

RESPONSIBILITY AND MORAL *BRICOLAGE*

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Resumo: Na longa disputa sobre o tipo de liberdade requerida para a responsabilidade, os participantes tenderam a assumir que estavam preocupados com um conceito de responsabilidade moral compartilhado. Esta assunção foi questionada recentemente. Uma visível divisão entre ‘Lumpers’ e ‘Splitters’ surgiu. Os *Lumpers* defendem a suposição tradicional que há um conceito unificado de responsabilidade, enquanto os *Splitters* sustentam que há dois ou mais conceitos de responsabilidade moral. Aqui, eu ofereço um argumento em nome dos *Splitters* que conecta um tipo de pluralismo de valor na ética normativa, teorizando com a contenda dos *Splitters* de que há múltiplas formas de responsabilidade moral. Minha tese é condicional. Na medida em que alguém crê plausível um quadro fragmentado da paisagem na teorização normativa – que eu referirei como ‘bricolagem moral’ – então alguém tem razão em juntar-se aos *Splitters* pensando que o conceito de responsabilidade moral é igualmente fragmentado.

Palavras-chave: responsabilização, aretaico, bricolagem, pluralismo, atitudes reativas, responsabilidade.

Abstract: In the long-running dispute about the sort of freedom required for responsibility, participants have tended to assume that they were concerned about a shared concept of moral responsibility. This assumption has come into question recently. A noticeable divide between “Lumpers” and “Splitters” has emerged. Lumpers defend the traditional assumption that there is one unified concept of responsibility, whereas Splitters maintain that there are two or more concepts of moral responsibility. Here, I offer an argument on behalf of the Splitters that connects a type of value pluralism in normative ethical theorizing with the Splitter’s contention that there are multiple forms of moral responsibility. My thesis is conditional. Insofar as one finds plausible a fragmented picture of the landscape in normative theorizing — what I will refer to as “moral *bricolage*” — then one has reason to join the Splitters in thinking that the concept of moral responsibility is likewise fragmented.

Keywords: accountability, aretaic, bricolage, pluralism, reactive attitudes, responsibility.

Introduction

We behave as if we are morally responsible agents. That is, our self-assessments and interactions with others suggest that we think that something like praise or blame would be a warranted response to the morally significant actions we perform (or fail to perform) and the morally significant attitudes and character traits that we exhibit. Aristotle – perhaps the first to explicitly theorize about such responsibility – pointed out that our practices of regarding ourselves as responsible presuppose both that the agent knew (or should have known) certain things and that s/he exercises some level of control, or freedom, in relation to the relevant actions, attitudes, and traits¹.

As is no doubt familiar, philosophers theorizing in Aristotle's wake and have tended to focus on trying to identify the kind of freedom, or control, that moral responsibility would seem to require and have wondered whether it is reasonable to suppose that we, in fact, possess it. Disputes about the sort of freedom required for responsibility will not concern us here. What I wish to highlight about that long-running dispute is that until very recently its participants assumed that they were concerned about a shared concept of moral responsibility. Even when controversy increasingly arose over how best to characterize that responsibility (for example, over whether praise and blame should be regarded as warranted only if it is an effective means of shaping future behavior vs. only if merited, or deserved, on the basis of past behavior) the assumption seems to have been that it was a controversy over the correct way of characterizing the one unified concept of moral responsibility.

This long-standing assumption that there is a unified concept of moral responsibility has come into question of late in contemporary Anglo-American philosophy. A noticeable divide between “Lumpers” and “Splitters” has emerged. Lumpers defend the traditional assumption that there is one unified concept of responsibility, whereas Splitters maintain that there are

¹ *Nicomachean Ethics*, III.1.

two or more – though perhaps related – concepts of moral responsibility². To date, Splitters have generally pursued a case-based argumentative strategy in trying to distinguish types of responsibility. That is, they have identified cases where it seems to make sense to say that someone is responsible in one sense, but not in another. Though arguments of this sort will be pursued here, they will be offered in the context of a broader argument on behalf of the Splitters. The broader argument involves connecting a type of value pluralism that may be adopted in normative ethical theorizing with the Splitter's contention that there are multiple forms of moral responsibility. My broader thesis is thereby conditional. Insofar as one finds plausible a fragmented picture of the landscape in normative theorizing – what I will refer to as “moral *bricolage*” – then one has reason to join the Splitters in thinking that the concept of moral responsibility is likewise fragmented. I begin with a rough sketch of the relevant form of value pluralism and then argue at greater length for corresponding fissures in the concept of moral responsibility.

Normative Theory and Moral *Bricolage*

One of the central motivations to theorize in normative ethics, as in other theoretical enterprises, is to seek a unifying explanation of a broad array of phenomena. In ethical theorizing, this is most clearly reflected in the drive to identify a single supreme principle which would both explain those moral judgments in which we have the greatest confidence as well as provide moral guidance by serving as the source from which novel moral judgments (and/or revisions of some previously held judgments) could be derived. Obviously, the Categorical Imperative and Principle of Utility are the historically preeminent examples of such unifying principles, and versions or descendants of these principles continue to play a role in many theories. However, it is also a familiar fact that normative theories grounded in such

² For the watershed piece generating this discussion, see: WATSON, Gary. “Two Faces of Responsibility,” *Philosophical Topics* 24/2 (Fall 1996), p. 227-248; Reprinted in WATSON. *Agency and Answerability* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 260-288. For a recent example of an exchange between a Splitter and Lumper, see: SHOEMAKER, David. “Attributability, Answerability, and Accountability: Toward a Wider Theory of Moral Responsibility”. In: *Ethics* 121 (2011), p. 603-32; and SMITH, Angela. “Attributability, Answerability, and Accountability”. In: “Defense of a Unified Account,” *Ethics*, Vol. 122, No. 3 (April 2012), p. 575-589.

unifying principles, or grounding considerations, are subject to the objection that they have failed to recognize the significance (or the proper degree of significance) of some important competing moral consideration. In response to objections of this sort, contemporary theorists inclined toward unification work hard to show how competing consideration can be incorporated into their accounts, while still defending the centrality of that consideration which plays the unifying role. So, for example, consequentialists work hard to explain the proper significance of deontic-like rules in relation to an overarching consequentialist principle, and neo-Kantians work hard to explain the proper significance of consequences in relation to the perfect duty of respect for persons.

Though there is no widespread agreement that the traditional unifying strategy in ethical theory is bankrupt, there are a growing number who follow W.D. Ross in thinking that such a unifying theory “oversimplifies the moral life”³. Some have followed Ross in defending a version of value pluralism, others take one further step in emphasizing the significance of context and defend versions of ethical particularism, and, of course, some have abandoned normative ethical theory altogether. Those offering unifying accounts are quick to point out what might appear lost when one gives up the unifying enterprise – namely, a reduction both of explanatory power and of resources for ethical decision-making⁴. I will make no attempt at adjudicating this dispute other than to note that there is a different kind of explanatory fit and thus power that non-unifying theories provide and which is hinted at in Ross’ quote – namely, a fit with the experience that many have that the moral life is likely not simple in the way represented by unifying theories – in other words, that the various types of moral considerations with which we navigate life resist the sort of explanatory reduction suggested by unifying theories.

From this point on, I will proceed on the assumption that the most fundamental moral considerations are irreducibly plural. My hope is that even those who disagree with this starting point – the antecedent of my broader thesis – may still find my later arguments regarding the concept of moral responsibility of independent interest. Though I will not attempt to

³ ROSS, W.D. *Foundations of Ethics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), p. 189.

⁴ For objections of this sort, see, for example: HOOKER, Brad. “Ross-style Pluralism versus Rule-consequentialism”, Vol. 105, No. 420 (Oct., 1996), p. 531-552.

spell-out and defend a detailed version of value pluralism, it will be necessary to suggest the general contours of the sort of account I have in mind and which I hope will be recognized as having some initial degree of plausibility. According to such an account, each of the following is a non-derivative source of moral reasons:

1. The Demand for Mutual Respect-Minimal Decency: impartial moral reasons concerning what we have the authority to demand of one another given our equal dignity as co-equal members of the moral community—for example, the duties of justice and perhaps some minimal duties of beneficence.

2. Goodness and Excellence in Promoting Well-Being: impartial moral reasons defined by their role in constituting and supporting human flourishing or by their role in detracting from it, including:
 - a. Impartial beneficence/minimization of harm in relation to others.

 - b. Ideal ways of being (virtues) and acting (virtuously) in the world and those faults defined by their distance from these ideals.

3. The Concerns of Particularized Caring: moral considerations deriving from the way that we are linked with specific others through bonds of deep attachment, including care for one's self.⁵

It is, of course, no accident that such a pluralist view can seem to amount to no more than a hodge-podge mix of the considerations central to

⁵ Particularized reasons of this sort have not only been emphasized in Care Ethics, but also in traditional Confucian Ethics. Care of self is understood here as a kind of disciplined attention to one's interests, one's improvement, and guardianship of the boundaries of one's self. For recent insightful treatments, see: FRANKFURT, Harry. *The Reasons of Love* (Princeton University Press, 2006), ch. 3; and WHISNANT, Rebecca. "Woman Centered: A Feminist Ethic of Responsibility". In: *Moral Psychology: Feminist Ethics and Social Theory*. Eds Des Autels and Urban Walker (New York: Roman & Littlefield, 2004), p. 201-217.

some leading unifying theories, since proponents of pluralism are typically seeking to salvage what seems most insightful from the most powerfully articulated unifying projects. Some worry that such “an unconnected heap of duties” can no longer claim to be a moral theory at all, but David McNaughton has, I think, shown that this need not be so – that the pluralist can still claim to be engaged in the enterprise of offering systematic explanations of our moral judgments. She is simply contending that the sources of explanation are plural⁶.

Though I’ll not defend this sort of value pluralism as preferable to its competitors, I do wish to address a concern about it that may arise from an influential socio-historical line of thought, since this challenge is pertinent to the larger project I am pursuing. In the memorable and provocative opening to *After Virtue*, Alasdair MacIntyre made the “disquieting suggestion” that our inability to reach a consensus on how to reason about moral matters – both in academic circles and in public discourse – reflects the catastrophic disintegration of earlier coherent moral schemes:

What we possess, if this view is true, are the fragments of a conceptual scheme, parts which now lack those contexts from which their significance derived. We possess indeed simulacra of morality, we continue to use many of the key expressions. But we have – very largely, if not entirely – lost our comprehension, both theoretical and practical, [of] morality⁷.

Though MacIntyre contended that this moral catastrophe was largely hidden from view, one might think that the problem is far from hidden for a value pluralist of the sort I have described – that she must grant that the fragmentation of our normative landscape is likely incoherent since its constituent components can no longer stand on their own once extracted from their original broader conceptual schemes.

If the value pluralism sketched above was incoherent in MacIntyre’s sense, then my present project would be undermined since – as soon will become clear – I will be understanding our responsibility practices as forms

⁶ MCNAUGHTON, David. “An Unconnected Heap of Duties?”. In: *The Philosophical Quarterly* 46/185 (1996), p. 433-447.

⁷ MACINTYRE, Alasdair. *After Virtue*. 2nd edition (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), p. 2.

of moral communication that very often are successful in appealing to a shared understanding of the relevant moral reason. MacIntyre's diagnosis of our predicament would seem to suggest that our responsibility practices must regularly misfire given the lack of a shared basis for moral reasoning. Perhaps the fact that our practices very often do seem to function just fine is sufficient to lay to rest his dire view, but I wish to go a bit further in addressing it. Borrowing a metaphor from Levi Strauss, Jeffrey Stout suggests that we regard ourselves as always having been moral *bricoleurs*, or conceptual craftspeople, who have had to take stock of and make do with whatever heterogeneous materials and tools are at hand to engage a project that presents itself to us.⁸ The ethically plural product which results from these efforts may be thought of as moral *bricolage*. Adopting this as our guiding image, we may regard the present morally fragmented situation (if that is an accurate depiction of our situation), not as a disintegrated state from an earlier more coherent state but as yet another creative solution to the challenges our present form of life presents to us. That is, contrary to MacIntyre's suggestion, it may be that our moral schemes have always been a form of *bricolage* – that they have never exhibited the sort of overarching coherence he imagines and that we should never expect them to do so.

This alternative explanation of why our normative landscape may appear fragmented is richly suggestive. If some such account is correct, then we might expect that our responsibility practices have evolved in corresponding fashion. That is, insofar as the challenges we confront in the process of engaging in moral *bricolage* continue to share enough in common and insofar as we are working from roughly the same historical pile of heterogeneous materials and tools, it is likely that we may continue to enjoy at least enough overlapping consensus to support both a required degree of shared moral reasoning and our responsibility practices. We turn now to a closer look at the relevant responsibility practices.

The Reactive Attitudes and Faces of Moral Responsibility

⁸ STOUT, Jeffrey. *Ethics After Babel: The Languages of Morals and Their Discontents* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 74. As Stout notes, the contrast is with the image of conceptual engineer who designs an integrated system. William LaFleur also makes use of the image of a moral *bricoleur* in LaFLEUR, William. *Liquid Life: Abortion and Buddhism in Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

In his landmark essay, “Freedom and Resentment,” Peter Strawson argued that philosophers had given insufficient attention to a wide range of attitudes involved in regarding one another as responsible and the central place these attitudes have in our interpersonal relationships – for example: resentment, hurt feelings, gratitude, reciprocal love, forgiveness, guilt, remorse, shame, pride, indignation, and esteem⁹. His general strategy was to pay closer attention to these interpersonal attitudes and then to work backwards from the nature of these emotions to a better understanding of that to which they are a response. On this approach, both the need for and nature of an account of responsibility is determined by our understanding of those attitudes central to our practice of regarding one another as responsible. To be responsible on the Strawsonian view is to be appropriately subject to the reactive attitudes¹⁰. So, for example, I may resent the fact that you have pushed me to the ground. You are responsible for this behavior if my resentment is appropriate. What Strawson helpfully observed was that to understand those instances when resentment is (and is not) appropriate, one needs to understand what is presupposed by such emotive reactions.

Shortly, we’ll take a closer look at some of the presuppositions of reactive attitudes like resentment, but note the following about Strawson’s general methodological strategy. On analogy with the claim that it is important to distinguish thick vs. thin moral concepts (e.g., courageous vs. right)¹¹, we can understand Strawson to be arguing for the importance of focusing on those thick vs. thin attitudes involved in regarding another as morally responsible. Instead of simply regarding an action as blameworthy, we should consider whether it is worthy of resentment and indignation; likewise, instead of simply asking whether an action is praiseworthy, we might ask whether gratitude and moral esteem is the appropriate response. My argument will be that if we are sensitive in a Strawsonian manner to the specific content of these thick attitudes involved in regarding one another as responsible, we can see how they entail reference to the type of moral *bricolage* described above and thus constitute distinct forms of regarding one another as responsible.

⁹ “Freedom and Resentment” *Proceedings of the British Academy* 48 (1962), p. 1-25.

¹⁰ Note that it is the attitudes, rather than their outward expression or accompanying practices – e.g., sanctions – since there are further conditions on the appropriateness of those expressions and practices.

¹¹ For the original distinction, see WILLIAMS, Bernard. *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 129.

Strawson refers to a rather wide range of attitudes as reactive. Commentators have struggled to define what counts as a reactive attitude in a way that could capture all those he seems to have had in mind¹². Finding this task intractable, the tendency has been to focus on resentment, indignation, and guilt as paradigmatic instances of those involved in holding an agent responsible since it is easier to provide an explanation of what ties them together¹³. According to this view, these particular reactive attitudes are communicative responses to a perceived lack of sufficient good will expressed in a person's actions. In other words, when they are expressed, they function as a form of moral communication between parties presumed to have the capacity to understand and conform to the relevant moral demands and thus the corresponding mutual authority to hold one another accountable to those demands¹⁴. This is most clearly illustrated in the attitude of resentment, for what is presupposed when I experience it is the presumption that *you* owe me something, are in a position to have recognized it and guided your behavior accordingly, but nevertheless have failed to honor this demand. Indignation is an example of an attitude that has been abstracted from this central personal attitude and so capable of being felt by a third party on behalf of the one who has been wronged, while guilt is an inward-directed reactive attitude prompted by the recognition that one has failed to observe a legitimate demand others have made of oneself.

Here, then, we have responsibility understood as a form of accountability. What distinguishes this form of responsibility is the type of moral reason presupposed by reactive attitudes like resentment, indignation, and guilt. As Stephen Darwall has recently characterized such reasons, they are principled respect-oriented reasons grounded in recognition of the

¹² See especially, BENNETT'S, Robert. "Accountability". In: STRAATEN, Z. Van (ed.). *Philosophical Subjects: Essays Presented to P. F. Strawson* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 14-47 [reprinted in M. McKenna and P. Russell eds., *Free Will and Reactive Attitudes: Perspectives on P. F. Strawson's 'Freedom and Resentment'*, (Ashgate, 2008) p. 47-68.]; and WALLACE, R.J. *Responsibility and the Moral Sentiments* (Harvard University Press, 1994), ch. 2.

¹³ This narrowing of focus is not without some support in Strawson's text since these particular reactive attitudes do, in fact play a prominent role in his discussion.

¹⁴ For the development of this line of thought, see: WATSON, Gary. "Responsibility and the Limits of Evil". In: SCHOEMAN, Ferdinand (ed.). *Responsibility, Character, and the Emotions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 256-86; WALLACE, R. J. *Responsibility and the Moral Sentiments*; DARWALL, Stephen. *The Second-Person Standpoint: Morality, Respect, and Accountability* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); and MCKENNA, Michael. *Conversation and Responsibility* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

mutual standing, or authority, that members of the moral community have to make demands one another. Summing-up the view nicely in slogan form, Darwall says: “the moral sense of ‘responsible for’ is conceptually tied to ‘responsible to’”¹⁵. Though members of the moral community cannot demand the best of one another, they can demand that which is minimally-decent. In other words, these demands constitute what we minimally owe one another¹⁶, thus this face of responsibility corresponds to the respect-oriented aspect of the kind of moral *bricolage* highlighted earlier.

The focus on responsibility as accountability is pervasive in the contemporary literature. However, there are two good reasons for thinking that this is not the only form of moral responsibility. First, note that the orientation of responsibility understood as accountability appears decidedly negative, or blame-focused. To hold someone morally accountable is most plausibly to regard them as responsible for a moral failure. Some have simply accepted that this is so. For example, R.J. Wallace grants that, “praise does not seem to have the central, defining role that blame and moral sanction occupy in our practice of assigning moral responsibility”¹⁷. Yet, this should strike us as odd since it’s obvious that regarding someone as praiseworthy is surely a way of regarding her as responsible for what she has done. Given this fact, most seem to conclude that the awkwardness of saying that we hold someone accountable when we praise her merely reveals an emphasis in our practice rather than a genuine conceptual incongruity, perhaps tied to the fact that more is often at stake when an agent is blamed and sanctioned¹⁸. Thus, aside from this skewed emphasis in practice, it seems often assumed that once one discerns what is presupposed in the experience of blaming

¹⁵ *The Second Person Standpoint*, p. 68.

¹⁶ SCANLON, T.M. *What We Owe to Each Other* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998). Scanlon’s treatment of responsibility in this and later work – as well as in the work of many of those who follow his lead – differs importantly in downplaying the theoretical significance of the reactive attitudes. Nevertheless, there is a similar emphasis in Scanlon’s and Scanlonian theories on blameworthiness and the claim that a judgment of blameworthiness involves the criticism that an agent has unjustifiably violated a moral demand we can rightfully make of one another, and thus that she owes a response (e.g., an apology, or justifying explanation, etc.) to the wronged party and/or the moral community at large (*What We Owe*, p. 271-2). For a helpful comparison of the sort of accountability presumed in Scanlon’s theory vs. in a Strawsonian approach, see WATSON’S, Gary. “The Trouble with Psychopaths”. In: *Reasons and Recognition*, eds. Wallace *et al.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 307-31.

¹⁷ *Responsibility and the Moral Sentiments*, p. 61.

¹⁸ See, for example, MCKENNA, Michael. *Conversation and Responsibility*, 37, n. 5, and Gary Watson on the higher stakes involved in blame in “Two Faces of Responsibility,” p. 283.

attitudes like resentment, indignation, and guilt, one will likewise be positioned to explain what is presupposed by their praise-related counterparts – in other words, that there is an accountability sense of praiseworthiness that is simply the reverse, or mirror-image of blameworthiness.

Though it is common to assume that one's view of praiseworthiness should mirror one's view of accountability blameworthiness, it seems clear that attitudes such as gratitude and moral esteem do not function as the mirror images of resentment and indignation¹⁹. To begin to see this, consider perhaps the most straightforward means of pursuing the strategy in question. If one assumes that praiseworthiness mirrors blameworthiness so that one's account of the former should be derivable from one's account of the latter, a natural assumption might be that an agent is worthy of praise – *i.e.*, is the proper subject of attitudes such as gratitude and moral esteem – whenever she meets the relevant respect-oriented demands presupposed in the blame-related reactive attitudes. However, this is usually not the case. We typically do not think that one merits praise for simply satisfying the demands of minimal decency. This is especially evident when the relevant demands are understood as imposing merely negative constraints on one's behavior – for example, negative duties to show respect by refraining from such things as unjustified harms and restrictions on autonomy. The fact that I have not cheated or beaten anyone today hardly makes me a candidate for praise.

Nevertheless, there is an instructive exception to the generalization that praise is inapt in cases where one has simply fulfilled a negative duty. For example, we may admire an agent when a demand for basic decency is met under especially tempting and/or trying circumstances. Imagine, for example, our response upon learning of a student who refrained from cheating while all those around her were cheating or a soldier who refrained from harming a prisoner of war, despite the fact that he knew that the prisoner had caused the death of a fellow soldier just moments beforehand. Examples like these may seem to suggest that praise for an agent's action is at least sometimes warranted even when she has simply met a negative duty that defines minimally-decent behavior.

¹⁹ To streamline the present argument, I leave aside the self-directed pair: guilt/pride. My argument in this portion of the text is drawn from a more extended argument along these lines in "Worthy of Praise: Responsibility and Better-than-Minimally-Decent Agency," forthcoming in *Oxford Studies in Agency and Responsibility*, eds. David Shoemaker and Neal Tognazzini.

However, we should attend carefully to that which our admiration is most likely a response in such cases. The fact that we do not praise all those who refrain from cheating or harming prisoners of war suggests that something else has caught our attention and led us to regard the agent as praiseworthy – that we are not responding merely to the fact that the agent has recognized and governed herself by the relevant moral demand for minimal decency. A likely candidate in these sorts of cases is that we have taken the agent’s action to reflect an admirable quality of character – perhaps integrity and/or fortitude in the face of adversity – thus our praise seems best understood as an expression of moral esteem for the quality of the agent’s character as reflected in her action under difficult circumstances, a way of crediting her with a moral achievement²⁰. If this is correct, then our understanding of such praise is not founded on respect-oriented moral reasons. That is, the esteem we believe an agent merits for her excellence of character is importantly different from the demand for respect presupposed by resentment and indignation. The object of moral esteem is excellence – excellence in fortitude or integrity in the cases we are imagining—whereas the object of moral respect is a person’s dignity and moral authority²¹. Thus our praise, in these instances, is responsive to the agent’s excellent way of being, or flourishing.

We arrived at this conclusion by considering the view that praise is apt when one meets the demands of minimal decency. However, we can also arrive at this same conclusion by entertaining the more common view about when praise is apt – namely, that the praise-related attitudes are responses to cases where an agent has exceeded, rather than simply met, demands for respect, or minimal decency. Such a view would allow us to acknowledge that praise seems most often reserved for something more than merely meeting demands for minimal decency while nevertheless maintaining a necessary conceptual connection to those respect-oriented reasons. So, for example, it is

²⁰ Even if the agent’s action does not reflect an established trait, it seems plausible to think that we are crediting the agent with a more particularized excellence reflected in the quality of her will on that occasion.

²¹ DARWALL, Stephen. *The Second Person Standpoint*, p. 122-126; and “Two Kinds of Respect,” *Ethics* 88 (1977), p. 36-49. Though Darwall marks this important distinction, I argue that he does not recognize its full import for responsibility in my “Worthy of Praise.”

common to think of gratitude as appropriately felt when someone benefits us in a way that we had no legitimate right to expect²².

It is true that the experience of gratitude is often accompanied by or presupposes a reference to the way in which the benefactor's action has exceeded a standard of what could reasonably be expected. For example, in expressing one's gratitude one may say, "You need not have done that." However, what is overlooked in simply noting gratitude's built-in reference to a reasonable demand, or expectation, is that when we acknowledge that an action is "beyond the call of duty," or surpasses a rightful expectation, the presumption is that the action was performed for a reason other than one of that kind – *i.e.*, that the quality of the agent's will reflects something *other than* merely respect, or a sense of what could be rightfully expected²³.

In other words, when we imagine a case of someone being grateful, we are imagining an instance wherein one person appreciates the fact that the other *recognized what she needed or prized and took that as sufficient reason to provide it*. Therefore, it appears that gratitude is not centrally responsive to respect-oriented second-personal reasons but is instead a response to the regard shown for one's well-being, or welfare. This claim is buttressed by noting how the generous person responds when told that she "need not have done that" – namely, she regards the comment as irrelevant to her intention. For example, she may say, "I know but . . ." where two sorts of considerations are typically offered to fill in the blank: "I know, but it seemed like what you needed;" or "I know, but it seemed like what you really wanted." In both cases, the reply suggests that her action is not based on a respect-oriented reason concerning what agents may rightfully demand or expect of one another but instead a reason regarding the agent's well-being.

As we've now seen, both moral esteem and gratitude are typically not responsive to those respect-oriented reasons which define the accountability

²² This view is reflected in Darwall's brief treatment of gratitude. See: *The Second Person Standpoint*, p. 73.

²³ Though I am arguing that praise-related attitudes are not primarily responsive to respect-oriented reasons, this does not mean that such reasons are irrelevant. It seems plausible that in many cases, praise is warranted only if the demands of minimal decency have been met, even though the warrant of praise derives centrally from reasons of a different kind. On a related point, Scanlon discusses a case (first mentioned by Parfit) of a gangster who treats his morning coffee vendor politely, fairly, and pleasantly, though he fails to respect the vendor's basic moral dignity (*Moral Dimensions*, 99-100). We might further suppose that he treats the vendor generously. Even so, it seems that the gangster would not deserve praise for behaving generously if he fails to respect the vendor. David Shoemaker helpfully drew my attention to this point and example.

face of responsibility. This suggests that these praise-related attitudes are ways of regarding an agent as responsible in another sense, one which is responsive to moral reasons that reflect what constitutes and promotes well-being. We can recognize this as well by considering the way that some forms of blameworthiness also fail to presuppose that a demand for mutual respect, or minimal decency, between members of the moral community has been violated. For example, I may regard someone with disdain for the views implied in his decision to chop down all the trees on his property and pave the ground with asphalt simply because it will be easier to maintain, or I may feel remorse for a period in my life when I was overly self-indulgent and thereby wasted good opportunities to develop my talents²⁴. These are clearly cases of regarding someone as responsible for the way their actions reflect their faulty judgment about permissible, or worthwhile, ways of living. The fault here is judged by its distance from a better, or ideal way of being. However, these are not the sort of moral failings for which members of the moral community have the authority to hold one another responsible in the accountability sense.

Clearly, these examples involving the praise-related attitudes and some forms of blameworthiness presuppose that the agent's actions were her own, or attributable, in the sense that they were expressions of her unimpeded judgment-sensitive will on matters of ethical significance and thus self-expressions for which the agent may be regarded as responsible. Following Gary Watson, we may thereby refer to this as the attributability face of responsibility²⁵. Satisfying some baseline conditions of responsibility as attributability would appear to be necessary in order to be responsible in the sense of accountable, as well. For example, it would seem unfair to hold someone accountable for an action via reactive attitudes such as resentment or indignation, if the action was not properly attributable to the agent – say, because she succumbed to a genuinely coercive psychological compulsion. Yet being responsible in the attributability sense is not sufficient for being responsible as accountable, for as Watson points out, it may make no sense to *hold the agent responsible* for the action in question since it may not be

²⁴ The first of these examples is suggested by: HILL Jr, Thomas. In: "Ideals of Human Excellence and Preserving Natural Environments," *Environmental Ethics*, 5, p. 211-224. See also BENNETT, "Accountability," p. 16. The second example is suggested in WATSON. "Two Faces of Responsibility" p. 266-7.

²⁵ "Two Faces of Responsibility", p. 260-271.

the sort of thing for which they are accountable *to us* – that is, as we’ve noted, there may be no relevant demand for mutual respect or minimal decency²⁶.

In addition to drawing the above distinction between responsibility as attributability and responsibility as accountability, Watson went further and equated the former with *aretaic* responsibility since he recognized that our assessment of an agent’s responsibility as attributability often involves an assessment of the moral quality of the agent’s self as expressed in the action – perhaps the quality of her will on a particular occasion and/or the quality of her character more generally. However, it pays to distinguish the minimal sort of responsibility as attributability that seems a prerequisite for any sort of responsibility from the more robust sort that we may associate with the label, *aretaic* responsibility²⁷. Our assessment of an agent’s responsibility as attributability for an action in the first sense is concerned with whether the action is *her own*, where ownership is defined by whether the action reflects the unimpaired exercise of that minimal form of agency distinctive of personhood²⁸. Responsibility in this sense may be relevant for actions with no moral relevance and so not reflect anything about the moral quality of the agent’s will, but it also serves as a baseline type of attributability for other forms of moral responsibility. Assessments of the second variety of responsibility as attributability – for which I will reserve the label, *aretaic* – are concerned with the moral quality of the agent’s will on a particular occasion or character assessed on a scale of goodness or excellence. On this model of responsibility, to praise or blame an agent just is to credit the agent with an achievement or find fault with her in relation to some moral standard or ethical ideal that is defined primarily by reasons concerning an individual’s well-being, the second central category of reasons in our model of moral *bricolage*.

Taking stock of the argument thus far, I began by highlighting the fact that to be responsible is to be an apt target of the reactive attitudes.

²⁶ “Two Faces of Responsibility”, p. 273-282.

²⁷ In distinguishing forms of attributability, I am building on an argument made by SHOEMAKER, David in “Responsibility and Disability” *Metaphilosophy* 40, no. 3-4 (2009), p. 438-461, 445-54, though it seems that Shoemaker’s characterization of the minimal sort of attributability necessary for accountability may be weaker than my own.

²⁸ See FRANKFURT, Harry. “Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person”. In: *Journal of Philosophy* 68 (January 1971), p. 5-20. Of course, whether Frankfurt is correct about what grounds the attribution is contentious.

Extending Strawson's general strategy, I have been arguing that insofar as *particular* reactive attitudes presuppose distinctive types of moral reasons, it makes sense to think of these ways of regarding someone as responsible as reflecting distinct faces of responsibility. These, in turn, correspond to and are the outgrowth in practice of recognizing what are arguably distinct and fundamental sources of moral considerations. To this point, we have identified an accountability and *aretaic* face of responsibility, both of which presuppose a baseline sense of responsibility as attributability.

I want to turn now to the issue of responsibility within our more intimate relations with others – *e.g.*, those between family members, friends, and partners in love. Strawson clearly recognized the special significance of these relationships within his broader treatment of responsibility as a deeply interpersonal phenomenon. Note his emphasis on the special significance that some people have for us when he describes the way the reactive attitudes express:

(...) how much we actually mind, how much it matters to us, whether the actions of other people – and particularly *some* other people – reflect attitudes towards us of good will, affection, or esteem on the one hand or contempt, indifference, or malevolence on the other²⁹.

As with our more abstract relations to fellow members of the moral community, responsibility in our more intimate relations may be seen as tracking expectations, if not demands. There are certain things that we regard as reasonable to expect of family members as family members, of our friends as friends and of our partners in love as partners in love. When those expectations are unmet, we are disposed to respond emotionally – perhaps with resentment—to what we perceive as a lack of sufficient good will and/or due attention to the object of those expectations – in other words, to hold the other party in the relationship responsible. Insofar as these reactive emotions seem to presuppose a mutual competence with and standing to rightfully expect certain things of one another – in this case, the more particular expectations associated with the relevant relationship – they appear

²⁹ "Freedom and Resentment" p. 5, author's emphasis.

to presuppose respect-oriented reasons of the sort that are distinctive of responsibility as accountability³⁰.

These observations are no doubt correct. Respectful recognition of another's rightful standing to hold us to the expectations definitive of a particular type of relationship is certainly a central background condition on participating in relationships defined by their close ties. Thus, it is important to acknowledge the role of accountability in such relationships. Similarly, we should acknowledge the way that gratitude and esteem in such relationships expresses the way that we regard one other as responsible in the *aretaic* sense for actions that contribute to our well-being. Nonetheless, it seems that we have not yet told the full story of responsibility in this context, for we have not yet captured the reactive attitudes that seem distinctive of being in such close relationships with one another. We will focus on two attitudes mentioned by Strawson: hurt feelings and reciprocal love. To understand the significance of such reactive attitudes, it may prove helpful to have before us an example with some degree of emotional detail.

Khaled Hossein's novel, *The Kite Runner*, begins with the story of two teenage Afghan boys in Kabul in the 1970s: Amir, the son of a wealthy businessman and Hassan, the son of a longtime household servant who is deeply devoted both to his role and to the members of the household. The two boys are close but unconventional friends given their very different stations in life and future prospects, tied as they are to their different ethnic backgrounds. Hassan's devotion to his friend is pure and demonstrated in repeated demonstrations of his loyalty. Amir's commitment to Hassan is less pure and complicated by his perception that he must sometimes compete with Hassan for his father's affection. At a crucial juncture shortly before we join the story here, Amir betrays Hassan. In an effort to escape his shame over the earlier betrayal and to remove the perceived competition for affection, he plots to have Hassan and his father dismissed from the household. Amir plants a watch he has received from his father as a birthday gift along with some money under Hassan's mattress. He then voices false

³⁰ See: DARWALL, Stephen. "Responsibility within Relations". In: *Partiality and Impartiality: Morality, Special Relationships, and the Wider World*, eds. Feltham and Cottingham (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 150-168. Also, Scanlon emphasizes the role of such relational expectations in his more recent account of blame. See *Moral Dimensions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), ch. 4.

suspicion of theft to his father, Babar, who confronts Hassan and his father over the allegation. Amir narrates:

They'd been crying; I could tell from their red, puffed-up eyes. They stood before Baba, hand in hand, and I wondered how and when I had become capable of causing this kind of pain.

Baba came right out and asked. "Did you steal that money? Did you steal Amir's watch, Hassan?"

Hassan's reply was a single word, delivered in a thin, raspy voice: "Yes."

I flinched like I had been slapped. My heart sank and I almost blurted out the truth. Then I understood: This was Hassan's final sacrifice for me. If he'd said no, Baba would have believed him because we all knew Hassan never lied. And if Baba believed him, then I'd be the accused; I would have to explain and I would be revealed for what I really was. Baba would never, ever forgive me. And that led to another understanding: Hassan knew [of the earlier betrayal] . . . He knew I had betrayed him and yet he was rescuing me once again, maybe for the last time. I loved him in that moment, loved him more than I'd ever loved anyone...³¹

Amir has now betrayed Hassan a second time in a most serious way and derivatively has betrayed Hassan's father on this occasion as well. They stand before he and Babar in great distress. No doubt some of this distress is due to their anticipation that they will be asked to leave the household for an uncertain future, made all the more uncertain at having to leave under suspicion of theft. Yet, it's clear that this is not the only, and not likely the main reason for their distress. They know that they have been betrayed by someone they consider all but family. Certainly resentment on their part is apt for this awful violation of the rightful expectations of friendship, even given the asymmetry imposed by the social context on that friendship³², yet what is most prominently displayed here is their deep hurt at being betrayed

³¹ HOSSEIN, Khaled. *The Kite Runner* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2003), p. 105.

³² Such resentment is expressed by Hassan's father shortly after the quoted passage.

by Amir – at being betrayed by this *particular* person. This is a crucial and distinct aspect of hurt feelings, as opposed to resentment. Hurt feelings are a response to the attitudes and actions of someone whose attitudes toward us are of special concern. In other words, hurt feelings presuppose a reason that is essentially tied to a particular person or persons. We can understand a bit more of the nature of this reason by shifting our attention now to Amir's reactive response in the passage.

Amir feels guilt and shame at his betrayal, but more noteworthy for our purposes is his reactive response to Hassan's act of self-sacrifice, a sacrifice performed in spite of his knowledge of being betrayed. In response, Amir loves Hassan, perhaps for the first time in a way that mirrors the love Hassan has had for him. There are, of course, many kinds of love, but here our focus is on this kind of reciprocal love that we are sometimes fortunate to enjoy in our closest relationships. Love in this sense is particularized – it is the love for a particular someone – and involves caring for that someone in the sense of identifying oneself with the interests of the one loved³³. Love of this sort need not begin reactively. For example, as Harry Frankfurt has pointed out persuasively, parents do not love their children in reaction to what they have done, nor even in reaction to a critical assessment of qualities that make them worthy to be loved. Rather, one's children are deeply valuable to oneself as a result of one's loving them³⁴. As with other persons and objects that may become the target of our love, we are simply the sort of creatures who sometimes come to care in this deep-seated way about the interests of another. However, *in response* to becoming aware, or more deeply aware, of the love another has for oneself, one can experience love reactively. This is the love that a growing child can come to have for her parents upon recognizing their love for her; this is the love Amir experiences for Hassan upon recognizing anew how deeply Hassan loves him; and I suspect that this is the sort of love Strawson had in mind when he included love in his list of reactive attitudes.

Again, love in this reactive sense is a response to the perception of being loved by a particular person and thus is a response that presupposes a particularized reason. With this insight in hand, we can return now to the

³³ For development of this theme, see: FRANKFURT, Harry. *The Reasons of Love*, ch. 2.

³⁴ FRANKFURT, Harry. *The Reasons of Love*. This is not to deny that they have value on other grounds as well.

case of hurt feelings. As we noted above, hurt feelings – like reciprocal love – presuppose reasons that are particularized insofar as they are a response to the attitudes and actions of someone whose attitudes toward us are of special concern. The relevant special concern is that they care for us in something like the sense that we care for them. In Hassan’s case, he is deeply hurt, because Amir’s betrayal suggests that he does not love Hassan as Hassan loves him. Reactions of this sort – hurt feelings and reciprocal love – are examples of the distinctive manner in which we regard one another as responsible in our more intimate relations. We might call this, “filial responsibility,” insofar as it is perhaps best exemplified in loving family relations and close friendships. As our earlier sketch of moral *bricolage* suggested, relationships of this kind generate distinctive moral reasons for action over and above those more abstract considerations concerning what we owe to each other as co-members of the moral community and what constitutes and fosters well-being. Thus, it is perhaps not surprising that our reactive attitudes have been shaped by our recognition of this important class of reasons.

Conclusion

If the argument in the preceding section is correct, then we should recognize three separate faces of responsibility based on an appreciation of distinct types of moral reasons: accountability, *aretaic* responsibility, and filial responsibility. Moreover, if it is best to think of these moral reasons as part of an irreducibly plural account of ethical value—components of the sort moral *bricolage* described earlier—then this fragmented picture of responsibility is just the sort to expect, for our concepts of responsibility and their attendant practices would have evolved together with the recognition of these fundamentally plural sources of moral reasons.

We also noted that these three faces of responsibility, in turn, presuppose a baseline type of responsibility as attributability, since each of these faces of responsibility presuppose that the action, attitude, or trait for which she is held responsible is *her own* in the requisite sense. My acknowledgement of this baseline variety of responsibility that is not tied to any particular reactive attitudes may serve as the basis for an important objection on behalf of the Lumpers – those who wish to defend a single unified concept of responsibility. One might grant that it is of interest to note the different types of reasons presupposed by those attitudes involved in

regarding someone as responsible, but deny that these point back to distinct faces of responsibility. In other words, one might maintain that the sort of underlying responsibility as attributability that I have acknowledged as necessary is the only sort of responsibility there is. For example, Angela Smith argues that: “to say that a person is morally responsible for some thing is to say that it can be attributed to her in the way that is required in order for it to be a basis for moral appraisal”³⁵. On Smith’s account, we do not need to follow the logic of the reactive attitudes to understand the nature of responsibility. They, and the particular type of moral reasons they presuppose, may be of ancillary interest in coming to understand whether and how to hold an agent responsible, but they are irrelevant to the attribution of responsibility itself. All we need to know is whether the agent’s action, attitude, or character trait is judgment-sensitive in a manner that would open the door to moral appraisal.

Though space does not allow for full engagement with Smith’s view³⁶, I want to conclude by highlighting an additional reason for acknowledging the multiple faces of responsibility as opposed to accepting an account like Smith’s, according to which the conditions on the aptness of particular reactive attitudes are simply conditions on the appropriateness of various ways of holding the agent responsible. As a number of philosophers have begun to point out, membership in the community of responsible agents seems to be not just a matter of degree, but of kind – that is, some individuals seem responsible in one way but not another, not merely less responsible on a single continuum of responsibility. For example, on some portrayals of the nature of psychopathology, it appears that such agents may be responsible to some degree in the *aretaic* sense, but not the accountability sense³⁷. It also seems plausible that individuals with various developmental impairments may be capable of responsibility in one or more senses but not others³⁸. The general point here – which is difficult to capture on a view like Smith’s – is that different forms of moral appraisal demand different agential

³⁵ SMITH, Angela. “On Being Responsible and Holding Responsible”. In: *The Journal of Ethics* 11 (2007), p. 467.

³⁶ For such full engagement, see the exchange between Shoemaker and Smith referenced in note #2.

³⁷ The literature on this topic is large and growing rapidly, but for an example of this particular claim, see Watson, “The Trouble with Psychopaths.”

³⁸ See, for example, SHOEMAKER: “Responsibility and Disability.”

capacities to recognize and respond to reasons, and these capacities, in turn, make different forms of responsibility possible for an individual³⁹.

Finally, along these lines, note that discriminating between types of responsibility in the manner I have suggested seems to allow for a more plausible account of the normal development of unimpaired responsible agency. It is common in discussions of moral responsibility to treat the development of responsible agency in a rather cursory fashion – to simply remark that children gradually grow into fully responsible agents. Accepting that there are multiple forms of responsibility of the sort defended here would allow for a more nuanced explanation of the development of responsible agency, for we might plausibly suppose that young agents begin first to develop the capacity to care for their family members and thus the capacity for filial responsibility. Subsequently, as their ability to engage in more abstract thought grows, they develop the capacity to appreciate those impartial moral reasons concerning respect and well-being and thereby, in conjunction, the capacity for accountability and *aretaic* responsibility. In this way, we may more clearly grasp that the development of responsible agents is the natural development of moral *bricoleurs*.

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³⁹ In recognizing this point, I am indebted to John Martin Fischer and Neal Tognazzini in "The Physiognomy of Responsibility". In: *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (March 2011), p. 383-387.

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