

Note

This paper did not find a home despite my best efforts. I have, with much reluctance, decided to retire it, at least temporarily. It will be used, in a different shape, for a current book project. I might someday submit it again. Or not. Your feedback is most welcome either way. You may also cite or quote the current manuscript posted on Philpapers (v. 11, January 25, 2022). Thanks for reading.

Directed duties and nonhuman personhood

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Abstract. This paper defends a relational account of personhood. I argue that the structure of personhood consists of dyadic relations between persons who can wrong or be wronged by one another, even if some of them lack moral competence. I draw on recent work on directed duties to outline the structure of moral communities of persons. The upshot is that we can construct an inclusive theory of personhood that can accommodate nonhuman persons based on shared community membership. I argue that, once we unpack the internal relation between directed duties, moral status, and flourishing, relations can ground personhood. Both the basis and the form of personhood are relational, and both can eschew anthropocentrism.

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I. Introduction

Is my cat a person? What, if anything, do I owe to this fellow creature laying on the couch, who cannot speak, enter formal agreements, promise, or be held responsible? My cat, after all, belongs in our community, like many other nonhuman companions, workers, and other animals used as sources of entertainment, research subjects, and food. And she belongs in a way that appears distinct from the plants, or the ants for that matter, that populate my garden. Put crudely, my aim in this paper is to convince you that, if you're tempted to agree that I owe anything directly *to* (not just *concerning*) my cat, then you should also see her as a person. In doing so, I am resisting the current temptation to ground nonhuman personhood in cognitive capacities, but also filling a gap in the literature on directed duties. So, I will explicate the structure of a certain kind of moral status—personhood—and to argue that it allows for nonhuman (animal) persons—and more broadly than the usual suspects such as chimpanzees (Andrews et al. 2018). The thesis has two parts. First, the fundamental structure of personhood—both its form and ground—is *relational*. Understanding what makes us persons is to understand the correlative structure of personhood and communities. Second, a relational theory of personhood can account for *both* the personhood of nearly all humans¹ and that of many animals, including cats, dogs, pigs, and cows. By clarifying the structure of personhood as consisting of dyadic duties, and including animals within their purview, I offer an

¹ I assume for convenience that such an account must include the cognitively disabled, young children, and infants. Accounts of the higher moral status of human beings sometimes also include late foetuses but not early foetuses, embryos or anencephalic infants (see e.g., Jaworska and Tannenbaum 2014: 255, 269; Kagan 2016; compare Schechtman 2014; Waldron 2017: 233-5).

account nonhuman animal personhood that does not rest on cognitive sophistication, and so can be inclusive with respect to both humans and other animals.²

But first a clarification. This paper is about *moral* personhood. Historically, moral personhood has been tied to metaphysical personhood, largely owing to Locke's legacy. Recent descriptive accounts of animals as persons follow the Lockean legacy in giving pride of place to self-awareness (Rowlands 2019). According to Locke, a person is "a thinking intelligent Being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing in different times and places" (1975: §2.27.9). Further, "person" is a "Forensick Term appropriating Actions and their Merit; and so belongs only to intelligent Agents capable of a Law, and Happiness and Misery." (§2.27.26) In other words, persons can be held accountable, because they are self-reflective and can make informed decisions. In what follows I won't say much about metaphysical personhood and its relation to moral personhood (see the brief remarks at the end of Rowlands 2019), mainly because I argue that our duties do not depend on our descriptions of individuals' psychology. I take it from granted that there are persons and that we owe them specific treatment. The question is what grounds those duties and what shape they take, and my answer is relational all the way down.

I proceed as follows. Section II unpacks The Challenge of Scope, namely identifying two competing pressures on theories of moral status: the equality of persons and the moral status of other animals. Section III sketches the conceptual groundwork of a relational theory of personhood drawing on relational theories of moral obligation and directed duties, which are owed to an individual such that

² Andrews et al. (2018: Ch. 4) consider community-based accounts of personhood but their focus is chimpanzees and they do not engage with theories of directed duties.

flouting them amounts to *wronging* that individual.³ With this conceptual apparatus in the background, Section IV discusses an attractive view of personhood centered on the structure of community, Marya Schechtman's (2014) "Person Life View." I address the limitations of the view and extract a template for nonhuman personhood. Section V then proceeds to the construction of a theory of personhood from that template, eschewing anthropocentrism and incorporating the promise of a relational approach. Section VI responds to objections.

II. The Challenge of Scope

On the standard interpretation, having moral status means that one's well-being or interests matter morally for their own sake. Moral status encompasses two ideas: moral *considerability* and moral *significance*—respectively, whether and how much one counts morally. I also assume the *moral relevance of interests*: status-conferring properties are determined by an entity's interests, good or capacity for well-being. In response to the variance and overlap of psychological capacities both between and within species, moral individualists (Rachels 1990; McMahan 2002; 2005) have maintained that *only the intrinsic properties of individuals determine moral status*, properties of the entity itself, rather than the social or biological groups of which it is a member. What matters to how we treat a bonobo, or a

³ Moral individualism is a view about the *basis* rather than the *form* of moral obligations. It is, as such, compatible with both monadic and relational obligations. Consequentialists are typically concerned with monadic duties (to maximize the good). Many non-consequentialists also ground moral status on some intrinsic property, such as rational agency, yet claim that the bearers of moral status are the objects of directed duties (Kamm 2007). A relational account of the *basis* of personhood is also compatible with both monadic and relational obligations. Thus, a utilitarian might say, a person is someone who stands in a certain relation to us, and we should maximize the happiness of persons; or a deontologist might say, the community of rational agents grounds duties to (not) do x, period. My relational account states that the basis of obligations is itself relational, not intrinsic.

human child are their similarities and differences in consciousness, and emotional, intellectual, and social abilities.⁴

Now consider two widely held claims:

Human equality nearly all human beings, including infants and cognitively disabled humans, have full moral status (FMS) (equal status higher than basic moral status) regardless of their actual capacities.

Degrees of status nearly all nonhuman animals with cognitive capacities comparable to those of infants and cognitively disabled humans have *at most* basic moral status.

Human equality applies to humans who once had person-typical abilities (prior to coma, dementia, or non-congenital disability), normally will have them (normal fetuses, infants, and young children), or could have had them (cases of severe cognitive disability). The Challenge of Scope is to affirm the conjunction of both claims (henceforth [Conjunction]), in the face of the wide empirical variation of the grounds of moral status, without relying on morally arbitrary factors such as bare membership in the species *homo sapiens*.

The challenge is not new (Arneson 1999; Carter 2011; Rawls 1971: 504-12; Sangiovanni 2017; Scanlon 1998: 185-6; Waldron 2017; see McMahan 2008 for discussion of the difficulties⁵), but recently philosophers have revived it while eschewing speciesism—the idea that a human’s interests count more *just because* they are human. Recent attempts include Jaworska and Tannenbaum’s (2014;

⁴ Throughout the paper, I assume that *basic* moral status, i.e., one’s being a subject of moral consideration, having one’s interests count directly, depends on some necessary and sufficient property such as sentience. I also assume that many animals have basic moral status.

⁵ For claims that being human in and of itself matters, see Diamond (1991); Kittay (2017); Steinbock (1978); Williams (2006).

2015) “person-rearing relationships” view, Kagan’s (2016; 2019) hierarchical “modal personism”, and S. Matthew Liao’s (2010; 2012) “genetic basis” account. Rather than offer new criticisms of these accounts,⁶ I motivate an overlooked option. Several authors have offered promising analyses of duties variably dubbed “directed”, “relational”, “dyadic” or “bipolar” as a central part of morality, yet the implications for the scope of personhood remain underexplored. My contribution will be to draw on their promise to explicate the relational structure of personhood and argue that it includes other species.

Why does the Challenge of Scope matter? First, it matters if we believe that persons are susceptible to more serious wrongs⁷ than others, or if personhood marks inviolability or dignity. Persons are more generally the kind of beings that one ought to treat *as persons rather than things*.⁸ Typically, persons have distinctive claims to liberty, respect, life, bodily integrity, privacy, socialization, and political participation, and rights not to be exploited, subjugated, or humiliated. People are not property; they are not mere things. For instance, if the exercise of autonomy is intrinsically valuable for persons, or if death harms them more than it does other animals, persons have claims that other animals lack. If you believe the death of a child matters more than the death of a dog, (Conjunction) can account for this intuition too. (Conjunction) reflects the commonsense idea that human lives are

⁶ See DeGrazia (2014) and Timmerman and Fischer (2019) on Jaworska and Tannenbaum (cf. Jaworska and Tannenbaum 2015); DeGrazia (2016), McMahan (2016) and Singer (2016) on Kagan; Grau (2010) on Liao (cf. Liao 2012).

⁷ According to Kagan (2019), persons’ interests also count *more* than the similar interests of nonpersons. While I think personhood entails distinctive claims, it does not involve weighing equivalent interests differently.

⁸ Though, see Schroeder (2019) for a compelling argument that sometimes we owe it others to treat them also as things.

equally valuable, and *more* so than animal lives. Persons are co-equals, including the severely mentally disabled, infants, children and, more controversially, fetuses.

One desideratum of a theory of personhood is to explain on what grounds we relate to one another as equals. Such grounds may rest on interpersonal relations or individual features. I view our obligations to persons as relational in form *and* grounded in relationships. By interpersonal relations I mean, not just friendship, love, trade, and conflict, but also practices of responsibility (reactive attitudes, punishment), matters of autonomy (paternalism, education), and political organization (distributive justice, representation, participation). Some authors construe persons as constituted by social practice or a complex of attitudes (Beck and Oyowe 2018; Chappell 2011; Diamond 1978; Lindemann 2014; Schechtman 2014; Wagner 2019). My account aligns with them in rejecting moral individualism. However, the link between directed duties and the grounds and the scope of personhood remains underexplored. Hereafter, I link the structures of the moral community, personhood, and directed duties. In the next section, I draw on recent work on directed duties to outline these structural links. I discuss “Relational Primitivism”, a view recently defended by Ariel Zylberman (2019), and make critical amendments to let animals in.

III. The relational structure of personhood

The guiding thought of the relational account is that persons do not exist in isolation. In a slogan: *We* are persons. Being a person implies being a member of a community of persons. But how do we move from the descriptive claim that we are persons together to the normative claim that persons are tied by deontic dyadic relations? The relational account justifies that move. In this section I canvas the relationships between directed duties, personhood, and wrongdoing, but I also identify the limitations of extant accounts of directed duties.

The standard view is that moral personhood depends on individual characteristics. David DeGrazia (1996: 210; 2007: 320), however, argues that personhood is a cluster of features susceptible of degree and vague in application: autonomy, rationality, self-awareness, linguistic competence, sociability, moral agency, and the capacity for intentional action. These features themselves are informative enough, and more so, than the predicate ‘person’.⁹ So construed, persons exist prior to the communities that comprise them. The standard view overlooks that individual characteristics do not exist in a vacuum but take root and grow inside communities, enabled by environmental, social, and cultural factors. One may then want to reverse the direction of explanation: communities exist prior to the persons that they comprise. However, I propose a third way: that communities and persons are not just causally related but *co-constitutive*. Causally speaking, communities supply the necessary background for the existence and development of persons, who in turn maintain the scaffolding necessary for communities to keep producing persons. But more fundamentally, we cannot conceive of persons and their communities independently. Interactions among persons constitute a community of persons, which is neither a preexisting community gathering persons nor a mere collection of persons.

A. *Directed duties*

The idea of co-constitution underscores the normative structure of personhood. Instead of thinking of persons as holders of *monadic* deontic claims grounded in *intrinsic* properties, I explain how the *relational* structure of the community of persons generates *dyadic* deontic relations. Thus, my view differs from the view that persons hold relational deontic claims in virtue of their intrinsic

⁹ Tom Beauchamp (1999) criticizes the notion of moral personhood as unhelpful because attributions of the relevant individual capacities are fraught.

properties, such as versions of contractualism and deontology.¹⁰ Hence, persons are constituted by and constitute the set of possible deontic dyads between claimholders and duty-holders. This set coincides with the scope of what we owe to each other, albeit not with the whole of morality, which may include virtues and duties regarding works of art and the environment (Scanlon 1998: 171–6). Arguing that the set includes nonrational animals means *expanding* the scope of what we owe to each other (*pace* Scanlon 1998: 177–88; Kamm 2007: 232–3; Kumar 2003).

Moral obligations in general have a few essential features (see Wallace 2019, especially on the first two features). First, they provide agents with Razian *exclusionary* (if defeasible) reasons for agents' deliberation; not just considerations among others, but reasons that normally override the normative force of other considerations (say, aesthetic or prudential reasons). As such, they are normatively *binding* on the agent, they operate as practical requirements constraining the scope of what agents may do. Third, the agent is a fitting target of *blame* if they fail to meet their obligation.

Directed duties exhibit a distinctive structure: *wronging* parties to the dyad can occur, beyond doing wrong *simpliciter*. Accordingly, the object of the duty has standing to blame the agent—blame is here positional. The following extensionally equivalent formulas (Darwall 2013: 28; Thompson 2004: 335; Zylberman 2019: 8) exhibit the positionality of parties to, and the corresponding *direction* of, directed duties (i.e., A's relation to B does not entail that B bears the same relation to A):

It is required that A φ s because B has a claim against A that A φ s

A owes it to B to φ

¹⁰ Zylberman distinguishes between *evaluative* judgments ('It is good that A φ s'), *simply deontic* judgments ('It is required that A φ s'), and *relational deontic* judgments ('It is required that A φ s because B has a claim against B that A φ s'). The latter, characteristic of the 'moral ought', represent a deontic requirement owed to another party (2019: 8).

A wrongs B by not φ ing

One may add:

B has standing to blame A for not φ ing (Darwall 2006; 2013)

Many discussions of bipolar obligations and directed duties follow Hohfeld's (1913) analysis of the correlativity of rights and obligations, if sometimes implicitly (Darwall 2006; 2013; Kamm 2007: 239–41; May 2015; Richardson 2018; Sreenivasan 2010; Thompson 2004; Wallace 2007; 2019; Weinrib 1996; Zylberman 2019). A claim-right necessarily correlates with some obligation owed to the claim-holder. The structure of personhood consists fundamentally of directed duties following this schema.

B. *Relational Primitivism*

According to Zylberman's "Relational Primitivism", the "moral ought" is fundamentally relational. More precisely, required actions represented by the moral ought are the objects of relational "Hohfeldian incidents"¹¹ constitutive of personhood. (2019: 8) Hohfeld's *axiom of correlativity* stipulates that directed duties and claims entail one another. Following Hohfeld, Zylberman argues that claims and powers "enjoy justificatory or explanatory primacy" (2019: 10), that is: (i) our original status as persons explains others' correlative duties to us, and (ii) we retain the power to alter our claim-rights or others' duties to us, for instance by releasing a promisor through consent. For instance, if you promised to take me to the movies, but I'd rather you don't so you can focus on your paper, I can release you from your obligation.

¹¹ Hohfeldian incidents are the four basic elements of rights: claims, privileges, powers, and immunities.

Because claims and powers are inherently relational, the deontic status of persons is relational. Relational Primitivism, however, does not purport to spell out the structure of the moral community. In the remainder of this section, I fill in the gaps, using the original claims of persons as the building blocks of a community to spell out the thesis that communities and personhood are co-constitutive. I accept Zylberman's characterization of personhood as a relational property representing "the *agent-as-rights-bearer*" (2019: 9), but I argue that this status presupposes relations between persons and their communities, not the other way around.

Consider Henry Richardson's (2018: 80) succinct definition:

The *moral community* is the open-ended set of all individual persons who can wrong or can be wronged by one another.

On this view, personhood inherently involves dyadic relationships. Monadic duties on their own cannot constitute a moral community (compare Feinberg's (1980) "Nowheresville" where duties but no claims exist). Richardson's definition meshes well with Relational Primitivism. Henceforth, communities denote sets of individuals standing in dyadic deontic relations and the moral community denotes the notional set of moral communities.¹²

The crucial respect in which I depart from Relational Primitivism is by making room for nonhuman persons at the construction stage rather than as a mere possibility. To their credit, theorists of relational obligations allow for some duties to be owed *to* nonrational animals (Richardson 2018: 86-8, 129-32; Wallace 2019: 101-20, 154-5, 271; *pave* Darwall 2006: 29, 43, 80, 95, 302; 2013: 28; Kamm

¹² Richardson (2018: Ch. 4) discusses the possible, if non-actual, unity of the moral community, Wallace (2019) the notional cosmopolitan community of equals.

2007; Kumar 2003; Scanlon 1998). Zylberman (2019: 19-20) even draws on Tom Regan's (1983) theory of animal rights to hint at animals' "proto-personhood". These are, however, allusions, not infrequently in tension with the primary focus, human equality. Of all, Richardson takes the possibility of nonhuman persons most seriously. Two features of his definition thus bear emphasizing: the inclusive disjunction (not all persons are moral *agents*) and open-endedness (not all persons are *human*). The disjunction must be inclusive to allow for the personhood of humans who cannot wrong others because they lack capacities for moral agency. Open-endedness has the virtue of eschewing anthropocentrism. I address each feature in turn.

C. *Claims and powers*

Authors have been keen to note that the concept of directed duties does not entail reciprocity, as suggested by the very notion of direction. Rights-bearers need not be duties-bearers. Thus, a relational account of personhood does not require that persons be (actually or even potentially) morally competent or possess Lockean "forensic" capacities.

One could argue that, as Hohfeldian incidents, powers are a source of claim-rights, therefore that nonrational animals cannot have claim-rights since they lack normative powers, or the abilities required to intentionally alter one's claim-rights and others' liabilities (Hohfeld 1913; Hart 1972). Such powers include consent, the capacity to enter contracts, to transfer property, to sue, etc. With consent, claim-holders can waive their claim-rights and release others from their duties. However, accepting that powers can create or modify claim-rights does not entail that all claim-rights stem from powers. Even if persons possess original powers insofar as they are rational, an inclusive theory of personhood does not require it. Moreover, while I will not rest my case on this argument, if animal agency involves certain normative powers such as assent or dissent, and if such powers

suffice to ground rights, then we may infer that animals have rights even if they lack moral agency (Healey and Pepper 2020) (see §V.D below).

Since other animals are not moral agents, we do not have claim-rights *against them* and may not blame them. But they have claims against us and we can wrong them. They cannot blame us, but we can be appropriate targets of blame by third parties. Likewise, norms of praise and blame do not fully apply to children, yet we can clearly wrong them and be appropriate targets of blame for flouting our duties to them.

Although the emphasis is arguably on *original* claims (2019: 12), Zylberman introduces an ambiguity by situating powers within the original status of persons. Original claims contrast with “contingent” or “acquired” ones. They include: “the claim not to be deceived, enslaved, tortured, murdered, or persecuted for your beliefs.” (2019: 9) *Pace* Zylberman (2019: 13-4) and following Wallace (2019), I contend that these acts can wrong us insofar as they affect our interests. Powers can alter whether others can justifiably affect my interests, either because they treat me in accordance with my original claims or because I waive such claims through consent. Powers, like claims, constitute the status of persons insofar as persons have an interest in determining their own lives. But Hohfeldian powers, unlike claims, are not a necessary constituent of personhood. If animals and children are to have any original moral claims, these must be explained by their interests rather than their moral competence. Indeed, when Zylberman (2019: 19) evokes Regan (1983: 271–3) as an example of a relational theory, he fails to note that Regan’s view takes as *basic* the fact that animals have a welfare grounding their claims. If Relational Primitivism is to make sense of our duties to nonrational animals and children, it must let go of the explanatory primacy of powers.

D. *Open-endedness*

Another attractive feature of Richardson's definition is its open-ended character: that current membership in the community does not pre-empt possible membership, and that divisions between communities do not preclude their integration ("articulation") in a unified community. Regarding nonhuman persons, Richardson writes that "it would be a defective conception of the moral community that conceptually foreclosed this possibility." (2018: 82)

This open-endedness suggests a diagnosis for the intuitiveness of (Conjunction). It is part of commonsense because, when thinking of what makes a person, we presuppose a background of interpersonal relationships and practices that are typically human (and roughly Lockean). We see persons as independent, rational, responsible, and self-conscious, engaged in the business of interacting with others based on a shared set of abilities. Persons can understand and communicate with each other, bargain, and hold each other accountable. Such platitudes shape our pre-theoretical conception, and so (Conjunction) seems worth saving. Yet those intuitions are worth challenging, in part for their historical association with the ongoing exploitation of nonhuman animals and subordinate human groups and the narratives that support it.

I return to narratives in Section IV. But briefly, because we see and treat persons as integral members of the moral community, in contrast we tend *not* to see and treat other animals—who are embodied, socialized, and stereotyped as nonpersons—as members of the same community. And we thereby reinforce our pre-theoretical conception of them as nonpersons. Charles Mills has shown how idealizations inherent to ideal theory in political philosophy produce domination and marginalization by ignoring or naturalizing their ideological underpinnings (2017: 72–90). Likewise, I

suggest, our ideal concept of (Lockean or Kantian¹³) person, when combined with the moral significance of personhood, automatically relegates animals to a subordinate position. This is concerning since our ideal concept and the commonsense conception of persons largely overlap, namely, that of a rational, self-governing individual. Consider this example, from a contractualist account of wrongdoing:

The appeal to “persons” here should be understood to be an appeal to a specific *normative* ideal of the person, the salient characteristic of which is the capacity for rational self-governance in pursuit of a meaningful life. (Kumar 2003: 106)

A direct implication of such idealizations is to restrict *a priori* the scope of what we owe to each other. In contrast, Richardson’s open-ended definition does not commit that mistake. Once we take seriously the idea that relational duties enjoy explanatory primacy, the individual features of persons are no longer morally fundamental; duties are not grounded in a normative ideal of persons. Rather, we relate to one another as equals despite our empirical differences, and this makes us all persons. There is thus a tension between the commonsense conception of persons captured by ‘intrinsic’ accounts and the fact that we disregard intrinsic differences in our relations to other people. In contrast, the relational conception does not hinge on intrinsic similarities or differences, and therefore reconciles our moral attitudes with a conception of (moral) personhood as constituted by dyadic deontic relationships.

¹³ In making a strong case for directed duties to other animals Korsgaard (2018) falls short of granting personhood proper to any owing to her Kantian conception of personhood. While one may think this doesn’t make much practical difference, Korsgaard still considers domestic animals “not as property but as something more like a subordinate population”. Treating animals as subordinate is incompatible with personhood in my view.

Here is a sketch of the forthcoming argument. Membership in a community of persons affects the material conditions of flourishing, in other words which capacities one is likely to develop, which ones are required to flourish, and what sorts of goods and activities one has interests in. Since moral status is about how we should treat others, if relations determine the conditions of flourishing, then they are relevant to moral status. This relationships between flourishing and community, I argue, is due to the relational nature of moral status in general, personhood in particular. My first step will be to show that persons require communities for their existence and their flourishing. For this, I turn to Marya Schechtman's Person Life View (2014). I address its limitations but argue that we can extract a template from it for describing interspecies communities of persons and their normative significance. My second step will be to specify the normative conception of personhood that reflects the flourishing-moral status-community connection, which unsurprisingly at this point, is the relational account previously canvassed.

IV. The person life view

A. Person lives and person-space

The core thesis of Schechtman's *Staying Alive* (2014) is that the lives of persons involve occupying a "person-space". The Person Life View (PLV) defines persons in terms, not of their capacities, but of the characteristic lives they lead. To be a person is to live a "person life", which consists of the practical interactions characteristic of persons and unfolds in person-space, a locus of *characteristically human practical interests and concerns*, where persons are expected, born, raised, educated, socialized, enculturated, held accountable, loved, cared for, mourned, remembered, and so on. Person-space is a social infrastructure where human-typical attitudes and behaviors are embedded. It is where commerce, work, arts, and science happen, where we become friends, romantic partners, parents,

and children, where we exercise our civic rights and duties, where we allocate social burdens and benefits, where we hold each other accountable.

Schechtman doesn't provide an argument for *why* we owe persons the sort of obligations that we do. In fact, my interpretation departs in some way from her original formulation. For Schechtman doesn't see the connection between moral status and personhood as I have assumed it here. Being a person, on her view, is not the ultimate criterion to decide how to treat persons. So she might well reject the implication that her view settles the moral status of persons, and might not have to worry about animal not being persons by her lights. Schechtman doesn't claim that what we owe other animals depends on their being seen as persons. I want to acknowledge this point of departure.

Location in person-space comes with a typical cluster of attitudes and practices that constitute personhood. Unlike Schechtman, I also want to argue that, insofar as it makes persons, it generates characteristic obligations (to be adjusted for different species, of course). Defending the general thesis that we owe persons specific treatment, and to explain why, is beyond the scope of this paper, although in §§V-VI, I provide a tentative normative bridge: person-space is necessary for flourishing, and what it takes for an entity to flourish justifies their treatment. If PLV is a plausible picture of personhood, including the relational elements that constitute the good of persons, it provides a case for taking the relational structure of personhood as the *ground* of their moral status. That is, that persons live and flourish in person-space explains both *why* we owe persons what we owe them and exactly *what* we owe them.

Schechtman's strategy is to start with paradigmatic cases on which there is general agreement and then determine how much deviation is compatible with our intuitions. "The typical mature person is sentient, reflectively self-conscious, a self-narrator ... and a rational and moral agent" (Schechtman

2014: 112).¹⁴ However, what makes those Lockean features marks of personhood stems from the interaction between a person life and person-space. Developing as a person requires “an environment that provides the proper scaffolding and social support”, while “particular psychological capacities ... are required if one is to engage in the more sophisticated kinds of interpersonal interactions found in a standard person life.” (ibid.) A person life rests on three mutually supportive elements:

- (1) the physical and psychological attributes of the individual;
- (2) the kinds of activities and interactions that make up the individual’s daily life and their relation to the general human form of life; and
- (3) the social infrastructure of personhood (Schechtman uses “culture,” “social infrastructure,” and “person-space” interchangeably; see p. 115), a set of practices and institutions enabling and facilitating persons’ activities, including “presuppositions about what (who) gets brought into the form of life that is personhood.” (Schechtman 2014: 113)

Schechtman’s account offers a bridge between metaphysical and moral personhood that could resolve the Challenge of Scope. Persons are, by dint of their location in person-space, loci of distinctive practical concerns, which marks them for a distinctive moral status. The inference from her descriptive picture to a normatively defensible account of personhood is well served by the idea that person-space is critical to human flourishing. In Section V, I offer a bridge principle to motivate the inference. I will also argue that person-space is in fact critical to the flourishing of some animals.

¹⁴ On the constitution of personal identity through narratives, see Schechtman (1996) and Lindemann (2014). On narrative identity as a criterion of moral personhood, see McMahan (2002) and Varner (2012).

Schechtman considers three types of non-paradigmatic cases: atypical developmental trajectory in humans (e.g., severe cognitive disability), anomalous social positions (e.g., slaves and oppressed categories), and nonhumans (animals, androids and robots). The first two, she argues, can be accommodated by PLV thanks to practices of inclusion and resistance to exclusion—by, say, abolitionists in the antebellum South or, today, disability rights advocates. While personhood might appear contingent on such an account, Schechtman convincingly shows that failures of recognition of certain humans as persons are not failures to see in them the grounds of personhood, but rather failure by the community to enact a tacit or partial recognition of such humans as members of the community. Schechtman’s discussion of nonhuman persons, on the other hand, is unsatisfactory because it lends too much weight to practices of exclusion.

The lives of humans who never develop the full array of capacities of typical adults are not paradigmatic person lives, yet we automatically see and treat these individuals as persons, even “well before maturity” (Schechtman 2014: 120). But, if being brought into a person life is *sufficient* for personhood, why is similar treatment not sufficient to make a dog a person? Schechtman notes that Mr. Peabody, the talking dog from *The Rocky and Bullwinkle Show*, is a nonhuman person (132-3). However, Schechtman is concerned that, *in real life*, we may not be able to recognize the lives of such beings as person lives, owing to different conditions of embodiment (134). Dogs and people have different forms of life, informing different expectations. The response of a family finding out that their child will never be able to talk or dress or feed herself (120–5, 137) is justifiably different than our response to what puppies can’t do. Another example, humans in permanent vegetative state (PVS) “are the recipients of person-specific attentions even if they cannot actively reciprocate.” (78). Even though these are “just barely discernible as interpersonal relations” (105), and even if relationships with a dog were more discernibly interpersonal, it would still be inappropriate to treat her as a person. We don’t marry, hire, or enter into contracts with dogs; we shouldn’t dress them as

humans. The developmental path of humans normally requires that we maintain our expectations even in the face of deviations from paradigms; poodles are not deviations but a different kind of being. Schechtman's view even appears to imply that it is more appropriate to treat the (human) dead as persons than living animals (Stokes 2019). Even if we conceded that it is not totally arbitrary, these are the sorts of natural attitudes we should question, I argue.

Although she is not considering animals here, Hilde Lindemann, who defends an approach similar to Schechtman's, writes of the double-edged power of narratives:

We are initiated into personhood through interactions with other persons, and we simultaneously develop and maintain personal identities through interactions with others who hold us in our identities. This holding can be done well or badly. Done well, it supports an individual in the creation and maintenance of a personal identity that allows her to flourish personally and in her interactions with others. Done badly, we hold people in invidious, destructive narratives. Some such narratives identify the social group to which someone belongs as socially and morally inferior, and in that way the stories uphold abusive power relations between "us" and "them." (Lindemann 2014: x)

The relational constitution of persons echoed by Lindemann can support flourishing or marginalization. Narratives can be ideological. Likewise, Jason Wyckoff argues that animal oppression arises partly from "the ideological functions of the categories we employ", that "our concepts may be shaping the very social reality that we are trying to talk about." (2015: 541) For "ideology serves to constrain imaginative possibilities by presenting contingent social features of the world as natural, immutable features." (545) Indeed, within the "dominant ideology", our concepts and narratives, embedded in social practices, mark animals as belonging to a position of subordination, which subordinates their interests (see Haslanger 2005). By the same token, our natural concepts and narratives affect our pre-theoretical judgments about who the concept "person" can apply to.

Schechtman's argument naturalizes the non-personhood of other animals. But if we take the ideological dimension of our concepts seriously, we should not let our natural attitudes prejudge who can live a "person life", even if we concede that a dog person life is importantly different than a human person life. An inclusive conception of personhood can grant some animals personhood for reasons analogous to why it accords personhood to nonparadigmatic humans: they already participate in and require for flourishing person-space. We are led to believe that they can't by faulty narratives.

B. Pathways to nonhuman personhood

Schechtman establishes a close link between personhood and the human form of life but, to her credit, she does leave some room for nonhuman personhood (2014: 131). She considers two pathways to animal personhood.

Let me start with the most direct route: animals who possess the typically Lockean capacities to interact with us in person-specific ways, such as capacities for self-consciousness, planning, and practical reasoning (132). It's "a largely empirical question" whether any animals fit the description, but human trained great apes may be plausible candidates. *In principle*, even a cognitively enhanced dog-like creature "could demonstrate enough of the attributes of a mature person to live a person life", as might "an atypical nonhuman primate" (133). Still, Schechtman doubts that, in practice, the dog's life would be recognizable as a person life.

The second pathway involves animals who typically have the capacities to develop a social infrastructure of their own. (134) If their infrastructure is "sufficiently like ours to allow for the right kinds of interactions", great apes, elephants and cetaceans could have recognizable person lives. Despite the chauvinism apparent in the requirement that their infrastructures be "sufficiently like

ours”, Schechtman grants that we shouldn’t “be too quick to overestimate how like us creatures must be in order to be able to live recognizable person lives.”

Let me make two comments. First, from an epistemic standpoint, she may well be right that we would not recognize such infrastructures if they were not “sufficiently like ours.” However, structures that involve recognizably dyadic relations among members of a community, such as cooperation, reciprocity, empathy, conflict resolution, friendship, play, mourning, and complex and potentially fluid social hierarchies, exhibit patterns characteristic of person-space. Species of great apes, elephants and cetaceans are a case in point with their complex social organization, innovative tool use or song-making, as well as traditions and cultural differences.¹⁵ Moreover, the idea that animals are capable of normativity, including morally laden behavior and emotions, is gaining scientific and philosophical traction (Andrews and Monsó, forthcoming; Bekoff and Pierce 2009; Rowlands 2012; Vincent et al. 2019). There exist sophisticated modes of social organization—social learning, culture, and tradition—in other species, even conceding that no other species is capable of *cumulative* cultural evolution (Boyd 2017; Henrich 2017). For all that, the epistemic problem may be partly intractable. Perhaps some super-intelligent alien creatures are persons but do not live recognizable person lives. How we should treat them may be settled, at least roughly, on independent grounds (say, sentience or rationality), but also depending on whether we can interact with them *as persons*. I return to the issue in §VI.A.

¹⁵ Animals have cultures insofar as they exhibit behavioral patterns that solidify through social transmission *within* groups and vary *across* groups independently of genetic and environmental variations. On cetacean cultures, see Whitehead and Rendell (2015). On chimpanzees, Whiten et al. (1999); on primates more broadly, Boesch (2012). If respect for persons involves respect for their culture, it may be impermissible to integrate such creatures into person-space.

Secondly, Schechtman's idea is not that such animals do (or should) accord personhood to one another. What matters is that they occupy positions in a recognizable person-space. The claim is structural not psychological. For instance, ritual mourning and burial practices may be indicative of person-space (Andrews and Monsó, forthcoming; King 2013), even if they do not take themselves to be doing so or possess the corresponding concepts. But note that a plausible case can be made for a wide range of animals having some understanding of death (Monsó and Osuna-Mascaro 2020). Moreover, in those nonhuman person-spaces, individuals who lack person-typical capacities "would nevertheless be persons within their own infrastructure (and so, by extension, within ours) for the very same reasons that humans with atypical developmental trajectories are." (Schechtman 2014: 135).

To recap, there are two main ways a creature can occupy person-space. Personhood can depend on humans recognizing other creatures as living in a person-space of the relevant kind, where the act of recognition itself is what determines our dyadic obligations. The details of such recognition should be filled in depending on the gate through which animals enter person-space: say, as workers, sanctuary residents, or companions. The second, and arguably more speculative, way in which animals can be persons is by living in a separate person-space that determines how animals should treat *each other*, even despite their inability to recognize explicitly *that* they have these obligations. For some species, it is easier to imagine them inhabiting a person-space of their own—such as whales inhabiting a whale-centered space—than it is to imagine them sharing person-space with us.

We have good conceptual and empirical reasons to leave the gates of person-space open. I will now spell out in more detail the relational structure of a community of persons that would be properly inclusive.

V. The communities of persons

A. *The structure*

The conditions below reflect common assumptions about the function of personhood in moral discourse: to represent individuals as tied by certain kinds of relationships—including respect, recognition, reactive attitudes, and a presumption of equality. These relationships hold even in cases where reciprocity is impossible. Moreover, personhood involves an internal relation to flourishing, broadly construed to include wellbeing as well as respect, autonomy, and other non-welfarist values. The following schema illuminates these important aspects of personhood.

Deontic	Persons are owed morally distinctive forms of treatment and can wrong or be wronged by one another in distinctive respects (see §II).
Grounds	Persons can wrong or be wronged by one another in virtue of facts about <i>both</i> individual characteristics and relations (i.e., the former do not exhaust the ways persons can be wronged).
Architecture	A community of persons has a layered structure. It comprises characteristic social infrastructures where abilities, skills, dispositions, desires, preferences, needs, and expectations have been shaped through cultural evolution and are honed through social development. Person lives are individuated, personal identity develops, and obligations emerge against this backdrop. For variations on person-space to coexist within a community, they must be mutually consistent (an example of inconsistent person-space is the status of “subpersons” relative to whites; Mills 2017).
Necessity	Person-space provides the necessary material conditions for the existence, individuation, identity, and flourishing of persons.

These conditions unify the upshots of previous sections. The schema supplies a criterion to recognize communities of persons, eschews anthropocentrism, and reflects the normative character of a moral community. At the same time, community-specific details can be filled in to reflect cultural variation consistent with our obligations to persons as such.

The question of articulating different communities within a single moral community, which Richardson (2018) dubs “Thompson’s Challenge” (Thompson 2004) is complicated by the possibility of nonhuman persons (see §IV.B.). Case in point, Schechtman imagines “discovering a species of marine mammals with whom we could communicate well enough to negotiate the use of waterways or engage in other cooperative ventures” (2014: 135). But coordination need not be based on isomorphic person-space if there is sufficient overlap. If we take this possibility seriously, recognizing participation in a different person-space could suffice to recognize personhood in one’s community.

Historically, societies have repeatedly failed to recognize persons in anomalous social positions. The fact that, say, Black people occupied inferior social positions in the United States is a result, not a justification, of such a failure of recognition. Indeed, an egregious wrong of slavery (or segregation) is denying slaves (or oppressed minorities) opportunities to fully manifest their personhood through society. Derrick Darby (2009) has argued that moral rights do not exist independently of social recognition. His “Rights Externalism” resonates with the present account. There are no persons outside communities of persons. But it might seem to generate the wrong conclusions. Darby understands his view risks making the rights of minorities contingent on the artifact of recognition. However, slaves in the antebellum South, even when they were treated as chattel, were recognized as persons by fractions of society and were fighting for their recognition within a broader moral community. Slaves met all the conditions of participation in person-space despite their anomalous

position (Schechtman 2014: 125–30). Slavery was, among many other things, a failure of uptake on these facts.

So what do we owe nonhuman persons? Thompson’s challenge touches on the tension between the various pathways I have sketched, but it is a general challenge about the unity of the moral community. Taking the cue from Richardson (2018), I will say that recognition does not automatically determine our dyadic obligations. Their specification is a work in progress, authoritatively settled in context by the moral community. They are to be articulated by an understanding of animals’ position in their own or our person-space. But a key determinant is what contributes to an animal’s flourishing. Unsurprisingly, the flourishing of persons depends in no small part on the conditions of a person life.

I will now argue that person-space can provide the necessary conditions for domesticated animals such as cats, dogs, cows, pigs, horses, goats, donkeys, chickens, and so on to be persons.¹⁶ They are *already* part and parcel of our social infrastructures and so can be located in person-space. However, changes to our current practices and uptake of the preconditions of recognition are required.

B. Relational primitivism reconsidered

Consider the following principle:

Flourishing An entity E’s moral status supervenes only on the properties or relations of E that are relevant to E’s flourishing. A P-property or R-relation is relevant

¹⁶ I wish to leave the scope of nonhuman personhood open for now. Most domesticated animals, at least birds and mammals, are plausible candidates, but so are many “liminal” (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011) animals, such as raccoons, coyotes, deer, crows, ravens, and pigeons, whose territory and interests overlap sufficiently, and do not excessively conflict, with ours. Of course, many wild animals including primates, cetaceans, and elephants, may also qualify on their own terms, as mentioned above.

to flourishing if, and only if, possessing P-properties or standing in R-relations determines what goods and opportunities are accessible to and good for E.

The principle doesn't specify which features are status-conferring but how they are fixed: by the conditions of a creature's flourishing. There is, in other words, an internal relation between moral status and flourishing. (Flourishing) illuminates our duties to persons: properties and relations that fix E's flourishing fix the grounds of E's claims. And since claims correlate with directed duties, the deontic structure of E's status follows from the conditions of E's flourishing.

At this juncture, two further points of departure from Relational Primitivism bear emphasizing. First, on Zylberman's view, deontic structure follows from E's original claims as a person, and since these involve directed duties, the relational structure of E's status enjoys explanatory primacy. In his discussion of Wallace (2019), Zylberman argues that explaining E's status *in terms of* E's interests appears to make the relational structure derivative (2019: 13-4). But that's assuming interests never have their source in relationships, thus begging the question: Why do persons have original claims in the first place? Zylberman writes, "The moral ought is not mysterious. It simply represents those actions I must perform to respect your status as a moral agent" (2019: 10). But what explains that I should respect you? I do worry that, as he puts it, Relational Primitivism has replaced "one mystery (the moral ought) for another (original claims)." The relation between claims and interests does more explanatory work than Zylberman allows.

Even if we agree that "original claims and the original status they together constitute are *primitive notions*?", flourishing (or interests) plays a role, especially when construed relationally. The idea is that we can pick out the properties and relations that are conducive to an entity's flourishing; they then ground that its moral status. This internal relation, encapsulated in (Flourishing), illuminates moral

status better than the presupposition that persons have dignity or deserve respect. None of this involves reducing claims and status to nonrelational primitives. In fact, this revision better accounts for the application of Relational Primitivism to animal rights (Zylberman 2019: 19) (see §II).

My second point of departure regards Zylberman's building a substantive conception of personhood into the content of original claims. He writes, "[morally required] actions are required by reciprocal relations of respect and recognition, that is, by relating to one another as bearers of original status" (2019: 10). Zylberman (2018) has also argued that dignity, construed as involving deontic norms, exhibits a relational structure: a co-entailment between dignity and the duty of respect. I have, in contrast, refrained from making substantive commitments, focusing on the form of personhood. My account does not presuppose that persons are, independently of their community, bearers of original claims nor that personhood entails specific moral norms of respect. It is more ecumenical.

Who, then, should we count as persons? By way of illustration, consider domesticated animals and whether they can occupy a position in person-space.

C. Interspecies communities

The possibility of "domesticated communities" has been extensively discussed by Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka since their influential *Zoopolis* (2011). Domesticated animals have been selectively bred for generations to live and work within human communities and include companion animals, farmed animals, and some laboratory animals. Donaldson and Kymlicka argue that they should enjoy citizenship rights, on top of their universal basic moral status. Animal co-citizens, whether in sanctuaries, in our homes, or in public spaces, have an interest in being empowered in four main areas: association, reproduction, environment, and work. The recognition of this special status is based on constitutional dependency on human supervision and care, but also on agency within

socially meaningful relationships, including cooperation, trust, and affection. A small-scale model of co-citizenship is the intentional community model of farmed animal sanctuaries (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2015).¹⁷

Relatedly, Laura Valentini (2014) has shown that associative theories of justice, based on “cooperation between morally significant agents”, can be extended to dogs and potentially other nonhuman animals, given the roles they play in our social lives.¹⁸ More broadly, the recognition of animals as subjects of justice entails that their interests be considered in designing the institutions, laws and policies that affect them. It means structuring the political community around and with them.

Following (Necessity), I propose, if some animals’ flourishing requires active participation in an interspecies community, then they are eligible for personhood. Considering domesticated animals such as cows, horses, donkeys, pigs, goats, and many others as persons, or co-citizens or subjects of political justice, would, for instance, alter the normative significance of animal labor, which would deserve proper recognition through rights of self-determination: to choose whether and when to work, what kinds of tasks, for what rewards, as well as rights to healthcare and retirement (Blattner 2020; Cochrane 2016). If domesticated animals possess the capacities and dispositions to live in interspecies person-communities, including agency and the normative powers of assent and dissent (Healey and Pepper 2020), they have rights of self-determination.

¹⁷ Donaldson and Kymlicka (2011) also ascribe intrinsic, universal (i.e. basic) moral status to all sentient animals.

¹⁸ Our understanding of other species’ communicative practices is of course a constraint on our ability to cooperate or otherwise meaningfully interact with them. In this respect dogs are an easy case. See e.g. Behdadi (2021) for an empirically informed discussion.

Why should facts about domestication make some animals persons but not others, such as more or less fully wild mammals and birds? First, personhood does not exhaust the space of moral status. If some animals cannot occupy person-space, then, *ipso facto*, person-space doesn't supply the current material conditions of their flourishing. Such animals don't meet (Necessity). Do any wild animals meet (Necessity)? Some may, especially those who live near or among us (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011: Ch. 6-7; Palmer 2010). Yet many fare better outside person-space. That said, many wild animals make claims against us, if and when we create relations of dependence, vulnerability or familiarity through habitat destruction and fragmentation, urbanization, feeding, or wildlife trafficking. In such cases, our directed duties expand farther than we typically assume. One could, for instance, argue that personhood would ground robust claims to privacy, in both captivity and nature (Pepper 2020), or to the accommodation of one's agency in urban areas (Delon 2020).

Duties entailed by basic moral status may well trump the claims of persons in certain circumstances. The intense *suffering* of factory farmed animals matters more than *loyalty* to cats and dogs; a raccoon's claim to assistance may trump my cat's claim to more social interaction. Simply, persons and nonpersons have different interests and their flourishing different dimensions, so we need not give more weight to the former for persons and nonpersons to make different claims on us.

Let me take stock. I put pressure on Relational Primitivism and the Person Life View to argue that they should include animals in the scope of personhood. I did this by restoring the explanatory relation between dyadic duties and flourishing, and by outlining the structure of communities of persons where such duties originate. Before concluding, let me review four objections.

VI. Objections

A. *Remote persons*

Are there individuals with capacities characteristic of persons who do not participate in *any* social infrastructure? Imagine hermits who were brought up in person-space but exiled themselves. They presumably have all the standard attributes of human persons—narrative identity, autonomy, rationality, and such. Surely, their isolation should not prevent us from recognizing their personhood. This seems to make the relational view superfluous. However, hermits were born and raised in person-space, and carry with them the social and cultural baggage of persons. They are, nevermind their attitudes, entangled in the structure of the moral community. There's nothing mysterious about owing them what we owe to persons.

What of individuals who never occupied a position in person-space? Could they develop person-typical capacities? Since the *possession* of such capacities is not necessary for occupying a position in person-space, the question is whether one can still become a person outside person-space. Besides the rare feral child, such outliers should not worry us, and I suspect PLV can accommodate them. Insofar as goods characteristic of persons are also good for them, including living in person-space, then we owe them what we owe to persons, albeit for slightly different reasons.

In sum, the case of socially anomalous individuals only threatens PLV and my relational view if currently occupying a position in person-space is required for personhood, but it's not (again, see

Stokes 2019 on PVS patients and the dead). (Flourishing) provides us with the tools to extract what we owe such individuals beyond their basic moral status.¹⁹

B. *Intrinsic/extrinsic*

Does status rest on whether a creature *does* or *should* belong to a person-community? In the former case, one worries about arbitrariness. With animals, there is a gaping hole between the set of currently recognized persons and those we should recognize as persons. The relevance of membership, it should be stressed, is not an appeal to brute facts. Normatively, we know we can fail to accord some beings their proper moral status. The challenge for me is why the correct set of persons is determined neither by brute facts nor by intrinsic properties.

The difficulty is real but not insurmountable. Whether a creature merits inclusion has to do with relevant facts about them, but such facts are not reducible to intrinsic properties. The relevant facts are what the creature's flourishing requires, which, I have argued, involve relations between a creature and a community, such as a history of dependence, vulnerability, trust, affection, and cooperation. The community's attitudes per se do not determine inclusion.

One might press on: I am conflating causal claims about, say, individual and evolutionary histories of different animals, with actual needs. The fact that person-space is good for the pig *is* intrinsic, the objection goes. For example, you might be a talented pianist because you had a good piano teacher,

¹⁹ Should we bring *more* beings into person-space, enhance animals so they can become persons, by increasing their cognitive capacities, their social skills, and/or altering our social infrastructures? Here's a tentative answer. We have *pro tanto* reasons to create new persons on three conditions: feasibility, beneficence, and identity. Enhancement that is feasible and would greatly improve an animal's life while preserving their identity may be permissible, albeit not obligatory. I am bracketing the question of whether enhanced moral status *itself* is prudentially good, although my view suggests that being recognized as a person can be good. See Chan (2009), Chan and Harris (2011) and Douglas (forthcoming).

but your talent is intrinsic despite its causal history. But I am not making this causal claim. Rather, we cannot detach the pig's flourishing from the material conditions that fix what is good for them in combination with their intrinsic properties. Facts about flourishing are fixed by that interaction. In other words, they are underdetermined by intrinsic properties, including those that have a causal history outside the subject.

C. The role of flourishing

Why rely on flourishing at all? Moral individualists assume that how one ought to treat particular beings should only depend on their individual characteristics. However, membership in a community also determines the material conditions of flourishing and how they differ for, say, a certain human child, dog, pig, or enculturated chimpanzee. The flourishing of enculturated chimpanzees requires some degree of participation in a human community, at the very least retirement in a sanctuary (Andrews et al. 2018). Community is relevant if, as moral individualists rightly believe, moral status tells us how we should treat individuals.

The objection goes on: The grounds of moral status require a distinct account from flourishing (Jaworska and Tannenbaum 2015; 2018). The former, not the latter, determine "moral entitlements". And so, the connection between community and flourishing does not entail a connection between community and moral status. However, the objection overlooks (Flourishing), which has independent plausibility. Moreover, the connection between moral status and capacity for well-being is central to most accounts of moral status. Flourishing and moral status are distinct notions and require distinct theories, but they are connected. (Flourishing) explains which capacities matter to moral status, and why.

D. *Agent-relativity*

Appeals to relationships as grounds of moral status may seem to only provide agent *relative* reasons, but moral status is supposed to be agent neutral (Jaworska and Tannenbaum 2018; McMahan 2005). For instance, what I owe to *my* cat—to take care of her, not abandon her, make sure she’s looked after when I’m out of town, respect her choices, not treat her in degrading ways, and so on—is well explained in terms of personal or associative obligations rather than moral status. But I have argued that I also owe her what we owe other cats *in virtue of occupying a position in person-space*—say, supporting adoption, rescuing a cat in need, supporting conflict-resolution with wildlife conservation organizations. A theory of moral status must illuminate the reasons we *all* have to treat other creatures in certain ways, and I have argued that some relations matter in exactly this sense. What we owe to other creatures includes what we owe to some of them in virtue of our special relationships but also as members of the community of persons.

VII. Conclusion

Persons make distinctive moral claims on one another, within and across communities. A relational view best reflects the deontic relational character of the moral community. I have argued that it can accommodate nonhuman persons, thus dissolving the Challenge of Scope: human equality is compatible with nonhuman personhood. I have eschewed moral individualism. In fact, I suspect it is responsible for the failure of previous theories to maintain coherence against the competing pressures of the Challenge of Scope.

The structure of personhood is a unified set of deontic relations among persons within person-space whose flourishing depends on and determines the structure of the community. My account is both conservative and revisionary in that it secures personhood for (almost) all human beings and (many)

nonhuman animals. Many questions remain about the specification of the content of rights and duties, and the principles governing relations between different moral communities, but the relational view provides a blueprint for answering these questions.

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