

# Directed Duties and Moral Repair

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If I promise Stephanie that I will help her move house, then, in ordinary circumstances, I ought to help her move. But that is not all. I owe it *to Stephanie* to do what I have promised. This three-place relation is called a 'directed duty'. If I violate my directed duty, then I not only do wrong; I wrong Stephanie. The same is true if I burn down her house — I wrong *Stephanie*, whether she is a stranger to me or not.<sup>1</sup> But in what way is owing it to her to do something different from simply having to do it? What is added to a duty by the fact that it is directed?

In particular, I aim to answer the following question about directed duties:

**Practical Difference.** What difference does it make to what we appropriately do that a duty is directed rather than not?

The question presupposes familiarity with the notion of a duty, and focuses on the element of directedness. So a satisfying answer may take for granted an ordinary understanding of what it is to be under a duty — such as that J's having a duty to  $\phi$  indicates that  $\phi$ ing should have a distinctive place in J's deliberation, and that J is open to criticism (of the kind involved in blame) for not  $\phi$ ing. But it must be sure to explicate whatever further difference directedness makes to the way in which the addressee (Stephanie, in my example), the agent (myself, in my example), or third parties may appropriately act.

1. Directed duties therefore needn't be based upon prior interaction between the parties, let alone a joint commitment entered into by them. I therefore set aside the conception of directed duties, articulated in terms of 'demand-rights', developed by Margaret Gilbert in *Rights and Demands: A Foundational Inquiry* (Oxford University Press 2018), pp. 159–181 and much other writing. Gilbert believes that demand-rights originate in a special sort of interaction — joint commitment. As she concedes, that means that there are no moral demand-rights against strangers (*ibid.*, pp. 235–292). I take this to be a theoretically motivated revision of an ordinary moral notion, whereas my aim is to elaborate the ordinary moral notion. Perhaps Gilbert's project suggests that demanding should be at the center of an account of our ordinary notion of directed duties; I reject this suggestion in Section I. I also reject Gilbert's claim that an account of the direction of a duty must be understood in voluntarist terms in my "Contractualist Justification and the Direction of a Duty" *Legal Theory* 25(3) (2019), pp. 200–24.

A substantive answer to the question of Practical Difference will go a long way in securing the central place that locutions like ‘owing it to Stephanie’ already occupy in our way of talking. Consider a consequentialist who insists that this way of talking is at best a convenient way of achieving optimally valuable states of affairs, rather than an acknowledgment of an important dimension of morality which does not have to do with maximizing anything. Given the potential for such skepticism, we should also aim to answer the following question:

**Importance.** What is lost by a moral community that fails to acknowledge the directedness of directed duties?

A substantive account of Practical Difference presents us with a strategy for addressing the question of Importance. For if the fact that a duty is directed reflects differences in the practical landscape for some agents, we would lose a shorthand for talking about these differences if we gave up talk of directedness. What is more, an account of Practical Difference would show that the consequentialist is wrong to see talk of directedness as merely a potential tool for inducing optimal behavior, since such talk reflects practical reality even where it is not in fact an efficient tool for promoting goodness. This strategy for answering Importance therefore begins by understanding what practical implications are implicit in our talk about directedness, and then shows what we would lose if we were to lose sight of those implications.

Are there better strategies for showing the Importance of directedness than answering Practical Difference? It is natural to think that directedness has something to do with an agent’s attitudes – perhaps J should give S special place in his deliberation, or see her as the source of his obligation. One might also think that directedness is important because it reflects a special justificatory role that S has. The attitudinal approach that J should see S as the source of his obligation is one way of developing this justificatory role into a response to the consequentialist skeptic. These approaches seem to me compatible with showing the Importance of directedness by developing an answer to Practical Difference. Indeed, it is one of the merits of the account I present here

that it provides a precise formulation of what it is to give S special place in deliberation, and this in turn suggests a way of thinking about S’s special justificatory role. Given this payoff, the strategy I have adopted seems to me a particularly good one, though I am unable to show here that it is the only viable one.

Several characterizations of Practical Difference can be discerned in the literature. According to the Claim Theory, what it is for J to owe it to S to  $\phi$  is for S to have a claim against J to  $\phi$ . According to the Demand Theory, what it is for J to owe it to S to  $\phi$  is for S to have special standing to demand that J  $\phi$ . According to the Blame Theory, what it is for J to owe it to S to  $\phi$  is for S to have special standing to blame J for not  $\phi$ ing. We find all three theories in Stephen Darwall’s claim that directed duties “entail a distinctive discretionary second-personal authority that obligees have to make claims and demands of obligors and hold them personally responsible”.<sup>2</sup> I argue in Section I that these accounts fail to capture the practical difference that directedness makes, since they are either inaccurate or too obscure to give us further purchase on understanding the importance of directedness.

But the Claim, Blame, and Demand Theories are not entirely misguided either. Each one attempts to say something about the special standing that an addressee of a directed duty has in virtue of its directedness. What is required is a more illuminating conception of that special standing. In Section II, I develop such a conception by elaborating a Repair Theory of directedness: If J owes it to S to  $\phi$  then S has special standing in our practice of accountability, in particular insofar as it aims at moral repair – S is the proper recipient of apology and redress if J does not  $\phi$ , and S is the one who has the power to accept J’s apology and to forgive him.

The Repair Theory is illuminating since it characterizes directedness in terms of familiar features of our moral practice, and shows that these features amount to a distinctive way in which our practice of

2. Stephen Darwall, “Bipolar Obligation” in Stephen Darwall, *Morality, Authority, and Law: Essays in Second-Personal Ethics I* (Oxford University Press 2013), pp. 31–32.

holding each other accountable is structured. So, as I argue in Section III, the account suggests a way to vindicate the Importance of directedness: by showing what would be lost if we did not have a practice of accountability structured in this particular way. Why should anybody have special standing to hold a wrongdoer accountable, and why should it be the addressee in particular who has that special standing? The Repair Theory allows us to frame these questions as well as answer them. When J fails to comply with the duty he owes to S, he injures S not just by setting back her interests but by failing to recognize her in a specific sense — he fails to affirm that he aims to act with proper sensitivity to her interests. A practice of accountability that gives special standing to S makes available a form of recognition, in the wake of wrongdoing, that comes as close as is possible to repairing the original lapse of recognition. So if we did not acknowledge the directedness of duties, and so did not acknowledge the special standing of addressees, we would lose this form of moral repair, and fail to acknowledge the importance of relations of recognition.

What is so important about standing in relations of recognition? Section IV sketches a Strawsonian vindication: Our interest in being recognized by others is intelligible in the light of our moral practices and our social nature, and is a fundamental element of our nature and practices. Recognition is also an important element of respect. So the Repair Theory allows us to affirm an important connection between directed duties and respect: To respect another is to see her as capable of being owed duties.<sup>3</sup>

#### I.

In order to say what difference the directedness of a duty makes, we should begin with our ordinary understanding of what it is to have a duty. If I have a duty to  $\phi$ , then my deliberation about what to do is subject to a constraint. The duty has a special normative force, which

3. As we shall see, that is a version of a claim originally put forward in Joel Feinberg, "The nature and value of rights" *Journal of Value Inquiry* 4(4) (1970), p. 243.

we may label 'deontic', such that  $\phi$ ing occupies a special place in my deliberation about what to do. One way of describing this special influence is that a duty to  $\phi$  is an especially weighty consideration in favor of  $\phi$ ing. If I have made my promise to Stephanie, and I subsequently discover that an old friend is in town on the same day, then the fact that I have made a promise outweighs the reason I have to see my old friend instead. But this can make it sound as if deliberation in the presence of duty is simply a matter of weighing the values of alternative actions. Instead, the experience of taking a duty seriously is typically one of feeling that certain alternatives have been excluded from serious consideration, rather than simply outweighed. That is, a duty has special influence on deliberation as an exclusionary reason: If I am under a duty to  $\phi$ , then I have a second-order reason to discount certain reasons against  $\phi$ ing.<sup>4</sup>

Could it be that the difference directedness makes is a matter of generating this distinctively deontic force? Consider R. Jay Wallace's suggestion that the directedness of a duty is what explains its deontic character.<sup>5</sup> That is plausible as a claim about *why* certain duties, namely the directed ones, have the normative force that they do. But non-directed duties have deontic force, too, so deontic force cannot be what makes for the difference between a directed duty and a non-directed duty. Even if all moral duties turn out to be directed, as is suggested by Scanlon when he describes morality as the domain of "what we owe to each other",<sup>6</sup> it is at least conceivable that one could be under a moral duty that is not owed to anyone. Indeed, Scanlon concedes that there are actions, such as cutting down a redwood just for fun, that we ordinarily call morally wrong even though the wrongness

4. Joseph Raz, *Practical Reason and Norms* (Hutchinson and Co 1975) pp. 35–48.
5. R. Jay Wallace, *The Moral Nexus* (Princeton University Press 2019), pp. 56–57. Cf. R. Jay Wallace, "The Deontic Structure of Morality" in David Bakhurst, Brad Hooker, and Margaret Olivia Little (eds), *Thinking about Reasons: Themes from the Philosophy of Jonathan Dancy* (Oxford University Press 2013).
6. T. M. Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other* (Harvard University Press 1998) pp. 171–77 *et passim*.

involved is not simply a matter of what we owe to each other.<sup>7</sup> And it is intelligible that I am under a duty not to cut down redwoods just for fun, and that this duty is not owed to anyone in particular, given that it is grounded in the impersonal value of the redwoods. Still, insofar as this is a duty, it has the same force as a directed duty, since it excludes considerations in favor of alternate courses of action. So we should not understand Wallace's suggestion as a response to the question of Practical Difference.<sup>8</sup>

More generally, examining the way in which a duty's force structures an agent's alternatives is not a promising place to begin an account of Practical Difference. Directedness is a relational normative concept, which is to say that it essentially involves more than one argument place reserved for persons.<sup>9</sup> So it makes sense to locate

7. Ibid., pp. 172–73.

8. If Wallace's claim is that directed duties are distinctive in the way that they come to have deontic force, then we might see a similar claim implicit in Scanlon's suggestion that justifiability to others has a shaping effect on our deliberation. Scanlon (footnote 6), p. 170 *et passim*. Even if it turns out that the impersonal values which underlie other kinds of duties have a similar shaping effect, we can still see moral duties as distinctive in that they are grounded in a particular kind of value, namely the value of the relationship constituted by acting in a way that is justifiable to another. These are claims about the justification of directed duties, ones which do not fully respond to the question of Practical Difference and do not fully indicate whether, and how, anyone should act differently given that the force of a duty is grounded in this way rather than another. I agree that a directed duty gives special place to its addressee in its justification. And that may well have some effect on how an agent should act: Perhaps, if he wishes to act with some degree of moral understanding, then he should grasp the special justificatory role of the addressee in his deliberation. The account I give suggests just such an idea — see Section III.

9. This is stronger than having more than one argument place that may refer to a person. The agentive ought of 'Amir ought to practice his scales' involves at least two argument places, one for the agent Amir and one for the action of practicing his scales, but it may also include further implicit argument places, such as for context and contrast class. And the names of persons may appear in several of these argument places, as in 'Amir ought to learn Bird's solos, given that he wants to play like Bird'. But only the agent argument place of *ought* must refer to a person, whereas the first two argument places of *J owes it to S to  $\phi$*  must refer to persons (or perhaps groups of persons).

directedness within a framework that is interpersonally structured in a way that is not obviously true of an agent's deliberation.<sup>10</sup> That suggests a starting point: a familiar interpersonal practice that exhibits structural differences, in particular differences in how participants appropriately relate to each other, in response to the fact that a duty is directed rather than not. If we could identify such a practice, it would not only help to illuminate Practical Difference by situating directedness in a familiar practice; the familiarity of this practice would also hold promise for our inquiry into Importance, if familiarity turned out to be a heuristic for the practice's social centrality.

The phenomenon of claiming provides an example of a conceptual framework that is interpersonal but is insufficiently familiar to illuminate Practical Difference, as much as it provides us with a useful vocabulary for talking about directedness. Joel Feinberg observes that: "If Smith owes Jones five dollars, only Jones can claim the five dollars as his own, though any bystander can claim that it belongs to Jones."<sup>11</sup> Feinberg's distinction is compelling, but it presents us with the same task facing us in the case of directedness: that is, to say what difference is made to what it's appropriate for anyone to do. It is true that the distinction between 'claiming' and 'claiming that' reflects a striking difference of logical form. When used in a normatively potent way, the locution 'to claim that' takes a normative proposition as its object; whereas the locution 'to claim' takes an entity or a state of affairs as its object. One claims that *the five dollars is owed to Jones*, whereas Jones claims *the five dollars*. What is important is not just the difference in type of the second argument, but the fact that the propositional object of 'to claim that' must explicitly name Jones as the one to whom the

10. To this it may be objected that deliberation can be about another, and so can be interpersonal in the way demanded. That is correct, and the idea that an addressee has special place in an agent's deliberation will be an element of an account of directedness, as suggested in note 8 and developed in Section III. The observation in the text is that the simple description of deontic force, as a way of structuring alternatives, does not yet make essential place for anyone other than the agent.

11. Feinberg (footnote 3) p. 251.

five dollars is owed. In contrast, the ‘to claim’ statement presupposes that the one who performs the speech act of claiming is also the one to whom the five dollars is owed. This characterization of claiming relies on the idea of a directed duty when it says that Jones’s claim presupposes that he is owed the five dollars, and so it does not tell us what practical difference it makes that Jones is able to claim the money rather than simply claim that he is owed the money.<sup>12</sup>

It is true that the above distinction in logical form reflects a distinction in the kinds of acts that *claiming* and *claiming that* are, a distinction that is not exhausted by considerations about argument places. Both are speech acts, but *claiming that* is (or is very similar to) the speech act of assertion, whereas *claiming* is a performative that is connected to (perhaps presupposes, or communicates, or endorses as appropriate) the thought that the thing is to be returned. But what is the connection? It is not enough to say that claiming *x* presupposes or communicates or endorses the thought that *x* ought to be returned, since claiming that *x* is to be returned does as much. The theories considered in the rest of this section are attempts to explicate what more claiming practically involves.

One way of interpreting the idea of a claim involves saying that to claim *x* is to demand it from the one who owes it — to ask it with the sense that the request is appropriate. Recall Darwall’s statement that directed duties “entail a distinctive discretionary second-personal authority that obligees have to make claims and *demands* of obligors and hold them personally responsible”.<sup>13</sup> This suggests a Demand Theory of directed duties: If *J* owes it to *S* to  $\phi$ , then *S* has special standing to

demand that *J*  $\phi$ .<sup>14</sup> But the proposal is either inaccurate or too obscure to provide a satisfying account of Practical Difference. It is inaccurate if what is meant is that it is only appropriate for *S* to demand that *J* comply with his duty. While there may be reasons of prudence and politesse for a third party to “mind their own business”, there are no general moral reasons to do so, and we in fact think of morality as being everyone’s business. We all may, and do, take an interest in the moral status of others’ actions, and, in particular, in how those actions treat people. This is particularly evident in cases in which the potential victim of an action has been made too timid or unaware to stand up for herself, and in which it is not just appropriate, but good, that third parties insist that the relevant duty be fulfilled. Perhaps, then, what is meant is not that *S* uniquely has standing to enforce the duty, but that her standing is special in some way. This suggestion is reinforced by Darwall’s description of the addressee as having *second-personal authority*, which suggests that the authority is of a special kind. But second-personal authority is simply described as the authority to make claims and demands upon others.<sup>15</sup> Without a better understanding of what a claim is, we do not gain any insight into what practical difference is made by having this kind of authority, and so we do not gain any insight into the practical difference made by directedness. As with the language of claiming, we seem to have simply re-labeled directedness with a term that is no more illuminating from the standpoint of Practical Difference.

Darwall says of the addressee’s power to demand that it is discretionary, and one may take from this the suggestion that what is

12. Can we do without such reliance on the idea of owing it to another, by making do with the idea that Smith ought to ensure that Jones has five dollars? More generally, we might say that for *J* to claim *x* from *S* is for *J* to claim that *S* ought to make it the case that *J* has *x*. This formulation makes no overt reference to a directed duty, or to the notion of owing; but it is also clearly false. That is because *J* may claim that *S* ought to make it the case that *J* has *x* without claiming *x* from *S* — because, say, it is best that *S* do this or because someone else has claimed it from him. See also Judith Jarvis Thomson, *The Realm of Rights* (Harvard University Press 1992), p. 61.

13. Darwall, “Bipolar Obligation” (footnote 2) pp. 31–32, emphasis added.

14. The Demand Theory is suggested by Gilbert, *Rights and Demands* (footnote 1), especially at p. 70. But Gilbert’s account is purportedly of *demand-rights*, which are *defined* in terms of standing to demand, and are clearly a subset of the claim-rights correlative to directed duties — see footnote 1 above. See further Gopal Sreenivasan, “Margaret Gilbert, *Rights and Demands: A Foundational Inquiry*” *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* (1 June 2019).

15. For example, second-personal authority is a “distinctively second-personal kind of practical authority: the authority to make a demand or claim”. Stephen Darwall, *The Second-Person Standpoint: Morality, Respect, and Accountability* (Harvard University Press 2006), p. 11.

distinctive about the addressee's standing is that it is up to her whether the agent must fulfill the duty or not — that is, that the addressee has special standing in the sense of having the normative power to release the agent from the duty, or to consent to non-compliance. But it is not true that the addressee of a duty necessarily has this power. For example, J is under a duty not to enslave S, no matter what S says.

Perhaps we are to think that the duty not to enslave is not directed, or that insofar as J were to owe it to S not to enslave her, she would be able to waive that aspect of the prohibition. Yet it sounds awkwardly asymmetric to say that if J breaks a relatively minor promise made to S, he wrongs her, whereas if he enslaves her, he does wrong, but does not wrong her. It also misses something important if we say that the duty against enslavement is grounded in an impersonal value such as the value of humanity or that of human freedom. Enslaving S does injury to her, and repairing the injury would require special acknowledgment of the injury to her and redress addressed to her, rather than, say, all of humanity, or all who have been enslaved. That the primary injury is done to S suggests that she is owed a duty not to be enslaved. There is also good reason to think that S is not capable of consenting to her own enslavement, and that this is not a judgment we should lightly revise. It is a hard-learned lesson of human history that those who are enslaved or in danger of being enslaved are particularly prone to consenting to the enslavement. Theirs may not count as adequate consent given the circumstances of duress and misinformation, but given that the danger is a real and very present one in these circumstances, and given that the power of consent in fact undermines the person's autonomy and is unlikely to further any other interests, there is good reason for morality not to grant a power of waiver to an addressee, for the sake of that addressee's interests.

It is enough to show the Demand Theory inadequate that there be one important directed duty that cannot be waived. Perhaps the particular defense just given of a directed but non-waivable duty against enslavement ultimately fails. There are other candidates that suggest themselves, such as the duty to keep a deathbed promise (since the

dead promisee is owed the promised performance and cannot waive it), the duty not to impose exploitative terms of exchange (since the other party appears to have a complaint against the duty-bearer despite voluntarily agreeing to the terms), and the duty not to interfere with a promisor's ability to perform a promise made to another (since the promisor may not waive the duty, on pain of wronging the promisee). But we needn't go so far. Since we are interested in the conceptual structure of our moral practice, it is enough that we can make sense of a duty owed to S, but to which S cannot consent, in order to see that this account does not give a satisfactory answer to Practical Difference. That is what the foregoing argument about the duty not to enslave demonstrated.<sup>16</sup>

Following Darwall again, we may attempt to characterize the special standing of the addressee from the perspective of backward-looking criticism rather than forward-looking enforcement. In particular, the Blame Theory proposes that if J owes it to S to  $\phi$ , then S has special standing to blame J for not  $\phi$ ing.<sup>17</sup> This proposal, too, is either

16. Note also that there are, conceivably, non-directed duties which give a power of release to someone who is not the addressee. Consider for example a duty not to search someone's premises without a judge's consent — if this duty is owed to anybody, it is the resident and not the judge. Could the resident have some more fundamental power of consent, so that even where a judge's consent is not received, he might still allow a search of his premises? That would certainly be a reasonable rule, but it is still intelligible that there be a rule granting the power of consent in such cases only to someone who is thought to be beyond corruption and undue influence, such as a judge. Such a rule need not create a duty owed to the judge, and assigning the power to the judge would in fact be done for the sake of the resident.

This way of thinking about how the power of waiver is to be assigned is influenced by the "hybrid theory of directed duties" proposed by Gopal Sreenivasan, "Duties and Their Direction" *Ethics* 120(3) (2010), p. 465. That theory proposes that a duty is owed to S just in case S's measure of control over the duty matches (by design) the measure of control that advances S's interests on balance. I do not assess this theory in the text because it does not propose an answer to the question of Practical Difference. Instead, the theory presents an answer to what we may call "the question of Direction": why is a particular directed duty owed to S, rather than T? I offer an alternate account of Direction in Jonker (footnote 1).

17. Margaret Gilbert, "Scanlon on Promissory Obligation: The Problem of Promisees' Rights" *Journal of Philosophy* 101(2) (2004), p. 83 endorses this theory

inaccurate or obscure. It is inaccurate if what is meant is that it is only appropriate for S to blame J for not  $\phi$ ing, for reasons that are very similar to those that apply in the case of the Demand Theory. For a start, it cannot be that the addressee is the only one who is entitled to blame the agent. For suppose that I promise Stephanie I will help her move, and when the appointed time comes around, I am so much enjoying having coffee with you that I say: "I said I'd help Stephanie, but never mind. Let's rather continue our conversation". Whatever Stephanie could say about my behavior, you could say, too. Even if you are also enjoying the conversation, it would not be at all odd for you to say that I really should help Stephanie; that she may be relying on my assistance, or that she would find it hurtful if I didn't help her. And your view of me might dim in exactly the same way that Stephanie's would upon my breaking the promise.

One may worry that it would be odd, even objectionable, for a perfect stranger to rebuke me for not keeping my promise. But we must be careful to distinguish again between the fact that there are generally good prudential reasons, as well as moral considerations of privacy, tolerance, and humility urging that a third party refrain from blaming a wrongdoer, and the thought that the third party lacks standing to do so. That there are reasons for a third party to hold her tongue is not sufficient for showing that she is strictly disqualified from blaming me, or even that her blame must take on some less intense form. We see this in cases of promising that involve public figures like politicians and celebrities, where the normal expectations of privacy have fallen away and our prudential reasons for being disinterested have been outweighed by the reasons we have for taking an active interest in their affairs. Where, for example, a celebrity has acted violently toward

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when she says that a promissory obligation gives the promisee special standing to rebuke the promisor for non-compliance. R. Jay Wallace, "Reasons, Relations, and Commands: Reflections on Darwall" *Ethics* 118(1) (2007), p. 29 might also be understood as endorsing this theory when he says that "the person who is wronged by you has a privileged basis for complaint against you"; though there is some ambiguity as to whether he is saying something about Practical Difference, or about the way in which a directed duty is justified.

his partner, it is not somehow mistaken for a member of the public to express a measure of indignation about this.<sup>18</sup> So the thought that an addressee is the only one who has standing to blame runs counter to our ordinary moral judgments about appropriate blame. It also runs counter to a very appealing conception of morality according to which each individual is answerable to a universal community of moral agents. When I am the victim of an injustice that is widely accepted or even rendered invisible by contemporary norms, I do not only think that my trespasser is answerable to me. I might warn him to consider how he will be regarded by history, and it may comfort me that the more enlightened inhabitants of the future will blame him, too.

Even in an ordinary case such as my promise to Stephanie, it is difficult to see what is *mistaken*, rather than annoying or rude, about a third party rebuking me for breaking my promise. Yet that is what the idea that Stephanie has special standing to blame seems to require. Certainly that is what talk about standing in its ordinary domain amounts to. A legal subject who lacks standing to sue in a particular case does not just have good reason not to litigate the matter; rather, their lack of status undermines any attempt to litigate. Yet it is never a mistake of this sort for a third party to judge that an agent has infringed a duty owed to an addressee, or to entertain the affective and interpersonal responses that transform this judgment into an instance of blame. This is what Raz seems to have in mind when he says against the Will Theory of rights, which characterizes a right in terms of special standing, that it rests on an analogy with the legal rule of *locus standi*, which determines who has the power to litigate where some legal wrong has ostensibly been committed, and that this analogy is prone to being exaggerated.<sup>19</sup>

18. In cases like this, there may well be reason for third parties to publicly express their disapproval and blame. See T.M. Scanlon, *Moral Dimensions* (Harvard University Press 2008) p. 169. Indeed, there are cases in which we think it objectionable if a third party does not blame a wrongdoer, such as where the wrong is particularly egregious or the third party stands to benefit from the wrong.

19. See Joseph Raz, "Legal Rights" *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 4(1) (1984), p. 5.

Perhaps some third parties are disqualified from blaming because of limits imposed by socio-temporal distance,<sup>20</sup> or by the moral significance of their own actions, such as when they have committed the very same act they would blame.<sup>21</sup> But these facts cannot be worked up into an account of unique standing for addressees. Instead, they show that even an addressee can lack standing to blame. I can owe a duty to Stephanie to keep my promise, but if she herself regularly breaks her promises, or if she purposefully places me in a position such that it is inevitable that I will not keep my promise, then she may well lack standing to blame me for noncompliance. Yet she remains the one to whom I owe it to keep my promise.<sup>22</sup> In sum, being the addressee of a directed duty is neither necessary nor sufficient for having special standing to blame or complain.<sup>23</sup>

As in the case of the Demand Theory, the more suggestive and more accurate idea is not that the addressee is uniquely entitled to blame one who violates a duty owed to her, but that her standing to do so is special in some other way. In the case of blame, this raises the possibility that what is special about the addressee's standing is the way in which she may blame. A prominent way of making out this suggestion is the Strawsonian claim that resentment is the characteristic

emotion that accompanies blame by an addressee, one that is distinct from the emotional response available to bystanders. Strawson distinguishes personal reactive attitudes like resentment from impersonal or vicarious reactive attitudes like indignation, describing indignation as "resentment on behalf of another".<sup>24</sup> This suggests a Strawsonian version of the Blame Theory: The addressee of a directed duty has special standing to resent the person who violates the duty.

But can we make out the difference between resentment and indignation in an illuminating way? It is not enough to say that indignation is "resentment on behalf of another", for this simply presupposes that the phenomenon we are tracking has its home in the emotional responses of the wronged person, and that the response of a third party is distinct and derivative. That is, it asserts rather than argues that the emotional responses of a wronged person and a bystander are different. Strawson does say more:

The generalized or vicarious analogues of the personal reactive attitudes rest on, and reflect, exactly the same expectation or demand in a generalized form; they rest on, or reflect, that is, the demand for the manifestation of a reasonable degree of goodwill or regard, on the part of others, not simply towards oneself, but towards all those on whose behalf moral indignation may be felt, i.e., as we now think, towards all men.<sup>25</sup>

Interestingly this threatens to reverse the intended priority of resentment and indignation, since the generalized demand that is implicit in indignation seems to express the more serious and paradigmatically moral complaint. I may complain about someone's action because I don't like it, or it hurts me, or imposes a burden on me; but for this complaint to be a moral one, of the sort that Strawson associates

20. See Macalester Bell, "The Standing to Blame: A Critique" in D. Justin Coates and Neale A. Tognazzini (eds), *Blame: Its Nature and Norms* (Oxford University Press 2013), interpreting Williams as thinking that we cannot properly blame those who are not our moral contemporaries.

21. G. A. Cohen, "Casting the First Stone: Who Can, and Who Can't, Condemn the Terrorists?" in G. A. Cohen, *Finding Oneself in the Other* (Princeton University Press 2013); R. Jay Wallace, "Hypocrisy, Moral Address, and the Equal Standing of Persons" *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 38(4) (2010), p. 307.

22. For an elaboration of this argument, see Simon Căbulea May, "Moral Demands and Directed Duties" (Presented at Directed Duties 2016 conference, Simon Fraser University, 2016).

23. My objection is different from the "antecedence objection" that is sometimes made against the Claim, Demand, and Blame Theories: that is, that they get the explanation of directedness backward. See Simon Căbulea May, "Directed Duties" *Philosophy Compass* 10(8) (2015), p. 523. The latter objection has some bite if we are trying to answer the question of Direction (see footnote 16), but not Practical Difference.

24. P.F. Strawson "Freedom and Resentment" in P.F. Strawson, *Freedom and Resentment and Other Essays* (Routledge, 2008), p. 16; see also Wallace (footnote 4) pp. 99–100.

25. Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment" (footnote 23), pp. 15–16.



with resentment, it must go beyond marking that the action is one I disapprove of. It must also mark the fact that my disapproval is reasonable, in the sense that it gives proper weight to the various considerations that lie for and against acting in that way. But such a complaint would also be appropriate if the action had been performed to the disadvantage of someone other than myself in a similar normative position. That is, a moral complaint essentially contains the same “generalized” expectation that Strawson finds in indignation. The problem is that we cannot treat indignation as the generalized form of resentment without thereby undermining the moral status of resentment.<sup>26</sup>

Wallace does not make this claim about generalization in distinguishing resentment from indignation. Instead, he points out that

[w]e feel resentment when we believe that another person has wronged us, violating a directional duty to us not to treat us in certain ways; resentment, indeed, can be understood as the characteristic form of complaint that bearers of relational rights and claims are in a privileged position to lodge when those rights and claims have been flouted.<sup>27</sup>

I have no objection to this statement, but it will not do as the basis of an illuminating account of Practical Difference. It may well be that

26. This is particularly evident from Strawson’s attempt to describe a person who entertains resentment but not indignation. Such a person, he says, would “appear as an abnormal case of moral egocentricity, as a kind of moral solipsist”. *Ibid.*, p. 16. But it is hard to imagine what a moral solipsist would be like, so entwined is the moral project with our concern for others. Strawson describes the solipsist as “seeing himself as unique both as one (*the one*) who had a general claim on human regard and as one (*the one*) on whom human beings in general had such a claim”. But he immediately remarks that this “is barely more than a conceptual possibility; if it is that”. Strawson is right to be puzzled. While it may be psychologically possible that an individual be disposed only to entertain resentment, it is difficult to see how the commitments involved in entertaining resentment do not at the same time commit her to responding with indignation in relevantly similar cases, even if she in fact fails to do so. We are all to some degree like this person, but only because we are blind to what our personal feelings of resentment commit us to.

27. Wallace, “Reasons, Relations, and Commands” (footnote 17), pp. 30–31.

resentment contains the distinctive complaint that it is *I* who have been wronged, or that it is a duty owed *to me* that has been violated. But these are the very facts whose significance we seek to explain by saying that the addressee has special standing to blame. The problem is not that we are committed to a sort of circularity in our account — it may turn out that we are unable to escape using relational normative concepts in any accurate account of directedness.<sup>28</sup> The issue, rather, is that we have not moved beyond labeling the difference that is made by the fact that a complaint belongs to the addressee rather than a third party. One way to see that we have not said enough is to ask whether we are in a better position to answer the question of Importance. We are not — for we do not yet have a sufficiently independent grasp of the practical difference between resentment and indignation to say why it is important that our moral practice make such a distinction.

## II.

The theories just canvassed explore the difference that directedness makes to our practice of holding each other morally accountable, rather than to our practice of moral deliberation. The Claim and Demand Theories assert that directedness makes a difference from the perspective of *ex ante* enforcement of a duty; the Blame Theory asserts that directedness makes a difference from the perspective of *ex post* criticism of one who violates the duty.<sup>29</sup> Though on the right track, these

28. Michael Thompson, “What is it to Wrong Someone? A Puzzle about Justice” in R. Jay Wallace, Philip Pettit, Samuel Scheffler, and Michael Smith (eds), *Reason and Value: Themes from the Moral Philosophy of Joseph Raz* (Oxford University Press 2004).

29. In doing so, it follows those who say that moral obligation more generally can be characterized in terms of its conceptual connection with our practice of accountability. See Stephen Darwall, “But It Would Be Wrong” in Stephen Darwall, *Morality, Authority, and the Law: Essays in Second-Personal Ethics* (Oxford University Press 2013); R. Jay Wallace, “Rightness and Responsibility” in D. Justin Coates and Neal A. Tognazzini (eds), *Blame: Its Nature and Norms* (Oxford University Press 2012); John Skorupski, *Ethical Explorations* (Oxford University Press 1999), p. 142; Allan Gibbard, *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings: A Theory of Normative Judgment* (Clarendon 1990), pp. 41–42; Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Harvard University Press 1985), p. 177; perhaps also

theories fail to develop the insight in a way that is sufficiently precise or extensionally adequate, largely because they limit their focus to the reactions available to an addressee immediately before and immediately after wrongdoing, and in doing so leave out the fact that we participate in a practice of accountability that allows for an extended exchange of responses between agent and addressee. By observing the structure of this exchange, it is possible to more fully characterize what is special about the status of the addressee.<sup>30</sup> In doing so, we arrive at the

**Repair Theory.** An addressee of a directed duty has special standing in our practice of accountability in the sense that she is the proper addressee of apology and redress, and the one who has the power to independently forgive the agent.

In this formulation, ‘practice of accountability’ refers to the familiar sequences of responses available to wrongdoers and the wronged following an apparent wrongdoing, which include excuse, justification, apology, redress, and forgiveness. Each response has appropriateness conditions as well as success conditions. For example, an apology is appropriate in the case of a wrongdoing which is not excused or exempted; and acknowledgment of the wrong and sincere expression of guilt are required for a purported apology to count as a successful apology. What is more, an apology that is successful, in the sense of fulfilling these conditions, can fulfill the appropriateness conditions of other responses, in particular making it reasonable for the recipient

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John Stuart Mill, “Utilitarianism” in Mary Warnock (ed), *Utilitarianism and On Liberty: Including Mill’s “Essay on Bentham” and Selections from the Writings of Jeremy Bentham and John Austin* (Second Edition, Blackwell 2003) p. 222, s. 14.

30. The idea here is continuous with the thought that we can make sense of the second-personal aspect of a speech act by situating it in our practice of interpersonal communication. For a very clear instance of this strategy, see Richard Moran, *The Exchange of Words: Speech, Testimony, and Intersubjectivity* (Harvard University Press 2018), pp. 118–19. See also Rebecca Kukla and Mark Lance, *Yo! and Lo!: The Pragmatic Topography of the Space of Reasons* (Harvard University Press 2009), pp. 134–52.

to withdraw resentment and embark upon the process of forgiveness. It is this normative articulation of the exchange of responses which makes it fitting to describe them as forming a practice.

The practice also grants distinctive statuses to particular individuals. As the Repair Theory observes, it is the addressee of a directed duty who is granted the status of being the proper addressee of an apology by one who violates the duty. That S is the proper addressee of apology simply means that it is a part of the success conditions of apology that it be addressed to S rather than to someone else. The notion of address, like that of the second person, can be elusive. Compare the aspects of address involved in sending a birthday card, which involves both the fact that the card is sent to the designated location of a particular person, and the fact that the card observes the birthday of that person rather than another. Similarly, a successful apology is directed toward its proper addressee, rather than another person, and its content is concerned with the hurt feelings, disappointed expectations, and violated interests of the addressee, rather than those of someone else. But something more is needed than speaking words of remorse where one expects that the proper addressee cannot avoid hearing them. The apology must be made *to* the addressee, just as the birthday card must be made out in the name of its intended recipient, or at least in the second person. More will be said about the point of such address in the next section. In the remainder of this section, I motivate the Repair Theory’s presupposition that S is the addressee of a directed duty just in case she is the proper addressee of apology and requests for what I will define as “independent” forgiveness.

There are cases in which it seems appropriate for a wrongdoer to apologize publicly, or to a wide variety of people. A president who has had an affair with a young intern might apologize not only to his wife and the intern but also to all citizens. But this is because he not only commits whatever wrongs are involved in having an affair without his wife’s knowledge and without concern for the intern’s vulnerability, but also acts in a way that undermines the trust of those he serves as

president, and thereby wrongs them.<sup>31</sup> An adolescent caught stealing might apologize not only to the storekeeper but also to his mother. But here again, the second apology is not ultimately concerned with the harm inflicted on the storekeeper, but with the disappointment that he thereby causes his mother. If his mother accepts his apology, it is not on behalf of the storeowner, but on her own behalf. One action may wrong various people in various ways, and may infringe a number of duties owed to different people; with respect to each such infringement, the wrongdoer is to apologize for that particular form of wrongdoing to the person who is wronged by it.

The Repair Theory also observes that the addressee (of a duty) has special status when it comes to forgiveness. It is often assumed that it is the wronged person who is in a position to dispense forgiveness.<sup>32</sup> But this assumption is open to challenge. Glen Pettigrove recounts a scene from Michael Apted's film *Amazing Grace*, in which the Parliamentarians William Wilberforce and the Duke of Clarence are playing cards. The Duke has run out of cash. When he proposes to wager his slave instead, Wilberforce leaves the room and begins to sever his relationship with the Duke. As Pettigrove observes, it would not make sense to think that Wilberforce's reaction arises from a feeling of having been wronged himself, since this too "would involve failing to acknowledge the independent moral standing of the slave".<sup>33</sup> Nonetheless, the relationship between the Duke and Wilberforce is clearly in disrepair. Aside from repairing their relationship, forgiveness has further work to do in this situation: It could overcome Wilberforce's indignation and prompt him to reassess the Duke's moral character. Since forgiveness

could have this role, Pettigrove infers that Wilberforce has standing to forgive the Duke, assuming the latter undertakes suitable reparative action – even though it is the slave who was mistreated.

Yet while third parties may be in a position to forgive a wrongdoer, there is something special about the power to forgive held by one who is wronged. This is brought out by comparing the powers that Wilberforce and the slave would have with respect to an unrepentant Duke. Any attempt to forgive by Wilberforce would misfire, and certainly so if the slave had not granted his forgiveness, since Wilberforce's action would once again seem to overlook that it is the slave's dignitary interest that was set back by the Duke's action. But the converse would not hold. The slave would have the power to forgive the Duke regardless of Wilberforce's stance. He may possibly have the power to do so regardless of whether the Duke had apologized or done anything reparative, though whether this is wise is another matter. Considering such a possibility, Christopher Bennett argues that third parties are capable of *redemptive forgiveness*, which involves acknowledgment that a wrongdoer has done whatever reparative work is required of them after wrongdoing; but that only those who are wronged are capable of *rights-waiving forgiveness*, which does further normative repair even though the wrongdoer has not done the reparative work required of him.<sup>34</sup>

Abstracting from Bennett's proposal, what is certainly correct is that the slave's power of forgiveness is in some sense primary or independent – at least in the sense that its appropriateness conditions are independent of whether the relationship between the wrongdoer and any unwronged third party has been repaired, including whether such a third party has forgiven the wrongdoer or whether the wrongdoer

31. Cf. Linda Radzik, "Moral Bystanders and the Virtue of Forgiveness" in Christopher R. Allers and Marieke Smit (eds), *Forgiveness in Perspective* (Rodopi 2010).

32. Jeffrie G. Murphy and Jean Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy* (Cambridge University Press 1988), p. 21; Kevin Zaragoza, "Forgiveness and Standing" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 84(3) (2012), p. 604, Adrienne M. Martin, "Owning Up and Lowering Down: The Power of Apology" *Journal of Philosophy* 107(10) (2010), p. 534–35.

33. Glen Pettigrove, "The Standing to Forgive," *The Monist* 92(4) (2009), p. 593.

34. Christopher Bennett, "The Alteration Thesis: Forgiveness as a Normative Power," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 46(2) (2018), p. 207. Bennett defines the power of the addressee more precisely: It is the power of waiving the reparative obligations that descend upon the wrongdoer because of their wrongdoing. I am less certain that this is a power the addressee has. It is clearer that the addressee has a power to do some reparative work, such as making it appropriate for the wrongdoer to interact with her without shame, even though the wrongdoer has not himself done any reparative work.

has done anything with respect to the third party to make forgiveness seem appropriate to them. That is, in deciding whether to forgive the Duke, the slave needn't consider whether Wilberforce has forgiven the Duke or whether the Duke has taken steps to improve his relationship with Wilberforce. But when Wilberforce decides whether to forgive, it would undermine the appropriateness of his forgiveness if he failed to even consider whether the slave had forgiven the Duke and whether the Duke had taken steps to repair his moral relationship with the slave. It is in this sense that it is the addressee of a directed duty who has the power to *independently* forgive one who violates the duty.

Cases involving small children, the incapacitated, and the dead raise familiar difficulties for special standing to accept apology and forgive. Having wronged a child who is too young to understand my apology, perhaps because he is too young to understand the nature of the wrong, I will likely feel compelled to apologize to his mother instead. And a repentant murderer will at best be able to turn to his victim's loved ones for forgiveness. In cases like these, the wrongdoer may well have violated some duty owed to the parent or the surviving relative as such, and should apologize for the wrong done to them. But the wrongdoer may also hope to apologize to the parent or survivor and seek their forgiveness on behalf of the primary victim. In contrast, the Repair Theory predicts that it is only the non-existent or incapacitated victim who has standing to receive apology and grant forgiveness. That is correct, and the apparent representative standing of the parent or survivor should not be taken too seriously. It would not be enough to say to the child, who is now grown up and able to understand the nature of the wrong I did to him, that I have already apologized to his mother. And a now repentant would-be murderer who discovers that his victim has in fact survived would no longer be satisfied with the attempts at forgiveness by the victim's relatives.

Insofar as we can make sense of the idea of actual representative standing, it does not threaten the Repair Theory. Consider the role of the CEO of a corporation or the spokesperson of a tribe, assuming

that it makes sense to think that I could wrong one of these collective entities qua collective. Coming to regret the wrongdoing, I would discover that there is no individual to whom I can adequately or coherently address my apology. Since the membership of these entities changes with birth and death (in the case of the tribe) or changes in property and contract relations (in the case of the corporation), it's not obvious that individualized apology to all the current members will be adequate. So here it is convenient and possibly necessary to apologize to, and seek forgiveness from, someone who holds office as a representative of the collective and who is thereby empowered to receive apology and grant forgiveness.

But this last description shows why the Repair Theory is still good. In apologizing to the officeholder, one does not address the apology to the officeholder qua individual member of the collective, but qua representative of the collective: One apologizes to them insofar as they hold the status and exercise the powers of the collective itself. That this is so is apparent from the kinds of reasons that should bear on the officeholder's decision: not whether they personally feel properly acknowledged and are convinced of a change of heart, but whether the collective has been properly acknowledged and can now expect better treatment. Something similar could surely be said of parents and relatives, should there turn out to be situations in which they really can accept apology and grant forgiveness on behalf of victims. Such a relative attempts to stand in for the victim and represent their powers and status, which nonetheless remain that of the victim and revert to the victim as soon as they are capable of taking them up.

What about an addressee who is incapable of receiving apology or granting forgiveness because she is rendered incompetent to do so by illness, or because she no longer exists? In such cases it is useful to say that the ill or non-existent addressee is the person to whom apology would have had to be made, and who would have had the power to forgive. That apology is no longer effective and forgiveness no longer available does not undermine the fact that it is the addressee to whom the wrongdoer is accountable, but in fact affirms it. Poignantly,

wrongdoers must sometimes try to content themselves with symbolic means of apology and seeking forgiveness (for example, apologizing at the dead addressee's graveside), or feel forever frustrated in their wish to apologize and be forgiven.

I have been arguing that the Repair Theory is extensionally adequate by considering apparently problematic cases which in fact support the idea that apology or the request for forgiveness is directed to the addressee of a duty. But what is to be said for the Repair Theory in the face of a general theory of accountability that counts certain third parties as the proper addressees of apology and requests? For example, why should we reject a maximalist conception of accountability that insists that a wrongdoer should apologize to anyone his wrongful behavior harms, whatever kind of duty his wrongdoing violates?<sup>35</sup> Considering this alternative will help to clarify why the Repair Theory is the most appealing interpretation of our practice, though it will take the rest of the paper to fully explore that appeal. More immediately, considering the maximalist conception will answer lingering worries that the Repair Theory is inadequate because apology and the request for forgiveness must be directed not only to those who are wronged but also to those who are harmed in some sense, as such.

Let's begin by distinguishing two kinds of cases which the maximalist conception proposes: (i) J owes it to S not to  $\phi$  but, contra the Repair Theory, T also has standing to receive apology and grant forgiveness in virtue of being harmed by J's  $\phi$ ing. (ii) J has a non-directed duty not to  $\phi$ , but contra the Repair Theory there is at least one particular person T who has standing to receive apology and grant forgiveness in virtue of being harmed by J's  $\phi$ ing. I will argue that both kinds of cases are implausible given countervailing pressures on our practice of accountability. On the one hand, it is overly demanding to require that a wrongdoer apologize to and ask forgiveness of all who are harmed by his wrongdoing. On the other hand, where the harm is

35. A similar view is suggested by the claim that a breach of duty wrongs everyone it harms — see Nicolas Cornell, "Wrongs, Rights, and Third Parties" *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 43(2) (2015), p. 109.

sufficient to warrant standing to receive apology and grant forgiveness, due to (say) its foreseeability and significance, it is also sufficient to ground a directed duty.<sup>36</sup> As a result, it is implausible that there are any cases in which apology must be made to one who is not owed a duty.

To see how these pressures operate to cabin the scope of accountability for a type (i) case, consider our initial example in which J promises S that he will help her move. It is very likely that failing to keep this promise will harm third parties in addition to S. For example, S may need to call on another friend T for help at the last minute, and T may as a result be unable to watch her favorite show. Does this count as a harm to T? If it does, it may well be *de minimis* — not sufficiently significant to call for redress or apology. Other harms may be more serious than this, but too remote. Perhaps T hurts her back while helping S move a heavy table. The harm is directly caused by J's failure to keep his promise, but it is implausible that J should be held accountable for it, since the fact of T's hurting her back was not so wholly attributable to J that it should have guided J's conduct. J may well feel regret upon learning of T's back pain, but he would be within his rights to refuse to pay for T's physical therapy.

More importantly, there are difficulties with generalizing a principle that holds J accountable for T's back pain. For there are, no doubt, many other harms, equally or even more remote, that are caused by J's failure to keep his promise, and it would be unwieldy to hold J accountable for all of these. For example: Because T helps S move, T is unavailable to advise her partner on an important presentation, with adverse effects on her partner's career; and by driving to S's place, T causes a slight fluctuation in traffic patterns that results in U being involved in a serious accident that would not otherwise have occurred. I say "unwieldy" because none of us are moral saints. If we were on the hook for all the *de minimis* and remote harms caused by our breaches of duty, we would be submerged by the demands of accountability,

36. A similar stance is taken by Wallace (footnote 4), pp. 196–97, but by responding to particular cases presented by Cornell (footnote 35) rather than making a general argument.

and the effort required to live up to these demands would leave very little space for anything else we value.<sup>37</sup>

But what about more direct and significant harms which result from the way J treats a third party? It is fair to hold J accountable for some such harms, given that avoiding them does not threaten to crowd out his own projects, and given that he is capable of avoiding them. It is tempting to draw the line at those which are significant and foreseeable, as it seems very reasonable to hold J accountable for significant harms that are foreseeable consequences of his failing to fulfill his duty. But why does this seem so reasonable? Only because the fact that the harm is foreseeable renders it fair to require of J that he take this consequence into account when deliberating about what to do. But if the harm to T is foreseeable and sufficiently significant that it should guide J's action, then this provides grounds for a duty on J, owed to T, not to act in the harmful way. And if we reject foreseeability as the right place to draw the line, then a similar argument will hold for whatever feature of a harm does make it reasonable grounds for holding the agent accountable.<sup>38</sup>

37. It is worth mentioning that there are cases in which apology to a third party is not only unwarranted, but also inappropriate. Suppose J promises S, his partner, that he will no longer talk to a certain ex-girlfriend, T, who is not quite over him. Perhaps J serially mismanages his relationships by being insensitive to the feelings of ex-partners and the effects of his actions, and S obtains his promise in order to be assured that he will finally stop doing this. If J does talk to T, he breaks his promise to S, and he also harms T by giving her false hope that they might get back together. Having committed this wrong, to whom should J apologize? An adequate apology to S should signal that J understands that he has promised not to speak to T, and for good reason. But apologizing to T now would simply harm T in the same way again, and undermine the acknowledgment made in his apology to S.

38. Related to the question of which harms ground accountability is the general phenomenon that a duty to T may be secondary and derived from a duty to S, in the sense that the grounds of the duty to T — say, the foreseeability of the harm to T — depend on the fact that there is a duty to S. Consider that if J throws out some manuscripts that belong to T, then he does not necessarily wrong T, for he may have thought them abandoned; but if S had obtained a promise that J not throw them out, this is sufficient evidence that the manuscripts are of value to someone, not necessarily S, and that J harms that person by throwing them out. By throwing out the manuscripts, J wrongs both

An example of a type (ii) case is one in which J chops down a redwood, though the value of the tree grounds a non-directed duty that he not do so. The tree may also belong to someone; it may damage someone's house when it is felled; or it may simply cause harm to those who would have otherwise derived enjoyment or edification from observing it. In such cases, all things being equal, J should apologize to the person harmed. But that is because J has not just violated a non-directed duty grounded in the value of the redwood. That value also explains why certain people have an interest in the tree not being harmed, since it is grounds for their interest in enjoyment; and these interests are what ground a duty to them against cutting down the tree. In this way, the impersonal value of the tree indirectly grounds a duty owed to the person deprived of enjoyment — a duty that is directed since it is not the value of the tree on its own, but the fact of enjoyment, that grounds the duty.<sup>39</sup> In such a case, the person who fells the tree violates at least two duties which happen to have the same content. That may seem to beg for parsimony. But that there are in fact two distinct duties is evident once we consider what is involved in repair. J may come to acknowledge that the tree had great value regardless of its enjoyment by people, and might even find some way of repairing the damage by restoring similar value elsewhere; but he would still owe an apology to those whose enjoyment of the tree he had disregarded. And J may apologize to those who are deprived of enjoyment, and be granted forgiveness by them, but he may continue to feel warranted guilt, since his destruction of value went beyond depriving people of their enjoyment of it.<sup>40</sup>

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S and T, but J's duties to S and to T are distinct in direction and content: He may need to apologize on different terms to S and to T, and S and T may reasonably differ in the way they exercise their powers of forgiveness. But the fact that the duty to T is derived from the duty to S does not in any way undermine the connection between directedness and apology captured by the Repair Theory.

39. Scanlon (footnote 5), p. 220.

40. I have been assuming that there are some non-directed duties grounded in the impersonal values of things like redwoods. But that may be wrong. It may

The above arguments aim to show that cases of extensional inadequacy will be elusive. But they fall short of showing that there are no such cases. For that purpose, it helps to have some reason to think that warranted apology and the directedness of a duty are so closely connected that one cannot have standing to receive an apology without being owed a duty. The strategy threatens circularity if the Repair Theory is invoked to show the connection. But that is not the case if we point to facts about the justification of a directed duty rather than facts about its practical implications. If it turns out that S must have an interest of a special sort in order to warrant being an addressee of apology and also in order to be an addressee of the relevant duty, then this interest would underwrite the extensional adequacy of the Repair Theory without begging the question. In fact, there is a special interest that ties direction and apology together, and Section III will describe that interest in pursuit of saying why we should think apology must be addressed to particular people. For now, a brief preview of that account must suffice. The fact that apology must be addressed to a particular recipient S is explained by the fact that S has an interest in recognition, in a specific sense to be defined later. But it is this interest

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be that the idea of a duty is tied so closely to that of a personal complaint that there are only directed duties. This would remove the concern about type (ii) cases discussed above, but replace it with a concern that the best theory of directedness is entirely deflationary, since there is nothing morally significant about directedness that is not a matter of the moral significance of duty. This concern was raised by an anonymous reviewer as a way of motivating the need for a normative powers view of directedness, on the basis that only a normative powers view could ward off the deflationary view. I do not see that connection myself, since it seems to me that if the co-extension of duty and directedness poses a deflationary threat to a view like the Repair Theory, then it equally poses that threat to a normative powers view. I take up the viability of the normative powers view in Section III.

As for the initial claim about co-extension, it is a question about our substantive moral reasons whether all duties are directed, and a theory of directedness could coherently leave this question open, and I think that it should. That is for the reason considered at the beginning of Section I: Even if all duties turn out to be directed, the conceivability of a non-directed duty requires us to say how our concepts of duty and directedness give rise to this conceivability, and allows us to consider the distinctive practical implications of each concept.

that is set back when S is wronged. In fact, as I will argue in Section III, a practice that connects the directedness of a duty and that of apology in the way ours does makes it possible to repair the interest in recognition that is set back by a violation of duty — that is its Importance. For now, it is enough to point out that the fact that directed duty and directed apology go together does not just appear from thinking about the cases, but from thinking about the kind of interest that warrants each of them. But that this distinctive interest warrants the directedness of a duty is not itself an answer to Practical Difference; for that, we need to describe the way in which directed duty and directed apology are connected, and that is what the Repair Theory does.

In sum, the Repair Theory is extensionally adequate, unlike the Demand and Blame Theories.<sup>41</sup> It also avoids the objection, made against the Claim Theory, that it simply relabels rather than explicates the difference made by directedness. One might worry that the Repair Theory's use of relational normative concepts in fact makes its answer to Practical Difference no more perspicuous than that of the Claim Theory. In particular, the responses of apology and forgiveness are themselves directed notions, in the sense that the relevant performatives (such as 'I am sorry' and 'I forgive you') must be addressed to another. The nature of such address can also appear mysterious, and a natural thought is that address must be characterized using relational normative concepts.<sup>42</sup> Compare the case of assertion. There are good reasons to think that we should characterize the speech act of assertion in normative terms: A prominent suggestion is that assertion

41. Observe also that while an addressee might lack standing to demand and blame because of hypocrisy or complicity, this does not undermine the facts that she is the one to whom apology is to be made, and the one with the power to forgive. But note that hypocrisy or complicity may make it more appropriate for the addressee to accept apology and issue forgiveness.

42. See, for example, Moran (footnote 30), pp. 122–44 on the relational normative nature of assertion and other speech acts. Kukla and Lance (footnote 30) similarly understand address in terms of the imposition of a certain kind of demand upon the addressee — see pp. 139, 161–62.

involves a special commitment to the truth of the proposition asserted.<sup>43</sup> This commitment involves “taking responsibility” for the truth of the commitment,<sup>44</sup> perhaps that means licensing others to believe the proposition or to make similar commitments.<sup>45</sup> But what distinguishes an assertion addressed to Hilary, as opposed to one made to Ilhaam, or to the world at large? It is tempting to say that it is the fact that a commitment is made to Hilary, rather than to Ilhaam or to the world at large. That sounds a lot like the sort of normative relation involved in promissory obligations and other directed duties.

So the centrality of address in my account seems to threaten circularity. But is it really objectionable that the Repair Theory invokes these directed performatives? Directed apology and requests for forgiveness are perfectly familiar phenomena, even if we don’t understand their intricacies, and so it is already illuminating to draw a connection between them and directed duties, even if in doing so we remain within a circle of relational normative concepts. My strategy has been to locate one such relational normative concept, the directedness of a duty, within the coordinates of a field of phenomena that are familiar, though not necessarily any less relational. The resulting explanation should be taken in a Strawsonian spirit: It does not reduce directedness to entirely non-relational terms, but it does connect it up with familiar aspects of interpersonal life that appear quite vital to us in our everyday interactions.<sup>46</sup>

43. John MacFarlane, “What is Assertion?” in Jessica Brown and Herman Cappelen (eds), *Assertion* (Oxford University Press 2010); also John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge University Press 1969), p. 29.

44. MacFarlane (footnote 43).

45. Robert B. Brandom, *Making It Explicit: Reasoning, Representing, and Discursive Commitment* (Harvard University Press 1994), pp. 141–98.

46. “Only connect”, Strawson says (echoing E. M. Forster), urging that philosophers take up “the real project of investigating the connections between the major structural elements of our conceptual scheme”. P. F. Strawson *Skepticism and Naturalism: Some Varieties* (Columbia University Press 1985), p. 22. In his influential paper, “Freedom and Resentment” (footnote 24), Strawson sought to alleviate our puzzlement about moral responsibility by showing

With this said, one might wonder if the Repair Theory is as illuminating as it could be without a theory of what warrants apology to the addressee in particular. This could be put in the language of interests.<sup>47</sup> Apology is warranted not when any interest of S is set back, but when some special interest of S’s is set back. So what is special about S and her interests that warrants apology to her in particular? This is an important question, though it bears emphasizing that the Repair Theory need not answer it to succeed as an answer to Practical Difference. It is enough that the theory give an informative and extensionally adequate picture of the practice that our concept of directedness invokes. Nonetheless the question of warrant is a way to ask whether we can make sense of that practice, and so is a step toward understanding its importance. The next section pursues that inquiry and bolsters the Repair Theory by showing it to be a fruitful framework for doing so.

### III.

I have been arguing that the Repair Theory avoids the dilemma faced by other theories: that they are either inaccurate or obscure. But why does it make sense to participate in a practice of accountability that has the structure described by the theory? That is what we want to know when we ask the following question:

**Importance.** What is lost by a moral community that fails to acknowledge the directedness of directed duties?

Imagine for a moment, and for the sake of contrast, a consequentialist theory that explains away the appearance that some duties are directed. A theory of this sort would posit that thinking of duties as if they were directed, and so believing that these duties assigned special standing to addressees, could have certain beneficial consequences.

that it is presupposed by the reactive attitudes that play a central role in our practical lives, lives that we could not easily abandon. What is most resonant about this way of thinking is the idea that a fundamental moral concept is to be understood in terms of the role that it plays in relation to familiar and indispensable features of everyday human life.

47. This is how an anonymous referee articulated the question.



But such a theory would not answer Importance, since treating duties as if they were directed does not count as acknowledging that they are in fact directed. It might be difficult or even impossible to do what the theory maintains we do, that is, believe that a duty is not in fact directed while maintaining the fiction that it is so as to reap the benefits of acting according to that fiction. But that doesn't explain what is defective about the theory. Rather, we would like to know what the stance it assumes misses out on in a world which does contain directed duties. What of importance would the consequentialist fictionalist learn upon discovering that duties are in fact directed (aside from the fact that he was wrong)?

The question of Importance is similar to that posed by Feinberg when he imagines and assesses Nowheresville, a community that has everything our moral practice has, except for rights.<sup>48</sup> But I have not framed the question in exactly his way because I worry that directed duties (and rights, for that matter) are too basic a feature of our moral reality for us to clear-mindedly pursue the thought experiment. In particular, I doubt that there is a coherent perspective from which we can imagine that moral reality might be different while assessing the moral importance of that difference, for it is difficult to see how we might endorse any assessment that is not made from the perspective of moral reality as we take it to be. But we can make sense of the idea that a community fails to acknowledge this aspect of reality, and it is not a stretch to interpret certain actual communities, distant from ours in space and time (Warring States-era Confucians, for example), as doing exactly that.<sup>49</sup> And we may ask, from our perspective of course, why we think that a community that fails to acknowledge the phenomenon that we acknowledge thereby goes astray, not just epistemically, but

48. Feinberg (footnote 3).

49. I must simply pass over the crucial and difficult question of who I think *we* are. At the very least, 'we' refers to myself, and the few others who will engage with this inquiry and see in its explananda some reflection of their own moral practice. That ours might, for all we know, turn out to be a parochial practice, or a mistaken one, does not prevent us from taking it seriously and doing our best to make sense of its claims.

in a way that is morally significant. (Asking this is compatible with acknowledging that we might lose something, not easily assessable from our perspective, by not doing things their way.) Our inquiry aims to recall and articulate those elements of our ordinary moral thought that make sense of our commitment to directed duties.

The Repair Theory induces a more specific formulation of this question of Importance. Before setting out the reformulation, let me introduce some terminology. Let's call the distinctively structured practice that accompanies directed duties a "directed practice of accountability". This practice has a directed structure insofar as it assigns a distinctive normative status (special standing to hold a wrongdoer accountable) to certain individuals (addressees of directed duties). A community that implicitly grasps the directedness of duties is one that at least *participates* in the directed practice of accountability, by behaving in a way that conforms with its directed structure, though this participation might fall short of acknowledgment. Members of such a community go about treating the addressees of directed duties as the ones to whom apology and redress must be made, and as the ones who have the power to forgive — even if they fail to notice that their behavior has this structure or fail to consider its significance. But when participation in a directed practice of accountability becomes sufficiently self-reflective, it can rise to the level of *acknowledgment* of the directed structure of the practice. Members of such a community would notice and affirm the fact that their practice assigns a special status to the addressees of directed duties, perhaps making this explicit by saying that they owe it to such addressees to fulfill their duties, or that they would wrong them by failing to fulfill their duties.

If a failure to acknowledge the directedness of duties involved overlooking some dimension of moral significance, that dimension would also be overlooked by a community that failed to participate in a directed practice of accountability. And a community that participates in a directed practice of accountability but failed to acknowledge that fact might have their moral lives enriched in a way that reflects the moral importance of directedness, but they would not be in the

habit of giving voice to that dimension of moral importance. So if we can articulate what of moral importance is involved in participating in a directed practice of accountability and acknowledging its directed structure, then we will have found a way of characterizing the distinctive moral significance that accompanies directed duties. In this way, the question of Importance becomes:

**Directed Practice Importance.** What is lost when a community fails to participate in a directed practice of accountability? And what is lost when a community fails to acknowledge the directed structure of its practice of accountability?

Directed Practice Importance points us to particular questions about the way we appropriately behave in the wake of wrongdoing: Why should anybody have special standing to hold a wrongdoer accountable, and why should it be the addressee in particular who has that special standing? These are questions we can sensibly ask without having to imagine a very different moral reality. And by enabling us to ask questions of such specificity, the Repair Theory already represents an advance beyond the Claim, Demand, and Blame Theories.

A suggestive idea expressible within the framework of Directed Practice Importance is that acknowledging directed duties is a requirement of respect. Joel Feinberg remarks that “[t]o respect a person ... or to think of him as possessed of human dignity, simply *is* to think of him as a potential maker of claims”.<sup>50</sup> That there is some connection between respect and directed duties is made plausible by considering the effect on J of the thought that he owes it to S to act in a certain manner. This thought may well remind him that he should act with respect toward her; it may cultivate in him that attitude of respect; and giving voice to the thought may be a useful way of expressing his respect for S. These claims are especially plausible when framed in the terms of the Repair Theory.

50. Feinberg (footnote 3), p. 252, emphasis in original.

Consider first the way in which our directed practice of accountability may *cultivate* respect. The special standing of the addressee requires that a wrongdoer make a genuine apology to her, thereby acknowledging the injury or potential injury done to her, and seek forgiveness from her, thereby giving her an elevated status with respect to the wrongdoer. Performing these actions may well bring the wrongdoer to develop the attitude of respect that was absent at the time of the wrongdoing, not just toward the particular addressee, but toward others. This empirical claim is antecedently plausible, given that the moral education of children takes place in much this way, by getting them to notice how their actions have or could have injured others. Our directed practice of accountability may also *remind* one that one should have an attitude of respect. Recognizing in advance that violating a directed duty would necessitate apology to the addressee may well remind the agent that it is the addressee who stands to be injured. It is typically the case that we find it harder to perform an action that we are told will injure a particular individual than one which we are told is wrong for some more abstract reason. And it may be that being accountable to the addressee serves to symbolize or *express* the respect that she deserves. We clearly do value symbols of the things we hold dear: memorials for the departed, flags of our nations, and the emblems of our various groups and projects. We seem to value these symbols not only because they serve to identify our projects to others, but simply because they stand for the value of our projects. Similarly, in the case of our practice of accountability, acknowledging that the addressee is treated as having special standing in relation to a wrongdoer may well serve to express the idea that one should have respect for the addressee.

Yet these connections fail to fully capture the importance of directedness. They describe a non-constitutive role that thoughts of directedness play in enabling us to have and express respect, where what is of ultimate importance is that we have and express respect. This gives directedness too contingent a role to avoid the skepticism of the consequentialist, who thinks that it is merely useful to think that one

owes duties to others. One aspect of this worry is that the connections are too contingent to ground a thoroughgoing vindication, since it would be open to us to doubt the importance of the directed practice of accountability if we found other, more effective means of furthering moral compliance and moral cultivation and symbolizing the place an addressee should have in an agent's thought. Second, these contingent responses to Importance make our talk of directed duties condescending, the kind of thing which could profit only the immature, weak-willed, or unsure moral agent. Third, this way of explaining Importance risks placing the addressee in the background of the explanation. That the directed practice of accountability is important to the addressee in particular is suggested by Feinberg when he remarks that the normative status of having a claim gives that person something to stand on, making it "a most useful sort of moral furniture".<sup>51</sup> Yet what has been said so far indicates that the practice benefits the addressee only indirectly, through its effects on the agent or the general moral culture.<sup>52</sup> More generally, the problem is that the instrumental characterization of the practice allows us to see directedness as merely a useful way for agents to think. If we are to fully vindicate directed duties, we should show not simply that it is important to think of certain individuals as having special standing in our practice of accountability,

51. *Ibid.*, p. 252.

52. Indeed, these descriptions would continue to apply if we substituted an impartially valuable state of affairs for some human addressee. It may well make sense to offer apologies to the redwoods insofar as this will induce in us proper respect for their value and make it more likely that we will not destroy them. But we do not ordinarily think of duties as capable of being owed to impersonal entities or states of affairs, nor apologies. Recent legal innovations to the effect that rivers and other environmental entities have rights are interesting and potentially useful developments, but they are interesting precisely because they stretch moral common sense. (A self-aware advocate of this is Gwendolyn J. Gordon, "Environmental Personhood" *Columbia Journal of Environmental Law* 43(1) (2018), p. 49.) An account of Importance that recognizes duties owed to impersonal entities as having the same kind of significance as ordinary directed duties would overgeneralize the case for directed duties and make our ordinary moral judgments seem deficient.

but that they actually do have such standing, and that we would lose something important if this were not so.

What we would lose is an important way of recognizing others — since an addressee's special standing with respect to apology and forgiveness is constitutive of the fact that apology and the seeking of forgiveness are ways of recognizing the addressee. The term 'recognition' is evocative and often used without much explication. I have in mind something quite specific:

**Recognition.** J recognizes S iff J treats S in accordance with the facts that

(i) S has interests which are sufficiently important that J should act in a way that is sensitive to their comparative importance; and

(ii) S's interests include a second-order interest in J's caring about her interests (including this one) enough to act in a way that is sensitive to their comparative importance.

The idea of recognition presupposes that S's life goes better not only if J respects her interests, but also if J has a measure of goodwill toward her. It is a familiar aspect of human life that we do care about the quality of another's will toward us.<sup>53</sup> This can be seen in the fact that we care about the justifying, excusing, and exempting of actions which only seem to set back important interests, or which do set them back but which could not reasonably have been avoided. Such a response aims to reassure the addressee that the agent was in fact sensitive to the interests that were set back, or apparently set back, by the agent's action. Moreover, it explicitly affirms that the agent is sensitive to the addressee's second-order interest in the agent's quality of will. By doing so, it treats the addressee as having such a second-order interest worth affirming, and thereby *recognizes* her in the sense defined above.

53. For more detailed discussion of the quality of will, and an account of why we justifiably care about it, see R. Jay Wallace, *Responsibility and the Moral Sentiments* (Harvard University Press 1994), p. 124ff.

Such affirmation is not necessary where an agent does not appear to threaten another's interests. So there is a sense in which recognition only requires acting in conformity with moral duty. But given our ignorance and our lack of consensus about what other interests hang in the balance and therefore what moral duty requires, it makes sense that we regularly engage in acknowledgments of each other's interests.<sup>54</sup>

An excuse or justification, made sincerely by J to S, should not simply be understood as *evidence* of the quality of J's will. Indeed, S's interest in recognition is not just an interest in *knowing* that J aims to be responsive to her interests, but is an interest in being *treated* accordingly. That can require an explicit affirmation of her interests in cases in which they are vulnerable to J's actions. That we do care about such explicit affirmations quite generally also appears from observing ordinary human life. For example, the acts of greeting another, or telling them something important, are ordinarily met with acknowledgment, even if such responses add nothing new to common knowledge. This phenomenon is brought out in a discussion by Kukla and Lance, who notice the pervasiveness of acknowledgment in our discursive lives, and describe its role as to "*give expression to the uptake*" of

54. The fact that recognition goes beyond conformity with duty and sensitivity to another's interests distinguishes my use of the term 'recognition' from looser use elsewhere. Compare Scanlon's claim that acting on the basis of contractualist deliberation is a way of standing in relationships of recognition with others:

The contractualist ideal of acting in accord with principles that others (similarly motivated) could not reasonably reject is meant to characterize the relation with others the value and appeal of which underlies our reasons to do what morality requires. This relation, much less personal than friendship, might be called a relation of mutual recognition. (Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other* (footnote 5), p. 162)

It is not entirely clear whether Scanlon thinks one must deliberate in the contractualist way in order to count as standing in a relation of recognition, or whether it suffices to act in accord with the principles derivable from that deliberation. My definition of 'recognition' should also be contrasted with Margaret Gilbert's much narrower definition in terms of joint commitment — Gilbert (footnote 1), pp. 226–27.

a commitment or truth.<sup>55</sup> The italicized terms call for elaboration, but nonetheless convey the fact that to acknowledge another in this way is neither simply to entertain an affirmative belief about them (by thinking to oneself "yes!"), nor to ensure common knowledge that one has the affirmative belief (by making available evidence that one thinks "yes!"). One must also explicitly affirm the belief to them.<sup>56</sup> What is important about the affirmation being explicit is not that this makes it available as evidence or takes it out of the realm of one's private thoughts, as suggested by the metaphor of "expression", but that this is essential to the affirmation being an interpersonal act that forges (or maintains) a reciprocally self-conscious bond between acknowledger and acknowledged.<sup>57</sup>

To illustrate, if I promise Stephanie that I will help her move, but I am prevented from keeping my promise because I am laid low by a fever, then I have an excuse for not keeping the promise. But I have reason to tell Stephanie why I am unable to keep the promise, since Stephanie reasonably takes an interest in knowing that I have an excuse, given her second-order interest in knowing whether I care enough about her interests to aim at acting in a way that is sensitive to them. Yet my excuse is not simply evidence that I have these attitudes. By making the effort to excuse myself, I do indicate that I am responsive to the interests that were vulnerable to my action, and also that I am responsive to the fact that Stephanie cares about my responsiveness. But in so doing, singling her out as the one to whom I must make my excuse, I also treat Stephanie as having a second-order interest in

55. Kukla and Lance (footnote 30), p. 145.

56. Thus, to recognize another is not to enter a theoretical judgment about them, but to take up a practical stance toward them. See, on this point, Wilfrid Sellars, "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man" in Robert Colodny (ed), *Frontiers of Science and Philosophy* (University of Pittsburgh Press 1962), pp. 39–40.

57. Perhaps we may think of this bond as one in which each relative self-consciously interacts with the other as one who is similarly self-consciously aware of the interaction. See Jeremy Wanderer, "Alethic Holdings" *Philosophical Topics* 42(1) (2014), pp. 63–84. Such a relation of awareness seems impossible without an actual interaction.

the quality of my will that is sufficiently important to stand in need of acknowledgment in the circumstances. So I treat Stephanie as having the structure of interests set out in the above definition of recognition, and I thereby recognize her. To be clear, that is not because I convey a set of attitudes that are on their own constitutive of recognition. It is the explicit interpersonal act of excuse that counts as a form of recognition.

If I did not have an excuse, and had merely decided not to keep my promise because I did not care enough about Stephanie's interests, then I would be guilty of a lapse of recognition on two counts. First, Stephanie had an interest in being assured that I would help her move, and this interest was set back when I failed to turn up. Second, Stephanie also had an interest in my properly caring about her interests, and this interest was set back when I failed to keep the promise because I did not properly care about her assurance interest. We see this twofold injury reflected in the variety of actions that is needed to come as close as is possible to repairing the wrong. Nothing can take the place of the lost assurance, but insofar as Stephanie had incurred material losses because she had relied on my promise, there may be ways to restore her to more or less the same level of material well-being, and Stephanie will now have an interest in this being done. Since Stephanie has an interest in my caring about her interests, she will also have an interest in my adjusting my attitude toward her interests and in knowing that I have done so; in particular, she will have an interest in knowing that I have come to see and regret that my action constituted a lapse of recognition. I can satisfy this interest by telling her that I see how my action set back her interests, and that I am sorry I acted in this way. But this is also an act of acknowledging her interests, rather than mere evidence that I have renewed my attitudes. So I treat her as having an important interest in the quality of my will, and I thereby recognize her.

I have been emphasizing that apology constitutes recognition rather than simply conveying an attitude of recognition, and that is because it is hard to see how an evidentiary conception of apology can give it a role in repair. Jeffrey Helmreich articulates such skepticism about

the evidentiary conception of apology in the form of a dilemma.<sup>58</sup> On the one hand, suppose we thought apology involves J's disclosing to S some set of cognitive judgments, such as that he was wrong to have acted in a certain way, that he now regrets it, and so on. Then, it would be puzzling that apology seems to still have a role in a case in which J and S have common knowledge that J holds all of these judgments. On the other hand, suppose we thought that what J discloses is some affective state, such as the feeling of remorse. Then, Helmreich argues, the obligation to apologize would be overly demanding, since J could only felicitously apologize to S when in the throes of this affective state. Indeed, it seems possible to feel remorse at one moment, and apologize at a later moment when the sentiment of remorse has subsided and left only one's revised judgments.<sup>59</sup>

The dilemma is avoided by providing a non-evidentiary conception of apology, and it is just such a conception I have been describing here.<sup>60</sup> That is because apology involves an explicit act of acknowledgment of another, and most importantly, such acknowledgment involves addressing a particular other. When J addresses a sincere apology to S, he treats S in a certain way, since addressing S treats her as normatively significant in an appropriate way — as the one who must be repaired. There are a variety of gestural performances that often accompany apology and that also treat S in this way, for example:

58. Jeffrey S. Helmreich, "The Apologetic Stance" *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 43(2) (2015), p. 75. Such skepticism may productively be compared with the skepticism about a merely evidentiary notion of testimony expressed by Moran (footnote 30). For this reason, I do not adopt Helmreich's terminology, according to which the problematic conception of apology is a "communicative" one. It seems to me that there is an important non-evidentiary sense of communication in addition to the information-theoretic one.

59. Helmreich (footnote 58), pp. 77–83.

60. Helmreich's own account of apology rests on the idea that it is a form of *stance-taking*, which involves valuing and committing to a certain normative claim, and acting as though the claim is true. I am sympathetic with this view insofar as it emphasizes the performative dimension of apology, but I doubt his idea that this performative dimension paradigmatically involves *acting as though* some claim is true, rather than *treating* the addressee in accordance with the claim.

bowing one's head, displaying humility, and acting with an excess of respect.<sup>61</sup> But none of these are essential to a successful apology. What is essential is the illocutionary performance of addressing the contents of the apology to the addressee, as is required by distinctively *directed* apology, since this singles her out as one whose interests are sufficiently important as to require explicit acknowledgment.

The role of address here is the same as its role in other performative areas of life — such as in thanking, greeting, congratulating, and telling, which all require address to whomever is thanked, greeted, congratulated, or told. In order to *tell* Thandi that there is a phone call for her, I must address *to her* the assertion that there is a phone call for her. I can make a statement to everyone that there is a phone call for her, knowing that she will overhear; but this is not the same as telling her. It makes a difference which of these I do if Thandi has a special interest in coming to know what the assertion communicates. Suppose I know that Thandi has been waiting anxiously for a call because it brings news of her brother's health, and she is sitting in another room with friends who are consoling her when the phone rings. It would be impersonal and odd if I went to the group and announced to nobody in particular: "There is a phone call for Thandi". The natural thing to do would be to address the news to Thandi. But what is so odd about the public announcement? It couldn't just be that addressing someone is typically the most reliable way of conveying information to them. For I can be quite sure that Thandi is listening as attentively as anybody for the news, and I can say the impersonal thing in my loudest voice, standing as close to Thandi as possible.

What is odd, rather than simply inefficient, is my lack of acknowledgment that she has a special interest in hearing the news. Of course, in making the impersonal announcement, I can aim at satisfying that interest. But I should also aim at satisfying Thandi's second-order interest in knowing whether I properly care about her interests. In addressing Thandi, I single her out as the proper recipient of the news,

61. Luc Bovens, "Apologies" *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 108(3) (2008), pp. 219–39, 230–34.

and in so doing show that I am sensitive to her special interest in hearing that there is a phone call for her; I show that I am announcing the news not for any old reason, but because I know that she has a special interest in hearing it. So far, this seems to give directed address a merely evidentiary role that could be substituted by other evidence of the right sort. But by addressing her in particular, I also self-consciously bring her awareness to the fact that I am showing my sensitivity to her interest in just such a self-conscious act. Engaging in such an act again has an evidential function, since it shows her that I care about her second-order interest in knowing whether I properly care about her first-order interest in hearing the news. But by acting on that attitude, I also treat her in accordance with the importance of that second-order interest. In this way, my addressing Thandi is not just good evidence of my attitudes, but an interpersonal encounter that is constitutive of the relation of recognition.

The same is true of directed apology. In apologizing, I do not only satisfy Stephanie's second-order interest in the quality of my will, but I also acknowledge that interest and thereby treat her in accordance with its increased importance in the wake of wrongdoing. Perhaps other forms of recognition and repair are conceivable. Nonetheless, directed apology is part of *our* practice, and it makes sense that it is, since address is a very natural way to repair recognition given that address plays such a prominent role in other parts of our lives, and given its contingent connections to moral development, as outlined earlier.

Understanding apology in this way suggests why it might be warranted that I apologize to Stephanie in particular for breaking my promise, but not to a third party who is merely harmed (but not wronged) by my promise breaking. The difference between Stephanie and the third party is that while the third party has an interest that is set back, Stephanie has an interest in recognition that is set back, since my promise breaking also sets back an interest sufficiently important that I should act in a way that is sensitive to its importance, thereby setting back her interest in knowing that I care about her interests to the proper extent. The Repair Theory posits this interest in recognition

as the warrant for the directedness of both the duty and the apology that is required in the wake of violating the duty. Of course, whether a third party truly lacks such an interest rests on the details of the case. If my promise-breaking harms a third party by upending a reasonable expectation of theirs that deserved due care, then I do fail to recognize the third party, and so I wrong them, and I also owe them an apology. But there are also cases in which a third party's interest, though important, is not sufficiently important to require that I act in a way that is sensitive to its importance. It is for a theory of promissory obligation to say why the terrain of interests gives rise to an interest of such comparative importance on the part of the promisee but not others, and such a theory may demonstrate that third parties sometimes do have such an interest, and that sometimes the promisee lacks it. What the present account supplies is a characterization of why directed apology and directed duty are bound together in being directed toward the same party. They are so bound because both concepts pick out the individuals whose interests are sufficiently important that their setback provides reason to acknowledge those interests.

I have focused on the addressee's standing to receive apology, but the Repair Theory gives an equally prominent place to the addressee's power to independently forgive the wrongdoer. I will only briefly sketch how such forgiveness connects up with recognition, since a fuller account would take us too far afield into the nature of forgiveness. Start with the observation that independent forgiveness involves a change in the norms governing wrongdoer and addressee, perhaps (following Bennett): The wrongdoer is released from obligations to apologize to the addressee and make restitution to her, and the addressee is placed under an obligation not to treat the wrongdoer with the sort of disregard made appropriate by the wrongdoing. One way to describe this fact is by saying that forgiveness involves the exercise of an addressee's power to change the normative statuses of wrongdoer and addressee.<sup>62</sup> Why is it the addressee who has such a power?

62. Bennett (footnote 34) and Brandon Warmke, "The Normative Significance of Forgiveness" *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 94(4) (2016), pp. 687–703 both

Postulating an interest in recognition on the addressee's part explains why. Forgiveness is often desired by the wrongdoer, and it is given in response to attempts by the wrongdoer to achieve reparation and redemption: through apology, compensation, and a change of heart. Unlike in the case of forgiveness by third parties (such as Bennett's "non-redemptive forgiveness"), it is the one who has been wronged who comes closest to being able to bring these attempts to an authoritative close. Therefore, the wrongdoer's redemptive efforts will be directed toward the addressee. That they should be so directed makes sense if the addressee has an interest in recognition that requires repair, for addressing such attempts to the addressee constitutes recognition, just as we have seen in the case of apology.

With this part of the account in place, the Repair Theory can now be compared to an alternative picture that reads more into the idea of special standing: namely, that one with special standing to receive apology and grant forgiveness has a power — a normative power — to change the normative facts concerning the appropriateness of blame as a response to an infringement of duty. This tempting picture of wronging has been defended in detail by David Owens, who hangs it on controversial assumptions that cannot be fully engaged here.<sup>63</sup> The focus of that picture is the idea that we have a remissive interest: an interest in shaping the patterns of appropriate blame by way of forgiveness.<sup>64</sup> To argue that we have such an interest, Owens begins with

observe this fact and then use it to argue in favor of a performative rather than attitudinal view of forgiveness, more specifically the view that forgiveness involves the exercise of a normative power. But I do not mean to say anything here about the nature of forgiveness beyond the claim that it involves the alteration of norms of interaction. I will also refrain from suggesting that such alteration means that the addressee possesses a *normative power* in any thicker sense. The latter claim seems to me to label an explanatory challenge rather than satisfy one.

63. David Owens, *Shaping the Normative Landscape* (Oxford University Press, 2012).

64. Owens is careful to distinguish between representationally accurate blame and apt blame. Blaming J for  $\phi$ ing may be accurate (since J's  $\phi$ ing was wrong) but inapt (since J has an excuse, or J's blamer is hypocritical, or the wrongdoing is *de minimis*). *Ibid.*, pp. 31–34. While the remissive interest is an interest in

the thought that it can be good that it is appropriate to blame someone for their action.<sup>65</sup> That is not because it is good that blame accurately tracks the wrongness of the action, but because patterns of blame are constitutive of the value of our valuable relationships: The value of a friendship, for example, is that it makes certain patterns of blame appropriate.<sup>66</sup> (Owens must assume, like Scanlon, that there is a valuable moral relationship between even strangers, and that this value is constituted by the value of the relevant appropriateness conditions of blame.) Given that facts about the appropriateness of blame can have such intrinsic value, we have an interest in being able to shape these facts. And the fact that we have such an interest means that we have a power — a normative power — to shape these facts about the appropriateness of blame, say, by declaring it inapt to blame someone for their misdeed.<sup>67</sup> In the case of a directed duty, the person owed the duty has

changing the aptness of blame, it seems to me that there is no way for Owens to resist the claim that we have an interest, post wrongdoing, in changing the representational accuracy of blame, and this counts against his picture.

65. *Ibid.*, pp. 25ff. This is in keeping with a more general attitude toward normative facts and values, reflected in the question which initiates Owens's project: "It is possible to ask whether it is in our interests that we are subject to certain duties, whether it is good for us that certain actions count as virtuous or vicious" (*ibid.*, p. 1). I think this is a sensible question to ask of the artificial virtues, but that we should be careful not to ask the question of all normative phenomena. For to ask whether some normative fact is valuable is to presuppose that we can take up a perspective from which to make a clear-headed comparison with a world in which that normative fact is otherwise. My doubts about the coherence of some such inquiries are what inform my careful formulation of the question of Importance.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 39. The central argument for this value-constitutive view of blame is that we must give up a value-tracking view of blame, and that we must do so because the latter view cannot account for the divergence between the accuracy conditions and the aptness conditions of blame. *Ibid.*, pp. 31–34. But it's not clear that we only have these two choices (blame could track something other than the value of a relationship), and it's not clear that a value-tracking account couldn't distinguish between accuracy and aptness (blame could track both the value of the relationship and the permissibility of the relative's actions, so that it may be accurate to blame an action that is impermissible but inapt because the action doesn't impair the relationship — perhaps that is true in cases of hypocrisy).

67. Owens argues that a normative power requires not only a normative interest

the power to forgive the wrongdoer, which amounts to the power to make it inapt for her to continue to blame the wrongdoer.<sup>68</sup>

Owens explicitly says that his account is not a competing answer to the question of Practical Difference.<sup>69</sup> So the question is whether it reveals something more about Importance than the Repair Theory can. Set aside the view's counterintuitive consequences, such as that we require a social convention of forgiving in order to forgive, or that we cannot say much more about whether a person has non-prudential reason to forgive or not. It is also unclear what viable answer we get to Importance, or to the variant of this question that Owens himself raises: whether it is valuable that a wrong act count as wronging someone in particular. On Owens's view, it is valuable that my breaking my promise to Stephanie count as wronging Stephanie in particular because she has, in virtue of that fact, a power to forgive me, which is in turn grounded in the interest she has in changing the facts about whether it is appropriate to blame me. But why is it valuable that she have such a power to change the appropriateness conditions of blame? We are not told. We cannot rely on the thought that her having such a power is constitutive of the value of the moral relationship without ending in an overly tight circle. But we are also told that she has a *normative* interest in the appropriateness conditions of blame, which is to say an interest independent of any non-normative consequences of

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but also a social practice recognizing the authority of that power. It's not clear that this is a helpful move. For on the one hand, it limits the normative powers to cases in which there are in fact social conventions, yet the facts he wishes to explain by way of normative powers exceed these cases. Promises between strangers from different communities is a clear case; see Scanlon (footnote 5) pp. 296–97. On the other hand, if we take the need for a social practice seriously, it must be because normative powers do not in fact have the self-standing power claimed for them to change normative facts. But if social practices can do this work, then they risk making normative powers superfluous.

68. Owens (footnote 63) pp. 58–61.

69. Or, as he calls it, "the constitutive question" about what it is for an act to wrong someone. *Ibid.*, pp. 46–47.



these conditions.<sup>70</sup> So we cannot rely on the thought that such a power ultimately makes our lives go better in some non-normative way, say by easing social cooperation.

It is true that a normative powers theorist can insist that it is simply intrinsically valuable that one is able to change the appropriateness conditions of blame. But such an answer leaves us without any explanation for limitations on that power. Why is it valuable that the wronged person in particular has such a power? Why do we think there must be apology and forgiveness involving the wrongdoer for there to be meaningful exercise of the power to change the appropriateness of blame? And why do we think that forgiveness is less valuable if done for purely prudential reasons? The normative powers view seems incapable of saying more than that a remissive power with this shape is valuable. In contrast, the Repair Theory provides a straightforward answer to Importance and a fruitful framework for answering these questions. Directedness is important in our lives insofar as it provides us with a way to acknowledge and repair relations of recognition. These relations have basic moral value, as I will argue in the next section. Furthermore, the way these relations respond to attitudes toward interests as shown by wrongdoing and subsequent efforts at repair are suggestive for understanding the normative contours of apology and forgiveness.

I have been arguing that directed duties involve us in a directed practice of accountability, and that this practice makes available performances that constitute appropriate ways of recognizing addressees in the wake of wrongdoing. But this whole picture might strike one as too beholden to a scenario in which a duty is violated. It is very appealing to think that the directedness of a duty has some moral significance even in scenarios in which the duty is not violated, and perhaps even where the agent is such that the duty is not in danger of being violated. And so it is tempting to think that the Repair Theory overlooks something important by focusing on wrongdoing.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Directedness is indeed important in these settings, and the Repair Theory helps to understand how. It claims that we can best articulate what is important about saying “I owe it to Stephanie”, where the duty has not been violated, by describing what would appropriately follow violation. That is because by saying this, I implicitly acknowledge that Stephanie has special standing to hold me to account for not fulfilling my duty. But in doing so, I acknowledge that it would be appropriate to recognize Stephanie if I were to violate the duty, since it would be appropriate to carry out those performances made available by the directed practice of accountability which constitute recognition in the wake of wrongdoing. So in acknowledging that I owe it to Stephanie to do what duty requires, I acknowledge that Stephanie has the two-tiered structure of interests that makes such recognition an appropriate response to wrongdoing. By acknowledging that she has that structure of interests and that they make such recognition appropriate, I take those interests seriously, in just the way that recognition demands. And by giving expression to this thought, by saying out loud that I owe it to Stephanie to do my duty, I treat Stephanie as someone with an important interest in recognition. So by having this relational locution available to us, we are able to recognize each other in advance of any wrongdoing, though this form of recognition is interestingly dependent on having available the apparatus for recognizing each other in the wake of wrongdoing.<sup>71</sup>

At this point, it is tempting to think that the Repair Theory is simply a roundabout way to a more immediate deliberative theory of

71. Let me be clear what this dependence amounts to. I am certainly not making the claim that S’s interest in recognition before wrongdoing is grounded in an interest in recognition that comes into being after wrongdoing. Nor am I making the claim that S’s interest in recognition before wrongdoing is grounded in the practice of accountability that follows wrongdoing. Rather, the claim is that the ability to recognize S by means of acknowledging that one owes it to S is grounded in the ability to recognize S after wrongdoing through apology and seeking forgiveness. Another form of dependence endorsed by the Repair Theory is explanatory: what recognition makes appropriate in deliberation is best understood by articulating what it requires after wrongdoing. That claim is taken up in the remainder of the text. I thank an anonymous referee for pushing me to clarify this point.

directedness: If J owes it to S to  $\phi$ , then J ought to recognize S by giving her special place in deliberation. Such an account may be especially tempting in light of Adam Kadlac's example of a parent asking an older boy to reflect on why he should not have hit his younger brother. Kadlac considers the kinds of reflections the older boy might entertain, and argues that some of these could not count as exhibiting a properly relational concern:

If the boy proceeds to reflect on his actions, his thoughts might take a distinctively monadic form. That is, he may consider his past behavior in light of rules whose violation he believes to constitute moral wrongdoing. "It is wrong to punch people in the stomach," he might think to himself. "And I should do what Dad tells me to do."<sup>72</sup>

The suggestion is that the older boy should think about the harm caused to his brother, and perhaps also the feeling of insult; and that in future, these thoughts should be with him as he decides how to act. That provides us with a picture of what it might be for the older boy to give his younger brother special place in deliberation: His brother appears on his "moral radar,"<sup>73</sup> featuring non-incidentally in his thought, so that thoughts of what it would be like to be his younger brother play a special role in his thinking about what to do. When the older boy thinks about what he has done, it is his younger brother in particular who features in the older brother's thoughts: the look on *his* face, the complaint as *he* would raise it, the particular ways in which it would harm *him*.

Similarly suggestive is Michael Stocker's hospital case, which imagines that your friend Smith comes to visit you while you are recovering in hospital, and you thank him for making the effort. Smith objects that he was simply doing his duty:

72. Adam Kadlac, 'Does It Matter Whether We Do Wrong?' *Philosophical Studies* 172(9) (2014), p. 2282.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 2282.

You at first think he is engaging in a polite form of self-deprecation, relieving the moral burden. But the more you two speak, the more clear it becomes that he was telling the literal truth: that it is not *essentially because of you* that he came to see you, not because you are friends, but because he thought it his duty, perhaps as a fellow Christian or Communist or whatever, or simply because he knows of no one more in need of cheering up and no one easier to cheer up.<sup>74</sup>

These examples persuade that an addressee appropriately has some special place in an agent's deliberation without being precise about what that special place is. But let me clear about what I am conceding. It is simply not true that an agent is *obliged* to deliberate in any particular way. We must resist being misled by the familial and intimate contexts of the examples. We care about how our relatives think about us, and you would rightly be concerned about your friendship with Smith on discovering Smith's reasons for visiting. But Smith does nothing wrong insofar as he is moved or thinks himself justified by the Categorical Imperative rather than by thoughts about you in particular. He does not violate any duties of friendship, as is obvious from considering a version of the scenario in which he does not so fully articulate his reasons. You would rightly feel disappointed in Smith if you did learn of his reasons, but you would not be right to blame him, just as there would have been nothing to blame in his conduct had he said nothing.

That is even easier to see in the case of strangers, who may conform with duty for purely self-interested reasons, or out of sheer luck. We are human, and weak, and it is difficult to act on the basis of duty in the way the ideal moral agent does. Sometimes we need the props of reputation and social sanction and self-interest in order to act in the moral way. But when someone does act contrary to duty, then it

74. Michael Stocker, 'The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories' *Journal of Philosophy* 73(14) (1976), p. 462, emphasis added.

becomes reasonable to insist that he meet the higher standard of recognizing those to whom he owed it to fulfill his duty, and that he do so through apology and seeking forgiveness. That does not mean that we can insist on an arbitrarily high standard after wrongdoing, as we would if we required the wrongdoer to compensate for all harm flowing from his action.<sup>75</sup> But it is appropriate and reasonable to ratchet up our standards in the sense of now *requiring* recognition, because that is a sensible and not overly demanding way to guide the wrongdoer toward the sort of behavior which we may expect of him but which he failed to exhibit in this instance.

What I concede then is only that, where an agent commits no wrongdoing, it is appropriate or fitting but not required that he give the individuals to whom he owes duties special place in deliberation. But what is this special place? What exactly is it for another to appear on one's "moral radar", or to act rightly but "essentially because of them"? There are two salient interpretations of these claims: the cognitive claim that since an addressee of a duty features distinctively in the justification of the duty, she should feature specially in the agent's understanding of why he should act according to duty; and the motivational claim that the addressee should play a special role in the agent's motivation to act according to duty. Yet regardless of whether the addressee is to have special place in the agent's justificatory or motivational attitudes, there remains vagueness about what that special place amounts to.

Here, the intimate nature of Stocker's and Kadlac's examples may again mislead us into thinking that moral deliberation is generally concerned with the particularity of the effects our actions have and the particularity of those who are affected. In such cases, it is important to think of the very personalized form of harm that might come to them, and of the very personal way in which we would have to answer to their complaints, and it may be unavoidable that we do so. But not all wrongdoing follows that model, and deliberating in this very

75. Cf. Cornell, "Wrongs, Rights, and Third Parties" (footnote 35).

personalized way can in fact be misleading. In thinking about whether to keep my promise to Stephanie, I may do better to think about the general ways in which breaking my promise might affect someone in her position, rather than thinking about how she will actually be affected, for I may owe it to her to keep my promise even though she will derive great benefits from my breaking my promise.<sup>76</sup>

With this qualification in mind, it is no longer obvious that the deliberative proposal presents a clear alternative to the Repair Theory. What goes wrong in Stocker's case when Smith responds not "essentially [to] you" but to the demands of the Categorical Imperative, or of what is best, is that he fails to give you special place in his deliberation. What the Repair Theory adds to this platitude about special place is a precise description of what is missing from Smith's deliberation: that he fails to see you as the one to whom he must apologize in the event of failing to visit you, and as the one who would have the power to forgive him for this. The theory also provides an explanation of why these thoughts are appropriate: because you have an interest not only in Smith's coming to your bedside, but in Smith's caring enough about your interests that he turns up for this reason, and apologizes if he does not.

#### IV.

Why should we care about recognition at all? The answer is that recognition, as I have defined it, is an important aspect of our moral lives. In particular, it is an element of respect for others. Let's begin with the observation that recognition is something we do ordinarily seek in our moral lives. We learn this by seeing that fundamental aspects of our practice of accountability are explained by postulating an interest in recognition. First, the reactive attitudes, including but not limited to those involved in blame, are responses to the quality of will of

76. This is the significance of Scanlon's under-acknowledged claim that the complaint that grounds a duty must be framed in terms of generic reasons. Scanlon (footnote 5), pp. 204ff. See also Jonker (footnote 1).

others.<sup>77</sup> For example, I feel gratitude toward Stephanie when she aims to act in a way that helps me, say, by going out of her way in order to send me comments on a paper. I do not have that reaction when her self-interested action merely happens to benefit me, as for example when she moves her car and unwittingly frees up a parking space for me. And I excuse someone who has acted wrongly but unintentionally because, given that they did not intend to act in that way, their action does not show disregard for my interests.<sup>78</sup> These facts show that we do care about whether others aim to act in a way that is sensitive to our interests or not. Second, our practice of accountability involves us in actually asking for and communicating excuse and justification and apology, and this shows that we care not only about how others' actions impact our interests, but about whether they care how their actions impact our interests. This is a pervasive concern, since the practice of accountability is a very general one that bears on all our actions and relationships with others.

But does the fact that we do show an interest in recognition say anything about whether it is an intelligible and reasonable interest? Perhaps arguments about the most general features of morality must bottom out in indicating that these features are very basic ones, and that they fit together with other aspects of our moral practice. (The just mentioned facts about the pervasive role of recognition in our practice of accountability would begin to make such a case.) Such tamping down of philosophical ambitions is familiar from other contexts, such as when Nagel says, against the thought that we can only hold someone responsible for what is within his control, that we simply don't do this across a wide range of judgments that we inevitably make;<sup>79</sup> or when Strawson says, against the thought that we could quite generally refrain from resentment and other reactive attitudes, that "a sustained objectivity of inter-personal attitude...does not seem to be something

77. P. F. Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment" (footnote 24).

78. Wallace (footnote 53), pp. 127–136.

79. Thomas Nagel, "Moral Luck" in Thomas Nagel, *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge University Press 1979).

of which we human beings would be capable...".<sup>80</sup> A concern about this sort of argument is that it is not really much of an argument, since it is equally natural to ask whether pervasive features of our moral practice, even those which are inevitable and inescapable features of human life, are mistaken.

In fact, neither Nagel nor Strawson set their ambitions so low. Nagel's argument appears to be that we could not be agents if we did not make certain sorts of judgments — such an argument would be too ambitious in the current setting. Strawson's argument, on the other hand, is not that certain judgments are required for the possibility of agency, but that life without them is "practically inconceivable". This doesn't simply mean that it would be very difficult or even impossible to overcome our tendency to make these judgments, but that a commitment to them

is part of the general framework of human life, not something that can come up for review as particular cases can come up for review within this general framework. ... [I]f we could imagine what we cannot have, viz, a choice in this matter, then we could choose rationally only in the light of an assessment of the gains and losses to human life, its enrichment or impoverishment....<sup>81</sup>

The two thoughts at play here concern the (i) fundamental and (ii) evaluative nature of certain phenomena that we wish to interrogate, but it is important to note how these properties interact in order to make the phenomena practically inescapable. Begin with the thought that the reactive attitudes are fundamental. That is so not just because they feature pervasively in our interactions with others and occupy a central place in our understanding of the significance of those interactions. In addition, Strawson claims, the reactive attitudes make

80. Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment" (footnote 24), p. 12.

81. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

available to us the human relationships that help to give our lives meaning.<sup>82</sup> So they are fundamental in the sense of being part of the framework in which we experience valuable and meaningful elements of human life. But these elements of life, and their value, are intelligible only within this framework — that is the sense in which the reactive attitudes comprise an evaluative phenomenon. The evaluative character of the phenomenon in turn affects the way in which it is fundamental. For the thought that we can step back and evaluate the framework of which the phenomenon is a constitutive part assumes that there is some vantage point from which to make such an evaluation. But if the framework is a part of the basis for our evaluative judgments, then it no longer makes sense to imagine stepping outside of this framework in order to evaluate the phenomenon, as if there were a perspective without from which we could wield the very capacities which we are only granted within the framework.

In sum, we seek a *Strawsonian vindication* of a phenomenon when we aim to show that we are practically committed to it, because it establishes part of the framework in which some of the basic values of human life arise. That work is not entirely descriptive, though part of it is done by showing that the phenomenon we are interested in is present in a very general way in human life. In addition, we should show how the phenomenon enables or opens up space for things we care about, and we should show that it is reasonable by our own lights that we care about these things. That is perhaps the best we can do to affirm that we are not making a deep-rooted mistake. And that is not nothing: Philosophical anxiety about our moral lives arises most urgently because we are unsure that ours is a reasonable or even intelligible way of doing things, rather than because we are unsure that ours is the best or the only way of doing things.

In the case of recognition, part of the burden of Strawsonian

82. Insofar as this claim is true, it is because the reactive attitudes contain judgments about the attitudes of others toward us, and because our relationships are partly about the attitudes of others. These facts are of great relevance to the question of why we value recognition, though they are not to the point of the current argument, which concerns Strawson's style of vindication.

vindication has already been shouldered by noticing that recognition is a general feature of our practice of accountability, since it grounds our reactive attitudes, insofar as they respond to others' quality of will, and grounds our wish to give and seek explicit excuse, justification, and apology. But that is not the only way in which recognition establishes a framework for the enjoyment of valuable human relationships. It is also an important element of the framework in which we pursue other, more intimate relationships with each other: friendships and love, familial relationships, collegial relationships, and so on. What these relationships share with each other, and sometimes share also with our moral relationships, is that they are established by repeated interactions, and include expectations about what future interactions will be like.

For example, the bond in a romantic partnership typically occurs by way of repeated interactions in which the lovers exhibit care for each other and interest in each other, and it gains much of its energy from shared expectations that these interactions will continue into the foreseeable future. As such, relationships like romantic partnerships revolve around the relatives' interests in the attitudes of each toward the other. As a participant in a relationship, one cares about how the other relative thinks about oneself, and one cares about communicating to the other relative how one thinks about her. This concern encompasses the interest in recognition, though it can extend far beyond it, too: One might care not only about whether the other is sensitive to the importance of one's interests, but also about whether the other goes to special lengths in order to support those interests, or regards them as special relative to the interests of others. But that further concern is not relevant to us now. What matters is that recognition plays at least as crucial a role in human relationships as the reactive attitudes; it would be at least as difficult to conceive of human relationships without that concern as to conceive of them without the reactive attitudes.

Strawsonian vindication calls for us to show not only that recognition is fundamental in the sense of grounding these valuable features of human life, but that it fits with the other judgments made from our

evaluative perspective. So we may well ask: What exactly is the importance of the interest in recognition to both moral relationships and special relationships? Why should we not think it merely a symptom of the frailty of the human ego — a natural tendency, admittedly, but one that nonetheless should be expunged if we are to achieve proper self-confidence and independence? One response is that knowing whether another recognizes me can be a helpful tool in my own planning: It provides me with some insight into whether I can rely on and trust that person, whether I can expect them to cooperate with me, whether I should seek them out for deeper relationships, or whether I should instead avoid doing these things. So recognition clearly has instrumental value. Of course, it is not an entirely reliable indicator of whether I can trust someone or expect cooperation or seek intimacy, but it may be as good an indicator as there is. And while there are conceivable circumstances in which I live so isolated a life, or am so unlikely to be involved in reciprocal or repeated interactions with others, that there is no point to using recognition as a guide for what I do, these circumstances are rare to the point of non-existence in the world in which human beings actually live.

But recognition does not only have instrumental value. That is the lesson we learn most vividly in our intimate relationships, where we care about how our intimate relatives feel about us apart from any benefits that may be derived from their attitudes. Why do we care in that way, and is it not just a matter of vanity that we do so? Note that caring about whether another recognizes me is fundamentally different from caring about whether they think I am intelligent or good-looking or have promising career prospects. Those concerns are much harder to defend against the charge of vanity. Caring about recognition is different because it amounts to a concern that the other person sees me as an equal, and sees that my interests count in the same way theirs do. Vanity is a concern to be seen as special, or even elevated, so the concern to be seen as an equal cannot be counted as a type of vanity. Indeed, insofar as the concern to be seen as an equal is a basic moral concern grounded in a belief in the equality of all, it is as safe

from the charge of vanity as any concern I may have for myself could be. Perhaps there is some apparently more modest attitude I may take in which I don't care whether others see me as an equal — that would in fact seem to border on an objectionable arrogance, for by not caring about how others think about me at all I dismiss the importance of their attitudes altogether.<sup>83</sup>

That recognition has this intrinsic value is not surprising when we see it as a key element of respect. But why should we think that respect involves recognition? One reason for doing so is that it makes sense of a plausible claim that is sometimes made about having respect for oneself. The claim is that an over-eagerness to accept forgiveness without adequate apology or redress shows a lack of self-respect. David Novitz writes that people who forgive too easily “do not manifest the right degree of self-respect; they underestimate their own worth and fail to take their projects and entitlements seriously”.<sup>84</sup> And Jeffrie Murphy claims that

the primary value defended by the passion of resentment is self-respect, . . . proper self-respect is essentially tied to the passion of resentment, and. . . a person who does not resent moral injuries done to him (of either of the above sorts) is almost necessarily a person lacking in self-respect.<sup>85</sup>

Murphy goes on to suggest that this person lacks not only self-respect but respect for others, since by failing to take seriously his own moral value, he also fails to take seriously the equal moral value of all persons.<sup>86</sup> Perhaps so, but that doesn't help to explain why the readiness to forgive should count against self-respect. After all, I may forgive my

83. A similar point, that refraining from resenting others may lapse into “Nietzschean” arrogance, is made by Murphy and Hampton (footnote 32), p. 18.

84. David Novitz, “Forgiveness and Self-Respect” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 58(2) (1998), p. 299.

85. Murphy and Hampton (footnote 32), p. 16.

86. *Ibid.*, pp. 18–19.

offender so that both he and I may escape the turbulence of blame and resentment, or because I have cultivated a generous attitude of compassion, all while maintaining that his action was wrong and continuing to recognize the way in which it set back my interests. Murphy might respond that by wronging me, my offender has also insulted me, failing to take my interests seriously and so failing to treat me as an equal. My resentment is a protest against that insult, and I should only withdraw the protest when the insult has been taken back by suitable apology and redress.

But this response does not make clear why I should take the apparent insult seriously, and why I should put any effort into protesting it. If I were secure in my beliefs that I am indeed an equal, then I might notice that my offender's action says something demeaning about my moral value, but I would also see that there is no reason to take it seriously as an indication of my moral value.<sup>87</sup> So could I not forgive in the absence of apology while hanging on to my self-respect? Perhaps in principle — but it is less clear that this makes sense once we take into account the human interest in recognition and suppose that it is an essential element of respect.

Consider for a moment what self-respect must involve, once we allow that respect requires recognition. If I recognize another, then I act in a way that is sensitive to the importance of their interests, and also to their interest in knowing whether one aims to act in a way that is sensitive to the importance of their interests. Turning to recognition of the self, it is clear that I can act in a way that is sensitive to the importance of my own interests, just as surely as I can fail to do so (as I often do), and so I must at least act in the former, interest-sensitive way. The question then is what I must do in order to respond to my interest in caring properly about my interests. When it comes to another, I often require some positive action on their part if I am to learn what

87. A critique of forgiveness that follows much of this line of thought has been developed and defended as an interpretation of Confucian thought by Kwong-Loi Shun, "Resentment and Forgiveness in Confucian Thought" *Journal of East-West Thought* 4(4) (2014), p. 13.

their attitude toward me is. One could be forgiven for thinking that it is different in the case of the self, on the basis that I know my attitude toward myself as surely as I know my other attitudes.

But it would really be a piece of blind optimism to think that I do know my own attitudes. That is the lesson of recent work on implicit bias and on the possibility of inconsistent beliefs, and it is also the long-running preoccupation of psychoanalysis. It would also be naïve to think that I have reliable access to my attitudes about myself. It is an all too conspicuous feature of human life that we undertake self-destructive action without clearly knowing that we do. It can take work to reveal one's estimation of oneself. But more than this, we have seen that recognition involves an acknowledgment of the comparative importance of one's interests in cases where one's basic interests are vulnerable to being set back, and that is true also in the case of self-recognition.

My claim is that when I insist on apology and I am cautious with forgiveness, this is an indication to myself that I have the right attitude toward myself, but also an acknowledgment of the importance of my own interests. Insistence on apology and caution with forgiveness do not just rest on a belief in my own moral value, but they involve an explicit performance that affirms the belief to myself. This encounter may be awkward, but it is valuable. If I never have to confront my offender in this way, then I could quite easily fool myself into thinking that I take my interests seriously, even though I do not. The argument here falls short of the Hegelian claim that recognizing oneself depends upon others,<sup>88</sup> but it does illustrate the value of our practice of accountability in providing social scaffolding for self-recognition.<sup>89</sup>

We are finally in a position to vindicate Feinberg's claim about

88. Cf. Robert B. Brandom, "The Structure of Desire and Recognition: Self-Consciousness and Self-Constitution" *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 33(1) (2007), pp. 127–150.

89. Thus, the argument in this paragraph serves my present purpose but is not enough to reject the skeptical Confucian argument in Shun (footnote 87). For the Confucian may question the importance we place on self-respect, and respect; or he may hypothesize that the sage-like agent would be sufficiently

directed duties: “[t]o respect a person..., or to think of him as possessed of human dignity, simply is to think of him as a potential maker of claims”.<sup>90</sup> I have been arguing that recognition is an element of respect, and that the importance of the directedness of duties is that it establishes ways to recognize each other in the wake of and in advance of violating duty. The conclusion to draw immediately from this is that directedness enables us to respect each other. This is not as strong as Feinberg’s claim, which suggests a constitutive relation: What it is to respect another is to see her as someone to whom duties may be owed. But something stronger can be said than that directedness enables respect, if we are prepared to concede that the practice I have been describing is indeed our own practice.

The question of Importance asks us to say something general about the worth of a basic feature of our practice. That doesn’t force us to adopt a perspective external to our ordinary practice, but it may make it particularly salient that there are other conceivable ways of organizing our moral lives. Perhaps there are ways other than directedness to recognize each other, even if, given the centrality of address in our lives, directedness is a readily available way of doing so. But when we are not asking the distinctly philosophical question of Importance, we are in a different position, and we can accept our directed practice of accountability as our practice, as simply the ordinary way of recognizing each other. This gives rise to a stronger claim about respect and directed duties. I have said that respecting Stephanie requires recognizing her, which requires acknowledging her first-order and second-order interests. But given how our practice of accountability in fact works, to acknowledge that she has that arrangement of interests is just to acknowledge that she could come to have special standing in that practice — that it would make sense to address an apology to her in the event of failing to fulfill a duty grounded in her interests. According to the Repair Theory, that is just what is involved in acknowledging that

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confident in his self-valuation that he has no need for such outward displays of self-worth.

90. Feinberg (footnote 3), p. 252.

I owe it to her to do my duty. So given the way our practice of accountability is, to in fact respect Stephanie and to recognize her is to see her as one who can have special standing in our practice, which is to see her as one to whom I can owe duties.<sup>91</sup>

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