available only because the beauty irradiated the properties which themselves were inseparably tied to her unique essence. This pervasiveness of her unique essence throughout her presence, which presence for Ryder was dependent on the properties, thwarted any effort to analyze her beauty in terms of the manifold properties abstracted from her. The properties were a necessary condition of her being present, but they were not a necessary condition of the love. That is, their vanishing through illness or decay would not of necessity spell the annihilation of Ryder's love as they surely would have destroyed his appreciation of her as *quattrocento* and Florentine.

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27) Waugh, *Brideshead Revisited*, 265.

## 6. Love's Singular Manner of Manifestation

Evelyn Waugh's character, Ryder, states an equivalence between Julia's beauty and her unique essence and he further claims that the beauty was unique to her.<sup>28</sup> He claims also that there were other further conditions for her beauty to become manifest. The first is that not only is the beauty unique to her and only in her but that it is by her authority. I take this to mean that not only is she alone the authoritative author of her revelation of herself through her properties, but that the revelation is of her unique essence. The second condition is Ryder's love of her. Ryder asserts that it was his love, and perhaps it is only his love, that displays the beauty of the unique essence inherent in her embodied personal presence.

Robert Sokolowski seems to be making a similar point in his explication of a passage that concludes Cormac McCarthy's *Cities of the Plain*.<sup>29</sup> Betty, the loving mother of the family and center of the home into which the old and sick cowboy drifter, Bill Parham, has been taken, is, in a poignant moment, addressed by Bill. "Betty, he said, – Yes. – I am not what you think I am. I ain't nothin'. I don't know why you put up with me." Sokolowski proposes that this double negative, "ain't nothin'" is an "existential declarative" whereby Bill Parham expresses his singularity, and this is to be contrasted to his nature, his physical appearance, especially his gnarled hands with their ropey veins, the link to his heart and to his world. And Sokolowski goes on to note that Betty does not answer to his remark wherein he wonders why she puts up with him. "What *could* she say?" That is, she does not answer reassuringly by saying indeed she knows what he is, in other words, that she is aware of some good points he has and that is why she puts up with him. Because he is only recently and briefly in her house, she cannot possibly know him in the sense of his character, his skills, the choices he has made, his basic beliefs and attitudes. Rather her answer, to his query of why she puts up with him, is: "Well, Mr Parham, I know who you are." And she concludes: "I do know why." We readers know she does *not* know who he is if this means the richly textured person we have come to know throughout this trilogy. This is the end of the trilogy and he has been her sick house guest for just a very short time. Sokolowski notes that Betty does not answer by saying she knows *what* he is. Rather she says "I know *who* you are" and that she knows why she so acts toward him. We may take this, "I know why" to mean her loving care is directed through the features of the old, tired, and sick cowboy to the beauty of his unique essence. Her love brings to light and delights in the unique essence or singularity of what Bill refers to in "I ain't nothin'" and this is the odd, non-sortal basis for her knowing "why" she lovingly cares for him. The "being somethin'" that would normally justify such kindness is trumped by an "ain't nothin'" that is more than "somethin'" even though it is not any identifiable property.

Apart from the Cormac McCarthy passage we may add that even "I am nothing" as the negation (or predication of "nothing") is paradoxically a predication of nothing of (the existing) *me by me*. Even if the "I" is non-sortal, and thus non-proprietary, clearly, as the substrate of the predication, it is not "nothing" in the proper metaphysical sense of the term.

Consider further that "I am nothing" might also be construed as an "existential declarative" in another sense of "existential," that is, a statement of humility or despair. I predicate "nothing" of me by me, who is most fundamentally non-sortal. Yet, as the existing substrate of the predicate and agent of the predication, this is not a *nihil negativum*.<sup>30</sup>

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28) The claim that the unique beauty is the equivalent of her essence recalls Dietrich von Hildebrand's notion of ontological value as not a value that is a property. See Von Hildebrand, *Christian Ethics*, 129–39. Cf. Aquinas, "Person signifies an individual substance pertaining to its *dignitas* and such is only to be found in an intellectual nature." *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 29, a.3, ad 2.

29) Sokolowski, *The Phenomenology of the Human Person*, 28. See McCarthy, *Cities of the Plain*, 290–92.

30) Cf. Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 167.

What love manifests in this regard is twofold: it is not only the one loving to whom the revelation is made but the one loved similarly has revealed to himself the core of his being, what we may call his Existenz. Bill Parham, like anyone who is really loved, may well be dumbfounded as to why he is loved, all the while knowing he “ain’t nothin’” and in his unique non-sortal self-awareness he is “not any property” and in this sense “nothin’.”

For this reason, the one loved will frequently ask why the lover loves, not because he really expects to be satisfied with a reason in the categorial form of a property, as Bill Parham appears to, but because the revelation of himself to the one loving him and to himself always seems so remarkable, indeed a miracle of grace. We are mutely aware of ourselves as singularities, unique essences, but when that becomes evident in the manner and eyes of another it is always amazing and puzzling. But the beloved is blessed too because he has not bestowed on himself this unique beauty inherent in his existing as this non-sortal essence, nor has he earned the gracious love which brings it to light for him and the lover. The lover and beloved are both astonished at the beauty of his existence in the form of a unique essence that love discloses.

Again, it is “natural,” given the bent of our intellects to find intelligibility in forms emergent in perceptual experience and to look for some “reason” for love in some salient property, even though there is a suspicion that the proffered candidate-property will be unconvincing for both the one loving and beloved.

The non-sortal essence or singularity may be said to have or rather *be* an “ineliminable dignity” (cf. The German Constitution, Article 1, Section 1)<sup>31</sup> which is reflected in a kind of irrepressible self-love and a summons to a non-negotiable and “unearned” respect in others. When this respect is withheld or turned into its opposite for no reason at all a different context may be given to a protest such as “I ain’t nothing.” Consider this passage from Alexander McCall Smith when one of his characters, Matthew, muses that it is a strange feeling “when you know that somebody doesn’t like you.”

I’m not talking about love or anything like that – just somebody you know makes it clear that they don’t like you. And you know that you’ve done nothing to deserve this. You’ve done them no wrong. They just don’t like you. It’s an odd feeling, isn’t it?

Big Lou, Matthew’s interlocutor, agrees that it was an odd feeling. And we learn that it feels somehow “unfair that the other feels this way.” But there is more to it. “The unmerited dislike of another made one think less of oneself.” Not only is our sense of ourselves enlarged by the love of others, but feel ourselves to be “diminished by their dislike.”<sup>32</sup> The senses of enlargement and diminishment obviously do not refer to an actual change in an ontological state of affairs, that is, there is not a lessening of our personhood or unique sortal essence, nor is there any worldly-quantitative diminishment. But yet, in such a case it is not merely a subjective feeling but indeed an existential moment that in its severest form, as in contempt (which is much more harmful than “dislike”) is what Sokolowski once called “moral annihilation.”<sup>33</sup> We tend to nurture the basic self-love and self-respect of our non-sortal, non-property singularity by an acknowledgment by others of our ontological dignity as well as our meritorious properties. If we are demonstratively disliked (a fortiori, if despised), quite apart from any properties, our ontological dignity is called into question for we appear to be less than nothing in the other’s eyes. Whereas love confirms one’s basic affirmation of one’s non-sortal singularity, such a dislike calls into ques-

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31) See the discussion of Robert Spaemann, “Über den Begriff der Menschenwürde,” in his *Grenzen: zur ethischen Dimension des Handelns* 109 ff.

32) Smith, *Love Over Scotland*, 44. I am grateful to Julia Livingston for this reference.

33) See Sokolowski, “Honor, Anger, and Belittlement in Aristotle’s Ethics,” 221–440, especially 231–40.

tion my non-sortal “myself.” Diminishment and enhancement here have to do with the way our being appears to be not merely first-personal but also in important ways intersubjective. Indeed, Husserl claims (see below) the “human vocation” is tied up with an absolute ought inseparably bound up with our being with others.

The consideration that what is basic for persons, throws more light on the basic act by which we make persons present as persons, that is, by which we render present this non-sortal essence or singularity which is the referred-to substrate of all the loveable and not so loveable properties. Husserl called this basic and original act “empathy.” This original act of “othering” by which others as others are rendered present, must be considered as a complex moral-emotive-doxastic act upon which all beliefs and attitudes about others build. “Empathy,” in this sense, renders present what is essentially absent to mere sensation, that is, the self-presence of the Other’s unique essence; this essence is rendered present as analogous to one’s own, in other words, to the one “self-othering.” This act of “empathy” is at once a perceptual recognition, a belief (a presencing of what is strictly speaking not perceptually “given”), which founds an elemental emotion of affirming valuing. With this complex act occurs the revelation of a “second first-person.” But, again, this fundamental presencing is a perceiving (appresenting) which also is an inaugural moral act in the form of respect for the ontological grandeur and dignity of the Other.

This unique act of presencing the transcendent unique essence burgeons with the seeds of love, delight, and celebration of the believed-in unique essence. We already noted Leibniz’s observation, that love is delighting in the Other (*amare est esse alterius delectari*).<sup>34</sup> This captures the basic empathic respectful presencing from which there burgeons forth the implicit moral obligations and invitations to love which pervade all of life. As with beginning wakeful consciousness there are the exigencies of the transcendence and objectivity of truth and goodness,<sup>35</sup> so in the initial presencing of the Other there is implicitly present what becomes explicit in the forms of moral values, attitudes, obligations, promises, and love.

Here, in this initial presencing of the Other through the complex act of empathy is the beginning of that loving belief that dumbfounds the beloved and may provoke the familiar exchanges: “Why do you love me?” “What do you see in me?” Answered with: “I love you because you are you.” This answer is often unsatisfactory and it is not clear what would satisfy the questioner. One is not responsible either for the fact *that* one is or for *who* one is at the most basic level of one’s unique non-sortal essence. To accept congratulations for being or for being *who* one is seems as odd as looking for the precise attribute or quality which merits the lover’s unconditional positive regard.

An allied further revelation achieved by love comes to light in considering how, in loving, the one loving is revealed to herself, as Husserl has put it, as having found her vocation. This, Husserl claims, is an inner call that awakens her to her innermost I, deepest interiority, and deepest center and is most manifest in one’s “absolute ought.”<sup>36</sup> This is a fuller sense we may give to the term “Existenz.” Here we may recall how in Cormac McCarthy’s *City of the Plains*, the perspicacity of Betty’s love oddly, but abundantly and adequately, answers the question of “why” she loves Bill when she does *not* answer with a list of qualities of which she might approve. (Betty’s loving silence finds a parallel in the silent adoring “listening” of the contemplative tradition, for example, in *The Cloud of Unknowing* [see footnote 12] and today in what is known as “centering prayer.”)

If we entertain the thesis that love goes beyond the properties to a transcendent haecceity or non-sortal essence of I-ness, we would seem to grasp the New Testament’s exhortation to love one’s enemies and to resist the norm of violence for violence rendered. For most of us this seems often to be a near impossibility. The snide

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34) Leibniz: *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, 424.

35) See my “Aspects of the Transcendental Phenomenology of Language,” cited in note 2 above.

36) See Husserl’s *Nachlass* B I 21 III, 54a–55a. Cf. my *Who One Is*, Book 2, 289–90.

observation, “He is a person only his mother could love,” suggests the difficulty. But in the exemplary follower of Christ there is the extraordinary habitual power of love which overcomes the fear, the revulsion, the pull to hatred, and violence. Further this seems not to be a mere “blind” will to love what is apparently unloveable or hateful. Rather there is an actual seeing or perspicacity, that is, an actual manifestation of a deep beauty in the person, a way of reaching the “enemy” in her deepest depth. Or, as a member of the Abrahamic traditions or the Vedanta or some Buddhists might say, here is a unique essence embodying a reflection of the divine’s or absolute’s own very essence.

Again, this kind of love is not singled out in the New Testament because it embodies outstanding moral fortitude, but for actually at once fulfilling the Law and realizing the vocation of the person. Indeed, the Christian is called to see what God the Father sees, for, as the Scriptures put it, if you love only those who love you, you are like the “heathens.” This text might be taken to mean that the “heathen” only finds loveable the pleasing properties of the beloved, and has not discovered his epistemic capacity of love to reveal the truth of the being of human persons regardless of how they appear and what they have done. (Gandhi *et alii* clearly in this regard are not heathen but exemplary Christians.)

But consider further that most democracies with something like a “bill of rights” presuppose the achievement of that act by which the person as person is present, that is, the fundamental epistemic-ethical act of presencing in such a way that the Other’s ontological dignity is foremost, in other words, by being with the Other wakefully or presencing that to which she refers when she says “I.” This fundamental presupposition of an ontological dignity inseparably tied to the transcendental I is the foundation of any democracy. Husserl named this act “empathy”; recently Stephen Darwall has named it “ontological respect,”<sup>37</sup> which all forms of empathy, sympathy, position-takings such as all aesthetic-moral judgments, for example, (merited) respect, about the person presuppose. If this is not in play there is a profound ontological-moral-categorical mistake and democracy is not possible.

It is not that such an elemental “love,” or that love exhorted by the Gospels and Gandhi, creates, for example, “the image of God,” through a resolve “in spite of appearances,” or out of nothing. It is not a matter of love laminating a doctrinal faith-commitment on top of the present person with whom one has to do. Rather love *sees*, most often with the help of “the eyes of faith”; “seeing” here is presencing what is perceptually absent, and thus a kind of “belief” is involved. With an epistemic-elemental emotive act, which Husserl calls empathy and Darwall, “ontological respect,” one is enabled to move through the manifestation of the person through her qualities to the deeper truth which presently is obscured by them. In the extreme heroic holy cases, such as “Forgive them, Father, they know not what they do,” there is the power to *not* let the hideous properties fully occlude the deeper truth. And, of course, there are familiar moments where because of one’s personal incapacity or weakness the act of “blind faith” and a grim resolve to triumph over the repugnant presence of the other are temporary necessary substitutes for love or even the basic “respect” that is inseparable from routine acts of empathy.

Elsewhere we have attempted to develop most of these matters.<sup>38</sup> To summarize much of what we have considered heretofore in this essay let us hear from Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s thirty-ninth “Portuguese Sonnet” which touches on many of these themes.

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37) See Darwall, *The Second-Person Standpoint: Morality, Respect, Accountability*. For more in the “respect” indigenous to “empathy,” see also, *Who one Is*, Book 2, chapter V, §8, especially 351–60

38) See my *Who One Is*; see note 1 above.

Because thou hast the power and own'st the grace  
To look through and behind this mask of me  
(Against which years have beat thus blanch-ingly  
With their rains), and behold my soul's true face,  
The dim and weary witness of love's race, –  
Because thou hast the faith and love to see  
Through that same soul's distracting lethargy,  
The patient angel waiting for a place  
In the new Heavens – because nor sin nor woe,  
Nor God's infliction, nor death's neighborhood,  
Nor all which others viewing, turn to go,  
Nor all which makes me tired of all, self-viewed, –  
Nothing repels thee,... Dearest, teach me so  
To pour out gratitude, as thou dost, good!<sup>39</sup>

### Part III The I-Dimension, Love, and Death

#### 7. The I-Dimension as Substance

We will return soon (in Section 9) to the theme of how love helps reveal a most basic consideration in the ontology of the person, but to do this we must dwell briefly on the classical theme of substance in this and the following Section.

We called attention earlier to Kant's claim that the exemplary form of substance appears not in the third-personal Lockean analysis of a bundle of third-personally given data or qualia, but rather in the first-personal I-experience. Nevertheless, for Kant, as for Locke, we do not really get at the actual real being of the substance, for both of them it is either a mere appearing and/or an "I know now what." In contrast, for transcendental phenomenology the transcendental first-personal field of consciousness as the candidate for the exemplary form of substance cannot be a mere appearance or an unknown I-know-not-what but that apodictically evident dimension without which and within which all being is manifest in all of its modes. Thus the transcendental I, too, is uniquely entitled to be named a substance in the proper metaphysical sense of a being existing *in* and *by* itself; but also as transcendental egoic consciousness it is (pre-reflectively) *for* itself.

But to grasp this properly we must avoid the misleading tendency to think of "the I-substance" as the third-personal thing-like object in the world, for example, the entity of consciousness, which is the substrate of predication and bearer of properties. It is better, following the work of Eric Klawonn (see note 6), to think of what "I" refers to as oneself as oneself, but oneself is always already a luminous agent of manifestation within a luminous field or luminous medium of mineness which one's agency both presupposes and articulates. In this presentation of the transcendental I which here follows, we bring together the transcendental I as the principle of the unity of consciousness, the lived life of the I, as both indebted to the luminous field for its own self-presence and agency, but also the I as the source-point or pole of its field of manifestness and the determinations within this pre-given field. Further that to which "I" as the nominative agent of manifestation, as well as dative of

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39) Browning, *Mrs. Browning's Complete Poetical Works*, XXXIX, 222.

manifestation (that-to-which what appears appears), refers is the source of the quality of the pervasive “mine-ness” of the luminous field. This field of manifestness is a manifestation of the I as agent of manifestation and a manifestation of the constituted *medium* through which and out of which one lives.

Life in the world and nature are lived in a medium of manifestness, the explication of the kinds of which as both manifesting and manifested is the work of transcendental phenomenology. This manifestness, this appearing medium, is rooted in the I as a unique appearing, a self-individuating appearing, a constant being and self-appearing through an absolute appearing wherein what appears must necessarily be.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, the I-dimension as an egoic field of medium is not in time, not a passing now, but a presencing of the various levels of temporality founded on the primal temporalizing; in its most “original originalness” the transcendental I lives not in time but is the abiding living primal-modal Present presencing the passage of presents as the founding layer of conscious unities, that is, the layer of the primal temporalizing of the stream of consciousness. The transcendental I-dimension is the trans-temporal present luminous clearing within which all temporality, all presencing of passing presents, is manifest.<sup>41</sup> (As we shall soon see, this trans-temporality and transcendentality are significant for accounting for some of love’s distinctive features.)

Let us briefly integrate this consideration with Husserl’s theory of the I-substance. Earlier (above Section 3.) we said that Husserl arrives at his account of the ontology of the I by considering “the definite description” or the *concretrum* of an eidetic singularity which informs a “this-here-now.” This unity of the eidetic singularity with the sheer this-here characterizes the web within which non-egoic things existing in and by themselves in the world are mutually individuating. I-substances in their unique uniqueness stand apart from this unity of eidetic singularities in the world. This is in part because it is at least thinkable of all of these concrete individual non-egoic things that they have “doubles” or be repeatable. Every individual thing in the world is a concretum with the further individuation of this-here-now. Nevertheless, in principle there could be a second completely like it alongside it. Thus the *concretum*, or eidetic singularity, is “singular,” and in this sense an “individual,” but as a definite description or “eidetic singularity” it is an eidos and thus universal and thus has the possibility of its constitutive essential markers being repeatable, with only the interchanging this-here-nows. For example, this black-lamp-in-my-study-here<sup>1</sup> interchanging with black-lamp-in-your-study-there.<sup>42</sup>

But what is thinkable in terms of things is not thinkable in terms of “I.” What “I” refers to, that is, this non-sortal unique essence is a *Je-ne-sais-quoi* in the sense of *not* being identified or recognized by having inter-subjectively available signature properties. Nevertheless, its being uniquely self-present and uniquely present to others is a dense mysterious something that eludes one’s conceptual grasp<sup>42</sup> and cannot be repeated or duplicated as a series of coexistent absolutely similar I’s. Husserl distinguishes the eidetic singularity (or what the definite description describes), that is, the eidos or “absolute *concretum*,” and the individuating “principle” of this-here-now. This latter is analogous to the scholastic principle of *matter* [*materia signata*] in contrast to *form*. The two considerations are unified in existing non-egoic things. But, in that to which “I” refers there is a coincidence of the absolute concretum, (the eidos of a definite description), and the individual because the eidetic singularity, the non-sortal reference of “I,” cannot be separated from the individual or substrate of the “this-here-now.” Husserl holds that in the case of the I, the unique essence (or eidos) individuates itself: “The

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40) Husserl, *Erste Philosophie II*, 412; Husserl, *Phänomenologische Psychologie*, 528; see also Taguchi, *Das Problem des ‘Ur-Ich’*, 194–97; 202–204; 208–10; 245. Husserl moves light as medium from an Aristotelian environmental medium tied foremost to heavenly bodies to the transcendental I. In this he was preceded, of course, by, among others, St. Augustine.

41) Husserl, *Späte Texte über Zeitkonstitution (1929–1934)*, *Die C-Manuskripte*, 33, 197–98.

42) Again we borrow “*Le Je-sais-quoi*” from Vladimir Jankélévitch who orchestrates this in many of his writings. See note 8 above.

Ego is a ‘substance’; a substance individuates itself.<sup>43</sup> The I is an individual *per se* and not *per accidens*, that is, it is individuating by itself and by no other considerations extrinsic to it.

Of course, this person, JG Hart, has individuating properties. What one refers to typically when referring to “oneself” is not only this unique essence but oneself as a whole comprised of a self-individuating I-substance, which has a body, a life made up of acts, memories, habits, friendships, and so forth. Some of these, like the body, are quasi-composite substances made up more composite substances. The body is “quasi”-substance because it does not exist apart from the I-substance (I-pole/field) and because it is a composite substance, that is, it is made up of numerous quasi-substances and substances (assuming some of the biological parts can exist by themselves, e.g., amino acids, if in other exterior suitable environments).

Furthermore, as worldly-thingly substances exist by and in themselves as well-individuated by endless contingent intersections, so the I-field of consciousness is individuated by the flow of experience, the person’s decisions, and so forth. That is, the content of my stream of consciousness is constantly changing. But consciousness as the luminous I-dimension within which the stream unfolds has a more basic individuation apart from the contents of its life in the world. As Husserl put it, the I, (and we add I-dimension with its ever-present field of manifestness), is self-individuated. This self-individuation is indicated by the non-referential luminous I-dimensional field, as well as all its content or experiences, having the feature of “ownness.” Of course this self-individuation is indicated by the non-sortal essence brought to light by first-person reference as well. This luminous field or medium is always “egoic” or informed and bound to an I as what holds the field together. Again this pervasive “ownness” is due to the bond with the unique essence referred to with “I,” in one’s own case, and “you” in the case of Others. This I-dimension, that is, primal I with its luminous field, is the substance of the personal life as the non-sortal, ever-present presence which bears or is the substrate for all the essential and accidental properties accrued in living one’s life.

## 8. Some Difficulties Surrounding the I-Substance

Whereas I can have present before my mind or remember the manifold of a complex sentence or the multiple parts making up the events of a day, the notes of a melody, scenes of a play or chapters of a novel, these manifolds are borne by the single bearer or substrate of my present luminous field within which they unfold. The phenomenal field is made up of, in the sense of being comprised of (or having) contents. These passing presents or nows, along with the acts (with their objects, the objects’ meanings, etc.) which are formed on the basis primal temporalizing which is an abiding present/presence. These acts, and what they intend surface and disappear within the ever-present luminous field of ownness which all the “contents” presuppose. The luminous field or medium and its egoic pole persist as a present presence throughout the transcendent flux and throughout the syntheses and unities formed within this flux. In this sense I *have* the flux and my life is bound to it, but I do not flow nor am I part of the flux; similarly and inseparably the luminous manifestness of the field is the “clearing” within which the flow occurs and is its abiding, non-flowing condition.<sup>44</sup>

The I-dimension or field of manifestness is pervaded by ownness which shows the I is self-awarely pre-reflectively present throughout the I-field in an indivisible way. The I is related to all the ingredients (contents) of the field in one and the same way, that is, indivisibly. In this respect the ingredients (contents) cannot be parceled out or divided up; this is not to say that there is no difference between what is focused on

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43) Husserl, *Einleitung in die Philosophie (Vorlesungen 1922/23)*, 262 footnote; see also Hart, *Who One Is*, Book I, chapter 5.

44) I have been helped here by Fasching, “Ich und Jetzt: Von der Ständigkeit der Erlebnisgegenwart,” in *Den Menschen im Blick. Phänomenologische Zugänge*, 505–526.



or thematic and what is marginally present and unthematic; rather all these forms of presence are indivisibly part of and joined together within the present presence of the I-field. Nor is the I-dimension available to be studied in temporal segments (“diachronically”) across the course of life as is the self; rather it, as the abiding self-present presence, is that within which all temporalization is manifest, and in this sense it is “synchronic.” Whereas the self or developing person is constantly affected by the stream of events and in this sense made up of temporal parts or pieces, the transcendental I is not so composite or is it itself a synthesis, but rather it is the principle of the syntheses and unities and present equally to all of them. Thus consciousness as one’s luminous field of presence may serve as a subject or substrate of predication in so far as mental states, acts, *sensa*, and so forth can be ascribed to it. These are themselves relative substances insofar as they become bearers of what is thought about, for example, the seeming interminable spreading of the coronavirus. Nevertheless, the I-field is the ultimate substrate which inheres in nothing else.

As the substrate of personal life and principle of unity of this conscious life the I-dimension or luminous field is at once necessarily one and the same in all its thoughts and it itself logically simple and undivided.<sup>45</sup> This sense of simplicity implies that of itself it does not perish, come undone, or decompose. This “ontological simplicity” is reflected in the impossibility of the I-dimension or luminous field rendering present its annihilation or non-being. We will return to this.

Let us briefly dwell on the sense of the I-dimension being the source of manifestness and itself “luminous.” In this regard we may think of the I-dimension as inseparably a field of “spiritual light” or manifestation. The manifesting is tied to the I as the agent of manifestation and in an important transcendental-phenomenological sense the “light of the world.” Even if, as Fichte says, it is not the I that is the origin of the light of the luminous field of manifestness but the light itself or it is the field of manifestness which is the principle that permits the I to come into the light as the manifesting or illuminating agent,<sup>46</sup> still, in so far as we ineluctably have (or participate in) an agency of manifestation, we have a unity of the I-dimension as necessarily having the I (agent of manifestation) and inseparably its luminous field. Further, Fichte’s claim for the priority of the manifesting light is tied to his concern about the divine origin of the I and the light. Here what is prior is Absolute Being, God; here God as Light and Being are inseparable and human consciousness as the consciousness of being, that is, as the othered “there” of Being (*Sein*), that is to say, as *Da-Sein*, derives from the Absolute Being the source of all being and manifestness or light. As Janke put it: “Being (as transcendent to concept) is the radiating forth of the self-effecting Light (*lux, non lumen*) from out of its self-actualizing life and existence, in which the light (of our seeing) exists.” In this formulation, the act of life and light of our consciousness or knowing is evident as *Dasein* which owes itself as *the consciousness of Being* to the manifestness of the divine being.<sup>47</sup>

And as the I is simple as the principle of unity and oneness of the field and all the illuminated ingredients in the field, the most basic principle is the intellectual light itself. Again, when thinking of the I-substance in terms of the I-dimension we must not think of some thing that we are looking at or beholding. All beholding presupposes the manifestness of the light, indeed of the spiritual light, which is inseparably the self-luminosity of the field as tied to the self-luminous I. Further, we must not overlook the luminous I-field’s unique and essential quality of indissolvability and indivisibility. The light of manifestation is omnipresent in the stream of consciousness and at the same time present in its parts, that is, in regard to all it renders manifest. It cannot get outside of itself and be seen in another foreign light, for all seeing and showing presuppose the manifestation of this light. Everything manifest is pervaded by it and the luminosity is, upon reflection, always there as “one’s own,” – it is

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45) See Henrich, *The Unity of Reason*, 162–63.

46) Janke, *Johann Gottlieb Fichtes “Wissenschaftslehre 1805,”* 32–33.

47) *Ibid.*, 42; see *ibid.* 39–45.

always an emanation of the I-source/substance. Thus the basic principle is only the indivisible luminousness of the spiritual light, named “spiritual,” of course because of its being the I-dimension, that is, because the luminous field of all being has an egoic character which is evident in the luminous field’s being pervaded by “ownness.”

The light of consciousness’ agency of manifestation then is the origin of the manifestness of I and of everything else. There is nothing manifest prior to it; and if it is not possible to speak of “after it” without presupposing it, so neither can what is “before it” be spoken of, that is to say made manifest, without presupposing it. Again, this has the corollary in Husserl’s separate occasional meditations on the beginning and end of the transcendental I. In our proposal, the I-dimension, as both transcendental ego and egoic luminous field, experiences itself as without an experience of its beginning or its ending. In this sense one may say the transcendental I as the foundational self-presence is unbegun and undying.

Once again: Although the I-dimension has manifold properties or things which may be predicated of it, for example, its numerous acts of manifestation, it itself is not manifold or a composite of other substances but simple, not divisible, and not sortal. These properties of the substance, which comprise its personalization through, for example its acts of display of what is within the I-field or ownness dimension; that is the endless manifold of the things and events within world brought to light by its judgments, perceptions, remembering, choices, and so forth; are ingredients of the I-field. Even though it is necessary that the I-field have content as that of which one is conscious, nevertheless the contents are factual and in this sense accidental properties of the I-field or I-dimension. However, as properties of the I-dimension, that is, its egoic field of luminosity, they are properties of manifesting consciousness, not properties of things, processes, or material worldly events. The properties of what is manifested by consciousness must not be confused with the properties of the manifesting consciousness.

Of course I, as a person, whose substance is the I-dimension with a field of manifestness, do more than think, remember, and so forth. I read, I eat, I hike, I row boats, I speak, and so on. Here in my agency, I am involved with numerous substances made up of other substances. My rowing requires a boat made up of other substances – oars, oar locks, nails, screws, ribs, a keel. Thus we find an architectonic of substances incorporating substances: as my rowing requires a brain, muscles, arms, and more, which themselves are not genuine independent composite substances (they do not actually exist part from the integral body), so the rowing also requires a boat with its substances and composite and quasi-substances pushed and pulled by the oars themselves made out of substances and quasi-substances such as wood and steel, and assorted other things with their own quasi-substantial, for example, molecular parts.

But deciding to go row the boat and thinking about rowing about the lake with you tomorrow do not seem to require any such composite substances. The choice and thought only require the non-composite, that is, simple, substance of the thinking and willing as my acts within the I-field, or ownmost dimension of consciousness. Whereas I clearly have a body, and the body is a composite substance made up of other composite substances, the I-field consciousness is indivisible, simple, and not itself made up of other substances.

Yet, as it is obvious that we cannot row a boat without a body, it seems almost equally obvious that we cannot think, imagine, perceive, and row a boat, and so forth without having a cantaloupe-like entity functioning in our heads, that is to say a brain.

What is the nature of this necessity of the body, and in particular the brain, for the I-dimension? Here we have to do with a clear case of necessary physical causality. It seems clearly empirically evident that whatever personal consciousness, whatever I-field, whatever ownmost dimension of consciousness we know, must have a brain. But how to relate the simple, non-divisible, non-sortal substance of the I-field of luminosity, “consciousness,” with the manifold brain-body quasi-substances or composite substances?

Thus, consciousness as one’s luminous field of presence may serve as a subject or substrate of predication in so far as mental states, acts, sensations, and so on, can be ascribed to it. These are themselves relative

substances insofar as they become bearers of what is thought about, for example, the coronavirus. But the I-field is the ultimate substrate which inheres in nothing else.

Here is a fundamental issue to which we here can only here allude. (Adequately addressing it would require an essay equal in length to this one.) The first-personal, phenomenological account of consciousness arrives at a simple, non-composite principle which is a substance in and for itself. Yet there is strong empirical third-person evidence that the first-personal actuality of this substance (when attended to in the third-person) requires a causal relationship to an extrinsic composite substance, a brain, just as all of the person's incarnate worldly activities do.

But if the one thinking and the thinking itself reveal themselves to be a simple (not extended, not composite or made up of parts) substance, is it absolutely necessary that the I as the simple substance require the composite substance of the brain for any possible form of conscious life? It would seem to be empirically necessary, but is it absolutely ontologically necessary? If the physical substances are absolutely necessary, in other words, if the mind must be joined in a causal relation to the physical substances, do they together make up for a whole substance which exists itself not as simple but as composite, so that the perishability of the brain/body spells the annihilation of consciousness or the spirit-substance?

Or may we not say, with the help of Klawonn and Sciacca, something like the following: the body is always already lived or felt in the light of being, that is, as within the luminous field of the I-dimension. If we may call this light of being the intuition of the notion of being (and of truth!), we may say that this light is absolute and knows nothing in the world beyond itself to which it may be subordinated or by which it is annihilated. Furthermore, it is this which constitutes one's intellectual consciousness and goes in advance of and informs all of its intellectual, volitional, and emotional agency. Although, phenomenologically speaking, and not speaking from the third-person empirical perspective of a materialist brain scientist, the distinctive lived pre-reflective awareness of the body depends on the I-dimension's illumination of being, by which there is palpable the sense of "ownness" of the lived body as well as the luminous field. The I-dimension's illumination of being itself as well as its self-illumination do not depend on the natural lived-experience or perception of the body. If this may be granted, may we not propose that the I-dimension's intuition of being – the light of being of the I-dimension – upon the event of death, loses its fundamental bodily-animal feeling which is a dispensable part of the illumination of the light of being, but which is not the pervasive self-awareness and being-awareness of the I-dimension? Of course, the substantial principle, the I-dimension, undergoes a major, perhaps unimaginable, modification with the death of the organism; but in so far as it is constituted by the idea of being and truth and goodness it essentially transcends the life in nature and the world. Thereby the mutation which is the cessation or perishing of the life of the body would not involve a disintegration or destruction of the I-dimension.<sup>48</sup>

We must mention another familiar allied problem: being an I, as a unique seemingly simple substance, is constituted by a self-aware consciousness by and for which there is a luminous field of manifestation. If this same I appears to lose consciousness, as in sleep or illness, only to return to consciousness – is the loss of consciousness an annihilation of the simple substance, analogous to death, and awakening from this unconsciousness analogous to birth? Clearly for transcendental phenomenology the "metaphysics of sleep" is as important a theme as it is for Advaita Vedanta. But, again, we must neglect these matters here.<sup>49</sup>

Allied with the central question of the meaning of death in regard to the I-dimension as constitutive of consciousness, there are a series of other familiar difficult problems we may here mention. If I want to go rowing with you tomorrow it is not my brain that wants to go rowing. And if we may say that I see with my eyes like I see

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48) For Klawonn, see here note 6; and Sciacca, *Morte ed Immortalità*, 266.

49) On this matter I find the work by Klawonn to be of great importance. But besides Klawonn and Henrich, see also especially Chisholm, "On the Simplicity of the Soul," 167–81. Clearly here I am merely sketching the direction to which I am drawn.

with my glasses, that is, neither my eyes nor my glasses see, and in this sense I have my body and my brain, yet clearly it is a unique sense of “having,” indeed I seem in obvious respects not only to *have* but also to *be* my body. Surely we know incidents where we readily confess to being at the mercy of the state of our body. For example, *I* cannot be an agent of manifestation and world-transformation when I am seriously ill. If the body, or just the brain, were to be destroyed appearances suggest confirmation of the common place assumption that I would also be destroyed, just as the person who dies before me appears to be irretrievably absented and annihilated by death. Indeed, this consideration partially motivates the widespread belief that what consciousness is truly is to be accounted for by a third-person neuro-physiological narrative; attached to this belief is the increasingly widespread view that the presumption of a kind of philosophical primacy in first-person experiences of consciousness is a treacherous cause of misleading opinions that give rise to numerous superstitions such as spirit, soul, immortality, and so on. In short, transcendental phenomenology with its elevation of first-person experience and rehabilitation of a robust notion of spirit begins to emerge as an enemy of mankind.<sup>50</sup>

Again: working out how the spiritual simple substance<sup>51</sup> is joined to the necessary causal substance of the body belongs essentially to this essay in so far as it would help us spell out some aspects of the nature of love.

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50) See my “Deep Secularism, Faith, and Spirit,” 635–62

51) A reader of this essay rightly pointed out that this paper does not do justice to the nuances in the theory of substance of Aristotle and others. It is well-known that Aristotle’s notion of substance is part of his philosophy of nature. However, perhaps his *ousia*, although referring to what pre-eminently exists, that is, by itself, and not inhering in something else, may be said to approach the views of Husserl, Berkley and Klawonn (see note 7 above) if we attend to the consideration that Aristotle on occasion uses “Socrates” and “Callias” and “you” to capture the purer sense of substance as what exists by itself and in itself – which purity is missing in the empiricist postulation of an underlying hidden substrate that never is itself manifest. In this paper we argue that with “person” we have implicit reference to an I-dimension and I-field, and it is this which is the foundation of the identical sameness of a being in spite of the spatial-temporal-qualitative-quantitative changes. Although “person” as such does not emerge as a category in Aristotle, he senses the problem of saying that proper names like “Socrates” refer to this individual incarnate soul: If soul seems to be “man’s” (a human being’s) primary and first being, or substance, and which has a body for its “material,” then “Socrates” means primarily both “soul” (*psyche*) as well as the concrete individual comprised of body and soul. (Cf. *Metaphysics* 1037a5ff.) But “snub nose” or even “athletic” does not inhere in soul in the way it properly inheres in Socrates as a composite of body and soul. Soul is the substance in the sense of the form of a natural body having life potentially within it, indeed, it is the actuality (*entelecheia*), and thus entitled to be called the “nature” of what we refer to by proper names in so far as the substance or primary being is the source of all its movement, especially development and excellences. (*De Anima* 412a-b; *Metaphysics* 1015a19). And, of course, what is especially relevant for our discussion in its appropriation of Klawonn, is Aristotle’s view that soul’s rational aspect or power has no connection with matter. It “alone comes in and, over and above, from outside, and is alone divine” (*On the Generation of Animals*, 736 b ff.) And, of course, the remarkable texts of *De Anima* III where mind, as agent of manifestation, is “alone immortal and eternal,” suggests some parallels with Husserlian meditations on the transcendental I. Klawonn notes that it is only apparently paradoxical that “individual mind,” or the I-dimension, is more easy to defend as a substance than the ordinary and even natural scientific view that physical entities are (Klawonn, *Mind and Death*, 56). This I-dimension as sphere of ownness is a substance as 1) a well-defined, well-individuated existing demarcated from other such spheres; 2) it bears or is a carrier of existential and accidental properties; 3) it as a lived first-personal sphere of ownness pervades the flux of time but transcends it; 4) it may function as a logical subject of predication, for example, mental states may be ascribed to it. That is to say, experiences or mental states can be ascribed to it (See Klawonn, *Mind and Death*, 55–61). Here briefly are some of Klawonn’s reasons for positing the immortality of the I-dimension. a) Although the luminous I-field or I-substance is objectively undeniably true it is not in the world as the realm of existing entities; nor is it within the realm of natural causality and necessities. b) Thus Klawonn’s claim implies the “ontological gap” of traditional dualism. He insists that the confirmed correlations of mind and body, as well as the *influence* of bodily states on the I-field or the internal states of the I-substance “does not imply that the very *existence* of the I-substance depends on bodily conditions” (*Mind and Death*, 128) and such correlationism does not imply identity. c) And as the I-dimension does not exist in a third-person sense and in no way identical to physical entities, it can hardly owe its existence to such third-person or physical conditions (Klawonn, *Mind and Death*, 128–129). d) Further, like Husserl and perhaps Aristotle, Klawonn notes that it seems “to be impossible to understand the annihilation of an own-sphere as an event which could take place and be completed within that own-sphere itself.” e) And if we take it as established that the I-dimension is a standing Now, the manifest ending of the I-dimension (the own-sphere), that is, the ending now of the I-dimension, would have to now be present

This paper is based on the assumption that the meanings of love, personhood, and death are intertwined. This is not merely acknowledging that love happens between incarnate mortal persons, but love itself transcends the corporeal and the temporal in so far as what “I” and “you” refer to transcend the temporal, the worldly, and the corporeal. Let us briefly dwell on some aspects of this ancient theme.

## 9. Death, Love, and Immortality

Connections of love to death and immortality are clearly tied to our brief discussions of the simplicity and non-dissolvability of the I-substance. Love happens between incarnate mortal persons. The poetry of being-in-love indicates an intimate connection to what each lover means by referring to the beloved “you.” That is, “you,” as we have claimed, refers to what the other refers to with “I” even while love celebrates the embodiment of what “you” refers to. This is foremost true of romantic and/or erotic love, but certainly a delight and fondness for how, for example, the parent, offspring, or friend looks is not alien to forms of love between family members and friends.

Two themes may be recalled here: a) how love frequently displays a unique unity of mind or spirit with the body, and b) how love in a special exemplary sense moves beyond the beloved’s bodily beauty, charm, and so forth. Indeed, whereas the poetry is tied to the present passing phases of intersubjective incarnate interactions, it no less is tied to what does not pass away but transcends what is ephemeral.

Loving, especially “romantic” *being-in-love* with “you,” is loving and being-in-love with all there is “about” you: the way you talk, the way you smile, the way you tilt your head and move your hands, and so forth. And in the much more extensive realms of love, that is the non-romantic love between family members, life-time friends, colleagues, and so forth, it similarly is inseparable from bodily expressions and comportment, which might be in the tone of voice, the way a story is told, the handwriting, a distinctive smile that occurs in a disingenuous self-deprecation, and so on.

Yet, chance, fate, time, and so forth radically change and can even destroy all these loved embodiments. But with this destruction *ipso facto* love is not destroyed. And with death it would seem that whom I refer to with “you” is still strangely loved, even though there is no obvious way of declaring or showing it. Let us review some indications of this.

Loving someone in a special exemplary way is not an “occasional act” confined to the time, whether lived (“psychological”) or measured clock time in which the declaration of love or the emotion of affection happens. I cannot properly say “I love you between 3:00 and 4:00 PM on Wednesdays” (which is quite different than saying “I love spending every Wednesday afternoon with you”). Nor, as we noted earlier, is love dependent on the physical presence of the beloved. The idea of love ceasing immediately with the death of the beloved, or with the person’s having moved thousands of miles away, or simply by force of circumstances placing the friend outside of one’s regular circle of contacts, seems odd if not offensive.

Indeed, in love there seems to be a burgeoning “eternization” (Marcel’s term; cf. below) of the other’s meaning and the value of the relationship. In American English, “love” is used in many contexts. “To make love” is obviously not loving as it occurs in most other instances, for example of love between family, friends, and even colleagues. And “to love” usually is different from to like, admire, be fond of, and so on. If in a flir-

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to me, that is, within the very field of phenomenal actuality, for it to be evident. But I would have to be now a primal present presence presencing in order to witness my being no longer and so would still be (now) existing witnessing that I am not and no longer. f) And finally (Klawonn, *Mind and Death*, 129–130) Klawonn is able to revitalize the classic argument for a natural immortality of the soul (“I-dimension”) from its indivisibility: The sphere of ownness is a realm of total presence wherein there is no separable pieces because this realm of total presence is one of non-objective non-spatiality and a Nowness transcendent to the stretched out aspects or modes of givenness of the flux of temporality. Cf. my review of Klawonn’s *Mind and Death*, 282–288.

tation or quasi-courtship one person were to say “I want to make love to you” it would be understood differently than “I love you.” In the former case there is merely a description of the speaker’s state of passion, lust, being “turned-on,” and so on. And it does not have either the solemnity or the unique temporality which “I love you” is capable of.

The solemnity comes out if we think of “I love you” less as a “locutionary act” describing one’s “state of mind,” as in giving an account to the “beloved” of one’s roaring passion for her. Rather it is more like a “performative.” That is, “I love you” may be seen as a doing something like making a promise which brings into the world a new sort of being. Here, if there is reciprocity, there is created an institutionalization of a very special relationship whose temporal limits are not foreseeable. Indeed, this “performative” character of “I love you,” which although solemnized in sacramental, or civil ceremonies (or ad hoc rituals created for the occasion), nevertheless may be achieved implicitly or even nearly automatically in regard to family and close friends. Again, typically such forms of love are not short-lived, and can be solemnized, of course in a vow, but generally people whom one loves tend to be loved in a temporally indefinite way, even if there is a falling-out or divorce and/or long spatial-temporal separation. Love does not seem to be able to be stopped immediately – as admiring or being attracted to someone can, indeed must, come to a halt when the admirable or attractive qualities are absent. Even when loved ones have been separated for whatever reason, the relations of love tend to still have that at once abiding, deft, and tender directedness to the loved one.

In the reflection on the interplay between love, personhood, death, and immortality we must attend more closely to what love targets in intending the sense of the “unique essence” of what the other refers to with “I.” “Essence” here does not refer to something merely third-personally present; it does not refer to a universal form which might well be considered something abstract and merely ideal, like the number 4. Neither “I myself” nor “you yourself” are the sorts of *eidōs* that can be conceived in the absence of actual existence, in contrast to, for example, the essence of coronavirus, Shakespeare’s “Lady Macbeth,” or “the Northern Lights.” This sense each has of him- or herself, but also the Other’s sense of herself, foremost, the beloved, is a sense of an existent self-presence. That is, thinking of someone deceased is to make present someone, a self-present presence, which is only known properly as actual. This accounts, in part, for the difficulty of envisaging one’s non-being, and for the resistance to thinking of death as one’s own or anyone’s annihilation.

Of course, “*the I*” is abstract but what “I” refers to is, as we noted earlier, a radical singularity, and it embodies the fullest sense of what is “concrete,” even more so than “here,” and “now.” “This-here-now” we earlier referred to as the co-principle of the concretum or eidetic singularity which accounted for third-person thingly individuals, all of which, as merely eidetic singularities and *not* “I’s.” These all are able to be duplicated except for the distinctions of being here and now. But when we consider that as indexicals, “now,” “here,” “this,” and so forth, depend on “I” (of the speaker) for their sense, and when we consider that, as Husserl says, the I is a self-individuating substance, we may assign that to which “I” refers a special “more concrete” sense of “concrete.”

Nevertheless, like the third-person quasi-thingly sense of *eidōs* or essence, we have to do, in love, with something that resists being annihilated or perishing. In this sense, it, as an essence, participates in and has affinities with the features of an ideal object and thus is essentially heterogeneous to what perishes. Thus, the ideal object “4” is not made up of decomposable parts and a story of how 4 came to be and passes away would seem to be an obvious mixing of incommensurate categories. As the number 4 is not annihilated when erased from a blackboard, so the basics of arithmetic as well as the logical relations of equivalence and implication are timeless and are not to be accounted for causally by the occasional contingent mental acts that grasp, recall, and display them.

The way, however, the loved deceased person lingers is different than the way an ideal object or essence, for example, the number 4, lingers after it is erased. In both cases we may experience a destruction of their

“embodiments” but the absence of the embodiment does not equate with, for example, the disappearance through decomposition of a leaf. Whereas the claim that with the erasure of “4” we have destroyed it may well provoke a humorous response or one bordering on such because of the logical absurdity of a confusion of categories, a deeper level of disharmony occurs to us in the confrontation with the commonplace apparent truth that the experienced absence of the deceased friend and the decomposing cadaver refer now somehow to one and the same. The physical absence, the invisibility and seeming impossibility of an actual physical presence of the loved one, do not of course amount to the equivalent of her being dead or an odd equivalence between the corpse and the deceased friend. If the friend is intended in terms of what she refers to with “I” we have implied that we do not thereby intend some physical aspect or even her actual visible bodily presence. In which case when the beloved becomes absent or “invisible” there is not *eo ipso* the novelty of death. The presence of what love intends is never exactly visible as something bodily evident – and in this sense what love intends is always invisible. But this is far from saying that we never perceive the beloved and whether she is perceptually present is a matter of indifference. Rather, it merely is to say that the novel deeply upsetting absence of death is not that the beloved is no longer visible. And it explains why when she is dead her presence may well linger because, in fact, she whom we loved, although doubtlessly sometimes perceivable was often loved when she was not visible. And even when present to us “in person” the target of our love, that is, what she refers to with “I,” is and was never primarily and essentially visibly present in the sense, for example, of being among the describable perceived things in the room where we were together.<sup>52</sup>

The “tragedy of death” may be said not to derive from the dissolution of the bodily composite but from the (at least apparent) destruction of the beloved precisely as a unique self-present presence. And regardless of the truth of this apparent destruction it seems that, as in the case of Dr. Assiz, (see Section 5 above) in Forster’s *Passage to India*, the unique spiritual presence of the beloved upon death can acquire greater poignancy in proportion to the love that one has had toward the deceased. Indeed one realizes precisely that the bodily presence is a kind of symbolic-sacramental appearance which may have, in the course of life both embodied and dissembled the unique essence.<sup>53</sup>

Thus we knew and loved the deceased even when she was not physically visibly present; but of course also we knew and loved her in her unique visible tangible, audible, touchable bodily self-presence. But there is a further difference we have noted, that is, that if love targets what the other refers to with “I,” and this is her non-sortal unique essence, then love targets that which is essentially self-conscious.<sup>54</sup> Thus we here do *not* merely have an “essence” in the third-person, but we have, in the form of “you,” a self-presence. But this would also seem to be the case in a thoughtful respectful appresentation of someone in the third-person. Here too we presence an essential someone who is essentially a self-presence.

This, we have said, verges on presencing what must exist. The essences of the number 4 or the Pythagorean theorem resists our attempting to imagine or conceive it as perishable; for that reason, their distinctive, that is to say ideal, being demands their unique non-ephemeral kind of (ideal) existence. But in presencing a person we presence a self-presence; this verges on presencing what is actually existing – even if the existence in which we know one another is a realm of what is perishable. Recalling or thinking about someone, whether living

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52) I have been helped here by Sciacca, *Morte ed Immortalità*, 281.

53) See Lavelle, *De L’Être*, 272–73.

54) Cf. our citation of Meister Eckhart earlier (Section 3) who argued that the unique essence of each person has its uncreated origins in the divine self-knowledge, (perhaps divine non-reflective self-awareness), so that this original uncreated eidos is oneself exemplarily, and thus one is from all eternity not merely an objective essence, like “4,” but first-personally one with God self-awarely from all eternity in God’s own “first-personal” being Godself. (We neglect the important Trinitarian refinements here.)

or dead, is always recalling one who is uniquely unique, but in recalling her one recalls her as not merely an object for me but as essentially actually self-present or self-aware. And if we recall her *as a loved one* we recall her as necessarily now self-present in a relation to me, and thus we recall her on the verge of not being merely “her” but “you” mindful of “me.” In the case of a deceased loved one, in as much as I was part of her life and she mine, recalling her as self-present brings to mind oneself as presented by her and oneself in relation to her. Thus such acts of recollection, whether explicit or implicit, evoke or are on the verge of evoking the deceased person’s presence to us and our being present to her.

This recalls the oddity of the conjugation of the verb “to die” in the second-person singular which is no less odd than the conjugation of “to die” in the first-person singular. Saying “I died,” “I am dead,” “I have been dead,” is as odd as saying “you died,” “you are dead,” “you have been dead.” This is odd because the meaning of “death” at least is the seemingly absolute irretrievable absence of the deceased from our life-world. Formally or as an empty intention, of course the pattern of the conjugation is regular and valid; but attempting to render it in a filled intuitive way, as a vehicle for speech in life, rehearses implicitly the phenomenology of the absent presence of a deceased loved one. Even in fictional accounts, where there is an application of the verb in the first- and second-person present and past, what one encounters usually borders on being silly, or it requires a belief which does not presently admit of any filled, or verifying intentions. In the third-person it seems easier to conjugate “to die” because we may think of the other, especially the total stranger, more readily with diffidence and inattentiveness and as abstracted from being self-conscious and a present I-field.

But connected to this there is another important additional point: we said that in recalling someone to mind we necessarily recall a self-aware unique essence. We said we recall the person necessarily as now self-aware, even if we are not recalling her as present to us or me, that is, as “you.” But furthermore, as recalling her as now aware of herself, we recall her being self-aware as having symmetry with our awareness of ourselves, that is, we recall one for whom the presence of one’s death as one’s annihilation is not a possible conscious act. All this by way of saying again that in recalling her we recall one for whom her I-dimension, her consciousness of – and self-consciousness, are essentially actual, unbegun and unending. Because love goes to what the beloved refers to when she says “I” it goes to what is essentially not ephemeral, that is, a unique essence, and one which is self-aware of itself as necessarily actually conscious. Love targets the unique luminous I-field within which everything comes to light, which therefore means the extinguishing of the light of the I-field cannot itself be brought to light.

This being so, when it is a case of recalling someone whom one loves, one evokes or is on the verge of evoking a contemporaneousness of co-consciousnesses in both the case of the living and the dead. (Again, this is why, upon the death of a friend, one experiences one’s world as our world with an absence or a hole in it.)

#### 10. “The Transcendental I Does Not Die”<sup>55</sup>

Much of what we have said is motivated by Husserl’s numerous analyses that show that the transcendental I is immortal. His chief reason for the belief we have already noted: the transcendental consciousness or the I-dimension cannot presence its non-being: to make present its birth as requiring presenting its not-yet being, or its death as its no longer being, and thereby to know its annihilation or negation, it has to be actual.<sup>56</sup> This

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55) For this one may now consult online the impressive doctoral dissertation of Peter Hess, *Der Mensch Muss Sterben – das transzendente Ich ist unvergänglich* (Universität Essen, 2009), especially 105 ff.; cf. also my “Phenomenological Time: Its Religious Significance,” 17–45; also my *Who One Is*, Book 1, chapters VII–VIII; Book 2, chapters I–II.

56) For an example of many such, see Husserl, *Analysen der passiven Synthesis*, 377–81.



is not quite Epicurus's thesis that death is not to be feared because: "if death is, I am not; if I am, death is not." In Epicurus, death is the equivalent of one's annihilation and cannot be first-personally presented. (Implicit in Epicurus is the argument: how can you fear death if you cannot make *it* present, grasp *it*, think about *it*? *It* is what is presented only in the third-person experience of a body as a corpse. That is, *it*, death, is never *my* experience and for this reason one's death as absolute annihilation was nothing to be concerned about.) Husserl, by contrast, is not saying that death is one's annihilation but rather the transcendental I of its essence cannot be conceived to be mortal if the phenomenological evidence requires presenting its own passing into non-being. This is because the transcendental I *as transcendental I*, is that which displays all coming to be and passing away, and displaying its non-being is not possible.

Further, the transcendental I and its transcendental luminous dimension is *Nichtwegdenkbar*, not able to be thought away, for example, in the presentations (whether real or imagined) of the elimination or destruction of anything and everything. Recall Husserl's meditations on whether there is madness in these meditations of the indestructibility of the I in its conceiving the destruction of the world.<sup>57</sup>

And, furthermore, the presentation of the absolute inexhaustible horizon of being is inseparable from one's own I's co-presence. Conceiving the world after one is dead may well be a matter of the absence of this identifiable person in the world with others, for example, JG Hart; but the sense of this continuing absolute horizon of being is inseparably bound up with my transcendental consciousness, in spite of the conceived absence of JG Hart.

Another closely related consideration, already touched upon in Section 8 above, may be considered as Husserl's own version of Spinoza's claim that "we feel and experience ourselves to be eternal": I, as an incarnate transcendental person in the world with others undeniably am immersed in time and edging toward death but our awareness of the flow of time itself is not in time; the awareness of the flow of elapsing Nows is not itself a flowing Now. The luminous field of presence in which everything comes to be and pass away itself is not in time; it does not come to be or pass away.<sup>58</sup>

For Husserl, the transcendental phenomenologist for whom there is an inseparable bond between being and manifestation, to accept the version of death which absolutely annihilates what each of us refers to with "I," on the basis, for example, of witnessing the "annihilation" of the presence of a friend in the presence of her corpse, would mean to have to acknowledge an important fundamental lacuna in the phenomenology of the transcendental I: if death is, then one must die without knowing it, that is, the phenomenology of the transcendental I as manifesting one's death contradicts the basic thesis of the inseparability of being a display. Here the being in question is the event of one's ceasing to be. In which case, both the destiny and final concluding phase of the being of the life of the transcendental I cannot be shown to the transcendental phenomenologist. Rather, as one says in American English: "He died without knowing what hit him."

But Husserl may be interpreted differently. To say that the transcendental I cannot die is to claim that the transcendental I, as the I-dimension or I-field of luminous consciousness, must be in order to know its passing, and thus not have ceased to be. The death of the transcendental person, as the perishing of the incarnate being in the world with others, is empirically true but it does not necessarily supersede the transcendental insight. The death of the transcendental I might well be, instead of an annihilation, a transition that indeed the transcendental I experiences. In which case death would not be its annihilation. But nevertheless, the evidence would remain in the first-personal consciousness of the one who died, that is, transitioned; what is available in third-person empirical evidence, that is, the insurmountable absence or the annihilation, would therefore not tell the whole story.

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57) For one discussion among many, see Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität III*, nrs. 2–3.

58) See, for example, Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins (1893–1917)*, 333.

Thus, to say the transcendental I cannot, as a matter of essence, die is not to say it, *de facto*, does not “die,” but the manifest “empirical presence of death” and in this sense “the perishing of the person,” (or embodiment of the spirit) cannot be annihilation. In this regard the empirical third-person perspective does not supersede the transcendental perspective and thereby permit the decisive claim that the transcendental I is annihilated and has not transitioned. If “dying” is the cessation of the body’s life and the transitioning of the transcendental I to a different dimension of being, then there is first-personal evidence for the deceased transcendental philosopher. *But* here there is no evidence for the living, that is, surviving, philosophers. The deceased transitioned transcendental I’s apodictic experience of his immortality is not able to be duplicated by the living philosophers as living philosophers. And, again, to claim apodictic evidence for one’s *de facto* immortality, the transcendental phenomenologist would have to have experienced death, not as annihilation, but as, for example, transition to what is beyond the experience of the perishing of the organism, which evidence is precisely what is not available to him *qua* living phenomenologist.

Sister Adalgundis Jaegerschmidt, who was able to visit Husserl in his last days, reported that Husserl claimed a kind of evident revelation regarding the event of his death (the Christian might say evidence through the grace of faith or of mystical experience); indeed, he claimed to be blessed. She reported that he said to her: “God has taken me up in grace. He has permitted me to die.”<sup>59</sup> Prior to this death-bed experience, it is reported that he took personal comfort in his conviction that the transcendental I does not die. At the same time, however, he never decisively found a way clear to clarify how precisely the immortality of the transcendental I squared with the manifest mortality of the transcendental person. Nor did he decisively see his way clear as to how it could be integrated with the way the transcendental I was incarnate and enworlded, and what immortality, reincarnation, and so forth might mean in terms of the transcendental I having some identity with herself as transcendental person in the new form of existence.<sup>60</sup>

We may conclude that the first-personal evidence for that actual immortality, if such there be, is not given to “living phenomenologists” in a decisive form because for this to be the case they must be living in the earthly condition aware of themselves dying *as well as* aware of themselves after death in order to have the evidence for saying: “I, as transcendental I, am actually immortal and do not die.” For Husserl the *essence* of the transcendental I “says” this, but no living embodied transcendental I can. But this difficulty does not negate, but rather it reinforces, the essential a priori claim that consciousness as the light of being cannot be conscious of, cannot shed light on, its non-being or extinction; that is, it cannot shed light on the apparently extinguished light. In this sense it remains true that death as the annihilation of the transcendental I is not possible for the transcendental I.

“Near death experiences” are seductive because they provide seemingly personal evidence of the experience of death without the person *really* dying in so far as the “near-death experiences,” apart from occasionally

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59) Schumann, *Husserl-Chronik*, 489.

60) See Alfred Schutz’ observation in his “Husserl’s Importance for the Social Sciences,” in *Edmund Husserl: 1859–1959*, 87. In an effort to bring together the transcendental I and transcendental person, Husserl was drawn to the Leibnizian monadology, and his sketch of the evolution and devolution of monads, the possibility of “sleeping monads,” and so forth. (See my essay on “Phenomenological Time” referred to in note 55. A key issue from the perspective of the focus of the present paper is the tension between the non-sortal and sortal senses of one’s identity. And for the reflecting phenomenologist, the key tension is one’s capacity to see oneself othered or radically altered, and still being oneself. Imagining or conceiving oneself radically altered is quite a different thing than imagining that one is another than oneself. The latter is clearly impossible, because the one imagining remains the same in the attempted imagining or conceiving. If, as I have argued (in *Who One Is*, Books 1–2, *passim*, but especially, Book 2, IV–V), there is an ontological-moral connection between the non-sortal transcendental I and the historical personification in the transcendental person, there would seem to be limits to the possibilities of the eidetic variation wherein the post-mortem transcendental I can find herself in an identifiable post-mortem transcendental person.

an array of, for example, odd colors, sounds, shapes, and movements, are homogeneous with what is before, “during,” and after death. But the evidence for the return from the “near death” is only that of the narrator and, assuming he himself is credible, what he says is not obviously credible as meaning anything more valid than the truth of a strange, perhaps dreamt or delusional, experience which subsequently is interpreted as an important insider first-hand information of what happens during and after death.

By contrast, for Christians, the divine transcendent-transcendental referent of the “I” of the historical Jesus “suffered death” through the perishing of his humanity on the cross. He then entered a realm beyond the living, but then, “came back” almost unrecognizably transformed. His appearances confirm that he did indeed die, but *he*, that is, the one Jesus refers to with “I,” was not destroyed, but suffered death. (Christians hold that fundamentally this is true because He also said truly, “Before Abraham was I am.”) And he states that given his transformation to a new life after the earthly life he can no longer be with his friends as before, but will be with them in a new superior way of radically spiritualized bodiliness, but one which involves a “New Heaven and New Earth.”

The way to this new life is sustained by faith and love, and during this life each is called to embrace the death of their old selfish selves and prepare to live in a way that prepares for the act of transitioning, that is, the act of dying, as the necessary condition for the transition, and as the act of faith and hope to share in the post-mortem transformed life of the Incarnate Word. But in this example, and there might be some others, the claim of immortality by Jesus is by one who, for the believing Christian, speaks with authoritative first-personal evidence of the actual, not merely conceivable, immortality and deathlessness of the transcendental I-dimension of Jesus of Nazareth.

## 11. Conclusion: Love and the “Eternization” of the Beloved

As Gabriel Marcel noted, there is built into our loving someone a kind of “eternization” of the other. Not only is there the manifestation of the unique “eternal” essence but there is also the love of this essence, this unique person, that is, a willing and wanting for her what she wants for herself, for what is best for herself, and her best self. In this sense Marcel can say that love “immobilizes the beloved above the world of genesis and vicissitude,” rendering the beloved immune to disintegration.<sup>61</sup> In this respect love addresses the Other as inseparable from what is eternal.

Indeed, if we consider that love is a unique binding of subjectivities, each of which are luminous I-fields, and that love has the power to discover the essential indispensable truth of the other and oneself and ourselves in the world, then we may say that love may aspire to bring the absolutely unique individual subjectivities into a universal intersubjectivity, indeed, as Husserl put it, a “personality of a higher order.”<sup>62</sup>

In other words: If we are able to follow Husserl and to see all of consciousness pervaded by the light of the transcendental idea and ideal of truth and the ideal of an absolute subjectivity adequate to this truth;<sup>63</sup> and, if in the tradition of Augustine to see this ideal as the common universal light of all luminous I-fields, and not a mere metaphor, but rather all other senses of light as manifesting are derived from the exemplary manifesting, that is, intellectual light;<sup>64</sup> *then* we see that all love is pervaded by a transcendent presence of a divine light guiding

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61) See Marcel, *Metaphysical Journal*, 61–63. For this Conclusion I am indebted to Peccorini, *Selfhood as Thinking Thought in the Work of Gabriel Marcel*, 121–23.

62) Cf. Hart, *The Person and the Common Life*, chapters III–VI.

63) See Husserl, *Granzprobleme der Phänomenologie*, especially Beilage Nr. 12, 169ff.

64) For a beginning sketch of this position, see “Aspects of the Transcendental-Phenomenological Theory of Language,” cited in note 2.

each and all into a unity. When this guidance is met by the uniquely unique individuals with a gracious gratitude, each following the lead of truth within their luminous I-fields, there is an energized response to the eternal divine light of truth. (Christians would say that the informing and energy of the light of faith is a necessary condition.) The possibility then exists for life to become an unfolding of a growing common life for the common good through following the light of truth. Then this life of love is a life of mutual enrichment and eternizing of the loved ones, while each is realizing together her and his most essential and basic vocation.<sup>65</sup>

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65) Again, Peccorini, *Selfhood as Thinking Thought in the Work of Gabriel Marcel*. Peccorini nicely connects a theory of intersubjectivity with Michele Sciacca's Augustinian theory of the light of truth, which I join to the "luminous I-dimension" in the text. See Michele Sciacca, especially *Filosofia e Metafisica*, 107–37. For an indication that there is a similar refrain in Husserl, see my "Aspects of the Transcendental Phenomenology of Language," cited in note 2 above. For a Husserlian theory of personal vocation, cf. *Who One Is*, Vol. 2, chapters VI–VII.

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