Towards an African Political Philosophy of Needs

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The Need for Others in Public Policy: An African Approach

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Introducing Relational Values

When reflecting on human need as a moral-political category, it is natural to include some intersubjective conditions. Surely, children need to be socialized, adults need to be recognized, and the poor at any age need to be given certain kinds of resources. There will be disagreement, however, over precisely why these things are needed from others. According to the 'intrinsic' perspective, a person needs socialization, recognition, aid, and the like in order to obtain some further things that are desirable for herself and make no essential reference to anyone but her. Perhaps she needs something from others in order for her to be healthy, feel good, or develop autonomy. In contrast, according to the 'relational' approach, a person might instead (or also) need others in order to obtain something desirable that makes essential reference to someone else besides herself. For example, perhaps she needs to be party to a loving relationship with another person as something good for its own sake.

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My primary aims in this essay are to spell out this distinction between intrinsic and relational ways of understanding the need for others, to motivate the plausibility of the latter approach as a major supplement to (though not supplantation of) the former, and to demonstrate how the relational approach has interesting and important implications for public policy. What we give to the poor, why people are entitled to jobs, what we teach, and even when we deploy robots would all likely be affected if the state were seeking to meet needs and a person needed to relate to others for its own sake, not merely in order to improve her own life construed individualistically. As I try to show here, quite often institutions in the West and in societies influenced by it focus on the intrinsic, where acknowledging that we need others for relational considerations would affect public policy in revealing and plausible ways.

Relationality is prominent in African normative thought to no less a degree than any other philosophical tradition, and greater than many.[1] In particular, a common interpretation of *ubuntu*, the southern African word for humanness often used to encapsulate morality, is that certain kinds of relationships are to be pursued as ends in themselves. As the influential theologian and Nobel Peace Prize winner Desmond Tutu remarks of those who hold an *ubuntu* ethic, 'Harmony, friendliness, community are great goods. Social harmony is for us the *summum bonum*—the greatest good' (1999: 35).[2] To spell out a relational approach to our need for others I often draw on African sources. However, I also consult some Western ones, particularly the psychoanalyst and social theorist Erich Fromm when he distinguishes between 'I love you because I need you' and 'I need you because I love you' (1962: 41). As I discuss below, Fromm calls the former 'immature' and the latter 'mature', in my terms contending that the latter, relational valuation is a better reason for needing others than is the former, intrinsic one.

Despite what is suggested by Fromm's labels, I am not out to show that it is improper to need others because of something intrinsic to oneself. My aim is the more moderate one of motivating the view that to need *only* in that way would be insufficient (or immature); one *also* plausibly needs others because one needs to relate in certain ways.

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[1] See Metz and Miller (2016) for an overview of relationality in three global philosophies.
[2] For broadly similar approaches, see Mokgoro (1998: 16–18), LenkaBula (2008), Mkhize (2008).

In addition, in this essay, I do not seek to argue that at least one proper job of the state is to meet people's needs (on which see Hamilton 2003; Gyekye 2004) or the closely related condition of their capabilities (on which see Alkire 2005). I realize that it is a controversial premise, one that would be rejected by both utilitarians, who would prefer that the state promote subjective well-being (e.g., Tännsjö 1998), and Kantians, who would have it distribute means that could be used to evaluate and bring about a wide array of ends (e.g., Rawls 1999). My project here instead assumes for the sake of argument that the state would be just to strive to meet people's needs (amongst other possible aims), with me showing some of what that would look like according to a relational appreciation of our need for others.

In the following section, I spell out the intrinsic/relational distinction with more care (Section 'Two Ways to Value the Need for Others'), after which I provide reason to take seriously the idea that relational values are essential to understanding why we need others in our lives (Section 'Motivating the Need for Others as Relational'). Then, I consider how needing others for relational reasons would mean effecting changes to public policy in crucial ways, specifically in respect of poverty, employment, education, and the fourth industrial revolution (Section 'Applying the Relational Need for Others'). I close by suggesting that, while I will not have argued that the state ought to meet people's needs, the various examples advanced in the essay implicitly lend support to that position, insofar as readers have found them attractive (Section 'Concluding Remarks on the Need for Others as Relational').

Two Ways to Value the Need for Others

In this section, I do more to spell out the two different ways of valuing the need for other people and begin to motivate the idea that a relational valuation is essential for a complete understanding of this need. Here I provide an example pertaining to individual choice, discussing applications to various spheres of institutional choice only in further sections.

Consider my need to obtain input on pre-publication drafts of this essay. I need to receive feedback on my ideas from colleagues by giving talks and seeking out advice from my editors and the reviewers they select. Why do I need such input?

One sort of reason could be intrinsic. To value the need for the judgement of experts intrinsically would be for me to seek it out because it can

help me, narrowly construed in terms of *features of myself that make no essential reference to anyone else*. So, for example, I might need collegial feedback in order to learn more than I knew before. Or I might need it in order to get the paper published and hence obtain a bonus from my university, which I then spend towards a holiday in Mauritius. My *knowledge* and my *holiday* are individualist or self-regarding ends, in the sense that no one else has to figure onto them, even if input from others is an essential *means* to obtain them.

In contrast, I might (also) value the need for expert input relationally, that is because receiving it would *constitute interaction, or enable me to interact, with others* in certain ways. Relational reasons can come in a variety of ways, as follows. I might have a need for expert input because I need a certain relationship (a) with those experts or (b) with someone other than those experts. I also might have a need for expert input because I need something to come (c) at the time of receiving the input or (d) at some time down the road. Given that different persons correlate with different locations on the planet, one can view these as spatial and temporal distinctions, respectively, and, further, as ones that crosscut each other. For an example of (a + c), the need for collegial feedback from persons X, Y, and Z could be a matter of a need for the *presence of an academic community*, with the reception of feedback from them partially constituting that. For an example of (a + d), the need for collegial feedback from persons X, Y, and Z could be a matter of determining which ones I would like to *collaborate with on future projects*. For an example of (b + d), the need for collegial feedback from persons X, Y, and Z could be a matter of wanting to learn more so that I can *share the knowledge with others* (persons A, B, and C) in a final draft of this paper (or of wanting to get the bonus from its publication so that I can give my sons a holiday). Finally, for the unusual case of (b + c), the need for collegial feedback from persons X, Y, and Z could be a matter of *keeping a promise that I had made to someone else, perhaps their supervisors, to engage with them.*

Note that the intrinsic versus relational distinction is not equivalent to the distinction between means versus ends in respect of a specific instance of relating. The point is not quite that an intrinsic valuation of the need to relate to others treats *a given relationship* as a means to the production of something good for an individual, while a relational valuation treats that relationship as an end. Instead, while an intrinsic valuation of the need to relate to others does treat a relationship as a means to an individualist end, a relational valuation might treat that particular relationship either as an

end, as in the cases of (a + c) and (b + c), or as a means to some *further relational end*, *vide* (a + d) and (b + d). Seeking input from you in order to determine whether to co-author with you down the road or to share your knowledge with readers is to value your input as an intermediate means, albeit a means towards ends that are relational in the sense of essentially including some positive way of engaging with others besides myself. The distinction concerns the ultimate point of needing others— does one need them simply because of one's individualist features, such as feeling pleasure or realizing autonomy, or does one need them because of relational features of some kind or other?

Motivating the Need for Others as Relational

I presume the above examples of valuing interaction with others relationally have some intuitive pull for readers. Many will appreciate the suggestions that the need for input on one's academic work is not exhausted by individualist concerns and that it is also important insofar as it facilities interaction in various ways, for example, with those providing the input, those in the broader scholarly community, and those in one's family. In this section I note some additional, theoretical considerations that tell in favour of viewing the need for others as something more than a mere means towards intrinsic ends such as one's knowledge, pleasure, autonomy, authenticity, self-confidence, self-expression, or uniqueness. Specifically, principled considerations of virtue (Section 'Virtue'), meaning in life (Section 'Meaning in Life'), and love (Section 'Love') entail that one needs others in certain ways for extrinsic reasons, roughly because satisfying the need for others facilitates interaction that is plausibly viewed as good for its own sake or as an end that merits pursuit in itself.

Virtue

In the African tradition, virtue is routinely spoken of in terms of 'personhood', where the greater one's personhood or the more of a person one is, the better one's life (e.g., Menkiti 2004; Nkulu-N'Sengha 2009). In southern Africa, the influential term for virtue is '*ubuntu*', which means humanness in the Nguni languages there, the similar idea being that the more one manifests human excellence, the better one's life (Letseka 2000; Mnyaka and Motlhabi 2005). Conversely, those who are lacking in virtue and instead exhibit vice are often said to be 'non-persons' or even

'animals' in serious cases (Letseka 2000: 186; Nkulu-N'Sengha 2009: 143–144). A central way to avoid having a bad character and instead to manifest more personhood or humanness is, by consensus, to act beneficently (Paris 1995: 136–137; Gyekye 1997: 50; Tutu 1999: 34; Mnyaka and Motlhabi 2005: 227; Masolo 2010: 251, 252). Insofar as being good to others is a way of realizing one's higher nature or virtue, doing so is desirable for its own sake.

To illustrate the point, return to the example of receiving collegial input on a draft of my ideas. Those who gave me help are better persons or more human to some degree for having done so. However, it is also plausible to think that a deep reason why I have a need for help from others concerns the development of my own personhood. If I let others help me, I am giving them the opportunity to enhance their personhood. Now, helping to enhance others' personhood is a way to help them, and surely one of the most important ways to help them according to an ethic of personhood/humanness, where virtue is the paramount human good. And, then, by helping others, I thereby confer more personhood/humanness on myself. The point is, of course, generalizable to many other contexts, including relationships amongst family members, colleagues in an academic department, or participants in a *stokvel* (a cooperative scheme in which money is pooled and lent out on a non-profit or profit-sharing basis, on which see Koenane 2019).

This point, that enabling others to help me is also a way to help them (because it fosters their personhood), is the flip side of a point that will be more familiar to African readers. It is common to encounter the suggestion that our humanness is interdependent, perhaps most influentially said by Desmond Tutu when he claimed that when apartheid supporters dehumanized others, they thereby dehumanized themselves.

> In a real sense we might add that even the supporters of apartheid were victims of the vicious system which they implemented and which they supported so enthusiastically. This….flows from our fundamental concept of *ubuntu*. Our humanity was intertwined. The humanity of the perpetrator of apartheid's atrocities was caught up and bound up in that of his victim whether he liked it or not. In the process of dehumanizing another, in inflicting untold harm and suffering, inexorably the perpetrator was being dehumanized as well. (Tutu 1999: 35)

Tutu invokes the example of an apartheid cabinet minister who 'could heartlessly declare that the death in detention of a Steve Biko "left him cold"' (Tutu 1999: 36). If dehumanizing another person thereby means that one has dehumanized oneself, then surely the reverse is also true: by humanizing another person, one thereby humanizes oneself. That is, by enabling others to develop their personhood, one thereby becomes more of a person oneself. And since enabling others to develop their personhood can involve receiving help from them, receiving help from others is a way of developing one's own personhood.

In sum, my need for help from others can also constitute a need to help them; by giving others the opportunity to enhance their personhood by helping me, I thereby help them and enhance my personhood. Or, as Tutu also says, 'We are different so that we can know our need of one another, for no one is ultimately self-sufficient. The completely self-sufficient person would be subhuman' (1999: 214). If I were self-reliant and did not let others enhance their humanness by helping me, I would be failing to help them in an important respect, which would cost me some humanness.

It might sound as though appeal to one's own personhood/humanness as a ground for needing others is an intrinsic rationale. It could seem that I am suggesting that one should receive help from others since that would lead to one's own self-realization down the road, which looks like a self-regarding good. However, a careful analysis of the concepts involved reveals that this is not my claim. Above I noted that intrinsic goods are by definition those that make no essential reference to others (even if others are essential as means to bring these goods about), but personhood/humanness in the African tradition is precisely not a state internal to a person that can be captured without thought of another person. Instead, by the present account, personhood/humanness is nothing other than the manifestation of certain other-regarding attitudes and actions.[3] These constitute the virtue.

Meaning in Life

Another theoretical way to understand the relational value of one's need for others is in terms of what makes a life meaningful. By this I largely have in mind those traits of a life that merit reactions such as pride or esteem

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[3] In contrast to the view advanced in Molefe (2019: 37–66), in which personhood is merely caused by other-regarding behaviour and is not constituted by it.

from a first-person perspective, or those such as admiration or praise from a third-person perspective (on which see Metz 2001; Kauppinen 2012). Creating a work of art and obtaining an education are common examples. However, probably the least contested source of meaning in life comes from helping others; it appears that literally every long-standing philosophical-religious worldview maintains that one's life would be more meaningful for doing what one expects will improve others' lives and for succeeding (Küng and Kuschel 1993). Making sacrifices for others that indeed make their lives go better surely merits esteem and praise, if anything does.

Returning to the example of collegial input, when my colleagues help me by providing feedback on my work, their lives are somewhat more meaningful for doing so. However, insofar as I give them the opportunity to help me and hence enhance the meaningfulness of their lives, I am thereby helping them and hence also enhancing the meaningfulness of my life. After all, an important way to help others is not merely to make them happier, but also to make their lives more meaningful.

As with personhood, the suggestion here is not that by helping others I am causing some distinct, intrinsic state of meaningfulness in me down the road. Instead, what constitutes the meaningfulness in my life, what it is that warrants the esteem and praise, is precisely the relational action of helping others, and in this case by giving them the opportunity to enhance the meaningfulness of their lives by helping me. It is not just our humanity that is plausibly intertwined, but the meaning of our lives, too. Martin Buber makes this point in his classic book *I and Thou*: 'You need God, in order to be—and God needs you, for the very meaning of your life' (1947: 82).

Note that, even if one does not find the above analyses of personhood and meaning compelling, there are ways of appealing to these values that are less controversial and still support a relational valuation of the need for others. So, specifically, suppose one is disinclined to think that my personhood and meaningfulness would be enhanced in the act of giving commentators the opportunity to help me with my work. Even so, one should surely accept that my personhood and meaningfulness would be enhanced by using their comments to help other parties, such as readers of the revised and improved draft.

<center>*Love*</center>

Love is a third theoretical lens through which to appreciate the relationality of our need for others, where sometimes an *ubuntu* ethic has been understood in terms of a loving disposition or way of relating (e.g., Tshivhase 2018; Metz 2019) and life's meaning has been, too (e.g., Buber 1947; Wolf 2002; Baggini 2004: 181–184; Eagleton 2007). I presume the reader will agree that one is a better person, or that one's life is more meaningful, for being loving or acting in loving ways, or that love makes a life go better for a reason independent of any other value.

Now, it is plausible to think that there are better and worse ways to love, which influence the degree of one's personhood or meaningfulness, returning us to Fromm's distinction between mature and immature love mentioned in the introduction. What Fromm considers immature or infantile love is summed up with the statement, 'I love you because I need you'. I interpret this to mean that I care for you only because you have done or can do something for me, individualistically construed, such as feed me or give me pleasure. In contrast, mature love, which is typified by 'I need you because I love you', amounts to 'a sense of new union, of sharing, of oneness' (Fromm 1962: 40). Here one engages in loving behaviour for its own sake.

So, another way to appreciate the relational worth of my need for collegial input is that I have to have it in order to do the epistemically loving thing of sharing the best reflections I can with a readership. To publish without having tried to get feedback beforehand on a draft (that I could have obtained) would be to display a lack of concern for the interests of readers. Were I not to seek out collegial input before publishing a piece of work, I would probably be publishing out of a concern for my (individualist) interests, or at least not so much those of my scholarly community.

APPLYING THE RELATIONAL NEED FOR OTHERS

In the rest of this essay, I suppose that the previous section has established that one large reason we need things from other people is so that we can do good things for those people or others. In this section, I apply this relational valuation of our need for others to some important issues in public policy. If we accept that the state is obligated to meet people's needs, what might this mean for law and administration if their needs for others are substantially relational? I address this question in the contexts

of wealth (Section 'Wealth'), employment (Section 'Employment'), education (Section 'Education'), and the fourth industrial revolution (Section 'The Fourth Industrial Revolution').

Wealth

An elderly African woman I once interviewed about *ubuntu* and lacking wealth told me that, for her, 'the problem with being poor is that I have nothing to give away' (first cited in Metz 2011: 238). Here, the relationality of her need for help from the state is patent. The woman did not say that the problem with being poor is that she is in pain or her desires are frustrated, as per a utilitarian account of the injustice of poverty. Nor did she say that the problem with being poor is that she is unable to reflect critically on her conceptions of the good and pursue a wide array of them, as per Rawls's (1999) and similar liberal theories of injustice. In contrast to these two intrinsic accounts of the need for state aid, the woman would seek aid so that she could in turn aid others.

If we take that conception of need seriously, then what the state should allocate is, well, a gift that keeps on giving, not so much to the initial recipient, but to people beyond her. That is, the state has strong reason to give to the poor what will enable them to give to others (although not only that). Money could surely be part of such an allocation, insofar as it is a transferable good. However, what else could a state ensure that its residents have that is likely to enhance their personhood by enabling them to enhance still others' personhood or otherwise to improve others' lives?

One reasonably clear, even if unusual, answer is parenting classes.[4] A state could fund enquiry into the most up-to-date knowledge about how to rear children in ways likely to avoid neurosis and expected to turn them into morally upright agents, and then it could systematically pass on this knowledge to prospective and actual parents. Indeed, it might even require parents to pass a test on such material and obtain a license (LaFollette 1980)—for, as the analogy goes, if the state rightly does so when it comes to driving a car, it may rightly do so when it comes to steering the course of a child's life. Similarly, the state could offer couples therapy, enabling a given person to share his best self with his partner, which could well include enabling her to do the same.

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[4] The ideas in the rest of this paragraph borrow from Metz (2011).

To be sure, we do not normally associate parenting classes and couples therapy with poverty reduction. However, the suggestion is not that the state should disregard more familiar needs such as those for food, shelter, and the like. In addition, it would be a rich life that were both able to raise children with minimal damage and with the result being a virtuous individual and able to be a loving romantic partner and bring out the same in another. If at least one major aim of the state is to meet people's needs, and not merely enable them to satisfy marketplace demand (thereby fulfilling utilitarian preferences or realizing Kantian ends), then these relational ways to ameliorate an impoverished life should be attractive.

Employment

Valuing our need for others relationally also has interesting implications for how to think about the need to be given a job.[5] The default position amongst redistributivist or egalitarian theorists in respect of work is the principle of equal opportunity, according to which those with comparable talent, effort, and education should have similar chances at jobs, with the state going out of its way to provide the requisite education. Setting aside considerations of redress for past injustice (such as affirmative action), most believe that, when it comes to nearly all of an economy, jobs should go to those who are well qualified for them, as opposed to be allocated on a racial or religious basis or because one's parents happen to have lived in a certain neighbourhood.

If the need to be paid in exchange for labour is understood relationally, we get an under-considered but plausible account of why equal opportunity is appropriate. For the utilitarian, the well-qualified applicant does not have a right to the job, but should receive it because she would likely do the job well and consequently promote the general welfare better than those who are poorly qualified. For the Rawlsian, the well-qualified applicant does have a right to the job, in large part because having an equal chance at a job brings an equal chance at good pay and self-esteem in its wake. In contrast, if one's need for a job is important substantially because of the value of relating to others in certain supportive ways, then the well-qualified applicant does have a right to the job, in large part because it is a vital way for her to help other people. As Bénézet Bujo, a Congolese theologian who has published two important books on sub-Saharan ethics,

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[5] The ideas in this paragraph borrow from Metz (2015, 2020).

notes, 'It is a well-known fact that in traditional Africa, work had nothing to do with "salary." The development of the clan's community life is what was emphasized' (1997: 164). For the state not to hire a woman as a fire-fighter despite her ability and willingness to do the job would be for it to fail to meet her needs, which are not merely for a salary or self-esteem, but also for making a social contribution that she could make particularly well. Such relational virtue and meaning ground a plausible rationale for a principle of equality of opportunity; the state should require at least major employers to award jobs on the basis of qualifications (setting aside considerations of redress, say, for occasions when they failed to in the past).

Education

If the need for a job is substantially relational, then so is the need for secondary and tertiary public education, at least insofar as a person could not obtain such a job without it. Part of the point of educating high school and university students should be to enable them to acquire work that would enhance their virtue and meaning by improving other people's quality of life. Such an education is not the same as imparting whichever knowledge would enable a student to do whatever the market calls for in exchange for a salary.

The aims of post-primary public education are not, however, reducible to employment, even when conceived in a beneficent way. Most of those who have reflected on the final ends of such education agree that it has a point beyond merely enabling students to get jobs, even socially useful ones. For instance, it is common amongst utilitarian and Kantian thinkers to maintain that it ought to enable students to satisfy their preferences, critically reflect on their conceptions of the good, or develop a sense of justice. Part of doing so is normally thought to involve taking a cosmopolitan approach to cultural instruction, that is, teaching students about a wide array of different ways of life from around the world, taking a neutral attitude about which ones are preferable, and leaving it to students to choose one(s) for themselves.

Now, if the need to receive knowledge from others is understood relationally, this sort of cosmopolitanism is suspect to some degree. Instead of education merely enabling students to get a job and to choose whichever way of life suits them best (that is consistent with justice), a relational approach entails that they need the kind of information that is going to enable them to live in certain, supportive ways with others. Concretely,

this probably would involve two approaches to public higher education that are controversial—at least outside of an African milieu.

First off, a primary aim would be to enable students to improve their moral decision-making in day-to-day life, that is, to exhibit personhood or *ubuntu*.[6] It would mean a curriculum and pedagogy oriented towards imparting not merely an abstract apprehension of moral points of view or even controversies, but also some moral wisdom and sound practice. The aim would not be so much moral education, an orthodox focus on belief formation, but more education for morality, an orthopraxy. On this score, a university should teach students, say, how to become more aware of their implicit biases, how to identify and deal with conflicts of interest, and how to become more attuned to other people's points of view and feelings. Such instruction would go far beyond merely enabling students to evaluate and adhere to the state's just laws.

Second, another aim of public higher education, if the need for it were valued relationally, would likely be to enable and prompt students to contribute to their local cultures. So far in this essay, I have focused on beneficent ways of relating, ones in which a person cares for other people. However, another kind of relationality that is intuitively valuable involves identifying with others or being interdependent with them. Part of what is desirable about a loving or friendly relationship is the respect in which the parties to it go out of their way to please each other, but additional parts are that they do things together, for instance enjoying certain rituals, and that they support one another's projects, even when these projects do not involve making themselves better off. These are respects in which personal relationships are not so much a matter of caring for each other's quality of life, but more sharing a way of life with each other.

Now, insofar as such ties are valuable, instructors and their students have moral reason to give some kind of priority to the cultures of their society (while not utterly disregarding other ones).[7] There is something wrong when a music department in an African university is focused largely on Western classical music, or when a literature department in a Japanese one addresses mainly works in English. Instead, there is intuitively some moral reason for a university to engage seriously with the cultures in which it is set, where they could of course be quite heterogeneous or admit competing interpretations. The need of students to share a way of life with

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[6] The rest of this paragraph has been cribbed from Metz (2018: 169).
[7] The rest of this paragraph has been cribbed from Metz (2018: 170).

others well explains the intuition; for the sort of information and skills they need are ones that would particularly (not solely) facilitate their ability to understand, enrich, and participate in the cultures of the society in which they live.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution

Finally, for now, let us consider some implications of a relational valuation of our need for others to give us technology, specifically in the form of the fourth industrial revolution (4IR), in which technology becomes an intimate part of people's biology and sociality. For instance, imagine that artificial intelligence developed to the point where robots could cook our food and give us orgasms. Should they? One advocate of 4IR who is prominent in the African context has said, 'It is inhumane to expect that which can be done by a machine to be done by a human being' (Marwala 2016: slide 39).

If our need for others is substantially relational, then at least one reading of this statement is incorrect. I asked my 11-year-old son which he would prefer to do the cooking, if a robot and I could cook the same meal, one that were identical in taste and nutrition. He said he would prefer that I do it, and not because he is inhumane or the like, but instead because he recognizes that the cooking would express my love for him. I presume comparable remarks clearly apply to sex—even if a robot could physically please my romantic partner, it would not be inhumane of her to expect me to do it.

The point is not that I would be wrong to have a robot cook for my son once in a while or that my partner should never use a sexbot. It is instead that when deciding how to fashion and employ 4IR technology, a key issue is clearly about the respects in which doing so would threaten to upset relational values, for example, would lead me not to make an effort for my son or would undermine my romantic relationship. We need to live with others in a context where devices relieve us of burdens and confer benefits on us, but our need for that is conditioned on friendliness or love. Our use of technology ought not to undermine such a way of relating, and instead ought to be deployed in ways that foster it.

Concretely, then, those programming smart machines should include a 'nudge' prompting consumers to avoid allowing the robots to do everything that can be done by a human. In addition, government should

perhaps require manufacturers to so programme robots, or at least engage in educational outreach to warn consumers of the risks to relational values of letting robots do too much.

Concluding Remarks on the Need for Others as Relational

In closing, I remind the reader that I have not sought to argue that the state ought to strive to meet people's needs. I have instead taken that for granted, with the aim of considering what it would look like on a relational valuation of our need for others. However, I presume the examples given to illustrate what would be involved in fostering relational goods for people have also served a motivational purpose. That is, I suspect many readers will have found the examples to be attractive. If, say, they have found appealing the ideas of the state doing what it can to strengthen family relationships and to make students into more virtuous agents, then there has been some implicit support for the view that the state indeed ought to strive to meet people's needs, as opposed to fulfil people's contingent preferences (utilitarianism) or give them resources useful for achieving a wide array of contingent ends (Kantianism/Rawlsianism). There is some evidence against the dominant, Western conceptions of the proper function of the state and for a conception of it that is at home in the African philosophical tradition. We may conclude not merely that our need for others is often because of a need for a relationship with them, but also that we need the state to meet such needs.

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