The Nature and Ethics of Blame

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Abstract

Blame is usually discussed in the context of the free will problem, but recently moral philosophers have begun to examine it on its own terms. If, as many suppose, free will is to be understood as the control relevant to moral responsibility, and moral responsibility is to be understood in terms of whether blame is appropriate, then an independent inquiry into the nature and ethics of blame will be essential to solving (and, perhaps, even fully understanding) the free will problem. In this article we first survey and categorize recent accounts of the nature of blame – is it action, belief, emotion, desire, or something else? – and then we look at several proposed requirements on appropriate blame that look beyond the transgressor himself, considerations that will form part of a full account of the ethics of blame.

1. Introduction

Blame is all over the place: Red Sox fans blame Bill Buckner for the loss of the 1986 World Series, politicians blame their colleagues across the aisle for just about everything, and academics blame reviewers for their inability to get articles published. Almost anyone is a potential target of blame, and almost any action can, in the right circumstances, be an occasion for blame. But despite (or perhaps because of) the ubiquity of blame, there is little agreement about its nature. This is partly because most philosophers think about blame only indirectly, as an idea that helps to motivate and structure the free will problem. *Whatever* blame is, the thought goes, it is not appropriate or fitting (some would say 'deserved') if an agent lacks the ability to do otherwise or is not the source of her action. So understood, these debates – while often concerned with blame*worthiness* – tend simply to ignore issues concerning the nature of blame itself.

   A notable exception to this are theorists who, following P. F. Strawson (1962), argue that only once we have a grip on what is involved in blaming will we be in a position to ascertain the capacities that constitute the sort of freedom that would render blame fair or appropriate (e.g., Wallace 1994). For these theorists, an inquiry into the nature of blame is an essential, and indeed conceptually prior, step to solving the free will problem. We think this is exactly the right way to think about these issues, but this is controversial. Even if the Strawsonian way of approaching the free will problem turns out to be wrong-headed, however, an examination of the nature of blame will surely at least help us to understand and theorize about agency and responsibility in all its rich variety (see, e.g., Brink and Nelkin forthcoming). Moreover, blame is an important moral psychological phenomenon in its own right. Wrongdoing (and, more generally, norm-transgression) is also all over the place, and we respond to such wrongdoing in a variety of ways. Which of these responses count as blame, and what elements of the situation render such responses appropriate?

These two questions are receiving renewed attention among philosophers, and they structure our discussion below: in Section 2, we canvas recent accounts of the nature of blame, and in Section 3, we turn to the ethics of blame.

2. The Nature of Blame

Although it's difficult to articulate the precise nature of blame, it's relatively easy to recognize instances of it. For example, all theorists can agree that the following scenario *involves* blame, even if they disagree about which features in the scenario *constitute* blame:

> Chris and Patrick have been colleagues for several years, they have collaborated on numerous work-related projects, and in the process they have come to know one another quite well, so that each would consider the other a good friend. Recently, however Patrick has been itching for a promotion and so has been spending much of his time with the higher-ups responsible for such decisions. When he discovers that the higher-ups are seriously considering Chris for the promotion instead, Patrick gets angry and begins telling lies about him, saying that Chris is lazy and incompetent and contributed nothing to their joint projects. As a result, Chris is passed over for the promotion.

> When Chris gets wind of this betrayal, he is incensed and hurt. He wishes Patrick hadn't resorted to such underhanded measures, and he decides he can't let the treachery stand unanswered. He confronts Patrick about the lies and rebukes him for his behavior, but Patrick just gets angrier at what he perceives to be Chris's self-righteousness—and the yelling match culminates with slammed doors. They still work in adjacent offices, but they no longer speak, and in fact go out of their way not to run into each other in the hallway. Occasionally Chris finds himself wishing that things could just get back to the way they were, but he finds it difficult to forgive Patrick for what he did, and even more difficult simply to forget.

There's a lot going on in this scenario, but it seems pretty clear that it involves blame. Most centrally, Chris blames Patrick both for lying and for the fact that Chris didn't get the promotion. But Patrick also seems to blame Chris for various things, including his supposed self-righteous attitude and even his good fortune or skill in getting the higher-ups to see him in a favorable light in the first place.

Again, it's easy to recognize that this is a scenario in which blame figures prominently, but it's extraordinarily difficult to identify which features of the scenario actually constitute the blame. In considering possible answers to this question, we begin by distinguishing various activities that Chris and Patrick are engaged in. We then consider reasons why each activity might, but also might not, count as blame. This way of proceeding suggests, at least initially, four conceptions of blame, according to which blame is, roughly, either a matter of *doing*, *believing*, *feeling*, or *desiring*.

2.1. OVERT ACTION ACCOUNTS

It's natural to think that blaming is something we *do* to other people. Our blaming scenario involves, for example, rebukes, shouts, and slammed doors. These actions serve as public expressions of resentment and indignation, and also as mechanisms for evoking guilt and apology. One might think, then, that blame is best captured by an *overt action* account, according to which blame is akin to punishment, or more generally to the notion of *holding someone morally accountable*. Perhaps accounts like Elizabeth Beardsley's (1970, 1979) that take blame primarily to involve speech-acts fall into this category.[1]

Public expressions of blame are certainly an important part of our practices of moral responsibility, and there may even be a sense in which publicly expressing blame is just one way of blaming.[2] However, an overt action account can't give us a general account of blame, because it elides the difference between blame that is publicly expressed and blame that is kept private. After all, we can privately blame those with whom we are unable to communicate, like those distant in time or space.

An adequate account of blame will certainly be able to make sense of the public face of blame (a phrase we borrow from Coleen Macnamara), but it will also explain the phenomenon of private blame, so the natural next place to look is inside the head.

2.2. COGNITIVE ACCOUNTS

The various interactions in our blaming scenario all seem to stem from certain beliefs or judgments held by Chris and Patrick. Patrick *thinks* that Chris has somehow unfairly caught the attention of the higher-ups; Chris *judges* that Patrick's lies are despicable, that Patrick has cost him the promotion, and that he has a right to confront Patrick about the situation; Patrick *believes* that Chris is self-righteous, and so on. According to *cognitive accounts*, to blame is simply to make a particular judgment or set of judgments.

But which judgments are the relevant ones? A plausible first proposal holds that to blame is to make a judgment of causal responsibility. In our blaming scenario, there's a clear sense in which Chris was passed over for the promotion *because* of Patrick's lies. As a result, if someone were to ask Chris what happened with the promotion, it would be perfectly accurate for him to respond: "I didn't get it, and it's Patrick's fault I didn't get it. I *blame* him for the fact that I'm still stuck as an underling."

It is uncontroversial that the word 'blame' is often used to highlight causal responsibility. In this sense, we blame the overcast weather for our bad moods, we blame a missed appointment on the never-ending stack of grading, and we blame the mess in the kitchen on the rambunctious puppy. But although this is one sense of the word 'blame', it seems clear that this is not the phenomenon that moral philosophers are primarily interested in. Someone can be *to blame* in this sense for some unpleasant outcome, but if it was an accident, it may not be appropriate for us to blame that person. This more robust sense of 'blame' is connected with *moral* responsibility in some way, and judgments of causal responsibility do not constitute blame in this more robust sense.

This suggests that perhaps blame is constituted by some normatively loaded judgment instead. Gary Watson (1996), for example, has argued that one way of blaming transgressors is to make negative aretaic assessments of them on the basis of their behavior (where an aretaic assessment is primarily a judgment about virtue or vice). In our blaming scenario, Chris judges that Patrick's treachery is unconscionable and that it reflects Patrick's lack of loyalty and integrity. In making this judgment, Chris attributes the lies to Patrick in a morally robust sense: they speak for him in a way that reflects poorly on him as a moral agent (see also Shoemaker 2011). Or consider instead the judgment that T. M. Scanlon highlights in his early work:

> What is essential, on [the contractualist] account, is that a judgment of moral blame asserts that the way in which an agent decided what to do was not in accord with standards which that agent either accepts or should accept insofar as he or she is concerned to justify his or her actions to others on grounds that they could not reasonably reject. (Scanlon 1986: 170)

This, in other words, given Scanlon's contractualist account of morality, is the judgment that what the agent decided to do was *morally wrong*. Not only did Patrick's behavior

betray a damning lack of loyalty, but it also violated the norms of what we owe to each other.

These judgments might serve as the foundation for a plausible cognitive account of blame. On such an account, we blame people by making certain normatively significant judgments about them on the basis of their behavior or attitudes.[3] This sort of account certainly seems promising. We do care a great deal about what others think of us (as Strawson (1962) was at pains to emphasize), and thus this account can explain why being the object of someone's blame is a particularly uncomfortable experience, that is, why blame has its characteristic force (Hieronymi 2004). It also captures the fact that, unlike judgments of causal responsibility, blame says something about the person qua moral agent.

On the other hand, one might worry that purely cognitive accounts conflate distinct phenomena, namely *judging blameworthy* and *blaming*. It is certainly morally significant to arrive at the conclusion that someone has acted viciously or wrongly, but isn't this conclusion in some sense *independent* of any actual blaming? Instead, it's plausible to suppose that this conclusion merely amounts to a judgment that the person in question is an appropriate target of blame, or is *worthy* of blame on account of her behavior. After all, if you are a co-conspirator in a crime, your partner might be perfectly justified in judging that you acted viciously or wrongly, while simultaneously congratulating you for these things rather than blaming you for them.[4] If we are to allow for this gap between judging blameworthy and blaming, it looks like we may have to move beyond the cognitive account.[5]

2.3. AFFECTIVE ACCOUNTS

Perhaps what's needed, then, is some sort of affect. What seems to be missing in the case of the co-conspirators is that your partner isn't *mad* at you for your transgression, and perhaps this is what keeps it from being a case of blame. Our blaming scenario with Chris and Patrick involves plenty of feeling: Patrick is angry and indignant, and Chris is incensed and hurt. According to an *affective account*, then, to blame someone is simply to be angry at her, or to target her with some negative feeling.

Susan Wolf (2011) is one theorist who has recently placed anger at the center of an account of blame:

> The paradigm of blame involves an 'angry' feeling or attitude – such as righteous anger, resentment, indignation, or guilt – which one person has or experiences toward another in connection with something hurtful or insulting that the latter is perceived or imagined to have done toward the former or someone in her community, and which disposes the blamer to scold or punish the person whom she blames. (Wolf 2011: 344)

Similarly, R. Jay Wallace (1994, 2011) has developed a sophisticated account of blame that centers around P. F. Strawson's (1962) reactive attitudes, specifically resentment, indignation, and guilt. Wallace says: "To count as blaming a person, you have to be exercised by what they have done, and to be exercised in the relevant way just is to be subject to one of the reactive sentiments" (Wallace 2011: 358).

The details of this account and its plausibility will depend, of course, on the precise nature of the feelings and emotions it involves. For example, if the proposal is that *mere* affect constitutes blame, then the account may seem inadequate. As Hieronymi says, "The force of blame seems deeper, more serious or weighty than simply being the object of [a] certain unpleasant emotional disturbance. The affect, itself, seems

insufficiently robust'' (Hieronymi 2004: 121). And there does seem to be something to this worry.

On the other hand, if the proposal is one that invokes a complex account of the reactive emotions according to which these emotions have both cognitive and conative elements and are linked to the expectations we have of fellow members of the moral community, then the account will seem much more plausible (see Wallace 1994; Mason 2011). In any case, appealing to the emotions will give us a nice distinction between judging blameworthy, on the one hand, and blaming, on the other, which is a point in favor of the affective account. It will also, unlike the overt action account, allow us to say that blame need not be communicated.

But while many blaming scenarios surely involve emotions like resentment and anger, it's not clear these emotions are necessary for blame. Wallace may well be right when he says that blaming requires being ''exercised by'' the transgression – this is what is missing in the co-conspirators case mentioned above – but something less than full-fledged resentment could surely suffice for the relevant sort of exercise. Don't we blame many long-dead historical figures for their misdeeds – Henry VIII, for example – even without experiencing anger or resentment?[6]

2.4. conative accounts

If judgments are insufficient for blame, but actions and full-blown emotions are unnecessary, perhaps we'll find exactly what we need in mental states like desires, commitments, intentions, and expectations. There are a number of these elements in our blaming scenario that might be relevant here: Chris wishes Patrick hadn't betrayed him, he opposes the motives on which Patrick acted, and he lacks trust in Patrick's commitment to the friendship. As a result, the relationship they once shared has been drastically altered. Perhaps we can find blame in one or more of these facts.

One account along these lines – what we might call a *conative account* – is due to George Sher (2006). According to Sher, the characteristic emotions and actions of blame trace to a belief–desire pair: the belief that someone has acted badly or is a bad person and the desire ''that the person in question not have performed his past bad act or not have his current bad character'' (Sher 2006: 112). Incorporating this desire into the account has a number of benefits: it allows Sher to account for the co-conspirators case, it enables Sher to give a compelling explanation of why emotions and rebukes often accompany blame – they are natural expressions of a frustrated desire – and it even gives Sher a way of saying that blame is intimately tied to a commitment to morality (the same desire features in both, according to Sher). One worry, however, is that there seem to be cases in which we genuinely blame someone despite being glad that she committed the wrong: perhaps the transgressor is our political opponent and her transgression will mean a boost in support for us.[7]

Another promising, but very different, conative account is T. M. Scanlon's more recent theory of blame, which focuses on ''the expectations, intentions, and other attitudes that constitute [human] relationships'' (Scanlon 2008: 128), and the modifications of those attitudes that is made appropriate by a rupture in the relationship. When Patrick betrays Chris, for example, Chris recognizes that their relationship has been impaired and that things can't go on as before. For example, Chris previously had a standing intention of helping Patrick work through problems when stuck, but Patrick's relationship-impairing action has led Chris to abandon that intention.

To blame someone, on Scanlon's account, is to make the appropriate alterations in a relationship that has been impaired by transgression, where the details of the case (e.g., the wrong in question, the relationship in question, and the standards internal to relationships of that kind) will determine precisely *which* modifications are called for. Thus, this account can accommodate the variety in our blaming practices that makes analyzing the nature of blame so difficult in the first place. However, there is a worry about whether we have a sufficiently robust relationship with strangers for this account to accommodate the obvious fact that we blame them, too.[8] (The problem of blaming those who are distant in space and time also seems applicable here.)

2.5. DESIDERATA

This brief survey of accounts of blame has revealed three *prima facie* desiderata for any adequate account of blame, and it might be useful to collect them here. First, an adequate account must respect two important distinctions: (i) the distinction between judging blameworthy and blaming, and (ii) the distinction between blaming and communicating blame. Second, an adequate account must allow for the possibility of blaming those who are distant either in space, time, or personal intimacy (e.g., the stranger). Third, an adequate account should be able to explain both the ''characteristic force'' of blame and also why blame tends to be paradigmatically associated with negative emotions in the one doing the blaming (even if those emotions aren't essential).

Of course, there's another possibility worth raising here, namely that the question that animates our discussion of blame, ''Which of the various elements of a blaming scenario constitute the blame?'' is the wrong question to ask. So before turning to the ethics of blame, we'd like to consider an alternative and underexplored way of thinking about the nature of blame.

2.6. A FUNCTIONAL ACCOUNT?

Recall that one of the significant advantages of Scanlon's recent account of blame is that it allows for variability in exactly which intentions and expectations are modified in response to an impaired relationship. Not all relationships are the same, and not all transgression is the same. So it only makes sense that different modifications will be appropriate depending on a host of specific contextual factors. Blame in the abstract, then, is simply a way of marking a significant negative change in a relationship.

Taking our cue from this idea of variability, we might even go one step further and give a purely functional account of blame, according to which it is *whatever mental states and activities serve a distinctive aim or goal in a particular context*. The distinctive aim of blame, perhaps, is to register one's protest of ill-will or disregard, and there might be various ways of accomplishing this goal depending on, for example, such things as the accessibility and psychological capacities of the transgressor, the nature of the disregard, the relationship that exists between blamer and transgressor, and so on (on blame as protest, see Hieronymi 2001; Talbert forthcoming). Or, perhaps, the goal of blame is to enforce moral norms in a way that initiates a moral dialog with the transgressor that brings him back into harmony with the moral community (see Duff 1986; Bennett 2008; Macnamara 2011.) Again, depending on certain contextual details, there will be different ways of accomplishing this.

Clearly, in order to make this sort of account credible, we will need to examine the role that blaming scenarios seem to play in our moral lives – a project that seems worth pursuing for its own sake in any case (see, e.g., Watson 1987; McKenna 2011).

3. The Ethics of Blame

Even if we can identify the elements in a blaming scenario that constitute blame, we haven't thereby answered the further question: ''When is it appropriate for us to blame another person for her transgression?'' And while facts about whether the transgressor is morally responsible for her action will be relevant, those facts alone do not suffice for an answer.

Angela Smith (2007), for example, has argued that there are cases in which an agent is morally responsible for her transgression, and yet it would be inappropriate for us to blame her for her transgression (see also Scanlon 1998, 2008). We can see what Smith has in mind if we extend our story from above so that *Chris* has, in the recent past, similarly prevented *Patrick* from getting a promotion. In that case, even if Patrick is morally responsible for his betrayal and deserving of condemnation, it may be inappropriate for Chris (in particular) to do the condemning because of his own misdeeds.

What we need, then, is a systematic account of *the ethics of blame*: an account of the conditions that the transgressor, the blamer, and the blaming interaction must satisfy in order for blame to be appropriate. For the purposes of this article we will set issues about the transgressor – and thus the free will problem – to one side (but see Levy and McKenna 2009) and focus instead on the blamer and the blaming interaction. Borrowing two terms from the law (and from Gary Watson, who suggested the terms to us), we will refer to these issues as questions of *jurisdiction* and *procedure*, respectively.

3.1. BLAME AND JURISDICTION

One way that blame can be inappropriate is if the transgression is not within the would–be blamer's *jurisdiction*, where this is understood in terms of the blamer's moral standing, authority, or normative powers. In the extended case where Chris is also guilty of sabotaging Patrick's career, Chris is not entitled to blame Patrick, even if Patrick is blameworthy, because such blame would be hypocritical. And although there is fairly widespread agreement that in cases of hypocrisy, the would-be blamer lacks the standing to blame, there is controversy as to why this is so. In other words, there is disagreement concerning why it is that in cases of hypocritical blame, it is inappropriate for the would–be blamer to express censure.

Scanlon (2008) has claimed that hypocritical blame undermines an agent's standing to blame because in such cases, it is the blamer, and not the transgressor, who is responsible for the relationship's impairment. So Chris cannot plausibly claim (or modify his intentions and expectations on the basis of the claim) that Patrick's transgression caused the impairment to their friendship because Chris's own transgression had already undermined the basis of trust and meaningful engagement.[9]

But according to Wallace (2010), when we engage in hypocritical blame we are violating the requirement that persons be given equal standing within the moral community. We are submitting others to disapprobation and negative sanctions while attempting to shield ourselves from the harshness of such sanctions. In so doing we attach ''differential significance to the interests of the persons whom [we] blame and to [ourselves]'' (Wallace 2010: 333). Because engaging with others in this way violates the standard of equal consideration for all persons, we can explain why hypocritical blame is morally objectionable: hypocrites act in ways that undermine the basis of the moral community itself. It seems then, that an agent's moral standing or authority does not outstrip her commitment to the equal standing of persons. As a result, some transgressions simply don't fall within the jurisdiction of would–be hypocrites.

But hypocrisy is not the only fact about a blamer that might undermine his standing to blame. The exact nature of the relationship between would–be blamer and transgressor will also be relevant in determining the blamer's jurisdiction. While Jennifer's mother can appropriately blame her for the mess left lying around the living room, a next-door neighbor cannot. The messy room is simply ''none of the neighbor's business,'' and when we blame others for transgressions that are none of our business, we our overstepping the bounds of our jurisdiction. Of course, what counts as ''one's business'' will depend on one's relationship with the transgressor, so questions of jurisdiction are necessarily con-text–dependent. Jennifer's relationship with her mother will afford her mom wider lati-tude in blaming. But it's natural to think that even strangers have *some* relationship to Jennifer, perhaps just as a fellow member of the moral community (Scanlon 2008). And even this thin relationship will likely bring some of Jennifer's transgressions into the juris-diction of strangers, when Jennifer's transgressions are the business of the moral commu-nity itself (e.g., if Jennifer is a thief).

So a blamer's jurisdiction will be determined in part by facts about the blamer's own past transgressions and in part by the particular relationship between the blamer and the transgressor. No doubt there are other facts that undermine a blamer's standing to blame (Cohen 2006 and Wertheimer 1998 are two excellent discussions of the issues here), but for now we simply note that this is an important avenue for future research.

3.2. BLAME AND PROCEDURE

We now turn to two final considerations relevant to the propriety of blame, which arise from the blaming interaction itself. Because of the parallel between these considerations and issues of procedural justice, we refer to these issues as those that can affect whether an instance of blame adheres to relevant procedural norms. Whereas issues of jurisdic-tion will be relevant to some would-be blamers but not others, procedural issues (in general) will apply to any would-be blamer but will be relevant only to some ways of blaming.

Intuitively, we can blame someone for an alleged transgression only if we have good evidence that the transgression in fact occurred, that the person was morally responsible for it, and so on. Suppose that Chris merely had an unsubstantiated hunch that Patrick was to blame for his getting passed over for the promotion. Generally, hunches are not the sort of things that we should act on – at least not without gathering more evidence. So, even if Chris is correct in thinking that Patrick is to blame, his hunch doesn't license blame. Such blame, perhaps because it reflects a lack of adequate concern for moral inno-cence, would violate the procedural standards of our blaming practices.[10]

Angela Smith (2007) articulates another way in which procedural issues are relevant to the propriety of blame. Smith considers a case in which a transgressor has recognized the significance of her transgression, has apologized to those she hurt, repented of the values and motives that moved her to action, and is working toward restitution and atonement. In such a case, it seems that the response of the transgressor affects the appropriateness of blame. After all, if, as Duff (1986) and Macnamara (2011) suggest, one of the aims of blame is to call for apology, repentance, and atonement on the part of the transgressor, then in such cases, blame's restorative function is unnecessary.

What we have in these two instances are distinct sets of considerations that affect the propriety of blaming that are independent of (i) whether the transgressor deserves to be blamed and (ii) whether the blamer has the jurisdiction to blame. Even if one is entitled to blame, one still must go about it in a way that respects certain procedural standards.

Though we have only offered a brief sketch here, a fully adequate ethics of blame will accommodate and explain these standards.

We should also note, of course, that although issues of jurisdiction and procedure can render blame inappropriate in certain contexts, this does not mean that blame is then *required* if these issues are settled or do not arise. One might be confronted with a genuinely blameworthy transgressor, and one might satisfy all the jurisdictional and procedural requirements, but one would then still only have a *pro tanto* reason to blame, which could be defeated by any number of more particular considerations (e.g., it may be unwise to blame your boss if doing so would lead to your getting fired).

4. Conclusion

We have focused on the nature of blame – which element of a blaming scenario counts as blame, whether action, belief, emotion, desire, or something else – and the ethics of blame – what facts about blamer, transgressor, and blaming interaction must be in place in order for blame to be appropriate. But there are other issues concerning blame that deserve to be addressed, including an exploration of its aim, its value, and its relationship to other important moral concepts, such as punishment. Recent work on blame has given us a robust framework from which to begin to address these questions, which we hope will be given the attention they merit.[11]

Short Biographies

Neal A. Tognazzini works at the intersection of metaphysics and ethics on problems of agency, free will, and moral responsibility. His publications have appeared in *Nous*, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *The Philosophical Quarterly*, and *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, among other venues. He is currently co-editing (with D. Justin Coates) a collection of new essays on the nature and ethics of blame, entitled *Blame: Its Nature and Norms*, which is under contract with Oxford University Press. Neal received his BA in philosophy from Western Washington University and his PhD in philosophy from the University of California, Riverside, before taking up his current position as an Assistant Professor at The College of William & Mary.

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Notes

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[1] See also Altham (1973–1974). For further discussion of blame as a speech act, see King and van Roojen (forthcoming).

[2] Michael Zimmerman (1988), for example, distinguishes between two sorts of responsibility – *appraisability* and *liability* – and he maintains that whereas the former is associated with a purely inward, cognitive sort of blame, the latter is associated with an overt sort of blame that he calls 'censure'.

[3] Zimmerman (1988) and Ishitiyaque Haji (1998) also appear to endorse cognitive accounts of blame, at least for the sort of responsibility they call 'appraisability'. Zimmerman, for example, says (38): ''Blaming someone may be said to constitute judging that there is a 'discredit' or 'debit' in his ledger, a 'negative mark' in his 'report card', or a 'blemish' or 'stain' on his 'record'; that his 'record' has been 'tarnished'; that his 'moral standing' has been 'diminished'.'' Angela Smith (2008) also sketches a cognitive account, and many early theorists of blame appear to endorse cognitive accounts, such as Squires 1968.

[4] Consider, for example, one of the thieves from *Ocean's Eleven* telling his co-conspirators that it will be nice to ''work with proper villains again.''

[5] Kenner (1967) contains an early version of this objection. Hieronymi 2004, however, contains a subtle and illuminating attempt to draw a distinction between judgments that amount to ''mere grading'' or description and judgments that amount to blame.

[6] Nomy Arpaly (2006) and George Sher (2006) both emphasize this objection to the affective account.

[7] We owe this objection to Angela Smith (personal correspondence).

[8] Scanlon is aware of this worry, but Wallace (2011) develops it in detail.

[9] Matt Talbert points out (in personal correspondence) that this explanation seems incomplete at best, since it cannot account for the equally objectionable case where Chris would be a hypocrite for blaming some third-party after having impaired his relationship with Patrick by performing an act with the same meaning.

[10] There is a parallel legal norm in criminal law that we convict a defendant only if the state proves the defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

[11] In an attempt to satisfy this hope, the authors are currently editing a collection of new essays on the nature and ethics of blame, under contract with Oxford University Press, entitled *Blame: Its Nature and Norms*.

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