

“HELLO, CLARICE.” (A STEP) TOWARDS A PHILOSOPHICAL ACCOUNT OF
INTIMACY

Pavel Nitchovski

A thesis submitted to the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of the Arts in the Department of Philosophy in the School of Liberal Arts and Science.

Chapel Hill
2018

Approved By:

Susan Wolf

C.D.C. Reeve

Gerald Postema

© 2018
Pavel Nitchovski
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

ABSTRACT

Pavel Nitchovski: "Hello, Clarice." (A Step) Towards a Philosophical Account of Intimacy
(Under the direction of Susan Wolf, C.D.C. Reeve, and Gerald Postema)

Despite the importance that many people today place on intimacy, there has been surprisingly little philosophical work done on the topic. This essay attempts to partially fill this lacuna by offering an account of some characteristic features of intimate interactions and providing the beginning steps towards a more nuanced view of intimacy. In short, the claim I will defend is that intimate interactions between people generally involve an instance of disclosure about something personal (by at least one person involved in the interaction) that is picked up by an empathetic individual, resulting in a specific kind of understanding of what's being shared, and that is marked with a shared recognition that this kind of understanding has occurred. I'll develop this point by looking at a few of the existing accounts of intimacy and a specific example from film.

To my friends and family for reminding me what's important.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank the members of my committee for taking the time and effort to guide me in this project. I would specifically like to thank Susan Wolf who has taken the time to read and comment on every scrap of writing (no matter how inchoate) since the beginning—if this thesis has anything insightful to add, it's because Susan's been able to find and wrench it out of my writing.

I would also like to thank the graduate students' Work in Progress workshop (to whom a draft of this paper was presented) for the insightful feedback and commentary.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family for the emotional support I've received and continue to receive. Thank you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION	1
II.	THREE VIEWS	4
a.	The Common View.....	5
b.	Strikwerda and May: Intimate Friendships.....	7
c.	Prager and Roberts: Conditions for Intimate Interactions.....	11
III.	A MEETING IN MEMPHIS	17
IV.	IDENTIFICATION, EMPATHY, AND RECOGNITION	22
V.	A Look Back (and Ahead)	28
	REFERENCES	32

I. Introduction

Few people doubt that close personal relationships are part of the good life. What Aristotle pointed out some two-thousand years ago remains true: nobody would choose to live without friends. Nor would anyone, I suspect, choose to live without being loved. A life devoid of companionship of either kind is rarely worth living. This much seems uncontroversial.

Perhaps more controversial, however, is the relatively modern notion that *intimacy* is important for having the kind of friendship and love affairs that make life good. This notion appears in two guises. In its strong form, it claims that intimacy is *necessary* for forming meaningful friendships and loving relationships such that impediments to intimacy are impediments to love and friendship, and an inability to facilitate and cultivate intimacy directly translates into an inability to love and be a friend. Thus, for example, we are told that men have difficulty forming meaningful friendships with other men *because* they lack the skills to be intimate with each other.¹ The same, we are told, applies to the person who is utterly incapable of being intimate with his or her lover. In both domains, intimacy is of utmost importance.

In its weaker form, the claim is not that intimacy is necessary for friendships and loving relationships, but that intimate friendships and intimate loving relationships are *better* than those that lack intimacy. In this sense, we may have plenty of meaningful non-intimate relationships,

¹ See Robert A. Strikwerda and Larry May, "Male Friendship and Intimacy," *Hypatia* 7, no. 3 (1992): 110-125, doi:10.1111/j.1527-2001.1992.tb00907.x.

but their lack of intimacy means that these relationships aren't as meaningful as they could be. Thus, men might be capable of having friendships with one another, but if they're incapable of forming *intimate friendships*, then they're denying themselves the possibility of something even more valuable. Intimacy in this sense allows for development and improvement of something that's already good in our lives into something better.

In both of its guises the general idea around the importance of intimacy seems to be that, at the very least, intimacy is a distinct, non-substitutable good in life. Of course, this claim that intimacy is good—or, more accurately, that it's *always* good—may be false. In many (if not all) cases it seems that being intimate with someone requires being vulnerable or exposed to another, and all vulnerability carries with it the risk of abuse and harm. Thus, it may turn out that although intimacy is usually a good that improves friendships and romantic relationships, it can also be exploited to make people much worse off than they would have been had they not become intimate. In such cases it may turn out that rather than inviting and cultivating intimacy, we should try to inhibit and prevent it from developing. In any case, it seems that before we can begin to address the question of when intimacy is good and why we have to be able to say something about what intimacy is.

Curiously, little philosophical attention has been devoted to the topic.² This is even more surprising given the fact that there is a deep philosophical tradition in the two areas where

² An exception to this is Christopher Laurel's *Intimacy: A Dialectical Study*. Although it is a very engaging piece of philosophy, I will not be able to address Laurel's book in this study for two reasons. The first is that the book is primarily concerned with defending and explaining the claim that intimacy, as defined by Laurel, is impossible to achieve. By contrast, I begin by tacitly assuming that intimacy is indeed possible to achieve and am interested in figuring out what elements are at play when it is achieved. Therefore, Laurel and I begin our projects at different starting points. The second reason I don't engage with the work in depth is because Laurel's dialectical methodology is one that I'm not terribly familiar with. That's not to say that this methodology is inappropriate, but rather, that my lack of expertise therein leaves me with little to say.

intimacy seems to be of utmost importance to us today: friendship and love. Take as just two examples Plato's account of love in the *Symposium* and Aristotle's account of friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Not only does neither author explicitly mention intimacy in his respective account, but it's also hard to see where intimacy would fit in if we tried looking for it: Plato's account of love is about knowledge of the good and beautiful; Aristotle's account of friendship is about equality in virtue.³ What role intimacy plays in either account (if any at all!) remains obscure. The same can be said for contemporary theories of love and friendship as well (with the exception that modern accounts will occasionally use the words 'intimate' and 'intimacy' as a synonym for 'close' and 'closeness'). There are two notable contemporary exceptions. The first is Christopher Laurel's book *Intimacy: A Dialectical Study* which, unfortunately, I will not be able to discuss here (see footnote 2). And the second is the account of intimacy offered by Robert Strikwerda and Larry May—this account will be addressed in the next section.

This general lapse may be explained in several ways. First, it's possible that philosophers of friendship and love have simply found the concept of intimacy to be so intuitive as not to require any further explanation. This strikes me as unlikely—few things in philosophy (if any!) are so intuitive, and intimacy doesn't seem to be one of them. In any case, it doesn't strike *me* as obviously intuitive what intimacy consist of, and I suspect I'm not alone.

It's also possible that this lapse in the literature could be explained by the fact, to which I alluded earlier, that the importance of intimacy in relationships seems to be relatively recent.⁴ Thus, the reason Plato and Aristotle don't talk about intimacy in their accounts could be because

³ These are, of course, very, very simplified bumper-sticker summaries.

⁴ Its importance may also be culturally relative—it does, for example, appear to be a largely western phenomenon.

they just didn't think of it as something important (if they thought about it at all!). More radically, it's also possible that just like the notion of romantic love, there simply wasn't a concept of intimacy until very recently. The relative lack of attention to intimacy in modern work, then, might be explained by following the deep philosophical traditions set in place during a time at which our modern concepts didn't exist. This, too, doesn't strike me as implausible, but it would require research that is well beyond the scope of this project. Regardless, the truth of this hypothesis would still leave us with the question of whether intimacy *is* important to *us*, and answering this question in either direction would require us to know what we're talking about when we talk about intimacy.

The goal of this paper is to begin to fill this philosophical lacuna by providing the first steps towards an account of intimacy. For reasons of time and space I will not be able to provide a full account of intimacy, but will only focus on what makes specific *interactions* between individuals intimate. In taking this approach I'm making an important methodological choice about how to engage with the topic. Specifically, I'm making the claim that intimacy can be found in two domains: interactions and relationships, with the important distinction between the two being that, generally speaking, interactions can occur between people who are not in an existing relationship and that relationships can be in place without the presence of any specific interaction. The hope is that if we can get a good grasp of what makes certain interactions intimate, we will also be in a better position to explain what makes certain relationships intimate.

The claim I will ultimately defend is that intimate interactions involve three elements: verbal or nonverbal disclosure, empathy, and a mutual recognition of understanding. It's worth noting at the outset that these elements are not necessary and sufficient conditions for intimate

interactions and I don't intend to treat them as such. Rather, they are important features at the core of intimate interactions that can give us a greater understanding of intimacy.

The structure of the essay will be as follows. I begin by first looking at what I take to be a commonly held folk view about intimate interactions—namely, the view that intimacy is, at its core, about sharing meaningful information about one's thoughts and feelings through deep conversations; I call this “the common view.” I will argue that while the common view points to something true about intimate interactions—viz., it involves disclosure—it is too narrow to serve as a general account thereof. Following, I will discuss two more sophisticated accounts. The first is by philosophers Roberts Strikwerda and Larry May and the second is by psychologists Karen Prager and Linda Roberts. These two accounts do better than the common view and take us closer to the heart of intimacy, but, I argue, they don't go far enough. I will then take an in depth look at an intimate interaction that proves to be a difficult case for both of the sophisticated accounts, and use it to offer my own analysis. Finally, after developing this analysis, I will show how the account I've offered preserves what was initially appealing about the three views in question while furthering our understanding of intimacy.

II. Three Views

In what follows I will explore three different views on intimacy, each of which gets something right about what makes a particular interaction intimate. My goal in engaging in this exploration will be to be as promiscuous as possible, picking up whatever it is from each view that is valuable in getting a better understanding of intimacy and leaving the rest behind. Thus, the movement from one account to another should not be seen as a rejection or refutation of that account, but rather as an indication of having picked up what I find to be useful.

a. The Common View

We can do worse in beginning our exploration of intimacy than to look at what strikes me as a commonly held view of intimacy. On this view, intimacy is achieved between two people who care about each other when they talk about their personal feelings, deepest desires, and highest aspirations. It is a state achieved through self-revealing verbal discourse in which the individuals are brought closer to one another by disclosing private matters. On this view, intimacy is a matter of verbal communication and positive affect for one another: I, who care about you, tell you about me—the real me—and what matters to me, and you, who also cares about me, tell me about what matters to you, and by learning about each other through our conversation our intimacy grows. Of course, we may do other things as well. If we're lovers we may also have sex, and if we're friends we may also go out drinking—but these activities are incidental to how intimate we ultimately become (after all, sex doesn't have to be intimate, and drinking together is as likely to lead to violence as to intimacy). It is only when these activities also involve (or precede or are followed by) discourse that the interactions they constitute become *intimate* ones for us.

This account is plausible and may seem to capture many of our initial intuitions on the matter. There really are many instances in which self-disclosure between people who like each other is rightly considered to be intimate. Furthermore, many of these instances really are cases in which we think of the interaction as intimate precisely *because* it involved discourse and disclosure. So, the common view isn't entirely mistaken. However, it can't be the whole story since verbal self-disclosure—whether it comes in the form of talking about oneself, one's feelings, or one's hopes—can be just as much of an impediment to intimacy as a means of achieving it. This is especially the case if what is revealed is particularly personal. Disclosing to

a stranger that you've been crying every day since your wife left or that you deeply hope she's miserable with her new husband is just as likely to push someone away as it is to bring them closer. Even if the other person isn't a stranger and cares about you, deeply personal revelations can become insurmountable barriers for intimacy—perhaps permanently so.

Furthermore, there appear to be some interactions that can be deeply intimate without any kind of *verbal* disclosure. Consider, for example, the following quote about the intimacy of boxing:

Boxing is a sport full of intimacy. Intimacy with self and others. It brings us closer to ourselves. We head into the ring to descend into the depths of personal fear and unknowns and when we come out, we have a deeper understanding of who we are. We suffer in training to discover the gaps in our will and desire. We want to know these gaps at the deepest level, so when tested we can cross these gaps without thought.⁵

Clearly, if boxing can constitute an intimate interaction, the intimacy is not to be explained by the depth of verbal discourse that goes on between the competitors, but by something else.

The author of the quote attributes the intimacy between two boxers to self-knowledge gained by engaging in the sport. This is a substantial thesis that we may ultimately want to reject, but the point still remains that if such an interaction can be intimate, then what makes it so will have to be put in terms of something other than verbal discourse. Of course, people may reject the claim that boxing can ever be an intimate experience, but I see no a priori reason to think that it shouldn't be—especially given the fact that at least some people do seem to find it to be such.

It also seems safe to say that, at least sometimes, sex can be intimate, and when it is, it is usually not because of what is *said* between the people involved. Rather, it is because of the

⁵ Arcaro Boxing Gym. "The intimacy in boxing," *Arcaro Boxing Gym* (blog), July 19, 2016, <https://arcaroboxing.com/2016/07/19/the-intimacy-in-boxing/>.

nature of the sexual interaction, the people who are involved, whether they like one another, and so on. It is these conditions that seem important to making the activity intimate and it is these conditions that the common view seems ill-fitted to accommodate.

b. Strikwerda and May: Intimate Friendships

Given these considerations, it seems clear that what I've called the common view will not be sufficient for a more general account of intimate interactions. Here, we can turn to the more sophisticated accounts offered by Strikwerda and May and Prager and Roberts. Let's begin with Strikwerda and May whose account is primarily concerned with intimacy in friendships.

Like the common view, Strikwerda and May's account holds that that intimacy in friendship involves some kind of self-disclosure. However, it states that for intimacy to occur between friends, this self-disclosure must be coupled with four additional elements: knowledge, positive feelings, trust, and reciprocity. Let's look at each of these. First, Strikwerda and May claim that intimate friendship requires "a deep and or intense mutual knowledge that allows the participants to grow in both self-understanding and understanding of others. That understanding includes the defining personal characteristics of an individual, conjoined with enjoyment of and loyalty to that person."⁶ The 'knowledge' element, then, denotes knowledge of a specific type—it is *mutual knowledge of* the other person's defining characteristics that leads to a broad understanding of self and others. Thus, my knowing your shoe size wouldn't count as knowledge

⁶ Strikwerda and May, 115.

of the relevant type (in most conceivable contexts), but my knowing something about your commitment to hard work might.⁷

Second, intimacy in friendships on Strikwerda and May's account has to involve some sorts of positive feelings from both parties about the other. Part of this was already referenced in the discussion of the first element when we mentioned that the deep knowledge must be coupled with an "enjoyment of and loyalty to that person." Unfortunately, Strikwerda and May don't go into too much detail beyond this with respect to what kinds of feelings count as positive ones. Nevertheless, two kinds of relationships seem to be ruled out with the stipulation of this element: namely, those relationships in which individuals have negative feelings towards one another, and those relationships in which they feel indifferent towards one another. Given how odd it sounds to say that two people can have an intimate friendship despite the fact that they hate each other or feel indifferently about each other, this seems correct.

Third, and as Strikwerda and May stress, "perhaps the most significant step in friendship is the achievement of a mutual trust based on some form of shared experience."⁸ This trust, they claim, is usually built up slowly over a long period of time and "engenders a corresponding loyalty and a further relaxation to heighten each other's enjoyment of shared activities."⁹

Finally, on Strikwerda and May's account each of these three elements must involve reciprocal behaviors. Hence, we can add the fourth element, reciprocity. *We* cannot be intimate

⁷ It's not clear whether one's loyalty or enjoyment needs to be grounded in my knowledge of your defining characteristics or if this is independent of this knowledge. Strikwerda and May leave this ambiguous. Presumably, however, I might enjoy your company and be loyal to you *despite*, say, your pig-headed streak.

⁸ Strikwerda and May, 115.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 116.

friends if only *you* have deep knowledge of me, if only *you* feel positively about me, or if only *you* trust me. In order for our friendship to be intimate we must both meet the specified conditions; there is no one-sided intimacy on this account.¹⁰ When these four elements are present in an instance of self-disclosure it constitutes “a form of mutual enclosure in which two selves create a new, inclusive focus of attention.”¹¹

The conditions specified by Strikwerda and May’s account do seem to get something right. It really does seem plausible to say that friends who disclose things about themselves under these conditions will be intimate ones and that such *instances* of disclosure will be intimate. Furthermore, the account allows us to fill in some of the gaps left by the common view. Specifically, it allows us to specify the *conditions* under which self-disclosure will *not* lead to intimacy—if self-disclosure is performed in a context in which the friends in question don’t trust each other, don’t have deep knowledge of each other, don’t like each other, or don’t reciprocate in their discourse, then that self-disclosure will not be an intimate one. Thus, we can understand why sometimes verbal self-disclosure can push people away instead of bringing them closer. In that respect, this more sophisticated view does better than the common view while preserving what was appealing about it.

That being said, it’s worth noting that Strikwerda and May’s account is narrowly focused on what kind of interactions make for intimate *friendships*. Thus, it is an account already situated within a specific and established relationship. What we’re interested in, however, is the more

¹⁰ This makes sense given that there's no such thing as a one-sided friendship.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 116. Strikwerda and May explain this as what makes an instance of self-disclosure intimate, but it’s not clear whether they mean this to be a general description of what would make any such instance intimate, or whether it is only what would make an instance of self-disclosure intimate among friends. Given the aim of their paper, I have treated them as meaning the former. However, I will shortly consider whether they could also mean the latter.

general question of what would make *any* individual interaction intimate, regardless of whether the people interacting are already friends. Strikwerda and May's account doesn't answer this question (nor does it claim to—this isn't a strike against their view!). That being said, we may be able to extend their view and say that an interaction will be intimate between any people as long as the four elements specified here are met.

This suggestion is plausible, but it strikes me as too strong. Specifically, the elements of trust and mutual knowledge seem so demanding that they appear to make the possibility for an intimate interaction outside the context of an already established relationship virtually impossible. For example, if what's required for an intimate interaction really is “a deep and or intense mutual knowledge that allows the participants to grow in both self-understanding and understanding of others...conjoined with enjoyment and loyalty to that person” then it seems extremely likely that *only* my friends (and even then, only a select few of them) will be people with whom I could have intimate interactions. Acquaintances, strangers, new romantic partners, or, more generally, people with whom one isn't already in an established relationship simply won't be eligible. One way of putting the worry, then, is that the conditions that such an extended account stipulate would simply be a restatement of what it takes to have an intimate interaction between *friends*.

Now, that's not to say that such an extended view would necessarily be wrong. However, it seems to me that adopting it would require that one be committed to the claim that, in general, all intimate interactions are like the intimate interactions between friends. And this further claim strikes me as dubious. Indeed, the boxing example we looked at in section a) (to the extent that it strikes one as a plausible instance of an intimate interaction) gives us some reason to suspect that not every intimate interaction looks like one that might occur between friends. If boxing can be

an intimate interaction, then it's presumably not because the boxers feel loyalty to one another, trust each other in any sense but the bare minimum (i.e. that the other person won't kill them in the ring), or have deep knowledge of each other's personally defining characteristics. It may be true that in some circumstances—if the boxers were *also* friends, for example—such factors may explain the intimacy between them, but if we think that their fight can be an intimate interaction even if they're not friends, then we may want to look elsewhere.

I want to stress that the fact that I find this extended account lacking is not a strike against Strikwerda and May's theory. Strictly speaking, the extended account is not *their* account, and, as I mentioned at the beginning of this section, the one they offer is one that is explicitly concerned with offering an account of intimacy with the context of a friendship. Their account may very well be correct in that narrow scope and I don't want to suggest otherwise. But given that *we* are interested in a more general account of what makes *any* interaction intimate, its narrow scope is sufficient reason to continue exploring.

c. Prager and Roberts: Conditions for Intimate Interactions

An account that better engages with the task we've set for ourselves here is the account offered by psychologists Karen Prager and Linda Roberts. This account is especially useful since it makes the explicit distinction between intimate interactions and intimate relationships and offers separate necessary and sufficient conditions for both. Here, I will only focus on the necessary and sufficient conditions specified for intimate interactions. They are as follows:

- i) The interaction must involve some self-revealing behavior (either verbal or nonverbal); i.e. the interaction must involve some form of disclosure.

- ii) The individuals involved must “be in a state of positive involvement with one another.”¹²
- iii) The interaction must be “characterized by shared understanding of one another’s selves.”¹³

When an interaction has these three features, at least *some* degree of interactional intimacy is present. Precisely how intimate any given interaction is can be described as a function of how self-revealing the behavior in question is, the strength of the positive involvement, and the extent to which both parties understand one another.¹⁴ Crucially, since the three conditions are necessary and jointly sufficient for an intimate interaction, no interaction that fails to meet one of the three conditions can be considered an intimate one on the Prager/Roberts account.

On its face, this view appears to share many features with the Strikwerda and May account. Roughly, we might say that Strikwerda and May’s ‘knowledge’ element maps onto condition iii), that condition ii) covers the elements of ‘positive feelings’ and ‘trust’, and that Strikwerda and May’s concern with self-disclosure is covered by condition i) with the additional element that nonverbal disclosure is now at play. That being said, if this mapping were exact, then Prager and Roberts’ account will run into the same problem as Strikwerda and May’s. That account, recall, was ill suited as a general account of intimate interactions because it required

¹² Karen J. Prager and Linda J. Roberts, "Deep Intimate Connection: Self and Intimacy in Couple Relationships," in *Handbook of Closeness and Intimacy*, ed. Debra J. Mashek and Arthur Aron (New York: Routledge, 2013), 45.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Their account of intimate relationships is built out of this account of intimate interactions. Briefly, intimate relationships are ones in which intimate interactions occur frequently and reliably. I disagree with this view since it seems to me that one can be in an intimate relationship in which intimate interactions occur very rarely or occurred once, but no longer. I lack the space to expand on this point at this moment.

that the individuals involved be in a state of mutual trust earned over a long period of time, mutual deep knowledge, and a sense of loyalty, that seemed to exclude anyone but a few close friends as people with whom one could be intimate. If Prager and Roberts' account is to do better, then the threshold for meeting conditions ii) and iii) must be weaker than Strikwerda and May's corresponding conditions.

To that end, we can take a closer look at Prager and Roberts' understanding of those two conditions. We can begin by asking what it means for two individuals to be in "a state of positive involvement with one another." On Prager and Roberts' account, a person's involvement is a matter of being attentive and engaged in the interaction as it unfolds. A distracted or unfocused conversational partner, for example, is not involved in the conversation while someone who is actively listening and paying close attention to what is being said is highly involved. A person is also *positively* engaged in an interaction to the extent that he has, and is communicating, 'basic positive regard' for the other person through verbal or non-verbal cues. Thus, someone who is in a state of positive involvement with a conversation partner will not only be focused and listen, but will also communicate her positive regard for his partner by verbalizing it, or by giving cues to that effect through his body language (eye contact, direct body orientation, nodding, etc.). If both partners are in such a state, then their interaction has met the second condition for an intimate interaction.¹⁵

¹⁵ It's worth noting that positive involvement does not imply positive *affect*. What's important to communicate to the other is not that one is happy or having a good time, but rather their positive regard for their partner. This can be done even if, for example, the two are having an unpleasant conversation. For example, we might both be despondent while talking about the death of a mutual friend and still be positively involved in our interaction.

This explanation is somewhat hindered by the fact that Prager and Roberts don't tell us what it means for someone to have a basic positive regard for another person. However, it seems clear that whatever it is, basic positive regard does not require trust and loyalty cultivated over years of familiarity; it's reasonable to say that one can have basic positive regard for someone one doesn't know well, but less so with respect to trust or loyalty. If this is correct, then Prager and Roberts can account for intimacy between two boxers who know nothing about each other and who don't say much of anything to one another as long as both are sufficiently involved in the activity.

The matter is a bit more complicated with respect to explaining condition iii) which specifies that the interaction must be "characterized by shared understanding of one another's selves." Unfortunately, Prager and Roberts say very little about what this might mean. Explicitly, they say the following:

In an intimate interaction, both partners experience a sense of knowing or understanding some aspect of the other's inner experience—from private thoughts, feelings or beliefs, to characteristic rhythms, habits, or routines, to private sexual fantasies and preferences.¹⁶

This passage suggests that the third condition is met when the two partners have an *experience or sense* of understanding or knowing something about the other. In turn, it suggests that intimate interactions require both partners to *feel* like they understand something about the other person and not that they *actually* understand something about them. But this reading seems much too weak. If right, it would force us to accept that cases in which one person convincingly misrepresents himself with the result that his partner feels they understand him will count as an

¹⁶ Prager and Roberts, 45-46.

intimate interaction. Simply put, if we accept iii) unaltered, interactions with con artists would be paradigmatic of intimate interactions.¹⁷ This seems like the wrong result. Of course, such interactions may very well *feel* intimate, but they're mere simulations of intimacy. This becomes obvious when we wake the next day to find our bank accounts cleaned out and our wallets empty—what we thought was a night of intimacy was nothing but a ruse to get our money.

A better reading of Prager and Roberts' third condition, then, might be that intimate interactions simply require that both partners do, in fact, come to understand or to know something about the other person's inner experience. Furthermore, in many of these cases, this understanding will also be accompanied by the *feeling* of understanding. But if we are to rule out the intimacy that con artists try to engender with their victims as genuine cases of intimate interaction, then the feeling of understanding cannot be the only thing that matters.

If this is right, then, as with condition ii), we can see that Prager and Roberts' criterion for understanding is weaker than its counterpart in Strikwerda and May's account. While both accounts require that understanding or knowledge of the other is achieved, the latter requires that what's understood is some deep *characteristic* feature of the other while the former only requires understanding of "some aspect of the other's inner experience." This allows Prager and Roberts to capture intimate interactions outside the context of an established relationship: I may very well be able to understand some *aspect* of your inner experience—a private sexual fantasy, a thought, a desire—even if I don't know you very well, but it's unlikely that I will be able to understand your deep personal characteristics unless we spend some extended period of time with one another. Of course, it may be possible to learn core characteristics of a person in a short time as

¹⁷ Assuming, of course, that the con men also feel like they understand something about us. Which they very well may.

well, but this looser condition allows for intimacy to occur in cases that fall short of such profound understanding.

While Strikwerda and May's account may very well be a promising one for intimacy within the context of one particular type of relationship (viz., friendship), it is ill-suited for developing a more general account of intimate interactions. Prager and Roberts' account does better in this respect. Furthermore, it seems compatible with Strikwerda and May's view. Given that the two share similar elements and differ mostly with respect to how strict the criteria for satisfying their respective conditions are (i.e. depth of understanding and level or type of positive regard), it appears that Prager and Roberts' view can deliver the same results as Strikwerda and May's with respect to intimate interactions within friendships, and better results with respect to intimate interactions outside of an established relationship. Thus, nothing appears to be lost if we adopt the former and set the latter aside.

Furthermore, Prager and Roberts' view seems to be able to account for the potential intimacy between two boxers that Strikwerda and May's account (or, at the very least, the extended version I offered) seemed ill-equipped to handle. On Prager and Roberts' view, the boxing match will constitute an intimate interaction for the two boxers just as long as they meet the three conditions. First, the two must (presumably) non-verbally disclose something to one another in the course of their fight. This seems plausible insofar as the two athletes are able to use their body language to convey something to one another through their fight (perhaps their desire to win or their fear of defeat at the other's hands).¹⁸ Second, they must be positively

¹⁸ Not being a fighter myself, I admit, I'm a bit out of my depth in speculating how and what could be communicated with another fighter through body language. I suspect that there may be things that fighters can learn from one another's postures and fighting styles that would only be available in an interaction in the ring. However, we don't need to take such a strong stance here. It is sufficient, I believe, that non-verbal disclosure can occur in general between people, that this ability to non-verbally disclose doesn't disappear once people step into

involved with one another during their fight. Putting aside the question of positive regard raised earlier, this, too, seems plausible insofar as we can imagine that the two fighters are attentive to one another during the fight (reasonable, given the interest each has to avoid being punched in the head) and insofar as they do not hold each other in utter contempt. And finally, through their interaction, they must come to a shared understanding of the other and themselves. This condition, too, seems like it may plausibly be met, and, in fact, seems to mirror the explanation of intimacy in the ring quoted earlier.¹⁹

So, we seem to be in fairly good shape. Nevertheless, in the next section I will push this account further with the help of an example that not only strikes me as intimate, but which puts pressure on Prager and Roberts' view.

III. A Meeting in Memphis

The example I have in mind comes from an interaction between FBI agent Clarice Starling and the cannibal Dr. Hannibal Lecter in the movie *The Silence of the Lambs*.²⁰ The scene I want to look at is the one from which the movie gets its name. For those who haven't seen the movie (or who don't remember it well) I will offer a brief synopsis before showing why it poses a problem for the Prager/Roberts account.²¹

the ring, and that it can be employed while the two boxers fight. And it seems to me that non-verbal communication can certainly occur between people—much is communicated, for example, during an intimate sexual encounter even if it's never said out loud.

¹⁹ Here's the relevant bit again: "We head into the ring to descend into the depths of personal fear and unknowns and when we come out, we have a deeper understanding of who we are."

²⁰ *The Silence of the Lambs*, directed by Jonathan Demme. (1991; Santa Monica, CA: MGM Home Entertainment, 2001), DVD.

²¹ The scene can also be found here: <https://youtu.be/zeKqD2g9-ic>

In the scene in question, Starling has flown to Memphis where the criminal Dr. Lecter is being temporarily held in a makeshift cell—a kind of iron cage surrounding a boxing ring in the middle of an empty exhibition hall. The deal Starling had promised him earlier in the movie has been shown to be a fake; Clarice never had the authority to make the promises she made. She had essentially tried to manipulate Lecter to get the information she needed. Whether Lecter knew this at the time is unclear. However, as she approaches the cell both parties are aware that Clarice comes with nothing to bargain: she won't be able to do anything for Lecter one way or another regardless of whether he tells her anything about the serial killer Buffalo Bill. Nevertheless, Starling intends to convince him to help her. She has only a short time to do this before Dr. Chilton—Lecter's warden—will end their meeting.

After handing Lecter a bundle of his old drawings and acknowledging the fact that she tried to deceive him, Starling tells Lecter that his “anagrams are showing.” Clarice has noticed that the name he had given to the police as the identity of Bill—Louis Friend—is an anagram for Iron Sulfide (fool's gold). Lecter has duped the police. In telling him this Clarice is proving herself to Lecter: what had fooled everyone else did not fool her. She is signaling to him that she's not like the other people Lecter is forced to deal with. Crucially, she is not like Chilton—cocky, self-absorbed, and oblivious to his own limitations. Rather, she is someone that deserves to be taken seriously and dealt with truthfully instead of toyed with and discarded. She stresses this by reminding Lecter that he had been truthful in their last meeting in Baltimore and implores him to continue.

The uptake from Lecter is immediate and his tone shifts. He will be truthful with Starling, but if she insists on being taken seriously she will have to work to get the information she needs. In doing this, he takes on the role of an instructor or mentor whose job isn't to merely deliver

answers to his pupil, but to help her find them on her own. He begins a pedagogical exercise that consists in quizzing and correcting Starling about Buffalo Bill's nature: Bill covets, and all coveting, as it were, begins at home. The implication, which we will learn in the third act of the movie, is that Bill's first murder was done close to where he first began to covet. So, if Starling wants to catch Bill, she has to figure out which murder was his first, and where it occurred.

Mirroring the earlier game the two had played in Baltimore, Lecter interrupts his lesson to demand that Starling tell him about herself.²² He forces her to return to the memories of her childhood: after the death of her father Clarice had been sent to live with a rancher and his wife in Montana; one day she ran away; Lecter wants to know why. Starling explains that on the day she ran away she woke up in the middle of the night to the sound of screams from the rancher's barn. When she went to check on the noise, she saw that the screams were coming from the frightened lambs being slaughtered by the rancher. In an effort to save the lambs, the young Clarice tried to set them free by opening their enclosures, but paralyzed by fear, the animals remained still, continuing to scream. Out of desperation, Clarice grabbed a single lamb and ran as far away as she could. However, she was quickly picked up, the lamb was slaughtered, and she was sent away from the ranch to an orphanage. Here, Lecter, who had been interrupting the story with probing questions, asks Starling whether she still wakes up hearing the lambs screaming and if she thinks that saving Bill's latest victim will make the lambs silent. Starling says that she doesn't know and Lecter responds with a "thank you, Clarice. Thank you."

²² I have in mind the "quid-pro-quo" scene from earlier in the movie in which Lecter, under the false pretense that his cooperation with Starling would improve his living conditions, agrees to answer her questions about Bill if she, in turn, will answer questions about her personal life. This scene can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIRLfbONYgM>

At this point the two are interrupted as Dr. Chilton enters the room. Guards grab a hold of Agent Starling and begin to escort her out of the room. She begs Lecter to tell her Bill's real name, but he seemingly refuses, offering her instead the case file that she had given him earlier. Starling breaks free from the guards and as she takes the file Lecter briefly grazes her finger—the first and only time the two make any physical contact in the movie.

The interaction between the two characters strikes me as an intimate one, but what makes it so is not immediately obvious.²³ After all, Starling and Lecter do not fit the mold of people whom we tend to think of as intimates. Not only are they profoundly different people with profoundly different values and motivations (she's an FBI agent—he's a cannibal! Cue the sitcom music!), but the interaction also seems to be a rather unpleasant one—Starling is being grilled about her most painful memories by a serial killer so that she can stop another serial killer from killing again. Needless to say, it also seems inappropriate to describe the interaction between the two in terms of deep trust or loyalty. Nevertheless, there seems to be something oddly intimate at play here. What is it?

This interaction, if it is indeed an intimate one, poses a particular challenge for Prager and Roberts' account for two reasons. First, it's not clear that Starling and Lecter meet its second condition; namely, it's not clear that the interaction is one in which the two characters are in a state of positive involvement. More specifically, it's not clear if the two have met the criterion for holding each other in basic positive regard. As pointed out earlier, part of this is due to the

²³ I want to acknowledge that this interaction may not strike everyone as intimate. In what follows, I will try to explain what it is about the interaction that makes me see it this way, but, I admit, part of this will come down to intuition. Consequently, the reader who finds absolutely nothing intimate in this interaction may find this section frustrating. This is okay. If successful, the account of intimacy that I will offer in the next section will still be compatible with central cases of intimacy—it's just that it will *also* allow for interactions like the one between Lecter and Starling to be intimate as well.

fact that we don't quite know what it means for someone to hold someone in basic positive regard. If in the context of intimacy it means that both people *like* each other, or feel positively towards one another, then Lecter and Starling do not satisfy the criterion. While it's not exactly clear whether Lecter likes Starling (he seems to have a favorable view of her at the end of the movie—at least favorable enough to tell her that he won't kill her), it seems obvious that Starling does *not* like Lecter. She's repulsed and frightened by his criminality and predatory nature—her strength is demonstrated in part because she is able to engage with Lecter despite the fact that she doesn't like to be around him.

Second, it's not clear that the interaction in question satisfies condition iii). There is certainly understanding between the two characters. In forcing Clarice to divulge something very personal about herself, Lecter really does come to learn and understand something profound about Starling. When taken together with the earlier scene in Baltimore he learns that Clarice suffered a deep trauma at the death of her father, which she relived when she was unable to prevent the slaughter of the lambs. Both cases leave her with a sense that the suffering of the innocent could be prevented if she were stronger (better, smarter, in the right place, etc.). In turn, this lets Lecter understand why she's so motivated to stop Bill, why she's willing to put up with Lecter's games, and why she tolerates the repeated sexism and objectification she encounters as a woman in the FBI.²⁴ *He* gets the kind of understanding of her inner experience. She, however, does *not* gain any such insight from Lecter—the understanding that occurs between the two is decidedly one-sided. Given that Prager and Roberts' condition iii) requires that both parties

²⁴ This is an angle that, unfortunately, I'm unable to explore here, but which I think is very important to understanding the relationships between Starling and Lecter. Lecter is clearly the only male character in the movie that doesn't objectify Starling. Lecter is ruthless and evil, but unlike Bill, Chilton, her FBI mentor, or the moth expert, he doesn't take her sex as something to possess or manipulate. The only other male figure that we're led to believe held the same position in Starling's life is, of course, her father.

understand something about each other's inner experience, it would appear that the interaction between Lecter and Starling cannot be intimate.

IV. Identification, Empathy, and Recognition

Let's return to the question of what makes the interaction between Lecter and Starling intimate. It's safe to say, I take it, that part of what makes it intimate can be explained by the fact that Starling shares something deeply personal about herself (even though she does this reluctantly) which lets Lecter understand something about her. Her disclosure and his understanding is of paramount importance. This much can be handled by the accounts we've discussed so far. However, two further elements also seem to matter: first, it matters that her personal divulgence occurs in a context in which she has demonstrated to Lecter that she is *like him* in one very important respect—her intelligence. This demonstration sets the tone between the two characters as two people who, if not exactly equals, are sufficiently alike with respect to their intellect to be considered in the same category.²⁵ I will expand on why I think this is important shortly. The second element that seems important in this interaction is that Clarice (tacitly) acknowledges that Lecter really has understood something profound about her and he, in turn, acknowledges her acknowledgment of that fact. This mutual acknowledgment is subtle:

²⁵ Their parity is also reflected in the way the scene is shot. At the beginning of the scene Clarice and Lecter are shown with the bars of Lecter's cage between them, clearly demarcating them as occupying two different worlds. However, as soon as Clarice demonstrates to Lecter that she's a worthy intellectual opponent and challenges him to take her seriously as one, the camera begins to zoom in. As the scene unfolds the bars retreat to the periphery and eventually disappear, and by the time Clarice is retelling the story of the lambs, all we see are two close-up shots of the characters' faces. Their conversation has proverbially melted away the barrier between them and has left out the outside world; there is no cage, there are no guards, there's only Starling and Lecter. The illusion is broken when Chillton enters the room and the camera zooms out to show the bars once again.

Clarice's can be noted by the fact that she doesn't protest (and seems to accept) Lecter's interpretation of her story; Lecter's can be noted in the thanks he gives in return.²⁶

Let's return to the first element: why should the fact that Starling shows herself to be like Lecter in this limited respect matter (she is, after all *very* different from him in almost every other respect)? The answer to this question, I believe, partially had to do with how Lecter sees his own intellect and what effects this view has on how he relates to others. Clearly, Lecter is both aware of his own intellectual abilities, his intellectual superiority, and how his intellect sets him apart from other people. Simply put, his intelligence serves as a barrier that separates him from others. That's not to say that he's pained by this separation. Far from it, given his predatory nature, his condescending demeanor, and general disregard for human life, he is perfectly content to be separated in this way. Nevertheless, he *is* separated from others. Furthermore, his intellect is not some peripheral feature of his personality—it is something central to who he is, how he sees *himself*, and how he makes sense of the world.

In recognizing Starling as sufficiently like him precisely with respect to this feature, two things happen. First, the barrier that is usually present between Lecter and the rest of the world is partially lifted for Clarice. He is no longer alone on one side, apart from everyone else; Starling is there with him. And second, because the feature that allows him to partially identify with her is so central to how Lecter sees *himself*, he is able to partially take on Starling's perspective.

²⁶ Lecter: And you think, if you save poor Catherine, you could make them stop, don't you? You think if Catherine lives, you won't wake up in the dark ever again to that awful screaming of the lambs.

Starling: I don't know. I don't know.

Lecter: Thank you, Clarice.

The thank you here is ambiguous, but as I'm interpreting it, it is a thank you for letting him understand what drives her.

Crucially, being able to see Starling in this way allows for a degree of *empathy* in Lecter that, up to this point, has been missing. In turn, this degree of empathy matters because it changes the way Lecter *understands* what Starling divulges. He doesn't simply identify *that* Starling has certain emotions, motivations, and drives—this is something that he is very good at doing, something that he's been able to pick up from Clarice since their first meeting, and something that we are led to believe he employs often to exploit the people around him. Rather, he comes as close as he possibly can given his psychopathy, to actually identifying *with* those motivations, emotions, and drives. In that sense, he comes as close as he can to having an understanding of Clarice from her point of view.

I don't mean to overstate this point: the degree to which he is able to identify with Starling is very limited. It's neither the case that he comes to think of himself as Clarice would think of herself, nor does he come to *actually feel* what Starling felt, recalling the crying of the lambs—he is, I take it, incapable of *sympathy*. That being said, I do think that he's able to see some vague outline—a cast shadow—of what that feeling might be like and that he is able to do this only because he comes to think of Starling as like him in this limited, but central to his own self-understanding, way.

The suggestion I'm proposing then, is that part of what makes the interaction between the two intimate is the fact that the understanding Lecter comes to have of Starling is mediated by the empathy (however limited it may be) he has for her in the scene. In turn, I want to explain how this occurs by appealing to the common feature that he identifies between himself and her. In other words, their similarity with respect to intellect matters in this interaction because it serves as the basis on which Lecter first identifies with Starling. This identification, in turn,

matters because it allows for a degree of empathy, which lets him gain a deep understanding of Clarice.

More generally, I want to say that an element of intimate interactions is the presence of at least some empathy by one (or both) of the people in an interaction that allows for what's being shared in that interaction to be understood by the empathetic person in a particular way. Namely, it allows for understanding of what's being shared by partially taking on the viewpoint of the person sharing it.

The other element that I've said matters in making the interaction between Lecter and Starling an intimate one is the fact that there is a kind of mutual recognition between the two. Starling acknowledges that Lecter has come to have a kind of deep understanding of her, and he recognizes her acknowledgment. This element is important primarily because it serves as a signal to both people in the interaction that there really has been genuine understanding between the two. It is a kind of mark of success that is weaker than a requirement for mutual understanding on both parts, but that serves to let both parties in the interaction know that what's been shared has been shared successfully. Consider how different their interaction would have been had Starling failed to notice that Lecter understood what motivates her, or, alternatively, if she had protested his understanding, insisting that he had misunderstood her. It seems to me that in both cases the degree of intimacy in the interaction would have been diminished or non-existent.

This element also plays a particularly important part in the interaction between Lecter and Starling for a different reason that's important to distinguish here. Part of what makes the notion that something intimate is happening in the interaction between Starling and Lecter so unsettling and difficult to explain is due to the fact that Starling is clearly under duress when being interrogated by Lecter. She doesn't *want* to be asked questions about the death of her

father or about the slaughter of the lambs and she only does so because Lecter has something that she needs. Nor does she seem to want to be *understood* by Lecter. In other words, it seems that he understands her against her will. In most cases, this lack of consent is enough to render intimacy in an interaction null. I think this is generally true, and I think it would have also been true in this case as well but for the fact that Clarice's acknowledgement that she has been understood seems to mitigate it. In a sense, then, her acknowledgment of his understanding serves as a very weak kind of retroactive consent to be understood—what was done was under duress, but it wasn't an overriding violation.

That being said, most cases of intimate interactions do not involve the kind of duress that Clarice experiences in sharing her story. For those cases it is sufficient that one simply engages in sharing freely for this baseline consent to be established. In that sense, to share with someone is a *de facto* way of consenting and inviting the other to understand something. In those cases I maintain that the mutual recognition of understanding serves merely as a way to signify to the other that what one has set out to share with the other has been achieved.

In that respect, it's possible to think of this second element as a further refinement of Prager and Roberts' 'engagement' condition. Recall, on that account, intimacy required that one be attentive and involved with the activity that constituted the interaction. This seems correct—distraction and disinterest are anathema to intimacy—and the element of mutual recognition of understanding can be seen as a way of signaling to the other that one is, in fact, involved.

Let's take stock. In the last section I tried to show that the interaction between Lecter and Starling presents a challenge for more sophisticated views of intimate interactions. This interaction seems to be intimate despite the fact that it doesn't fit the standard mold of an intimate interaction: the characters don't particularly like each other, and not only is the

interaction between them asymmetrical insofar as only Starling divulges anything personal about herself, but it is also asymmetrical insofar as she doesn't come to understand anything about Lecter. On Strikwerda and May's theory (extended from their theory about intimacy between friends) this wouldn't count as an intimate interaction and Prager and Roberts' account doesn't easily accommodate it as long as the view remains committed to an element of mutual divulgence and an unclear standard of basic positive regard.

In this section I've tried to account for the difficulty presented by the interaction between Lecter and Starling by stressing the importance of two elements. The first is the presence of some degree of empathy on behalf of Lecter that allows him to understand the personal matters that Starling is divulging. More specifically, by exhibiting some degree of empathy for Starling prior to her telling him the story of the lambs, Lecter is able to at least partially occupy her viewpoint of the world and come to understand what she's sharing with him, her motivations and her drive for justice from her point of view. The second element is the presence of a recognition by Starling that Lecter has understood her, and an acknowledgement on his behalf that she has recognized this.

Putting everything together and generalizing, then, we can say that generally an interaction is intimate if:

- i) One individual (or both) shares something either verbally or nonverbally with the other
- ii) There is some degree of empathy on the part of the person with whom that something is shared (or both if both are sharing something)
- iii) As a result, one individual (or both) comes to understand what's being shared at least partially through adopting the viewpoint of the other

- iv) There is a shared recognition that this understanding has occurred

I've argued that this way of thinking of intimacy can handle difficult cases like the one between Lecter and Starling. In the next section I will show that the similarities between my account and the ones we discussed earlier are sufficiently similar to capture everything that made those accounts seem promising. Thus, we lose nothing by adopting my view and may even gain a greater understanding of what's right about the other accounts. I will close off the paper by considering some remaining questions and further areas worth considering.

V. A Look Back (and Ahead)

The first thing to note is that the account I've presented isn't radically different from the ones we examined earlier. In fact, the four accounts share quite a bit in common. All four, for example, share the notion that an interaction has to involve some kind of disclosure or sharing that occurs between the people involved. However, each varies with respect to *what* must be shared and *how* it must be shared. The common view held that something personal has to be disclosed verbally; Strikwerda and May held that it has to be some core characteristic feature disclosed either verbally or nonverbally; Prager and Roberts held that it must be a feature of the other's inner experience shared either verbally or nonverbally. My view holds that disclosure can happen either verbally or nonverbally but so far I've remained uncommitted about the content of what's being shared. My suspicion is that what's being shared is less important than the other elements I've discussed. However, I've given no argument for that claim, so I will settle for saying that my view is open to accommodating inner experiences, characteristic features, and deep personal aspirations, feelings, and drives as equally good subjects for divulgence. In this respect, my view is perfectly compatible with the rest.

Rather than focusing on what's being disclosed, my account looks at the conditions under which the disclosure occurs. Here, it departs from the other three which all take seriously the notion that the people involved must, in some sense, think about each other in a positive light. The common view holds that the individuals must like each other; Strikwerda and May's view holds that they must trust and be loyal to one another; and Prager and Roberts' view holds that they must have a basic positive regard for one another. In contrast, my view states that there must be some degree of empathy present in the person with whom information is being shared. This, I've argued, allows one (or both) parties to understand what's being shared from the perspective of the other. Since being empathetic doesn't require that one view the other person in a positive light, but, at the same time allows for that possibility, my account can account for those cases in which the people in question do feel positively towards one another, as well as more difficult cases in which they don't (i.e. the boxing case and Lecter and Starling's interaction). In other words, the conditions under which disclosure must occur are more relaxed than those of the other accounts.

The focus on understanding is also present in the two sophisticated views of intimacy we looked at. Both Strikwerda and May and Prager and Roberts stress that some kind of understanding must occur between the individuals. The former put this in terms of a deep mutual knowledge that allows for an understanding of the other and oneself, and the latter put it in terms of a shared understanding of one another's selves. My account differs from these in two respects. First, it doesn't require that the *understanding* be mutual—the understanding that occurs may be asymmetrical. However, it does require that both people *recognize* that this understanding has occurred. This condition, too, is weaker than the one offered by the previous accounts.

The weakening of these last two elements of intimate interactions is what allows my account to accommodate the difficult case presented by Starling and Lecter's interaction. At the same time, however, the account is similar enough to the previous three accounts to also capture what made the other theories plausible. It can still explain why talking about personal things between people who care about each other is important when it comes to intimacy; viz., such interactions are likely to be ones in which the elements I've specified are likely to be present. But it can also explain why talking doesn't always result in intimacy (the other person may not be empathetic in the least, or they may not understand what you're sharing, or you may not recognize that they've understood!). Likewise, my account can still take on board the importance that Strikwerda and May place on trust and loyalty in intimacy between friends—nothing in my view excludes this possibility. But it can also explain how there can be intimate interactions that can occur between people who fall short of full blown trust and loyalty. Finally, my account can still grant that the *mutual* understanding and positive regard specified by Prager and Roberts is important while allowing that there may be cases in which intimacy occurs despite the fact that the understanding achieved is one-sided, and despite the fact that there may be little positive regard in play during the interaction. If what I've said here is right, then adopting my account gives us a more nuanced understanding of the nature of intimate interactions.

That being said, the account I've offered here is by no means a full account of intimacy. Even with respect to intimate interactions, there are still some questions that remain unanswered. For example, I have not given a full account of the mechanism by which identification with a particular feature can lead to empathy with a person. I've assumed that it's enough to identify empathy as an important element of intimate interactions and to give a (seemingly) plausible mechanism of how this empathy might be engendered (i.e. empathy by way of identification)

through a specific example while simultaneously passing the buck of how empathy *actually* works to other theorists. The seemingly plausible mechanism I've proposed may turn out to be very different from the way people come to feel empathy for one another—in that case, my account will have to be modified.

Likewise, I do not take myself to have identified *all* the features that may be relevant in making an interaction intimate. I have not, for example, addressed the role that touch can play in making an interaction intimate. Nor have I talked about the role of anxiety, judgment, or comfort. More generally, I have remained silent on how we should interpret nonverbal disclosure and the different forms it can take; rather, I have simply assumed that this kind of disclosure is common and intuitive and have simply incorporated it into my account. This is not an assumption that should be taken lightly—the conditions under which nonverbal disclosure occurs may themselves be crucial to understanding how we should understand intimacy.

Finally, and most notably, I have said nothing about the role of intimacy in loving relationships or friendships. The big questions that spurred this exploration of the intimate landscape remain unanswered. Nevertheless, I hope that what has been said here can serve as a stepping stone towards a broader theory that may be better disposed to answer them.

REFERENCES

- Ahmoda looz. "Silence Of The Lambs - best scene". YouTube video. Posted [May 2015].
<https://youtu.be/zeKqD2g9-ic>
- Aristotle. 2014. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by C.D.C. Reeve. Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.
- Demme, Jonathan, Ted Tally, Kenneth Utt, Edward Saxon, Ron Bozman, Jodie Foster, Anthony Hopkins, et al. 1991. *The Silence of the Lambs*. Santa Monica, CA: MGM Home Entertainment, 2001. DVD.
- Movieclips. "The Silence of the Lambs (5/12) Movie CLIP - Quid Pro Quo (1991) HD". YouTube video. Posted [Jul 2013]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIRLfbONYgM>
- Lauer, Christopher. *Intimacy a Dialectical Study*. London: Bloomsbury, Bloomsbury Academic, an Imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2016.
- Plato. 1998. *Plato's Symposium*. Translated by Avi Sharon. Newburyport, MA: Focus Pub./R. Pullins Co.
- Prager, Karen J., and Linda J. Roberts. "Deep Intimate Connection: Self and Intimacy in Couple Relationships." In *Handbook of Closeness and Intimacy*, edited by Debra J. Mashek and Arthur Aron. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Strikwerda, Robert A., and Larry May. "Male Friendship and Intimacy." *Hypatia* 7, no. 3 (1992): 110-25. doi:10.1111/j.1527-2001.1992.tb00907.x.