

Respect and the Efficacy of Blame

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Recent work in moral philosophy has significantly deepened our understanding of blame. It has deepened our understanding of blame's *nature*—what blame *is*, what characteristic attitudes, emotions, and behaviors blame involves. It has deepened our understanding of blame's *norms*—when blame is *appropriate*, when someone is blameworthy or deserving of blame, who has the standing to blame, what constitutes an excuse, an exemption, a justification. But while philosophers have had lots of insightful things to say about blame's nature and norms, they have devoted relatively little attention to blame's *efficacy*: how blame works to modify the thoughts, feelings, dispositions, and behavior of the blamed. Despite broad agreement that blame plays a crucial role in regulating moral life, the mechanisms underlying blame's attitudinal- and behavioral-modifying effects remain significantly under-examined.¹

To be sure, discussions of blame's nature and norms have not completely neglected the relevance of blame's efficacy. For example, philosophers have debated whether blame can be justified on the basis of its efficacy: Can our practice of blaming *wrongdoers* (and *intimates* who fail to live up to the norms of friendship and love) be justified in virtue of blame's power to modify the attitudes and behavior of the blamed to comply with moral (and other relationship) norms? Consequentialists, particularly those with compatibilist inclinations (such as J. C. C. Smart),² have defended an affirmative answer to this question; non-consequentialists (such as P. F. Strawson,³ and T. M. Scanlon)⁴ have defended a negative one.

¹ Important contributions to the topic of blame's efficacy include McGeer (2013), Fricker (2016), Vargas (2013), and Bennett (2002).

² Smart (1961), Schlick (1939). Hobbes and Hume are two historical philosophers who have defended a version of blame as a kind of deterrent strategy, as justified if it is efficacious.

³ Strawson (1963). For non-consequentialist readings of Strawson, see Bennett (1980), Watson (1987), Wallace (1994), Darwall (2006). For a consequentialist reading, see McGeer (2014).

⁴ Scanlon (2008).

My concern in this discussion is not the issue of whether blame can be justified on the basis of its efficacy. On that question, I am inclined to answer negatively. In his classic paper, “Freedom and Resentment,” Strawson argues, persuasively to my mind, that efficacy in regulating behavior cannot be the “only reason” for engaging in practices of blame and punishment. Indeed, as he put it, “this is not a sufficient basis, it is not even the *right* sort of basis, for these practices as we understand them.”⁵ Yet, in the final paragraph of the paper, Strawson registers that:

It is far from wrong to emphasize the *efficacy* of all those practices which express or manifest our moral attitudes, in regulating behavior in ways considered desirable.⁶ (My emphasis)

Strawson has foremost in mind our practices of blaming and holding each other responsible. Even in denying that blame’s efficacy could serve as its (sole) justification, Strawson does not overlook blame’s connection with the broader social purpose of behavior regulation and correction.⁷ But while registering the importance of blame’s efficacy as a dimension of blame, Strawson—like many others who have contributed important work on blame—does not say much about how blame functions to achieve its efficacy: What moral-psychological conditions must be in place in the blamed agent in order for blame to be effective? How is blame distinctive, even peculiar, in the way it modifies the attitudes and behavior of its target? How are the operations of blame structurally similar to, yet also different from, those of other modes of influence or exercises of power, such as rational persuasion, manipulation, and coercion?

Earlier, I mentioned broad agreement on the notion that blame serves an important regulative function in our relationships and social world. The practice of blame is one of the ways in which shared reasons, motivations, and expectations are generated and sustained—shared reasons, motivations, and expectations that partly constitute and enable valuable relationships and moral community. Here it is crucial that we understand the notion of *moral community* not as an abstraction referring to the class of all persons or rational agents—à la Kant’s *Kingdom of Ends*—but rather along the lines of Hegel’s notion of *Sittlichkeit*, which commentators often translate as “ethical life” or “customary morality.” In seeking to understand the role

⁵ Strawson (1963: 4). The point is also made in Williams (1995a) and Bennett (1980).

⁶ Strawson (1963).

⁷ Importantly, the question of blame’s justification or appropriateness can be asked at two levels: (1) the systemic level, concerning whether we should hold our practice of blame as a whole; (2) the token level, concerning whether an instance of blame is appropriate. My suggestion in this paragraph is that considerations of efficacy cannot in general be blame’s justification at the token level; the justification must rather be more directly related to the violation of relevant moral norms or expectations.

blame plays in bringing people into and sustaining the moral community, it is moral community in the sense associated with *the lived experience of ethical norms* and *concrete ethical practice* that is relevant. Moral community so understood requires internalized forms of social practice. It consists of members who have psychologically internalized a certain substantive set of ethical values and dispositions (cognitive, emotional, and behavioral).

In describing a shame-based moral community, Bernard Williams observes that:

It is not merely a structure by which I know that you will be annoyed with me because you know that I will be annoyed at you. These reciprocal attitudes have a content: some kinds of behavior are admired, others accepted, others despised, and it is those attitudes that are internalized, not simply the prospect of hostile reactions.⁸

The idea that moral communities consist in part in their members having certain sorts of internalized reciprocal attitudes with ethical content is not restricted to shame-cultures. It would presumably apply to any *actual* moral community, including those that are guilt-centered.

If we want to understand how blame functions to generate and sustain the internalized shared reasons, motivations, and expectations that partly constitute and enable a relationship or community, we need to understand the moral-psychological mechanisms that enable blame to achieve these desired effects. This is what I set out to explore in what follows. My discussion aims to bring out that how blame operates to modify the moral understanding and behavior of the blamed is a rather complex matter. This complexity matches the fact that the blamed (as a group) are themselves quite a morally diverse lot. It also matches the fact that blamer and blamed can stand in many different possible relations to one another: different relations of power, different relations of care, intimacy, and respect. For example, a blamed agent might come into the blaming transaction caring a lot or very little (or somewhere in between) about the following: about the relevant moral considerations; about the interests of the blaming agent; about having the esteem or positive regard of the blaming agent; about having the good opinions of third parties and others in the social world; and so forth.

In what follows, I argue that, depending on a range of factors such as these mentioned above, different moral-psychological attitudes (like respect, esteem, vanity, and fear) will need to come into play—will have to be mobilized—during the blaming transaction to enable blame to be effective. The account of blame's efficacy I develop challenges the complacent notion that the rational force of blame's reasons is always enough on its own to

⁸ Williams (1993: 83–4).

move the blamed agent to modify his behavior in relevant ways (that is, in the ways the blamer hopes).⁹ Or rather, more carefully stated, I argue that, even when the acknowledgement of the reasons *is* enough, the blamed's willingness to acknowledge the reasons often depends on further attitudes, motivations, and dynamic interactions operating in the background.¹⁰ Based on my account, I end with the following normative conclusion: that blame may well be more morally problematic—a more worrisome exercise of power—when it is effective in modifying the behavior of someone who, at the outset of the blaming transaction, is very morally different from the blaming agent.

12.1 PRELIMINARIES

A few clarificatory points are in order. First, I have been speaking of blame's *efficacy*, *effectiveness*, and *desired effects*. To fix terms, I shall use all three interchangeably to refer to the modification of attitudes and behavior of the blamed to comply with moral and other relationship norms (as understood from the perspective of the blamer).¹¹ These modifications include changes in the blamed's feelings, thoughts, perspectives, motivations, and dispositions. In examining the moral-psychological conditions that enable blame to be effective, I am interested in the conditions that enable blame to modify these aspects of the blamed.¹²

Secondly, I shall focus on *second-personal communicative blame*.¹³ This is not blame in the causal-diagnostic sense—the sense deployed when, for

⁹ Here and throughout, I use “he” as the unmarked pronoun, which is semantically gender-neutral.

¹⁰ I do not claim that in communicating blame, we are always trying to change someone (that blamers always intend to change the blamed). After all, we might blame someone even when we think he is incapable of change. We might blame someone for *expressive* or *symbolic* reasons: to stand up for ourselves, to signal to the blamed and third parties that we will stand up for ourselves, that we will not put up with how we have been treated. Nevertheless, the desire to modify the blamed's attitude and behavior is present much of the time when blame is communicated.

¹¹ The desired effects should be taken as relative to the perspective of the blamer's view of the relevant norms.

¹² I doubt that any of the items referred to here—thoughts, feelings, dispositions, motives, and behaviors—could be understood in complete independence from any of the others.

¹³ McKenna (2013) uses the term “directed blame” to refer to the kind of blame at issue. Fricker (2016) uses the term “communicative blame.” The claim that the second-personal case is most fundamental is not uncontroversial, but my argument in no way depends on it. It is enough to agree that second-personal blame is a central variety of blame, without any commitment to its being most fundamental.



instance, we blame the faulty radiator for the car's overheating. Rather, my concern is the kind of blame that is at home in *interpersonal relationships*: blame that is usually prompted by perceived wrongdoing and that is directed at wrongdoers (more on the connection between blame and wrongdoing below).

More specifically, the label *second-personal communicative blame* is meant to stress two key features of the relevant variety of blame. First, *second-personal communicative blame* is *communicative* because it involves the aim to communicate relevant moral reasons, judgments, and feelings of blame (typically, reactive attitudes like resentment and moral anger).¹⁴ Thus, the kind of blame at issue goes beyond the mere private experience of the reactive attitudes, as well as their mere outward but non-communicative behavioral display (e.g. frowning of the brow without the intent to communicate anything). The blamed's understanding or acceptance of the relevant content is not required, however, in order for communicative blame to be tokened, provided that the communicative intent is present in the blamer.¹⁵

Second, *second-personal communicative blame* is *second-personal* because the communication is *by the blaming agent to the blamed agent*: it involves an *address* by the blaming agent to the blamed agent *as a you*.¹⁶ ("How could you?!"; "It's all your fault!"; "Look what you've done!"; "I can't believe you!") Of course, the address or communication needn't be verbal or explicit. Giving someone the silent treatment or cold shoulder can count as second-personal communicative blame, since it is voluntary and aimed at conveying a certain message to the blamed.

Second-personal communicative blame (henceforth, *blame*, unless otherwise noted) is typically for an act or omission perceived as wrongdoing. But it needn't be *wrongdoing* (a morally impermissible act) strictly speaking, so long as in a broader sense "there is some kind of ethical dimension" in the case.¹⁷ For example: One could blame a teammate for slacking off in practice. A partner to a bank robbery could blame the other for making an idiotic mistake derailing the getaway. Even in these cases, there is an ethical dimension in that

when the failure [of the blamed party] is explained, it seems that for the blame to be appropriate [or make sense], there must be some generally reprehensible

¹⁴ Following Strawson (1963), *reactive attitudes* are attitudes toward a person that are reactions to their attitude (of ill-will, disregard, or lack of consideration) toward others as reflected in their action.

¹⁵ This point is compatible with excluding from the class of communicative blame such cases as blaming the dead.

¹⁶ For simplicity's sake, I focus on blaming transactions between two persons.

¹⁷ Williams (1995b).

characteristic involved in the explanation: the agent must have been careless, or lazy, or self-serving, or something of the sort.¹⁸

We can and do blame people for things other than what they *do*. Commonly cited cases include racist, sexist, and anti-gay beliefs and attitudes. But we also blame people for more normatively mundane responses, such as being ungrateful or sulky or inattentive or not empathetic, where these consist in the first instance not in *actions* performed but in *perspectives* adopted toward others and the world.¹⁹ For simplicity, I shall focus on the case of blaming someone for an act (or omission), but the account is meant to be generalizable to cases of blaming someone for holding a belief or attitude or perspective.

The final preliminary point is that my discussion will draw on Bernard Williams's interpretation of blame, while also departing from it in key respects.²⁰ According to Williams, blame rests on a *fiction* that helps to recruit people into the moral community. The fiction is that the agent who is blamed had reason to avoid the wrongdoing, comply with moral norms, at the very time at which the wrongdoing was committed. For Williams, it is often false that the blamed agent had such reason, given the basic relation (as Williams understands it) between practical reasons and the "subjective motivational sets" of the agents whose reasons they are.²¹ But Williams holds that the fiction—that the agent who is blamed had reason to avoid the wrongdoing, comply with moral norms, at the time at which the wrongdoing was committed—can nonetheless be a useful one, with perhaps a legitimate place in human affairs. Blaming someone in a *proleptic* manner, *as if* they had reason to avoid wrongdoing, comply with moral norms at the time of action (even when this is strictly false), can be a useful and effective way of "recruiting" them to join the moral community. It can help to give rise in the blamed to the motivations and concerns that will make them members of the moral community.

¹⁸ Williams (1985, 1995).

¹⁹ Shoemaker (2015: 113) has an interesting discussion of "coming to feel what others feel in a simpatico fashion."

²⁰ Williams (1995a, 1995b). Both of these papers have received significant attention, but the aspects concerning blame have been underappreciated.

²¹ This is Williams's *reasons-internalism* thesis, the view that an agent's practical reasons must be anchored in the agent's subjective motivations. That is, any reason that is a reason for action for the agent must appeal to something internal to his "subjective motivational set"—or desires very broadly construed. (See Williams 1981, 1995b.) Williams understands our acceptance of this falsehood as connected to our acceptance of a broader picture of ethical life in basic Kantian terms, the conception of the ethical he calls "morality". See Williams (1985: Ch. 10).

Williams's reflections on blame can help us to understand how blame works to get the blamed to care about moral considerations that the blamed did not previously care about—or care about enough, or in the right way. Building on Williams's insights, I shall develop the idea that treating the blamed as if they were already members of the moral community can give rise in them to the concerns that will make them members of the moral community. In doing so, however, I will not rely on Williams's controversial *reasons-internalism* thesis: that an agent's reasons must be anchored in the agent's subjective motivations, that there are only internal reasons for action. Nor will I adopt the suspicions and negative connotations Williams attaches to morality (or “the morality system”) in calling it “a peculiar institution.”²²

12.2 BLAME'S EFFICACY AND JUSTIFICATION

How does blame lead to the modification of the blamed agent's feelings, beliefs, and behavior? Is it just that blame is unpleasant? Blame is certainly distinctively unpleasant. Nobody enjoys being on the receiving end of another's resentment, anger, or negative moral criticism. But even acknowledging blame's “characteristic (if elusive) quality of opprobrium,” we may still wonder whether blame works simply as a kind of negative reinforcement.²³ (And praise/gratitude, therefore, a kind of positive reinforcement.)²⁴

Although it is not altogether incorrect to see blame as a kind of negative reinforcement, it is over-simplistic. Blaming and praising are importantly different than using negative and positive reinforcement in animal training. It is also unclear that blame is best understood as simply a kind of sanction or punishment.²⁵ Even if one were to insist on classifying it as such, blame is certainly a distinctive kind of punishment. In many paradigmatic cases of punishment (such as inflicting suffering or harm, depriving someone of goods or privileges), it is typically not a central aim that the target acknowledges the reasons for the punishment. By contrast, in blaming (particularly of the second-personal communicative variety), it often is a central aim that the target comes to acknowledge the blaming agent

²² Williams (1985).

²³ Wallace (2011: 348) describes blame as having a “characteristic (if elusive) quality of opprobrium.”

²⁴ The economy of threats view of blame can be found in: Schlick (1962), Nowell-Smith (1948: 45–61), Smart (1961).

²⁵ Among the different ways in which blame can be practiced, some are more punitive or sanction-like, and more prone to be experienced as such by the blamed. On blame as a kind of punishment, see Smart (1961). Scanlon (2008) discusses and rejects the idea.

and his reasons for the blame.²⁶ One dimension of blame that makes it distinctive, then, is the connection between blame's desired-effect (particularly, the modification of blamed's behavior going forward) and the blamed's acknowledgement of relevant moral reasons: that is, the justificatory force of the negative moral evaluation that blame involves.

Consider the fact—apparent to keen social observers—that blame's efficacy depends, much of the time, on blame's perceived justification: its justification in the eyes of the blamed agent. That is, blame's power to modify the behavior of the blamed is often conditioned on the blamed's experiencing the blame as *justified*: as warranted, appropriate, supported by good reasons, fair. Conversely, blame that is experienced by the blamed agent as *unjustified*—as unwarranted, inappropriate, unfair, misplaced, excessive—often generates resentment, leading to responses and behavior in the blamed that run counter to blame's desired effect.²⁷ If blame's efficacy is at least much of the time conditioned on the blamed's coming to acknowledge as justified the reason(s) for which he is being blamed, how does the blamed agent typically come around to that acknowledgement?

12.3 THE VARIETIES OF MORAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE BLAMED

I have suggested that blame's efficacy is conditioned (in part, much of the time) on the blamed agent's willingness to accept the justificatory force of the negative moral evaluation that blame involves, to accept as justified the reason(s) for which he is being blamed. In this section, I consider some different ways in which the condition (the willingness on the part of the blamed to acknowledge relevant reasons) could come to hold. I shall argue that the blamed agent's willingness to accept relevant reasons often depends on the blamed agent's having in place certain broader *respect-relevant dispositions*.

There are strikingly different ways in which the blamed can come to accept the (justificatory) reasons for which he is being blamed. This should not be surprising, given that blamed agents can come to blaming transactions with different moral psychological make-ups: with a variety of different possible

²⁶ There can be other aims too, such as those mentioned in n. 10.

²⁷ Williams (1995a) remarks that the claim that blame's efficacy depends on its received justification suggests—to return to an idea earlier discussed—that to justify blame on the basis of its efficacy is to sell it short. For if blame is, much of the time, efficacious only on the condition that it is experienced as justified, then the justification of blame cannot be reduced to its efficacy. For the blamed agent who thinks blame is *unjustified* does not simply think that the blame will be *ineffective*.

(morally relevant) thoughts, motivations, and values. At the outset of the blaming transaction, the blamed may care a lot (or very little) about the main moral consideration(s) at issue. The blamed may care a lot (or very little) for the blamer and the blamer's interests and concerns. The blamer's positive regard may matter a lot (or not at all) to the blamed. The blamed's moral outlook and motivations may *overlap* significantly (or hardly at all) with the blamer's outlook and motivations. Targets of blame are also differently situated with respect to the moral community: they may be positioned at the core, periphery, or even beyond the moral community. All of these factors make a significant difference to how (and whether) blame is able to achieve its desired effects.

I want to sketch a range of different ways in which blame achieves its efficacy, a range that reflects the fact that targets of blame can be differently *morally minded* when they come to the blaming transaction. The characterizations will serve my case that the moral consciousness of the blamed agent, and the blamed's relation to the blamer, when entering into the blaming transaction will determine *how* (and even *whether*) blame achieves its desired effect of modifying the behavior of the blamed going forward.

Let us represent the different possible moral psychologies instantiated by targets of blame at the outset of the blaming transaction in terms of four figures, along a continuum:

- (1) someone who (by the lights of the blamer) cares *a lot* about relevant moral considerations;²⁸
- (2) someone who (by the lights of the blamer) cares *somewhat* about relevant moral considerations;²⁹
- (3) someone who *hardly* cares, or does not care at all, about relevant moral considerations, *but* does otherwise care about other people's (including the blamer's) opinions of him; and
- (4) someone who cares neither about relevant moral considerations nor about other people and their opinions.³⁰

²⁸ Such an agent cares *enough* about moral considerations in both the following senses: (1) having morally adequate or proper moral concern, and (2) having sufficient concern psychologically speaking for (standard) blame to be effective. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pressing me to clarify this point.

²⁹ Such an agent does not quite care *enough* about moral considerations.

³⁰ It is not an obvious question which group most of us fall into, but what is obvious is that (4) does not describe most of us. (4) might be understood as representing the figure philosophers have called *the amoralist*, who has absolutely no concern for others. I shall argue that this figure may be *beyond the reach of blame*. The amoralist is indifferent to moral considerations and other people's interests. Not only can the amoralist not be *argued* into caring about moral considerations and other people's interests, the amoralist

These four figures are intended as *caricatures*: representations that exaggerate or highlight certain features—and thereby oversimplify things—for the purposes of making a point more clear or apparent. By reflecting on how blame might operate on each of these representative figures, my aim is to show that the moral consciousness of the blamed agent when entering into the blaming transaction (partly) determines *how* (and *whether*) blame achieves its desired effect.

To do so, I shall elaborate in next section the mechanisms underlying blame's efficacy in three cases: *standard*, *intermediate*, and *proleptic*. Reflections on the three cases will make manifest a range of ways in which blame achieves its desired effects. They also bring out how the achievement depends on the blamed's antecedent position on relevant moral matters relative to that of the blamer's position, and on distinct kinds of power relations that obtain between the blamer and blamed (and others in the moral community).

12.4 MECHANISMS OF BLAME'S EFFICACY: STANDARD, INTERMEDIATE, AND PROLEPTIC

Start with a general point. In blaming B for doing (omitting) some action, X, the blaming agent, A, presupposes that B *should* have avoided doing (omitting) X. Part of what A communicates (conveys tacitly or explicitly) in blaming B for doing X is that B should have avoided doing X. The idea that B should have avoided doing X can also be formulated in terms of B's *reasons*: B had reason (typically, sufficient reason) not to do X.³¹

Consider the *standard* case of blame. The label *standard* is meant to stress two things. First, that the case of blame described here is more common than the *proleptic* case (roughly, blaming with the presupposition that the blamed already cares about the relevant moral consideration when this is less than clear, in the hopes of getting the blamed to actually care about the relevant moral consideration). Or at least it must be taken for granted to be

also cannot be induced into caring by other means that go beyond reasoning (e.g. emotional pleas, threats).

³¹ The presupposition that the blamed agent, B, should have done otherwise, or had (sufficient or overriding) reason to do otherwise, may have further implications. I mention two and set them to the side: that B was actually in a position to do better (in the sense that B *could* have done otherwise); and that B was actually in position to know better (in the sense that B could have known then that B should, has reason, to do otherwise). In short, when A blames B for not avoiding X, typically, A assumes/presupposes at least the following: that B (1) did X, (2) should have avoided X, and (3) could have avoided X.

more common by most of the members of the moral community engaging in the blaming practice. Second, that the standard case is more fundamental than proleptic blame: the operations of proleptic blame depends on standard blame (but not vice versa).

In standard blame, the person being blamed already cares significantly about the moral considerations pertaining to the negative moral judgment that blame involves. (So standard blame involves the first figure described in last section.) Or put in slightly different terms: standard blame involves blame of someone who is already situated at the core of the moral community. Yet another way to put it is that: standard blame involves blame between individuals whose respective moral outlooks and motivations already substantially overlap.

In standard blame, the blamed agent, B, *readily agrees* that he had (sufficient) reason to avoid doing X at the time of doing X. One way to understand the notion of *readiness of agreement* is in terms of the blamed's basically being in the right *motivational* state to acknowledge the relevant reasons for the blame. Put in Williams's preferred terms: B possesses a relevant motivation in his "subjective motivational set."³² I prefer to construe the idea in terms of B's already being in the right *evaluative-normative state*: B already values V (has internalized value V, which is relevant to the action's wrongness), where this valuing involves taking V-related consideration, C, as a sufficient reason for action in relevant contexts.

Consider an example featuring the moral consideration of respect for a colleague's privacy in the workplace. I will use the example (and variants of it) throughout.³³ Suppose B barges into A's office without knocking and A blames B for failing to respect A's privacy. Suppose, moreover, that B does in fact respect and value A's privacy. As a matter of fact, let us assume that B cares about people's privacy *in general*: B generally sees other people's privacy (including A's) as a source of reasons for action: B is disposed in relevant contexts to treat the impact of B's actions on someone's privacy as having deliberative relevance and weight.³⁴

In *standard* cases—where B already possesses the motivation(s) linked with respect for people's privacy, or already attaches proper value to people's privacy, and so already treats considerations of privacy as reason-giving—blame's efficacy is explained by the fact that the blaming transaction serves

³² See Williams (1995b).

³³ If one prefers, one could run analogous examples featuring other moral considerations, such as fidelity in promise-keeping, honesty in truth-telling, loyalty in friendship, gratitude toward a benefactor, not being selfish in dealing with others, and so forth.

³⁴ The relevant contexts needn't arise very often, and even when they do arise the privacy-related considerations needn't be *decisive* or overriding.

to *remind* the blamed agent of moral considerations he already cares about or treats as sufficiently reason-giving. When A blames B for barging into A's office, the blame *cues* B to the relevant reason(s), which—due perhaps to carelessness or weakness of will—B failed to act on in the situation. But B's failure to act was not because B did not, at the time of action, value A's privacy (or others' privacy). It was not that B saw such considerations as lacking reason-giving force. On the contrary B does and did see the considerations as reason-giving: had B been asked at the time of action, B would have sincerely avowed that considerations of privacy have reason-giving force. Here, then, the blame serves as a *normative reminder*. Being blamed helps to ensure that B will be a bit more aware, stop and think, the next time around. (The reactive emotions involved in the blame may help to jolt the blamed into paying greater attention.) In the standard cases, then, blame does not so much transform the blamed agent's values and cares as encourage the blamed to take the due care needed the next time around, bringing into better conformity the blamed agent's actions, on the one hand, and values and cares, on the other.

There are cases a bit removed from the standard case—call them *intermediate* cases—that involve the second figure described earlier, the one who cares about morality and moral considerations *somewhat*. (We could also think about these cases as involving blame of someone who is not situated at the core of the moral community, but who is still within the moral community.) In intermediate cases, the blame is between individuals whose moral outlook and motivations have somewhat less in common than in the earlier case discussed, but still a great deal in common. Prior to the blaming transaction, both parties—blamer and blamed—care about the relevant moral considerations, but not in the same way: they might disagree about their *weighting* (relative to competing considerations) and/or about their *relevance* (the range of possible scenarios in which the considerations apply).

In intermediate cases, the blamed agent, B, needs *some* convincing that he had sufficient reason to do otherwise. In that sense, blame has to go beyond merely being a moral reminder. To use variants of the privacy case earlier discussed: one possibility is that B was already disposed in relevant contexts to treat the impact of B's actions on A's privacy as having deliberative relevance, but (by A's lights) did not attach sufficient weight to the reason. Another possibility is that B was already disposed to treat the impact of B's actions on A's privacy as having deliberative relevance and sufficient weight relative to competing considerations in a certain range of contexts, but had not taken *this* context as being relevant for considerations of privacy to have sufficient reason-giving force. Notice that in both possibilities, the blamed agent does not antecedently hold that the relevant moral consideration never has relevance or weight. In the first variant, A blames B for failing to

give consideration of A's privacy enough weight at the time of action; in the second, A blames B for failing to recognize the relevance of the consideration to the context at hand. Blame's efficacy in these variants would involve the modification of the blamed's view of either the relevance or weight of the reason(s) to avoid doing X.

Unlike the standard cases, then, intermediate cases of blame do more than simply draw the blamed agent's attention to the consideration, which the blamed agent already treats as a reason to avoid the action. They also get the blamed either to attach more weight to the reason or broaden its application to a wider or different set of contexts. Thoughts such as that it matters to the blamer that the blamed not do X, or that the blamer may get angry or upset should the blamed continue to do X, may help the blamed to see the greater relevance of, or to attach greater importance to (value more, care more about) considerations of respecting the other's privacy (or in different cases: telling the truth, or keeping a promise, or not acting in a selfish manner, and so on).³⁵

I turn now to the target of blame who does not care at all about relevant moral considerations, though importantly the target does care about other people, if only about having their respect and regard. Here, I want to claim that blame has to operate *proleptically*, if it is to be effective. But before I do so, let me introduce the idea of prolepsis as a way of treating or interacting with another person.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines *prolepsis* as "the representation or taking of something as already done or existing." Proleptic treatment or engagement in general involves treating someone or relating to someone in an "as if" way. To proleptically engage another agent, S, is to relate to S *as if* S is (already) in possession of a capacity, disposition, character trait, or reason, where this kind of treating-as-if is potentially self-fulfilling or causally reifying. Proleptic engagement is potentially self-fulfilling or causally reifying in that it is intended to make—or likely to have the effect of making—S actually have the relevant capacity, disposition, character trait, or reason.

To clarify the general phenomenon, consider two examples of prolepsis:

Proleptic Trust: You are a parent. You might act *as if* your teenage child is trustworthy—and indeed, do so by actively placing and communicating trust in your child, despite believing that he is less than fully trustworthy or deserving of trust. This interactive trust (tokened, for example, by lending

³⁵ Notice the agent may come to attach greater weight to privacy partly because he now appreciates that the blaming agent cares that he care more about respecting privacy.

your teenage son your car, and saying to him, “Son, here are my keys, I trust you . . .”) may help to develop genuine trustworthiness and reliability in him.³⁶

Pedagogical Scaffolding: You are a dissertation supervisor. You might treat your dissertation advisee *as if* she is (already) an intellectual equal, say, by taking her intuitions, arguments, and objections with the utmost seriousness—*as if* her views are like those of your most respected and esteemed philosophical equal. Relating to your graduate student as if she is (already) an equally capable or accomplished philosopher may help her develop confidence in herself as a philosopher, enabling her to realize her philosophical aspirations. Treating your advisee as if she is (already) an excellent philosopher scaffolds her philosophical development.³⁷

Now consider how proleptic engagement might be instanced in blame:

Proleptic Blame: You are at the office and one of your colleagues has acted ungratefully toward the administrative assistant. You might respond to the ungrateful colleague *as if* considerations of gratitude really do matter to her deep down, even when it’s less than clear that they actually do. Responding to her as if considerations of gratitude matter to her, say, by blaming her for failing to do what (you suppose) she had reason to do may have the desired effect of making it such that considerations of gratitude really come to matter to her. Going forward, the considerations begin to have reason-giving motivational force for her, and she starts to become the kind of person who cares about not being ungrateful toward others.

Let us consider in more detail the operations of proleptic blame: how the assumption or presupposition that relevant moral considerations already matter to the blamed—relating to the blamed as if this is so—can lead the blamed to actually care about those considerations, or increases its likelihood. Returning now to the consideration of privacy once again, let us suppose the target of blame, B, is not disposed in relevant contexts to treat the impact of his actions on A’s privacy (A being the blamer) as having *any* deliberative relevance or weight. B does not value other people’s privacy (including A’s); B does not see privacy as a source of reasons for action. Characterized in Williams’s *reasons-internalist* terms: at the time of the action (and before), the agent did not have a relevant motivation in his “subjective motivational set” (had no desire to avoid doing X, for which the agent is blamed).

So we are imagining someone who does not care about considerations of privacy—someone for whom privacy has no normative significance, no reason-giving force—but who, through the blaming transaction, comes to care about them, to invest those considerations with significance. This is

³⁶ Holton (1994) and Pettit (1995) both discuss cases of proleptic trust, though not under that description.

³⁷ On the importance of scaffolding in human development, see McGeer (2004).

required if blame is to be effective—if it is going to change the blamed's behavior going forward. In order to get the target to change, the blaming transaction has to lead the blamed agent to begin to care about, value, or attach some importance to the relevant moral consideration C (in our example, consideration of privacy.) How exactly can this be realized through blame?

One way is by identifying something else that the blamed agent already cares about and then connect it to the relevant moral consideration(s). More specifically, to identify something else, Y, that the blamed *does* already take an interest in, which stands in something like an *instrumental* relation to C. So suppose B (the blamed) does not care about considerations of privacy, but B does care about having or maintaining the respect or esteem of certain others, particularly those people he too respects or esteems. That is, B does have the cares associated with *vanity*: caring about how B is seen by certain others, taking an interest in having or maintaining a good reputation. If certain other people's respect, esteem, or good opinion of B is conditioned on B's caring about consideration C (and conducting himself in a way that involves treating C as a reason for action), then this is something that might have a motivational grip on B—something that can get B to start caring about consideration C. The blamed agent may not care about the relevant moral consideration (at least initially, prior to the blaming transaction). But if the blamed agent *does* care about the person who is blaming them (particularly, does care about having the blamer's respect), the blamed agent may begin to care about the moral consideration too. If, in blaming, the blamer conveys (tacitly or indirectly) that the blamer's respect toward the blamed is conditioned on the blamed caring about C—is able somehow to get the blamed agent to be sensitive to this—then (from the perspective of the blamed) there is now a reason to care about C.

We are supposing that the blamed agent has an interest in the blaming agent's respect. That is, the blamed agent, B, possesses a broader, background desire to have or maintain the respect of the blaming agent. More precisely: suppose B has the broader motivation to avoid blame when it comes from people B respects, but otherwise no desire to avoid the particular wrong. Given the broader motivation, combined with the recognition of what is expected of B by those B respects—which the blame (and its characteristic opprobrium) serves to indicate—B comes to acquire through the blaming transaction the desire to avoid doing the particular wrong (the thing he is blamed for having done). Having acquired this relevant item in his "subjective motivational set," the blamed agent now has an internal reason to avoid the particular wrong, going forward. In this way, proleptic blame *creates* reason (gets the blamed agent to care about consideration C, to treat C as a reason for action) by *presupposing* it (presupposing that C is a reason for

action, is a consideration that the blamed agent should care about). So *in* blaming, the blaming agent presupposes that the blamed agent did have reason; and *by* so doing is able to create it for the blamed agent going forward, on the condition that the blamed cares about having the respect of certain others, particularly those the blamed respects.

I have argued that, in cases where the blamed agent does not care about the relevant moral consideration, C, the blamer might get the blamed agent to care about C by *latching onto* something else that the blamed cares about: some consideration other than C that is instrumentally connected to C. But one might worry whether this caring about C that the blamed agent comes to (which provides the motivational basis of the blamed's improved behavior) amounts to caring about C *in the right way*: that is, the way required for the agent's action to possess full moral worth.³⁸ This is because the blamed's concern for C, being prudential or instrumental in character, falls short of being the right sort of moral reason for action.³⁹

My response to the worry is to acknowledge that the result of the proleptic blame—the kind of prudential or instrumental caring about relevant moral considerations the blamed comes to—is a *moral second-best*. It is rather unlikely that, given the kind of psychological creatures we are, blame can *straightaway* transform someone who does not care at all about the relevant moral consideration into the kind of person who is motivated by the right sort of moral reason. To be sure, the blamed may eventually come to care about the moral consideration in the right way, but only by first caring about the moral consideration at all. This will certainly be true if we accept—as I think we should—a broadly Aristotelian picture of moral development as proceeding (when it does proceed) in a gradual and step-wise fashion.

Consider the case of morally educating young children. Initially, one has to teach them to do the right thing, even if they do not understand—perhaps cannot understand—why they should. (This is the stage of *incontinence*.) Typically, they are not able to appreciate the proper moral reasons immediately. Only later, after the child has done the right thing for not the right reasons for some time will the child be able to appreciate the right reasons and do the right thing for the right reasons. The parent says to the child

³⁸ Arpaly (2002) characterizes the connection between the moral worth of an action and the agent's responsiveness to moral reasons as follows:

for an agent to be morally praiseworthy for doing the right thing is for her to have done the right thing for the relevant moral reasons—that is, in response to the features that make it right... [And] an agent is more praiseworthy, other things being equal, the stronger the moral concern that has led to her action... Moral concern is to be understood as concern for what is in fact morally relevant and not as concern for what the agent takes to be morality.

³⁹ Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for raising this sort of worry.

refusing to share with the others: “If you are not going to share, then you will have to go to time-out.” This gets the child to share on the basis of a morally second-best motivating reason: to avoid time-out. But over time, the hope is that as the child develops the habit of sharing and engages in the practice a bit, the child might come around to sharing for the non-instrumental reasons tied to moral virtue: that is, sharing because it is the right thing to do, because of the good in itself of fairness, cooperation, and kindness (and not because it is needed to avoid time-out). Something similar holds true of the adult agent undergoing moral transformation as a result of blame. Getting someone to care about relevant moral considerations that he does not care about in blame is much like trying to cultivate moral virtues in bringing up children: we need to (perhaps have no choice than to) begin by getting the behavior going in the direction of proper moral behavior first. This requires getting the person to care about the moral consideration in some way, even if it is not quite the right way. The modification of the motivating reasons to align with the right reasons comes later.

It is also worth clarifying the relevant notion of respect at work here in the proleptic operation of blame. Stephen Darwall distinguishes between two kinds of respect: *recognition respect*, which involves recognizing the other as having the standing to make claims on one, and *appraisal respect*, which involves assessing the other’s conduct or character as worthy of admiration in some way, moral or otherwise.⁴⁰ As Darwall construes it, recognition respect involves seeing the object of respect as a legitimate source of claims or demands on us. Recognition respect is something we owe to all rational agents in virtue of their rational agency (or to all beings with dignity in virtue of their dignity, or to all persons in virtue of their second-personal authority). Crucially, for the relevant individuals (agents, beings, or persons), recognition respect is not the sort of thing that has to be *earned* on the basis of the quality of character or conduct. Nor can recognition respect be legitimately *taken away* on the basis of a negative moral evaluation of a person’s character or conduct.

Appraisal respect, on the other hand, does involve an evaluation of the person’s worthiness to be admired in some way, moral or otherwise. Darwall thus calls it “a kind of esteem.” Appraisal respect is not owed to everyone and it *is* the sort of thing that can be appropriately won or lost on the basis of goodness or badness of character, conduct, qualities, and talent. With Darwall’s distinction in hand, it should be clear that the relevant kind of respect at work in proleptic blame is not recognition but appraisal respect. It is the interest on the part of the blamed agent in having or maintaining

⁴⁰ Darwall (2004).

the appraisal respect or esteem or positive regard of the blaming agent (and possibly also third party observers) that provides the blamed agent with an internal reason (now) to care about the relevant moral consideration, the failure to take heed of had resulted in the action for which he is blamed.

Others in the philosophical tradition have also registered the importance of our need or desire to have the good opinion of others in enabling moral community. Adam Smith wrote that:

Nature, when she formed man for society, endowed him with an original desire to please, and an original aversion to offend his brethren. She taught him to feel pleasure in their favorable, and pain in their unfavorable regard. She rendered their approbation most flattering and most agree-able to him for its own sake; and their disapprobation most mortifying and most offensive.⁴¹

For Smith, the desire for the positive regard, for standing in the eyes of others was one of the most basic of human inclinations. He thought that social life (or civil society) would hardly be possible in a world in which people did not care about having the good opinion of others.

To summarize: Standard blame describes the cases where the blamed party already cares about the relevant moral consideration. Intermediate blame describes the cases where the blamed party already cares to some degree, but not enough or not in the right way. The blamed has not attached enough weight to the consideration (relative to other considerations) or has not seen the relevance of the consideration to this situation. Proleptic blame describes the cases where the blamed party does not care about the moral consideration, but cares about what the blaming person thinks about him. The blamed person cares about having the respect (esteem, good opinion, high regard) of the blaming party. Another possibility is that the blamed person does not care about the moral consideration or about having the blaming person's respect; but the blamed *does* care about having the respect of others in the collective, who are in position to know about the moral violation and the blaming transaction. The blaming transaction can thus signal something to these others, and the blamed party may care about what this may mean for *their* respect of him, as they may come to respect him less given what he has done.

Targets of blame in the three cases—standard, intermediate, and proleptic—are all within blame's reach: they are suitable candidates for blame to be effective. But not everyone is a suitable target; there is also what we might call "the hard case." Here, the blamed person cares not about the moral consideration, about the opinions or regard of the blaming person, or about what third parties think of him. Such a person cares about none

⁴¹ Smith (1982: 116).

of these things, and may not even care about the punishment that may potentially come down on him. Having no such other cares, it is doubtful that there is anything that blame can get a grip on, to get the blamed to care about the moral consideration. Such a person is beyond blame's reach. He is *outside* the moral community, and it is unclear how, if at all, blame can bring him in.⁴²

I have presented the *standard*, *intermediate*, and *proleptic* operations of blame as distinct cases, but the differences between them are perhaps better understood as lying on a continuum, the distinction being a matter of degree rather than kind. Moreover, it may be difficult to draw these distinctions correctly in any particular case. We can think about this continuum in different though not incompatible ways. One way is in terms of the degree of overlap in the desires or motivations of the blaming and blamed agent prior to the blame transaction: there is greater overlap in the standard cases than the proleptic cases. Another is in terms of the degree of overlap in the held values or motivating reasons shared between the blaming and blamed agent prior to the blame transaction: there are more shared values and reasons in the *standard cases* than in the *intermediate cases* than in the *proleptic cases*. Yet a third way is in terms of the role of the interest in respect in the blaming transaction. While blame's desired effect in standard cases is achieved without having to rely on the blamed's interest in having the blamer's respect, blame's desired effect in proleptic cases essentially relies on this interest. Indeed, I will argue, understanding the role of different kinds of respect in furthering blame's efficacy allows us to make sense of Williams's suggestive but elusive remark that "blame, like some other ethical institutions, operates in a space between coercion and full deliberative co-operation."⁴³

12.5 BLAME AS MODE OF INFLUENCE: A MORAL RESIDUE?

In the final part of my paper, I want to suggest that the greater the extent to which blame's efficacy relies on the blamed's interest in having the blamer's respect (as in the case of *proleptic* blame), the more blame begins to

⁴² So described, there are still different ways in which someone can be outside the moral community with regard to blame. The agent might be utterly unresponsive to all moral considerations or might be the sort of incorrigible wrongdoer who is unresponsive to a mere range of such considerations. The latter agent might be a member of *some* moral community, but incapable of recognizing the reason-giving status of the interests of, e.g. members of a certain race, nationality, class, and so on. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pointing out these possibilities.

⁴³ Williams (1995a).

approximate manipulation and coercion. If this is right, then—to put it provocatively—the more that blame’s efficacy has to rely on respect (in the relevant way), the less respectful the blame will be.

Compare proleptic blame to *coercive threats* with the structure: “If you don’t do X, then I will do Y.” When the mugger says “Your money or your life!” what he means is that if you don’t hand over your money, then he will shoot. In issuing the threat, the mugger shapes the options such that the balance of reasons points strongly in one direction. Coercion changes the reasons there are for the option of handing over the wallet.

Proleptic blame also changes the target’s reasons. Suppose that the blamed agent is being blamed for breaking a promise. Suppose further that the blamed agent does not care about considerations of fidelity that give one reason to keep one’s promises. But the blamed agent does care about having the appraisal respect and esteem of the blaming agent. With this as background, the blamer, in blaming, might get the blamed agent to think the following: “If I (the blamed) don’t begin to care about considerations of fidelity (if I don’t start keeping promises), then I will lose your (the blamer’s) appraisal respect and esteem.” On the condition that the blamed agent cares about having the respect of certain others (including the blamer), blame changes the reasons there are for certain options (keeping promises) from the perspective of the blamed.

There are other variants of the “If you don’t do X, then I will do Y” structure that blame could instantiate. X could involve other moral considerations and other morally significant actions. And Y could include not just the withdrawal of the blaming agent’s respect or esteem, but also other valued social attitudes: love, care, attention, affection, and trust. Y might involve putting distance between oneself (the blaming party) and the blamed. These cases can start to look more like emotional manipulation.

Consider also the case in which the blame is expressed with great hostility, and though the blamed agent does not (prior to the blaming transaction) see a reason to have avoided the action for which he is being blamed, his desire to avoid the blaming agent’s hostility now gives him a reason to avoid doing the action in question (going forward). That the target of blame fears the hostility of the blaming agent, and that this fear of hostility is what is getting him to care about the relevant moral consideration (even if only instrumentally)—this dynamic gets us even closer to coercion, given the kind of threatening psychological pressure being imposed on the blamed.

There is an important respect in which (proleptic) blame is unlike coercion. In the case of coercion, the exercise of power involves an explicit threat or intent to inflict penalty, and this is basically transparent in the transaction between coercer and coerced. This is not so in the case of (proleptic) blame. The role of power in the blame transaction is more subtle and cannot be

too transparent or salient if the blame is to be efficacious. (Compare “Your money or your life” with “Comply with my moral expectations or lose my respect.”) When A coerces B, A communicates an *intention* to D (e.g. shoot B) if B does not do C, the unwanted consequence (e.g. hand over money).⁴⁴ Moreover, A does this in order to get B to do C. When A proleptically blames B, the relevant unwanted consequence (loss of respect and esteem) is not explicit. The blamer does not typically communicate an *intention* to do something—withdraw appraisal respect—should the blamed not come around to acknowledge reasons not to do the thing for which he is being blamed for having done.

Consider now the case of “deliberative cooperation,” or deliberative advising: advising another in the “If I were you...” mode. Deliberative advising may involve one party (the advisor) pointing out errors of fact and/or practical reasoning on the part of another party (the advisee). To give a mundane example: Knowing that the bank closes at 4 p.m. on Friday and that you need to cash a check by the close of business today, I may advise you to leave work early. In advising you, I provide you with a piece of relevant (factual) information, perhaps correcting your misunderstanding that the bank closes at 5 p.m. Deliberative advising may also involve assisting you with means-end reasoning, with making more determinate a plan or aspiration, and helping you to see unconsidered alternatives and possibilities.

Consider an example of deliberative advising drawn from Ta-Nehesi Coates’s “The Black Family in the Age of Incarceration”:

If the prisoner is lucky, someone—a cell mate, an older prisoner hailing from the same neighborhood—takes him under his wing. This can be the difference between survival and catastrophe. On Richard Braceful’s first night in Carson City Correctional Facility, in central Michigan, where he had been sent away at age 29 for armed robbery, he decided to take a shower. It was 10 p.m. His cell mate stopped him. “Where are you going?” the cell mate asked. “I’m going to take a shower,” Braceful responded. His cell mate, a 14-year veteran of the prison system, blocked his way and said, “You’re not going to take a shower.” Braceful, reading the signs, felt a fight was imminent. “Calm down,” his cell mate told him. “You don’t take a shower after 9 o’clock. People that are sexual predators, people that are rapists, they go in the showers right behind you.” Braceful and the veteran sat down. The veteran looked at him. “It’s your first time being locked up, ain’t it?” he said. “Yeah, it is,” Braceful responded. The veteran said to him, “Listen, this is what you have to do. For the next couple of weeks, just stay with me. I’ve been here for 14 years.

⁴⁴ I use the term *communicate* because in such cases the coercer needn’t *directly announce* the intention, but may simply point the gun, raise an eyebrow, or make a gesture indicating the wallet to be handed over, etc.

I'll look out for you until you learn how to move around in here without getting yourself hurt.⁴⁵

Notice that in this example, the older prisoner is advising the new prisoner, Braceful, on his first night in prison, letting him know that taking a shower at night makes one vulnerable to sexual predators and rapists. The older prisoner is directing Braceful's attention to some dangers of life in prison. But the presupposition is that Braceful already cares about avoiding danger, about avoiding "getting yourself hurt." So cooperative deliberation as exemplified in this case involves the older prisoner adopting Braceful's evaluative perspective (one that includes caring and wanting not to get seriously harmed in prison), and pointing out that Braceful has reason to refrain from something he thought he had reason to do—or a lot less reason than he had previously thought. Notice that Braceful, in heeding the older prisoner's advice, accords him a kind of authority in deliberating what to do. This is a kind of recognition respect, insofar as it involves giving the advisor a certain standing in one's relations to him.⁴⁶

Standard blame involves similar elements. Recall that in standard cases, blame's efficacy (the changes in the blamed agent's behavior going forward) is explained by the fact that the blaming transaction serves to draw the blamed agent's attention to a relevant moral consideration that he (antecedently) cares about. The blame makes salient to the agent something that he (antecedently) accepts: that he has reason to avoid the action, the action for which he is being blamed. The blamed is reminded of the importance he attaches to relevant moral considerations; it does not get him to attach importance to considerations to which he did not previously attach importance. The blamed also accords the blamer recognition respect: the authority to address second-personal reasons. The blamed sees the blamer as a legitimate judge of when blame is appropriate. In these ways, then, blame is similar to "deliberative cooperation."

There is, however, an important difference between advice and blame in that advice is typically prospective—it looks forward into the future and concerns what the agent has reason to do *later*—whereas blame is retrospective—it looks into the past and concerns what the agent had reason to do *earlier*. When A advises B at T_1 (now), one of the things A is trying to accomplish is to get B to accept that B has reason to X (where X represents some course of action) at T_2 (in the future). If B's reasons depend on B's subjective motivations (as well as rational deliberations) in the way

⁴⁵ Coates (2015).

⁴⁶ On the idea that genuine collaborative inquiry requires according the other person(s) a certain kind of authority, see Pettit and Smith (1996).

Williams's internal reasons theory suggests, then the very advising transaction may shape B's subjective motivations in such a way that prior to T_1 at T_0 , B does not have (internal) reasons to X, but after T_1 B does. Notice that when A tells B that B has reason to X at T_2 , there is no strict misrepresentation. This is so, even if "advice... has to be understood, in part, in terms of its own intended effects."⁴⁷ But this is not so with blame, at least in the proleptic case: While it was not true at T_0 (pre-blaming transaction) that the blamed agent had reason to avoid X, at T_2 (post-blaming transaction) the blamed agent has reason to avoid X. He has reason to avoid X in virtue of changes in his subjective motivations, changes that are a result of what has taken place during the blaming transaction. As Williams puts it: "Blame presents a consideration that contributes to what it is talking about; but it must be more obliquely related than advice to the agent's reasons at the time of action, since it presents its consideration only retrospectively."⁴⁸

Earlier, I suggested that the greater the extent to which blame's efficacy (in a token transaction) has to rely on the blamed party's interest in having the blaming party's respect—as it does in *proleptic* cases—the more blame begins to approximate manipulation and coercion. To be clear, I do not claim that proleptic blame is an instance of manipulation or coercion. Rather I am claiming that proleptic blame looks more like manipulation and coercion than standard blame does. Whether this alone makes proleptic blame morally problematic may be thought to depend on the question of whether *manipulation* and *coercion* are understood as moralized notions. Is one committed to an act's being wrong in calling it manipulative or coercive? Wrong all things considered or *pro tanto* wrong? I want to side step these questions about how to use these concepts. My interest is in arguing that even when proleptic blame brings about the desired effect of getting the blamed agent to act in conformity with moral norms, there may still be a *moral remainder*—a moral hesitation we should feel about how blame's desired effect is achieved.

Here, it helps to disambiguate between two kinds of proleptic blame. With the first kind—*self-aware* proleptic blame—the blaming agent is explicitly intending to change the blamed agent (in relevant ways) by relying on the fact that the blamed has an interest in maintaining the respect or esteem of the blamer. The blamer in this case is aware of the fact that the blamed cares about the blamer's (or other people's) esteem and is going to try to use this fact to influence the blamed to change in relevant ways. With the second kind of proleptic blame—*non-self-aware* proleptic blame—the blaming agent

⁴⁷ Williams (1995b: 42).

⁴⁸ Williams (1995b: 42).

is not explicitly intending to change the blamed agent (in relevant ways) by relying on the fact that the blamed has an interest in maintaining the respect or esteem of the blamer. The blamer in the second variety may or may not be aware of the fact that the blamed cares about having the blamer's respect or esteem. But even if the blamer is aware of this, the blamer is not, in blaming, trying to rely on the fact that the blamed so cares to try to change the blamed in relevant ways. The blamer in this second case may be trying to change the blamed, but is not trying to do so *in this way*.

Self-aware proleptic blaming looks more like manipulation and coercion than non-self-aware proleptic blaming, and thus may be more morally objectionable than non-self-aware proleptic blame.⁴⁹ But even in the case of non-self-aware proleptic blame, there may nonetheless be something that remains morally untoward about it, some *moral residue* it leaves behind. This is because even non-self-aware proleptic blame may fall short of an ideal that Bernard Berofsky expresses as follows: a person's "autonomy is respected insofar as his desiring nature as given is accommodated and the method of influence is restricted to the techniques of rational persuasion."⁵⁰ If, as Berofsky claims, rational persuasion is the only method of influence that respects a person's autonomy, then it is hard to see how proleptic blaming could be respectful, given that it does not rely only on, or even primarily on, the provision of reason(s) to bring about the desired-effect of behavior modification. We might worry that even with non-self-aware proleptic blame, there is an illicit, disrespectful exercise of power. Even if the blaming agent is not consciously exerting his power (power he has in virtue of the fact that the blamed cares about having the blamer's esteem, that the blamer's respect matters to the blamed), still we might feel morally uneasy about the operation of power at work in their relating or interaction, because proleptic blame involves the exercise of power that bypasses rational deliberation. Even if it is morally unproblematic to engage in proleptic blame in our moral education practices involving children, is it morally unproblematic with respect to autonomous adult agents?

But maybe we shouldn't worry. Maybe proleptic blame of the second variety needn't be morally objectionable. For, one might reply, the worry involves holding a naïve and unrealistic view of human interaction and influence. We are hardly ever moved by pure consideration of reasons alone, even in rational persuasion and discussion. The moral world is complicated

⁴⁹ Non-self-aware proleptic blame is probably more commonly tokened than self-aware proleptic blame. Indeed, to construe our blaming practices as much of the time working as self-aware proleptic blame would be to seriously mischaracterize or distort our blaming practice.

⁵⁰ Berofsky (1983: 301–20, at 311).

and we need others' help, including the resources of social scaffolding, to access moral truths. We need to rely on each other to track and act in accordance with moral reasons. Proleptic blame need not be disrespectful, as it does not—to use Kantian language—treat the blamed as a *mere* means. In proleptic blaming, we are showing that we respect and care about the blamed. We are not being moved simply by self-serving considerations, and we might be other-regarding when engaging in self-aware proleptic blaming. Moreover, if I blame you publically (where others can witness my blaming you), this can be costly to me. Suppose I call you out for making a homophobic joke. Depending on who is in our social group, what company we are keeping, and my status in the group, doing so may be quite costly to me (the blamer). But it is because I take you (the blamed) seriously, take your agency seriously, and care about you as an agent, that I am willing to take on costs in blaming you. This is one way of responding to the notion that proleptic blame is morally untoward.

Still, I believe a worry remains, a worry which concerns the fact that it is a serious threat to one's personhood or identity to have others withdraw their respect toward one, or have them threaten to do so tacitly. Suppose you and I are deciding where to have dinner. I would like to grab fast food, while you strongly oppose the idea. To try to get your way, you say to me: "If we go for fast food, then I won't eat and I'll go hungry." That would certainly be manipulative and morally problematic. Now suppose, instead, you say to me: "If we go for fast food, then I am not going to respect you." Not only would this case be manipulative and morally problematic, there is a sense in which it is a morally worse thing to say—a greater, more disruptive threat to me. It would hurt more to hear this, because our sense of ourselves, of who we are and of our own value, depends in part depend on others' respecting us, seeing us as worthy of respect. I want to suggest that it is this same sort of threat of the withdrawal of respect that is at work in proleptic blame in enabling it to be effective. If this is right, then whatever moral good proleptic blame may bring about in the blamed, for the relationship between blamer and blamed, or for the moral community, there nonetheless remain a worry about whether in the blaming transaction the blamer is relating to the blamed in a way that treats the blamed with the utmost respect. We should not necessarily think that moral transformation through blame is always achievable without moral residue.

Finally, the fact that proleptic blame is morally worrisome for the reasons offered has an uneasy implication for our thinking about how blame treats its different targets. In particular, blame toward those who are more morally *distant*—those who are more on the periphery of the moral community, who have less shared values with one (the blamer), who do not care, or care less, about the relevant moral consideration, or who do not care about

the blaming agent, or about having his positive regard—has to be more like manipulation and coercion to be effective. This is so, given the way that blame relies on the blamed's interest in having others' respect. On the other hand, blame toward those who are more morally *nearly*—those who are at the core of the moral community, who have many shared values with the blaming agent, who care about the moral considerations and what others (including the blaming agent) think of him—needn't be so to be effective. The normative upshot is that blame may well be more morally problematic—less admirable, more akin to manipulation and coercion, a more worrisome exercise of power—when it is effective in modifying the behavior of those who morally are very unlike us.⁵¹

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