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Troubling Others and Tormenting Ourselves:
The Nature and Moral Significance of Jealousy

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Abstract

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Jealousy is an emotion that arises in diverse circumstances and is experienced in phenomenologically diverse ways. In part because of this diversity, evaluations of jealous subjects tend to be conflicting and ambiguous. Thus philosophers who are interested in the moral status of jealousy face a challenge: to explain how, despite the diversity of jealous subjects and experiences of jealousy, our moral evaluations of those subjects in light of those experiences might be unified. In this project, I confront and respond to this challenge, which I call *the challenge of heterogeneity*.

In Part I, I refine and expand on existing descriptive accounts of jealousy, defending an account with three necessary but not sufficient conditions. On my view, if one is jealous:

- A. One desires that oneself stand in some relation to a specific, non-replicable good.
- B. One has in mind a (possibly imagined) rival and regards the rival's having the good as logically or causally inconsistent with the satisfaction of this desire
- C. One has in mind some (possibly imagined) set of circumstances in which this desire would be satisfied.

In discussing this view I emphasize the role that relationships play in giving rise to jealousy, since its connections to relationships make jealousy descriptively and normatively unique.

In Part II, I develop an account of jealousy's moral significance. To do so, I divide cases of jealousy into three types: those involving jealous desires relating to (1) caring relationships, (2) non-caring relationships, and (3) material goods or personal qualities. I argue that in all three types of cases, jealousy undermines the actual or potential moral value of the jealous subjects' relationships, and that this undermining provides the paradigmatic moral reason to criticize jealous subjects. Thus I respond to the challenge of heterogeneity without simply portraying jealous subjects as selfish or insecure.

After doing so, I consider multiple arguments for the claim that a person's being jealous sometimes constitutes a moral reason to praise that person. I critique each of those arguments and conclude that we have good reasons to see jealous subjects as worthy of moral criticism but not moral praise.

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Introduction

Whether our knowledge of the emotion jealousy comes from first-person experience, from operas and novels, or from sitcoms and pop songs, we all know stories of jealousy arising among siblings, colleagues, classmates, lovers, and neighbors. We know stories of jealousy that feels like anger, jealousy that feels like fear, and jealousy that feels like sadness. We know stories of jealousy that causes its subject to lash out and jealousy that causes its subject to withdraw. So for moral philosophers who are concerned to engage with the wide variety of messy experiences characteristic of real human lives, it is worth asking whether there is anything morally significant that unites all cases of jealousy.¹ We could call this *the challenge of heterogeneity*.

Attempts to confront this challenge are complicated by the fact that existing literature on jealousy is largely descriptive,² and largely aimed at distinguishing it from envy. A further complication is that when people have advanced views about jealousy's moral significance, they have tended to simply say that it is a manifestation of a bad character trait like insecurity or selfishness.³ But I think that kind of response to the heterogeneity challenge is far too quick. For I think experience shows us that people who have no standing disposition to be insecure or selfish can and do feel jealousy on occasion. And even if experience is somehow misleading, I do not see any reason in principle why a

¹ While there was no way to tell ahead of time whether I would find an affirmative answer to this question, I have always assumed that I could learn a great deal about jealousy by attempting to answer it, even if I were to conclude that there is no such unity.

² Goldie 2000, Kristjánsson 1996 and 2002, Neu 1980, and Taylor 1988 do confront normative issues, but they are not primarily about the normative and focus on a limited range of normative questions about jealousy.

³ This has been noted by Kristjánsson 1996, p. 163, among others.

person could not feel jealousy once or twice even though she lacks those character traits.⁴ So we need a more sophisticated response to the challenge of heterogeneity.

My suggestion is that if we are going to find a morally significant commonality shared by all (or even most) cases of jealousy, first we need to identify what unifies jealousy descriptively. The descriptive account of jealousy that I favor is a revised version of Luke Purshouse's account, which involves three necessary but not sufficient conditions. According to my view, a person who is jealous desires that she stand in a relation to a specific, non-replicable good, has in mind a (possibly imagined) rival whose having the good in question she takes to be logically or causally inconsistent with the satisfaction of her jealous desire, and also has in mind some (possibly imagined) circumstances in which that desire would be satisfied.⁵

A crucial fact that Purshouse does not highlight is that jealousy paradigmatically arises within a tangle of interpersonal relationships. These (and other) interpersonal relationships are morally significant, and it is by focusing on the relationships from which jealousy springs that I develop my response to the challenge of heterogeneity. To capture the moral significance of jealousy in a way that responds to the challenge of heterogeneity, I need to move beyond a purely descriptive account of jealousy like Purshouse's. So I carefully consider what it takes to preserve and/or enhance the morally valuable features of the relationships in which jealousy arises and the moral obligations that arise from those relationships in order to trace the moral implications of the descriptive account that I endorse. I thereby take to heart what a variety of philosophers

⁴ Admittedly, *some* jealous subjects are insecure or possessive in morally problematic ways.

⁵ While jealous subjects tend to have whole clusters of desires relating to their jealousy, I use 'jealous desire' to denote the one desire without which the jealousy would not exist; I say considerably more about said desire throughout.

have emphasized in recent decades: that we philosophers need to do more to recognize the relational elements of human lives.

Distinguishing different kinds of relationships in which jealousy arises allows me to divide cases of jealousy into three types and show that for each type, the jealousy undermines at least one relationship, thus giving us a moral reason to criticize the jealous subject.⁶ Let me be clear from the start that unless I specify otherwise, I use ‘jealous person’ or ‘jealous subject’ to refer to a person who is experiencing jealousy the *emotion*. These phrases may, in other contexts, connote a person whose character disposes her to feel jealousy often or intensely, but here I am primarily concerned with emotions rather than character traits. I also want to emphasize that it is the *subject*, in virtue of her being jealous, that I am suggesting we have a moral reason to criticize, rather than her *jealousy itself*.

The first type of jealousy that I consider arises in caring relationships; these could be relationships between lovers or family members, but I use as my paradigm example a case of two friends who enjoy dancing together. The second type arises in non-caring relationships; my paradigm example here is a case of jealousy between colleagues at work. My paradigm example of the third type involves a subject who jealously desires to be the pre-eminent Proust scholar in America. This type looks at first blush like it does not

⁶ I intentionally discuss moral reasons to criticize jealous subjects rather than reasons to *blame*. For there has been a great deal of debate in recent years about just what counts as moral blame, and I cannot get mired in that debate here. Many people see blame as more naturally linked to what Gary Watson has called the accountability face of responsibility than to the attributability face. I am more concerned with showing that people are responsible for their jealousy in the attributability sense, and thus that it is appropriate to make aretaic judgments of those subjects on that basis. See Watson 2004. I also think it is worth asking whether we can distinguish a form of criticism that is weaker than blame; for one affirmative answer, see the discussion of “the resentment of disappointment” in Fricker 2007.

involve relationships; in these cases, the jealous desire is for a material good or personal quality, which do not appear to be things that we necessarily want to be given to us by specific individuals with whom we share relationships. However, I argue that even this type of jealousy does depend on relationships with one's possible future selves and with members of one's community, and I argue that those relationships are undermined by jealousy. So I respond to the challenge of heterogeneity by defending the claim that jealousy's undermining of relationships is the morally significant feature that unifies cases of jealousy. Since relationships are valuable (or potentially so) in so many different ways, this analysis allows us to unite an extremely wide range of jealous experiences.

However, before responding to the challenge of heterogeneity, I need to lay some groundwork; I have three main tasks to complete in the rest of this Introduction. First, I quickly survey the existing philosophical literature in support of a key assumption on which my project depends: the claim that our emotions are things for which we are appropriately held morally responsible and in virtue of which it is appropriate to make moral assessments of us. Second, I trace the ways that various scholars in the Western tradition have demonstrated evaluative ambivalence and disagreement about jealous subjects. Third, I investigate a variety of potential epistemic and moral reasons to criticize jealous subjects, and show that they do not apply to all jealous subjects. In completing these latter two tasks, I show just how challenging the challenge of heterogeneity is.

Then in the first chapter, I discuss the existing philosophical literature on jealousy and defend a refined version of Luke Purshouse's descriptive account of jealousy. In the following three chapters, I develop an account of a common thread that unites moral assessments of jealous subjects. In the second chapter, I argue that jealousy undermines any caring relationship in which it arises. In the third chapter, I argue that jealousy

undermines any non-caring relationship in which it arises. In the fourth chapter, I argue that even when subjects jealously desire material goods or personal qualities rather than relationships with particular people (and thus seem to be jealous outside the context of their relationships), jealousy undermines their relationships with their ideal selves and to fellow members of their communities.

In the fifth chapter, I consider and critique multiple arguments designed to show that we sometimes have a moral reason to praise subjects for their jealousy that might outweigh or neutralize our moral reasons to criticize jealous subjects. Finally, in an appendix, I critique the idea that evolutionary psychology can provide us with reason to praise jealous subjects. I include this appendix because literature on jealousy and evolutionary psychology has received a great deal of attention both from empirical scientists and also from the popular press. I think it is important to be explicit about the limits of what such literature can show, since for many people, this will be the only research on jealousy with which they will be familiar.

In developing my arguments, it has been necessary for me to confront a number of lively debates in contemporary philosophical literature about ethics and emotions, and to choose sides in some of them. Most crucially, I am committed to the claim that it is appropriate that we be held morally responsible for our emotions. I use the next section to survey some literature supporting that claim, which I take for granted in the remainder of this project.

Moral Responsibility for Emotions

In recent years, there has been a great deal of philosophical discussion about what we are morally responsible for and why. According to many traditional accounts, we are only morally responsible for things that are under our direct voluntary control, products of our

free choice or will, and/or things we do intentionally and knowingly. Such accounts make sense of our intuitions about cases in which we think it right to refrain from holding people responsible for their actions because they “could not have done differently,” “did not mean to do what they did,” or “did not (or could not) know what they were doing.” These views are relevant to my project insofar as a significant number of people who hold such views believe that emotions are not a sort of thing for which we should be held morally responsible, and therefore that they are not the sorts of things that provide moral reasons to praise or criticize the people who feel them.⁷

Nevertheless, many newer accounts of moral responsibility reject or loosen the requirements of those earlier accounts. The newer accounts I have in mind separate the things for which we are morally responsible from the things we have direct and/or voluntary control over and subsequently widen the range of things for which we can be responsible to include beliefs, attitudes, emotions, and the like. For instance, John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza defend a view that we can be held morally responsible for (and thus be morally assessed on the basis of) our emotions insofar as we can trace emotional experiences back to our exercise of “guidance control.”⁸ Pamela Hieronymi defends a view that we adopt certain (commitment-constituted) attitudes or perform certain actions based on reasons that settle certain sorts of questions, which thereby renders us morally responsible for those attitudes and actions.⁹ Angela Smith defends the following view:

[T]he kind of activity implied by our moral practice is not the activity of choice, but the activity of evaluative judgment. This ... allows us to say that what makes an attitude “ours” in the sense relevant to responsibility and moral assessment is

⁷ See Sidgwick 1981; Taylor 1970; and Wallace 1994 for a sampling of these relatively traditional views.

⁸ See Fischer and Ravizza 1998, especially pp. 255-259.

⁹ See Hieronymi 2008, especially pp. 367 and 371.

not that we have voluntarily chosen it or that we have voluntary control over it, but that it reflects our own evaluative judgments or appraisals. There are a number of different ways in which our attitudes can be said to reflect our evaluative judgments.¹⁰

An exhaustive survey of similar views is impossible here.¹¹

Of course this trend, and each individual view embodying it, is not uncontroversial. Recognizing that I cannot settle the issue here, I simply want to make my commitments clear from the start. In this project, I assume that the authors of these newer views are onto something and that we can be morally responsible for (and thus be morally assessed in light of) the emotions we experience. Because I am not able to adjudicate between all these different views here, my aim is to articulate my own views about jealousy so as to make them consistent with the largest range of these newer views about moral responsibility as possible. Certainly the result will be *more* compatible with some such views than others, but I leave it for the future to remark on that. For the

¹⁰ Smith 2005, p. 237. See also Smith 2011.

¹¹ Other relevant literature includes Arpaly 2003 and 2006, Frankfurt 1988, and Sankowski 1977. See also Sher 2006, in which he argues that we are justified in blaming people for having bad character traits, even when having those traits is not and was not ever under the control of the agent who has them, and Sher 2009, in which he argues that moral responsibility depends not only on what a person is consciously aware of doing, omitting to do, or bringing about, but also on certain objective facts about a person's identity that cause the person to do the things he does. See Margalit 2004, especially pp. 56-57, for the claim that responsibility does not require direct control and thus that we can be responsible for having or lacking mental states like memories and attitudes. Kolodny 2003, especially p. 138, outlines a view of emotions as reason responsive and thus open to criticism (but not blame), although the criticism he has in mind is of a more epistemic variety. See Deigh 1995, p. 147, for the claim that "Since we are capable of bringing emotions under rational control, we may regard our feeling a specific emotion as incompatible with our moral principles and so try to make ourselves no longer liable to it." See also Solomon 2003, for a view primarily concerned with emotions rather than moral responsibility, according to which emotions, as active judgments, are things for which we can appropriately be held responsible. See Kristjánsson 2002, section 1.4, for a discussion of responsibility for emotions that focuses on pride and jealousy. See also D'Arms and Jacobson 2000 on the distinction between emotional propriety and emotional correctness; while I focus on moral propriety of emotions in this project, I do have a bit to say about emotional correctness later in this Introduction and in Chapter 5.

moment, it is time to look at the long line of scholars who have disagreed and shown ambivalence about jealousy's moral significance.

Evaluative Disagreement About and Ambivalence Toward Jealous Subjects

The historical record shows deep disagreement and ambivalence about how we should best react to jealousy from a moral or more generally evaluative standpoint. Jealousy is often seen as being bad, but it is also often seen as being good, and this is so whether we look at epistemic or moral evaluations of jealous subjects. There is great tension not only between competing accounts of jealousy's value, but also *within* some accounts of jealousy's value. A brief survey of historical commentary on jealousy makes this evaluative disagreement about and ambivalence toward jealous subjects abundantly clear.¹²

The earliest explicit definition of jealousy (*zêlotupia*) that we have on record from the ancient Greeks was written by Diogenes Laertius, who lived sometime between 200 and 500 CE. He said, “[Z]êlotupia is a pain at another's having what one also has oneself...(D.L. 7.111=fr. 412 *SVF*).”¹³ Similarly, in the fifth century CE, John Stobaeus cited an unnamed Stoic who said that jealousy is “pain at another getting what one wanted...(Ecl. 2.92.7 W=fr. 414.14 *SVF*).”¹⁴ Since the Stoics thought, “all passions involve an element of false value-judgement,” they believed that we should be apathetic, which involves not being “psychologically subject to anything—manipulated and moved by it, rather than yourself being actively and positively in command of your reactions and

¹² Of course, some of the disagreement about how to evaluate jealous subjects stems from disagreements about who counts as a jealous subject. I do not attempt to adjudicate between competing descriptive and/or normative accounts until after this introduction, in which my aim is only to briefly describe the range of evaluative views on offer in order to make vivid the challenge of heterogeneity.

¹³ Konstan 2006, p. 223.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

responses.”¹⁵ Thus Stoics would expect their audience to know that they considered jealousy, qua emotion, to be bad without explicitly saying so in defining it. However, by defining jealousy as a type of *pain*, such definitions also express the view that jealousy involves a badness that is not shared with all other emotions (for instance, delight).

Cicero criticized the Peripatetics for their views about the value of jealousy, which shows that contemporary scholars are far from being the first to disagree about how jealousy should properly be evaluated. Cicero saw the Peripatetics as willing to characterize jealousy as (at least potentially) useful and therefore instrumentally good, although he did not say what it was purported to be useful for, as he did with some other emotions.¹⁶ While I do not know of any Peripatetic writings that explicitly refer to jealousy as useful or good, Cicero might have had access to sources that I do not, or he may have simply assumed that his opponents would see jealousy as (potentially) useful on the basis of what they said about other emotions, like anger. Cicero suggests two reasons for thinking that jealousy cannot be good.¹⁷ First, he suggests that it is appropriate to try to acquire goods that one lacks, but inappropriate to be upset about one’s lack of a good.¹⁸ Second, he asserts that a desire to be the only one to have a particular good does not make sense.

Ovid’s evaluative position on jealousy is somewhat like that which Cicero attributed to the Peripatetics. For Ovid recommends to women that they incite jealousy in their husbands as a way to make their husbands’ love more intense and long-lasting,

¹⁵ Baltzly 2008.

¹⁶ See Cicero 2002, p. 55.

¹⁷ Cicero 2002, p. 59.

¹⁸ He does not discuss the possibility that one might be upset at the very same time that one is trying to acquire the good, and that this upset might provide motivational *oomph* that helps one acquire it.

although this strategy is recommended only within firmly established relationships. He counsels women to speak and act in ways that suggest to their husbands that a rival exists, for he is confident that husbands will perform their roles better if they suspect that they have competition.¹⁹ Thus, jealousy was an instrumental good in Ovid's view.

St. Augustine's work also contributes to our sense of tension regarding how we should evaluate jealous subjects. For Augustine ascribes jealousy to himself,²⁰ to the devil,²¹ and to God.²² Surely he is not criticizing God by adopting the Biblical tendency to refer to God as jealous, and yet it is clear that in other contexts, his attribution of jealousy is meant to be a criticism.²³ Augustine's ambivalence about jealousy runs deep. God's jealousy is seen as having a positive value, and yet this positive value cannot be a merely instrumental value, a value that jealousy has because using it strategically allows God to achieve some end. For surely Augustine conceived of God as being able to bring about any valuable end through means other than jealousy if He wanted to. Rather, it only makes sense to see God's jealousy as intrinsically valuable. But this clashes with Augustine's comments about the significant disvalue of jealousy when it is not God who is jealous.²⁴ Theologians will be better suited to resolve this tension than I am; my aim here is simply to point out the serious evaluative ambivalence about jealousy that is present in Augustine's work.

¹⁹ Ovid 1957, p. 171.

²⁰ Augustine 1960, p. 77.

²¹ Augustine 1998, p. 631.

²² Augustine 1960, p. 45.

²³ For just a few of the Biblical passages in which God is referred to as jealous, see Exodus 20:5, Deuteronomy 32:16 and 21, and Zechariah 8:2.

²⁴ For an example, see Augustine 1998, p. 586, where he straightforwardly calls jealousy an evil.

Hume left open the possibility, at the beginning of his essay “On the Jealousy of Trade,” that sometimes we might have reason to be jealous, despite the condemnatory view he takes toward jealousy in relation to trade. For he wrote, “It is obvious, that the domestic industry of a people cannot be hurt by the greatest prosperity of their neighbours; and as this branch of commerce is undoubtedly the most important in any extensive kingdom, we are so far removed from all reason of jealousy.”²⁵ If, as Hume implies, it is possible to have *reason* to be jealous (in non-trade contexts), then jealousy must be, in some sense, good. Whether Hume’s leaving this possibility open was intentional or not is difficult to tell, but I think that we should see this passage as reason to think that even if he was not conscious of the tension between views of jealousy as positive and views of it as negative, such a tension did influence his work.

Rousseau’s view about jealousy may seem straightforward, but is actually quite ambivalent. He said that jealousy is one of “the most dangerous passions, the quickest to ferment and the most appropriate to corrupt the soul, even before the body has been formed.”²⁶ Because of this, Rousseau cautions us not to think that by teaching children in ways that make them jealous, we can thereby teach children to be virtuous. Furthermore, he reassures us that it is possible to teach children to pursue the ends of which we approve by appealing to their appetites, rather than by creating jealousy in them. As Rousseau says, “[T]heir vivacity, their imitative spirit suffice,” and therefore jealousy should not be an instrument for instruction.²⁷ He also provides more practical advice on this point, saying:

²⁵ Hume 1987, p. 328.

²⁶ Rousseau 1979, p. 92.

²⁷ Rousseau 1979, p. 130.

In thinking about what can be useful to him at another age, speak to him only about things whose utility he sees right now. Moreover, let there never be any comparisons with other children, no rivals, no competitors, not even in running, once he has begun to be able to reason. I prefer a hundred times over that he not learn what he would only learn out of jealousy or vanity.²⁸

Here Rousseau takes up a more condemnatory attitude toward jealousy than the earliest writers on the subject, which is consistent with a general trend. He also follows many of his predecessors in seeing jealousy as an inherently social emotion, the product of a person comparing himself to others; for he says, “jealousy has its motive in the social passions more than in primitive instinct.”²⁹ Rousseau sees the jealousy of animals as inherently linked to sexual potency, in contrast to the jealousy specific to humans, which is linked to the uniquely human experience of love and which establishes a moral bond between individuals. He says that when jealousy takes the uniquely human form, it is not as furious and worthy of our disapproval as when it is of the baser sort (although it is possible for humans to experience the jealousy of other animals).

As a social emotion, Rousseau sees human jealousy as having its source both in our own desires and in our beliefs about those around us:

One wants to obtain the preference that one grants. Love must be reciprocal. To be loved, one has to make oneself lovable. To be preferred, one has to make oneself more lovable than another, more lovable than every other, at least in the eyes of the beloved object. This is the source of the first glances at one’s fellows; this is the source of the first comparisons with them; this is the source of emulation, rivalries, and jealousy.³⁰

Rousseau ties such desires tightly to our moral status by saying that “what makes man essentially good is to have few needs and to compare himself little with others.”³¹ When

²⁸ Rousseau 1979, p. 184.

²⁹ Rousseau 1979, p. 430.

³⁰ Rousseau 1979, p. 214.

³¹ *Ibid.*

we fail to take this fact to heart, we experience *amour-propre*, a love that compares, not true self-love. *Amour-propre* is the source of jealousy and other negative emotions. Living among others makes *amour-propre* possible and thus makes virtue in general, and the avoidance of jealousy in particular, difficult.

We see in Rousseau a tension that we will see increasing in the work of later writers. Although he sees jealousy as an emotion that is to be avoided, he also sees it as, at times, not completely avoidable or at least very difficult to avoid. This inevitability should not worry us too much, as practical advice regarding jealousy often tells us how to make the best of being jealous when we cannot avoid it completely. Since Rousseau's Emile has received the education that is most conducive to virtue and most attuned to human nature, he is best positioned to do just that.

When he is in love and jealous, Emile will be not quick to anger, suspicious, and distrustful but delicate, sensitive, and timid. He will be more alarmed than irritated; he will pay far more attention to winning his mistress than to threatening his rival. If he can, he will get rid of him as an obstacle, without hating him as an enemy... His unjust pride will not be stupidly offended by someone's daring to enter into competition with him. Understanding that the right of preference is founded solely on merit and that honor is to be found in success, he will redouble his efforts to make himself lovable, and he will probably succeed.³²

Here we find the notion that jealousy can serve a positive function within a relationship based on love, which Rousseau sees as necessarily mutual; the idea is that jealousy can be an important signal of a (potential) problem within a relationship and spur the subject to behave in ways that strengthen the relationship. Rousseau is suggesting that the experience of jealousy, which he so often cautions us to avoid, can actually be an impetus to improving one's moral character. The tension underlying such a view is not unique to Rousseau.

³² Rousseau 1979, p. 431.

But of course a wide range of writers have seen jealousy as worthy of negative, often extremely negative evaluations. Adam Smith had harsh things to say about those who feel it, pairing it with the word ‘malignant’ twice.³³ According to Spinoza, jealousy is bad insofar as it necessarily involves hatred. For him, jealousy is “nothing but *a vacillation of mind born of love and hatred together; accompanied by the idea of another who is envied*”³⁴ and, “Hate can never be good.”³⁵ In their encyclopedia entry on jealousy, Chevalier Louis de Jaucourt and Denis Diderot wrote, “This cruel and petty passion is the sign we mistrust our own merit.”³⁶ The idea that jealousy signals that the jealous person is insecure or otherwise doubtful about his own merit is one that I have not seen expressed prior to this comment and is one that has only gained in popularity over time.

Echoing themes from Rousseau and Jaucourt and Diderot, Kant saw jealousy as potentially arising when compares one’s own merits to the merits of others. He suggests that if one finds oneself coming up short when compared to others, one might try to eliminate the discrepancy in one of two ways: by trying to emulate the better person (emulating jealousy) and thereby to gain the merit that one sees in that person or by trying to diminish the other person’s merit so that it is equal to or less than your own in the relevant respect (disparaging jealousy).³⁷

While Kant’s views on right action preclude Kantians from thinking of emotions as things for which we can be praised or blamed on moral grounds (because they are not under our rational control as our actions are), Kant recognizes that many of the actions

³³ See Smith 2007, pp. 151 and 235.

³⁴ Spinoza 1994, p. 172.

³⁵ Spinoza 1994, p. 224.

³⁶ Jaucourt and Diderot 2007, p. 439.

³⁷ Kant 1997, p. 195.

we perform when we are feeling jealous are blameworthy actions³⁸, and in this way he indirectly makes a normative assessment of jealousy. Thus we are instructed to let only reason be a motive for action, not jealousy. In order to avoid the disparaging jealousy that drives people to perform blameworthy actions, and in recognition of the fact that it is natural for people to compare themselves to standards outside themselves, Kant encourages people to compare themselves with perfection (God) rather than other people. The thought is that if we compare ourselves with perfection, it will motivate us to do things that increase our merit, since there is nothing we can do to diminish God's perfection, and emulation will be our only option for reducing the discrepancy between our merit and the merit of that to which we are comparing ourselves.

Not unlike Rousseau, Kant encourages parents to pre-empt jealousy in their children by teaching that goodness is to be commended in and of itself; if parents teach children about morality through reasoned discussion of principles rather than by focusing on the modeling of good behavior, children will behave better and other children will try to emulate them. Kant agrees with Rousseau that jealousy is a natural phenomenon in humans, and also agrees that it is a serious flaw in educational methodology if one does not take steps to decrease the incidence of disparaging jealousy in one's children.

Wilbur Larremore, in "The Tyrant of the Mind," argues that jealousy is a serious *moral* problem to which moral theorists have not given adequate attention. He depicts jealousy as comparable to the vice of intemperate egoism; the underlying idea that is that unless one's self-love is overgrown in a morally problematic way, one will not experience

³⁸ For example, he sees belittling or hostile behaviors by jealous subjects as blameworthy (*Ibid.*).

jealousy.³⁹ Many commonsense views of jealousy that have since grown in prevalence have followed this line of thinking. Larremore advocates for more serious engagement with jealousy in moral education, and introduces the contrast term ‘generous rivalry’ to describe the related, but morally acceptable, emotional experience. However, his writing is much more concerned to draw our attention to the lacuna in the literature than to fill the void with a detailed account of what makes jealousy morally problematic or how to combat said problem(s).

After Darwin, a large number of psychologists, anthropologists, and sociobiologists have said that jealousy is a natural, valuable strategy for maintaining certain values, although they have varying ideas about just which values are protected by jealousy and how jealousy protects them. For instance, Gregory White and Paul Mullen say that jealousy is virtuous insofar as it encourages an intense interest in all aspects of one’s partner’s life.⁴⁰ David Buss uses much more forceful language, saying, “Properly used, jealousy can enrich relationships, spark passion, and amplify commitment. It is an adaptive emotion, forged over millions of years, linked inexorably with long-term love. The total absence of jealousy, rather than its presence, is a more ominous sign for romantic partners.”⁴¹ This is just a sampling of those who have advocated for our evaluating jealousy in a mixed or positive way.⁴²

³⁹ Larremore 1905, p. 491.

⁴⁰ White and Mullen 1989, p. 183.

⁴¹ Buss 2000, p. 207.

⁴² Unfortunately, some make the problematic inference from the claim that jealousy is a natural strategy for preserving value to the claim that its moral value is positive (or neutral) all things considered. I talk more in the appendix about why this inference must be avoided. This becomes clear when we notice a number of other “natural” strategies for preserving value, such as increasing the chances that one’s own offspring will survive in a social environment with limited resources by killing the children of one’s rival, the way that many social mammals do at times. If

In contrast, Margaret Mead believes that all jealousy provides evidence that the subject is guilty of a particular kind of moral failing; she sees an egoistic insecurity as a necessary causal precursor for jealousy, and sees this egoism as selfish and morally problematic. This is evident in the following quote, which responds to the suggestion that people who do not feel jealousy lack the zeal that constitutes a normal and motivationally valuable element of love. “[Jealousy] is an unfortunate phenomenon with nothing to be said in its favour. Jealousy is not a barometer by which depth of love can be read, it merely records the degree of the lover’s insecurity.”⁴³ Thus she sees jealousy as giving us reason to criticize the person who feels it, because it is a product of selfish egoism (not the product of appreciation of the beloved). But the causal chain she has in mind does not just start with egoism and end with jealousy; the jealousy in turn causes any number of other bad consequences. “[T]his perhaps is one of the chief reasons why sophisticated people should wish to ban jealousy from their lives, because it tends to blur the important issues, to obscure the fundamentals of personal relations, to muffle hurt in sullenness, and to deck separations in rags of bitterness and abuse.”⁴⁴ However, note that her advice focuses on eliminating jealousy, rather than the underlying insecurity that makes jealousy possible in the first place.

suburban parents adopted this “natural” strategy to secure for their children places at an elite private school, we would have no question about the moral disvalue of such an act.

⁴³ Mead 1977, p. 120.

⁴⁴ Mead 1977, p. 124.

Peter Stearns provides us with a wealth of historical information about the ways that Americans evaluated jealous subjects in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, providing a vivid picture of changing (and conflicting) norms and values.⁴⁵ As he says:

Insofar as jealousy entails anger, American emotional standards have increasingly urged antipathy: anger in family relationships and other contexts is seen as wrong. Yet jealousy is not just anger: in many expressions, it also entails an attachment to loving relationships and a need for affection that Americans have been increasingly schooled to see as desirable and natural.⁴⁶

Stearns discusses how a variety of trends in American life and historical sources from which American culture draws, when taken together, make for a deep ambivalence in American culture when it comes to jealousy. For one example, he comments on the way that the predominance of Christianity in America has perpetuated ambivalence about jealousy, since Christianity's message of universal love can be seen as in tension with Old Testament claims about a jealous God who is the sole deity worthy of being worshipped.⁴⁷ He also talks about how, in the early nineteenth century, various changes to social practices made for more opportunities to experience jealousy in an amatory context, while at the same time, norms punishing the effects of amatory jealousy were less stringently enforced.⁴⁸ He also discusses the ways that changing gender norms in the twentieth century influenced evaluative judgments about jealousy.⁴⁹ Stearns' work provides an excellent example of how historians can illuminate ongoing disagreements about how to appropriately evaluate subjects who feel emotions like jealousy.

⁴⁵ For a less detailed Western history of changing cultural constructions of jealousy, see Mullen 1991.

⁴⁶ Stearns 1989, p. xii.

⁴⁷ Stearns 1989, p. 14.

⁴⁸ Stearns 1989, p. 25.

⁴⁹ Stearns 1989, pp. 143-146.

Jerome Neu's view of jealousy demonstrates an internal ambivalence about jealousy's normative status. He admits that jealousy can be quite harmful, saying, "My belief is that one may be able to limit the consequences of jealousy and the suffering it involves, but that one cannot eliminate the jealousy itself."⁵⁰ But he does not see it as necessarily harmful. In fact, he says, "Jealousy has two faces. One face is as a sign of love."⁵¹ Jealousy can, according to Neu, be a sign of love and caring, which can benefit the person cared for, since recognizing such signs can confer a sense of security. It can also benefit the person doing the caring, since such signs can help the person see where his priorities lie. For a person who has not yet admitted his love for another to himself might be forced into such an admission if he recognizes how jealous he is. But even insofar as it is related to love, jealousy cannot, in Neu's mind, be seen as purely positive. As he writes, "Jealousy, in addition to involving an obvious lack of trust, may betray a deeper lack of love, or rather, lack of trust in love."⁵² The upshot of Neu's view of jealousy is that it can be and often is quite harmful, but that to eliminate or diminish our experiences of jealousy would require the elimination or diminishment of much that we value highly.

Kristján Kristjánsson gives the most extended defense of the claim that jealousy is morally good of which I am aware, and I have quite a bit more to say about his view in the next chapter. He views jealousy as a virtue that constitutes an important part of a well-rounded life, seeing it as the mean between two extremes in responding to violations

⁵⁰ Neu 1980, p. 431.

⁵¹ Neu 1980, p. 452.

⁵² Neu 1980, p. 455.

of moral desert. Thus, on his account, jealousy is similar to righteous indignation in certain respects.

As I hope to have made clear in this brief survey, there has been, historically, a great deal of disagreement and ambivalence about how to evaluate subjects in light of their jealousy. What many people agree about is that jealousy's normative status makes for an interesting research topic. For instance, Larremore says, "The vice of intemperate egoism with its inevitable tendency towards hatred and mental beclouding... has never received adequate treatment by moralists. ... [J]udged by its effect both upon the subject and upon social and public life, jealousy should be taken very seriously."⁵³ White and Mullen, in their suggestions for future cross-cultural research about jealousy, call on scholars to investigate a variety of empirical questions about the moral judgments made about jealousy within various cultures.⁵⁴ Like some others, Robert Solomon sees the moral import of jealousy as connected to rights, saying, "What rights one person has to the attention, the intimacy, indeed the body of another is a very real question," but it is not a question that Solomon pursues.⁵⁵ Michael Wreen devotes the last two pages of his article to the implications of his descriptive account of jealousy in the domain of ethics: just enough to whet one's appetite, but not enough to satisfy a serious curiosity. Purshouse ends his article by saying, "Detailed arguments about the moral and rational status of jealousy and envy are beyond the scope of this paper. However, its accounts of the emotions' psychology have laid a solid groundwork for addressing them elsewhere."⁵⁶ My

⁵³ Larremore 1905, p. 491.

⁵⁴ White and Mullen 1989, p. 171.

⁵⁵ Solomon 2007, p. 107.

⁵⁶ Purshouse 2004, p. 201.

aim here is to build on this groundwork toward the kind of detailed normative account that these authors looked forward to.

One thing that makes it difficult to develop a normative account of jealousy is the fact that there are a variety of aspects of jealousy that can be subject to a variety of types of evaluation. Jealousy can be evaluated for the epistemic justification of the beliefs involved, the truth of the beliefs involved, the practical consequences of having the emotion, the moral consequences of having the emotion, for what having the emotion says about one's character, etc. Scholars have not always adequately clarified which of these types of evaluations they intend to be making. In order to have a productive discussion about the moral significance of jealousy, we must be explicit about which types of evaluation we are concerned with and how these various types of evaluations are related.

Reasons to Criticize Some, But Not All, Jealous Subjects

In the remainder of this introduction, I aim to deepen our understanding of the challenge of heterogeneity by identifying some possible reasons to criticize people for their jealousy and then showing why those reasons do not apply to all cases of jealousy. My main (but not exclusive) focus from this point forward will be on reasons to criticize subjects for their jealousy because, despite the disagreement and ambivalence about jealousy's normative status that I have discussed, historically, most people have seen jealousy as being in some sense bad.⁵⁷ My own intuitions are that this is correct. Some of the reasons to criticize jealous subjects that I consider are clearly epistemic, some clearly moral, and some an epistemic-moral hybrid. I do not assume that any of these reasons is a trumping reason:

⁵⁷ For discussion of potential reasons to praise subjects for their jealousy, see Chapter 5.

one that is sufficient, regardless of other reasons, to justify an all-things-considered judgment that we should criticize the jealous subject.

There are a huge variety of epistemic and moral reasons that one might criticize a subject in light of his or her jealousy, many of which have taken to be reasons that apply to all jealous subjects. Here I want to show that we have good reason to reject many familiar reasons to criticize jealous subjects, at least insofar as they are purported to apply to *all* jealous subjects.

Potential Epistemic Reasons for Criticizing Jealous Subjects

Let us start with epistemic reasons. It seems that a subject could go epistemically wrong in her experience of jealousy in at least the following general ways: (1) she could have a false or unjustified belief about the value of what she jealously desires, (2) she could have a false or unjustified belief about her rival(s), or (3) she could have a false or unjustified belief about her entitlement relative to the jealously desired good. I take it that these are fairly common ways of going epistemically wrong in being jealous, but not the only ways that one might do so.⁵⁸

For an example of the first sort of epistemic failing, consider the following case: Betty is jealous because Veronica is developing a romantic relationship with Archie, with whom Betty desires a romantic relationship. However, what Betty does not know is that Archie is habitually verbally abusive to his partners in private. If Betty knew this, she would no longer jealously desire a romantic relationship with Archie; at most, she would desire a relationship with someone who is like Archie in the respects that initially attracted her to him. But note that not all cases of jealousy involve this kind of failing, for

⁵⁸ For an interesting discussion of different ways to assess emotions for their rationality, with some attention to jealousy, see Jones 2004. See also de Sousa 1987 and Taylor 1975.

not everyone with whom someone jealously desires a relationship is unworthy or incapable of having such a relationship.

For an example of the second sort, consider this case: Betty is jealous because she believes that Veronica is developing a romantic relationship with Archie, with whom Betty desires a romantic relationship. However, Betty misunderstands the situation. For Veronica is not romantically interested in men, and Archie knows and accepts this. So Veronica is not really a rival for Archie's romantic attentions at all, and certainly not in the way that Betty believes she is. But again, not all cases of jealousy involve this kind of failing, for some people who seem to be rivals are rivals in exactly the way they seem to be.

For an example of the third sort, consider the following case: Betty is jealous because Archie sometimes chats with Veronica and Betty believes that her relationship with Archie entitles her to forbid him to speak to all single women. I am inclined to say that no one is ever entitled to do that, but to avoid debate about that, suppose that Betty and Archie's relationship is simply a platonic friendship. In such a case, Betty is wrong about what she is entitled to claim from Archie. But once more, not all cases of jealousy involve this kind of failing. For not all jealous subjects believe that they are entitled to demand anything of the person with whom they jealously desire a relationship. Sometimes relationships are desired from afar and desired by people who think themselves unworthy of what they desire; that, however, does not necessarily prevent jealousy from arising.

This is but a tiny sampling of the ways that one's jealousy can be epistemically problematic. I have focused on cases in which the subject has a false belief, but there are also plenty of cases in which a jealous subject is worthy of epistemic criticism because that

person has failed to exercise due epistemic diligence and lacks justification for a belief. I do not take myself to have *proven* that there is no epistemic reason to criticize that applies to all jealous subjects, but I do think that we have good reason to suspect that there is no such reason. I invite the reader to consider more cases of jealousy and imagine whether there is an epistemic error that could be shown to be present in all of them.

Potential Moral Reasons to Criticize Jealous Subjects

Let us turn our attention to cases in which a subject somehow goes morally wrong in being jealous. There are many different moral reasons that are commonly invoked to criticize subjects for being jealous. However, my aim here is to show those commonly cited reasons do not provide an adequate response to the challenge of heterogeneity. That is, if we are going to find a moral reason to criticize that applies to all jealous subjects, we are going to have to look beyond the more familiar reasons.

I begin with reasons to criticize jealous subjects that focus on how jealousy can be harmful to welfare or well-being. It is uncontroversial that jealousy often causes subjects to act in ways that are materially, psychologically, and/or socially harmful to targets, rivals, and/or to the jealous subjects themselves. Targets can be harmed when jealousy leads to their losing valued relationships, not forming new relationships in the first place, losing privacy, witnessing harms to loved ones, being the subject of public accusations, being lied about, losing time and energy to deal with the jealousy and its effects, losing employment and income, needing therapy, getting divorced (and incurring legal costs), being subject to violence (and incurring medical costs).⁵⁹ Since jealous violence sometimes

⁵⁹ See White and Mullen 1989, p. 2 for information about the causal role jealousy plays in violence against partners, the ending of romantic relationships, and people seeking counseling. For statistics on jealousy and marital assault, see Stearns 1989, p. 139. See Mathes 1992, pp. 79,

results in the death of the target (and/or the rival), the significance of this harm cannot be overstated. I take the link between jealousy, relationship violence, and death to be extremely serious; cases of jealousy that are manifested in violence are certainly the most morally egregious. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to let the significance of such cases obscure the many other (often serious and much more common) ways that jealousy can be harmful. However, none of these harmful results invariably follow from jealousy, not least because not all jealousy is ever expressed.

Rivals can be subject to almost all, if not all, the same harms that targets are, whether they be psychological, social, or material harms.⁶⁰ However, there are many, many cases of jealousy in which no rival is harmed, for at least two simple reasons. One, often the jealous subject does not know the identity of the rival, and two, often the rival is nothing more than a figment of the subject's imagination. Not even the most insanely jealous person can harm someone who does not exist.

Moral philosophers have a tendency to focus on the ways that jealousy negatively impacts the welfare of people other than the jealous person (usually only the target and the rival). However, the psychological literature, not to mention common sense, tells us that often the welfare of the very person who is experiencing the jealousy is seriously

86-87, and 132-139 for more information about links between jealousy and violence, murder, and suicide. For a summary of evidence for the claim that "male sexual jealousy may be the major source of conflict in an overwhelming majority of spousal homicides in North America" as well as many cases of nonfatal wife abuse and courtship violence, see Hansen 1991, p. 225. For more on jealousy and violence, see also Buss 2000; Daly, Wilson, and Weghorst 1982; Fantham 1986; Gesell 1906, pp. 482-483; citations in Hansen 1991, p. 225; and Holtzworth-Munroe 1997.

⁶⁰ However, we have some evidence that suggests rivals are much less likely to be the victims of jealous violence than targets are. See Mathes 1991, p. 74. There is also some evidence that women are more likely to be the victims of jealous violence, whether the jealous subject/perpetrator is a woman or a man; see van Sommers 1988, pp. 37 and 192.

negatively impacted by jealousy.⁶¹ Crucially, there are many ways in which the jealous subject's welfare can be negatively impacted even if the jealousy is never expressed. For one thing, jealousy can harm subjects by distracting them from valuable projects and relationships; being jealous can take a lot of mental and physical energy and time, which cannot be spent on other projects and relationships.⁶² Often one can only prevent oneself from expressing one's jealousy by expending a great deal of mental effort; that effort might leave one with less time and energy for other projects.⁶³

Even when unexpressed, jealousy can result in psychologically painful feelings of guilt and/or shame, at least it can when jealous subjects are able to recognize their jealousy for what it is.⁶⁴ Realizing that one is jealous can also destabilize one's sense of self. For instance, empirical studies of sexual jealousy often discuss people who practice various forms of non-monogamous sexual activity who find their jealousy particularly traumatic to their sense of identity, given that many such people see jealousy as a harmful by-product of overly possessive (monogamous) sexual relationships and therefore take the fact that they feel it as a sign of their being unsuccessful in their attempts to "outgrow"

⁶¹ Hence the title of this dissertation, which plays on an insightful quote by William Penn, who says "The Jealous are Troublesome to others, but a *Torment* to themselves." For this quote and some elaboration upon it, see Penn 1900, p. 147. For philosophical discussion of the harmful effects of jealousy on the subject, especially jealousy's connections to anxiety, see Kierkegaard 1964.

⁶² See Holtzworth-Munroe et al. 1997 and Most et al. 2010, the latter of which provides empirical evidence for the interesting claim that jealousy is literally blinding (that is, while jealous, one is less adept at visual processing).

⁶³ The point I am trying to make here is more than just that there are opportunity costs associated with being jealous. Every mental activity, like every action, precludes one from doing something else, so the *having* of opportunity costs does not set jealousy apart from other emotions. I want to highlight the fact that jealousy's obsessive nature makes it a particularly bad offender when it comes to interfering with one's other projects and mental processes.

⁶⁴ Although, of course, whether or not this occurs is partially influenced by one's cultural conditioning.

monogamy and the thinking that goes with it.⁶⁵ The obsessive nature of jealousy can, presumably, make the unpleasantness of all these feelings particularly difficult to eliminate. But, of course, some people embrace their jealousy and so not all jealousy will have these kinds of negative effects on subjects' psychology.

Because jealous subjects can be harmed by their jealousy whether or not it is expressed, the potential harms to the welfare of the jealous person are more numerous (although not necessarily more serious) than the potential harms to the welfare of others. The harms of unexpressed jealousy may also be more difficult to prevent or mitigate because of the obstacles to their being identified by concerned third parties. However, it seems much more common (although not necessary) for jealousy to harm a jealous subject indirectly through the subject's jealous behavior. Jealous subjects may harm themselves by destroying or impairing relationships that they care about very much. Othello's agony after he realizes his murderous mistake is a great example of this. If a relationship is seriously damaged because of jealousy, the jealous person can lose access to important resources (consider all the material losses that can result if jealousy leads to divorce). Just as important, damage to a relationship often psychologically damages the jealous subject because the subject cares about the person with whom the relationship is shared. Many of us take ourselves to be harmed in an especially awful way when we ourselves are the cause of harm to those about whom we care deeply (or those with whom we identify ourselves).

⁶⁵ For a sampling of discussions of jealousy among people who practice swinging, polyfidelity, and other types of non-monogamous sexual activity, see Buunk 1991; Mathes 1992, pp. 54-57, and 85; van Sommers 1988, Chapter 3; and White and Mullen 1989, pp. 121-123. See also Overall 1998 for defense of the claim that non-monogamy, and the jealousy it incites, tends to affect women and men differently, insofar as women are under greater cultural pressure to incorporate their sexual partners into their own identities.

As noted, at its extremes, jealousy can motivate violence, and this violence can lead to seriously bad results for the jealous subject, including incarceration and/or reciprocal violence. Even when the jealous person's behavior does not have these results, and even when the target accepts the jealous behavior (maybe by internalizing norms that portray jealousy as a good thing), behaving jealously can negatively impact one's social life more broadly construed. For even if one's partner does not protest or retaliate against one's jealous behavior, friends and family members may (but, again, will not necessarily) protest or retaliate, thus increasing tension across a wide web of social connections.

The negative impacts on welfare that I have considered thus far are, I think, easy to imagine. However, in the psychological literature on jealousy, there is evidence of links between jealousy and the subject's welfare that are less easily identified. For instance, Eugene Mathes' discussion of psychological research on jealousy shows us that a number of researchers, using a variety of methodologies, have found that jealousy tends to be correlated with certain other psychological features: namely, "neuroticism, anxiety, low self-esteem, external locus of control, insecurity, low life satisfaction, a malevolent view of the world, family unhappiness, and poor physical and mental health."⁶⁶ I expect most people will agree that having those psychological features can and often does negatively impact a person's welfare. Of course, evidence that these psychological features are correlated with jealousy is not proof that they are caused by jealousy.

However, I think we can make a good (though admittedly not airtight) case for the claim that the relation between jealousy and at least some of these psychological features is a relation of mutual causation via a feedback loop. For instance, a person with an

⁶⁶ Mathes 1992, p. 90. See Chapters 3 and 4 for evidence supporting this claim.

external locus of control (that is, one who perceives forces external to himself as highly influential in his life and who sees himself as having little control over his own life) would seem to be more likely than the average person to see the behavior of a target or the behavior of rivals as potentially having a great (negative) impact on his welfare. Because of this, it seems that such a person would be more likely than the average person to see the behavior of others as threatening the satisfaction of his desires. Similarly, it seems that a person who feels jealousy often or intensely would tend to spend more time thinking about the ways that the behavior of rivals may present significant obstacles to the satisfaction of his desires. Because of this, it seems that such a person would tend to see others as in fact having a great deal of influence on his welfare. I think that similar relations of mutual reinforcement can be found between jealousy and a number of the other traits on Mathes' list.⁶⁷ If I am right about that, then feeling jealousy will tend to catalyze the development of certain traits that tend to have a negative impact on the welfare of the jealous person. However, I see no reason to think this connection is a necessary one.

Rather little is said in the literature about how jealousy impacts the welfare of those in the community outside the central triad, but jealousy can negatively impact such people in various ways. By decreasing the stability of relationships between members of the community, expressed jealousy (even if it is not recognized as such) can throw the interactions of a wide network of community members into a destabilizing readjustment period. This can be psychologically confusing and can lead to losses in efficiency, productivity, etc., especially when the community is a work-related one.

⁶⁷ For more on similar feedback loops relating to jealousy, see White and Mullen 1989, pp. 14-15 and 29.

Furthermore, when jealousy arises, the family members of those involved in the central triad are often negatively impacted. Insofar as jealousy is a contributing factor in divorce or incarceration, the effects on family members, especially dependent children, can be quite grave, psychologically, socially, and materially. But there can also be many much more mundane negative effects of jealousy within families, and they could involve any of the general types of negative effects of expressed jealousy already considered. For instance, many people become unpleasantly agitated, depressed, or angry when they witness their friends' jealousy and its resulting negative affects on that friend and others. Children of bickering jealous parents lose a sense of security, if not actual security. People walk on eggshells when they know that their colleagues are jealous in the workplace.

Insofar as jealousy is manifested violently, community members can be forced to use their time and resources to deal with it, sometimes employing courts and penal institutions, sometimes using less formal systems of mediation. Recognizing the potential effects of jealousy can even lead to the drafting of laws specifically designed to help the community deal with those effects.⁶⁸ In addition to using resources to contain or punish people whose violent behavior results from jealousy, communities also spend resources to help those who are harmed by jealous behavior, which means that there are fewer resources available for other goods and services. However, if jealousy is not expressed in any way, it is hard to imagine it having an impact on the welfare of anyone other than the

⁶⁸ There are a number of historical examples of laws that are formulated with jealousy in mind; the most commonly cited are those that treat the killing of a rival discovered *in flagrante delicto* differently from murder, whether by classing it as manslaughter or decreasing sentencing in these cases. It wasn't until the 1970s that various American states overturned their laws that explicitly allowed people who killed others from a motive of "justified" or "understandable" jealousy to receive lesser punishments than other killers. See Stearns 1989, pp. 28-30 and 154-163.

jealous subject. And since jealousy is not necessarily expressed, harms to the community (just like harms to the target and rival) are not inevitable results of it.

Not all moral reasons to criticize jealous subjects are grounded in concerns about jealousy's effects on welfare;⁶⁹ some are grounded in concerns about respect. For behaviors motivated by jealousy often involve jealous subjects treating others as mere means to the satisfaction of their desires, even if they do not harm the welfare of those others. For instance, sometimes when a jealous person prevents his partner from leaving the house unsupervised, he is doing so to assuage his own fears about being abandoned for a rival. Jealous people who restrict their partners in this way are not acting out of concern for their partners, nor are they acting in the best interest of their partners, although they may try to justify their controlling behavior by claiming they are. Instead, they are attempting to satisfy their own desires for security and status. Using someone in this way is not morally appropriate treatment of any moral agent, let alone one about whom you care.

There are also more subtle ways that jealousy may involve a failure of respect. A jealous subject may instead manifest his jealousy by making snide comments about the target (or the rival), sometimes by implying that the person has low or no standards for associating with others. Over time such criticisms can undermine the person's confidence, which is necessary in order to reason and choose well. These criticisms diminish the person's ability to make decisions based on accurate information and/or her willingness to make choices for herself at all. So criticisms motivated by jealousy sometimes slowly erode another's reason and will, which is incompatible with showing appropriate respect

⁶⁹ One might criticize someone simply because that person's being jealous means they *risk* one or more of the harms just discussed; that sort of criticism is rather more difficult to defend.

for that person as an autonomous moral agent. These two examples certainly involve the subject harming another, but notice that the failure to show respect, not the harm done by that failure, can be a sufficient reason to criticize such a subject.

These examples demonstrate ways that one's jealous *behavior* may fail to meet the requirements of respect. In order to avoid these specific kinds of failures, and the criticisms to which they make one subject, it is sufficient to reform one's behavior. One might say that continuing to be jealous is perfectly compatible with demonstrating the appropriate respect for others, as long as one does not act on the jealousy in morally forbidden ways. And certainly there are people who are jealous but do not act on it in any significant way, if at all, and thus do not fail to demonstrate morally required respect for others.

Another very common way to criticize jealous subjects is to say that jealousy is simply the manifestation of some bad character trait or other. For instance, it is common to claim that people experience the emotion jealousy because and insofar as they are possessive, greedy, selfish, insecure, or immature (which is to say that they lack virtues such as generosity, selflessness, self-confidence, and/or maturity).⁷⁰ I agree that there are important relations between our character traits and the emotions we feel; that much is

⁷⁰ For a sampling of references to jealous people as selfish (or possibly so), see James 1890, vol. 1, p. 308; Neu 1980, p. 453; and Stearns 1989, pp. 46, 52, 60, 92-94, and 116. For references to jealous people as possessive, see Bernhard 1986, p. 23; Mathes 1992, p. 20 and van Sommers 1988, p. 3. For references to jealous people as insecure (or possibly so), see Jaucourt and Diderot 2007, p. 439; Mathes 1992, p. 20; Mead 1977, p. 120; Neu 1980, pp. 454-455; Stearns 1989, pp. 59, 92, 118, and 128; and van Sommers 1988, p. 49. Bringle 1991 discusses the relation between jealousy and insecurity. Farrell 1997 discusses a possible link between jealousy and insecurity, but note that he does not cite anyone who defends what he calls the insecurity thesis; Mead 1977 would be the closest to such a view that I know of. For references to jealous people as immature, see Mathes 1992, pp. 71-79 and Stearns 1989, pp. 92, 112, 118, and 128. See also Mullen 1991, p. 593, 600 for discussion of the view that jealous people are immature, possessive, *and* insecure.

relatively uncontroversial.⁷¹ If having certain virtues prevents a person from feeling certain emotions, or makes it such that they only feel those emotions under certain limited conditions (which I think is highly plausible), then there may be some virtues that require their possessors to refrain from being jealous (at least under some conditions).

However, I have two things to say about the line of thinking sketched above. First, I see no reason to think that *everyone* who experiences jealousy at some time or another must necessarily have a general disposition to be greedy, selfish, insecure, immature, possessive, or to manifest any other particular vicious character trait. It certainly seems possible that someone might feel jealousy only once or twice in her life, under relatively unusual conditions, and that her feeling it would have nothing to do with a general tendency to be vicious in any particular way. Or someone might feel jealousy frequently, but only in a very limited domain of his life, such that his thoughts, feelings, and actions in that domain cannot be generalized into a picture of his character overall. Furthermore, it seems a stretch to say that everyone who feels jealousy at some time or another necessarily has *all* the bad character traits that have historically been associated with jealousy in this way; it seems that a person could feel jealousy without being greedy *and* selfish *and* insecure, etc. I admit that there will be many people who are greedy, selfish, possessive, immature, or insecure and for whom those bad character traits at least partially explain why they feel jealousy when they do, but I do not see any reason to think that will be true in all cases.

⁷¹ Few people would bat an eye if we said that a person who tends to get intensely angry at the slightest provocation has a character defect. See, for instance, Aristotle 1999, pp. 61-62 for a discussion of anger and the virtue of mildness, where he suggests that it is appropriate to criticize people for feeling anger too strongly, not strongly enough, at the wrong times, or toward the wrong people.

Second, we need to be careful to distinguish between criticizing someone because they have a vicious character trait and criticizing someone because they feel a particular emotion on a particular occasion. Sometimes one will feel a particular emotion in a particular circumstance *because* one has a vicious character trait, but criticizing them for having that character trait is different from criticizing them for that particular instance of an emotional experience. This also helps us remember that certainly not everyone who feels jealousy at some time or another can appropriately be said to have a disposition to be jealous, so it is important to maintain the difference between jealousy the emotion and jealousy the character trait.

My concern in this project is with jealousy the emotion, not the disposition or character trait, but it will be helpful for me to make a few brief remarks about the trait here. There may be a straightforward way to explain why we might criticize the character of a person with a jealous disposition. A jealous disposition is straightforwardly an element of a person's character. When we speak of a person who has a jealous character, we mean to be saying more than just that the person has experienced jealousy before or is experiencing it now. The person with the jealous character has some tendency or disposition to feel jealousy, and probably tendencies to have other related beliefs, desires, emotions, and to behave in certain ways. Assessing someone's character as a jealous one requires taking into account the person's behaviors and experiences across a significant span of time and/or set of circumstances. This makes jealousy the character trait the sort of thing of which we might ask whether it is a vice or a virtue.

Given the relatively episodic nature of jealousy the emotion, it seems to be a rather more difficult task to explain what feeling the emotion could say about one's

character.⁷² Jealousy the emotion is neither a virtue nor a vice, because it is not sufficiently dispositional. I know of no reason to think it would be impossible for a person to feel the emotion jealousy once and only once in their life, even if the person encountered numerous situations in which other people would have felt jealous. It would not seem appropriate to say that such a person has a jealous character. So I think you can feel jealousy without having a jealous character. Similarly, I think you could have a jealous character without ever feeling jealousy, if you have the right sorts of tendencies and dispositions but never find yourself in the relevant sort of situation (although this is probably rare). One could have a jealous character without ever being jealous if, for instance, one lived in isolation to such a degree that one was never in a social situation that could give rise to jealousy the emotion.

So, while jealousy the emotion is not itself a virtue or vice, I do think that sometimes it is a product of a vicious character trait (although not always the same one). However, when it is, it is hard to see why we would criticize the subject for feeling the emotion rather than criticizing them for the underlying vicious character trait directly. Since my aim is to explain why we would do the former rather than the latter, I do not think that familiar claims about jealousy being a product of a vicious character trait are going to be as much of a help for my project as one might have initially thought.

Potential Moral-Epistemic Hybrid Reasons to Criticize Jealous Subjects

Thus far, I have discussed some potential epistemic reasons and some potential moral reasons to criticize jealous subjects, none of which seem to apply to all cases of jealousy. However, we should also note that some epistemic failings that are involved in jealousy

⁷² Although, remember that jealousy the emotion, while episodic, is rarely instantaneous. Recalcitrant jealousy and cases like the Othello case show this.

are simultaneously moral failings; I sometimes think of these as providing us with moral reasons to criticize that are parasitic on epistemic reasons to criticize. When I speak of such reasons, I refer to moral reasons to criticize that would not be present if it weren't for the fact that the subject (1) has engaged in an epistemically irresponsible practice for which she is culpable or (2) has one or more false beliefs, and (3) the false or irresponsibly-formed belief is somehow implicated in her jealousy.

The *prima facie* plausibility of the claim that some sorts of epistemic failings are also moral failings can be illustrated using an example involving jealousy from Verdi's opera *Il Trovatore*.⁷³ In that story, two lovers, Leonora and Manrico, confront a number of barriers to their love, including a powerful rival, the Count di Luna. After the count has put Manrico in prison, Leonora quickly secures Manrico's release by promising the count that she will submit to his sexual advances, then ingests a deadly poison to ensure that her promise will remain unfulfilled. When she arrives at the prison to release Manrico, he instantly assumes (correctly) that she has promised herself to the rival to secure his release, but he also assumes (incorrectly) that she intends to fulfill her promise. He promptly begins to berate her for selling the love that was "his" and then curses the day he ever met her.

I believe that it is a moral failing of Manrico to jump to these conclusions (even the true one). He uses quick, skillful reasoning to figure out what would have allowed Leonora to gain the key to his cell (her making the promise). However, he does not give her an opportunity to explain why she was willing to do so, he merely launches into a tirade of condemnation. She attempts to explain while he curses her, though he is

⁷³ See Verdi and Cammarano 1983, pp. 74-76.

unwilling to listen.⁷⁴ This is bad epistemic practice, reflects poorly on his character, and causes great suffering to Leonora, whom he supposedly loves.

But even if he were right about her intentions, Manrico might still be worthy of moral and epistemic criticism. For in that scenario, he still might be neglecting to consider the possibility that Leonora is making an enormous (and possibly morally praiseworthy) sacrifice by sleeping with a man she hates to save the life of the one she loves. Given what Manrico knows about Leonora's past behavior (especially about her willingness to make sacrifices for the sake of their relationship), whether or not she actually intends to sleep with the count, she seems to have earned the benefit of the doubt. His failure to give her this is appropriate grounds for morally criticizing him.⁷⁵ This is not to say that Manrico could not have been justified if he were somewhat skeptical and questioned her about her intentions, but merely to say that he should not jump to conclusions so quickly, immediately treating her like someone who is morally bankrupt and not worth listening to.

While my reading may not be the only plausible reading of this story, it makes it reasonable to suggest that it is Manrico's jealousy that prevents him from trusting Leonora, who deserves his trust. The jealousy focuses his attention on his own desires and on his rival in a way that makes him unable to focus on his beloved and thus prevents him from being charitable in his thoughts about her. He is unable to be grateful when she

⁷⁴ It is a very interesting question whether Manrico's behavior constitutes an epistemic injustice to Leonora in the sense described in Fricker 2007; I think it does.

⁷⁵ Some people may disagree with me about this example, particularly with my claim that Leonora's past behavior gives Manrico a *prima facie* reason to think better (or differently) of her, given that earlier, he saw her embrace the count (albeit because she had mistaken the count for Manrico). If this particular example is contentious, the reader can likely think of another case where someone would be worthy of criticism for not giving someone the benefit of the doubt.

arrives to rescue him, or even to treat her fairly. Thus we might even say that he makes himself and their relationship morally worse by precluding the exercise of various virtues. It seems to be fairly common for people experiencing jealousy to narrow their attention thus.⁷⁶

Manrico's belief about Leonora intending to sleep with the count is false and, I believe, epistemically unjustified, given the information he has about her past behavior and his refusal to listen to her story about what passed between her and the count. It seems that he would be worthy of criticism even if the belief were false but justified or true but unjustified, although probably to a lesser degree. I think that by forming this belief in these circumstances, Manrico wrongs Leonora.⁷⁷ Thus he is both epistemically and morally in error. My sense that she is wronged is not just based on the fact that Manrico's curses cause Leonora significant psychological pain in the brief time between their meeting in the prison and her death, although that pain is significant. His new beliefs about her also fundamentally change their relationship. By forming these beliefs, their relationship becomes less trusting (or demonstrates that it was not so trusting all along). Either trust that previously existed was destroyed, or they (and we) were wrong all along about the level of trust between them.⁷⁸ If the latter, then those changes to their understanding of the relationship change the relationship itself, which turns out to be

⁷⁶ See Holtzworth-Munroe et al. 1997, p. 320 for evidence that violent men have a narrower focus on their wives than distressed men who are not violent. For a fascinating study relevant to this point, but which focuses on women's jealousy, see Most et al. 2010, which provides evidence that jealousy can even disrupt one's visual perceptual processing.

⁷⁷ I also think he undermines their relationship, but more on that later.

⁷⁸ A wide range of beliefs can affect one's trust in another. Forming a belief that someone has lied to you on one or more occasion can make trust more difficult to maintain or destroy it completely. Similarly, forming a belief that someone's priorities have significantly changed may increase or decrease one's trust in that person.

unstable, unpredictable, and unequal. This would be true even if Manrico had never expressed his jealousy or if Leonora never knew about it. Unlike Manrico, Leonora was consistently trusting of, committed to, and supportive of her partner. It strikes me that even if Leonora had died before she heard Manrico's harsh words,⁷⁹ or even if his harsh words did not bother her, Manrico wronged her by thus degrading their relationship, which she values above all else. We can see Manrico's action as *unjust* even if Leonora did not hear what he said or did not feel hurt by it.

This is just one case where I believe that there is a moral reason to criticize the jealous person that is, at base, the same as an epistemic reason to criticize that person.⁸⁰ Manrico's believing the worst about Leonora under these conditions seems to be at once epistemically and morally problematic. I think that the epistemic failing is itself also a moral failing regardless of whether it leads to other morally significant problems, because what makes Manrico epistemically unjustified is exactly what is morally unjustified: his failing to take into account relevant information that he could have if he simply listened to Leonora.

One might worry that I am not criticizing Manrico for his jealousy, but rather for the actions that result from his not properly recognizing his jealousy and controlling himself. However, it seems unlikely that Manrico would have done the criticizable actions if it weren't for his jealousy. So since his jealousy may function as an important source of the actions that one has reason to criticize, that might be reason enough to criticize him

⁷⁹ The question of whether Manrico could harm Leonora in such a case is interesting, but this is not the place to discuss whether a non-living person can be harmed.

⁸⁰ Alternatively, our moral judgment about him may *proceed from* our epistemic judgment about him. That is, Manrico's failure to fulfill his epistemic duties is the basis for the moral judgment according to an "ethics of belief" standpoint. Thanks to Lars Enden for helping me see this alternative formulation.

for the jealousy as well. Furthermore, if the *epistemic* error is simultaneously a moral failing, then criticisms of Manrico need not depend on his actions, if ‘action’ is understood in a standard, limited sense. If actions are the things one does or says, but not what one thinks, desires, or omits to do, then criticizing his actions is not enough to capture the failing that is simultaneously moral and epistemic in nature. To criticize him for that failure, we do not refer to his actions, but rather to the jealousy itself (it being an internal state) and what he fails to do because of that jealousy.

I think we could come up with quite a few more cases in which the moral failing of the jealous subject is intimately related to an epistemic error. Some of the most common reasons given for criticizing jealous subjects might fall under this category of hybrid epistemic-moral failings. For instance, as I have already noted, it is extremely common to say that jealous subjects are to be criticized for being insecure. Insofar as this is *sometimes* true, it will *sometimes* be the case that a jealous person makes an epistemic error by underestimating her own worth and simultaneously wrongs or harms herself through this underestimation.

However common it may be to simultaneously make an epistemic and moral error in being jealous, not all jealous subjects do so. Not all jealous subjects jump to conclusions the way that Manrico does, and some who do manage to convince themselves or be convinced to slow down and look at all the evidence. Not all jealous subjects have an opportunity to confront their targets and do them the kind of injustice that Manrico does to Leonora, and some who do have such opportunities turn their suspicions and insecurities inward rather than outward at their targets and rivals. Furthermore, some jealous subjects are correct in their assessments of the threats that their rivals pose, and thus do not make an epistemic error at all.

So of all the types of epistemic, moral, and hybrid reasons for criticizing jealous subjects that I have considered here, none of them seems to constitute a reason for criticizing all people who experience jealousy. It *seems* in principle possible that a person could experience jealousy without harming himself or others, especially if the jealousy is short-lived and never expressed. It also seems in principle possible to experience jealousy while meeting the requirements of respect and without one's jealousy being the manifestation of any particular vicious character trait. Of course, it may be that every case of jealousy falls prey to at least one of these kinds of reasons to criticize. The fact that none of these kinds of reasons seem to apply to all cases of jealousy highlights the multifarious nature of jealousy and shows us just how much of a challenge the challenge of heterogeneity is.

Problems with Identifying and Evaluating Jealousy

Given the variety of ways that jealousy can involve some failing or other, we can see that to correctly diagnose someone's jealousy as morally and/or epistemically problematic requires significant observational acuity on the part of the person making the diagnosis (whether this person is a third party or the jealous person herself).⁸¹ For one needs to have significant information about a person's mental states and the processes by which those mental states were formed to correctly attribute jealousy to a subject, and we are all aware of the difficulty of acquiring accurate information about others' mental states.

Given the variety of both epistemic and moral failings that can be involved in jealousy, the variety of circumstances in which jealousy can arise, and the difficulty of

⁸¹ For an interesting discussion of some literature about how we attribute emotions to ourselves partly by noticing features of our situation rather than of our internal states, see Silver and Sabini 1978, pp. 105-106 and Solomon 2007, p. 33.

identifying another's mental states, I want to mention two general conclusions that can be drawn from these facts. First, these facts provide the basis for a preliminary explanation of why we have historically been somewhat ambivalent in our evaluations of jealousy. For it is unlikely that a person making an evaluative judgment about an experience of jealousy will actually be making an all-things-considered judgment. There are too many potential errors for most people to take account of under normal circumstances. And even if one devotes a great deal of time and truly achieves (or approximates) an all-things-considered judgment, chances are that they will not have characterized all the subject's relevant mental states correctly or in sufficient detail to arrive at a *correct* all-things-considered judgment. If I am right about this, then neglecting to assess jealousy relative to one type of failing or another may lead to widely differing overall judgments of the appropriateness of the emotion.

Second, these facts provide a *prima facie* reason to be extra careful in making inferences about the moral and epistemic failings of particular persons experiencing jealousy in particular situations. It gives us reason to be cautious in expressing moral or epistemic praise or criticism of the jealous person. When we recognize how many different morally significant values need to be considered in our assessments of the moral appropriateness of jealousy, we realize how easy it is to miss a relevant fact or misunderstand a relevant feature of the situation. Such realizations give us reason to be cautious in believing that we have made an accurate and truly all-things-considered judgment about a subject's jealousy.

This is not to say that I do not think we can ever be justified in our beliefs about the moral and epistemic problem(s) involved in a particular experience of jealousy, nor to say that I do not think that expressions of moral or epistemic criticism are ever justified

responses to jealous subjects. Rather, I simply recommend being quite cautious when it comes to expressing criticism in response to particular episodes of jealousy.

Conclusion

In the preceding, I have introduced the reader to what I call the challenge of heterogeneity, which requires us to confront and answer the following question: given the variety of situations in which jealousy arises, ways that jealousy can feel to a subject, and behaviors that jealousy can cause, is there any morally salient feature that is present in all or most cases of jealousy? In introducing the reader to this challenge, I have briefly surveyed the literature supporting my assumption that emotions are the kinds of things for which we can be held morally responsible, and thus for which we have moral reasons to praise and/or criticize people. I have also sketched out the range of, and ambivalence within, historical views about how we should evaluate subjects in light of their jealousy, then discussed a variety of the epistemic, moral, and hybrid reasons one might give to criticize subjects for their jealousy. I have suggested that none of those reasons apply to all cases of jealousy, and thus that if we want to determine whether we can give an affirmative response to the challenge of heterogeneity, we must look for a different commonality. The main goal of the rest of this project is to do just that.

In the next chapter, I discuss what exactly is involved in experiencing the emotion jealousy. I build my account upon the solid foundation provided by Luke Purshouse, and I contrast my view with a variety of other descriptive accounts of jealousy. In the following three chapters, I attempt to show that there is one kind of moral reason to criticize jealous subjects that does apply to all cases of jealousy, and that this reason is the key to responding affirmatively to the challenge of heterogeneity. I aim to show that disparate experiences of jealousy are unified in that they provide us with the same moral

reason to criticize the jealous subject; they are unified in that jealousy undermines subjects' interpersonal relationships. To show this, I divide all cases of jealousy into three types, based on differences in the subject's relationship with the target of her jealous desire, then show that each type involves the subject undermining the moral value of at least one relationship. I start with cases in which jealousy involves a desire for a relationship with a target about whom the subject cares. This is the most familiar and common type of jealousy. The other two types of cases are those in which jealousy involves a desire for a relationship that is *not* caring and those in which jealousy involves a desire for a material good or personal quality. After considering those three types of cases, I consider and critique various arguments attempting to show that a person's being jealous sometimes constitutes a moral reason to praise that person. But first things first: let me now turn my attention to a more careful description of the emotional experiences with which I am concerned.

Describing Jealousy

Chapter 1: A Descriptive Account of Jealousy

Jealousy is an emotion that is generally seen as widespread and unavoidable.⁸² Nevertheless, people seem to be particularly bad at recognizing and admitting when they are jealous.⁸³ And once people are jealous, they seem particularly bad at ceasing to be jealous; jealousy tends to be *recalcitrant*, and even more immune to rational revision than many other emotions are.⁸⁴ In different times and places, jealousy has been represented as primarily a feature of women's experience,⁸⁵ and at other times and places, as primarily a feature of men's experience.⁸⁶ There is also quite a bit of competing empirical evidence

⁸² On jealousy's unavoidability, see Buunk 1991, p. 172; Mathes 1992, p. 110; Neu 1980, p. 428-432; Rousseau 1979, p. 214; and van Sommers 1988, Chapter 3 and p. 95. For an account that de-emphasizes the alleged ineliminability of jealousy, see Taylor 1988, especially p. 247. See also Schoeck 1969 for view of *envy* as inevitable (though I have significant misgivings about other features of this account).

⁸³ On problems with recognizing (and acknowledging) jealousy, see Clanton and Kosins 1991, pp. 138-139; Neu 1980, p. 453; Parrott 1991, pp. 5-6; and Stearns 1989, p. 100. For an excellent literary illustration of the mental acrobatics people will go through to avoid seeing themselves as jealous, see what Maggie Verver has to say in James 2009, p. 316.

⁸⁴ On jealousy's recalcitrance, see Burton 2001, p. 282 of the third partition; Cervantes Saavedra 1989, p. 318; Nussbaum 2001, p. 225; and White and Mullen 1989, p. 189. A wonderful literary illustration of jealousy's recalcitrance can be found in Robbe-Grillet 1965.

⁸⁵ For examples of people who see women as the more jealous gender, see Freud 1989, p. 674; Gesell 1906, p. 483; Ovid 1957; Mead 1977; Mullen 1991, p. 597; and Stearns 1989, pp. 24, 42-43, and 73-74. Of course, disagreement on this is prevalent. In Burton 2001 we are told that Montaigne thought women were more jealous; Burton replies that "Comparisons are odious, ... men and women are both bad, and too subject to this pernicious infirmity," then goes on to say that "sure [jealousy] is more outrageous in women, as all other melancholy is, by reason of the weakness of their sex" (p. 266 of the third partition). Given that Burton describes male jealousy as tending to lead to violence and death, while he describes women's jealousy as tending to result in crying and yelling, the claim about the outrageousness of women's jealousy appears to be the product of a gendered double standard.

⁸⁶ For discussion of the earliest ancient Greek references to jealousy, almost all of which are about jealous men, see Fantham 1986. While the Bible attributes jealousy to many men and to God, nowhere does it attribute jealousy to a woman. This might be explained by the etymological link between 'jealousy' and 'possession' in Hebrew and the fact that the women in the Bible would not have been considered capable of owning property. Thanks to Jeremy Fischer for pointing out this connection. See Aquinas 1922, p. 334 for the claim that males, whether human or non-human, experience more jealousy towards females than females do towards males. See also the view discussed in Stearns 1989, p. 15.

about differences in the conditions that elicit jealousy from contemporary men and women, as well as differences in the ways that their jealousy manifests in behavior.⁸⁷ There have also been numerous cross-cultural studies of jealousy, its causes, its effects, and how people evaluate jealous subjects.⁸⁸ Many people have even attributed jealousy, in all its complexity, to non-human animals.⁸⁹ All of the above make jealousy a fascinating object of study.⁹⁰ But the question remains: just what is jealousy?

To answer this question, I favor a bottom-up approach. In theorizing about emotions, which are fundamental experiential components of being a human being and a moral agent, I take our actual emotional experiences and related linguistic practices, in all their messiness and multiplicity, as the appropriate starting place. However, this approach does not preclude us from refining our intuitions after careful consideration.

Paradigmatic Examples of Jealousy

With a bottom-up approach in mind, I want to outline a handful of paradigmatic situations in which jealousy might arise. By outlining a range of rather different situations in which it is easy to imagine a person feeling jealous (even in the absence of a theory of

⁸⁷ For just a sampling of this literature, about which there is very lively debate, see Bryson 1991; Buss 2000; Daly, Wilson, and Weghorst 1982; DeSteno et al. 1992; DeSteno et al. 2006; Harris 2000; Mathes 1992, pp. 83-88; Pines and Aronson 1983; Sagarin et al. 2003; and Stearns 1989, pp. 35-39 and 143-146.

⁸⁸ On cross-cultural similarities and differences when it comes to jealousy, see Bryson 1991; Daly, Wilson, and Weghorst 1982; Hupka 1991; Hupka et al. 1997; Kristjánsson 2002, p. 161; and Mathes 1992, pp. 105-113. On cultural variation of emotions generally (jealousy included), see Solomon 2007, pp. 252-262. For the claim that jealousy is present in all cultures, see van Sommers 1988, p. 95.

⁸⁹ See, for instance, Burton 2001, Darwin 1998, Gesell 1906, Larremore 1905, Rousseau 1979, and Sidgwick and Jones 1902. See also Mathes 1992, pp. 111-112 for the results of an empirical study of people's claims about the jealousy of their pets. For dissent, see Green 1890, p. 131 and Kristjánsson 1996, p. 167.

⁹⁰ For two interesting accounts of how jealousy serves as a theme in certain kinds of narrative artworks, and how a study of those artworks demonstrates the diversity of experiences of jealousy, see Wagschal 2006 and Yates 2007.

just what jealousy is), I can quickly show just how multifarious jealousy is commonly understood to be and also provide myself with a list of familiar, concrete cases from which to draw to illuminate jealousy's normative status. The following are just a handful of the many different examples I could give that would be easily recognizable as cases in which a subject could feel jealous:

1. *Flirt at the Party*: Jeff is dating Claire and desires to spend more social time with her than anyone else does. They attend a party where Jeff witnesses Claire having a good time joking and flirting with someone else. Jeff conceptualizes the jokester as a rival and feels jealous.⁹¹
2. *Dance Partners*: Fred and Adele are platonic friends who practice dancing together regularly. When Ginger shows up at their practice session for the first time and Fred asks her to dance as a welcoming gesture, Adele feels jealous.
3. *Co-workers*: Linda desires to be the employee who her supervisor at work, Nancy, trusts more than any other employee. She desires this because she sees it as the quickest and surest route to a promotion. Linda feels jealous once she forms this desire, since she already knows that Nancy trusts Susan more than Nancy trusts her.⁹²
4. *Scholar*: Frank, who believes that he is America's pre-eminent Proust scholar, feels jealous when he sees an ad that bills Larry Sugarman as America's #1 Proust scholar.⁹³
5. *Coin Collector*: Louis collects rare coins and experiences jealousy when reminded that he does not own the most valuable coin collection, which he desperately desires.
6. *Childhood Friend*: Billy and Mike are elementary school children who have been best friends for years. Billy experiences jealousy when Mike chooses to be science fair partners with the smartest student in the class, Charlotte, rather than with Billy.⁹⁴
7. *Violent Partner*: Leo believes that his wife, Shelly, cannot be trusted to devote what he sees as the appropriate time and attention to him if she maintains or

⁹¹ See a similar case in Farrell 1980, which has a great deal in common with my dance partner case.

⁹² I tend to call cases like this one *workplace jealousy* rather than *professional jealousy*. The latter fits the following case better, since that case involves a subject who actively desires to be an exemplar in his profession, not just to be seen as an exemplar.

⁹³ This scenario comes from the movie *Little Miss Sunshine*; see Arndt 2006. See other, similar cases of professional jealousy involving an opera singer in Farrell 1997 and involving a tennis player in Farrell 1980.

⁹⁴ Interestingly enough, since Billy might desire *both* to be chosen by Mike and also to get to work with the smartest student in the class, Charlotte, Billy might jealously desire things of both Mike and Charlotte and see them both as his rivals.

initiates relationships with others. His jealousy manifests itself in violence toward Shelly if he suspects she has left their home without his permission or if she talks to others on the telephone.

8. *Family Feud*: Two siblings, Anna and Dorothy, receive unequal inheritances from their parents; it is unclear if the discrepancy is based on Anna having a greater need or on her being their parents' favorite. Dorothy, who received less, feels jealous, although it is not clear whether she jealously desires her parents' money, affection, or both.⁹⁵

I return to many of these cases in the following as I endeavor to find a normatively significant feature that unifies cases of jealousy; I also comment on a number of less paradigmatic cases of jealousy in what is to come. For now, I turn my attention to the descriptive account of jealousy that I think is the best currently on offer in the literature, followed by an accounting of its virtues relative to other accounts and a few key refinements to it.

Purshouse's Account of Jealousy and of How It Differs from Envy

The descriptive component of my account of jealousy is a refined version of the excellent descriptive account developed by Luke Purshouse.⁹⁶ He explains his view clearly, defends it persuasively, and engages with a wide range of the best contemporary research on jealousy. After explaining just what he says about jealousy, I have a great deal more to say about exactly what makes his account so strong, especially when compared to some other accounts.

Purshouse's goal in writing about jealousy is to distinguish it from envy as far as that is possible; in adopting this goal, he follows a number of other philosophers who have also devoted considerable attention to this particular distinction.⁹⁷ However, this is not

⁹⁵ For a somewhat similar case in the literature, see Kristjánsson 2002.

⁹⁶ See Purshouse 2004.

⁹⁷ Purshouse argues (successfully, I believe) that some emotional experiences can accurately be described both as jealousy and also as envy. Most philosophers who have taken up jealousy as a

the only goal one might have in one's philosophical investigations of jealousy. I want to shift philosophical discussions of jealousy from the descriptive realm into the normative realm, and I want to show how the view that Purshouse defends, when modified a bit, gives us the resources to say a lot more about the moral significance of jealousy than we would be able to without his insights.

To achieve his goal, Purshouse focuses on what he calls jealousy's "characteristic evaluative components," which are intentional states of some form or other, rather than focusing on any physiological, affective, or phenomenological aspects ("feeling" aspects). As Purshouse says, "[T]he feelings a jealous subject undergoes may be both (a) highly variable between different instances of the emotion, and (b) frequently the same feelings as are associated with other emotions."⁹⁸ Neither of us denies that feeling aspects are involved in jealousy, but we agree that it is the evaluative aspects that help us identify experiences of jealousy.⁹⁹ So while I do not share Purshouse's main goal, I do share his focus on the evaluative or cognitive aspects of jealousy rather than on feeling aspects,

serious object of study have been concerned to distinguish it from other emotions. Primarily, they have devoted themselves to explaining how jealousy and envy are distinct (or not). Examples of philosophical works structured, at least in part, around this task include Kristjánsson 1996 and 2002, Neu 1980 and 2000, Purshouse 2004, Solomon 2003 and 2004, and Taylor 1988. For psychologists who do the same, see, for instance, Parrott and Smith 1993 and Smith, Kim, and Parrott 1988. See Ben Ze'ev 2000, pp. 321-326 for a comparison of jealousy and envy from the moral perspective. For a work that distinguishes between different kinds of jealousy rather than jealousy and envy, see Salovey and Rodin 1986. Philosophers have also been concerned to describe jealousy's relation to other emotions, especially fear, anger, indignation, and sadness. This can be seen in Kristjánsson 2002 (anger and indignation), Neu 1980 and 2000 (fear), Solomon 2003 and 2004 (fear), Taylor 1988 (fear, anger, and resentment), Tov-Ruach 1980 (fear), and Wreen 1989 (anger). See White and Mullen 1989, pp. 37-39 for more citations.

⁹⁸ Purshouse 2004, p. 183.

⁹⁹ For agreement on this point, see Solomon 2003, p. 5. For defense of the claim that the evaluative and feeling aspects of emotions cannot and should not be neatly separated, see Goldie 2000.

because I think we need to attend to what is descriptively distinctive of jealousy to account for what is morally distinctive of it.

Purshouse defends the following three necessary (but not sufficient) conditions for jealousy, saying that the following will be true of any jealous subject:

- a. He desires to possess a good, possibly to a certain extent, or in a certain way: for instance, exclusively or pre-eminently.
- b. He regards the actual or potential possession of this good by another person, the rival, as inconsistent with the fulfillment of this desire.
- c. He has in mind some (possibly imagined) set of circumstances in which this desire would have been satisfied.¹⁰⁰

The major innovation of Purshouse's account is in what he says about inconsistency in (b). Purshouse's claim about inconsistency is developed from an idea that first appeared in "Jealousy, Attention, and Loss" by Leila Tov-Ruach (a pseudonym for Amélie Rorty). Tov-Ruach suggests that in jealousy, the subject views the rival as the *cause* (or potential cause) of the subject's not having the desired good; jealous subjects see their own loss (or potential loss) as someone else's gain, such that there is (potentially) a direct transfer of the good from the subject to the rival.¹⁰¹ Purshouse refers to this as Tov-Ruach's "causal condition."¹⁰²

Purshouse builds on the causal condition when he points out that some jealous subjects think that their rivals' having the desired goods is *logically*, rather than causally, inconsistent with the subjects themselves having those goods.¹⁰³ The two crucial kinds of cases that Purshouse uses to demonstrate this are cases in which what the jealous subject

¹⁰⁰ Purshouse 2004, p. 195. Notice that Purshouse labels his conditions with lowercase letters. For clarity, I always use the lowercase letters to refer to his original conditions, whereas I always use capital letters to refer to the revised conditions that I articulate in what follows.

¹⁰¹ Tov-Ruach 1980, p. 466.

¹⁰² Purshouse 2004, p. 191-192.

¹⁰³ Purshouse 2004, p. 192-193.

desires is either (1) to have *exclusive* possession of some good and (2) to have *pre-eminent* possession of some good. In such cases, where the subject wants to be *the only* possessor of some good or to possess *the most* or *the best* of some good, there is a logical rather than a causal relation between the rival's attaining a good and the subject's jealous desire being unsatisfied.¹⁰⁴ The key insight is that it is possible for a person to experience jealousy when that person does not possess (or might cease to possess) a desired good *in the manner he desires* (exclusively or pre-eminently). Notice that whether the perceived inconsistency is causal or logical, the rival's having the good may not be the *only* thing standing in the way of the subject having it; it may be over-determined that the subject's jealous desire is not satisfied.

Now we can see how Purshouse's necessary conditions for jealousy give us the resources we need to distinguish jealousy from envy (as far as that is possible). Purshouse characterizes envy as follows:

Envy ... can be understood as involving a negative attitude to a distribution [of goods] on grounds that it comprises one's own inferiority to another. The relative breadth of this characterisation reflects the fact that envy encompasses a range of possible attitudes, linked by the fact that subject dislikes his inferior standing.¹⁰⁵

We do not have to accept this exact formulation of what envy is to accept Purshouse's arguments about how to distinguish jealousy from envy. Because of the form his arguments take, they only rely on our agreeing that certain kinds of familiar cases are in fact cases of envy. The crucial part that one does have to accept is the idea that envy is a relatively broad category that subsumes many different sub-categories.

¹⁰⁴ Notice that pre-eminence may be used as a quantitative or qualitative notion, so wanting pre-eminence in some domain might require a desire to have the *most* of something or to be the *best* in some respect. Purshouse does not talk about this explicitly, but his choice of examples shows clearly that he allows for either reading of the term.

¹⁰⁵ Purshouse 2004, p. 195.

Given this rough characterization of envy, each of the three necessary conditions for jealousy fails to be met in some cases of envy. For instance, a person who fails to meet condition (c) can still be envious; I can be envious of Bill Gates' wealth or Susan B. Anthony's friendship with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, even though I do not believe it is possible for me to ever attain those goods. Similarly, a person can fail to meet condition (b) and be envious; I could be envious of the quality and quantity of Oprah Winfrey's powerful influence on American culture without believing that her having that influence is logically or causally inconsistent with my satisfying my desire to be equally (or more) influential. Furthermore, a person can fail to meet condition (a) and still be envious; Gabriele Taylor and Purshouse call the kind of envy relevant to such a case *destructive envy*. For I can be envious of a classmate who gets a job at a prestigious law firm, even if I do not want such a job or the status that comes with it. What I might enviously want is that he *not* get a job that will confer elevated social status on him or that will make him more satisfied with his job than I am with mine. I may be happy with my status as it is, except insofar as I want that this rival not equal or surpass me in status or satisfaction. By using similar cases and reasoning, Purshouse argues that none of the necessary conditions for jealousy are necessary conditions for envy, although they do tend to be fulfilled in cases of envy.

Purshouse tells us that a closer look at condition (b) allows us to see three ways that jealousy tends to be different from envy; as he says "generally speaking, jealousy, unlike envy: (i) involves wanting to deny the rival something, (ii) concerns particular goods, and (iii) is not formed about internal qualities of body, mind, or character."¹⁰⁶ I

¹⁰⁶ Purshouse 2004, p. 198

agree with Purshouse that, in general, jealous people desire to deny their rival something, insofar as jealous people see their rivals' having certain goods as inconsistent with their own desires being satisfied. Later, I refer to such a desire as a *subsidiary jealous desire*, since it is intimately connected to the jealousy, but not, strictly speaking, necessary for it.¹⁰⁷ However, as Purshouse points out, when a jealous subject wants pre-eminence relative to a good, that person need not want rivals to be denied that good, so long as the subject gains or maintains enough of that good to surpass the rival relative to it. An example of this could be the person who wants to be most trusted by her boss; she may be perfectly happy if her boss trusts other employees somewhat, as long as the boss trusts them less than the boss does her. Thus (i) is not *always* true of jealousy, especially if (i) is read as wanting to deny a rival something full stop. But even in pre-eminence cases, jealous subjects tend to want to deny the rival something, if only *to a degree*, so (i) will, generally, be true.

Similarly, I agree with Purshouse about (iii); jealousy tends not to involve a desire for internal or personal qualities because one's having such qualities is generally not seen as incompatible with others also having them. Nevertheless, since one can jealously desire exclusivity or pre-eminence, and thus it is possible to jealously desire to be, for instance, *the most intelligent* or *the only one able to do something*, it is possible for a person to jealously

¹⁰⁷ I use 'jealous desire' to denote the desire mentioned in the first necessary condition; jealous desires are whatever desires without which the jealousy would not exist. Subsidiary jealous desires are those desires for the means by which one expects or hopes one's main jealous desire will or might be satisfied.

desire a personal quality. An example of this could be the person who jealously desires to be America's pre-eminent Proust scholar. Thus (iii) is not *always* true of jealousy.¹⁰⁸

As for (ii), the claim that jealousy generally concerns particular goods, but does not always do so, we need to be careful about exactly how to interpret this claim. So I revisit it when, in the upcoming section, I propose a few revisions to Purshouse's account.

While Purshouse's conditions give us the resources to distinguish many cases of jealousy from cases of envy, his account still allows the two categories to have some overlap.¹⁰⁹ That is, it allows that some emotional experiences can be appropriately called both jealousy and envy. This helps us understand common sense patterns of jealousy and envy attribution; it allows us to explain why colloquial usage of these words does not involve hard and fast guidelines for distinguishing cases of jealousy from cases of envy.

The Virtues of Purshouse's Account

The virtues of Purshouse's account, as it stands, are numerous, and are mostly products of the fact that Purshouse has carefully assessed earlier views of jealousy and avoided the problems that he has identified in those earlier accounts. One significant virtue of his account is the way it is designed to avoid a number of problems that arise when one tries to distinguish envy and jealousy using one simple rule. In recent years, it has been quite common for philosophers (and psychologists) to try to distinguish jealousy and envy by

¹⁰⁸ In Chapter 4, I provide reason to think that even when jealousy does involve a desire for an internal quality, it *also* involves a desire for a certain status, which is not wholly internal to the subject. So the exceptions to (iii) are a bit more complicated than they might appear at first blush.

¹⁰⁹ See Silver and Sabini 1978, footnote 2 for another reference to jealousy and envy as overlapping. Kristjánsson also sees jealousy and envy as overlapping, but only because he sees jealousy as a type of envy; see Kristjánsson 1996 and 2002. Taylor 1988 also allows for borderline cases that tend to blend together both jealousy and envy. See also Stearns 1989, pp. 12-13 and Hansen 1991, p. 212 for other views that allow for overlap. I am glad to see agreement on this particular point among theorists whose views about jealousy are otherwise quite different.

identifying some single feature that is purportedly necessarily present in one and absent in the other. Purshouse discusses many proposals of this type and shows how they all end up misclassifying some cases or others. In the following, I discuss some of these proposals and the problems that befall them, as a way of showing the kinds of misclassifications that Purshouse's accounts avoids.

To begin, Purshouse's view avoids the problems of certain views, such as that considered but not endorsed by Farrell, according to which jealousy focuses on that which one desires and envy instead focuses on one's (perceived) rival.¹¹⁰ Proposals like this make the difference between the two emotions simply a difference in intentional object. However, individuating the two emotions along those lines fails to acknowledge that both emotions take complex objects, and that neither jealousy nor envy could occur without there being some relevant good *and* a perceived rival.¹¹¹

Similarly, Purshouse's account is a better alternative to accounts, such as those defended by Farrell, Neu, Solomon, and Wreen, according to which jealousy necessarily involves three people: a subject, a rival, and a person with whom the subject wants a relationship.¹¹² Such accounts say that envy instead involves only two people, a subject and a rival, and so what the envious person wants is some sort of material good or personal quality rather than a relationship. But Purshouse shows us that it is not true that

¹¹⁰ Farrell 1997.

¹¹¹ Purshouse 2004, p. 183-185. Jealousy's complex object is also briefly discussed in Solomon 2002, pp. 135-136. See Davis 1936, p. 395 and Solomon 2007, pp. 106-107 for similar claims that simultaneously emphasize the role of the community in jealousy. See also Goldie 2000 for the claim that the object of jealousy is a (complex) narrative, and Jaggar 1989, p. 153 for the claim that the objects of all emotions are complex states of affairs.

¹¹² See Farrell 1997, p. 166; Neu 1980, p. 433; Solomon 2007, p. 106; and Wreen 1989, p. 642. For an alternative to Purshouse's argument that one cannot distinguish between jealousy and envy simply by the number of parties involved, see an argument for the same conclusion in Kristjánsson 1996, p. 165. Kristjánsson says that there are necessarily three parties in jealousy, but also that there can be three-party envy.

envy never involves three people and a desire for a relationship, nor that jealousy never involves two people and a desire for a material good or personal quality. A person can be envious of someone else's personal relationship(s) and a person can jealously desire something other than a relationship, like a valuable coin collection or a talent. So we cannot distinguish jealousy from envy either by the number of people involved or by the type of object that is desired by the subject.¹¹³

Purshouse's account is also better than alternatives, such as that defended by Ben Ze'ev, that distinguish jealousy from envy by saying that envy necessarily involves the subject seeing himself as in some sense inferior to the rival, whereas jealousy is possible even if the subject sees himself as superior or equal to the rival.¹¹⁴ For Purshouse persuasively argues that, for instance, two suitors who are romantically pursuing the same person might *both* feel jealous, even if one of them receives less of the desired attention or affection and both pursuers recognize this.¹¹⁵

Finally, Purshouse's account is also preferable to accounts, such as those defended by Neu and Taylor, that would have us distinguish jealousy and envy according to temporal factors. Neu argues that jealousy involves a desire for a good that one now possesses or has possessed in the past, whereas envy involves a desire for a good that one has never possessed.¹¹⁶ Purshouse argues that we should reject this view, since it has the unacceptable implication that once I have possessed a good, even for the briefest time, I

¹¹³ Purshouse 2004, p. 185-87. In Chapter 4, I argue that Purshouse is not exactly right if he means that the jealousy involved in cases like that of the coin collector do not involve *any* desire for a relationship. I aim to show that even in such cases, jealous subjects desire a certain kind of relationship with their ideal selves as well as certain kinds of relationships with other members of their communities.

¹¹⁴ Ben Ze'ev 1990, p. 489-490.

¹¹⁵ Purshouse, 2004 p. 187-189.

¹¹⁶ Neu 1980, p. 432-433.

can never experience envy relative to that good again for the rest of my life.¹¹⁷ Taylor argues that experiences of jealousy necessarily involve desires for goods that one either possesses now or expects or hopes to possess in the future, whereas experiences of envy need not fulfill this condition.¹¹⁸ Purshouse supports Taylor's idea that in order to be jealous, one must think it is possible to attain the desired good (hence his third necessary condition), but thinks that ultimately Taylor's account of jealousy is too narrow for another reason: we can think of cases of jealousy in which the subject believes attaining the good is possible, but nevertheless neither expects nor hopes to attain the good, and does not already possess it.¹¹⁹ So there are a number of single rules for distinguishing jealousy and envy that cannot capture our intuitions about specific cases as well as Purshouse's account can.

Another oversimplified view of jealousy is one that Farrell calls the commodity theory of jealousy; in fact, there are multiple variations on such a theory.¹²⁰ Theories of this type are often criticized in the literature on jealousy, but they have rarely been defended in print. According to the variation that Farrell discusses (and rejects), a jealous subject, "implicitly believes that things like love and affection are in an important respect rather like scarce material commodities. Each of us has just so much of them to give to others, ... so that any love or affection given to one person is that much less left for

¹¹⁷ Purshouse 2004, p. 189-190.

¹¹⁸ Taylor 1988, p. 233.

¹¹⁹ Purshouse 2004, p. 190-191.

¹²⁰ Farrell 1980, p. 549. Farrell refers to both a commodity theory of love and affection and also a commodity theory of jealousy; I think it is clear that he means the latter to depend upon the former.

others.”¹²¹ This view renders the “upset” or “botherment” of jealousy quite understandable; if one believed this about love and valued being loved, then it would be reasonable to be bothered by having a rival with whom one shares or might have to share someone’s love. This view also gives us the resources to explain why we tend to see jealousy as a bad thing; according to such a view, jealousy is founded in a false belief that love and affection are commodities of which we have limited, fixed quantities to distribute. This would give us an epistemic reason to criticize the jealous subject, and with an additional argument, one might also be able to show that having this false belief is morally problematic.

However, those good features come at a significant cost, which neither Farrell nor I are willing to pay. One problem is that this view does not help us understand cases in which what is jealously desired does not appear to be love or affection, such as in the workplace and professional jealousy cases mentioned previously. But even if this view were advanced solely with respect to romantic or sexual jealousy, I agree with Farrell that it is unreasonable to suppose that every romantically or sexually jealous person has the same, as he calls it, “patently false belief” about love and affection. Farrell and I agree that while some (maybe many) jealous people may well hold such a view of love and affection, there is no reason to suppose that everyone who has experienced romantic or sexual jealousy does; this account of the wrongness of jealousy is simply too tidy to be plausible. For instance, one might firmly believe that one’s partner has an unlimited

¹²¹ *Ibid.* This line of thinking is sometimes discussed in the literature in terms of zero-sum games. See, for instance, Kristjánsson 1996, p. 174; Neu 1980, pp. 455-456; Solomon 2007, p. 106; and Wreen 1989, pp. 636-639. As Neu points out, though, things like time and attention, as opposed to love and affection, actually *are* limited in quantity: see Neu 1980, pp. 456-457.

amount of love to distribute and yet be jealous because one seems not to be receiving the largest share of that love.

However, that is not the only view that might be called a commodity theory of jealousy. According another variation, jealousy necessarily involves a desire to possess a good in a literal, economic sense of possession that would confer property rights (rights of control, among other things) over the jealously desired good.¹²² This view has it that people experience jealousy when they believe that a rival has impinged upon their legitimate possession of a valued good. Since this view describes jealousy as an emotional reaction to the subject's perception of a threat to actual or potential possession of his or hers, it provides a neat and tidy explanation of what is supposed to be morally bad about jealousy. For if jealous people desire *persons* or persons' attention, affection, or esteem, those people are quite mistaken if they think that these things can be or should be literally possessed like commodities.

According to this view, jealousy is irrational since it involves a mistaken belief about what kinds of things are commodities that one can own and have property rights over. However, this mistaken belief is also *morally* flawed. Viewing persons (and/or their attention, affection, etc.) as commodities that can be possessed like objects is morally egregious according to a wide variety of different moral theories; morality is supposed to

¹²² This kind of view is discussed in Farrell 1980, pp. 554-558, though not as a variation on the commodity theory. For an example of a person who held something like this second kind of commodity theory, see Helmut Schoeck's work on envy. Kingsley Davis may or may not be interpreted as holding such a view; he certainly sees what the jealous person values as property, but his distinction between economic and non-economic property may tell against a reading of him as a commodity theorist.

be a guide to how we should treat persons differently from mere objects.¹²³ Under the assumption that human beings deserve to be treated in ways that recognize their personhood, and that treating a person as a market commodity is incompatible with such treatment, the commodity theorist says that there is necessarily something morally problematic about jealousy.

So the first version of the commodity theory of jealousy employs a conception of love and affection as commodities insofar as they are *scarce* (that is, of fixed, limited quantity). The second version employs a conception of jealously desired goods as commodities in the sense of being potential objects of *possession* by having property rights over them.¹²⁴ It seems possible that one might hold both versions of a commodity theory simultaneously. My disagreement with commodity theorists of either stripe is simply with the claim that *all* jealous subjects have *the same* problematic belief(s).¹²⁵ I do not see any

¹²³ See Farrell 1980, p. 556 for the claim that to feel jealousy, one must view the target as a person insofar as jealousy involves being bothered by the target *choosing* to favor someone else, and therefore that no jealous person ever views the target entirely as an object. In Taylor 1988, p. 246, we see the related claim that jealousy involves inconsistent beliefs in that it involves seeing the target both as a person capable of choosing and as an object. Since I allow for the possibility of jealously desiring material goods, I do not agree that jealousy always requires believing that some *particular* person has chosen to favor a rival over oneself, but I do think Farrell and Taylor's insights on the matter are important.

¹²⁴ Even if the second kind of commodity theorist uses 'possession,' 'commodity,' and 'property rights' in metaphorical rather than literal ways, there are problems with such a view. First, it still is not clear that it would correctly capture the mental states of all jealous subjects. Second, this variation does not, on its own, give us a tidy explanation of jealousy's moral status. It would need to be coupled with a view about what claims are "legitimate" within the relevant metaphorical ownership relations, why they are, and how jealousy is or is not compatible with making such legitimate claims. So reading this view metaphorically makes it radically incomplete.

¹²⁵ Another major problem with these views is the fact that they receive basically no support in the literature, despite being discussed fairly often, and thus may best be seen as straw persons. The only possible exception I know of is the view attributed to James Rachels and Charles Fried in Reiman 1976, according to which intimacy (the sharing of personal information not shared with others) is a market commodity that gets its value from its scarcity or limited quantity. The Reiman article, which involves a minimal discussion of jealousy in the context of an argument about privacy rights, is mentioned often in the jealousy literature. Despite potentially being straw

reason to think that *everyone* who has ever been jealous has viewed love as a scarce commodity and/or viewed a person as an object. In particular, it seems to me that there are jealous people who do not believe that they have or could have anything like an ownership claim over a person or a person's affection. If I (and the many other philosophers who have strongly criticized commodity theories) am right about this, then the commodity theory fails both as a descriptive and as a normative account of jealousy.¹²⁶ To its credit, Purshouse's view does not trade on any of the problematic simplifications of commodity theories.

A different virtue of Purshouse's account is that it leaves room for significant variation in jealousy's physiological, phenomenological, and affective qualities.¹²⁷ He allows for the fact that some people experience jealousy in a way that feels like sadness, some like anger, and some like fear. Furthermore, his account is compatible with the fact that there is no facial expression or posture that is characteristic of jealousy, as there is with some other emotions that are more physiologically unified.¹²⁸ However, not all views of jealousy sufficiently recognize this great variety. Purshouse's openness to these kinds of variation sets his account apart from accounts that define jealousy as a non-basic, complex, or compound emotion that consists of multiple basic emotion components. For

persons, I do think it is worth mentioning commodity theories, given the state of the literature and the fact that some folk views about jealousy probably do trade on these ideas.

¹²⁶ For more references to and criticisms of commodity theories (although often not under that name), see D'Arms and Jacobson 2000, p. 7; Kristjánsson 1996, p. 172; Mullen 1991, p. 597; Neu 1980, section III; and Taylor 1988, p. 246. Jeffrie Murphy presents the commodity theory as the standard view of jealousy among those who were culturally and intellectually on the left in the 1980s; see Murphy 2002, pp. 143 and 147. Note that while many people say the commodity theory has been or is extremely popular, it is very difficult to find a philosopher who defends anything like it; thus it may be best to think of it as a folk psychological view.

¹²⁷ For another view that speaks to the importance of allowing for phenomenological variation in jealousy, see Farrell 1997, pp. 171-172.

¹²⁸ On jealousy's lack of a characteristic expression, see Darwin 1998, pp. 83 and 260.

instance, Kristjánsson argues that all jealousy involves anger and indignation, because jealousy involves (among other things) seeing a rival as having violated one's moral desert.¹²⁹ Thus, on Kristjánsson's view, jealousy is a virtue that constitutes an important part of a well-rounded life; he sees it as the mean between two extremes (being servile and being overly sensitive to treatment one does not deserve) in responding to violations of moral desert. This makes his view rather unique among others currently on offer in the literature, in that it both (1) discusses jealousy's moral status *in some detail* and (2) argues that it has a *positive* moral status.¹³⁰

However, there are cases that we would, in everyday life, identify as cases of jealousy that cannot be classified as such according to Kristjánsson's account. For instance, consider the case of the flirt at the party that I mentioned earlier. Jeff and Claire are dating, and while at a party, Jeff becomes jealous when he sees Claire joking around with someone else. The belief that jealousy can arise in such a case is extremely common and rather uncontroversial. And indeed, in many such cases, the jealous subject experiences something very much like anger at the partner and/or the rival. But I do not think in all such cases, the subject feels anything like indignation toward the rival, which, according to Kristjánsson's Aristotelian view, requires a painful belief that the rival has

¹²⁹ See Kristjánsson 2002, chapter 5. Kristjánsson does not explicitly distinguish between indignation and resentment, but uses the terms for them almost interchangeably; at times he seems to imply that righteous indignation is a type of resentment. By saying that jealousy necessarily involves indignation over a violation of one's moral desert, Kristjánsson's view of jealousy basically builds in the virtuousness of jealousy from the start in a way that I think is too quick. I want to leave room for the possibility that people might feel jealous even when they do not think they deserve that which they jealously desire.

¹³⁰ Because Kristjánsson believes that feeling jealousy requires that one have the moral concepts necessary to view something as a violation of moral desert, he denies that infants and non-human animals can be jealous. He sees this as a strength of his account, while I do not.

received undeserved good fortune.¹³¹ Jeff can think that the rival is a great person who deserves to have fun at parties and maybe even deserves to have fun at parties *with Claire* (especially if Claire and the rival are childhood friends) and still feel jealousy.

Similarly, Jeff would not necessarily feel anything like anger at Claire because he thinks she has violated his moral deserts.¹³² People who have extremely low opinions of themselves or who think much less of themselves than of their partners, who do not believe that they *deserve* good treatment from their partners, can experience jealousy. Furthermore, people who do believe that they deserve good treatment from their partners can be jealous in Jeff's situation without anger at their partners if they simply do not believe that being treated well by their partners requires their partners to forego whatever kind of fun Claire was having with the rival. So Kristjánsson's account does not leave room for cases of jealousy that do not involve the subject believing his moral deserts have been violated nor for cases that involve the subject believing that the rival's good fortune is deserved. He does not leave room for jealousy without indignation or anger, cases of jealousy that more closely resemble fear or sadness.¹³³ It is primarily because I find this account to be overly narrow that I think we should reject it.¹³⁴

This is a good time to return to the point about physiological, phenomenological, and affective variation across cases of jealousy. All views that describe jealousy as a

¹³¹ Kristjánsson 2002, p. 142.

¹³² Kristjánsson 2002, p. 143. See also Solomon 2007, p. 105 for another view of jealousy as necessarily involving the perceived violation of some legitimate claim, entitlement, or right; I have similar worries about that view.

¹³³ Part of the problem, I think, is that Kristjánsson uses *one* paradigm example to illustrate his account of jealousy, and since his paradigm example involves two siblings in competition for an inheritance, it is of a sort that puts a *claim* (or at least desert) much more squarely at the center of the jealousy. But not all cases of jealousy are so easily linked to beliefs about claims and desert.

¹³⁴ One could also object to Kristjánsson's account by arguing that we should deny the existence of moral desert or deny a (sharp) distinction between moral rights and moral desert, two claims on which his account depends.

complex of more basic emotions have difficulty explaining the range of ways in which jealousy can be experienced. In general, it has been people who aim to provide a theory of emotions in general, rather than a theory of jealousy in particular (unlike Kristjánsson), who have advanced views according to which jealousy is a complex of more basic emotions. It is possible that such views, which categorize emotions as either basic or non-basic, simply work much better when focusing on some emotions rather than others.¹³⁵ For it seems plausible that some other emotions vary less than jealousy does and thus more easily lend themselves to being viewed as complexes of basic emotions. Nevertheless, viewing some emotions as complexes of more basic emotions tends to be a product of a top-down approach, and because of this, it can obscure some of the variation in experiences of jealousy. For this and other reasons, I reject the view that jealousy is a complex emotion made up of basic emotions.¹³⁶ Thus I take it to be a virtue of Purshouse's account that it does not depend on viewing jealousy as a complex emotion made up of more basic emotional components.

A final virtue that I want to mention here is that throughout his article, Purshouse is careful to avoid implying that jealousy is necessarily a complex of full-blown beliefs and desires alone; he does this by choosing language that refers to the mental states involved in jealousy in an open-ended way. For instance, in his second necessary condition, he uses the word 'regards,' and in his third necessary condition, he uses the phrase 'has in mind.'

¹³⁵ Such accounts are more popular among psychologists and other social scientists than they are among philosophers.

¹³⁶ For references to a number of views that portray jealousy as a complex emotion, see White and Mullen 1989, p. 37. See also Sharpsteen 1991. For an excellent survey of the variety of theories of emotion that trade on the basic/non-basic distinction and a number of additional arguments that explain why we should reject theories that categorize emotions as either basic or non-basic, see Solomon 2003, chapter 8.

Similarly, he writes, “[O]ne should believe in, or at least imaginatively construct, a plausible scenario where, in the rival’s absence, one *might* have attained [the jealously desired good].”¹³⁷ Thus Purshouse does not require that one have any particular *belief* to be jealous; he also uses the weaker language of “regarding,” “having in mind,” having a “notion” or having an “imaginative construction” to describes the belief-like mental states that can be involved in jealousy. I see this looseness about the cognitive states involved in jealousy as a virtue because I agree with people like Peter Goldie and Bennett Helm, who have argued that in describing emotions, we should not speak as though it is only full-blown, easily identifiable beliefs that are involved in and distinguish the emotions that we experience.¹³⁸

As I develop my arguments about jealousy’s moral status, additional virtues of Purshouse’s account will become clear; only at the end of the project will we be in a position to see how well Purshouse’s account sets us up to learn about the moral significance of jealousy. The upcoming section about the limits on jealous desires is especially crucial, but before I get to that, I make a few revisions to Purshouse’s necessary conditions.

My Revisions

For all its virtues, Purshouse’s account can be strengthened by a few revisions. In this section, I propose my revised version of Purshouse’s three necessary conditions, then explain how my version differs from Purshouse’s and why I think that the differences constitute improvements.

¹³⁷ Purshouse 2004, p. 194.

¹³⁸ See Goldie 2000 and Helm 2010.

The following are what I take to be three necessary (but not sufficient) conditions for jealousy. If one is jealous:

- A. One desires that oneself stand in some relation to a specific, non-replicable good.
- B. One has in mind a (possibly imagined) rival and regards the rival's having the good as logically or causally inconsistent with the satisfaction of this desire
- C. One has in mind some (possibly imagined) set of circumstances in which this desire would be satisfied.¹³⁹

As I have articulated these necessary conditions, they differ from those laid out by Purshouse in a number of ways, some more significant than others. However, all of my revisions are, I believe, ones that Purshouse could accept. The first minor revision simply involves using gender-neutral terms, which I prefer to do whenever possible.

Another minor change is to consistently use 'satisfaction' to describe what happens when a desired state of affairs is actualized, rather than using 'satisfaction' and 'fulfillment' interchangeably, as Purshouse does. This simplifies things for the reader and captures the subjective experience of a desire being brought to fruition; it *feels like* something to have a desire brought to fruition, and that feeling is satisfying. Similarly, it *feels like* something to have a desire go unsatisfied. This is a subtle reminder that while Purshouse and I *focus* on the evaluative aspects of jealousy, phenomenological or feeling aspects are also involved in it.

Next, I eliminate the verb 'possess,' which Purshouse uses frequently throughout his article and in his necessary conditions. For, just to be clear, not all jealous people want to *possess* or *own* the goods that they jealously desire, since not all jealously desired goods

¹³⁹ The desire mentioned in (A), the belief-like states mentioned in (B) and (C) may not be states that the subject is consciously aware of or is able to articulate to herself or to others. Another way to put condition (C) is to say that one regards the satisfaction of the jealous desire as possible (in some sense).

are the kinds of things that can be possessed or owned, and many jealous people recognize this.¹⁴⁰ In fact, there are many different relations that jealous people may desire to stand in to various goods.¹⁴¹ The range of goods that subjects may jealously desire is quite large, and similarly large is the range of *relations* that a jealous person may desire to stand in relative to those goods.¹⁴² For example, a jealous person might desire to stand in a relation of control to another's finances. Alternatively, a jealous subject might desire to stand in a reciprocal relation to another's admiration (for instance, to be admired by a friend and to admire that friend in return). As Purshouse would emphasize, the desired relation might be characterized by its superlative degree or its unique quality: for instance, one might desire to stand in the exclusive relation of "only recipient of sexual favors from x" or the pre-eminent relation of "greatest recipient of attention from y." Making it explicit that jealous subjects can desire to stand in various relations to various goods (not just the relation of possession) helps me capture the full range of differences between cases of jealousy.¹⁴³ It also emphasizes that I do not think that all jealous people

¹⁴⁰ However, as Gabriele Taylor demonstrates in Taylor 1988, p. 245-247, there is a sense in which possessiveness can shade into protectiveness, and that while a jealous person may not be possessive of another person in a sense relating to ownership, that jealous person may be possessive of another in a sense relating to protection. Nevertheless, since neither of these senses are applicable to all cases of jealousy, I still prefer to take this word out of my necessary conditions.

¹⁴¹ The language I prefer, of standing in a relation to a good, is also used in Taylor 1988.

¹⁴² I sometimes use 'have' to describe the relation that the subject desires to stand in to the desired good, however, this should be thought of as a catchall term, not as a synonym for 'possess,' which implies property ownership. Of the many relations a jealous person can desire to stand in relative to some specific good, many of them are not naturally glossed with 'have.' However, when there is no other way to avoid the more cumbersome construction, I occasionally speak in terms of a jealous desire to *have* some good rather than a jealous desire to *stand in some specific relation to* said good.

¹⁴³ The emphasis on relations also helps us transition to a discussion of the moral significance of jealousy, since the relations that jealous people desire are relations to goods that require them to have relationships with other *people*, as recognized in Taylor 1988, p. 245. Furthermore, the jealous person has to already be situated within interpersonal relationships in order for jealousy to

are possessive in a morally problematic way, as some have suggested. However, I think Purshouse would be amenable to this revision, given that he himself notes, “the platitude that jealous people are overly possessive can be qualified on grounds that the three [necessary conditions] ... are sometimes satisfied without any censurably ‘possessive’ thought being entertained.”¹⁴⁴

But taking out the language of possession gives me reason to be explicit that the jealous person desires something *for himself*. A jealous desire is a desire that a relation hold, and the jealous person must be one relatum; the other relatum must be something that the jealous person sees as being, in some sense, good or valuable. Jealous desires are not *purely* altruistic desires that goods accrue to people other than the subjects themselves. The self-interestedness of jealous desires is implied by the language of possession (for when one possesses something, that thing is *for oneself* in an important sense), and retained in the revised claim that what the jealous subject wants is for himself or herself to stand in some relation to some good. The relevant sense of ‘self-interested’ here is a *descriptive* sense; it does not necessarily imply that this kind of self-interest is morally problematic.¹⁴⁵ I think

arise in the first place; at the very least, the jealous person has to imagine the existence of another person who is a rival for the good in question. When we shift our attention to these interpersonal relationships, we shall see that they are themselves morally significant, and therefore that the ways jealousy impacts them are morally significant. Furthermore, shifting our attention to relationships helps us get at a key insight from Farrell 1980, the claim that jealousy involves wanting to be favored by some other person (a beloved or target with whom one shares a relationship).

¹⁴⁴ Purshouse 2004, p. 201.

¹⁴⁵ Plenty of descriptively self-interested things are morally good or neutral. For instance, having self-respect could be characterized as involving a descriptive sort of self-interestedness, and having self-respect tends to be morally good. Furthermore, certain desires, like the desire for adequate nutrition (for oneself), are descriptively self-interested and are at least morally neutral, if not morally good. For more on this point, see Nussbaum 2001, pp. 52-53.

Purshouse could also accept the description of jealous desires as self-interested, given his claim that “jealousy seems essentially founded in considerations of self-interest.”¹⁴⁶

Before moving on, I want to touch briefly on a type of case that one might see as posing a challenge to this component of my view. Imagine a parent whose child, Tina, plays basketball and who experiences what feels like jealousy *on behalf of* Tina when another child is chosen as the starter for the school team instead of Tina. If this kind of case does involve jealousy, it seems to constitute a challenge to my view, since the parent seems not to have a self-interested desire here.¹⁴⁷ One might call what Tina’s parent feels *vicarious* or *sympathetic jealousy* and ask whether it is true jealousy or not. Should we say that this parent feels jealous despite the fact that the parent does not want to be the one who stands in a relation to the desired good?

To respond to this interesting case, we must be clear that what the parent wants is for Tina to be a starter on the team.¹⁴⁸ When another child is chosen, it is easy to imagine that the parent feels frustration or sadness over the thwarted desire and anger or indignation at the other player and/or the coach. Those feelings would certainly be phenomenologically similar to some jealous feelings. But we have already seen that jealousy’s phenomenology varies quite a bit and can be similar to the phenomenology of a wide range of emotions. So this is insufficient to distinguish jealousy from other emotions, and we need to look further to determine whether we should say that Tina’s parent is jealous.

¹⁴⁶ Purshouse 2004, p. 193; see also endnote 13 on p. 202 for more on why jealousy is self-interested rather than disinterested.

¹⁴⁷ Thanks to Sara Goering for encouraging me to comment on these kinds of cases.

¹⁴⁸ If the desire were to be the parent of a child who is a starter on the basketball team, then all the necessary conditions for jealousy that I have outlined could be met in a straightforward way; the other parents would be rivals rather than the other child.

Let us consider a structurally similar case. Imagine that Gina has just moved to a town where she does not know anyone. Hoping to meet new people, she goes to an art gallery opening party. She notices Jeff and Claire enter the party together arm in arm, and she hears Jeff introduce Claire as his girlfriend. Later, she sees Claire flirting with someone else; the two of them are clearly having a great time. Is it plausible to suppose that Gina might experience jealousy because Claire apparently prefers to joke around with someone other than Jeff? While Jeff might feel jealous because he takes Claire to be showing a preference for another's company over his, we would not think that Gina could be jealous because she agrees with him about his assessment of Claire. For Gina is not connected in the right way to the situation; Jeff and Claire are simply strangers to her. So jealousy, if it can be experienced vicariously, is not like certain other emotions that we can feel on behalf of just anyone.¹⁴⁹ I think that it is clear that Gina could only be jealous in this situation if she wanted to be having fun with Jeff's rival, to be Jeff's girlfriend, to be flirting with or dating Claire, or if she had some other desire to stand in some relation to one of the goods before her. In such cases, she would not be jealous on Jeff's behalf.

What might make someone think that Tina's parent could feel jealous on behalf of Tina in a way that Gina could not feel on behalf of Jeff? Unlike Claire and Jeff, Tina's parent is not remotely a stranger to Tina. The crucial difference seems to be that the parent's interests and identity are aligned with Tina's interests and identity in a way that Gina's are not aligned with Jeff's. The closeness between Tina and her parent seems to be foundational to the emotional reaction that the parent has. One might think that their

¹⁴⁹ For instance, Gina could feel anger at Claire on Jeff's behalf if she thinks Claire has wronged Jeff, or she could feel fear on behalf of the rival if she sees Jeff threaten the rival.

closeness allows the parent to feel jealousy on Tina's behalf, even though jealousy is usually felt only on one's own behalf.

However, if we are going to call the parent's emotion jealousy because of this kind of reasoning, we need a way to determine when a person's interests and identities are sufficiently aligned with another person's to make jealousy on behalf of that other person possible. We could do empirical research on the conditions under which people attribute vicarious jealousy to themselves and others. But even if we were able to get good data, it would only answer descriptive questions about jealousy attribution, not the normative question about whether we should attribute jealousy to people like Tina's parent. We could also try to draw a line between situations in which vicarious jealousy can and cannot arise using non-empirical methods, but I cannot think of one that is not *ad hoc*. Furthermore, calling the parent's emotion jealousy would involve rejecting the core of Purshouse's first necessary condition for jealousy, since that requires a person to have a desire to possess something (for oneself).¹⁵⁰

We also have some *prima facie* reasons to think that our normative assessments of what Tina's parent feels will be quite different from common normative assessments of jealous subjects. Jealousy is commonly seen as a product of selfishness, but that certainly cannot be the case for what Tina's parent feels (unless the parent's identity is *extremely* enmeshed with Tina's, which itself might be problematic). Jealousy is also commonly seen

¹⁵⁰ It would also run afoul of many, many other accounts of jealousy. See, for instance, Gesell 1906, who emphasizes jealousy's self-regarding nature (although he does allow for group jealousy); Jaucourt and Diderot 2007, who describe jealousy as concerning our own good; Kristjánsson 2002, who sees jealousy as a response to a violation of *one's own* moral desert; and Taylor 1988, who (like Purshouse) emphasizes that a jealous person necessarily desires to possess a good. See also White and Mullen 1989, pp. 23-26 for numerous definitions of jealousy, all of which apparently preclude vicarious jealousy for similar reasons.

as a product of personal insecurity, but what Tina's parent feels does not give us a reason to think the parent is insecure. Jealousy is also commonly seen as good for spurring achievement, but what Tina's parent feels can only spur achievement in a very indirect way at best.

Given these differences and challenges, I prefer to say that the *vicarious* or *sympathetic* emotion that Tina's parent feels is not true jealousy, but merely analogous to jealousy. Tina's parent feels something that is phenomenologically similar to some experiences of jealousy, has in mind a rival (the other child) whose having a good is inconsistent with the satisfaction of one of the parent's own desires, and has in mind circumstances in which the parent's own desire would be satisfied. However, the specific, non-replicable good that the parent desires is for Tina to be a starter on the team, not that *the parent* stand in any relation, and thus the parent does not fulfill my first necessary condition. Therefore, what I have to say about jealousy's moral status in the following does not necessarily apply to emotional experiences like that of Tina's parent. I admit that my carving up the world in this way depends in part on my intuitions about how we actually employ our concept of jealousy, but I think that is as it should be. And while there is much more to be said for and against my view about such cases, doing so here would keep me from my main goals relating to jealousy's moral status.

So let us turn to my final revision: my claim that jealous subjects must desire *specific, non-replicable* goods. Let's start with the "specific" part and revisit Purshouse's claim (ii), the claim that jealousy *generally* concerns particular goods, but does not always do so. At this point it might look as though I am substantially diverging from Purshouse, but I think the divergence, while important for the sake of clarity, is not so substantial. The cases of jealousy that Purshouse mentions as not concerning particular goods are cases in

which the subject jealously desires pre-eminence or exclusivity. As he says, “A businessman who wants to be the only person in his workplace to own a Rolls Royce could be jealous of a colleague acquiring any such car, not just the one he himself now possesses.”¹⁵¹ I agree that such cases form a crucial subset of cases of jealousy, but I want to analyze them in a way that is slightly different from how Purshouse does, largely because I think his use of ‘particular’ in this context is a bit ambiguous.

If when Purshouse says that jealousy does not always concern particular goods, he simply means that jealousy sometimes concerns *substitutable* goods, then I am on board. The Rolls Royce case shows this; the businessman’s jealous desire would be satisfied if he wrecked his current Rolls and got a new one without anyone else also getting one. His jealous desire can be satisfied despite the substitution of one Rolls Royce for another, so long as it is the only one owned by anyone at his workplace. What matters is similarity in the relevant respects, not numerical identity. This interpretation is, I think, the most plausible interpretation of what Purshouse meant by saying that jealousy does not always concern particular goods.

However, one could read him as saying that jealousy often, but does not always concern particular goods in the sense that the jealously desired goods are desired insofar as they are somehow unique. Under that reading, I would have to disagree. For the jealously desired good does have to be somehow unique (at least in the eyes of the subject) if a rival’s having that good is to be seen by the subject as logically or causally inconsistent with the jealous desire being satisfied. For it to be possible to fulfill the second necessary condition for jealousy, a jealously desired good must be somehow unique.

¹⁵¹ Purshouse 2004, p. 198

Furthermore, jealous subjects desire goods under particular descriptions. Goods are desired jealously *insofar as* they are somehow unique. The businessman jealously desires to own the car under the description “the only Rolls Royce owned by an employee of Company X,” but not under a number of other true descriptions of that car (such as “the English brand car owned by an employee of Company X”). Similarly, a person might jealously desire to be “Emily Brown’s best friend” but not desire to be “the best friend of someone who grew up on a dead-end street,” although Emily Brown did grow up on a dead-end street.

I aim to capture these points by saying that jealous desires are always desires for specific, non-replicable goods. They are desires for specific goods in the sense that it is not just any good of the relevant general type that is desired; what is desired is more than just *a* car or *a* best friend.¹⁵² Cars, best friends, and other goods, when *jealously* desired, are desired under more specific descriptions than that.

Jealously desired goods are also non-replicable in the sense that if they were replicated, having them would no longer satisfy the subjects’ jealous desires. For, as already mentioned, people jealously desire things that are somehow unique.¹⁵³ Thus the second necessary condition for jealousy; it is the fact that the jealously desired goods are somehow unique that makes it such that another’s having them can be seen as inconsistent with the satisfaction of the desire. Goods can be substituted and remain

¹⁵² In contrast, envy can involve a desire for a replicable good. The case of envying Bill Gates’ wealth is a good illustration. If one is envious of Bill Gates’ wealth, one does not necessarily want the exact dollar bills, stock certificates, properties, and other capital that he has; one might simply want wealth of the same magnitude or type. So one might be perfectly satisfied if someone replicated his wealth and gave it to one while Bill Gates kept all the original wealth. However, people who are jealous are not satisfied by replicas of the goods they jealously desire.

¹⁵³ As stated in D’Arms 2009, “[F]or the jealous person the rival is fungible and the beloved is not fungible.” D’Arms sees things as being the other way around for envy.

unique (as in the Rolls Royce case), but goods cannot be replicated and remain unique. I cannot replicate myself insofar as I am Emily's best friend and satisfy my desire to remain Emily's best friend; either I am the best friend and the replica is not (in which case it is not a replica in the relevant sense), the replica is the best friend (in which case I am no longer the best friend), or neither of us is *the* best friend. What the jealous person desires is something that, because it is desired insofar as it is somehow unique, cannot be replicated.

Notice that in making these revisions, my focus has been on clarifying the exact nature of jealous desires; I have attempted to clarify what they are and how crucial they are to experiences of jealousy. My account of jealous desires is key to my later arguments about the moral significance of jealousy. So let stop comparing my view to Purshouse's and instead begin a more detailed discussion of the limits on jealous desires.

Limits on Jealous Desires

Each of the three necessary conditions for jealousy places a limit on jealous desires. The first necessary condition limits jealous desires to those the satisfaction of which involve *the subject himself* standing in some relation to a good. One is only jealous when one wants oneself to have something, not when one wants someone else to have something purely for that person's own sake. Thus purely altruistic desires, such as the desire that one's friend enjoy her vacation simply for her own sake or that one's parent recovers quickly from a surgery for his or her own sake and/or for the sake of one or more third parties, cannot function as jealous desires.

This helps us distinguish jealousy from a particular type of envy. As Purshouse shows, jealousy is different from what has been called "destructive envy" because the person who experiences destructive envy would be satisfied if only his rival were denied a particular good. The person who experiences destructive envy does not necessarily want

the good for himself, because he could be satisfied without gaining it (or despite losing it), so long as the rival does not have it either. The jealous person is not like this; his desire would not be satisfied if the good were destroyed and neither he nor the rival could have it.¹⁵⁴ So it is the particular kind of desire required for jealousy that sets it apart from destructive envy, which does not *require* (but may involve) a desire that *oneself* gain or maintain a relation to a particular good.

However, notice that it is somewhat misleading to speak of *the* jealous desire, for jealousy tends to involve clusters of desires. For while jealous subjects always have desires that they gain or maintain things for themselves, jealous subjects also tend to desire (sometimes unconsciously) that their rivals *not have* the desired goods. Similarly, we often need to posit that a jealous person has some general desire in addition to her jealous desire to explain why she has the specific jealous desire she does. For instance, if a jealous employee desires to be her supervisor's most trusted employee, her having this desire is only explainable in the context of her more general desires. The jealous desire may be explainable in terms of her more general desire to be superior to her peers, to receive a pay raise, or to have more pleasant experiences in high-stress weekly meetings.

The second necessary condition limits the desires involved in jealousy to those the satisfaction of which the subject takes to be causally or logically inconsistent with another person standing in the desired relation to the good. If the subject believes that the rival's actual or potential relation to the good cannot thwart the satisfaction of his desire, he will not be jealous. For when the other person's standing in a relation to some good makes no difference to the possibility of the subject standing in the desired relation to that good,

¹⁵⁴ See Purshouse 2004 for his discussion of destructive envy (196) and Taylor 1988 for an earlier discussion of destructive envy (236).

that other person is not really a rival at all. This tells us that the desire involved in jealousy cannot be a desire for something general, like wealth or strength. Being wealthy is not inconsistent with others being wealthy; rivalry only arises when one desires to be wealthier than one or more others. So the desire involved in jealousy has to be a desire for something specific in order for the second necessary condition to be met.

This condition helps us distinguish jealousy from another type of envy. As Purshouse shows, jealousy is different from what has been called “emulative envy” because the person who experiences emulative envy could be satisfied by gaining the good even if the rival also has the desired kind of good. This person wants some general thing that can be possessed by more than one person; he can become stronger, and thus be like the person he wants to emulate, without that other person becoming weaker. The person who experiences jealousy is not like this; his desire cannot be satisfied if the rival stands in the desired relation to the good.¹⁵⁵

The third necessary condition limits the desires involved in jealousy to those that the jealous person can imagine being satisfied, even if that imagining involves envisioning circumstances that deviate radically from reality. The jealous person has to think that it is *possible* for his jealous desire to be satisfied, but he does not have to think that it is *likely* for his jealous desire to be satisfied. For instance, I could never be jealous of another person’s acquaintance with someone (say, Ida B. Wells-Barnett) who died before I was born, because I know it is impossible for me to be personally acquainted with someone whose life does not temporally overlap my own; I cannot even *imagine* such a thing. Although I

¹⁵⁵ See Purshouse 2004, p. 197 for more about emulative envy; see also Taylor 1988, p. 235 for an earlier, more detailed discussion of emulative envy. For a much earlier distinction between disparaging and emulating jealousy, see Kant 1997, p. 195. For references to similar distinctions, see Parrott 1991, p. 9.

think it would be wonderful to be acquainted with an early civil rights activist like Ida B. Wells-Barnett, and I might even desire her friendship in particular, I cannot be jealous of those people who were lucky enough to be acquainted with her before I was born.

This limit is closely related to the limit imposed by the second condition; if I cannot even imagine one of my desires being satisfied, then it is not a rival who (potentially) stands in the way of me satisfying that desire. It may be something about *me* that makes this the case; I might be limited in some way that prevents me from even imagining my desire being satisfied. Alternatively, it may be a fact about the world more generally that makes it impossible for my desire to be satisfied; it is facts about time and death that keep my desire to be acquainted with Ida B. Wells-Barnett from being satisfied. There is no rival that keeps me from being friends with her, just circumstances beyond anyone's control that I cannot imagine away.

Important Lessons to Apply in a Normative Account of Jealousy

In the most straightforward, familiar cases, jealousy arises in the context of a subject's relationships with both (1) a person with whom the subject wants to gain or maintain a relationship and also (2) a person who the subject sees as a rival threatening the satisfaction of that desire. The fact jealousy is always, in some sense, about relationships sets it apart, *descriptively*, from many other emotions (such as fear, disgust, and awe), which can occur even outside the context of one's relationships. Jealousy's interpersonal nature can also be expected to set it apart from other emotions *normatively*. If we accept some form of the plausible view that the domain of morality is the realm of interactions between moral agents, we have a *prima facie* reason to think that jealousy is in general

morally significant, insofar as it arises within and impacts a tangle of interpersonal relationships.¹⁵⁶

So if we want to develop an adequate account of jealousy's moral significance, we should pay careful attention to the way that it is situated within and made possible by the prior existence of interpersonal relationships. Doing so is made easier by the fact that interpersonal relationships are being discussed by philosophers more than they have been at some times in the past. For instance, in recent decades, a variety of philosophers, many of them feminists, have demonstrated the need to conceptualize persons not as isolated individuals, but rather as interdependent.¹⁵⁷ There has, of course, been significant debate about how best to understand this interdependence. While this general lesson has had some uptake, philosophers have yet to apply it in all the domains in which it can be helpful; one goal of this project is to show how this lesson can productively be extended into studies of the morality of emotions. So I suggest that those of us who are interested in the moral significance of jealousy (and of similar emotions) shift our framing somewhat; let us not treat jealous subjects as isolated individuals. Let us pay careful attention to the relational aspects of jealousy to gain insight into the moral assessments we have reason to make about subjects in light of their jealousy.

For the purposes of the normative project I undertake in what follows, we need to devote extra attention to condition A, which states that to experience the emotion

¹⁵⁶ Here I simply intend to make a minimal claim about the domain of morality in hopes that most people will be willing to grant that it includes *at least* this much. I, for one, think this is an overly narrow formulation, since I take it that morality also governs one's treatment of oneself, of non-human animals, and at least some plants, environments, and artworks.

¹⁵⁷ For just a few of the many examples of feminist works of this sort, see Held 2006, Kittay 1999, Mackenzie and Stoljar 2000, Noddings 2010, and Westlund 2008. For a view of persons as interdependent that is not presented as feminist, see Bennett Helm 2010.

jealousy, a person must desire to stand in some specific relation to some specific, non-replicable good. Because the range of relations the jealous person can desire is quite large, and because the goods to which the jealous person may want to be related is also quite large, it is difficult to see what all cases of jealousy might have in common from a moral perspective. To facilitate a search for what unifies jealousy from a normative perspective, I divide cases of jealousy into three types, based on differences in the relationships implicated in the jealous desires.

The person other than the subject who figures in a jealous desire is someone I call the *target*, a usage which distinguishes that *person* from the *desired good* (the target's attention, admiration, or what have you).¹⁵⁸ Notice that the target may figure in the jealous desire only under a particular description; in the workplace case I mentioned earlier, Linda desires to be most trusted by Nancy, only insofar as Nancy is Linda's supervisor. Also notice that when people are jealous, they tend to already have some relationship with their targets (even if it is not yet the kind of relationship that the subject would like to have), and quite often that relationship is a caring one.¹⁵⁹

The first type of jealousy involves cases in which the satisfaction of the jealous desire requires that the jealous subject form or maintain an interpersonal relationship with a target about whom the subject cares (in a sense to be explained). These cases are

¹⁵⁸ The target is often called the beloved in other accounts of jealousy. However, since jealousy often arises in non-romantic, non-sexual, non-familial contexts, it can be quite a stretch to think of the person as *loved by* the jealous person. Nor do I want to call this person the *object* of jealousy, which would be misleading, since some people see the rival as the object of jealousy and some people, myself included, see jealousy as taking a complex object (a relation between a subject and a good). See section 2.1 of Purshouse 2004.

¹⁵⁹ An interesting empirical question is what proportion of jealousy cases involve caring relationships. I would wager that the *vast* majority of relationships in which jealousy arises are at least minimally caring (though I consider the bar for a minimally caring relationship to be quite low).

most likely to be cases of romantic, sexual, or familial jealousy. The second type of jealousy involves cases in which the satisfaction of the jealous desire requires that the jealous subject to form or maintain an interpersonal relationship with a target about whom the subject does *not* care. These cases are most likely to be cases of employment, scholarly, or neighborly jealousy. But sometimes jealousy arises when there is no other specific person who figures in the desire. The third type of jealousy involves cases in which the satisfaction of the jealous desire requires the subject to gain or maintain some personal quality or material good. For instance, a person might have a jealous desire that he own the most valuable stamp collection, that she be the most intelligent member of a team, that he own a particular piece of movie memorabilia, or that she be the most accomplished point guard in the league.¹⁶⁰ These cases seem less common.

In the chapters that follow, I consider each of these types in turn and show how each of them provides us with a similar moral reason to criticize the jealous subject. This reason is that jealousy undermines the moral value of a relationship. Thus I will show that there is something common to all cases of jealousy from a normative perspective.

¹⁶⁰ When a jealous desire is a desire to stand in a relation to a material good or a personal quality, the desired relation is an exclusive, pre-eminent, or otherwise unique one. This is because the second necessary condition for jealousy requires that a jealous person regard a rival's standing in the relation as *inconsistent* with the satisfaction of the jealous desire. This can involve a causal or a logical inconsistency between the rival's relation to the good and the subject's deprivation. But someone else's having a personal characteristic does not cause my desire for that same characteristic to go unsatisfied, and someone else's having a material good does not cause my desire for something of the same *general sort* to go unsatisfied. So the third kind of case never involves a causal inconsistency. However, if the jealous desire is for a specific material good or an exclusive or pre-eminent personal characteristic, there will be a logical relation between the rival's relation to the good and the subject's deprivation. It is in discussing the *logical* inconsistency in such cases that I think Purshouse does his most innovative work.

Evaluating Jealous Subjects

Chapter 2: Jealousy in Caring Relationships

Fred and Adele are close friends who practice dancing together once a week with a long-standing practice group; sharing in this activity is one way they express their care for each other. One night at practice, a dancer named Ginger arrives, who is new in town and would like to join the group. Fred, knowing the others well, realizes that none of them will forego practice with their own partners and ask her to dance. So to spare her feelings, Fred asks Ginger to dance. Adele wonders whether Fred wants a new dance partner to replace her. Throughout practice, Adele only smiles when she thinks Fred is looking, and then it seems forced. Mostly, she stares into the middle distance, apparently lost in her imagination. When she directs her attention to Ginger, Adele seems to be sizing her up: evaluating her dancing and trying to determine how much fun Fred is having. Adele does not engage with her other friends from the practice group; she seems preoccupied by Fred's dancing with Ginger. These behaviors are all good clues to her emotional state.

Insofar as Adele desires that she be Fred's *only* dance partner, taking this as crucial to the close relationship she desires, she meets the first of the three necessary conditions for jealousy.¹⁶¹ Since she recognizes that Ginger's dancing with Fred is logically inconsistent with the satisfaction of her desire for exclusivity, she meets the second condition. She also knows this desire was satisfied at previous practice sessions; thus she meets the third condition. Adele's meeting these three necessary conditions is all I need for my main argument, but it is true that these conditions are not *sufficient* for jealousy; not everyone who meets these conditions is jealous (rather than, say, annoyed, disappointed,

¹⁶¹ Many other desires could play a central role in the jealousy that arises in such a relationship; possibilities include the desire to be Fred's *favorite* dance partner, or part of the group's *best* dance partnership.

or emotionless).¹⁶² When Adele does become jealous, we can expect her to form subsidiary jealous desires, including the desire that Fred and Ginger stop dancing together,¹⁶³ since the satisfaction of such desires are means to the end of her being Fred's only dance partner.¹⁶⁴ So these subsidiary desires are often rational, given subjects' other mental states.¹⁶⁵

Adele's behavior throughout the evening clearly indicates that she is jealous. Noticing this, Ginger suggests to Fred that she simply watch for the rest of the evening. But Fred declines, because he is pleased by Adele's jealousy.

Adele's being jealous in the context of a caring relationship is not unusual; Fred's being pleased by that jealousy is not unheard of either.¹⁶⁶ Ovid even advised women to intentionally incite jealousy in their husbands; he thought that by making her husband believe he had a rival for his wife's attention or affection, a wife would make her husband "burn with desire."¹⁶⁷ While I see no reason to think that Ovid took there to be a *moral* value at stake, we might ask: is Fred's pleasure a reason to think that Adele's jealousy is morally good for them and their caring relationship (maybe because it is an expression of

¹⁶² For one thing, people tend not to be jealous when satisfying the relevant desires does not *matter* to them. The exact sense of 'mattering' is thorny, but does not need to be specified completely for present purposes.

¹⁶³ This subsidiary jealous desire shows what Purshouse had in mind when he said that unlike envy, jealousy tends to involve the subject wanting to deny the rival some good. See Purshouse 2004, p. 198.

¹⁶⁴ In at least some cases like this, the jealous subject knows that the partner has done no wrong and does not blame or get angry at the partner, but is jealous anyway. This is contrary to what some have suggested; for instance, see Kristjánsson 2002, p. 144 for his claim that being jealous involves being angry at the target because one believes the target to be in violation of moral desert.

¹⁶⁵ Forming these additional desires is one indication that satisfying the jealous desire *matters* to the subject.

¹⁶⁶ People who want their romantic partners to be jealous are common in television and movie plots. See Neu 1980, pp. 452-455 for thoughts about what this sitcom trope can tell us about jealousy.

¹⁶⁷ The relevant passage is in Book II, lines 577-610 of *The Art of Love*; see Ovid 1957, p. 170-171.

her care for him)?¹⁶⁸ Or does the jealousy of people like Adele give us a moral reason to criticize them?

I aim to show that Fred and people like him have good (but not obvious) moral reason not to be pleased by the jealousy of Adele and people like her, since their jealousy provides a moral reason to *criticize* jealous subjects. I begin by outlining what a caring relationship is, what it means for one to be undermined, and what is required for jealousy. Then I argue that when jealousy arises in a caring relationship, it undermines that morally valuable relationship and thus gives us a moral reason to criticize the jealous subject.

Caring Relationships

Jealousy can arise in a variety of caring and non-caring relationships, but here I am only concerned with jealousy in caring relationships, so I must explain what makes a relationship, like that between Adele and Fred, a caring one.

When I call the relationship between two people a caring one, I have a particular conception of a caring relationship in mind.¹⁶⁹ To be brief: the type of relationship that I have in mind requires four things: (1) that one be acquainted with the other individual, (2) that one recognize that person's moral value as the individual she is,¹⁷⁰ (3) that one desire the person's interests (both subjectively and objectively conceived) be well served for that person's own sake, and (4) that one be motivated to think, feel, and act for the sake of that

¹⁶⁸ I set aside the question of whether it is good for Fred to be pleased.

¹⁶⁹ I use person-centric language for the reader's ease, but strictly speaking, the entity one cares about need not be a full-fledged moral agent with robust autonomy and deliberative capacities. One can, of course, care about household pets, infants, and people who have severe cognitive disabilities.

¹⁷⁰ For instance, I recognize that my friend Emily Brown is, among other things, honest, devoted to her loved ones, and funny in ways that are characteristic of her and her alone.

person by furthering or supporting her interests.¹⁷¹ When one has a caring relationship with someone, one's mental states and actions relating to that person fit together in an interconnected pattern.¹⁷² The more one recognizes another's value, desires her interests be served, and is motivated to serve her interests, the more robust the pattern and the more one can be said to care about her; so the caring in relationships comes in degrees. Notice that caring relationships need not be reciprocal, although Fred and Adele's is.

While this account precludes the possibility of having *caring relationships* with people one is not minimally acquainted with as individuals, it does not preclude the possibility of *caring about* or *caring for* such people. I can *care about* all people (or all people of a certain sort), in the sense of being concerned about the interests of all people (or all people of a certain sort); to care about someone is to have a certain kind of attitude toward that person. I care about all people who lack adequate nutrition in that I believe all such people deserve adequate nutrition and that I want them to have it. But I do not (and cannot, under present conditions) have personal relationships with all people who lack adequate nutrition, let alone caring relationships. Furthermore, as a philanthropist, one can *care for* people one does not know as individuals; to care for someone is to act in service of that person's interests (or attempt to do so). To have that kind of attitude or do that kind of action requires that one stand in certain relations to the other person (for instance, relations of spatio-temporal proximity and/or causal relations), but does not

¹⁷¹ The particular caring ways that a subject is motivated to act depend on contextual features of the situation, the type of relationship involved, and the subject's abilities.

¹⁷² My view on this has much in common with that described in Bennett Helm's 2010 book. As he says on p. 75, "[T]o care about something is for it to be the focus of a projectible, rational pattern of felt evaluations and evaluative judgments, such that one is motivated not only to feel and judge, but also to act accordingly," and on p. 76, "caring ... involves a concern for the well-being of the agent *for its own sake*." See Chapters 2 and 3, especially pp. 57-64, for passages that are important to his accounts of care and of the closely related notion of import.

require that one have an *interpersonal relationship* with that person.¹⁷³ An interpersonal relationship is a patterned set of interactions between non-substitutable individuals; a caring interpersonal relationship requires a pattern of both caring for and caring about another individual as the unique individual that she is.

According to my view, it would be fair to say that to have a caring relationship with someone is to recognize that person and her value in a robust way. To have a caring relationship with someone requires one to recognize that person's value as the individual she is, where the relevant sense of 'recognition' necessarily involves not only beliefs but also motivationally efficacious desires.¹⁷⁴ This recognition is active; it requires interactions between persons and grounds many of the relationships that we find morally valuable, including friendships, romantic relationships, and many family and work relationships. While I do not claim that all morally valuable relationships are caring ones (for instance, plenty of respectful relationships are morally valuable without being caring), I do think that caring relationships tend to have greater moral value than non-caring ones.

Undermining Relationships

Because jealousy arises in the context of interpersonal interactions and relationships,¹⁷⁵ we must consider carefully jealousy's impact on relationships to make appropriate moral assessments of jealous subjects. Since I want to argue that jealousy undermines the moral

¹⁷³ For references to and explanations of a variety of views that make clearer the distinction between caring for and caring about, see Held 2006, Chapter 2.

¹⁷⁴ So maybe, as Helm encourages us to do, we should reject the cognitive-conative divide and see caring as a mental state that straddles those two categories.

¹⁷⁵ See Farrell 1980 and 1997 and Neu 1980 for the view that jealousy always involves three agents. See Purshouse 2004 for the view that jealousy can involve two or three agents, and see Davis 1936, especially p. 395, for the view that jealousy is structured in a quadrangle, not a triangle, including a public/community element in addition to the subject, rival, and the person with whom the subject desires a relationship (the target). These authors would agree that if a person can live a life devoid of relationships with others, such a person might well have numerous emotions (fear, joy, and disgust), but not jealousy.

value of interpersonal relationships, I need to clarify what I mean by ‘undermine’ in this context. ‘Undermining’ connotes erosion of something’s foundation, but exactly what does the eroding and what affect the erosion has are left somewhat open. There seem to be three basic ways a relationship could be undermined: through (1) a *loss* of pre-existing moral value, such as when a morally valuable relationship is damaged or terminated; (2) a *threat* to pre-existing moral value that can be overcome only if someone takes evasive action to prevent such a loss; or (3) an *obstacle* to the creation of moral value within the relationship, whether the value to be created is of a sort not previously present or an increase in a type of value that the relationship already has.

All these possibilities involve moral costs, although the seriousness of the moral cost varies. That is, undermining a morally valuable relationship may be more or less serious, but it is always less than ideal. The moral cost of the first possibility is most obvious; a concrete moral value is lost (maybe irretrievably, maybe for some finite time period). Sometimes all of the moral value in the relationship is lost because the relationship is destroyed, or it might be that only some particular type or degree of moral value is lost. For instance, the value of commitment, trust, honesty, cooperation, or gratitude may be lost or diminished even if the jealous subject and the target continue to have an interpersonal relationship (and even if that relationship remains a caring one to some extent).

But the second and third possibilities also involve a moral cost, albeit a cost of a less serious and more indirect sort. In the second sort of undermining, when an existing value is threatened, one of two things happens; either the threat comes to fruition and the relationship loses a specific type or degree of moral value (and thus becomes the first sort of undermining), or one or more of the parties to the relationship must take action to

maintain the value in question. However, even if the parties to the relationship are successful in maintaining the value in the face of the threat, a moral cost is incurred. Since interpersonal relationships extend through time, the fact that this threat has arisen colors the relationship as it stretches into the future. The threat decreases the stability of the relationship for some indefinite period, even if the present response to the threat is optimal.¹⁷⁶ This is morally significant.

For when a relationship is morally valuable in some way or another (for instance, by being a caring, trusting, or honest relationship), the degree to which that relationship has that morally valuable feature depends in part on the stability of the relationship. The pattern of thoughts, feelings, and actions that makes the relationship a caring, trusting, or honest one is more valuable the more stable it is; stability is the diachronic robustness of the pattern. Stability also enables the parties in the relationship to form reasonable expectations and to make good practical decisions, and it does so regardless of whether the stable features are morally good or bad ones. Instability, on the other hand, tends to decrease the value of relationships (at least insofar as the source of the instability is located within the relationship).¹⁷⁷ A threatened relationship is less stable than a relationship that is not threatened, and so threats that destabilize caring relationships undermine the value of those caring relationships.

¹⁷⁶ Even if the recognition of this threat motivates a person to behave in ways that ultimately strengthen the relationship, there is still a moral cost (albeit one that, in such a case, happens to be outweighed when all things are considered).

¹⁷⁷ If a relationship is unstable and the source of the instability is outside the relationship, the instability may not make the relationship less morally valuable than it would otherwise be. Examples of cases where the instability of the relationship is due to features outside the relationship are, for instance, cases where the instability in the relationship is due to one's political environment (like being out of communication with a loved one because of a war) or due to one's physical circumstances (like being unable to help someone because of an illness).

In the third sort of undermining, something prevents or makes difficult the creation of moral value within the relationship. This sort of undermining is especially likely to occur in non-caring relationships, where the moral value of the relationship tends to be lower to start. I may be in a non-caring relationship with my letter carrier, but if I do or think things that make it difficult or impossible for me to form a more morally valuable relationship with my letter carrier (such as booby-trapping my mailbox or entertaining racist thoughts about her), then what I have done exacts a moral cost from my relationship with my letter carrier. This moral cost *may* be less worrisome than the costs involved in the first two sorts of undermining, if the loss of *potential* value is less morally significant than the loss of *actual* value. But I do not need to take a stand on the relative moral significance of losing actual or potential value; all I need is the plausible claim that it is morally *significant* if one's thought and actions erect obstacles to the creation of moral value. All things considered, it is morally better not to do so.

Thus there are multiple ways that the moral value of relationships can be undermined, given my use of that term.¹⁷⁸ Undermining the moral value of a relationship should not be understood as always involving a loss or decrease in pre-existing moral value. It may involve the erection of a barrier to maintaining, increasing, or creating moral value, all of which are morally significant and should be avoided, all other things

¹⁷⁸ One may well ask why I write in terms of the moral value of relationship (and loss thereof) rather than in terms of the jealous subject *harming* the target. I have three main reasons for this. First, it can be counterintuitive to speak of harm when, as in the second sort of undermining, the moral value is merely threatened and the only actual loss is of a value that is indirectly related to moral value, like stability. It is also counterintuitive to speak of harm when, as in the third sort of undermining, no moral value is lost but an obstacle to the increase of moral value is erected. Second, although harm reduction is an important concern for a variety of normative ethical theories, speaking explicitly and at length in those terms may imply a commitment to a consequentialist view that I do not want to espouse here. Third, that language encourages us to focus only on the target and not on the relationship.

being equal. To the extent that those things are not avoided, we have a moral reason to criticize the person who has failed to avoid them.¹⁷⁹ That is, I take it that when subjects' mental states or actions undermine their relationships' patterns of care, trust, honesty, loyalty, respectfulness, or any other morally valuable patterns of thoughts, feelings, and actions, this gives us a moral reason to criticize those subjects, albeit one that might be outweighed by other considerations. However, I grant that this may not be sufficient reason to render an all-things-considered judgment that one should criticize that person on moral grounds. With this notion of undermining in hand, we can turn our attention to the ways that jealousy undermines the moral value of caring relationships.

I want to show that even in relatively mild cases like Adele's, jealousy undermines the morally valuable caring relationship in which it arises. In what follows, I divide cases of jealousy in caring relationships into two subtypes: those in which what triggers the jealousy serves the target's objective interests and those in which it does not,¹⁸⁰ then I show how the jealousy undermines the caring relationship in either type of case. While I use variations on the Adele and Fred case as illustrations, the arguments apply to all cases of jealousy in caring relationships.

Argument for Undermining in Situations that Serve the Target's Interests

Why think that someone like Adele, who is jealous within a caring relationship, undermines that relationship? Consider cases in which what triggers said jealousy serves

¹⁷⁹ Because not all caring relationships are equally morally valuable (because of a greater degree of care, presence of additional good-making features, and/or the absence of bad-making features) and because there are different kinds of undermining, the type of moral reason to criticize that I discuss in this paper is not an equally strong reason in all cases.

¹⁸⁰ There is a real question about what time frame is relevant when considering whether something is in the target's interests or not; however, a serious discussion of that does not fit in this paper.

the target's interests, all things considered.¹⁸¹ In the Fred and Adele case, this happens if Fred's asking Ginger to dance is, all things considered, in his interests.¹⁸² This might be so if dancing with Ginger improves his dancing skills, if his asking her to dance is an exercise of kindness that improves or expresses his good character, or if he has a prior firm commitment to welcoming anyone new to town.

Since Adele cares about Fred, as part of her pattern of caring thoughts, feelings, and actions, she wants to see him doing well both subjectively and objectively.¹⁸³ If asking Ginger to dance is in Fred's interests, then it is not possible for Adele's caring desire (that his interests be served) and her subsidiary jealous desire (that he not dance with Ginger) to both be satisfied. So we might call this jealous desire an uncaring one, since to satisfy it, Adele must neglect or override her caring desire, breaking the pattern characteristic of a caring relationship. My point is not that the two desires are essentially in conflict; I admit that the conflict is contingent.¹⁸⁴ Rather, my point is that there are a limited number of ways one might respond to cases involving such conflict, and those ways either eliminate the jealousy or undermine the caring relationship.

First, the most caring thing to do in such cases is to maintain the caring desire and eliminate the conflicting jealous desire (and thereby cease being jealous). If Adele is to do

¹⁸¹ The relevant interests in this section and the next are the target's *objective* interests, not his interests as he or the subject subjectively understand them. The trigger is the event in the external world that incites the jealousy, not the subject's mental activity prior to becoming jealous.

¹⁸² In this and the following section, I talk about Fred's interests, not because Adele's jealous always sets back Fred's interests, but rather because Adele's thoughts, feelings, and actions relative to Fred's interests partly determine the character of their relationship. So the discussion of the target's interests does not change the fact that what grounds our moral reason to criticize the subject is the significance of her jealousy *to the relationship*, not what the jealousy does to the target.

¹⁸³ She wants Fred to be happy and healthy, have his needs met, desires satisfied, preferences respected, and projects come to fruition, among other things. For a similar view, according to which care requires consideration of both subjective and objective interests, see Helm 2010, Chapter 3.

¹⁸⁴ In the next section, I consider cases in which the desires do not conflict in this way.

this, which is difficult, she needs to see what truly caring for Fred amounts to and stop desiring that he not dance with Ginger. That might happen if Fred explained to Adele why he asked Ginger to dance; then Adele could stop wondering whether Fred wanted a new dance partner.¹⁸⁵ Or, it might happen if Adele reassessed her priorities and realized that being Fred's only dance partner is not what really matters to her.¹⁸⁶ However, even if the subject does abandon the jealous desire, some damage may have been done; the subject may have a reason to apologize.¹⁸⁷

Another option would be for Adele to continue having the caring desire, but also maintain the conflicting subsidiary jealous desire that Fred stop dancing with Ginger.¹⁸⁸ As long as a subject does this, it is possible (though sometimes unlikely) for her to choose the satisfaction of the jealous desire over the satisfaction of the caring desire, which would break the pattern of thoughts and actions that makes the relationship a caring one. Such a pattern breaks when a person *could* think, feel, or do something caring, but does not. This happens at least occasionally in every caring relationship, but the more breaks in the pattern, the less caring the relationship. So when a subject responds to this conflict in her desires by maintaining both of them, the presence of the jealous desire threatens the

¹⁸⁵ It seems possible for Adele's jealousy to be recalcitrant, persisting despite her seeing the reasons to revise her desires provided by her care, but I save that case for a separate paper about recalcitrant jealousy.

¹⁸⁶ Furthermore, ceasing to be jealous helps Adele maintain the rational connections between her mental states. If Fred's interests and Adele's care for him give her good reason not to desire that Fred and Ginger stop dancing, then she has reason not to be jealous. For if one ceases to desire the necessary means to some end, that gives some indication that one's desire for said end is not all that important to one after all.

¹⁸⁷ Many people do apologize to their partners when they realize they have been experiencing jealousy.

¹⁸⁸ If she simply regrets that she cannot give Fred something that he can get from Ginger, that is different from her being jealous. That regret would primarily involve a negative or unpleasant mental state aimed at her own role in the situation, rather than at other agents, as in jealousy.

degree of care and thus threatens the morally valuable relationship. This threat to the relationship means that it is undermined in the second sense.

A third and final option would be for Adele to eliminate the caring desire but maintain the jealous desire. If a subject eliminates her caring desire, even if only in limited context, that breaks the pattern of mental states and actions that makes her relationship a caring one. This happens even if Adele eliminates the caring desire unintentionally (she may convince herself that Fred's interests will be served if her jealous desire is satisfied). But in that case, she convinces herself to have a false belief about his interests, which also compromises her pattern of caring thoughts and actions. Either way, it involves a (maybe small) loss in the care in their relationship, and thus the relationship has been undermined in the first sense.¹⁸⁹ So, when what triggers a subject's jealousy is in the target's interests and the subject retains the jealous desire (and thus the jealousy), that jealousy undermines their caring relationship.

Argument for Undermining in Situations that Do Not Serve the Target's Interests

Next, consider cases in which what triggers the jealousy does not serve (and maybe thwarts) the target's interests, all things are considered. This occurs if Fred's dancing with Ginger is not, all things considered, in his interests. For instance, if by dancing with Ginger, Fred learns nothing, has no fun, and has his toes stomped on repeatedly, doing so could be contrary to his interests. In these cases, it is better *for Fred* if the valuable

¹⁸⁹ Actually, there is a fourth option in which both desires are eliminated, but this outcome is rare and it involves both the elimination of jealousy *and* the undermining of the caring relationship.

relationship with Adele is preserved at the expense of the new relationship with Ginger.¹⁹⁰ Notice that unlike in the two other variations, it is possible for both the jealous desire and the caring desire to be satisfied; the satisfaction of both desires comes about if the relationship between Fred and Ginger is nipped in the bud. Adele can be motivated to think and act in ways that facilitate this nipping in the bud either by the jealous desire or the caring desire.¹⁹¹ Thus it is possible that either kind of motivation could lead Adele to preserve her valuable relationship with Fred.¹⁹²

To see how Adele's jealousy undermines her relationship with Fred in these variations, consider what might *motivate* her to respond to the jealousy-inducing situation (regardless of how she responds). The same circumstances (namely, Fred's ceasing to dance with Ginger) will satisfy both the jealous and the caring desires, so Adele is likely to maintain both desires; let's consider this case first. If only the jealous desire motivates her, this breaks her pattern of caring mental states and actions, since being motivated by caring desires is part of the pattern that constitutes a caring relationship. In that case, the subject undermines the caring relationship in the first sense; by breaking the pattern, one

¹⁹⁰ This 'better' should be understood objectively. Unless something unusual or pathological is going on, the target would not pursue a relationship with the rival at the expense of the relationship with the subject if the target believed that doing so would be contrary to his or her own interests. So this will tend to be a variation in which the target's objective and subjective interests come apart.

¹⁹¹ Because the satisfaction of either desire leads to the same outcome, it is difficult to recognize that these are two different desires. This can help explain why someone might think that being jealous is a good thing. A person might confuse the caring desire with the jealous desire, and it is the caring desire that is morally valuable.

¹⁹² If the subject is not motivated by either of these two desires, the relationship may or may not be preserved, depending on the target's actions, the rival's actions, and other factors. Even if the subject is motivated by one of these desires, he might choose a strategy that fails to preserve the relationship.

decreases the degree of caring in the relationship.¹⁹³ Since Adele can be motivated by her jealousy to do something that happens to serve Fred's interests, it is easy to think that her care for him motivates her in those cases.

If Adele's jealous desire remains but another desire (caring or otherwise) motivates, then her caring relationship is undermined insofar as the jealous desire constitutes a threat to her being motivated by the caring desire in the future. For as long as a subject has a jealous desire, it is possible for it to become motivationally efficacious instead of a caring desire; if that happens, the care in the relationship decreases. Since that outcome is possible for as long as the jealous desire is present, this variation involves undermining in the second sense, via threat.

If both the jealous desire and the caring desire play a role in motivating Adele's behavior, then again the morally valuable care in the relationship is undermined by a threat. For as long as both desires are present and motivationally efficacious, it is possible for the jealous desire to "crowd out" the caring desire by becoming the sole motivationally efficacious desire, in which case undermining in the first sense, involving a loss, would occur.¹⁹⁴

Alternatively, Adele may eliminate one desire but not the other. As shown in the previous section, if she eliminates the caring desire and retains the jealous desire, then the relationship is undermined in the first sense, because eliminating the caring desire breaks the pattern of care in the relationship. If, however, she eliminates the jealous desire and

¹⁹³ Furthermore, if breaking the caring pattern makes it less likely that one thinks, feels, or does caring things in the future, then the relationship may be undermined in the third sense as well; the break in the pattern might function as an obstacle to the creation or increase of value in the relationship.

¹⁹⁴ The likelihood of these threats being actualized varies considerably across cases.

retains the caring desire, she ceases to be jealous, which is the only way to avoid undermining the relationship.

In the previous section, I argued that when subjects are jealous in caring relationships and the features of the situations that trigger their jealousy are in their targets' interests, they undermine those morally valuable relationships because their jealous desires break or threaten the pattern of caring mental states and actions in their relationships. In this section, I argued that when subjects are jealous in caring relationships and the features of the situations that trigger their jealousy are not in their targets' interests, they undermine those relationships because their jealous desires either actually or potentially motivate the subject to think or act for non-caring reasons, which either breaks or threatens the pattern of caring mental states and actions in their relationships.¹⁹⁵ Since either way the jealousy undermines the relationship, we have a moral reason to criticize any subject who is jealous in a caring relationship.¹⁹⁶ Succinctly, this is because caring for someone requires desiring things for her sake and being motivated by those desires, whereas jealousy requires desiring things for oneself.

Conclusion

My goal has been to show that jealousy in caring relationships undermines the morally valuable care in those relationships and thus gives us a moral reason to criticize those jealous subjects. It does so in different ways depending on whether the satisfaction of the

¹⁹⁵ We have seen how jealousy undermines the *care* in relationships, but jealousy can, and often does, also undermine other morally valuable aspects of relationships, including generosity, trust, forgiveness, loyalty, gratitude, and respect.

¹⁹⁶ I do not frame this critique in terms of vices because I do not think there is a single vicious character trait that is implicated in all cases of jealousy. Saying that jealousy undermines relationships allows greater specificity about what exactly the problem is that unifies cases of jealousy. However, this critique is about vices just insofar as any moral reason to criticize a person is a reason that the person falls short of being fully virtuous.

jealous desire is or is not in the target's interests. If it is, then the jealousy undermines the relationship because the jealous desire either breaks or threatens to break the pattern of care in the relationship. If it is not, then the jealousy undermines the relationship because the jealous desire either actually or potentially motivates the subject to think or act for non-caring reasons, which either breaks or threatens the pattern of caring mental states and actions in the relationship. The morally significant feature that unifies cases of jealousy within caring relationships is not obvious; it is not some morally suspect insecurity, nor a morally problematic view of other agents as possessions (although sometimes caring jealous subjects are insecure or possessive in ways that are morally problematic). What unifies and gives us a moral reason to criticize these cases is jealousy's undermining of interpersonal relationships between subjects and targets. So, since the majority of cases of jealousy involve subjects who have caring relationships with the targets of their jealous desires, the majority of cases of jealousy are morally unified in that all such cases provide us with a shared moral reason to criticize the jealous subject.

However, I have not argued that the reason to criticize that I discuss is the only or the most important moral reason to criticize jealous subjects; many cases of jealousy can be criticized for other, often powerful, moral reasons. This undermining of the moral value of relationships between subjects and targets does not exhaust the moral problems that can be involved in jealousy; earlier I considered many other potential moral problems with jealousy.¹⁹⁷ However, I do think that what is *paradigmatic* about jealousy from a moral perspective is that it undermines the moral value of relationships between jealous subjects and targets, and it does so in a way that is traceable to the particular kind

¹⁹⁷ See the Introduction.

of desire that is necessary for the jealousy.¹⁹⁸ I have not tried to show that this reason sufficiently grounds all-things-considered judgments that we *should* criticize jealous subjects, nor to show that jealousy undermines all caring relationships to the same degree. A combination of many factors will determine how seriously jealousy undermines any given relationship. I have simply argued that we have *a* moral reason to criticize subjects who are jealous within caring relationships. In the next chapter, I explain how jealousy undermines relationships between subjects and targets when the subject does *not* care about the target.

¹⁹⁸ This is part of why it is so valuable for an account of jealousy to have a good descriptive component; without a clear understanding of the desire involved in jealousy, we would not be able to identify the conflicts between jealous desires and caring desires.

Chapter 3: Jealousy In Non-Caring Relationships

Imagine a person, Linda, who desires that her supervisor, Nancy, trust her more than any of her colleagues. Linda's desire is not born of any warm thoughts or feelings about Nancy; their relationship is not a caring one. Rather, Linda desires to be Nancy's most trusted employee because she desires a promotion and thinks that this is the surest, quickest route to being promoted. However, Linda knows that she is *not* Nancy's most trusted employee, Susan is. While not everyone would be jealous in a similar situation, Linda is.

When Linda or someone like her experiences jealousy in the context of a non-caring relationship, does she thereby provide us with any moral reason to criticize her? Many people say that Linda only does so if she *acts* on her jealousy in a way that is worthy of moral criticism, either because they do not think one's emotions can harm another, or because they do not think that emotions are voluntary or under our control in the right sort of way to ground moral responsibility. However, I think we have good reason to believe otherwise, and that careful consideration of cases like Linda's can help us see why.¹⁹⁹

Here I aim to show that in cases of jealousy like Linda's, in which the satisfaction of her jealous desire requires a relationship with someone like Nancy (the target)²⁰⁰ about

¹⁹⁹ In recent years, philosophers have developed a number of arguments to show that we can appropriately be held morally responsible for and thus be assessed on moral grounds for attitudes and emotions as well as actions. Here I assume that some such view is correct. See the Introduction for more discussion of and references to the relevant literature.

²⁰⁰ The most common term for this person in the literature on jealousy is 'beloved.' Using 'beloved' to refer to the person involved in the jealous triad who is neither the subject nor the rival is intimately tied up with the habit focusing almost exclusively on cases of romantic/sexual jealousy. However, using 'beloved' is counterintuitive in cases of non-caring jealousy, which is why I prefer 'target.'

whom she does not care, we have a moral reason to criticize the jealous subject for the way her jealousy undermines the moral value of their relationship. Specifically, I aim to show that Linda's jealousy, whether expressed or not, makes it more difficult or impossible for her to maintain or increase the moral value of her existing relationship with Nancy.²⁰¹ For Linda and Nancy are colleagues who have a relationship, and that relationship can be morally better or worse despite not being a caring one.

In the remainder of this section, I sketch my descriptive account of jealousy and what it is about Linda that makes her jealous. Then I outline four necessary conditions for a caring relationship and describe the varieties of non-caring relationships in which jealousy can arise. Next, I explain what it means to undermine the moral value of a relationship and argue for that jealousy in non-caring relationships undermines those relationships, whether they are actually or only potentially morally valuable. Finally, I consider and respond to an objection to my argument.

According to my descriptive account, there are three necessary conditions for jealousy.²⁰² First, in order to experience this emotion, one must (A) desire that oneself stand in some relation to a specific, non-replicable good. Call this the jealous desire. Second, one must (B) have in mind a (possibly imagined) rival and regard that rival's having the good as logically or causally inconsistent with the satisfaction of one's jealous desire. Third, one must (C) have in mind some (possibly imagined) set of circumstances in

²⁰¹ I do not claim that this reason is always sufficient to ground an all-things-considered judgment that we should criticize her.

²⁰² These conditions are not sufficient at least partly because they lack a condition relating to jealousy's phenomenological, affective, or feeling component.

which one's jealous desire would be satisfied. The subject need not be aware of meeting any of these conditions to experience jealousy.²⁰³

As I have described Linda, she clearly meets the first necessary condition for jealousy; she desires to be Nancy's most trusted employee as a means to being promoted, which she wants for herself.²⁰⁴ Her desire, like all jealous desires, is both self-interested and specific. The relevant sense of 'self-interested' here is descriptive, rather than normative. Linda's jealous desire is self-interested in that she desires something for herself, but of course, to desire something for oneself is not necessarily a bad thing. I do not claim that all jealous people are self-interested in a morally bad way (although surely *some* are). Simply put, jealous desires are not *purely* altruistic; they do not involve desiring things *only* for others' sakes.

Linda's desire, like all jealous desires, is also a desire for something specific, not for something like wealth *in general*. A jealous person may, for instance, desire the money that a specific person has, or a specific amount or degree of attention, affection, or companionship from a specific person. Linda wants to be Nancy's most trusted employee as a means to a promotion; she does not want just anyone's trust, nor simply to be trustworthy in general.

Linda also meets the other two necessary conditions for jealousy. She is acutely aware of Nancy's superlative trust in Susan and the fact that only *one* person can be the employee who Nancy trusts *the most*. So whether she could or would articulate it thus, she knows that Susan's being most trusted is logically inconsistent with her own desire being

²⁰³ Here I take this account for granted; see Chapter 1 for my defense of it.

²⁰⁴ That is, what she wants is for *her* to have the promotion. The question of why she wants it is separate; she may want it partly for another's sake (maybe an aging parent who she supports financially).

satisfied. Thus she meets the second condition. She also makes plans (sometimes fanciful ones) to become Nancy's most trusted employee, contemplating what that would require, and she thinks there are multiple possible ways to achieve her desired status. By having in mind circumstances in which her jealous desire would be satisfied, she meets the third condition. Before I explain how Linda's being jealous undermines her relationship, we need to consider what makes it a non-caring one.

What Is a Non-Caring Relationship?

According to my view, to have a caring relationship with another requires *at least* four things: (1) that one be personally acquainted with that individual, (2) that one recognize her moral value as the individual she is, (3) that one desire that her interests be well served for her own sake, and (4) that one be motivated to think, feel, and act for her sake by furthering or supporting her interests.²⁰⁵ According to this schema, relationships can be caring to a greater or lesser degree. The thoughts, feelings, and actions involved in a caring relationship form an interconnected pattern, and the more robust the pattern, the more robust the care in the relationship.²⁰⁶

Call the first condition the *acquaintance condition*. A subject fails to meet it relative to someone (and therefore fails to have a caring relationship with that person) if the subject is not acquainted with that person, where one takes 'being acquainted with' in its most minimal sense. People cannot have caring relationships with people *wholly unknown* to

²⁰⁵ See Chapter 2 for my previous articulation of this view.

²⁰⁶ Many factors contribute to the robustness of this pattern: the span of time across which one has caring thoughts, feelings, and actions; the frequency of one's caring thoughts, feelings, and actions; the degree of success one has in serving the other's interests; the strength of one's caring feelings and desires; etc.

them, so acquaintance requires having some propositional beliefs about the person.²⁰⁷ While the relevant beliefs are most often gained through having met the other person in some direct way, it can be gained through indirect means. That is, I might be acquainted with someone in the relevant sense because that person is a friend of my friend, who has told me enough about this other person (who I have not yet met) for me to begin to develop a caring relationship with him or her. The reason for including this rather minimal condition, which can be fulfilled in a vast variety of different ways, is simply to capture the strongly felt and widely shared intuition that we cannot have caring relationships with individuals with whom we are not, in any sense or under any description, acquainted as individuals.²⁰⁸

Call the second condition the *value recognition condition*. It requires that one believe that the other person is morally valuable insofar as she is the particular person that she is, not just in the sense that all persons are morally valuable.²⁰⁹ It also requires that one meet the first condition, because one has to be somehow acquainted with an individual to form

²⁰⁷ I prefer to call it an acquaintance condition rather than a knowledge condition because one can fulfill it even if most of one's beliefs about the person are *false* and hence cannot count as knowledge. We can begin to care about someone we have just met or just heard about through some indirect means even if many of our beliefs about that person are inaccurate. These false beliefs are an obstacle to *robust* care, but may be enough for minimal care in some circumstances.

²⁰⁸ This is not to say that we cannot care about people wholly unknown to us in another sense. One could say that I care about all humans, despite not being acquainted with most of them, insofar as I believe that each human is important. But that is quite different from sharing *caring (personal) relationships* with all humans.

²⁰⁹ These values are in the eyes of the beholder; I can have a caring relationship with you in part because I believe that you are an honest person, even if I am mistaken about that. Or my care might be partly based on my belief that you are uniquely valuable because you and I are related by birth, marriage, adoption, or otherwise. So this condition does not imply that we can only have caring relationships with people who are objectively good. However, if one's beliefs about another's value are largely wrong, we have reason to think that the relationship is not *robustly* caring, since one does not care about the actual other, but rather about an imagined person in some respects like the actual person. Furthermore, even if such a relationship could be robustly caring, the underlying epistemic errors might make the relationship much worse (overall) than it would be otherwise. Thanks to Jean Roberts for questioning me on this.

beliefs about what makes her uniquely valuable. One fails to meet this condition if one (falsely) believes that the other is outside the moral community, or if one does not have any beliefs about the moral value of the person as the specific individual she is.

Call the third condition the *desire condition*. A subject can fail to meet this condition in three different ways. One such way involves a subject who has no desires whatsoever relative to the other person. Another way involves a subject whose only desires relative to the other person's interests are equally applicable to all people, and not specifically concerned with the particular person's interests. The last way involves a subject whose desires relative to another person's interests are all for the person's interests to be thwarted or for the person to be harmed.

Call the fourth condition the *motivation condition*. A subject fails to meet this condition if she fails to ever act in a way that is intended to further or support the other person's interests.²¹⁰ This failure need not be a product of maliciousness; she may be concerned for the other but simply not be *motivated* by her concerns (because she is only weakly concerned, is distracted, or does not realize that she has an opportunity to act on her concerns). Consider a person who has only neutral and/or mildly positive attitudes toward her new neighbor, and yet has never been motivated to act out of a concern for this neighbor. Her actions may *in fact* impact this neighbor's welfare, but that is not what moves her to act as she does. Thus, on my view, one cannot stand in a caring relationship

²¹⁰ On the link between motivation and care, see Shoemaker 2007. "If one lacks a care for *X*, ... one will not, other things equal, be motivated to perform any *X*-preserving or *X*-promoting actions; one will not be moved by *X*-reasons, as it were. And the converse holds true as well: *if one fails to have any motivation to act in accordance with X-reasons and X is something it is possible to preserve or promote, then the explanation, other things being equal, is that one just does not care about X*" (83-84, italics mine). See also Shoemaker 2003.

with someone if one has positive attitudes toward that person and yet makes no effort (not even a failed one) to serve that person's interests.²¹¹

The actions that fulfill the motivation condition may be quite minimal; merely saying that you support someone (especially in response to someone else criticizing her), spending time getting to know her better (even through indirect means), or participating in a group activity to which she is committed can count as acting to further or support her interests (albeit in somewhat minimal or indirect ways). Thus we can act in support of the interests of celebrities, royalty, and otherwise distant people, who do not *need* our support. Furthermore, we can give verbal or symbolic support to those whose interests we cannot support in any more direct or significant way because of factors outside our control.²¹²

These four conditions give us a way to sort relationships into those that are caring and those that are non-caring. Of course, most non-caring relationships meet *some* of the conditions for a caring relationship, so some non-caring relationships have greater

²¹¹ These actions need not *successfully* serve the other's interests; what matters is the subject's motivation or reason for action. However, if a person consistently fails to succeed in such endeavors under normal circumstances, that is a reason to think that the subject only cares weakly, if at all, about the other person.

²¹² One might think that a disposition to support may be sufficient here, but I am not confident that it is appropriate to say that one has a disposition to support someone's interests (a very general sort of disposition) if one has never done any of the various specific things that would count as supporting her interests. In general, I am willing to say it can be appropriate for us to attribute to people dispositions to *X* even if they have never been in a position to *X*, so long as certain other conditions are fulfilled. However, I doubt that I could have a relationship with someone and yet never have been in a position to do something that could be construed as supporting that person's interests, at least in a minimal or symbolic way. So while it can be appropriate to say that some people are disposed to incur significant debt to help loved ones in emergencies despite never having been in a position to do so, we attribute such a disposition to a person because they have done *other similarly supportive actions* in the past. If someone has literally never done anything to support the interests of someone with whom she has a relationship, I am not confident that we are justified in saying that she has a disposition to do so. And if a person needs to have at least tried to do something supportive or other in order for us to appropriately say that the person has a disposition to support, I think this gives us good reason to frame the final condition for a caring relationship in terms of motivation and action rather than dispositions.

potential to *become* caring relationships. Across this and many other dimensions, non-caring relationships are quite varied. So before I talk about how jealousy undermines non-caring relationships, I need to say a bit about the kinds of non-caring relationships in which jealousy can arise and the kinds of non-caring relationships that do not allow the necessary conditions for jealousy to be fulfilled.

Which Kinds of Non-Caring Relationship Allow for the Possibility of Jealousy?

To stand in a non-caring relationship with someone means that one fails to meet at least one of the four necessary conditions for a caring relationship relative to that person.²¹³ However, jealousy is not possible in every non-caring relationship. Here is a quick schematic to show the kinds of non-caring relationships in which jealousy is and is not possible:

If a subject:

1. is not acquainted with a person
 - i. then it is *not possible* for that person to function as the target of the subject's jealous desire. The target of a jealous desire is the specific person from whom the subject jealously desires something. Since 'acquaintance' is used in a minimal sense, and one cannot desire something from a specific individual about whom one knows *nothing*, a jealous desire cannot take as its target a person with whom the subject is not acquainted. A desire for something from a wholly unknown person cannot meet the specificity condition for a jealous desire.
2. does not recognize a person's value as the individual she is
 - a. because the subject falsely believes that person to be outside the moral community
 - i. then it is possible for that person to function as the target of the subject's jealous desire.²¹⁴

²¹³ The conditions are in order by the likelihood that they are met in any non-caring relationship; the first condition is most likely to be met (and necessary for all the others) and the fourth is least likely to be met.

²¹⁴ I do not know of any case in which this highly unusual type of jealousy has clearly occurred, but such cases merit consideration; jealousy seems possible in cases in which the subject believes

- b. because the subject lacks any beliefs about the moral value of the person as the individual she is
 - i. then it is possible for that person to function as the target of the subject's jealous desire. When subjects have jealous desires to use their targets in purely instrumental ways, they need not have any beliefs about the targets *as specific moral individuals*. Linda might not lack a belief about what makes her boss the specific, morally valuable individual she is, and still jealously desire her trust.
- 3. does not desire someone's interests be served for her own sake
 - a. because the subject has no desires relative to that person whatsoever
 - i. then it is *not possible* for that person to function as the target of the subject's jealous desire, because such a person clearly has no *jealous desires* relative to the person.
 - b. because the subject only has desires relative to that person that are equally applicable to all other persons
 - i. then it is *not possible* for that person to function as the target of the subject's jealous desire. For if the person were the target of the subject's jealous desire, then it would follow from the definitions of a target and a jealous desire that the subject desires something specific from that specific person.
 - c. because the subject only has desires relative to that person that aim at thwarting the interests of or harming that person

the target is not a member of the moral community. This might occur if a racist subject jealously desires a relationship with a target who he sees as being of an inferior, subhuman group. But it is difficult to see what relationship such a subject would desire to have with a person he sees this way.

For instance, this type of jealousy might arise within a sexual relationship like that between Thomas Jefferson and his slave, Sally Hemings (though I know of no historical evidence to suggest that it did). I see two problems with thinking that this could be a case of the relevant type. First, slave-owning societies are set up so that owners rarely have rivals when it comes to their slaves (see Davis 1936, p. 401), and when a rival is possible (as in a matter of the heart), owners are trained not to see slaves as desirable in that domain. Second, to the extent that a slave owner sought a *relationship* with a slave, this mitigates somewhat against attributing to him a belief that the slave is a member of a subhuman group. Jefferson provides a striking example of a person whose statements about and actions toward African-Americans are complicated at best and inconsistent at worst; determining what he really thought of African-Americans is no easy task. If one accepts Charles Mills' account of the racial contract (see Mills 1997), it might be that *any* white signatory of the racial contract whose jealousy takes a person of color as its target would have this kind of jealousy, given the view that all signatories of the racial contract view people of color as "sub-human." Thanks to Jeremy Fischer for drawing my attention to this.

A better example might be jealousy that takes a non-human animal (maybe a pet) as its target. But that only works to the extent that non-human animals are outside the moral community, and while many people would happily accept that claim, I think it is actually a rather difficult question whether we should.

- i. then it is possible for that person to function as the target of the subject's jealous desire.²¹⁵
- 4. is not motivated to act in service of someone's interests
 - i. then it is possible for that person to function as the target of the subject's jealous desire.

To summarize: jealousy can arise in a non-caring relationship if one or more of the following are true: (a) one does not believe the target is a member of the moral community, (b) one has no beliefs about the moral value of the target as the individual she is, (c) one's only desires relative to the target are desires for her interests to be thwarted or that she be harmed, or (d) one is never motivated to support the target's interests. Notice that jealousy would be much more common in situations of the sorts outlined in (b) and (d) than in the sorts of situations outlined in (a) or (c).²¹⁶

Because I allow for very weakly caring relationships, I believe that most people stand in somewhat caring relationships with most of their acquaintances most of the time.

²¹⁵ Such cases appear to be quite rare. For if a person wants another's interests to be thwarted, it is likely to be because she believes that the other person deserves it. But whatever one's reason for believing someone deserves such a thing also seems to be a reason not to want a (more significant) relationship with that person, which the jealous subject must. This unusual kind of jealousy might occur though: imagine a prison guard who desires a relationship of power over a high profile prisoner in order to "do justice" to a person who he believes deserves to be dominated and humiliated; the guard may become jealous when another guard is assigned the shifts that would make the satisfaction of his jealous desire possible.

One might think this sort of jealousy is morally acceptable in cases in which the target *deserves* to have her interests thwarted or deserves to be harmed. I doubt that anyone deserves such a thing, but I cannot argue for that here. I can say that if a person jealously desires a relationship with a person she believes to be deserving of such things, it seems that the subject's values are worrisome or even inconsistent, which bodes ill for their relationship. For I do not see why someone would want to have a relationship with a person whom she thinks deserves to have her interests thwarted. If such a subject were to try to justify her desire for such a relationship by saying that it is best for the target to get what the target deserves, that would show that the subject *does* desire that the target's interests be served after all, insofar as it is in one's interests to get what one deserves.

²¹⁶ When jealousy arises in non-caring relationships, it seems likely that the subject's attitudes toward the target will be neutral rather than malicious. For it seems unlikely that subjects will desire relationships with others toward whom they have malicious attitudes, no matter how strongly the subjects believe that the relationships would be in their interests. If I am right about this, non-caring jealousy most commonly involves either a subject who has no beliefs about her target's individual moral value *or* a subject who is never motivated to support her target's interests.

So although Linda's jealousy is not unusual in some respects, her not having even a *minimally* caring relationship with Nancy makes the case rather unusual in that one respect, as are all the cases of the sort with which I am concerned here. However, I think that even these unusual cases merit our consideration for two main reasons. First, philosophical literature about special obligations tends to focus on the obligations that arise from certain roles or from caring/loving relationships; I mean to show, through consideration of jealousy in non-caring relationships, that these latter relationships can also give rise to special obligations. Second, my search for a morally significant thread that unifies cases of jealousy demands that I consider a range of uncommon cases as well as the most familiar cases of jealousy.

In my view, the degree of care in a relationship corresponds to the degree to which the four necessary conditions for caring are met.²¹⁷ Furthermore, the degree of care in a relationship is relevant to assessment of the moral value of the relationship; all other things being equal, a more caring relationship has greater moral value.²¹⁸ However, even wholly non-caring relationships (like Linda's relationship with Nancy) can be more or less morally valuable, depending on how respectful, fair, etc. they are, and all relationships have the *potential* to become morally valuable if they are not already. In the

²¹⁷ All four necessary conditions for a caring relationship admit of degrees. One can be better acquainted with a person, have more or more firmly held beliefs about her unique value, have more or stronger desires that her interests be served, and be more often or more strongly motivated to serve her interests.

²¹⁸ An example of a caring relationship that might be morally worse than a non-caring one could be a caring relationship between a war criminal and his lover. The lover's care for the war criminal could be grounded in false beliefs about the war criminal's value and/or interests, and thus could provide the war criminal with the psychological support necessary to pursue a much more aggressive series of crimes against humanity than he would otherwise. Such a relationship could be seen as worse in terms of its overall consequences and/or worse in terms of the character of the agents involved. However, any caring relationship of this sort is unlikely to be worse than a non-caring relationship that is cruel or otherwise positively bad, even if it is better than a relationship that simply *lacks* care.

next section, I argue that even when a subject does not care about the target of her jealousy, that jealousy undermines her relationship. For the jealousy does one or more of the following: it (1) causes a loss in the moral value of the relationship, (2) threatens the moral value of the relationship, or (3) is an obstacle to the relationship's becoming more valuable. For instance, jealousy can be the reason why a non-caring relationship is no longer as respectful or fair or honest as it once was, and it can also function as an obstacle to the relationship's *becoming* a caring one.²¹⁹

What Does it Mean to Undermine the Moral Value of Relationships?

As I said in the previous chapter, a relationship can be undermined in any one (or more) of three ways: (1) through a *loss* of pre-existing moral value, as when a morally valuable relationship is damaged or terminated; (2) through a *threat* to pre-existing moral value that can be overcome only if someone involved takes evasive action to prevent such a loss; or (3) through an *obstacle* to the creation of moral value within the relationship, whether the value to be created is of a sort not previously present or an increase in a type of value that the relationship already has. The values of fairness, honesty, respectfulness, trustworthiness, caring, and generosity are just some of the moral values that can be present in a relationship; any of these can be undermined in any of the three ways just mentioned. Even in the rare circumstances in which a relationship has no moral value as it stands, its potential value can be undermined in the third sense. That is, one could make it more difficult or impossible for such a relationship to become morally valuable

²¹⁹ One may ask whether jealousy can sometimes also or instead promote justice, fairness, or other moral goods. If so, it might be that despite my arguments about moral reasons to criticize jealous subjects, such reasons are sometimes outweighed or neutralized. I consider multiple such proposals in Chapter 5.

and thus decrease its *potential* moral value. My task is to show that whenever jealousy arises in a non-caring relationship, at least one type of undermining occurs.

Argument that Jealousy Undermines Non-Caring Relationships

The following is an outline of my general argument that jealousy in non-caring relationships undermines those (actually or potentially) morally valuable relationships:

1. Relationships, including non-caring ones, require some form(s) of engagement between non-substitutable parties across some span of time.
2. By having a jealous desire, a subject engages with whoever is the target of that desire.
3. Different moral obligations accompany different modes of engagement in a relationship.
4. Some conditional moral obligations that accompany all desires for things *from* specific individuals (and thus all jealous desires in non-caring relationships) are obligations to:
 - a. consider how the satisfaction of one's jealous desire would impact the target and one's relationship with the target,
 - b. be willing to revise or repudiate one's jealous desire if satisfying it will impose an undue burden on the target and actually be motivated to do so if one determines that it will,²²⁰ and
 - c. be willing (before the satisfaction of the jealous desire) to be grateful or compensate for costs incurred by the target if one's desire is satisfied and actually be motivated to do so if one's desire is satisfied.²²¹
5. Only subjects who have caring relationships with the targets of their jealousy can meet those conditional moral obligations.
6. Thus, in the cases under consideration, jealous subjects cannot meet their conditional moral obligations.
7. Failing to meet one's moral obligations to someone undermines one's relationship with that person at least by creating an obstacle to the increase of moral value in the relationship and sometimes also by a loss of or threat to existing moral value in the relationship.
8. Thus, in the cases under consideration, jealous subjects necessarily undermine their relationships with the targets of their jealousy.
9. One's undermining a relationship gives us a moral reason to criticize one.

²²⁰ This willingness is *ceteris paribus* willingness, not all-things-considered willingness. People are not required to be willing, *no matter what*, to do these things; for instance, one need not be willing to revise one's jealous desire if the only way to do so is by taking one's own life.

²²¹ This may not exhaust the conditional moral obligations that accompany jealous desires. For instance, jealous subjects may also have conditional moral obligations to be willing to justify or offer an excuse for actions by which they try to satisfy their jealous desires. However, I do not need that claim for my argument.

10. Therefore, we have at least one moral reason to criticize all jealous subjects who lack caring relationships with the targets of their jealous desires.²²²

The first claim is simply a quick statement of my working definition of a relationship, which I do not expect to be controversial.²²³ However, each of the other claims requires defense here.

The second premise states that when a subject becomes jealous, she engages with the target of her jealousy in a new mode; this is true insofar as she now desires that the target participate in a particular type of relationship with her. For instance, Linda engages with Nancy in a new mode when she develops a desire that Nancy trust her more than any other employee. This claim relies on a broad usage of ‘engagement’ that includes not just other-directed behavior but also other-directed attitudes, desires, and emotions. Since different kinds of relationships (like friendships, parental relationships, and work relationships) are distinguished (at least partly) by the modes of engagement involved in having them, we need this broad usage if we are to capture the differences between various kinds of relationships. For instance, any adequate characterization of friendship will make reference to the emotions and attitudes that friends have toward each other as well as the things friends desire for and of each other.

An analogous case can emphasize the point. If Ben develops a desire to raise a baby with his partner, Jenny, then it seems that the character of his relationship with her has changed; even if he does not discuss this new desire with her, he is engaging with her in new ways through this desire and the thoughts that accompany it. A jealous desire

²²² For my purposes here, I take ‘a moral reason to criticize a person’ as synonymous with ‘a reason to think that person is morally bad/disvaluable/vicious in some respect’ (and similarly for ‘praise’ and ‘morally good/valuable/virtuous’).

²²³ See also Kolodny 2003.

similarly colors one's relationship with the target of one's jealousy, so I think we have good reason to see having a jealous desire as a form of engaging with the target of that jealousy. I am not claiming that *every* desire is a form of engaging with another person; I can desire things of no one in particular. I am making the weaker claim that whenever one desires something *for or from some specific person* (the latter of which is always true of jealous desires), it is a form of engaging with that person. The moral significance of such engagement varies depending on the desire and the relationship involved.

The third premise states that different (new) conditional moral obligations accompany different (new) modes of engagement in a relationship. Why? We have moral obligations to others solely in virtue of their being fellow members of the moral community; we stand in a morally significant *relation* to members of the moral community even if we do not have *relationships* with them. But many of us believe that as we develop relationships with others, we come to have *additional* moral obligations to them; friends have obligations to friends that they do not have to others, parents have obligations to children that they do not have to others, representatives have obligations to constituents that they do not have to others, and the same is true of neighbors, co-workers, teachers, caretakers, and people in many other relationships.²²⁴

These relationships develop (“thicken”) as the parties engage more and/or in new (often more intimate) modes. I think of the more intimate modes of engagement as those that require the parties to engage as *particular* individuals with *particular* needs, interests,

²²⁴ Of course, it is controversial whether we have such special obligations. I cannot defend the claim that we do in this paper, but see Scheffler 1997 and Feltham and Cottingham 2010 for arguments to that effect. If my larger project succeeds, I provide another reason in favor of this claim: assuming that we have special obligations gives us the resources us to develop an account of what is morally paradigmatic of the emotion jealousy.

and desires that are not shared with all other individuals.²²⁵ However, we define our thickest relationships (such as those we share with lovers, family members, and close friends) both by the modes of engagement involved in them and also the moral demands they make on us. So we have reason to think that as relationships develop, they impose additional moral obligations on those involved, who come to have greater moral obligations (in terms of number, variety, and strength) to each other.

Consider some ways we might enrich a relationship through a new mode of engagement, and the obligations that follow. When you first share personal information with someone in confidence, form a contract with someone, or co-operate to achieve a shared goal, you thicken your relationship by engaging in a new mode of engagement with that person. With that new mode of engagement comes greater moral responsibility *to that person*. When you first share personal information with me in confidence as we begin our friendship, I become obligated to protect your privacy in new ways (provided that withholding the particular information does not pose a significant risk to anyone's welfare). When you enter into a contract with me, I become obligated to fulfill my end of the bargain. When we co-operate to achieve a shared goal, I become obligated to share the rewards and costs that accrue to us thereby. All these obligations are conditional upon what has already happened in our relationship; without our having engaged in those ways already, such obligations would not exist.

If I am right that desiring something from some specific person, whether jealously or not, is a mode of engaging with that person, then, as with other modes of engagement, desiring something from someone brings new conditional moral obligations with it. For

²²⁵ See Margalit 2004.

instance, if I want Lars to give me a ride to the airport, I am obligated to be willing to reciprocate somehow (by giving a ride in the future, paying for gas, expressing gratitude, or something).²²⁶ If I want Elizabeth to loan me money, I am obligated to assure her that I will pay back the money if she seeks such assurances, even before I receive the loan and thereby become obligated to pay it back. I take these sorts of examples to be familiar from our actual moral practices.

The fourth premise outlines which conditional moral obligations accompany a jealous desire (which, remember, is necessarily a specific, self-interested desire). To understand why the list includes what it does, notice that having certain desires can be morally wrong, either conditionally or unconditionally. For instance, it is unconditionally wrong to desire that some innocent person be harmed when no good would be brought about thereby. Here, however, I am interested in desires that are only conditionally wrong to have.²²⁷ For instance, it would be wrong of me to desire of Bobby, who I know to be a recovering alcoholic, that he continue to be my drinking buddy. To desire this of Bobby would be callous; it is to desire that he risk his health (and much else) simply because I think he is a fun companion when we are inebriated. If he were to satisfy my desire, he would harm himself, and he would also render our relationship a bad one (for it would be exploitative on my part, among other things).²²⁸ Under normal circumstances, it

²²⁶ For a detailed account of when we owe someone a debt of gratitude and of what we owe when we do, see McConnell 1993.

²²⁷ Such desires are wrong in one or another of these ways depending on what it is about a person in virtue of which we desire something from them (that is, a desire may be unconditionally wrong under some descriptions and only conditionally wrong under other descriptions).

²²⁸ I am not claiming that it is wrong to *desire that he be able to drink with me without perpetuating his dangerous addiction* or to *our camaraderie as drinking buddies*. It would be unconditionally wrong if I desired that he be my drinking buddy *because* he is an alcoholic, but only conditionally wrong (given his alcoholism) if I desired that he be my drinking buddy *because* he is a fun person.

is wrong to desire that a particular person do something for you when doing so would impose great suffering or hardship on that person. Once we notice that it can be conditionally morally wrong to desire certain things of certain people, we can see that jealous subjects must fulfill multiple conditional moral obligations in order to avoid this wrongness.

One thing that I might be doing wrong if I want Bobby (an alcoholic) to be my drinking buddy is simply *failing to consider* that Bobby, since he is a known alcoholic, should not be encouraged to drink.²²⁹ For whenever one desires that some specific person give one something (their time, attention, money, trust, or what have you), one becomes obligated to consider how that giving would impact that person.²³⁰ To count as the required consideration, one needs to recognize some things about the target as a specific valuable individual with unique needs, desires, and interests; otherwise, one is not really considering the impact *on that person*, but simply going through the motions.²³¹ While sometimes our actions *affect* people who we do not and cannot know in this way, I am concerned about a narrower range of cases in which one desires something from a specific person. One has to be acquainted with the person already for these desires to be possible, so it is always *possible* to give the required consideration in such cases.

²²⁹ This obligation to consider another might be met by developing certain habits based on rules of thumb.

²³⁰ There does not seem to be any such obligation when, for instance, one desires wealth without desiring that it come from any particular source. I am not claiming that these moral obligations accompany wishfully thinking something like, "Wouldn't it be nice if I had a better memory?" because doing so does not involve engaging with anyone to whom you thereby become obligated.

²³¹ On the importance of taking seriously persons' particularity in treating them as persons, see O'Neill 1985, in which she distinguishes between, on the one hand, not using people as mere means and, on the other hand, treating people as ends in themselves.

One must extend such consideration, rather than simply ignore those who will be impacted by one's actions and the satisfaction of one's desires if one is to avoid the vices of self-centeredness, greediness, and/or callousness. So, as in the alcoholic drinking buddy case, a jealous subject has an obligation to consider how the satisfaction of the jealous desire would impact the target and her relationship with the target. Only by extending the required consideration to others does it become possible for us to recognize when our desires are morally inappropriate and to revise them if need be.

This gives us reason to think that having a jealous desire also obligates one to be willing to revise or repudiate that desire if satisfying it will impose an undue burden on its target. For simply *considering* how the satisfaction of one's desires might impact the interests of another would not be very morally significant if one were completely *unwilling* to see those impacts as giving one reasons to think, feel, or act differently than one would otherwise. To consider others without seeing them as providing reasons would be merely to pay lip service to morality. To be unwilling to revise or repudiate a jealous desire that would impose an undue burden on one's target is to treat that target unfairly. Moreover, to be truly willing to revise or repudiate the desire if it is unduly burdensome to the target, one must actually be motivated to revise or repudiate the desire just in case one determines that it *would* be unduly burdensome.

But suppose that the satisfaction of the jealous desire would not be unduly burdensome to the target. Even in that case, I would say that having a jealous desire (prior to its satisfaction) obligates one to be willing to show gratitude or compensate for costs incurred by the target through the satisfaction of the desire and it obligates one to actually be motivated to compensate or be grateful to the target if the desire is satisfied. If, for instance, Linda were never willing and/or motivated to support Nancy's interests,

then Nancy would have grounds for complaint. To lack such willingness and/or motivation is to fail to value Nancy appropriately (specifically, not to sufficiently value equality, reciprocity, and/or fairness in dealing with her), since Linda wants something from Nancy that she is not willing and/or motivated to return in any sense.²³² To summarize, the conditional moral obligations that accompany a jealous desire are obligations to (1) think about the target's interests, (2) take the target's interests (insofar as they are this very person's interests) as providing one with reasons, and (3) act on those reasons when appropriate.

²³² Let me say a bit about the two most unusual kinds of jealousy that can arise in non-caring relationships. If Linda desires that Nancy be harmed or have her interests thwarted, then I think said desire is necessarily morally inappropriate, but that the jealousy makes things morally worse. For if Linda's jealous desire *is not* satisfied, she violates a conditional moral obligation because she lacks the requisite *willingness* to be grateful or compensate Nancy, and if her jealous desire *is* satisfied, she still violates an obligation because she lacks the *motivation* to be grateful or compensate Nancy.

Similarly, if Linda believes Nancy is not a member of the moral community, then Linda has already wronged Nancy, even without the jealousy, but the jealousy seems to make their relationship even worse. For prior to the jealousy their relationship can at least be predicated on consistent beliefs. However, the addition of the jealous desire means that Linda sees Nancy *both* as a potential party to an interpersonal relationship and as outside the moral community. But insofar as an entity is capable of having relationships, that entity is in the moral community. Relationships tend to exist between *persons*, and persons are generally seen as the paradigmatic, "full" members of the moral community. Non-human animals, infants, and people with severe cognitive disabilities may not be persons in the fullest sense, but they are at least "honorary members" of the moral community (or moral patients), and they can certainly have relationships with others in the moral community. For I take it that the moral community includes (although maybe not in the exact same way) at least all the entities that are capable of having relationships. So in this case, Linda's view about Nancy is deeply confused.

Furthermore, in such cases Linda's jealous desire may motivate her to do certain things and not others, and because she believes that Nancy is outside the moral community, she likely fails to recognize certain moral limits on her actions relative to Nancy. For if Nancy were outside the moral community, *she* would provide no limits on Linda's behavior. So when Linda becomes jealous in this way, she becomes more likely to violate her unconditional moral obligations to Nancy, and that creates a barrier to the improvement of their relationship. Prior to Linda's becoming jealous, she may have rarely thought about Nancy at all and behaved benignly toward her, or may even have treated her well out of a general habit. However, with the advent of jealousy, Linda is liable to see Nancy as something to be manipulated for her own benefit. So at worst, her jealousy causes Linda to cease thinking, feeling, and doing things that made her prior relationship with Nancy morally better than it otherwise would have been.

Let us turn now to the fifth premise, which states that only subjects who have caring relationships with their targets can meet the conditional moral obligations just outlined. To have a jealous desire for a relationship with some specific person requires one to be acquainted with that person (at least in a minimal sense), so jealous subjects always meet the first necessary condition for a caring relationship.

To meet the conditional moral obligation to consider how the satisfaction of one's desire would impact that target and one's relationship with the target, one must, to some degree, recognize the target as the individual she is. That is, one needs to recognize at least some things about what another's needs, interests, and desires are if one is to consider how the actualization of some state of affairs (that in which one's jealous desire is satisfied) would impact those very needs, interests, and desires. But to recognize some things about a particular person's unique needs, interests, and desires is also to recognize some things about what makes that person a unique, and uniquely morally valuable, moral agent. For one's *unique* needs, interests, and desires are intimately related to one's subjective values, ideals, and commitments, and these latter are what make us morally valuable in unique ways. So to meet the first conditional moral obligation, one must also meet the value recognition condition for a caring relationship.

If one fulfills both the second and third conditional moral obligations that accompany a jealous desire (that is, if one is (2) willing to revise or repudiate one's jealous desire if satisfying it would be unduly burdensome to the target and motivated to do so if one determines that it would be, and one is (3) willing to be grateful or compensate for costs incurred by the target if one's jealous desire is satisfied and then motivated to do so if the desire is satisfied), I believe that one will also necessarily fulfill the remaining two necessary conditions for a caring relationship with one's target. Those two conditions

require a subject to desire that the target's interests be served for the target's own sake and to be motivated to think, feel, and/or act for the target's sake by supporting or furthering the target's interests.

Why? At first glance, this claim might seem quite problematic. For it may seem that the jealous subject could fulfill the conditional moral obligations without doing so for the target's sake, and therefore that a jealous subject might fulfill her conditional moral obligations to the target without having a caring relationship with the target. However, I think that if we look more carefully at exactly what the “*for her own sake*” clause requires, we will see that one cannot fulfill the conditional moral obligations that accompany a jealous desire without also fulfilling the desire and motivation conditions for a caring relationship.²³³

When I say that a caring relationship requires desiring and being motivated to do things for another's sake, I do not mean that the caring subject must necessarily desire or do things *only* for the other's sake. We cannot forbid the possibility that a caring person's desires and operative reasons might consistently be partially self-interested. For if we did forbid that, we would preclude the possibility of deeply caring relationships in which the two parties' sakes (or interests) are so thoroughly enmeshed or intertwined (at least in some domains) that one party would not *have* the interests that she does if it were not for the fact that the other party shared them. Such relationships would be precluded by an account of caring relationships that requires wholly altruistic desires and operative reasons because, in such relationships, even if X seems to be desiring or doing something wholly for Y's

²³³ This does not mean it is impossible (full stop) to be jealous in a non-caring relationship. It means that it is impossible to be jealous in a non-caring relationship *while also fulfilling one's conditional moral obligations*.

sake, desiring and acting for the sake of Y requires X to watch out for X's own interests, since Y takes X's interests to be as important as her own. That is, if I have a loved one who sees the fulfillment of my interests as crucial to the fulfillment of his or her own interests, then to serve the interests of my loved one, I also need to serve my own interests, and to do so for my own sake, as my loved one does.²³⁴ I take it to be a fatal flaw in any account of caring relationships if it precludes deeply caring relationships in which the two parties have interests that are so deeply enmeshed. This is not to say that such relationships are common, only that we should allow for their being possible.²³⁵

How should we understand the desire and motivation conditions for caring relationships so as not to exclude these deeply caring relationships in which the parties' interests are tightly enmeshed? I would flesh out the desire condition for a caring relationship so that it requires either that one (1) desire something solely for the other's sake, (2) desire something for both people's sake's if either (a) one would have desired it even if it weren't in one's own interest or (b) it wouldn't *be* in one's interests if it weren't in the other person's interests as well. Similarly, I would say that to fulfill the motivation condition requires either that one (1) be motivated to think, feel, or act solely for the other's sake, (2) be motivated to think, feel, or act for both people's sake's if either (a) one would have done so even if it weren't in one's own interest or (b) it wouldn't be in one's interests if it weren't in the other person's interests as well.²³⁶ Provided that we think it is

²³⁴ On this point, see Bennett Helm 2010.

²³⁵ This is not to claim that two people can have *completely* overlapping interests; I think that if two people had all and only identical interests, there would be one, not two people. But I do think that two people could have completely overlapping interests in some domain(s), and that in such domains, all their actions could impact the interests of both parties equally (in terms of valence, kind, and degree of impact).

²³⁶ We need to include 2b in addition to 2a in order to deal with the following kinds of cases:

in one's own interests to fulfill one's moral obligations, the jealous subject who fulfills the second and third conditional moral obligations that accompany a jealous desire also fulfills version 2b of the desire and motivation conditions for a caring relationship.²³⁷

Let's look at the desire condition (version 2b) first. The second and third conditional moral obligations require that the subject take the target's interests as providing her with reasons, and that she act on those reasons in appropriate circumstances. If the subject does both of those things, then she fulfills the first part of version 2b of the desire condition: she has a desire that is, at least partially, for the target's sake, insofar as she takes the target's interests as providing her with reasons *because they are the target's interests*. I read the clause referencing the other's own sake as John Cooper interprets it in Aristotle's account of friendship.²³⁸ Cooper argues persuasively that Aristotle's claim that friends wish and do things for their friends' own sakes should be read in a causal way that "makes it at least as much retrospective as prospective; the well-

suppose I have a choice between two different jobs. My highest priority in making the decision is to take the job that gives my partner and I the greatest chance of fulfilling some joint long-term goal *y*. I care about my partner and thus desire that my partner's interests be served, and I know that achieving *y* is extremely, maybe even pre-eminently, important to my partner. So I want to and in fact do choose the job that is most conducive to *y*. But that desire and action are also conducive to my interests. Would I have chosen that job even if it weren't also in my interests? I might not, if my partner would not have had the goal of achieving *y* if achieving *y* would not be in both of our interests. We might have agreed that *y* is important because it is the best way for us to both use our talents together; if we didn't want to use our talents together, we would have chosen separate goals for ourselves and given those goals priority. So I do not think that talking about what I would have chosen even if it weren't in my interests helps us capture all the cases of deeply intertwined interests that we should include in an account of caring relationships.

²³⁷ Of course, I am not able to defend the claim that it is always in one's interests to fulfill one's moral obligations here, but I am not alone in thinking we have reason to believe this. We at least have reason to think this is true of many people because even if fulfilling one's moral obligations is not in one's interests objectively conceived, it is in one's interests as subjectively conceived by everyone who values being a morally good person, which is a great many people.

²³⁸ My account of caring relationships has a great deal in common with Aristotle's view of friendship. The primary difference is that I do not think caring relationships require the reciprocity between equals that Aristotle says friendship does; I allow that relationships that fundamentally involve dependence and therefore do not involve direct reciprocity between equals can be highly caring.

wishing and well-doing are responses to what the person is and has done rather than merely the expression of a hope as to what he will be and may do in the future.”²³⁹ Or, as Kelly Rogers says, the “for his own sake” clause “modifies not the lover, but the *grounds* of love: it is a causal idea referring to the feature of the beloved that elicits love from his friend.”²⁴⁰

My suggestion is that if Linda fulfills her conditional moral obligations to Nancy, she also fulfills a key requirement for Aristotelian advantage friendship. For Linda wishes and does things for Nancy’s sake in the sense that Linda’s wishing and doing are grounded in her recognition of Nancy’s unique role in providing benefits to her.²⁴¹ Reading the “for her own sake” clause in this way allows us to capture the way that even minimally caring relationships can involve doing and wishing well for another’s sake, and it also allows us to emphasize the way that what happens in a caring relationship depends on what has already gone on between the parties involved. If ‘for her own sake’ is read in an entirely prospective sense, we lose sight of how relationships (caring and otherwise) are grounded in past engagement between the parties.

If the subject fulfills her conditional moral obligations, she also fulfills the second part of 2b, in that she has at least a weak desire to do something that would not be in her interest if it weren’t also in the target’s interest. For a jealous subject who is willing to revise or repudiate her jealous desire when it would be unduly burdensome to the target

²³⁹ Cooper 1977, p. 633.

²⁴⁰ Rogers 1994, p. 292.

²⁴¹ Rogers argues that we should thus read Aristotelian friendship as not necessarily altruistic, if altruism is read as involving self-sacrifice, given that Aristotle would have seen friendships as involving parties whose interests are in harmony, not in conflict. I think the same should be true of our understanding of caring relationships; there are many times when caring for someone is perfectly compatible with having self-interested goals and aims.

has at least a weak desire to do something that wouldn't be in her interest if it weren't also in the target's interest. Similarly, if the subject is willing to be grateful or compensate for costs incurred by the target just in case her jealous desire is satisfied, then she has at least a weak desire to do something that wouldn't be in her interest if it weren't also in the target's interest. For since I am assuming that it is in the subject's interest to act morally, and what is morally required here depends on the target's interest, if it weren't in the target's interest, it wouldn't necessarily be in the subject's interest.

Now let's look at the motivation condition (version 2b). As we've seen, the second and third conditional moral obligations require that the subject take the target's interest as providing her with reasons, and that she act on those reasons in appropriate circumstances. If the subject does both of those things, then she fulfills the first part of version 2b of the motivation condition: she has a motivation that is, at least partially, for the target's sake, insofar as she acts on the reasons provided by the target's interest in appropriate circumstances and does so because it is *the target's* interest. Again, I read the "for her own sake" clause in a causal sense.

If the subject fulfills her conditional moral obligations, she also fulfills the second part of 2b, in that she is motivated to do something that would not be in her interest if it weren't also in the target's interest. For when she is motivated to revise or repudiate her jealous desire because the desire's satisfaction would be unduly burdensome to the target, she is motivated to do something that would not be in her interest (at least, not necessarily so) if it weren't in the target's interest. Similarly, when her jealous desire is satisfied and she is motivated to be grateful or to compensate for costs incurred by the target, she is motivated to do something that would not necessarily be in her own interest if it weren't also in the target's interest.

The subject's fulfilling all three of the conditional moral obligations together, which involves (1) thinking about the target's interest, (2) taking the target's interest (insofar as it is this very person's interest) as providing her with reasons, and (3) acting on those reasons when appropriate, is what guarantees that her desires and motivations are appropriately characterized as (at least partially) for the target's sake. For to do X for Y's sake is to do X *because* X is in Y's interest. It is to do X out of the recognition that Y's interest provides one with reason to do X insofar as it is Y's interest.

If the jealous subject fulfills the first conditional moral obligation, she has to consider what is in the interest of the target. I introduced the second and third conditional moral obligations to ensure that this consideration isn't empty, to ensure that the subject does not merely play lip service morality by thinking about others without taking those specific others as providing reasons. To fulfill the other two conditional moral obligations, the subject has to see the target's interest as providing her with reasons, to see that (among other things) as action-guiding. And it has to be the target's interest *as such* that receive this consideration and that provide reasons for the subject, since it is the target from whom the jealous person desires something. So the main idea here is that the subject and target have matching interests insofar as it is in both their interests that the subject fulfill the conditional moral obligations to the target; if the subject responds in a morally appropriate way to those matching interests, that response involves thinking, feeling, and/or acting in a caring way to the target.

Therefore, if one fulfills all the conditional moral obligations that accompany one's jealous desire, one will also necessarily have already met all four requirements for a caring relationship with the target of one's jealous desire. Since the cases with which I am concerned here are those in which jealous subjects lack such relationships, that means

that none of the subjects with whom I am concerned here have met their conditional moral obligations.

When one violates a moral obligation (conditional or not) to a particular person, one undermines one's relationship with that person. At the very least, by violating a moral obligation to the target of one's jealous desire, one forms a barrier to the improvement of that relationship, making it more difficult or impossible to increase the relationship's moral value. When Linda fails to fulfill a conditional moral obligation to Nancy, Nancy has a reason to be indignant toward Linda (whether or not she actually recognizes this reason). It also gives Nancy a reason not to invest more time and energy into their relationship; for instance, she has a reason not to try to be Linda's friend in addition to being her colleague. Linda's violation of a moral obligation to Nancy may also threaten to or actually decrease the existing value in their relationship, especially if Nancy is aware of the violation as such; for instance, Nancy may now struggle to or fail to hold Linda in the high esteem she previously did.

When a subject wrongs someone in a way that undermines the relationship they share, that gives us a moral reason to criticize the subject.²⁴² This moral reason is only one reason among many, but it is the morally significant thread running through all cases of jealousy in which the subject lacks a caring relationship with the target of her jealous desire. This same thread also runs through all cases of jealousy in which the subject *has* a caring relationship with the target of her jealous desire, as I have shown previously. So if Linda is jealous, she cannot just come to care about Nancy and thereby avoid undermining their relationship and neutralize the moral reason to criticize her that

²⁴² Allow me to emphasize that it is the *subject* (in virtue of her being jealous) who we have a moral reason to criticize; I am not talking about a reason to criticize the jealousy (or jealous acts).

accompanies that undermining.

Objection from Demandingness

When taken together, my claims about the specific conditional moral obligations that accompany jealous desires entail that jealous subjects are morally obligated to have caring relationships with the targets of their jealous desires. Some people will say that it is too demanding to require jealous people to have caring relationship with the targets of their jealous desires; some may even say that it is too demanding to require anyone to have a caring relationship with anyone.²⁴³ One might think that this demandingness constitutes a *reductio* of my view.

As we know, questions about the limits of morality are extremely controversial; intuitions about such limits differ so widely that I suspect an objection from demandingness is simply a product of intuitions about the limits of morality that conflict with my own. I think that the demandingness (or lack thereof) of any view about moral obligations cannot *by itself* constitute a *reductio* of that view. For no matter how demanding (or undemanding) a view about our moral obligations is, unless a challenger can give an independent argument for what constitutes an overly (or insufficiently) demanding set of moral obligations and an argument that the view in question is overly (or insufficiently) demanding based on those criteria, that challenger has yet to offer the kind of argument needed to make a persuasive case. Absent such a view, it is an open question how demanding morality is; I believe it is quite demanding, but my intuition is no more decisive than its negation. And I certainly cannot defend a view about the limits of morality here.

²⁴³ Notice, however, what this latter view would imply for parents' moral obligations to their children, etc.

Worries about demandingness might be grounded in worries that once we require people to have caring relationships in some circumstances, we will be unable to draw any bright lines limiting such obligations, and we will be forced to accept the claim that everybody is required to having caring relationships with everybody all the time. I would tend to agree that if my view implied that, it *would* constitute a *reductio* of my view.

But I am not claiming that everyone is required to have caring relationships with everyone all the time (which is impossible on my definition of a caring relationship simply given the huge number of members of the moral community), and I am not worried about a slippery slope. I have argued that the moral obligation to have a caring relationship is conditional on being jealous, because of the particular kind of specific, self-interested desire necessary for jealousy, so the arguments in this paper apply only to a highly restricted set of cases. Critics will be correct if they point out that, according to my view, we can be (conditionally) morally required to have caring relationships even to people with whom we stand in otherwise relatively minimal and mundane relationships, like business clients and neighbors. However, worries about the demandingness of my view offer me a good opportunity to emphasize the limited, conditional nature of the moral obligation to care that I have discussed here.

I have not claimed that one is morally obligated to recognize anything about the distinctive needs, desires, and interests of individuals with whom one is not acquainted. I have said nothing about an obligation to have caring relationships with all fellow members of the moral community. If one person does not personally engage with another or does not even know that the other person exists, it is not a moral failing at all if she does not recognize that other person's needs, desires, and interests. But that kind of case cannot involve jealousy.

Someone might worry that since I have set the bar fairly low for acquaintance, I am saying something nearly as strong, since on my account, we are acquainted with an awful lot of people. However, I do not claim that one is morally obligated to recognize anything close to all of the needs, desires, and interests of all one's acquaintances; that would be impossible for even one acquaintance. The needs, desires, and interests that one is obligated to recognize depend on the general type and particular qualities of one's existing interpersonal relationship; one needs not recognize the needs, desires, and interests that are not salient in or relevant to the domain of the relationship. For instance, one is generally not morally obligated to recognize one's neighbor's desire to wear socks with sandals; such desires are generally irrelevant to maintaining good neighborly relationships. The closer the relationship and the more the relationship touches a variety of domains in the lives of the parties involved, the more one will be obligated to recognize about the other person's needs, interests, and desires. But, conversely, if the relationship is not intimate and takes place only in a limited domain, the obligations to recognize the other person's needs, desires, and interests will be similarly limited.

If worries about demandingness persist despite these limits, I am prepared to bite the bullet; I do think morality is quite demanding in general, and especially so when it comes to interpersonal relationships (as opposed to interactions among strangers).²⁴⁴

²⁴⁴ Other objections that make reference to the demandingness of my views could be advanced by those who believe that our only moral obligations to others are negative obligations, or by those who believe that we can only be obligated to care about particular others in a limited range of very special relationships (such as parental relationships or friendships). These people would have different underlying reasons for believing that my view is overly demanding. For obvious reasons, I cannot defend the claim that we have positive moral obligations here, although I believe that to be the case. To respond well to the second type of objection, I would need to see an argument for the claim that obligations to care are limited in the way suggested, but since I know of no such argument, I set that kind of objection aside.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to explain how a person who stands in a non-caring relationship with the target of her jealous desire undermines her existing interpersonal relationship with the target. This undermining of the moral value of the relationship gives us a moral reason to criticize the jealous subject, albeit a reason that may be outweighed by other reasons in an all-things-considered judgment. I have also considered and responded to two objections.

Chapter 4: Jealousy and One's Ideal Self

Paradigmatic cases of jealousy arise within a tangle of interpersonal relationships. The most familiar cases of jealousy involve three people: a jealous subject, a rival, and the person I call the *target* of the jealous desire. But one may well ask whether all jealous desires are for relationships with specific targets and thus whether jealousy *necessarily* involves three people.²⁴⁵

I believe that there are cases of jealousy in which the subject's main jealous desire is for something other than a relationship with another specific person (a target), although such cases are relatively rare. Ordinary language certainly allows for cases in which what the jealous subject desires is to stand in some relation to a material good or a personal quality.²⁴⁶ Such cases may involve, for instance, a subject who jealously desires to be the owner of a unique piece of movie memorabilia, or to be the first person to shake the hand of the president after her taking the inaugural oath, or to be the most highly skilled video game player in a group of peers.²⁴⁷ These are desires that the subjects themselves stand in

²⁴⁵ See Farrell 1980 and 1997 for the view that jealousy always involves three agents. See Purshouse 2004 for the view that jealousy can involve only two agents, and see Davis 1936, p. 395 for the view that jealousy is structured in a quadrangle, rather than a triangle, to include a public/community element.

²⁴⁶ More specifically, the object of such a jealous desire would be the state of affairs in which the subject has the personal quality or material good.

²⁴⁷ I think there can also be cases of jealousy in which the target is a non-human animal. Some such cases seem to be best treated under the rubric of jealously desiring a material good (for instance, if one wants to be the owner of a certain prize race horse). However, other cases seem to be best treated under the rubric of a jealous desire in a caring relationship (for instance, if one wants to be the person who gets the most affection from a beloved family pet). I struggle to describe a case of a jealous desire in a non-caring relationship between a subject and a non-human animal target, but I do not see any reason to exclude such cases in principle. Maybe a police officer in a canine unit could experience jealousy the target of which is a particularly skilled bomb-sniffing dog about whom the officer does not care.

I also think that jealousy can arise when the *rival* is a non-human animal, as when a subject is jealous because he views his romantic partner's beloved pet as a rival, insofar as he thinks that the

specific relations to specific, non-replicable goods, so each subject fulfills the first necessary condition for jealousy. The subject who has such a desire can also regard some rival's standing in the desired relation to the good as logically or causally inconsistent with this desire being satisfied, thereby meeting the second necessary condition for jealousy. The subject who has such a desire can also, in at least some circumstances, imagine the relevant desire being satisfied, thereby meeting the third necessary condition. Thus a jealous desire can be for a material good or personal quality.²⁴⁸

Because of this, the cases under consideration may seem more like cases of envy than those discussed in the two previous chapters. While some such cases might involve both jealousy and envy, not all of them will. None of the three necessary conditions for jealousy are necessary for envy. Jealousy necessarily involves a desire for a specific, non-replicable good for oneself, regarding a rival's having the good as inconsistent with the satisfaction of that desire, and regarding the satisfaction of the desire as possible. Envy does not *require* any of those things; following Purshouse, envy involves having a negative attitude because some goods are distributed in a way that the subject sees as rendering him inferior to one or more others. Whether or not the cases under consideration are *more likely* to involve both jealousy and envy is an interesting question, but not one I can answer here.

My aim here is to show that when jealousy involves desires for material goods or personal qualities, it undermines relationships. The relationship I focus on is the one between the subject and her ideal self (although I also discuss how relationships with

attention and/or affection the partner devotes to the pet is incompatible with the satisfaction of his jealous desire.

²⁴⁸ However, as I shall show, even when the main jealous desires are for material goods or personal qualities, there are subsidiary desires for certain kinds of relationships with other people.

others can be undermined by this type of jealousy). The term ‘ideal self’ requires some explanation. A person’s ideal self is any possible future version of herself (given the world she actually lives in and her life thus far) who, when evaluated *objectively*, has a (morally and otherwise) better or equally good life overall as compared to all other possible future versions of herself.²⁴⁹ A person’s *idealized self* is any possible future version of herself who, when evaluated *subjectively* has a (morally and otherwise) better or equally good life overall as compared to all other possible future versions of herself; it is the self who *she considers* to be ideal or who she most wants to be or become.²⁵⁰

My first task is to explain the range of cases under consideration here. Next, I argue that this kind of jealousy undermines the subjects’ relationships with their ideal selves. In doing so, I argue that we can best make sense of why jealousy arises if we suppose that jealous subjects believe that having the goods they jealously desire is required for them to be their ideal selves, a belief that I show to be mistaken. Then I argue that people have relationships with their ideal selves and that such relationships are undermined by that kind of mistaken belief. So we have a reason to criticize those who experience this kind of jealousy, and that reason is a both an epistemic and moral reason.²⁵¹ Thus, I show that the cases under consideration are like the cases of caring and non-caring jealousy that I have already discussed; this is because we have a moral reason to criticize the subjects in question insofar as their jealousy undermines their relationships.

²⁴⁹ I have in mind a possible version of oneself that lives something like Aristotle’s *eudaimon* life. I avoid using the language of *eudaimonia* in part to avoid interpretive debates about Aristotle.

²⁵⁰ I find the concept of an ideal self to be useful in multiple contexts. For another philosopher who briefly discusses an ideal self (subjectively understood) and its relation to an actual self, see Tefler 1995, p. 115.

²⁵¹ For an excellent explanation of hybrid epistemic and moral *virtues*, see Fricker 2007.

The Range of Cases Under Consideration

Many people who have written about jealousy have focused solely on its romantic, sexual, or familial incarnations, which involve desires for specific, non-replicable relationships with specific other people. However, here I want to consider some cases that tend to get set aside, the cases in which a subject jealously desires a material good or personal quality. By allowing for this, we greatly expand the range of cases in which jealousy may occur. However, we must remember that not just any desire can function as a jealous desire. As discussed earlier, a jealous desire must be (1) at least partially self-interested (in a descriptive sense) and (2) a desire for some specific, non-replicable good. Furthermore, the satisfaction of the desire must (3) be regarded by the subject as causally or logically inconsistent with the rival's standing in the desired relation to the desired good and (4) be something that the subject can imagine occurring.²⁵²

The desire at the heart of jealousy is usually a desire for a certain kind of relationship with a specific person, but jealous people can also desire to stand in a variety of relations to specific, non-replicable material goods.²⁵³ The jealous person may want *ownership of* a material good (like a piece of movie memorabilia), *sole access to* a material good (like a specialized research lab), *primary curatorial responsibility for* a material good (like an artwork in a museum), or even *pre-eminent expert knowledge of* a material good (like an ancient book in an archive or a cutting edge technology). A desire to be the owner of a material good is probably the most common of these, but it is certainly not the only kind.

²⁵² See Chapter 1.

²⁵³ A desire to stand in a relation to a *type* of good cannot be a *jealous* desire because another's having a type of good is not causally or logically inconsistent with one also having that type of good.

Similarly, jealous desires can aim at a variety of personal qualities. The jealous person may want to have a particular physical trait (like weighing the least of anyone on the cheerleading squad), to have a particular intellectual trait (like being the pre-eminent Proust scholar in America), to have a particular character trait (like being the most honest shopkeeper in town), or to have a particular ability (like the ability to beat all of the members of one's chess club). Notice that all these qualities involve being superlative, pre-eminent, or otherwise unique in some arena; if one desired a personal quality that was not somehow unique, another's having that quality would not be causally or logically inconsistent with the desire's satisfaction.²⁵⁴

All these seem to be desires to play a unique role or have a unique status in a community. For when people have desires like those just described, that seems to be *because* having the desired goods would accord them a certain status. If a person only wanted wealth in general, it might be for reasons unrelated to status (so they could afford needed medical care or for peace of mind). But if someone wanted to be *the wealthiest*, that only seems to make sense given an underlying desire for a unique status or a desire to play a unique role. So while subjects in such cases do not necessarily desire relationships with particular individuals, they do desire certain kinds of relationships with people more generally: relationships of superiority, pre-eminence, etc. I tend to emphasize that these

²⁵⁴ Multiple people have asked me whether a jealous desire can be a desire for membership in some elite group, as when one desires to be one of only a small number of people who can perform a particular athletic feat, such as free-diving to certain depth. When cases involve a desire to have a specialized ability, I do not see how another person having that ability could be taken to be inconsistent (either logically or causally) with the desire being satisfied, so I do not see them as cases of jealousy. If the desire is the more demanding desire to be the world's *best* free-diver, then jealousy would be possible, but then it is not mere group membership that is desired. Furthermore, when cases involve a desire to be a member of a group with a fixed, limited number of members, jealousy is possible since others, by their (actual or potential) membership, can be seen as jointly thwarting one's desire. Even though it is all the members together who make one's desire go unsatisfied, in such cases the jealousy may *focus* more on some members than others.

cases involve desires for material goods or personal qualities (rather than desires for status), given that this is the more intuitive, colloquial way to describe the desires, and because doing so highlights more of the concrete features of the situation.²⁵⁵ However, I do not think the jealous desire for the material good or personal quality can be neatly pried apart from the desire for status. So because status is necessarily relational, even non-paradigmatic cases of jealousy involving desires for material goods or personal qualities arise within a tangle of relationships.

Argument that Jealousy Involving Desires for Material Goods or Personal Qualities Undermines Relationships

What follows is the skeleton form of an argument that even when jealousy involves a desire for a material good or personal quality, the jealousy undermines a relationship. In this chapter, I have already given reasons for thinking the first claim is true, and the second premise is a reminder about my descriptive account of jealousy:

1. A jealous desire can be a desire for a material good or personal quality.
2. The three necessary conditions for jealousy are not sufficient conditions; some people who meet them do not experience jealousy.
3. The best way to make sense of why jealousy arises when it does is to attribute to jealous subjects the belief that having the jealously desired good is required for her to be her ideal self (a belief which non-jealous subjects would lack).
4. When a subject believes that being her ideal self requires that she gain or maintain the jealously desired material good or personal quality, her belief about what it takes to be her ideal self is mistaken, giving us an epistemic reason to criticize the subject.
5. Among others things, having this kind of mistaken belief undermines her relationship with her ideal self.
6. Because the mistaken belief undermines her relationship, it simultaneously gives us a moral reason to criticize such a subject for her jealousy.

²⁵⁵ Furthermore, I think the jealous subjects themselves are more likely to describe their desires as desires for material goods or personal qualities, rather than desires for elevated status or the sense of self-worth that they may imagine accompanying that status.

This argument clearly requires a great deal more explanation and defense, so in the next three sections, I justify the remaining claims. After doing so, I argue that even if I am wrong about this type of jealousy undermining one's relationship with one's ideal self, I can still show that subjects who experience this type of jealousy also undermine their relationships with other people.

Let us start by remembering that my three necessary conditions for jealousy are not purported to be sufficient conditions. One could fulfill all three necessary conditions, but not experience jealousy, despite the fact that there are features of the situation and of one's own mental state that would bring about or incite jealousy in other circumstances or in someone else.²⁵⁶ Let us compare two people who both fulfill the three necessary conditions for jealousy, but only one of whom experiences jealousy; identifying the difference between them will help us better understand why someone might experience jealousy that involves a desire for a material object or personal quality.

How to Make Sense of Why Jealousy Arises When It Does

Having a detailed case in mind will be helpful for what follows. At the start of the movie *Little Miss Sunshine*, Frank Ginsberg (played by Steve Carrell) is the pre-eminent Proust scholar in America.²⁵⁷ We know this because Frank explicitly mentions it on multiple occasions. This repetition gives us good reason to think that being the pre-eminent Proust scholar in America gives Frank a status he sees as important and wants to retain. His rival, Larry Sugarman (played by Gordon Thomson), threatens his status, and it is fair to assume that Frank recognizes that Larry's becoming the pre-eminent Proust scholar in

²⁵⁶ This is because the three necessary conditions do not mention any phenomenological, affective, or feeling component; they focus on the cognitive and conative elements of jealousy.

²⁵⁷ See Arndt 2006. Thanks to Elizabeth Scarbrough for directing me to this example.

America is inconsistent with the satisfaction of Frank's desire to retain his status. We know that Frank can *imagine* circumstances in which his desire is satisfied (since he begins the movie *knowing* that he is the pre-eminent Proust scholar in America). So it is fair to assume that Frank (or someone much like him) meets all three necessary conditions for jealousy. But since these are not *sufficient* conditions for jealousy, Frank may or may not actually feel jealous.

Suppose he is not. What would help us understand why not? It makes sense for Frank not to be jealous under these circumstances if it does not much *matter* to him whether he is the pre-eminent Proust scholar or not.²⁵⁸ If Frank does not feel jealousy under the circumstances, the most natural explanation is that being the pre-eminent Proust scholar in America is not all that important to Frank.²⁵⁹

If someone like Frank is jealous, we make sense of that by seeing the domain in which he desires to be pre-eminent (Proust scholarship) as mattering to him a great deal.²⁶⁰ The "upset" of jealousy seems to be, at least in part, a product of a felt need for

²⁵⁸ One might say that whether or not he is jealous depends crucially on his habits, dispositions, and/or character and thus that those things should figure in any explanation of why Frank might not be jealous. However, one's habits, dispositions, and character are crucially shaped by what one takes to matter, so I think such intuitions support my point here. Similarly, if Frank is not jealous only because he is distracted from the Larry Sugarman threat by more pressing matters, that is also consistent with my point; in such a case, Frank is distracted because he thinks other things *matter* more and thus are more worthy of his attention under the circumstances. For some empirical support for my claim that people do not experience jealousy relative to what does not matter to them, see White and Mullen 1989, p. 120.

²⁵⁹ An alternative explanation is that Frank suffers from severe, affect-dampening depression, which is likely true of the Frank in the movie. But even this is consistent with my point, insofar as depression is often portrayed as impairing one's ability to see things as mattering (for apathy, loss of interest in one's projects, and/or loss of enjoyment in things that were once pleasurable are signs of depression).

²⁶⁰ See Nussbaum 2001, pp. 30-31 and 55-56 for the idea that emotions are felt when the object of the emotion is seen as somehow important to the subject's life. For empirical evidence in support of the view that "[E]nvy and jealousy are most likely to be felt when comparisons are made in domains that are especially important to how we define ourselves... jealousy is most likely to be

that which one jealously desires. But people don't need particular non-replicable material goods or personal qualities (or the status conferred by such goods) for bare survival, and they know this, so the jealously desired good must be felt to be necessary for something else. Maybe jealous people feel a need for certain goods because they think those goods are required for a *good* life, not just a life of bare survival.²⁶¹ But even that, I think, is not enough to make sense of the cases of jealousy at hand. For many jealous people can be expected to freely admit that they can have a good life without the thing they jealously desire; I am confident that there are people who jealously desire to be the best at something or to have the only one of something and yet who fully recognize that their life can be quite good without that desire being satisfied. So I think that we can best make sense of why people jealously desire material goods and personal qualities by supposing that such people believe that they need such things in order to live their *best* lives, in order to be their *ideal selves*.²⁶² This is not to say that *all* people who believe such a thing will be jealous, but rather to say that when people are jealous, we have reason to attribute such beliefs to them.

experienced ... in especially important domains—that is, domains relevant to self-definition,” see Salovey and Rothman 1991, p. 272. See also White and Mullen 1989, pp. 19-21. Since self-definition can involve defining oneself not just as one currently is but also in terms of how one envisions oneself being or intends to be in the future, I think that the domain in which one experiences jealousy also tends to be relevant to defining an ideal life for oneself.

²⁶¹ See Gill 2003 for an argument that it is a social group's conception of what constitutes the good life generally that will have the greatest influence on when, where, and why members of that group will experience jealousy, as well as on the normative assessments they make of peers when they diagnose those peers as jealous.

²⁶² In fact, I think that a similar claim is needed to make sense of other kinds of jealousy as well. I think that all jealous subjects take the satisfaction of their jealous desires to be essential to being their ideal selves. However, in cases that do not involve a jealous desire for a material good or personal quality, I do not think that this belief is likely to be nearly as problematic, if it is problematic at all.

In the movie, Frank behaves in ways that show us that being the pre-eminent American Proust scholar is very important to his living the life that he sees as ideal. It is an extremely serious blow to his understanding of his own identity and worth when, towards the end of the movie, he sees a newspaper that bills Larry Sugarman as the pre-eminent Proust scholar in America. This gives us good reason to think that Frank's scholarly pre-eminence is crucial to his conception of his ideal self.²⁶³

I am not claiming that Frank or anyone else is fully aware of what he thinks his ideal self would be like; he need not *consciously* believe that his ideal life requires the jealously desired good.²⁶⁴ Nor am I claiming that there is only one version of his future self that would be ideal for Frank (or for anyone else). Rather, it seems that there are certain things that must be true of Frank in order for *him* to consider his self to be ideal, and there are certain things that must *not* be true of him in order for him to consider his self to be ideal. For instance, for many people, every ideal self will be allowed to practice their religion as they see fit and no ideal selves will witness the death of their children.²⁶⁵ I expect that there can be quite a bit of variation in the selves that could be called ideal according to any given person's subjective views; any person may have a number and variety of idealized selves. The same thing goes for objectively ideal selves.

²⁶³ For another view that links jealousy and self-identity, see Tov-Ruach 1980.

²⁶⁴ I am using the term 'believe' here for the reader's ease, but I am not convinced that belief is the only kind of mental state that could play this role. We might, for instance, think of it in terms of a "feeling toward" in Peter Goldie's sense. It seems in principle possible for subjects to be aware of such a mental state, but I take it that it tends to be hidden. In fact, I take it that some people who undergo therapy to deal with intense jealousy undergo a process to become aware of and challenge these belief-like states.

²⁶⁵ This is not to say that prior to having children, it must have been true that all a person's ideal selves had children. When things happen in one's life, they foreclose the possibility of some future selves. So, as I see them, sets of ideal (and idealized) selves are time-indexed.

My claim is that if we are to explain why Frank experiences jealousy and why some people who meet all three necessary conditions do not, the best way to do so involves attributing to Frank a vision of his ideal self that *requires* pre-eminence in Proust scholarship.²⁶⁶ If Frank thinks this, then it makes sense that he be jealous when Larry Sugarman threatens to (and actually does) surpass him in this domain. The “upset” that is involved in jealousy is not mysterious if Frank sees something as significant as his ideal self as being at stake. Since people have very different reasons for thinking that something is or is not required for their ideal selves (reasons that vary with their beliefs about their own identity and their own values), this gives us a good way to explain why different people experience jealousy in different circumstances.

My proposed explanation seems to work equally well when the jealous desire is for a material good. Imagine a person who jealously desires to own the most valuable coin collection. Plenty of people are coin collectors, even avid coin collectors, without jealousy entering the picture. But to be jealous in the realm of coin collecting, a person would have to think that coin collecting really matters. If being the pre-eminent coin collector were not important to him, we would not expect him to be jealous, and would be hard pressed to explain it if he were.²⁶⁷

One might worry that my claim is too strong and that there are cases in which, while the subject believes it is very important that he have the desired good, he does not

²⁶⁶ See Davis 1936, p. 399 for a similar view (albeit one that is limited to sexual/romantic contexts) that characterizes the relationship between the subject and the target as an ultimate end in itself, of supreme value, and non-substitutable.

²⁶⁷ If the only reason that he lacks the most valuable coin collection is that he has been wronged, then we can account for his being upset even if he does not see having the most valuable coin collection as required for an ideal life, because his being upset will fit the pattern for indignation, anger, or resentment better than for jealousy.

think that it is *required* for him to be his ideal self. One might prefer to claim that Frank's desire for pre-eminence simply has to be *strong* for us to be able to explain why he experiences jealousy, or that Frank only has to perceive the satisfaction of his desire as important to some sufficiently high degree (which might fall short of strict requirement). One might suggest that Frank is only jealous when he thinks there is sufficiently *high probability* that his ideal self will be the pre-eminent Proust scholar in America.

I do not think that talking about the strength of a desire is helpful here *unless* you know how to measure the strength of a desire and know how to divide desires into those that are and are not strong enough to explain why jealousy would occur.²⁶⁸ I do not know either of those things. Furthermore, it seems that people have different "desire strength thresholds" for jealousy. If one experiences jealousy in lots of situations, we might say that one feels jealousy when one's desires are relatively weak or that one thinks lots of things are crucially important to one's ideal self. Others may feel jealousy only when they have relatively strong desires or only in the relatively few domains that they see as crucially important for their ideal selves. So even if I could measure the strength of someone's jealous desires and if I could identify some threshold to explain why one person experiences jealousy in some situations and not others, that threshold would not necessarily be of any use in explaining anyone else's experiences of jealousy. Thus, I am not inclined to rely on claims about the strength of desires to explain why some people who meet the necessary conditions for jealousy experience the emotion and some do not.

²⁶⁸ For a substantive discussion about the fact that certain jealous desires seem curiously *strong*, and the ways that the satisfaction of their jealous desires matters to jealous subjects, see Farrell 1997. See Parrott and Smith 1993 and Smith, Kim, and Parrott 1988 for reasons to think that jealousy is generally more intense than envy, which, if true, might or might not be traceable to the strength of the jealous desire.

The same thing goes for the proposal framed in terms of high probability; I do not know how to identify the sufficiently high probability in a way that is not simply *ad hoc*, and I do not think any threshold will apply consistently across persons, situations, and times.

Even if we could find a way to delineate a sufficiently high probability in a way that would not be *ad hoc*, there is another problem with that alternative. Suppose that at a given time, a given person has 100 ideal selves. That is, she has 100 different possible future selves that would be equally good, given her life thus far and the world she actually lives in. Suppose that this person believes that 99 of those 100 lives have a particular feature in common: she believes that 99 of her 100 ideal selves graduate at the top of her class. Even if she is right about that, that fact does not give her any reason to prefer one of the 99 ideal selves who graduate at the top of her class over the one who does not. For by definition, all ideal selves are equally good.²⁶⁹

If, by her own lights, she can be her best possible self, living her best possible life, even without that which she jealously desires, it is very difficult for me to make sense of why she feels the "upset" of jealousy under such circumstances. But I take it that we feel our emotions for reasons (albeit not always good ones), and we expect to be able, in principle, to tell a story about why this person felt this emotion under these circumstances. I have not heard of or been able to come up with a reason (even a rather bad one) that would explain why a person would jealously desire a material good or personal quality if he believed that he could be his ideal self and thus live his best possible life even without it.

²⁶⁹ She does, of course, have reason to prefer that she become any one of those 100 ideal selves rather than any non-ideal self.

My explanation avoids these problems, for one either thinks some personal quality or material good is required for one to be one's ideal self or one does not. Attributing to jealous subjects beliefs about what is required to be one's ideal self seems to be the best available way to sort those who meet the necessary conditions and are jealous from those who meet the necessary conditions but are not jealous. We will certainly always be fallible in attributing such beliefs to people (as well as fallible in attributing jealousy to people), but I do not know of a better way to explain why jealousy arises in some cases but not in other similar cases.

My explanation is also advantageous for another reason; it helps us understand why most jealous desires are not for personal qualities. Most people do not think that they have to have a superlative or pre-eminent personal quality in order to be their ideal selves. Many people think that their ideal selves are more generous, kind, smart, strong, or capable than their actual selves, but being more generous, kind, smart, strong or capable is not inconsistent with others having these qualities to a higher degree than oneself. Many people think they can be their ideal selves without being the *best* at something or having the *most* of some quality. One's subjective conception of one's ideal self is always defined in comparison to one's current self, but often not defined in comparison to others (and arguably should not be).

Similarly, relatively few jealous desires are for material goods, for relatively few people think that they must have any superlative, pre-eminent, or otherwise unique relation to any specific material good in order to be their ideal selves.²⁷⁰ Even those who

²⁷⁰ There are some jealous desires that we seem to be able to describe as desires for traits or for material goods. For instance, if one wants to be the richest on one's block, we might think of that as a desire for a trait (being the richest) or for a material good (the most money). (The same would

are most concerned with material goods tend to be concerned with those goods insofar as having them confers elevated social status on their owner, and even very materialistic people tend to realize that there are lots of material goods that could confer elevated status. So such people tend to be much more concerned with having general *types* of goods, rather than the specific goods that can be the objects of jealous desires.

Why the Satisfaction of These Jealous Desires Is Not Required for One's Ideal Self

The next premise states that when a subject believes that being her ideal self requires that she gain or maintain a material good or personal quality that she jealously desires, that belief is mistaken. The claim is that idealized selves (subjectively ideal possible future selves) and ideal selves (objectively ideal possible future selves) are mismatched in a person who experiences this kind of jealousy; she has a false conception about what is required for an ideal life for her, a mistaken conception of what it takes to be her ideal self.²⁷¹

To see why, we need a fuller understanding of what makes for an ideal self. Any ideal self must have a variety of different goods, and I think the range of required goods is captured quite well by the list of ten central human capabilities identified by Martha Nussbaum. To be my ideal self, I need to have capabilities relating to life; bodily health; bodily integrity; senses, imagination, and thought; emotions; practical reason; affiliation;

not be true of the Frank case.) Whether we call them desires for personal qualities or for material goods, these ambiguous cases still fall under the third main type of jealousy; they are evaluated the same regardless.

²⁷¹ I am not claiming that specific, non-replicable material goods and personal qualities cannot be worthy of our desires for them. My claim is about the relative importance of these and other kinds of goods for an ideal life.

other species; play; and control over my environment.²⁷² Note that to have certain capabilities, such as the capability for life, requires that one have access to some concrete goods, such as adequate nutrition and clean water. However, a truly ideal self will have more than just a range of important capabilities; an ideal self must exercise those capabilities in virtuous ways when exercising them. This does not mean that one must exercise any particular capability or all capabilities to be an ideal self; one must have simply have the capabilities and when exercising them, do so virtuously. If one were to have all these capabilities, and to exercise them in one of the most virtuous ways that one could (given one's material conditions and one's life up until the relevant point in time), then I think it would be fair to say that one had become a version of one's ideal self.²⁷³

A significant strength this conception of an ideal self is that its reference to a variety of capabilities takes into account our physical, psychological, and social needs, while its reference to virtuous exercise of those capabilities captures the fact that we are also inherently moral beings. While I think Nussbaum's list of capabilities is a good one, the important point for this conception of an ideal self is that it references capabilities, not that it references the exact capabilities described by Nussbaum. For even if we disagree about whether, for instance, capabilities relating to play are central human capabilities, I

²⁷² Nussbaum 1999, p. 41-42. Nussbaum's aims in talking about capabilities are rather different from my aims here, and I am not suggesting that she would accept the position I am defending. However, since she argues in various places that everyone should support a just distribution of these capabilities because of their centrality to a flourishing life, it seems possible that she or someone with similar views could accept my claim that a life cannot be ideal if one lacks any central capabilities that one could have had. I cannot argue here for the claim that Nussbaum's list includes all and only capabilities that are crucial for a flourishing life, but I do not need agreement about the exact details of the list for my argument.

²⁷³ When I say "one of the most virtuous ways that one could," my aim is to leave open the possibility that two actions might be equally virtuous if by doing them one exercises different but equally valuable sets of virtues. I recognize that not everyone thinks this is possible, but I cannot adjudicate that conflict here.

think we can get broad agreement that *if* they are, then one cannot have an ideal life if one lacks all capabilities in that domain. It does not make sense to say that a self is ideal if it lacks any of the capabilities that are central to human flourishing, whatever those are. Having a capability is a minimal standard, and an ideal self must meet at least minimal standards in all crucial domains, whatever those are. However, selves that exceed different standards to differing degrees may be equally ideal.

One can exceed the minimal standards in terms of the capabilities one has and/or in terms of how well one exercises the capabilities that one does exercise. It does not make sense to say that a self is ideal if it exercises its capabilities viciously or poorly. One does not have to exercise any particular capability to be ideal, but if one does exercise it, one must do so well. Some people will have more opportunities to act in certain virtuous ways than others. Even if there is just one way to be virtuous and many ways to be vicious in any given situation, there can still be a variety of different virtuous, flourishing, or ideal lives, and the range of such lives open to an agent depends somewhat on circumstances outside that agent's control.

Since I think of ideal selves as *possible* future selves in the world one actually lives in, one might argue that my account of an ideal self is problematic if anyone ever lives under circumstances in which it will be impossible for that person to have one or more of the capabilities outlined, for one might think that in such circumstances, that person has no ideal self. For instance, someone might ask us to consider a woman who lives in a society that is extremely discriminatory toward women; it may be impossible, under those conditions, for her to have capabilities relating to important forms of control over her environment (perhaps especially her political environment). So someone might suggest that *none* of *her* possible future selves would have all the requisite capabilities and thus that

she has no ideal self.

However, I think that in such cases, this woman would still have an ideal self, but even her ideal self would, unfortunately, lack one or more extremely important human capabilities. The possible future version of herself that had as many of the capabilities that were available to her in this unjust world would still be *her* ideal self, it would simply be one that is not ideal compared to versions of herself that live in more just worlds. So I should be careful to say that if one were to have all the central capabilities *that it is possible for one to have in the world that one inhabits*, and one were to exercise those capabilities as virtuously as one could, then one would be some version of one's ideal self.²⁷⁴ This is not to say that things could not change, so that a self that was impossible in some world becomes possible in that world later.

However, none of the plausible candidates for central human capabilities require one to have any specific, non-replicable material good or personal quality of the sort that can figure in a jealous desire. Central human capabilities are capabilities to do and have *types* of things, not the specific things that can be jealously desired. No one needs to be the best, most, or only possessor of any given material good or personal quality in order to have a capability of the relevant sort.²⁷⁵ One of the main reasons to link flourishing to the

²⁷⁴ This view also ensures that people who are ill or disabled in various ways still have ideal selves.

²⁷⁵ One might suggest that in some worlds, the existing social structures make it such that one would need to be the best, most, or only possessor of a material good or personal quality in order to have one or more central capability. For instance, social structures might be set up so that only the possessor of some unique sacred object had even minimal control over his or her environment, and thus in such a world one might jealously desire to be the only possessor of that object because the capabilities necessary for one to be one's ideal self would contingently depend on having it. But all such cases seem to depend on the perpetuation of oppressive social structures, and whenever it is only *one* person who can have the relevant good, it seems more than possible that the majority could overturn those oppressive social structures, opening up the possibility that many people could gain the relevant capabilities without being the best, most, or only one with the material good or personal quality in question. One might push me to consider worlds in

having of central capabilities in the first place is so that we can capture the diversity of flourishing lives. Similarly, a key reason to understand ideal selves in terms of central capabilities and their virtuous exercise is so that we can capture the ways in which a person's ideal selves might differ; it allows us to explain the differences between a person's ideal selves in terms of the different capabilities that they exercise virtuously. However, if specific goods were required for central capabilities, the diversity among our ideal selves would be greatly decreased, if not eliminated completely. Furthermore, if specific goods were required for central capabilities, my having a specific good and thereby a certain central capability could preclude your having that good and capability, which is extremely implausible.

Neither does one needs to be the best, most, or only possessor of any material good or personal quality in order to *exercise* the relevant capabilities virtuously. In fact, since to be one's ideal self requires one to exercise the virtues to the fullest extent that one *can* (because an ideal self is a *possible* self), and since that just is to make the best of what one has got, not having any specific, non-replicable material good or personal quality *cannot* preclude one from being some version of one's ideal self. So, according to my conception of an ideal self, it simply is not true that one must have any specific, non-replicable material good or personal quality in order to be one's ideal self. One certainly needs an allotment of capabilities, material goods, and good character traits, but one does

which there are so few people and in which natural abilities are so radically unequal as to make the overturning of such oppressive social structures impossible. However, I worry that such worlds would be so immensely different from the one in which I live that what I have to say about jealousy (and most other contingent phenomena) simply does not apply there.

not need to be the *pre-eminent* Proust scholar or the owner of the *most* valuable coin collection to be one's ideal self.²⁷⁶

One does not need to have all of one's desires satisfied to be one's ideal self; the satisfaction of some desires is much more important than the satisfaction of others. The satisfaction of a desire for nourishing food of some sort is more important than the satisfaction of a desire for a specific material good; the satisfaction of a desire for healthy relationships in general is more important than the satisfaction of a desire to be the most popular of one's classmates. To think, feel, and act as though one *needs* one's jealous desires for material goods or personal qualities to be satisfied in order to be one's ideal self embodies a set of values that is at odds with an accurate conception of an ideal life. The goods that this type of jealous person values so highly as to desire them jealously are exactly what cannot be *required* for one to be one's ideal self (although they can certainly contribute to the goodness of a life when they are present).²⁷⁷ Such a person is overly concerned with that specific, non-replicable good or personal quality. This may or may not be because of a disproportionate concern for status; such a person might be no more status-obsessed than the average person, but lack imagination in thinking about how to attain status.

²⁷⁶ One might say that the capability to be or be seen as unique or special is central to human flourishing. That seems plausible to me. However, that capability does not require the satisfaction of one's jealous desire for a *specific*, non-replicable material good or personal quality. Owning the most valuable coin collection or being the country's pre-eminent Proust scholar are two ways to be or be seen as unique or special, but they simply are not required for the capability in question.

²⁷⁷ This mistaken conception of an ideal life is similar to a mistaken conception often involved in cases of people who jealously desire relationships with people about whom they care. Often the jealous person seriously misunderstands the cared-for person and that person's interests; thus what he desires is a relationship with an idealized person in his head, not the actual person. Similarly, in the cases currently under consideration, the subject desires to be an *idealized* self, not an actually ideal self.

Consider the jealous coin collector again. If he thinks that owning the most valuable coin collection is necessary for him to be his ideal self, then he must think that, were he to own even the second most valuable coin collection, no combination of capabilities, material goods, or personal qualities could be added to his life that would compensate for being second best in the realm of coin collections. He does not think that having a better moral character, six additional months of life, fewer allergies, more just political representatives, or any of a number of other good things could compensate for his second place status in coin collecting. For him to think that none of those things could make for a possible future self that is just as good as or better than those possible future selves who are first in coin collecting seems radically mistaken.²⁷⁸

If I am right that subjects who jealously desire material goods or personal qualities should be understood as believing that the satisfaction of said desires is *necessary* for them to be their ideal selves and we assume that these subjects want to be their ideal selves, then it seems that their ideal selves function as targets of their jealous desires. The targets of jealous desires in caring and non-caring relationships are people with whom the jealous subjects desire to share certain relationships. Here the target of jealousy would be the ideal self, a person with whom the subject desires to come to be identical or nearly so.²⁷⁹ So we should ask whether there is a relationship between a person and her ideal self, and

²⁷⁸ The fact that societies often confer elevated status on those who own certain specific, non-replicable material goods explains why some people come to mistakenly believe that an ideal life for them requires that they have those goods. However, there are many reasons to think that societies should not confer elevated status on this basis (since ownership and merit so often come apart). The socially constructed links between these material goods and social status make jealous desires for these goods understandable, but they do not make the jealous subjects' conceptions of an ideal life any less mistaken.

²⁷⁹ Similarly, in many cases of romantic jealousy, subjects also desire to meld or integrate their identities with the identities of their loved ones.

if so, whether that relationship is undermined by the jealousy, as I argued is the case with respect to caring and non-caring relationships. I believe the answer to both questions is *yes*.

One's Relationship with One's Ideal Self

To demonstrate this, I first need to show why we should think that there is a *relationship* between a subject and her ideal self.²⁸⁰ There is nothing odd about saying that a subject and her ideal self stand in many relations to each other; they are (potentially) numerically identical. But since they are only *potentially* identical, this does not guarantee that they have a relationship. Furthermore, the identity relation is not a relationship in the sense relevant to this project; it is not a patterned set of interactions extending over time. For where there is only one thing, there is not *interaction*. So the identity relation is more like the “taller than” relation than like a friendship, and the latter is a better model for what I am trying to show. I admit that there is something peculiar about the claim that there is a patterned set of interactions extending over time, and thus a relationship, between a subject and her ideal self. So I grant that if there is such a relationship, it is not a paradigmatic one; unlike paradigmatic relationships like those between friends, neighbors, family members, and colleagues, one of the parties in such a case does not actually, presently exist. For ideal selves are merely possible selves, potential future persons.

²⁸⁰ For mention of one's ethically significant relationship with one's own self, see Margalit 2004, especially p. 37. For an interesting contribution to an ongoing philosophical debate in which parties on both sides assume that it is possible to have relationships with one's future selves, see Whiting 1986. The debate is about whether and how the (special) concern in these relationships can be *justified*.

Given the difficulty of specifying exactly what is required for one to have a relationship with another and the lack of philosophical literature on that exact question, I will content myself with showing some commonalities between what I see as the relationship one has with one's ideal self and more paradigmatic, familiar types of relationships. I focus on the following features: (1) the temporally extended nature of relationships, (2) the interaction or engagement required for a relationship, (3) the first-hand knowledge that arises within relationships, and (4) the tendency of relationships of motivate.

To give a loose definition: paradigmatic relationships like friendships and family relationships are temporally extended patterns of engagement between people (or other relevantly similar entities). So paradigmatic relationships unfold across time; they are dynamic and temporally extended. It takes time to become friends, and a friendship always lasts for some extended period of time (is never instantaneous). Family relationships extend across whole lifetimes. Similarly, the relationship between one's actual self and one's ideal self exists throughout one's life, despite its ever-changing nature. In this sense, it is much like one's relationships with one's family members; it changes over time (as the parties to the relationship and their circumstances change), but the relationship itself persists throughout a lifetime.

What exists across an extended period of time when one has a relationship is a pattern of engagement or interaction. To have a relationship now, people must have engaged with each other somehow in the past. Friendships, family relationships, and working relationships all involve people doing things together and/or doing things that have fairly direct causal effects on each other. Put another way, one's actions make a difference to the lives of those with whom one shares relationships. And our actions

certainly make a difference to the lives of our ideal selves; it is in part because of our actions that our ideal selves do or do not become actual. All the things we do, think, and feel that make a difference in the lives of others are ways of engaging or interacting with those others, whether those others are friends, family members, colleagues, or possible future versions of ourselves.

We can certainly stand in various kinds of *relations* to possible future people; we can (among other things) approve of, disapprove of, have confidence in, distrust, and/or be worried about possible future people. Since standing in these relations to actual people tends to depend upon our having interacted or engaged with those people in the ways that constitute relationships, our being able to stand in these relations to possible future people gives us reason to believe that we can interact or engage with possible future people in ways that constitute having relationships with them.

Because of this engagement or interaction, a person has first-hand knowledge of her ideal self that is a characteristic part of a variety of interpersonal relationships. As in more paradigmatic relationships, a person has a lot of first-hand knowledge about her ideal self's past (namely, their shared history up until now). Similarly, the ideal self, if she existed, would have detailed first-hand knowledge of the current self (namely, the current self's history and future, which is also her own past). Having such first-hand knowledge of how a person's life unfolds is one of the hallmarks of having a relationship with that person.

Furthermore, one's actions are often motivated by what one wants for one's ideal self, just as one is often motivated by what one wants for people to whom one stands in more paradigmatic relationships. Not only do our desires motivate us to serve the interests of possible future versions of our friends and other relations, our desires motivate

us to serve the interests of our possible future selves. Retirement planning is just one practice that shows this.

For all these reasons, I think we are justified in saying that people have relationships with their ideal selves. In fact, I think this kind of relationship is appropriately characterized as being, at least in general, very much like the caring relationships that I discussed in detail earlier. For it seems that people are generally at least minimally acquainted with their ideal selves (they have some beliefs about their ideal selves as individuals), believe their ideal selves are morally valuable as the individuals they are, desire that the interests of their ideal selves be well-served, and are motivated to act in service of the interests of their ideal selves. I cannot argue for this claim without taking us too far off track for present purposes. However, note that if there are relationships between people and their ideal selves, and if those relationships are caring ones, then such cases would be in the category of jealousy in caring relationships after all. If so, then these cases would involve undermining a relationship in the same way described in Chapter 3.

If someone wanted to deny that we have relationships with our ideal selves, they would be likely to do so by claiming that since ideal selves do not actually exist, we cannot have relationships with them. The claim would be that an ideal self is not the right kind of entity to be a party to a relationship. And I agree that ideal selves do not exist; they are merely possible future versions of existing people. But I think that we can have relationships with possible future people, even if they are somewhat different from our relationships with currently existing people, since they cannot involve direct causal reciprocity as more paradigmatic relationships do. It seems to me, for instance, that people who are trying to become biological parents can have relationships with their possible future children. Their actions do have fairly direct causal effects on those possible

future children; their actions certainly make a difference in the course of the possible children's lives, insofar as those actions in part determine whether the children will exist. They can have certain kinds of knowledge about the individual identities of their possible future children, and desires that certain things happen for the sakes of those possible future children. They can also be motivated to do things that will further the interests of those possible future children. In short, people can have something at least very much like what I have been calling a caring relationship with their possible future children. And if it is possible to have a relationship with that kind of possible future person, I see no reason to think we cannot have relationships with possible future people with whom we share our pasts. The comparison between how one relates to one's possible future children and possible future selves is especially apt in the sense that in both cases, one's actions are crucial determinants of whether the possible future person will come into existence.

The view that we cannot have relationships with non-existent people is likely to be grounded in a strong view about certain kinds of reciprocity being required for a relationship. While I agree with those who say that many of the best relationships are highly reciprocal, I do not think that there is any one kind of reciprocity that is required for something to be called a relationship, nor that all good relationships are reciprocal. For instance, my account of caring relationships allows for the possibility of a caring relationship in which the care does not flow in both directions; a caring relationship can be unidirectional.²⁸¹ So it does not bother me to recognize that there is a kind of reciprocity absent from one's relationship with one's ideal self; namely, one's ideal self

²⁸¹ This is important insofar as I think it is possible for me to have a caring relationship with someone who, for one reason or another, is not willing or able to have a caring relationship with me (although the other will clearly have a *relationship* with me).

cannot act in ways that directly causally affect one's current self because time only flows in one direction.²⁸² There are similar cases involving existing people; I can have a relationship with my friend even after she falls into a persistent vegetative state, even though she can no longer causally affect me. All sorts of dependency relationships show us that interactions between persons need not be reciprocal in all respects in order to count as relationships, even very good ones.²⁸³

I take it that all interpersonal relationships at least have the potential to be morally valuable. So if I am right that we have relationships with our ideal selves, then those relationships will have the potential to be morally valuable. However, we should presumably be able to say something about the particular ways that one's relationship with one's ideal self might be more or less morally valuable. There seem to be multiple features of such a relationship that can make it more morally valuable than it would be if it did not have those features. First, it seems that one's relationship with one's ideal self will have greater moral value insofar as one is more motivated to act in ways that are likely to bring about one's ideal self. Through self-improvement, one brings one's actual self into closer alignment with one's ideal self. This way of changing the relationship is good for both one's present self and for one's future self, and when a change to a relationship is good for both of the parties involved, that gives us one reason to say that the relationship is morally better.

²⁸² The ideal self can, however, provide a model for the behavior of the actual self, which means that there can be something like a relation of governance that flows from the ideal self to the actual self.

²⁸³ For an argument that it is plausible to think that the desires, interests, and values of our future selves can causally affect the formation of our present desires, interests, and values, see Whiting 1986, p. 558.

Moreover, “closeness” in interpersonal relationships is often seen as a morally valuable feature, and this “closeness” is often understood in terms of the two people having a rich shared history and a broad range of shared values.²⁸⁴ However, “closeness” in the case of one’s relationship with one’s ideal self can include, in addition to a very rich shared history and a broad range of shared values, an even deeper sense of shared identity; when one has a “close” relationship with one’s ideal self, one is in the process of literally *becoming* or at least *increasingly approximating* that ideal self.

Furthermore, it seems that having a more accurate conceptualization of one’s ideal self (that is, an idealized self that is more similar to one’s ideal self) can make for a morally better relationship with one’s ideal self since, for one thing, an accurate conceptualization of one’s ideal self will tend to increase the efficacy of the self-improvement projects just mentioned. An accurate conceptualization of one’s ideal self requires a certain amount of imagination and information about possibilities, and it is fair to ask what sort of possibility is at stake here. Surely it is best if one’s idealized self is a *logically* possible version of oneself, since a person who directs her actions toward bringing about the logically impossible will be pursuing a fool’s errand. With other kinds of possibility, however, the picture becomes murkier.

Suppose my idealized self (my ideal self as I understand it subjectively) is not possible given widespread misogyny in the time and place that I live, because the current level of misogyny prevents me from achieving things that I believe I must achieve for an ideal life.²⁸⁵ But suppose that co-operation and hard work could reduce that misogyny

²⁸⁴ See Margalit 2004 for a view according to which shared history is an important component of many, if not all, ethically significant interpersonal relationships.

²⁸⁵ Thanks to Elizabeth Scarbrough for encouraging me to consider such cases.

enough in my lifetime for me to achieve those things and suppose I am right that an ideal life for me does require me to achieve them. In such a case, I think one can have a good relationship with one's ideal self despite one's conceptualization of one's ideal life being impossible in some contingent sense. I do not think one's relationship with one's idealized self is *necessarily* morally better or worse as a function of the *difficulty* of approximating one's idealized life. I think the important lesson from cases like this is that if a person is to have a morally valuable relationship with her ideal self, her idealized life should be a logically possible life for her, and that if it is not possible in some other sense, she should at least be or try to become aware of what changes would be required for it to become possible. So one should aim for accuracy in understanding how similar and how different one's actual, ideal, and idealized selves are, which requires a certain amount of reflection on both oneself and one's circumstances.

How the Jealousy Undermines One's Relationship with One's Ideal Self

If I am right that people have relationships with their ideal selves and that people who jealously desire material goods or personal qualities mistakenly believe those goods to be required for their ideal selves, the jealousy that has the mistaken conception of the ideal life at its heart undermines subjects' relationships with their ideal selves. This is because said jealousy functions as an obstacle to a subject's improving her relationship with her ideal self. If the jealous desire (which always at least has the potential to motivate) is coupled with a false belief about what is required for her ideal life, it will be more difficult or even impossible for her to do the things that would allow her to bring her real life in closer alignment with an ideal. For instance, her jealous desire will always have the potential to distract her from projects that *are* required for an ideal life, and such distractions are obstacles to her improving her relationship with her ideal self. Insofar as

the jealousy functions as such a barrier or obstacle, this is the third of the three types of undermining that I outlined earlier.²⁸⁶ So the cases under consideration are cases in which the subject's being jealous gives us both an epistemic and a moral reason to criticize her.

This is not to say that *nothing* can be *required* for a person's ideal life. As mentioned earlier, for people who are parents, an ideal life can require not living to see the death of your children. If there is such a thing as Hollywood movie-style "true love," and some people are simply "meant to be with" particular others, then an ideal life can require an ongoing relationship with one's true love. An ideal life might require that one have opportunities to use one's special talents or that one not suffer certain health problems or political injustices. But notice that having a desire for any of those things is significantly different from having the kind of desire involved in the type of jealousy under consideration. Desiring these things is not like desiring a specific material good or a superlative or pre-eminent personal quality. With the possible exception of a relationship with one's true love, having these goods is not inconsistent with others having them. They are desires for general types of goods, so they cannot be jealous desires. And since the desire for a relationship with one's true love is not a desire for a material good or personal quality, my criticisms here are not directed at that type of jealousy anyway.

We might ask whether these cases can also involve the loss of or threat to existing moral value in a relationship. I think it is possible for these types of undermining to occur in the cases under consideration, insofar as the jealousy tends to direct the subject's attention in certain directions rather than others. For instance, if Frank's jealousy makes

²⁸⁶ See Chapter 2 for my discussion of the three types of undermining.

him think obsessively about his rival, Larry Sugarman, those obsessive thoughts can lead that subject to do poorly on his scholarly work, lose his job, and get kicked out of his apartment (much like what happened to Frank when he was thinking obsessively about his former graduate student and lover).²⁸⁷ Those things can damage his relationship with his ideal self.

Similarly, the jealous coin collector might find his jealousy so unpleasant that he contemplates or actually carries out a theft or other shady dealings to increase the value of his coin collection. But surely contemplating or carrying out criminal activities can threaten or actually decrease the moral value of one's relationship with one's ideal self, insofar as becoming a criminal is not (or at least generally not) compatible with living an ideal version of one's life. So I do think that the first and second sorts of undermining can occur in these cases, although I do not think they necessarily will.

The next claim in my argument is that when a subject undermines her relationship with her ideal self, she thereby gives us a moral reason to criticize her, just as she would if she undermined her relationship with someone else. Notice that I am not claiming that this is a sufficient reason to render an all-things-considered judgment that we should criticize her. The main idea here is that *anytime* someone undermines a relationship, we have *some* reason to criticize the person for that. While the reason to criticize may end up being outweighed by other reasons, I think it is reasonable to say that we have moral reasons to avoid undermining relationships. Insofar as relationships are morally valuable, and have the potential to become more so, we have a moral reason

²⁸⁷ See Cobb and Marks 1979, Holtzworth-Munroe 1997, Neu 1980, Parker and Barrett 1997, and Tov-Ruach 1980 for discussion of the link between jealousy and obsession. The best literary illustration of jealousy's obsessive nature that I know of is to be found in Robbe-Grillet 1965.

at least to protect, if not enhance them; undermining them is, of course, antithetical to that.

Auxiliary Arguments

Even if I am wrong that subjects who jealously desire material goods or personal qualities undermine their relationships with their ideal selves, we still have reason to think that these subjects undermine their relationships with others.

To see why, think about how these subjects conceive of their ideal selves and the cluster of background beliefs related to their experiences of jealousy. Someone who jealously desires to have more or better material goods or personal qualities than others prioritizes the acquisition of such things above his relationships with those others. He thinks it is more important for him to be superior to those rivals, at least in this realm, than for him to care for and support them as persons. This makes it more difficult for him to recognize and act on the moral demands made of him within his relationships, which at least functions as an obstacle to the improvement of those relationships. Thus he undermines his relationships with rivals in the third sense I have identified.

Consider Frank Ginsberg: when Frank sees Larry Sugarman at a gas station, he hides rather than greet him, even though he still believes himself to be the superior Proust scholar.²⁸⁸ If a high-ranking scholar cannot even greet his fellow scholar at a gas station, imagine the difficulties at major academic conferences of relevance to their work! Imagine the other scholars who feel compelled to take sides, the collaborative projects not undertaken, and the animosity over limited grant money. If being the *pre-eminent* Proust scholar were not quite so important to people like Frank and Larry, they might be friends

²⁸⁸ Frank's story is surely complicated by the fact that Larry is accompanied by Frank's former lover, but imagine a rivalry based purely on their knowledge of Proust.

united by their love of French literature, not just colleagues. It should not come as a surprise that the jealousy blocks the development of morally valuable relationships between subjects and rivals.

Things are even worse if the subject and rivals were friends to begin with and ruin their caring relationship over their rivalry. As in the cases discussed in Chapter 2, when one's potentially jealous beliefs and desires about material goods or personal qualities take on a certain significance, they can also threaten to or actually crowd out the thoughts and actions that constitute one's caring relationship with one's rival. So subjects who jealously desire material goods and personal qualities can also undermine their relationships with rivals through threatening to or actually decreasing the value of those relationships, especially if the relationships in question are caring ones.

We can also see reason to think that the kind of jealousy under consideration undermines the subject's relationships with people outside the central jealous triad. Remember that if a subject jealously desires a personal quality, it has to be a quality of such a sort that if someone else were to have it, that could be perceived as inconsistent with the subject having it. This is why jealous desires for personal qualities have a superlative, exclusive, or pre-eminent nature; only the having of these sorts of personal qualities could be inconsistent with a rival having them. Jealous desires for material goods are also like this, so people who jealously desire material goods or personal qualities desire to be, in some sense, the best or the most or the only one of something. Having that kind of desire frames one's relationships in terms of competition, at least in the relevant domain. Competitive conceptions of relationships are, at best, focused on advancing one's own position while not advancing others', or at least not advancing them to the same degree. At worst, competitive conceptions of relationships focus on advancing one's own

position by making others worse off than they otherwise would be. Such advancing of oneself (or trying to do so) by making others worse off is often, if not always, worthy of moral criticism.

Even at their best, competitive conceptions of relationships are not the stuff of caring relationships. Spending one's time thinking and acting so as to get or stay "ahead" of one's rival(s) takes time and energy away from existing caring relationships and makes it harder for one to develop new caring relationships. For instance, to be the jealous coin collector, one must think pre-eminence in coin collecting is a required element of one's ideal life. That thought looms large over the jealous coin collector's relationships with family members, friends, and fellow hobbyists. Since the collector's time and resources are limited, there will always be a risk that the collecting will be prioritized over the relationships. Imagine the ways that the collector might sacrifice time with friends and family when there is an opportunity to negotiate the purchase of a rare coin. Since the value of relationships depends on spending time and resources to maintain them, the value of these relationships is threatened, if not actually decreased, by the subject's jealousy and mistaken belief about what is required for an ideal life. So those relationships are undermined in the second sense, if not also in the first sense.

Similarly, the collector's jealousy can function as a barrier to the improvement of relationships, and thus undermine those relationships in the third sense. Imagine the way the jealous coin collector would view a novice collector who does not own any particularly special coins: not as a potential friend, but as someone who has nothing to contribute to the satisfaction of his jealous desire. His jealousy tends to focus his attention in a way that blocks him from seeing the potential for a valuable relationship that is right in front of him. So jealousy can undermine the moral value of the subject's relationships

with people outside the jealous triad in each of the three ways discussed previously: by diminishing, threatening, or blocking the improvement of relationships.

Objection from Desire to Be Superlatively Virtuous

One might attempt to object to the main argument of this chapter by outlining a potential counterexample in which jealousy involving a desire for a material good or personal quality seems not to undermine one's relationship with one's ideal self. One interesting move of this sort draws our attention to the possibility of a person who wants to become more virtuous.²⁸⁹ This person might, for instance, have realized that she is not particularly generous (pick your virtue). She might realize that she really has a lot of work ahead of her if she wants to become generous and she might aim to become the *most* generous person, aiming beyond what is strictly speaking necessary to achieve the virtue, in recognition of Aristotle's claims about the value of aiming to overshoot in certain circumstances so that one can hit the mark. She comes to desire that she be the most generous, realizes that only one person can be the most generous, imagines a situation in which she is the most generous, and becomes jealous when she starts to see the satisfaction of this desire as crucial to being her ideal self. One might say that *this* jealousy is conducive to a good relationship with her ideal self; it certainly appears to help her inculcate the kind of relationship with her ideal self that I have recommended. For it is reasonable to suppose that a person who jealously desires to be superlatively virtuous has a desire that may motivate her to more closely approximate her ideal self and/or to reflect more carefully on what her ideal self would be like.

²⁸⁹ Thanks to Ben Hole for proposing this line of thinking.

There are a number of things I want to say in response to this objection. First, I see no reason to deny that it is in principle possible for a person to jealously desire to be superlatively virtuous, so I grant that one might experience the kind of jealousy just described. However, I do not think this is a counterexample, despite its being an interesting and unusual example. For I have not argued that there is no way in which this third type of jealousy could possibly enhance one's relationship with one's ideal self. Rather, I have argued that there is a way in which this third type of jealousy undermines that relationship. I have not made any claims about all-things-considered moral judgments; I have left it open what other moral reasons to praise or criticize might sometimes come into play in all-things-considered judgments of jealous subjects. In the next chapter, I consider a number of proposals that purport to describe ways in which a person's being jealous might give us a moral reason to *praise* that person.

This worry can, however, teach us a lesson about the importance and difficulty of specifying exactly what desire is at play in jealousy. In this example, we are talking about a desire *to be the most generous*. But this can be glossed in two different ways. One might desire to be *the most generous person one can be*; or one might desire to be *the most generous person when compared to some group of other people*.²⁹⁰ The difference between those two desires makes a big difference to how we assess the person who has it. People are right if they believe that being their ideal selves requires being as virtuous as they can, but they would be wrong if they equated being as virtuous as they can with being more virtuous than others. There is no necessary connection between those.

²⁹⁰ There is a rich literature about Rousseau's concept of amour-propre that is relevant to this discussion insofar as amour-propre is supposed to arise from social self-comparison and make people wicked. See, for instance, Rousseau 1979 and Kolodny 2010. Unfortunately, I cannot pursue all the interesting connections between the present project and that literature here.

If we understand the jealous desire in the former way, then I see no problem. For being the most generous person you can be is not inconsistent with others being equally or more generous, so this desire is not of the sort that can function as a jealous desire. Nor will this kind of desire undermine one's relationship with one's ideal self in the ways I have described; I agree that this kind of desire probably, if anything, improves one's relationship with one's ideal self.

However, if we read the desire in the latter way, then jealousy is possible and when it occurs it will be accompanied by the undermining I described. For one is simply mistaken if one believes that one needs to be more virtuous than others in order to be one's ideal self. Insofar as we can all be virtuous, there are no rivals for particular virtues or virtuousness in general; so jealous desires for particular virtues or virtuousness in general involve a mistake. While at first blush we might think that there is something admirable about jealously desiring to be the most virtuous (compared to others), I do not think this intuition merits our endorsement. For, unlike the person who simply want to be as virtuous as she can be, a person who jealously desires to be more virtuous than others might not want to become any more virtuous than she already is; she might simply want others *not* to surpass her current superlative degree of virtuousness or want others to become less virtuous than her.²⁹¹ These latter possibilities are not admirable, and the desire for others to be less virtuous may even be prudentially irrational.

²⁹¹ However, for this to be a case of jealousy rather than malicious envy, the subject's desire must be such that if she became *less* virtuous, it would not be satisfied; see Chapter 1 for discussion of the distinction.

Conclusion

My aim here has been to show that there are cases of jealousy that involve a desire for a material good or personal quality, and that in such cases we have a moral reason to criticize the jealous subject, insofar as that subject undermines the moral value of her relationship with her ideal self and her relationships with others. This means that, despite not involving relationships in the obvious ways that the other two kinds of cases do, cases of this third kind so also give us a moral reason to criticize the subject insofar as her jealousy undermines the moral value of her relationships. I have not argued that these reasons to criticize provide sufficient grounds to render all-things-considered judgments that the jealous subjects should be criticized, but I think this conclusion is significant nonetheless. It shows that there is a normative thread running through all cases of jealousy; it shows that there is a commonality between cases of jealousy from the moral perspective, even though that commonality is not immediately obvious. Given my view that relationships are highly morally significant and partially constitutive of our identities, this commonality strikes me as highly significant. This background view about the importance of relationships to the moral landscape makes me think that not only do we have a moral reason to criticize all the subjects who feel these three types of jealousy, but we also have a *good* moral reason for doing so.

Chapter 5: Potential Moral Reasons to Praise Jealous

Subjects

In previous chapters, I argued that jealousy undermines the relationships in which it arises and thereby gives us a moral reason to criticize subjects for being jealous. Many people will wonder if that reason to criticize is all that significant; after all, it might sometimes or often be outweighed or neutralized by some moral reason to praise subjects for being jealous. Many of us who have been jealous at some point may have a strong impulse to search for something morally good about jealousy. So my task in the following is to consider proposals to the effect that, at least sometimes, a person's being jealous can give us a moral reason to praise that person. As discussed in the Introduction, people's moral judgments about jealous subjects vary quite radically, whereas moral judgments about people who feel certain other emotions, such as gratitude, are much more uniform. This ambivalence merits further scrutiny. So the question is whether any of the reasons that people take themselves to have for thinking that jealousy can ground moral praise are *good* reasons. I discuss three types of proposals to that effect; we can learn a great deal about jealousy and its moral significance by considering them.

I start by considering the proposals most relevant to jealousy in caring relationships, then move to those that also relate to jealousy in other sorts of relationships. For each proposal, I outline at least one supporting argument, explain what might motivate one to support said argument, and highlight some limitations to the proposal's application. As I have mentioned before, there is very little sustained argument about jealousy's moral significance in the existing philosophical literature; because of this, much of my explanation of the proposals considered in this chapter is my attempt to extrapolate

from rather isolated comments in the literature (and many discussions with colleagues and friends) and thereby develop some of the best and most common reasons given in support of various claims that jealousy can be a morally good thing.

After explaining each proposal, I consider some objections that are specific to it. After explaining why each proposal should be rejected, I discuss what makes these proposals similar and, on the basis of those similarities, develop criticisms that apply to all the proposals I have considered. I conclude that we probably lack any good moral reason to praise jealous subjects as such. I do not *prove* that there is no possible case in which a person's being jealous might constitute a moral reason to praise that person, but in my own estimation we are justified in believing that it is highly unlikely that there is one.

The Beloved-Pleasing Proposal

To illustrate the first proposal, let us return to the case of Fred and Adele from Chapter 2. Remember that Fred and Adele are friends and dance partners, and that Adele becomes jealous when Fred dances with Ginger to spare her the public embarrassment and loneliness of having no dance partner. Furthermore, Fred finds himself pleased to be the target of Adele's jealousy. Some people, when they learn of Fred's pleasure, might think something like, "Well, if Fred is pleased by Adele's jealousy, then no one has any reasonable grounds for complaint against her for feeling it, and in fact, it is rather a good thing that Adele does so if it pleases Fred."

What I call the *beloved-pleasing proposal* would likely be Fred's proposal if he were to argue that Adele's jealousy is *morally* good.²⁹² According to it, we have a moral reason to

²⁹² Fred and people like him might admit that what pleases them about jealousy has nothing to do with morality, but my concern is with how one might try to justify praising jealous subjects *on moral grounds*.

praise some jealous subjects because jealousy can be good for those who are loved by those jealous subjects.²⁹³ An argument for it goes something like the following:

1. It is morally good to satisfy the reasonable desires of those one loves when one is in a good position to do so.²⁹⁴
2. It is reasonable for a beloved person to desire that his or her lover acknowledge (maybe publicly) the value and importance of the beloved and of their relationship.
3. By being jealous one can acknowledge the value and importance of a beloved and of one's relationship with the beloved.
4. So, if a beloved wants (or does not object to) the lover's jealousy, then by being jealous one can satisfy the beloved's desire for such acknowledgement.
5. Therefore, a person's being jealous can give us a moral reason to praise that person.²⁹⁵

The crucial premise is the third one.²⁹⁶ The reason one might support the third premise seems to be a belief that jealousy is evidence that a subject cares about a target (or that a

²⁹³ Although elsewhere I avoid using 'beloved' and instead use 'target,' I make an exception here because people tend to advance this proposal only relative to relationships in which the target is loved, and the proposal works best when restricted thus.

²⁹⁴ I specify "reasonable" desires simply to avoid the implication that it would be morally good to satisfy *any* desire a loved one has, even if it is the product of radical ignorance, faulty inference, or pathology.

²⁹⁵ The wives to whom Ovid recommended (whether seriously or not, it is difficult to tell) intentionally inciting jealousy in their husbands could try to justify such behavior via this proposal. However, I see no reason to think that Ovid saw a *moral* value as being stake; he makes it clear that he is discussing wives who seek more *passionate* marriages, not necessarily wives who want their husbands to bring about greater *moral good*. While those two goals may coincide, Ovid focuses on the former and I on the latter. See Ovid 1957, p. 171 (*Art of Love*, Book II, line 577-610).

The crux of Ovid's recommendation was that by making a husband think that he had a rival for his wife's attention/affection, the wife would cause the husband to "burn with desire" even if his ardor had waned of late; he implies that if loving is easy, husbands will not want to do it. Note the gender asymmetry: whether Ovid thought wives can (not) or should (not) get jealous when the roles are reversed is unclear. I mention Ovid's thoughts on the subject here because, in my experience, many contemporary Americans express similar thoughts about how creating jealousy in a loving relationship might be good for the beloved and the relationship in the long run. For more references to jealousy as a "spice" for relationships, see Stearns 1989, p.128. See also Mathes 1992, pp. 19 and 140 for references to studies that provide mixed results about whether jealousy enhances relationships in this way; Mathes concludes that any increase in love or arousal caused by jealousy is slight.

²⁹⁶ In fact, one could treat the justification of the third premise as a wholly separate proposal and call it the evidence of care/value/importance proposal. I do critically assess the justification of this premise in the following, but I do not treat it as a separate proposal because the same claim is key

lack of jealousy provides evidence that a subject lacks care for a target) and a belief that someone like Fred has good reason to want such evidence.²⁹⁷ In the existing literature, jealousy is not often called evidence, but it is often called a *signal* of one thing or another, which I think comes to much the same thing in this context.²⁹⁸ The sort of care that jealousy supposedly signals may or may not be the robust sort required for a caring relationship, with which I have been concerned thus far. A caring relationship requires four things: (1) that one be acquainted with the other individual, (2) that one recognize that person's moral value as the individual she is, (3) that one desire the person's interests (both subjectively and objectively conceived) be well served for that person's own sake, and (4) that one be motivated to think, feel, and act for the sake of that person by furthering or supporting her interests. If it is not caring relationships that are relevant, advocates of this proposal might simply say that jealousy is a valuable way of signaling (to the beloved, but possibly also to the subject and others) what a subject truly values or what is truly important to her. This is why I use 'value and importance' in framing the third premise.

to the view of those who think Fred's *being pleased* by the jealousy is an important part of why it is a morally good thing.

²⁹⁷ For a pop culture example of a character whose behavior indicates acceptance of something like this argument, see Vernoff and Melman 2006 for the episode called "I am a Tree" from the television show *Grey's Anatomy* (season 3, episode 2). In it, Callie Torres is so thrilled when the person she is dating, George O'Malley, becomes jealous because of a misunderstanding that she begs her colleague, Meredith Grey, not to clear up the misunderstanding. Callie *wants* George to continue to experience and be motivated by jealousy (which has Callie as its target). Depending on how one interprets her behavior, Callie may also accept some version of a social value proposal, which I consider in a bit. See Neu 1980, pp. 452-455 for interesting thoughts about what the sitcom trope of "making someone jealous" or "wanting someone to be jealous" can tell us about jealousy.

²⁹⁸ See Neu 1980, p. 452 for the claim that jealousy is a sign of love. Philosophers seem more willing to let 'signal' go unanalyzed than I suspect they would be if it were replaced with 'evidence.'

The ‘can’ in the third premise is also important. It should be clear that jealousy cannot *always* acknowledge the value and importance of a beloved and a relationship because, among other things, not all relationships (and maybe not even all apparently beloved people) are important and valuable. One cannot acknowledge what is not so. Therefore, this argument, if successful, would only give us a moral reason to praise a jealous subject in a limited range of cases. It does not give us a reason unless the beloved and the relationship are *worthy* of being acknowledged as important and valuable. Nor does it give us a reason when jealousy is wholly unexpressed and the target wants public or semi-public acknowledgement, since unexpressed jealousy cannot function as even semi-public acknowledgement.²⁹⁹ Furthermore, the beloved must find the mode of the jealousy’s expression acceptable, if not good; if the beloved finds it distasteful, inappropriate, offensive, or scary, that acknowledgement will not satisfy the beloved’s desire.³⁰⁰ Moreover, the beloved may prefer acknowledgment that does not involve jealousy, regardless of its mode of expression; the beloved may prefer that the subject acknowledge the value and importance of their relationship by buying presents, doing housework, making time to spend together, saying “I love you,” etc.

Criticisms of the Beloved-Pleasing Proposal

While I agree with supporters of this proposal that it is morally good to satisfy the reasonable desires of one’s loved ones when one is in a good position to do so, and I agree that we have reason to want those with whom we have loving relationships to acknowledge our value and importance and that of the relationships we share, I also think

²⁹⁹ Depending on what the beloved desires, the subject’s expressing the jealousy only to the beloved may sometimes be sufficient to satisfy the desire for acknowledgement.

³⁰⁰ However, the beloved need not interpret it *as an expression of jealousy*.

that we should reject the third premise of the argument for the beloved-pleasing proposal, in part because the claims about jealousy being evidence that are meant to support it do not withstand scrutiny.³⁰¹

Let us begin with the claim that jealousy (or lack of it) is evidence of a *caring relationship* (or lack of it). If there were a *necessary* connection between being jealous and caring, the purported evidence would be strong. However, if jealousy can arise in relationships that are not caring, then jealousy does not provide indefeasible evidence of caring. To see that jealousy *can* arise in non-caring relationships, simply imagine a case (like that of Linda, Nancy, and Susan in Chapter 3) in which someone is jealous because of a colleague's somehow superior relationship with their boss, where the subject is jealous because she is ambitious in her career goals, not because she has any concern for their boss for the boss' own sake. Such cases show that being jealous does not entail that one has a caring relationship with the target of the jealous desire, so sometimes jealousy is not evidence of a caring relationship at all.³⁰²

Furthermore, a lack of jealousy does not necessarily provide evidence that a subject lacks a caring relationship with the target; Adele could fail to meet any or all of the necessary conditions for jealousy and still have a strongly caring relationship with Fred. Remember that the four necessary conditions for a caring relationship are: (1) that one be acquainted with another, (2) that one recognize his moral value as the individual he is, (3) that one desire his interests (both subjectively and objectively conceived) be well

³⁰¹ I grant that it is possible to be viciously deficient in acknowledging valuable relationships or in protectiveness toward one's valuable relationships, but I deny that this entails there can be a vicious deficiency of jealousy.

³⁰² It might, however, be evidence that she cares about her career. Moreover, one might think it is evidence that she cares about *herself*; I consider a proposal focusing on self-respect in the next section.

served for his own sake, and (4) that one be motivated to think, feel, and act for his sake by furthering or supporting his interests. On the face of it, none of these *require* jealousy, so we should not think that Adele must be jealous to prove that she has a caring relationship with Fred.³⁰³ Similarly, insofar as she might have a caring relationship *with their relationship* (which would depend on whether and how we understand relationships as having interests), she need not be jealous to prove that she does so. So jealousy is not necessarily evidence of a caring relationship and neither is lack of jealousy necessarily evidence of a lack of a caring relationship.

Nor is jealousy (or a lack of it) evidence for the weaker claim that a subject considers a target and their relationship to be important and valuable (or not).³⁰⁴ If Adele lacked jealousy after witnessing Fred ask Ginger to dance, that would not provide evidence that her relationship with Fred and Fred himself are not important and valuable to her. It might be *extremely* important and valuable to her that she dance with Fred frequently (even if not exclusively), that he enjoy dancing with her, and that their relationship extend beyond the dance studio; she might still consider him and their relationship tremendously important and valuable and demonstrate that in a variety of ways. Even if being his *only* dance partner is important and valuable to Adele, her response to his dancing with Ginger might be indignation, resentment, sadness, or self-

³⁰³ For another example, it seems more than plausible that a manager might have somewhat caring relationships with at least some subordinate employees, but might never desire relationships with those employees that are causally or logically inconsistent with other managers also having the same type of relationship with the same employees (and thus never meet the necessary conditions for jealousy).

³⁰⁴ To consider something to be important and valuable seems to require less than a caring relationship. For one thing, to consider something important and valuable does not seem to require one to *act* in any patterned way toward it. For another thing, one can only have a caring relationship with an entity that has interests, whereas we can consider inanimate things or ideas with no interests to be important and valuable (we can care *about* them). For discussion of how caring and importance are related, see Margalit 2004, p. 30.

reproach, rather than jealousy. So jealousy cannot be *required* to prove that a subject finds a beloved and their relationship important and valuable any more than it can be required to prove the stronger claim that a subject has a caring relationship with a beloved.

However, a supporter of the beloved-pleasing proposal could say that the purported evidence is not so strong, because the connection between jealousy (or lack of it) and care (or lack of it) is only contingent. It might be that jealousy is only one possible way to show that either (1) one's relationship with another is caring or (2) that one sees the person and the shared relationship as important and valuable. If so, jealousy need not ever be seen as required to show either of these things. So one might say that being jealous is only evidence of care in some limited circumstances (and maybe only to a limited extent). The idea is that if Adele jealously desires an exclusive or pre-eminent relationship with Fred, it may be *because* she recognizes something uniquely valuable about him. That is, she may feel jealous because she fulfills the second necessary condition for a caring relationship. Alternatively, there may be some limited circumstances in which having a jealous desire is a way to recognize the unique moral value *of a relationship*. But what are those circumstances, and how could we recognize them, thereby making it appropriate to take jealousy as evidence of care? How could we know when one is jealous *because* one cares?

To determine whether a subject is jealous *because* she cares about the target or their relationship, one needs to rule out the possibility that she jealously desires a relationship with the target for purely self-interested reasons. However, the presence of jealousy by itself does not provide reason to rule that out, because jealousy can arise in a non-caring relationship characterized by purely self-interested desires. So jealousy could only function as evidence of care when one already knows that care is present, and

evidence that only helps you show the truth of a claim after its truth has been shown is not particularly valuable. If one already knows that a subject cares about someone or some relationship, it is opaque to me why it would be morally good for her to provide additional evidence of her care by being jealous, even if the target desires it, especially when there are so many better ways to show that she cares (a point to which I return later).³⁰⁵

Despite this problem, one might see jealousy as a good strategy for acknowledging important and valuable people and relationships insofar as jealousy is uncalculated and automatic, and therefore difficult to fake in the unlikely circumstance that one wanted to. Because of these features, one might see jealousy as being a sincere, reliable, and thus highly convincing expression of the nature of a subject's values, priorities, and relationships. However, even if jealousy (or a lack of it) does sometimes provide evidence about the nature of a subject's values, priorities, or relationships, we must be careful about exactly *what* it provides evidence of. I submit that jealousy (or lack of it) can only function as evidence for very minimal claims, which are not the claims that most people would want evidence for anyway. At most (barring things like affect-dampening depression), her lack of jealousy would provide evidence that the satisfaction of her

³⁰⁵ For various reasons, some people can never have too much or enough evidence that they are cared for and will welcome any occurrence that they see as such evidence, so we must be careful about the possibility that some claims about jealousy being evidence of care are simply products of vanity or insecurity. If Fred desires that Adele be jealous because his insecurity or vanity make him forever hungry for more evidence of her care, I do not see why one would think that Adele's satisfying such a desire shows that she cares for him. In such a case, Fred will either not be satisfied or not be convinced by the additional evidence, and his underlying character flaw will be reinforced, so it is not clear what good her jealousy is supposed to be doing for him.

However, one need not be moved by vanity or insecurity to ask how evidence of care could ever be unwelcome (other things being equal); my aim is to show that jealousy is often not evidence of care at all, and that if it ever is, the evidence (a) is superfluous, (b) is for a very minimal claim, and (c) comes at a price to a relationship.

jealous desire is not important or valuable *enough* or *in the right way* to her to incite *jealousy* in *her*, which does not illuminate anything except that she is not jealous, which we already knew. This is not to say that when the satisfaction of her jealous desire is important and valuable enough to reach some threshold she will inevitably feel jealousy relative to his dancing with Ginger;³⁰⁶ the point is that *if* she does feel jealousy, then the satisfaction of her jealous desire must be somewhat important and valuable to her. For, as I argued in Chapter 4, people are not jealous when it does not much *matter* to them whether their desires are satisfied. But of course, a person can be jealous when her “beloved” matters to her a great deal only insofar as the beloved is instrumental to the satisfaction of some purely self-interested desire.

So at most, Adele’s being jealous provides evidence that *the satisfaction of her jealous desire* is somewhat important and valuable to her, and that she sees Fred and their relationship as *instrumentally valuable to the satisfaction of that jealous desire*. It does not provide evidence about *how* important and valuable, unless it is taken in tandem with a great deal of information about the conditions under which Adele tends to feel jealous, and if we have that, we probably also already have a great deal of evidence about what she finds important and valuable and to what degree she does so. Nor does her jealousy provide evidence about *why* she finds the satisfaction of her jealous desire important or valuable; it might be for selfish, generous, kind, malicious, rational, irrational, instrumental, or non-instrumental reasons. And this latter kind of evidence about reasons seems to me to be the much more important and desirable kind of information to have about those with whom

³⁰⁶ Even if she has a very strong disposition to be jealous, situations of great danger, depression, or other distractions might prevent her from being jealous under conditions in which she otherwise would be.

we stand in relationships; we want to know that we are considered important and valuable at least in part for our own sakes, not merely instrumentally.

Given these difficulties with taking jealousy (or lack of it) as evidence about subjects' values, it seems that the burden is on my opponents to show how jealousy can function as evidence in a way that provides moral reason to praise subjects for being jealous. This burden seems particularly burdensome insofar as the main argument of this dissertation provides some reason to reject the third premise of the beloved-pleasing proposal. For even if we replace the claim that jealousy is evidence of a *caring relationship* with a weaker claim that jealousy is evidence that the subject finds the satisfaction of her jealous desire important and valuable, I think it is highly questionable whether jealousy (or jealous behavior) *actually acknowledges people and relationships as important and valuable*. For there comes a point when something serves a function so poorly that we must ask whether it can really be said to serve that function at all. I think jealousy serves the function of acknowledging the importance and value of people and relationships so poorly that I hesitate to say that it acknowledges these things at all. (In fact, if my earlier arguments are correct, then jealousy actually undermines the valuable relationships that supporters of the beloved-pleasing proposal think the jealousy acknowledges as valuable.) If jealousy does not function as acknowledgment, then Fred has no reason to want Adele to acknowledge him and their relationship via jealousy (quite the contrary).

In exploring why, I consider two versions of premise (3) of the beloved-pleasing proposal. According to the first, jealousy is a *means* by which to acknowledge the beloved

and one's relationship with the beloved as important and valuable.³⁰⁷ Jealousy could be such a means if it motivates subjects to do things that function as acknowledgment, such as saying "I love you," doing the beloved a favor, or spending time with the beloved. According to the second, being jealous (or having the disposition to be so under certain circumstances) is *constitutive* of having certain kinds of important and valuable relationships. Under the constitutive reading, the third premise could be phrased more precisely to say "By being jealous, one can make one's relationship with the beloved into a new, more valuable sort of valuable relationship and, if the jealousy is expressed, thereby simultaneously acknowledge the value and importance of one's beloved and one's relationship with the beloved." The idea is that there are some situations in which, if one's partner is not jealous, one's relationship must not be of the type that one wants or that one thought one had. Under this second interpretation, the beloved need not desire that the subject acknowledge the relationship via jealousy; the beloved desires a relationship that is partially constituted by the partner being jealous in certain circumstances. Notice that neither of these readings requires the acknowledgement to be conscious or intentional on the part of the subject. However, both versions of premise (3) are problematic.

Consider the first interpretation, according to which jealousy is instrumental to acknowledging the importance and value of one's beloved and one's relationship with

³⁰⁷ One might think the instrumental reading of this proposal is implausible if one believes that one cannot *make* oneself be jealous (or not). However, even with that belief in place, one could accept the instrumental reading as a third-person justification or an after-the-fact justification for unintentional jealousy; people do in fact sometimes praise people for good brought about unintentionally, and I take it as at least an open question whether that practice is sometimes morally acceptable. This same point applies to the instrumental reading of the self-respect proposal that I consider next.

one's beloved. If I am correct about jealousy undermining caring relationships, then it would be incoherent to try to acknowledge as valuable and important a person or one's relationship with that person by having an emotion that makes or threatens to make that relationship less caring and thus less morally valuable.³⁰⁸ For Fred may want Adele to be jealous for all the wrong reasons (morally speaking), and Adele may have a jealous desire for all the wrong reasons (morally speaking). Even if her jealousy does signal that she finds him important and valuable, she might find him important and valuable not for his own sake, but entirely for her own purposes. Fred's being pleased by Adele's jealousy does not change the fact that her jealous desires and motivations can conflict with her caring desires and motivations.³⁰⁹ One might think that cases in which the beloved wants the subject to be jealous are more difficult for me to criticize, but I do not think so. For caring relationships require one to have motivationally efficacious desires that the other's interests (both objectively and subjectively conceived) be served. Fred's desiring that Adele be jealous does not mean that it is in his interests that she be so; Fred can be wrong about what is good for him and his relationship, so her care for him can require that she not satisfy his desire that she be jealous.

If what triggers the jealousy is in Fred's interests, then the jealousy undermines the relationship because the jealous desire either actually or potentially eliminates the caring

³⁰⁸ One does not acknowledge the tastiness of a dinner by making it taste worse.

³⁰⁹ This is so even if it is possible for Fred to *intentionally* make Adele jealous or if it were possible for Adele to intentionally make herself jealous *because* she knows that would please Fred. Just because a person like Fred might intentionally cause an emotion does not mean that he is correct to think that doing so is good for him, his relationship, or his partner. In such cases, Fred is wrong about what counts as a caring desire. Notice that if Fred intentionally incites Adele's jealousy, he probably also makes their relationship worse, since by doing so he intentionally makes Adele feel an unpleasant, even painful emotion that undermines the caring nature of their relationship simply in exchange for more attention, more dance practice, or whatever he hopes to achieve. His doing so is likely motivated by his feeling of desperation rather than by his careful deliberation.

desire, breaking or threatening the pattern of care in the relationship. If it is not in his interests, then jealousy undermines the relationship because the jealous desire either actually or potentially motivates the subject instead of the caring desire, breaking or threatening the pattern of care in the relationship.³¹⁰ If Fred wants Adele to care about him and their relationship (which he must if he is advancing this proposal), then his desire that Adele be jealous conflicts with his desire that she care about him. So if anything, jealousy makes their relationship less *worthy* of acknowledgment as valuable by undermining the morally valuable care in it. If one's jealousy is meant to bolster the care in a relationship, then one could better achieve that goal by bolstering the care in a way that does not simultaneously undermine it. So Adele should, to maintain her care for him, satisfy Fred's desire for a caring relationship rather than his desire that she be jealous.³¹¹ Thus, to want one's lover to acknowledge the importance and value of oneself and one's relationship by being jealous is to have an unreasonable desire, which one's lover should not satisfy.³¹²

Even if I am wrong that jealousy undermines caring relationships, we still have reason to reject this proposal insofar as jealousy is, for additional reasons, a *poor* strategy for acknowledging important and valuable people and relationships (more on this

³¹⁰ See Chapter 2.

³¹¹ I have more to say later about what exactly this might involve her doing: it is not necessarily nothing.

³¹² My claim is that we should not praise someone for satisfying the desires of the beloved at the cost of harming the relationship. One might object, though, that relationships are only valuable to the extent that they serve to satisfy the desires of the people involved—so if jealousy satisfies the desires of the beloved at the cost of the relationship, then so be it. However, I think it is clear that relationships are not only valuable insofar as they serve to satisfy the desires of the people involved; many parents have relationships with their children that are valuable in large part because of the ways that those relationships serve to thwart certain of the desires of the children. But not only parent-child relationships are like this; my relationship with my best friend (who is my equal in all significant respects) is valuable in part because she helps me thwart my desires to give up or lash out under certain kinds of pressure.

later).³¹³ Jealousy is often an ineffectual, costly, unreliable, or even counterproductive means for acknowledging valuable people and our relationships with them, since it often leads to obsession, suspicion, heartbreak, and even violence. Moreover, as I have shown, jealousy cannot serve as evidence of *why* a subject considers a person and relationship to be important and valuable, which is a crucial part of what people want from such acknowledgement. So even if my main argument does not succeed, I do not think people have good reason to want their lovers to be jealous as a means to acknowledge their importance and value and that of their relationships; there are plenty of alternative ways to acknowledge these things (more on this later as well). So I think we should reject the instrumental interpretation of the beloved-pleasing proposal.

If one accepts my arguments thus far, one also has reason to reject the second interpretation, according to which jealousy (or the disposition to be jealous) in certain circumstances is partially constitutive of some valuable relationships.³¹⁴ This interpretation suggests that sometimes we should value more highly those caring relationships in which jealousy is a constitutive part than those in which it is not. This seems to be a mistake, given how jealousy undermines caring relationships. Suppose it were possible for two caring relationships to be identical until a time at which jealousy arises in one but not the other. I have tried to show that the jealousy would undermine

³¹³ The use of ‘strategy’ here is not meant to imply that jealousy is used consciously or intentionally by jealous subjects in order to achieve some goal; it is simply meant to show that jealousy can function as a means to bring about certain states of affairs. Referring to jealousy as a strategy is not uncommon in the literature on jealousy (and some other emotions), which I think can be traced to two different trends: (1) the increasing acceptance of evolutionary explanations of why people experience jealousy and (2) the increased willingness among philosophers to see emotions as not being things in the face of which we are wholly passive. For someone who argues at length about the purposiveness and strategic function of emotions, see Solomon 2007.

³¹⁴ I suspect that the disposition to be jealous is not always as morally problematic as actually being jealous, but that is a topic for another paper.

the caring nature of the first, but whether my earlier arguments are successful or not, it is unclear to me why I should ever prefer the relationship with jealousy to the one without.³¹⁵

The impulse to accept this second interpretation seems to stem from the belief that if a subject is not jealous under certain circumstances, then that person's beloved and that person's relationship with the beloved must not *matter* to the subject the way one would hope them to. I can see the appeal of this, since I agree that people are not jealous when what is at stake does not matter to them. I also agree that if a valuable relationship appears threatened, one ought to feel *something*. However, just because a relationship's mattering seems to be at the heart of why a caring person becomes jealous, that does not mean that jealousy ever *has* to be involved for a relationship to matter to a person or *should* be. It seems to me that when subjects become jealous, the satisfaction of their own desires is mattering more to them than the relationships that must exist if those desires are to be satisfied; the jealous desire is what gives this emotion its "oomph," and the jealous desire is at least partially a self-interested desire. The self-interest at the heart of jealousy is not necessarily a bad thing *in itself*, but it is bad insofar as the jealousy of which it is a part interferes with the patterns of caring in one's relationships.³¹⁶ So I think we should also reject the constitutive interpretation of the beloved-pleasing proposal.

³¹⁵ The few ways I can think of that Adele's jealousy might enhance her relationship, such as if the jealousy were to make their dancing more expressive, do not seem to be of the right sort to outweigh the undermining of the *morally valuable* caring nature of the relationship.

³¹⁶ For a very different sort of criticism, let us briefly return to Ovid, who specifically recommended that *wives* incite jealousy in their *husbands*, but not *vice versa*. To the degree that a similar gender asymmetry in who is and who is not encouraged to feel jealousy (and why) is present in contemporary American culture, this gives us a reason to reject the beloved-pleasing proposal.

I cannot give a full analysis of how gendered norms encourage and discourage people to feel jealousy, so a few remarks will have to suffice to start us thinking about this issue. On the one

The Self-Respect Proposal

Let us now consider a different moral reason to praise jealous subjects. According to what I call the *self-respect proposal*, some jealous subjects can be worthy of moral praise because their jealousy can help maintain or enhance their self-respect and thus ward off servility. According to this proposal, it is not the target who primarily benefits from jealousy, but rather the jealous subject who does.

There are quite a few different views in the philosophical literature about what self-respect is and why it matters morally. It would be beyond the scope of this project to defend a fully articulated account of self-respect and its value here, but I do need to distinguish between some rather different ways of conceptualizing self-respect. Thomas Hill identifies at least three different kinds of self-respect; as he sees it, self-respect can be

hand, insofar as it is seen as normal and acceptable for men to be sexually unfaithful to women, women are not encouraged to feel jealousy relative to sexual infidelity; women's jealousy would supposedly be futile if it were an attempt to preserve men's sexual fidelity. Insofar as women are encouraged to take what they can get when it comes to romantic partners (notice the rise in popular media narratives depicting extremely attractive and accomplished women who are happy being partnered with unattractive slackers), women are not encouraged to feel jealousy. Insofar as it is supposed that women are better off remaining faithful and that women have less desire to be unfaithful than men, it is supposed that women do not need the threat of men's jealousy to remain sexually faithful. For some history relevant to these points, see Stearns 1989 or a quick summary of his research in Mullen 1991, pp. 597-598. On the other hand, insofar as it is seen as manly for men not to be emotionally intimate, men are not encouraged to feel jealousy relative to women's intimate emotional relationships with others.

This gender asymmetry seems to serve the interests of men somewhat more than it does women. Insofar as following the recommendation underlying the proposal perpetuates a gender asymmetry that privileges members of one gender to the disadvantage of others, this is a reason to criticize the beloved-pleasing proposal. Given dominant gender norms in our society, we cannot aim to please beloveds by satisfying their desires for us to be jealous without disproportionately harming members of one gender and perpetuating sexist norms, insofar as members of one gender are more encouraged to *desire* that their partners be jealous. If this asymmetry is reversed anywhere, we still have a reason to reject the proposal, because of course it would be unjust to perpetuate a gender asymmetry in either direction. Notice that Fred and Adele subvert the gendered pattern discussed here.

grounded in (1) the human or moral rights that everyone shares,³¹⁷ (2) one's merits, or (3) one's (adherence to) personal standards.³¹⁸ For my purposes, I group together (2) and (3) so that there are two basic kinds of self-respect: the self-respect grounded in rights, of which all people are equally worthy, and the self-respect grounded in what I call character, of which different people are worthy in different degrees and for different reasons.³¹⁹ Hill seems to be most well known for what he says about rights-based self-respect, but my main concern is with character-based self-respect.

On my view, character-based self-respect is partially grounded in the relationships, personal qualities, and possessions that one has and in virtue of which one sees oneself as having merit or meeting one's personal standards. One might think that insofar as jealousy helps a subject maintain those relationships, personal qualities, and possessions in the face of rivals, her jealousy contributes to her having character-based self-respect.³²⁰ If so, since it can be a morally good thing to have character-based self-respect (at least when having it results from a proper assessment of one's character or particular aspects of it), one might say that jealousy can be morally valuable, and thus that a person's being jealous can be a moral reason to praise that person.

For instance, one might say that if Adele's self-respect depends in part on her maintaining a valuable and exclusive partnership with Fred and if a rival like Ginger

³¹⁷ The first kind of respect is the one most closely associated with Kant, but it is not the only kind that he discusses. For a quick summary of four different kinds of respect in Kant, see Dillon 1995, pp. 14-18.

³¹⁸ See Hill 1991, pp. 4-24, especially p. 12 and p. 22.

³¹⁹ For more discussion of the contrast between conceptions of self-respect according to which all people are equally worthy of having it and conceptions of self-respect according to which not everyone is equally worthy of having it, see Darwall 1977 and the essays collected in Dillon 1995. In those essays, one can see a number of options for how to frame (and name) what I see as the two basic types of self-respect.

³²⁰ See Rousseau 1979, p. 431 for a view according to which jealousy can spur one to act in ways that improve one's character.

threatens to encroach on that partnership, being jealous can serve to protect Fred and Adele's relationship by motivating her to strengthen it or remove the threat. By protecting a partnership that is important to her identity, Adele would be protecting her character-based self-respect.³²¹ The suggestion is that if Adele were not jealous in response to Fred's dancing with someone else, Adele might be failing to appropriately recognize her own merits or personal standards.³²² Thus supporters of this proposal conclude that, in some circumstances, if Adele were not jealous, she would be servile.³²³

An argument for this proposal goes something like the following:

1. Having character-based self-respect (or at least avoiding servility) is morally valuable (at least when it results from a proper assessment of one's character or particular aspects of it).³²⁴
2. Having character-based self-respect (and avoiding servility) sometimes requires one to defend one's relationships if a rival threatens them.³²⁵

³²¹ For empirical evidence in support of the view that "[E]nvy and jealousy are most likely to be felt when comparisons are made in domains that are especially important to how we define ourselves... jealousy is most likely to be experienced ... in especially important domains—that is, domains relevant to self-definition" see Salovey and Rothman 1991, especially p. 272. See Clanton and Kosins 1991, p. 133 for the claim that "the *intention* of jealousy is the protection of the relationship and/or the protection of the ego of the threatened partner." For more discussion of the connection between jealousy and one's conception of oneself, see Neu 1980, Tov-Ruach 1980, and White and Mullen 1989, pp. 19-21.

³²² She might also be failing to give appropriate weight to her interests, and thereby failing to recognize her status as a moral agent who is as worthy of rights-based self-respect as any other moral agent.

³²³ This proposal is especially interesting given how common it is for people to link jealousy to insecurity, lack of self-respect, or low self-esteem. A quick Internet search for 'jealousy' and 'assertiveness' or 'self-respect' yields lots of advice about how to prevent jealousy by building a more positive self-image. Common views are divided between those that see jealousy as a *product* of low self-esteem and those that see it as a *cause* of low self-esteem; those who think the latter will be hard pressed to defend this proposal. See White 2008 for research on therapists' perceptions of low self-esteem as the most significant cause or contributing factor to their clients' jealousy. See Stewart and Beatty 1985 and Mullen and Martin 1994, pp. 38 and 41, for evidence of a correlation between jealousy and low self-esteem. See also White and Mullen 1989, pp. 21-23.

³²⁴ A stronger version would say we have a moral *obligation* to cultivate self-respect or avoid servility. Hill, for one, certainly thinks we have a moral duty to cultivate rights-based self-respect, if not the other kinds of self-respect.

³²⁵ Another version of the self-respect proposal says self-respect is not so much produced or maintained by defending relationships from threats, but rather by acknowledging and validating one's own beliefs and, especially, desires. Many of the same criticisms will apply to that version.

3. By being jealous, one can defend one's relationships from threats by rivals.
4. So by being jealous, one can protect one's morally valuable character-based self-respect.
5. A person's protecting something of moral value gives us a moral reason to praise a person, albeit one that can be overridden.
6. Therefore, a person's being jealous can give us a moral reason to praise that person.³²⁶

In discussing Fred and Adele in the paragraph above this argument, I interpreted the third premise as saying that jealousy is *instrumentally* valuable to cultivating self-respect, given its capacity to motivate.³²⁷ However, one might instead read it as saying that being jealous can *partially constitute* having self-respect. In this respect, this proposal is like the beloved-pleasing proposal.³²⁸ Regardless of which reading one prefers, they both turn on the claim that one's self-respect can, in some sense, depend on one's being jealous.

This proposal does not seem to be advanced as frequently as the beloved-pleasing proposal is, but there are some people who say that they could not respect themselves if they were not jealous when their important relationships were under threat from rivals. There are multiple reasons one might be motivated to support the self-respect proposal.

³²⁶ See Kristjánsson 2002, especially section 5.4, for a similar line of thinking. He says that jealousy is virtuous in that it (by definition) involves *anger* over a violation of one's moral desert; thus he says on p. 163 that being jealous is a mean between being servile and being overly sensitive to treatment one does not deserve. However, as I argued in Chapter 1, I think we have good reason to reject his definition of jealousy as overly narrow. For other relevant literature, see also Taylor 1988, sections III and V, on jealousy's protective function and Larremore 1905, p. 487 on Herbert Spencer's claim that "In insisting upon the necessary or just rights of self, jealousy of others who encroach upon them is legitimate."

³²⁷ Some might suggest, as Jean Roberts did to me, that jealousy is not an instrument by which one might defend a relationship, but rather that it is simply what many people feel *while* defending their relationships using other means. I see the appeal of that way of thinking, but am willing to grant to jealousy's defenders that it might, at least sometimes, function as an instrument the way suggested above.

³²⁸ This proposal is formulated to give us a moral reason to praise subjects who already have and do not want to lose what they jealously desire. It could be reformulated to encompass cases in which self-respect depends on gaining something new, but the former are more often seen as relevant to self-respect. As one philosopher told me, he is much more concerned with preserving his status now than he ever was with becoming well-known and well-regarded in the first place.

For instance, one might support it if one sees jealousy is a manly response to a threatening rival and manliness as important to one's identity. Alternatively, one might support it because one sees having certain kinds of interpersonal relationships as crucial to being the kind of person who is worthy of self-respect. However, regardless of what might motivate one to think that one's self-respect depends upon being jealous, I think we should reject this proposal.

Criticisms of the Self-Respect Proposal

I am happy to grant the first premise in both a stronger and a weaker form; I accept the claim that having and/or cultivating appropriately grounded character-based self-respect is not only morally valuable, but also morally obligatory.³²⁹ However, I have worries about the rest of the argument.

My first worry relates to the second premise and our need to be careful not to overestimate the number of situations in which it could be true that having self-respect requires one to defend a relationship from a threat by a rival. For this claim elides the fact that the non-jealous person in the relationship is, in general, an autonomous agent. Insofar as our partners can and sometimes do autonomously choose to change or end their relationships with us, we should recognize those autonomous decisions for what they are and respond appropriately.

Consider a case in which Adele's self-respect is partially grounded in maintaining her partnership with Fred. Now suppose their partnership *is* threatened: Fred may choose, for good or bad reasons, to pursue a partnership with Ginger rather than, or in

³²⁹ People who believe that we do not have moral obligations to ourselves would reject the stronger version of it, but I think that reasonable people will at least be able to agree with the weaker version.

addition to, with Adele. If Adele sees the partnership as something to be protected the way her house needs to be protected from intruders, she would be neglecting the fact that their relationship requires Fred's *voluntary* participation. To maintain the partnership, she should engage Fred as an agent, giving him reasons and listening to his reasons in turn. If Fred chooses not to maintain the partnership, that choice need not reflect anything about Adele's grounds for self-respect. Fred might choose for terrible or good reasons, but they are *Fred's reasons*. Adele's self-respect should not be grounded in something that requires Fred to align his reasoning and values with hers, come what may. Subjects should not have to neglect others' autonomy to maintain their self-respect. For one's self-respect should not, in general, be grounded in someone else's choices, and should not be grounded in someone else's sacrificing his or her autonomy.

My next, more serious objections have to do with premise three. First, we should ask whether jealousy can actually protect relationships. I take my earlier arguments to give us good reason to think that jealousy undermines both caring and non-caring relationships, and thus that it cannot protect them in the way necessary for the self-respect proposal to succeed. For if jealousy undermines relationships, then it makes them less worthy of grounding self-respect. If my earlier arguments are successful, the argument for the self-respect proposal says, in effect, that sometimes one should defend one's relationship by doing something (being jealous) that undermines the morally valuable nature of that relationship and thereby undermines its worthiness to serve as the grounds of one's character-based self-respect. Thus it would not serve the protective function that is supposed to provide a moral reason to praise the jealous subject, according to this proposal. So if I am right that jealousy undermines relationships, we have reason to reject premise three.

Someone might retort that even if I am right about jealousy undermining relationships, sometimes character-based self-respect can *only* be protected at the expense of a relationship. However, I worry that if there are such cases, they involve pathology; I think it is a problem if subjects base their self-respect on things that can only be preserved by jealousy. In cases where one might be tempted to say that a subject's self-respect can only be preserved by jealousy and thereby at the expense of a relationship, it seems better to say that the subject should find something else to serve as the basis of his self-respect. For instance, one could maintain one's self-respect by committing oneself to protecting one's relationship, if the need arises, only in ways that will not simultaneously undermine it. This commitment or personal standard could itself form the basis for self-respect (even if the relationship disintegrates in the face of one's efforts to maintain it); sticking to this commitment provides a better ground for self-respect than protecting a relationship even when doing so simultaneously undermines it.

However, even if my arguments fail and jealousy can protect relationships, we should ask whether it is a morally acceptable or, more to the point, commendable means of doing so. That is, we should ask whether there are any considerations of the sort hinted at in premise five that would override the moral reason to praise a subject for being jealous when that jealousy protects the subject's self-respect. One such consideration is the fact that other means of protecting self-respect tend to be more effective and involve fewer morally significant risks, as Goldie and many others have recognized.

I think that part of what makes it appealing to say that jealousy is a morally praiseworthy means of protecting relationships is an unconscious reliance on a false dichotomy. It does seem plausible to say that jealousy is a morally praiseworthy means of protecting relationships when one thinks that Adele's only two options are to be jealous or

to simply step back and watch Fred make his choices to her detriment. Focusing on those two choices leads some people to believe not only that jealousy *can* protect self-respect, but also that there are some circumstances in which jealousy is the *only* way to protect self-respect. However, it is not the case that the only alternative to being jealous is feeling and doing nothing.

There are ways to preserve Fred and Adele's relationship that involve bringing emotions other than jealousy into play. If Adele cares about Fred, her sympathy and affection for him, her fear of harm befalling him, her hope for their future together, and many other emotions could all contribute to preserving their relationship. People have an impressive array of emotions that can motivate thoughts and actions that support their relationships. For example, someone who sees his partner flirting with someone else at a party might, instead of getting jealous, feel guilty for neglecting his partner lately and thus be motivated to devote more loving attention to his partner. Alternatively, he may feel compassion for or anger toward his partner, who has a habit of making friends with selfish, outgoing manipulators and thus be motivated to help the partner break this habit. These emotions seem much more worthy of praise to me.

When we look carefully at the cases in which someone is most likely to think that jealousy is recommended or required to protect self-respect, I think we will find that the emotion we should actually be recommending is not jealousy but instead *indignation* or *resentment*, which, unlike jealousy, necessarily involve a belief that a wrong has been done.³³⁰ If one's relationship, and thereby the grounds of one's self-respect, are truly

³³⁰ Indignant people want whatever is owed to them and are upset about being wronged; jealous people want some non-replicable good that is not necessarily owed to them and are upset about (potentially) having this desire go unsatisfied. Some might think that what I am calling indignation

threatened by a rival, either the rival or the partner has done something to undermine the relationship, and thereby the grounds of your self-respect. If so, you have a moral reason to criticize that person; the person who undermines your valuable relationship merits your *indignation or resentment*.³³¹ I would agree that a person might lack self-respect if he fails to feel indignation or resentment toward people who threaten or disregard his morally valuable relationships, but I would not agree that a person who fails to feel jealous in such a circumstance lacks self-respect. Relationships are often worth our protection and often should partially constitute the basis of our self-respect, but that does not mean we should or can only protect them by being jealous.

There are also ways to preserve relationships that do not require any emotions.³³² I leave it to others to explain ways to create and maintain good relationships, but I think we can agree that some things, like good communication, forgiveness, and taking responsibility for one's errors (however one defines those things) are crucial.³³³ Depending on what type of relationship is under consideration, different strategies will be appropriate to its preservation. Because non-emotional strategies and emotional strategies not involving jealousy are available for dealing with threats to relationships, jealousy should not be thought of as a *necessary* component in successful strategies for preserving morally valuable relationships.

might more appropriately be called resentment, and that is fine with me; I am not able to argue for a particular view of the distinction between them here.

³³¹ The situation might also or instead merit anger, fear, resentment, disappointment, sadness, regret, etc., depending on whether a wrong has been done, whether the relationship is actually threatened, etc.

³³² Gary Hansen uses empirical findings (both psychological and sociological) to identify a number of strategies for coping with jealousy-inducing situations. It seems that those coping strategies could be triggered even in the absence of any emotional response. See Hansen 1991.

³³³ In fact, see Mathes 1992, pp. 150-153 for evidence that communicating is a successful strategy for coping with jealousy.

To illustrate why we should reject the claim that jealousy is sometimes *required* for one's self-respect, let us consider a class of cases in which people seem most likely to suppose that self-respect can *only* be protected by jealousy. I have in mind cases in which a person who we might think of as a "doormat" finally responds with jealousy to the behavior of someone to whom that person usually defers.³³⁴ An example of someone similar to Hill's deferential housewife helps flesh this out: suppose Shelly is extremely deferential to her husband Ned, who fairly consistently takes advantage of Shelly's good nature.³³⁵ Ned repeatedly cheats on Shelly, and does not even try to hide his affairs from her. If one day Shelly finally reaches her breaking point and becomes jealous in response to Ned's affairs, we might be particularly inclined to think that Shelly is on the right track to self-respect by being jealous under these circumstances, and therefore see ourselves as having a moral reason to praise her in virtue of her jealousy.

I think such claims seem plausible because, in such cases, we are thinking of the situation in which Shelly reacts with jealousy *as compared to* previous situations in which she passively accepted Ned's poor treatment of her (or, worse, blamed herself for it). We approve of her responding *at all* to Ned, *despite* the fact that the response involves jealousy. I will be the first to admit that Shelly's passively accepting Ned's poor treatment is morally worse, and less conducive to self-respect, than her responding with jealousy.³³⁶ For as Diana Meyers says, "A number of philosophers have contended that the hallmark of self-respect is the self-respecting person's refusal to submit passively to victimization," and Shelly is somewhat less passive when she responds with jealousy than when she does

³³⁴ Thanks to Bill Talbott and Jeremy Fischer for pressing me to discuss examples of this sort.

³³⁵ See Hill 1991, especially pp. 5-6.

³³⁶ For I think that Hill makes a persuasive case that the passivity of someone like Shelly is incompatible with having *rights-based* self-respect.

not respond at all.³³⁷ However, just because there was a morally worse response available that Shelly managed to avoid, that does not mean that her actual response is not also morally bad.³³⁸ By comparing the present circumstances to the past circumstances, we can lose sight of the fact that there are also better ways for Shelly to respond that do not involve jealousy.

But I think it is even more significant that we can also be confused about what it is that we approve of here. We approve of Shelly's coming to value *herself*, her moral rights, and/or maybe her marriage vows, or we approve of her coming to value these things *more* (enough to make jealousy possible). In our excitement for Shelly's accomplishment on that score, we might be disposed to confuse approval of those accomplishments with approval of the jealousy as such.

One might wonder whether Shelly's jealousy is a means to her coming to value herself and/or her moral rights. However, since jealousy does not arise unless a subject takes the satisfaction of one of her desires to *matter*, Shelly will not be jealous until, consciously or unconsciously, (1) she desires to have her value and/or the value of her moral rights recognized and (2) she takes that desire to be a matter of significance. Therefore, since the recognition of value precedes the jealousy, the jealousy cannot be the instrument by which she recognizes her value and/or the value of her moral rights.

Someone might still argue that there are some circumstances in which there is no better alternative to jealousy that is truly live for a subject. For instance, one might agree

³³⁷ Meyers 1995, p. 219.

³³⁸ I do think that one can find oneself in a situation in which one does not have the option to act in a morally good way. This might be purely because of bad moral luck, or it might be because one has made bad choices in the past that have cut off the possibility of acting in a morally good way now.

that it would be better for Shelly to demand that Ned show more respect for her than to be quietly jealous, while also asserting that making such a demand might simply be beyond Shelly's abilities (at least at the present stage of her life). However, I have a very hard time seeing any reason to think that it would be possible for Shelly to feel jealousy in response to Ned but not possible for her to feel indignation, resentment, exasperation, frustration, or some other emotion that could indicate that she does value herself and believe herself to be worthy of better treatment than Ned has given her. Furthermore, feeling indignation and/or resentment in response to being poorly treated seems to be a better way to protect one's self-respect than by feeling jealousy, insofar as indignation and resentment involve believing oneself to have been wronged or believing that one deserves better than the treatment one has received, whereas being jealous can involve desiring something that you do not think you deserve.

When I take all these considerations together, I am not persuaded that jealousy makes subjects morally praiseworthy through any connection to their character-based self-respect. Instead, it seems to me that jealousy undermines the grounds of one's character-based self-respect, since jealousy undermines the relationships that partially constitute the grounds of one's character-based self-respect.

Social Value Proposals

The next proposal widens the scope of the supposed beneficiaries of jealousy. What I call social value proposals posit that we have a moral reason to praise some jealous subjects because of the role their jealousy can play in securing a good for a group. They attempt to show that jealousy can be a mechanism or strategy for protecting or enhancing some

social good.³³⁹ There are a number of social goods that might be proposed to flow from jealousy, many of which are supposed to be brought about by preserving particular social forms or practices. The social form to be preserved might be a “traditional” family structure, monogamous relationships, stable relationships, relationships predicated on some form of exclusive interaction, a competitive and thus productive populace (think contemporary corporate America), or even a competitive and thus honorable or glorious populace (think ancient Athens and its culture of *agon*).³⁴⁰

Social value proposals seem to be the proposals that I encounter most frequently in casual conversations about jealousy, so I want to outline two versions of this type of argument. The first argument for a social value proposal can be called the *traditional family proposal*:

1. Monogamous relationships are necessary to preserve the traditional family structure.
2. The traditional family structure is a moral good that we should preserve.
3. Jealousy can protect monogamous relationships.
4. Therefore, jealousy can help us preserve the good of the traditional family structure.³⁴¹
5. Therefore, a person’s being jealous can give us a good reason to praise that person.³⁴²

³³⁹ For a view in this category, see Clanton and Kosins 1991, who define jealousy as a “protective reaction,” seeing the jealous subject’s intention as being to protect a relationship or the subject’s ego (133). They emphasize what they call the “general social usefulness of jealousy,” which is grounded in “the fact that many jealous behaviors are appropriate and constructive ways of protecting valued relationships from real threats” (142). See also Bringle 1991, p. 125 for a short discussion of some potential positive and negative effects of jealousy on relationships.

³⁴⁰ One might also think that jealousy can protect certain religious goods, such as fidelity to God. For instance, the Christian apostle Paul was “jealous” of the Corinthians, wanting them to remain faithful to a true understanding of what it is to be an apostle. St. Augustine says that citizens of the city of God would praise Paul for this jealousy. See Augustine 1998, p. 598. I do not think that Paul’s concern for the holiness of the Corinthians counts as jealousy on my account, but one can imagine a religious good being at stake in a variant of a social value proposal.

³⁴¹ As Jean Roberts pointed out to me, poverty and many other bad things can help preserve this and other supposed social goods, so the burden is on supporters of this kind of proposal to show why jealousy’s contribution to the preservation of a social good is *enough* to render the jealous subject praiseworthy.

One reason that the traditional family proposal is worth considering is that there is empirical evidence of a correlation between firm commitment to sex-role traditionalism and higher incidence of jealousy. The fact that some people antecedently accept this argument could partially explain this correlation, or it might be that people who are more firmly committed to sex-role traditionalism and are more jealous simply use this argument as a justification for their experiences of jealousy (whether consciously or not).³⁴³

Another reason to discuss the traditional family proposal is that it highlights the conservative nature of many social value proposals. Since jealousy is and has been a common feature in many social structures, people who tend to want to maintain the status quo are more likely to suggest that there is good reason for the jealousy we feel. This is certainly not to say that all supporters of the “traditional family structure” see jealousy as morally good, but rather that assessing jealousy as a good thing makes it easier to consistently maintain that we should continue to think, feel, and act according to familiar patterns. On the flip side, America has a fairly significant, if cyclical, history of social experiments meant to eliminate or minimize relationship jealousy when it is seen as morally bad; there is an underlying progressivism in such experiments.³⁴⁴

³⁴² This argument is framed in language familiar from the contemporary American popular press, but the underlying argument predates that particular linguistic trope; jealousy has been seen in many “honor societies” as a way of upholding norms relating to family and sexuality long before people referred to such norms as the backbone of “the traditional family structure.” For discussion of jealousy as a way to preserve family honor, see Mullen 1991, pp. 594 and 597.

³⁴³ See Mathes 1992, pp. 34-35, 43, and 82-83 for evidence that jealousy is correlated with endorsement of traditional attitudes toward women, religiosity, and endorsement of traditional sex-roles. See also White and Mullen 1989, p. 123-124. For references to more literature on the link between jealousy and traditional gender-role orientation and attitudes, see Hansen 1991, p. 217.

³⁴⁴ See Buunk 1991; Mathes 1992, pp. 54-57, and 85; Overall 1998; Stearns 1989, pp. 34-36 and 122-126; van Sommers 1988, Chapter 3; and White and Mullen 1989, pp. 121-123 for

Not all social value proposals wear conservatism so clearly on their sleeves, though. For instance, what follows is another formulation of an argument for a social value proposal, which can be called the *productivity proposal*:

1. For a social group to be productive, competition is a necessary motivational force.³⁴⁵
2. Productivity is a social good that we have a moral reason to preserve (and/or enhance).
3. Jealousy can spur competition.
4. Therefore, jealousy can help us preserve (and/or enhance) productivity in a social group.
5. Therefore, a person's being jealous can give us a moral reason to praise that person.

I choose to focus on this formulation because the social value at stake (productivity) looms large in the minds of many contemporary Americans and because this formulation captures a social good that might be created by jealousy in non-caring relationships like the workplace relationship between Linda and Nancy that is discussed in Chapter 3.³⁴⁶ Both formulations attempt to show that jealousy can be a mechanism or strategy for protecting or enhancing some social good. Other social value proposals might frame jealousy as an *educative* mechanism; jealousy's social value might reside in its being a way to help people learn something (about themselves, their values, other people, or social norms) that makes it easier or more likely that they will preserve or enhance some social value.³⁴⁷ One way to criticize such proposals is to simply say that they are mistaken

discussions of jealousy in the lives of people who practice swinging, polyfidelity, and other non-monogamous sexual practices, as well as the impacts of such practices on the practitioners' partners.

³⁴⁵ For many examples of people who believe this (and criticisms of this view that differ from my own), see Vaillancourt Rosenau 2003.

³⁴⁶ Most social value proposals focus on the supposed social value of jealousy in caring/loving relationships.

³⁴⁷ For instance, your unexpectedly being jealous might teach you that what you desire is more important to you than you realized or teach you to notice certain important features of your surroundings.

because goodness is not to be understood in terms of that which has desirable consequences. However, since I want to engage with the supporters of this proposal on their own terms, I set that particular criticism to the side.

One might say that a virtue of this type of proposal is that it, if successful, might give us a reason to praise jealous subjects in a broad range of non-caring cases, depending on how the social good is cashed out.³⁴⁸ Another virtue is that many proposals of this general kind emphasize the moral value of relationships, which is an aim that I share. Insofar as the supporters of such proposals claim that many relationships are genuinely morally valuable and that morally valuable relationships, social forms, and social practices should be preserved, I agree wholeheartedly. Despite its virtues, however, this proposal is not without problems.

Criticisms of Social Value Proposals

I start by focusing on the first (traditional family) formulation of the social value proposal, then move to the second (the productivity proposal). While I do not work through each possible version of a social value proposal, I believe that the same general kinds of criticisms apply to other formulations of social value proposals.

First, some of the things that people who support the social value proposals actually seek to protect have never really existed, and therefore our grounds for thinking that they would be protected (or created) by jealousy (or the disposition to be jealous) are quite weak. Consider “the traditional family structure.” There has never been only one

³⁴⁸ This probably is not true of the two proposals already considered. For the beloved-pleasing proposal applies only to cases in which the relationship between subject and target is worthy of being acknowledged as important and valuable, which is less likely to be true of non-caring cases. Furthermore, the self-respect proposal applies only to cases in which the object of the jealous desire could be seen as (potentially) grounding the subject’s self-respect, and jealous desires in non-caring cases seem less likely to fulfill that condition.

family structure present in a single culture at a single time, nor across cultures at a single time, nor across times in a single culture. There are always families with kids and families without. There are always families in which a family member who would otherwise play a key role is absent or dead. These are just a couple of many variations in family structure that are present in any given community.

So to speak of jealousy as protecting or bringing about “*the* traditional family structure,” as though there were only one, is to speak in code about protecting or bringing about a certain kind of family structure that some people *wish to be the only family structure*. The good that people who would support the first formulation of a social value proposal seem to actually want is *uniformity* of family structure, and most people in contemporary America who advocate for “the traditional family structure” want families to be nuclear families headed by Christian husbands/fathers in monogamous, heterosexual relationships. Such families have certainly existed in many times and places, and have often been considered the best kind of family, but they have never been the only kind of family. So the presence of jealousy in a culture has never been *sufficient* to create or maintain uniformity in family structure (whether it is “the traditional family structure” or not), which is what supporters of this formulation of the proposal seem to actually want.

Furthermore, I see no reason to think that jealousy is *necessary* to create or maintain uniformity of family structure. For instance, I can imagine a tyrannical theocracy in which families other than nuclear families headed by husbands/fathers in monogamous, heterosexual relationships are systematically eradicated, as horrible as that would be. Jealousy would not need to play any role in such a campaign for it to be successful. And if it were, I would not conclude that I had a moral reason to praise the person(s) who brought about or ran the tyrannical theocracy. So in addition to my worry

that any causal connection that exists between experiencing jealousy and protecting “the traditional family structure” is quite weak, the parallel case of the tyrannical theocracy makes me worry that even if the causal connection were tight, we would have reason not to accept the first formulation of the social value proposal.

The second problem is that some of the things that people who support social value proposals seek to protect might not be goods at all, or at least not in the way that proponents of the proposals think they are. Nuclear families headed by Christian husbands/fathers in monogamous, heterosexual relationships can of course be very good families, but they are not the only kind of good family, nor are they *always* the *best* kind of family, as some would have us believe. I do not think we should accept the second premise of the first formulation of the social value proposal in its current, unqualified form, because I do not think the traditional family structure is always, necessarily a moral good that we should preserve. If some people can be better members of society, have better relationships, and raise healthier, happier children (if they choose to have children) by living in a family that is structured some other way, then I do not see any reason to tell those people to preserve the traditional family structure. And I think a lot of people fulfill that antecedent. What makes a family good is not its having the traditional family structure; families are good when their member have good relationships. And if it is simply good relationships (wherever we find them and whatever form they take) that we want to preserve, then I do not think social value proposals are going to get us all that far, since they do not represent the multifarious nature of valuable relationships.

So now let us turn our focus to the second formulation of a social value proposal. This formulation focuses on the preservation or increase of productivity through competition spurred by jealousy, and here I believe that we have found something

(productivity) that does exist and that is a good. So now we have to confront the question of whether jealousy preserves it. I think the answer is no. I am happy to grant the second (normative) premise of the productivity proposal, with one important caveat; while I agree that productivity is a social good that is more or less present in any group, I want to be sure to emphasize that this premise should be qualified with a *ceteris paribus* clause. We should preserve or enhance productivity *when all other things are equal*. Despite obsessions with productivity in certain business communities, it is certainly not a supreme social value; it cannot be said to trump any other value (social or otherwise) that comes along.³⁴⁹

The claims that competition is necessary to motivate productivity and that jealousy can spur competition are empirical premises, and I do not think there is sufficient empirical evidence to support them. First, let us consider the claim that competition spurs or increases productivity. Certainly it does not always do so; competitiveness is insufficient for productivity. It can cause a person to focus on the tasks that will bring that person the most recognition from others or the tasks that are most prestigious according to some subjective set of values, which are not necessarily the tasks that most need to be done or that one is best suited to do. But the real question is whether increased competition is motivationally *necessary* for increased productivity. Let us consider the idea that competition is necessary to motivate productivity. When I was a teenager, I had a part-time job at a doctor's office stuffing bills into their envelopes. I was the only person who did this job, and was basically guaranteed the job for as long as I wanted it. I had no actual and basically no hypothetical competitors, so competition did not motivate me to

³⁴⁹ Thanks to Jeremy Fischer for pointing out that this might be the end of the argument, if you think that a non-moral reason (to feel jealousy) can never trump a moral reason (to refrain from jealousy).

be more productive. What made me most productive was simply working when no one else was around, since I worked in a room where I was often interrupted during business hours. Many stories like this support the claim that competition is not necessary for productivity; many of us simply want to do well at our jobs regardless of whether other people perform their jobs better or worse and regardless of whether others are compensated more or less.

Let us turn now to the link between jealousy and competition. I am happy to grant that more jealousy in a population is probably *correlated* with more competition, but it is far from clear to me that one causes the other, and if so, which causes which.³⁵⁰ There are certainly many instances in which jealousy causes some people to give up in the face of competition and cases in which jealousy causes people to lash out in ways that end with their being removed from a competitive situation. It seems to me that if we want increased productivity, what we really want is not jealousy-fueled competition, but rather a lot of people who want to be productive regardless of whether others are also being productive and/or a lot of productive people who support others in being productive. A bit of imagination is all it takes to see that jealousy and competition are not the only ways to encourage people to be productive.³⁵¹

Furthermore, even if I am wrong and jealousy does enhance productivity by enhancing competition, we must ask whether it is possible for jealousy to increase productivity *enough* or *in the right way* so that the value of doing so neutralizes or outweighs

³⁵⁰ One might think there would be empirical evidence for such a correlation, but I am not aware of any.

³⁵¹ See Larremore 1905, p. 492, where he says, “As shallow and as false as the saying that love is impossible without jealousy, would be the contention that jealousy could not be uprooted from the average soul without impairing its zeal in the competitions of life.”

the disvalue of its undermining of relationships. It is notoriously difficult (some say impossible) to compare values as disparate as the value of productivity and the value of having good interpersonal relationships. All that I can do here is gesture at one possible way to argue that even if jealousy were to preserve or enhance productivity by enhancing competition, we would still have moral reasons to prefer that jealousy not occur.

On the one hand, if a group is productive enough to meet all of its members' basic needs, it seems to me that additional resources would be well-spent if they were devoted to preserving and enhancing relationships rather than further increasing productivity. On the other hand, if a group's members' basic needs are not being met because productivity is low, increasing productivity through jealousy-fueled competition seems unlikely in the long run to be conducive to meeting the unmet needs, which should be the priority, morally speaking. For if I am right that jealousy undermines relationships, and people must work together to increase productivity and thereby meet the unmet needs, then preserving relationships and avoiding jealousy to the extent that we can will be key to meeting those unmet needs.

Thus I take it that the considerations discussed in this section give us a number of reasons to reject these social value proposals. I cannot discuss every possible variant of a social value proposal, but the general criticisms that I discuss in the next section provide reason to think that we should reject other proposals of this sort as well.

Criticisms that Apply to All These Proposals

What I consider to be my two most important criticisms are those that apply to all the proposals I have considered so far. They apply to all these proposals in virtue of the fact that each proposal has a similar structure; each posits some way in which jealousy contributes to the preservation or increase of some moral good or the prevention of some

moral bad, and thus they all portray jealousy as a valuable means or strategy.³⁵² I happily grant that jealousy can appropriately be thought of as a means or strategy for achieving some end; the same is true for many, if not all emotions.³⁵³ However, I object to conceiving of jealousy as a *morally good* or *morally valuable* means or strategy.

My first general criticism has been touched upon at various points in the preceding sections, in which I have given a number of reasons for thinking that jealousy does not preserve or enhance the values or goods that some suggest it does. With respect to all the proposals under consideration, we have good reason to see jealousy as a *poor* strategy, in the sense that it is an ineffective means for preserving or promoting good things (or preventing bad things). Anytime we see jealousy as a means for promoting or preserving a good, we should ask whether it is an effective or ineffective, efficient or costly, reliable or unreliable means for doing so.

However, even if I am wrong and jealousy does sometimes preserve or enhance one or more of those goods, it may yet be that jealousy is not morally acceptable or at least not good enough to merit moral praise. A morally acceptable strategy for preserving or enhancing some good cannot require a practice that is immoral in itself, such as genocide or rape. I take it that jealousy passes that test. Nevertheless, I would also suggest that in order to be morally *good* (and therefore potentially ground moral praise), a strategy must be at least as successful and involve no greater costs than the available alternatives.

³⁵² The only person I know of who might say that jealousy is *intrinsically* good is Kristján Kristjánsson, who characterizes jealousy as a virtue. However, since I think he arrives at this conclusion only because of his reliance on a descriptive account of jealousy that is much more narrow than mine (and which does not allow for a variety of cases we would intuitively call jealousy), I do not think that he and I are actually talking about the same class of emotional experiences.

³⁵³ For examples of scholars who portray emotions as strategic, see Frank 1988 and Greenspan 2000.

For I think that mere moral acceptability of a strategy (the absence of a moral prohibition against it) is insufficient to ground moral praise for employing that strategy.³⁵⁴ One does not need a *jealous* desire to motivate thoughts, feelings, and actions that preserve or enhance the valuable things mentioned in the proposals discussed; one just needs *some* desire to preserve or enhance those goods or *some* desires that, if fulfilled, would have that effect. So let us now turn to my second general criticism.

With respect to all the proposals under consideration, I have tried to show that we have good reason to see jealousy as *unnecessary* to the preservation or promotion of the good things (and the prevention of bad things) mentioned. However, even if there are circumstances in which the best available response is a jealous response, the existence of such circumstances would not provide a reason to think that the jealousy is good *qua* jealousy. If, because of contingent circumstances, there really is no option available to me that is better than my being jealous, what could ground moral praise of me would not be my *being jealous*, but rather my *having avoided (numerous) worse options*. Without an argument for the further claim that jealousy is *in itself* somehow good in a way that grounds moral praise, I have to suppose that if jealousy were ever the lesser of numerous evils, that contingent fact would not be sufficient to render jealousy a good thing in its own right.

³⁵⁴ One might think that moral praise is or can be merited in a situation in which one does what is merely morally acceptable if (for instance, because of bad moral luck) all the morally acceptable options available are very difficult to identify and carry out. However, in such cases it appears to me that any moral praise we might (correctly) attach to such an agent is done so not in virtue of the particular *strategy* she has employed, but rather in virtue of her overall good *character* (especially including her practical wisdom and self-discipline), without which they could not have acted so well in difficult circumstances. But what the supporters of the proposals under consideration need here is a moral reason to praise her in virtue of her employing *jealousy* as a merely morally acceptable strategy for achieving some good (not in virtue of her character overall).

What one will be left with is, at best, a moral reason to praise a person who happens to be jealous, but not a moral reason to praise a person precisely because she is jealous. It will only be an accident that, under some circumstances, jealousy is a means to some good that could not otherwise be achieved; this does not mean that we have a moral reason to praise a jealous subject as such. For comparison, think of the infamous ticking-time bomb scenarios with which philosophers have occupied themselves. If in such a scenario it would be morally right or good (all things considered) to torture someone so that we would be able to diffuse the bomb in time to save many others (a big if), that would not be sufficient grounds to think that we should praise the person who carries out the torture *for being a torturer*. At most, we will praise the person for having the fortitude to carry out a very difficult task in the name of the common good, and that it was torture that was needed to do so is not the relevant fact. Similar praise for their fortitude would be equally appropriate if the person simply had to perform a very time-intensive and physically grueling set of tasks or had to perform a task that is morally equivalent to torture in order to achieve the same result.³⁵⁵

In my eyes, these criticisms give us sufficient reason to conclude that it is unlikely that we will find any reason to praise a subject on moral grounds because of that person's jealousy. For something that these proposals have in common is that they do not describe a connection between what might provide a reason to praise a jealous subject as such and the necessary conditions for jealousy. The connection between a moral reason to criticize jealous subjects and the necessary conditions for jealousy is exactly what I have tried to outline in my positive account of the paradigmatic moral reason to criticize jealous

³⁵⁵ As Jeremy Fischer pointed out to me, when we praise a person under these circumstances, we still have reason to *regret* that the person had to resort to the strategy in question.

subject as such; I have argued that it is because of the specific kind of desire that is required for jealousy that jealousy undermines a wide variety of relationships and thus gives us a moral reason to criticize subjects because they are jealous. So moral reasons to praise and moral reasons to criticize jealous subjects are very different in this respect; because the moral reason to criticize that I have discussed is a function of what is distinctive of jealousy, it is a reason to criticize a jealous subject as such. Because the moral reasons to praise that I have considered do not depend on any feature unique to jealousy, they are not moral reasons to praise jealous subjects as such.

Conclusion

I have just considered a number of arguments for the claim that sometimes a person's being jealous constitutes a moral reason to praise that person. Proponents of each proposal attempt to show that by being jealous, some subjects create or maintain something morally valuable or thwart something that would have been morally bad; I have attempted to show that we have good reasons for rejecting each of those proposals.

My thinking has been as follows: if jealousy were intrinsically morally good, we would have a straightforward reason to praise subjects for their jealousy. But I know of no good reason to think that it is. If jealousy were sometimes required to bring about a moral good or prevent a moral bad, we would have a straightforward reason to praise subjects who feel jealousy in the relevant circumstances (albeit one that could be outweighed if jealousy's costs were greater than the good created or bad prevented). But I do not think we have good reason to believe that jealousy is ever required in that way. Even if it were (as it might seem to be in the Shelly case), that would be because of rather unusual contingent circumstances. In those circumstances, I have tried to show that we do not have a reason to praise the subject for her *jealousy*, but rather a reason to praise her for

avoiding worse alternatives. Finally, if jealousy is instrumental to bringing about a moral good or preventing a moral bad without being required, then it might be worthy of moral praise if it were, though not a required strategy, a strategy that is equal or superior to alternatives. But I have given a number of reasons to think that jealousy is inferior to alternative strategies. So it simply is not clear to me what about jealousy could ground moral praise for those who feel it. I do not pretend to have considered every possible argument for the claim that, at least sometimes, there is good moral reason to praise a person for being jealous, nor to have offered definitive objections to the arguments considered. However, I do believe that we have stronger reasons to reject these proposals than we have to accept them.

Conclusion

In this project, I have defended a descriptive account of jealousy with three necessary but not sufficient conditions. According to my account, to be jealous, one must (1) desire that oneself stand in some relation to a specific, non-replicable good, (2) have in mind a (possibly imagined) rival whose having the good one regards as logically or causally inconsistent with the satisfaction of said desire, and (3) have in mind some (possibly imagined) set of circumstances in which said desire would be satisfied. These conditions are not purported to be sufficient for jealousy at least in part because they do not specify the affective, phenomenological, or feeling component of this emotion, which varies greatly across different experiences of jealousy. However, jealousy does require that its subject feel something, and sometimes people fulfill all three necessary conditions without feeling anything. To *feel* jealous, one must think that the satisfaction of one's jealous desire *matters* a great deal; I have argued that the best way to explain why some people feel jealous when they fulfill the three necessary conditions and some do not is to attribute to those who do a belief that the satisfaction of the jealous desire is required if the subject is to become his or her ideal self. The main aim of this project has been to extend this descriptive account into the moral realm in order to confront the heterogeneity challenge, which arises when we ask whether there is any morally significant commonality that links cases of jealousy despite their incredible diversity along various dimensions.

I take it that to understand what sets jealousy apart from other emotions in the normative realm, it will be useful to focus on what sets jealousy apart from other emotions in the descriptive realm. One thing that sets jealousy apart from at least most other emotions is the fact that jealousy always involves a tangle of interpersonal relationships;

jealousy could not arise in the total absence of relationships. Even cases of jealousy that involve desires for material goods and personal qualities, which do not at first blush seem to involve interpersonal relationships, are cases in which a subject desires those material goods and personal qualities in virtue of the status that they confer. Since status only exists in interpersonal contexts, even these cases depend for their existence on the prior existence of relationships. I have tried to show that when we attend to the fact that jealousy arises within a complex of relationships (which are actually or potentially morally valuable) we can find what we need to respond to the heterogeneity challenge.

The best response to the heterogeneity challenge that I have come up with is to say that we have a moral reason to criticize all jealous subjects insofar as and because their jealousy undermines their relationships with those who figure in their jealous desires (and sometimes their relationships with others as well). I defend this view by dividing jealousy into three types of cases and arguing that the same conclusion holds for each type of case. The first type of jealousy involves cases in which a subject jealously desires a specific kind of relationship with a person about whom she cares. In such cases, the caring relationship is undermined because the jealous desire either (1) breaks or threatens the pattern of caring mental states and actions in the relationship or (2) actually or potentially motivates the subject to think or act for non-caring reasons, which either breaks or threatens the pattern of caring mental states and actions in the relationship. The second type of jealousy involves cases in which a subject jealously desires a specific kind of relationship with a person about whom she does not care. In such cases, the non-caring relationship is undermined because the jealous desire is accompanied by conditional moral obligations to the target that cannot be fulfilled so long as the subject is jealous and lacks a caring relationship with the target. The third type of jealousy involves cases in

which a subject jealously desires a material good or personal quality (and the status that accompanies such a good). In such cases, the subject undermines her relationship with her ideal self by having a mistaken belief about what is required for her ideal life, and she may also undermine her relationships with others in her community. These cases are somewhat different from the others in that they always give us both an epistemic and moral reason to criticize the jealous subject.

Although my main concern has been to discuss the single moral reason to criticize jealous subjects that is at the heart of my response to the heterogeneity challenge, I also consider a number of arguments that one might use to propose that jealousy can be, at least under certain circumstances, a morally good thing. The arguments I focus on locate jealousy's moral praiseworthiness in its (1) ability to satisfy a target's desire for acknowledgement, (2) ability to preserve or enhance a subject's self-respect, (3) ability to protect monogamous relationships and traditional family structures, and (4) ability to preserve or enhance competition and thus productivity. I have argued that we should reject all these proposals insofar as jealousy is never required to bring about any of these goods, always comes at a cost, and is not the real reason why we praise people in such cases when we do.

I can now say a few words on the subject of all-things-considered moral judgments about jealous subjects. If I am right that jealousy always undermines relationships and thereby gives us a moral reason to criticize jealous subjects, that there are often additional moral reasons to criticize jealous subjects that do not apply to all cases, and that the proposed reasons to praise jealous subjects should all be rejected, then it is difficult for me to imagine any case in which we would be justified in making an all-things-considered moral judgment that a person should be praised for being jealous. While one may want to

argue that there are many small goods that come from jealousy which add up to neutralize or outweigh the bad things about jealousy, it is far from clear to me what those small goods might be, if not the candidate goods I have already considered.

At this point, let us revisit the discussion of evaluative disagreement and ambivalence about jealousy from the Introduction. For now I have the resources to suggest some explanations for why people have held such conflicting views about whether and why jealousy is a morally good or bad thing. We have seen that the things one can jealously desire are quite various; one can jealously desire a certain quality or quantity of the attention, affection, trust, or time of particular people, and one can even jealously desire material goods and personal qualities and the status that accompanies them. For any case of jealousy, the questions of whether it is morally good, bad, or neutral to desire such a thing and whether those things are themselves morally good, bad, or neutral will be tricky. The difficulty of answering such questions is exacerbated by the fact that there is significant disagreement about the value of exclusivity and pre-eminence (and the desire for those things) in the kinds of relationships that are most central to our lives. I suspect that the greatest divide between my opponents and me is, at heart, a difference in intuitions about the role that desires for exclusivity or pre-eminence should play in relationships, but that is a debate for another project.

On the one hand, I think that when people see the object of a jealous desire as something that is morally good (such as the love of an intimate relation), they are more likely to see jealousy itself as a morally good thing. People who focus on the value of that which is jealously desired may want to give “credit” to jealous subjects for recognizing and responding to that value emotionally. This explanation for why someone might be motivated to argue that jealousy is morally good is more charitable than explanations that

see such people as simply trying to justify their own jealousy after the fact. And I am happy to agree that sometimes the things that people jealously desire are indeed quite morally valuable. I disagree insofar as I do not think that desiring such things *jealously* is a morally valuable way to do so.

On the other hand, by focusing as I do on the structural similarities of jealous desires (all of which are for specific goods and at least partially self-interested), we can see that even when one jealously desires something that is morally valuable, we have reason to think that one's jealousy undermines an actually or potentially morally valuable relationship. This is why I believe that jealously desiring something (whether that thing is itself morally good, bad, or neutral) is not a morally good thing. Of course, historically, people have also been able to see jealousy as morally bad when they have focused on those cases in which what the jealous person desires is itself morally bad or when the jealousy leads to the subject to do morally bad actions. My point here is simply that it is understandable why one might praise jealous subjects on moral grounds if one focuses on a specific aspect of a specific set of cases, although I think that when one takes a more holistic view that focuses on what is common to all cases of jealousy, one can see more and stronger moral reasons to criticize those subjects. So my response to the heterogeneity challenge is that while it may be very human to experience jealousy at times, the jealousy we experience undermines one of the things that makes us most human: our morally valuable relationships.

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Appendix: Jealousy and Evolutionary Psychology

In recent years, evolutionary psychologists have had a lot to say about jealousy, and their claims have gotten a certain degree of uptake both within and outside their field. The fact that claims about jealousy with roots in evolutionary psychology are very much “in the air” in a variety of discussions about this complicated emotion means that it is important that I consider the ways in which evolutionary psychologists portrayed jealousy as a good thing. These portrayals of jealousy as good involve rather different kinds of claims than the arguments about potential moral reasons to praise jealous subjects that I considered in Chapter 5. David Buss articulates the most sustained argument in favor of jealousy on evolutionary grounds in his 2000 book, *The Dangerous Passion: Why Jealousy Is as Necessary as Love and Sex*.³⁵⁶ Here is a succinct statement of his view:

Jealousy, according to this theory, is an adaptation. An adaptation, in the parlance of evolutionary psychology, is an evolved solution to a recurrent problem of survival or reproduction... Jealousy, according to this perspective, is not a sign of immaturity, but rather a supremely important passion that helped our ancestors, and most likely continues to help us today, to cope with a host of real reproductive threats. Jealousy, for example, motivates us to ward off rivals with verbal threats and cold primate stares. It drives us to keep partners from straying with tactics such as escalating vigilance or showering a partner with affection. And it communicates commitment to a partner who may be wavering, serving an important purpose in the maintenance of love. Sexual jealousy is often a successful, although sometimes explosive, solution to persistent predicaments that each one of our ancestors was forced to confront.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁶ Given his evolutionary perspective, he restricts his focus to jealousy in the romantic/sexual realm only.

³⁵⁷ Buss 2000, pp. 5-6. Note that the focus here is on what jealousy can motivate us to *do*; evolutionary psychologists have little to say about *unexpressed* emotions, for emotions that are *wholly* motivationally inert cannot confer any selective advantages.

Thus it is said that we evolved to feel jealousy, which motivates us to protect the sorts of relationships that ensure the greatest survival advantage for our species.³⁵⁸ This view posits that people who felt jealousy were naturally selected to have more offspring and/or to have offspring with a higher survival rate, because jealousy tends to keep sexual partners in the sorts of relationships that have the most efficient divisions of labor and therefore which provide the most resources for offspring. Note that for jealousy to be an adaptation, the evolutionary advantages it has conferred only need to *generally* outweigh the disadvantages it confers (otherwise nature would not have selected for jealousy); however, this is perfectly compatible with there being some significant number of cases of jealousy that do not fit the general pattern of being advantageous in the ways discussed. Arguments in favor of jealousy on evolutionary grounds tend to go something like the following:

1. Monogamous sexual relationships and the high paternity confidence that they make possible tend to be conducive to the survival of the human species.³⁵⁹
2. The survival of the human species is a good that we should pursue.
3. Jealousy tends to protect monogamous sexual relationships and thereby insure paternity confidence.
4. Therefore, jealousy can help us pursue the good of human survival.
5. Therefore, a person's being jealous can give us a reason to praise that person.

³⁵⁸ For an early claim that jealousy is instinctive, see James 1980, vol. 2, p. 439. For sociobiologists who hold much the same view, albeit focusing exclusively on *male* sexual jealousy, see Daly, Wilson, and Weghorst 1982. For a psychologist who disagrees about jealousy being an evolved capacity, see Hupka 1991, for the claim that "It appears reasonable to propose that human beings have evolved the capacity to be emotional; however, in light of their high intelligence, immense investment of time in the care of offspring, and long periods of learning, it is also reasonable to propose that all other facets of emotion (e.g., their elicitation, expression, modulation, the target of the emotion, etc.) are learned" (254). For more on this debate, see also DeSteno et al. 2002; DeSteno et al. 2006; Harris 2002; Neu 2002, p. 164; and White and Mullen 1989, Chapter 3.

³⁵⁹ Notice the similarity between this and the traditional family proposal; both portray jealousy as conducive to monogamous relationships, but they explain the value of those relationships quite differently.

I call this the evolutionary argument in what follows, just so I have a simple way to refer to it.

Allow me to focus on three criticisms of this argument, none of which will be unfamiliar to those acquainted with philosophical literature on evolutionary psychology more generally; these criticisms tend to be equally salient whether one has jealousy or some other emotion in mind. The first objection challenges the empirical evidence available to justify the first and third premises. Both the first and third premises purport to describe (historical) reality, and the evidence used to support either one could always be reinterpreted and/or supplemented to support a different causal story.³⁶⁰ For all evolutionary explanations of why humans have certain traits or behave in certain ways are inferences to the best explanation, and it is always possible for new evidence to come to light that tells against an explanation. It is also always possible to develop another explanation based on the same evidence that is, by some criteria, a better one.

This sort of worry can be mitigated in some circumstances, as when the evidence in support of the explanation is particularly abundant, consistent, and uncontested. However, when one is trying to explain why we feel an emotion and why it is good that we do so, the fossil record and other archaeological findings are very limited in what they can tell us. We know much less about our evolutionary ancestors' emotions than we know about their physiology or their eating habits, and it is unlikely that this will ever change. So supporters of the evolutionary proposal must confront a general philosophical or logical worry about the limits of inference to the best explanation and a more scientific

³⁶⁰ I myself would prefer to object to the third (rather than the first) premise on these grounds, although that may simply be a product of my greater familiarity with empirical literature about jealousy than with literature about the advantages of monogamy.

worry about the paucity of evidence from an evolutionary time scale about human emotional experience. I take both these worries very seriously, but trained scientists, philosophers of science, and logicians are better equipped to work through the nuances of those worries than I am. For my purposes, the next criticism is more important.

The next criticism targets the suggestion that this line of thinking is about *moral* value at all.³⁶¹ It is not at all clear that the good in question is a *moral* good, and therefore it is not at all clear that *moral* praise is the relevant kind of praise here. For instance, jealousy might simply be a biological good, like having an efficient heart, or an ecological good, like having a sustainable balance of predators and prey in an area. Furthermore, it is not clear that the praise mentioned in the proposal is praise *of an agent*; the praise might be due to the species as a whole. For what we are praising probably depends on the unit of selection, and there is sure to be disagreement about whether natural selection for jealousy occurred at the level of genes, individual organisms, species, or what have you.

Moreover, the praise is not clearly conferred *in virtue of* the jealousy. For even if a natural endowment, like quick reflexes, allows me to do a morally praiseworthy action, like saving a child from a fall, moral praise will not be conferred on me in virtue of such natural endowments. Even if there were good scientific proof that humans who feel jealousy have been naturally selected for the advantages conferred on them by their jealousy, such proof would be insufficient to ground a normative claim that jealousy is

³⁶¹ I allow that we might have reason to praise jealousy from some *non-moral* perspective. For instance, jealousy might be politically useful to a particular party if the jealousy of their favored candidate spurs his or her to run a successful election campaign. This usefulness is perfectly compatible with the jealousy being highly morally problematic. Similarly, jealousy might be biologically useful if it helps perpetuate the species but still make jealous agents morally worse than they would be without it. Such political or biological usefulness could certainly give us reason to praise jealousy from a perspective other than the moral perspective.

morally good. Surely the human foot is an amazing and wonderful adaptation that contributes to one's pursuit (literally, in some cases) of many goods, but I would never say that having human feet gives us a moral reason to praise a person.³⁶²

In fact, some people who make or discuss arguments like the one I outlined above take pains to emphasize that the value at stake is *not* a moral value.³⁶³ Unfortunately, when such denials are absent, it may be easy for the average person to conflate different kinds of value and suppose that whatever is good for the species is morally good. Evolutionary psychologists (who tend not to *want* to make moral arguments) and philosophers (who tend not to think one can derive an ought from an is, as a moral version of the evolutionary argument would seem to do) are unlikely to support a moral version of the evolutionary argument. If someone does support a moral version of this argument, I think they thereby accept the burden to show why the relevant values here are moral ones; in the absence of any such argument, I think we have reason to think this is not an argument about morality at all.

How might someone try to argue that this argument is about moral value? To my mind, the most likely ways to do so would be to rely on a claim that the moral somehow

³⁶² This example raises a number of interesting questions about possible asymmetries between moral praise and blame. For even if one agrees with me, one might think that there is a moral reason to criticize people who cut off or neglect their feet. If that is correct, then by analogy we might have a moral reason to criticize someone who suppresses or prevents his or her jealousy (if that is possible). Unfortunately, I cannot delve into debates about asymmetries between moral praise and blame in enough detail to say anything particularly satisfying here.

³⁶³ Buss never explicitly says that his praise of jealousy is not *moral* praise, but I think a careful reading makes it clear that he does not see any necessary connection between his view about jealousy and any particular moral claim(s). See p. 114 for a passage in which he cautions readers against conflating the (empirical) claim that spousal violence can deter abused partners from abandoning their abusers and the (normative) claim that spousal violence is morally or legally acceptable. See also p. 184, where his discussion of jealousy and therapy might be taken to suggest that he is skeptical about the value of making moral judgments about jealousy at all. See Solomon 2007, pp. 107-109 for a nice, brief commentary about why Buss' view lacks moral significance.

reduces to the natural or to rely on a consequentialist theory of morality that employs a maximization principle. Of course, many philosophers will argue vehemently that we should not rely on either of those things, but it hard for me to imagine a person thinking that the evolutionary argument is a moral argument in the absence of one of those positions. The third criticism points out that even if we grant that the relevant values are *moral* values, we may still reject the assumption that using some means to pursue a moral good gives us a moral reason to praise the subject *for using that means*.

Here I do not want to challenge the assumption that it is (at least sometimes) appropriate to think of jealousy as a means to pursue a good (albeit a means that one tends not to use consciously or intentionally), although one could challenge that assumption. Nor do I want to challenge the assumption that (at least sometimes) moral reasons to praise subjects are grounded in the effectiveness of the means the agent uses in pursuit of an end. I do not think that only facts about a subject's motivations or character can ground moral reasons to praise that subject; sometimes outcomes matter morally. However, I do want to challenge the assumption that gets us from (4) to (5); that is, from the claim that jealousy can help us pursue the good of human survival to the claim that a person's being jealous can give us a reason to praise that person. For the sake of argument, I allow that if the good of human survival is a moral good, then this reason to praise a jealous subject would be a moral reason.

It should be clear that there are many potential means or strategies for protecting monogamous relationships and ensuring high paternity confidence, and that not all of them involve jealousy. One strategy involves making infidelity and/or sex before marriage illegal and using the threat of legal sanctions to protect monogamous relationships and ensure paternity confidence; another strategy uses the threat of informal

social sanctions or religious sanctions to do so. Others involve making infidelity very difficult from a practical perspective (perhaps by sequestering one of the sexes), inculcating beliefs about the value of monogamous relationships from an early age, normalizing the use of contraception so that paternity confidence is less dependent on monogamy, or revising dominant gender norms so that neither gender receives enhanced social status for promiscuity. These are just a few of many possible strategies, which of course can be employed in various combinations. Furthermore, some (combinations of) strategies will surely be more successful than others, and any of these strategies or means may be implemented intentionally with the goal of protecting monogamous relationships in mind, or unintentionally and in fact unconsciously.

Insofar as one supports the evolutionary proposal as giving us *moral* reason to praise jealous subjects, one needs to acknowledge these alternative strategies. If one does acknowledge them, then one also needs to show that jealousy is a *better* strategy for ensuring species survival than (some combination of) alternative strategies, or alternatively, one would need to explain why we might praise someone for employing a sub-optimal strategy. If moral facts and values reduce to natural facts and values or if what is morally right is what maximizes moral good, then for a person to be worthy of moral praise for using some strategy, that strategy needs to be relatively successful and have relatively minor costs. That is, the strategy should generally work and involve no unnecessary costs.³⁶⁴ Insofar as supporters of the evolutionary argument do not consider

³⁶⁴ This is not to say that for a *person* to be morally praiseworthy in general, she must be relatively successful and incur relatively minor costs in her endeavors. We might think the naïve teenager who tries to solve the problems of climate change by writing poetry deserves moral praise for her deeply felt commitment to solving a major global problem, but we would not be morally praising her for the employment of her particular strategy of choice. The claim is that we would not call

alternative strategies for preserving monogamous relationships and/or ensuring high paternity confidence, they do not show that jealousy meets these criteria. If there is an implicit naturalism or consequentialism in the moral reading of the evolutionary argument, then the burden is on its supporters to consider those alternatives, and we should not accept the proposal until that burden has been met.

If a supporter of the evolutionary argument thought that jealousy is a necessary component of the best such strategy for protecting monogamous relationships and ensuring paternity confidence because otherwise it would not have been selected for and it would not be so prevalent, such a view would neglect two very important facts about the process of natural selection.³⁶⁵ First, the existence of some trait need not be explained by telling a story about how having that trait confers a selective advantage; some traits exist because they are by-products of other traits that confer a selective advantage. Jealousy may well be one of these by-products.³⁶⁶ For instance, jealousy might be a by-product of a cognitive module that helps us emulate the ways that those around us have successfully attracted and retained mates or attained other goods. Alternatively, jealousy might be something that we experience only as a by-product of a tendency to hoard goods that was useful under the conditions in which our evolutionary ancestors lived. Notice that lots of jealousy is unrelated to sexual relationships and thus may be only a by-

her *strategy* a morally good one and we would not praise her for using that strategy if using that strategy regularly failed to help achieve her goals or regularly incurred higher than necessary costs to do so. Thanks to Fared Awan for pointing out this instructive case to me.

³⁶⁵ Again, I am not attributing these mistakes to the evolutionary psychologists themselves, but rather some of the non-specialists who have taken up some of their claims to defend a moral version of the evolutionary proposal.

³⁶⁶ For the suggestion that jealousy evolved only in the sense that its component states were selected for and then used for mate-guarding purposes, see Sabini and Green 2004 and Green and Sabini 2006.

product of a strategy that is best suited for another area of life, unless there is an explanation of why jealousy that is unrelated to sexual relationships is conducive to species survival.

Secondly, since the process of natural selection unfolds across time, it is always possible that we have only recently (evolutionarily speaking) or are just now as a species developing some strategy for protecting monogamous relationships and ensuring high paternity confidence that will be more successful and have fewer costs than jealousy. Or we might be developing new ways of life that make monogamous relationships and high paternity confidence irrelevant or even harmful to species survival.³⁶⁷ In either of those scenarios, the supporter of the evolutionary proposal should not deem praiseworthy the very strategy that has become or is becoming outmoded at the expense of the newer, more effective strategy. Such strategies might include widespread use of DNA tests to confirm paternity, welfare states in which monogamous relationships are not necessary for offspring to have the resources needed to survive, communal living arrangements in which children have more than two parents, and medical practices that allow for declining family size and infant mortality regardless of parents' sex lives.³⁶⁸

Furthermore, since we cannot see the future, we will never be able to rule out claims that we are actually in one of these scenarios, so we will never know if some current practice is conferring an evolutionary advantage or not. So we should never praise (for moral reasons or otherwise) current practices for the evolutionary advantages they confer,

³⁶⁷ Notice that Buss, in the long quote above, qualifies his view to recognize this, saying only that it is *likely* that jealousy continues to help us today.

³⁶⁸ If I had children, I would certainly prefer to live in a nation in which the collective resources of all could be called upon to aid my children in their time of need rather than counting on a single sexual partner of mine who has a jealous disposition to fulfill the needs of my children. This is the principle of distributing risk and the reason why people are willing to buy insurance.

because we can never know whether those practices are currently conferring any evolutionary advantages at all. On evolutionary grounds, at best, we can only praise people in the distant past for having experienced jealousy, but of course we have very little information about who in our evolutionary past actually experienced jealousy and who did not.

So, I take it that the evolutionary proposal does not give us a *good* moral reason to praise people insofar as they experience jealousy. For the proposal depends on empirical claims that are difficult (if not impossible) to prove or disprove, an attempt to derive an ought from an is, a simplistic view of evolution, and a myopic view of alternative strategies for preserving relationships. Simply put, we need to recognize the limits of what evolutionary psychology can do to justify moral assessment of individual agents in light of their jealousy (or other actions and attitudes). Evolutionary psychology is meant to explain why we have the traits we do; the arguments it provides are of the wrong sort to explain whether a given trait is morally praiseworthy.

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