

THE CHARACTER OF THE HYPOCRITE

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ABSTRACT: A distinction is made between *acting hypocritically* and the character trait of *being a hypocrite*. The former is understood as resulting from the employment of a double standard in order to obtain a wrongful advantage, while a particular problem with the latter is that hypocrites do not give trustworthy testimony.

KEYWORDS: morality, hypocrisy, character, testimony

CONSIDER seven hypocrisies. (1) The politician who feigns religious faith to curry favor with the electorate. (2) I criticize you for having poor table manners when you chew with your mouth open, all the while noisily slurping my soup. (3) Ortcutt is a seasoned assassin for Murder Inc., who feels a bit threatened in his position by an up and coming junior colleague. So, Ortcutt takes the opportunity to rebuke this colleague in front of Lepke the Boss, for being squeamish about killing a priest. Ortcutt does this even though he remembers quite clearly feeling similarly squeamish about a similar job early in his own career, about which he has been secretly ashamed ever since. (4) The evangelical pastor Ted Haggard damned homosexuals to Hell for their sins, and yet lost his ministry when it was revealed that he had had a long-standing relationship with a male prostitute (not to mention the methamphetamines). (5) Next, consider Donald Trump who, as a candidate for president, defended the integrity of James Comey when the latter was criticizing Trump's opponent but then later, as President, impugned Comey's integrity when Comey criticized Trump for demanding fealty from him. (6) Think of how many whites have responded to the Black Lives Matter movement by claiming "All Lives Matter": they insist that they are only applying one standard equally to everyone, while they are in fact reinforcing a status quo founded upon a double standard. (7) And, finally, consider the feckless Bates, an irredeemable "Mommy's boy," whose life went into a years-long tailspin upon her death. Toward the end of this inordinate grief, as his mother's sister, his "Dear Auntie," is slowly dying, Bates resentfully criticizes his cousin, the son of his aunt, for not handling his mother's death better.

As introductory commentary on the cases: first, note that the feigning politician is merely claiming possession of something seen as desirable and not blaming anyone for anything. Second, note that when I fault you for poor etiquette, my hypocrisy may have moral fallout, but the context of my hypocrisy is completely non-moral. With regard

to Orcutt, let's assume that he knew exactly what he was doing: his hypocrisy was deliberate and a self-conscious attempt to disparage his young colleague by making him look morally upright in front of Lepke the Boss. Moving on to Ted Haggard, for the sake of argument, let's assume he sincerely believed he was going to hell for his homosexual acts but that he was deeply akratic and simply could not abstain. Next, let's also assume for the sake of argument that Trump is thoroughly self-deceived about his own hypocrisy regarding Comey's integrity: he sincerely believed Comey's integrity to be intact when Comey was criticizing an enemy, and sincerely believed it to be broken when Comey was criticizing him.¹ With regard to "All Lives Matter," implicit biases hypocritically affect the standards by which we judge cases, as they arguably have in many cases of those whites who see "reverse racism" at work whenever their white identity does not work positively in their favor. These implicit biases might genuinely be invisible to those whites, so they need not be self-deceived about them for them to inspire hypocrisy. Finally, let's assume the feckless Bates is barely of average intelligence and is not a reflective person at all. As such, it never occurs to him that his grief for his mother was excessive, nor does he ever even consider a direct comparison of his cousin's behavior with his own. He is not self-deceptive, but rather "blissfully" ignorant and naïve in his hypocrisy.

The literature on hypocrisy is full of similar examples and different explanations for what hypocrisy is and what is wrong with it, many of these will be discussed below. (For another catalog of cases, see Szabados and Soifer 2004: chapter 3.) There are those who say hypocrisy has to be an intentional choice, while others think it can be the result of either self-deception or *akrasia*. Some claim that it involves self-righteousness and false claims of moral or religious standing, while others point to examples that have nothing to do with morality or religion. Others claim that the problem lies in blaming others when one lacks the standing to blame, even though it seems as if one paradigm case of hypocrisy, the politician feigning religious fervor, does not involve blaming of any kind.

The present essay will attempt a catholic theory of hypocrisy, one which attempts to capture its most general characteristics, while distinguishing individual acts of hypocrisy from the character trait of being a hypocrite, and the particular problem that attends it. The bare-bones view of hypocrisy understands it as a vice associated with a failure of justice, as it is one way of failing to treat like cases alike. More specifically, it involves a "double standard." Hypocrisy can be defined as follows:

HYP: Hypocrisy is when, with regard to circumstances of type Φ , an agent attempts to wrongly take an advantage by judging and/or acting in accord with one standard privately, or in one range of situations in which Φ arises, while judging and/or acting in accord with a different standard publicly, or in a distinct range of Φ situations.

In the vernacular, we say that hypocrisy is "not practicing what one preaches," or what happens when "the pot calls the kettle black."²

While we will attend to examples of hypocrisy below, it is worth pointing out that there are two logical structures for hypocrisy and the definition above captures both. When the politician feigns religious faith in front of the crowd, the hypocrisy

here is a one-place predicate: the politician uses one standard in the privacy of his own mind and another in public, or he simply thinks or talks according to one standard while acting in accord with a different standard; this is not practicing what one preaches. All the action is within his own conscience or lack thereof; no one else is involved or is being judged. But in cases in which, say, one person faults another for something the first person is also guilty of, then analysis requires a two-place predicate: one standard for the hypocrite and another standard for the person being faulted; this is when the pot calls the kettle black. In this way, we can see how the idea of “a double standard” is flexible enough to accommodate both ranges of case, for the “doubleness” can be intrapersonal or interpersonal.

Double standards have not come under much scrutiny in the literature on hypocrisy, though Bela Szabados and Eldon Soifer discuss them in a brief chapter of their (2004) book, and R. Jay Wallace brings them up in two footnotes in his (2010) paper on the topic. Finally, double standards come up in a discussion of “pure hypocrisy” by Tony Lynch and A. R. S. Fisher (2012), which we will return to below when the discussion turns to self-deception. Turning here to Szabados and Soifer, they correctly claim that the employment of a double standard alone is not sufficient for hypocrisy, but they seem open to the idea that double standards plus taking some form of immoral advantage is sufficient (2004: 237). To this degree, there is no disagreement with HYP. But they claim that hypocrisy can arise without a double standard being involved, as they do not see famous hypocrites like Molière’s eponymous *Tartuffe* and Dickens’s *Uriah Heep* from *David Copperfield* as employing a double standard as they manipulate others by feigning moral rectitude (2004: 236). This however, is to understand “double standard” as requiring what was just called a “two-place predicate.” If, however, we consider the public/private distinction and the two standards which apply respectively to each of its sides, we can see the way in which *Tartuffe* and *Uriah Heep* actually were employing two standards, and so are captured by HYP.

In footnote 16 of Wallace’s paper (2010: 315), he mentions “double standards” in a way that seems quite friendly to the idea of letting double standards play a central role in the analysis of hypocrisy. He writes:

even if there is not an intention to deceive in the politician’s brazen grandstanding, there is at least an intention to distract attention from the double standards that it involves. This is so because you cannot expect people to take seriously your moralizing pronouncements, or even to listen to them, if it is clear to them at the time that you do not take those pronouncements seriously yourself; and pronouncements that you cannot expect others to take seriously become pointless.

But in footnote 40 (2010: 333), he claims there is only a single type of double standard which yields hypocrisy:

In the paradigm cases I am trying to analyze, hypocrites apply double standards precisely by accepting a threshold for subjecting others to opprobrium that is lower than the threshold they apply to their own case.

Unfortunately, it seems that Wallace’s view would only find hypocrisy in characters like *Tartuffe* and *Uriah Heep* when they happen to be blaming others for faults of

which they too are guilty. Yet their hypocrisy extends beyond this, to the point where they feign moral rectitude without this involving blame or opprobrium at all. And the same holds true for politicians who feign moral rectitude or religious faith when no one is being blamed for anything. Blame will come up again below, but for now, hopefully, it is clear that the idea of “double standards” is flexible enough to accommodate an appropriately wide and yet intuitively apt range of cases of hypocrisy.

Our word “hypocrisy” comes through the Attic Greek verb *hupokrinesthai*, which meant “to speak in dialogue” or “to play a part on the stage” (Crisp and Cowton 1994). Of course, we do not think that actors are hypocrites merely in virtue of their craft, which involves acting one way on the stage and another way in real life. They are not “attempting to take advantage” of anyone by their acting. Nor is all social pretense hypocritical: telling a white lie to avoid hurting someone’s feelings or to keep private business private, is not thought of as hypocritical, as its intention is not to gain any sort of advantage over the person hearing the white lie. As stated in HYP, hypocrisy is the employment of a “double standard” which works for one’s own immoral benefit, and the injustice of failing to act consistently, to treat like cases alike, explains why hypocrisy is morally wrong. People engaged in hypocrisy are typically harder on others than on themselves, they may fault others for traits or behavior they accept in themselves. The advantage or benefit may not actually redound, as some acts of hypocrisy fail to attain their ends, which is why HYP includes the idea of an “attempt.” The benefit which is aimed at by the hypocrisy may be direct (as in the politician gets votes for being religious) or may only derive from the satisfaction of exercising power over others, criticizing them (as in the soup-slurping case, with Bates and his cousin, or with Ronald the hard-partying student discussed below), or simply seeing them do less well than they would absent the hypocrisy. But the benefit must redound to the hypocritical agent: if I wrongly employ a double standard to enrich the coffers of my loved ones, this is unjust and immoral but not hypocritical.

Moreover, the advantage taken by hypocritical behavior must be wrongful, immoral, or vicious. Only this would explain the difference in our intuitions between the genuinely agnostic politician who feigns religious fervor for the sake of currying favor with the electorate and the Jews who feigned Christian belief, even enthusiastically, during the Spanish Inquisition to avoid *auto-da-fé*. The politician is immoral because hypocritically feigning religious faith for political gain is wrong: the politician takes unfair advantage of the trust of the electorate. The situation of the Jews was different, since the Inquisition’s coercion of the Christian faith was already being immorally perpetrated upon innocent Jews. At that time, the double standard adopted by some Jews affected for them a fair advantage taken over their immoral oppressors. Thus, the pretense of those Jews is not considered “hypocrisy.” There is always something wrong with hypocrisy: there is no reason for having the concept of *hypocrisy*, other than to point toward behavior we wish to discourage in ourselves and others.³ To put this the other way around, behaviors, like those of actors on the stage and the insincere Jews, which are morally innocent or blameless and do not count as “hypocritical” despite having a structurally similar psychology to genuine hypocrisy. Hypocrisy manifests injustice and immorality.

Dan Turner (1990) helpfully understands hypocrisy as involving “disparity pairs” of logical inconsistency between word and word, or word and deed, or deed and deed, though we should note that hypocritical thinking and judging is possible as well: hypocrisy need not manifest itself in a public way.⁴ I might silently condemn others for types of action in which I indulge without self-reproach. What is crucial is that hypocrisy involves being “two-faced” or lacking sincerity or seriousness; hypocrites lack integrity, they are “a house divided against itself.” (Being “two-faced” in this way need not be intentional, as will be discussed below.) The relevant double standards may be moral or non-moral, involving, for example, either fairness or conventional etiquette. And double standards may be privately held or publicly stated; they may be employed consciously or unconsciously, and may or may not involve blame. These possibilities will be discussed more below. Note, importantly, that not all applications of a “double standard” count as hypocritical: if a judge treats two similar defendants according to different standards, this is not hypocrisy, however unjust it may be: hypocrisy involves holding oneself to one standard and others to another, or espousing one standard and acting contrary to it, as described by HYP.

Just as we may distinguish discussions of lying from those of mendacity, we may distinguish hypocrisy from being a hypocrite. With regard to the character trait of *being a hypocrite*, it is perhaps a bit surprising that the literature has placed all its emphasis on giving an analysis of *hypocrisy*—acting hypocritically—while hardly attending to the problematic character of the hypocrite. It is common to note that hypocrisy is rife in humanity, as no one is perfect and everyone occasionally fails to “practice what they preach.” Far less common are true hypocrites. When hypocrisy becomes a habituated character trait, generally within a certain realm in a person’s life, so that a person is justifiably called “a hypocrite,” the problems at that point become epistemic as much as moral. To the degree that a person is a hypocrite, that person has a lot in common with Chicken Little, who ran around saying, “The sky is falling,” and the proverbial Boy Who Cried “Wolf.” The trouble with hypocrites is that their word is not their bond, they are not trustworthy. They present false evidence that their public statements about themselves and others are true. They say they will do something which they don’t do, or don’t do what they say they will do; like those who regularly break promises, they ought not to be taken “at their word.” They are committed more to themselves than to the truth, especially when they report on their own behavior, about which each of us is generally presumed to have some sort of privileged access. With regard to the moral epistemology of hypocrites, their testimony is unreliable; their hypocrisy undermines their reliability. And since the assessment of others often depends upon a comparison with oneself, the hypocrite’s testimony regarding others is unreliable as well. So, while hypocrisy is most broadly speaking a moral vice, being a hypocrite comes with a peculiar epistemic vice attached.

Recently, psychologists have found some evidence that the dictionary definition of “hypocrisy” is, in fact, the basis for the moral condemnation commonly leveled at it (Jordan, Sommers, Bloom, and Rand 2017). The OED defines “hypocrisy” as “The assuming of a false appearance of virtue or goodness, with dissimulation of real character or inclinations, esp. in respect of religious life or beliefs; hence in

a general sense, dissimulation, pretence, sham.” This also supports the theory of hypocrisy articulated by Roger Crisp and Christopher Cowton (1994), who argue that what unifies various cases of hypocrisy is a lack of moral seriousness. And while this does, indeed, account for a large swath of the territory, and in particular the case of the feigning politician, it cannot accommodate examples of hypocrisy in which the relevant standards are non-moral, and involve no pretense to being virtuous or morally good in any sense. So, it cannot account for the hypocrisy of you and me at the dinner table unless we moralize etiquette (see, e.g., Stohr 2011). More directly problematic for the “moral seriousness” view is the case of Ortcutt’s complaint about his junior colleague. Here, we find that the accusation is that the colleague is lacking moral viciousness: the problem is supposed to be that the junior colleague is *too* virtuous and good, and that is why Ortcutt faults him. Still, what Ortcutt is doing is criticizing his colleague for something of which he is similarly guilty. While all hit-men are guilty of heinous injustice, Ortcutt is also guilty of being unfair to his colleague: if squeamishness over killing a member of the clergy did not impair Ortcutt’s future “success,” he should not be claiming that it bodes poorly for his colleague. He holds his colleague to a higher standard than he holds himself. Ortcutt’s hypocrisy does involve a lack of seriousness, but not a lack of *moral* seriousness, rather it is just the opposite; he is taking an unfair advantage, but by feigning to be morally worse than he is.

A similar complaint may be lodged against those discussions of hypocrisy which emphasize the misuse of “moral blaming” by hypocrites (Wallace 2010; Fritz and Miller 2015). It is unclear to what degree some of these discussions are simply trying to justify a “non-hypocrisy” constraint on blaming, or the idea that hypocrites thereby lose their standing to blame others. But to the degree that such discussions are meant to be theories of *hypocrisy* or analyses thereof, they seem to go too far in tying hypocrisy to blame. Blame is often understood in these discussions as a way to value or care about the moral ends which are defended by the blame, and so the blame involved in hypocrisy is supposed to be moral blame (Wallace 2010: 327). The case involving table manners and the Ortcutt case both show that the hypocrite’s blame need not be moral blame. Moreover, theories of hypocrisy which (seem to) analyze it in terms of inappropriate blame will miss those cases of hypocrisy in which there is no blaming attitude attached, such as our paradigm case of the feigning politician. Even leaving such cases behind, hypocrites are often disapproving and critical of behavior they engage in; they find fault and criticize others for what they do themselves. But, of course, in cases not involving hypocrisy, we regularly find fault and criticize people for their behavior without thinking they are blameworthy for what they do; perhaps someone innocently knows no better until he or she is corrected by the criticism. And there is no reason to think that hypocrites cannot criticize people in this non-blaming way: if non-hypocrites can fault others in a non-blaming way, then hypocrites can as well.

Nor does hypocrisy have to be both intentional and surreptitious, as has been suggested by Eva Feder Kittay (1982) and, jointly, Bela Szabados and Eldon Soifer (1999). Counterexamples involving blatant and non-deceptive hypocrisy have found empirical verification in studies conducted by Mark Alicke, Ellen Gordon, and David Rose (2013: 678), for whom 57 percent of tested subjects judged as hypocritical

those parents who admonish their children to not take those illegal drugs which they admit to having taken in their own youths. The parents are not trying to “get away” with anything, they are explicitly saying, “Don’t do what I did” and that is sufficient to be judged hypocritical. Notice, however, that the specifics of the case may matter. Imagine a parent, upon finding her teenage child about to take LSD, saying, “Please don’t. I dropped acid at your age and had a bad trip, which was one of the worst experiences of my life.” Contrast this with another parent, who punishes a teenage child for smoking marijuana at a rock concert, when it is well known in the family that the parent did that throughout her own youth, saying, “Just because it wasn’t bad for me, doesn’t mean it won’t be bad for you. You are grounded!” In short, saying “Don’t make the mistake which I made” is different than saying, “Don’t do as I have done”: in the former, there is a single standard which is being applied fairly to everyone, while in the latter case, like cases are not being treated alike.

Moving on to hypocrisy caused by weakness of the will, some have argued that in fact hypocrisy cannot be due to weakness of will (Szabados and Soifer 1999). The argument for this idea, however, seems to require that hypocrisy is not only always intentional, but also requires calculated manipulation. On the contrary, Alicke, Gordon, and Rose (2013: 680–1) have found that subjects judge some cases of weakness of will to be hypocritical. In fact, they tested in particular the reactions to a case analogous to the way the Ted Haggard case was described above, where 83.2 percent of subjects judged a priest as hypocritical for having a single and *akratic* adulterous affair and 91.8 percent judged the priest as hypocritical for repeated such events.

While our examples of hypocrisy have so far involved some form of intentional action, Daniel Statman (1997) convincingly argues that hypocrisy need not be intentional, and Alicke, Gordon, and Rose (2013) have found some confirmation that the folk think similarly. Statman’s claim is that self-deception often leads to hypocrisy (and vice versa), and since self-deception cannot be intentional then, when it leads to hypocrisy, the latter cannot be intentional either. Alicke, Gordon, and Rose had subjects judge two scenarios describing a student, Ronald, who parties far more than he studies. In the first scenario, Ronald knows that he is a poor student but criticizes others whom he believes are not serious students. And in the second version, Ronald truly believes that he is studying as hard as he can, and is again critical of slackers. In the first study, 90 percent of the subjects thought Ronald was hypocritical and in the second, 74.3 percent of the subjects judged him as such (2013: 682).

Arguably however, Statman goes too far. In the end, he follows Mike Martin (1986), concluding that hypocrisy and self-deception are so closely linked that the only people for whom they are distinct are those who are cynical, manipulating, and calculating and that people like this “mainly inhabit novels and plays” and are only rarely found in real life.⁵ This sounds naïve, however, for while there are thankfully few true villains in the world, there are plenty of people who knowingly deceive and manipulate others, and who habitually dissimulate whenever the truth becomes a bit too uncomfortable or inconvenient. There are all too many deliberate and self-conscious hypocrites in the world, even if some of them are hypocrites

about only trivial matters, and the vast majority of these are not morally vicious villains, like Tartuffe, Uriah Heep, or Ortcutt.

However, the empirical statistics work out with regard to how much hypocrisy is caused by self-deception and how much is not, it seems indubitably true that people can be hypocrites without knowing it. (The feckless Bates will be discussed more below.) For example, many of the whites who said “All Lives Matter” in response to the Black Lives Matter movement sincerely think there is no racist motive behind their response, when it seems likely that they are influenced to some degree by an implicit bias against blacks, acting at levels below their consciousness.⁶ Sticking to cases of hypocrisy due to self-deception, people can deceive themselves into thinking they are not guilty of the same faults which they find in others. This sort of partiality toward the self is well known, from aphorisms in the New Testament, such as Jesus saying, “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?” (Matthew 7:3), to Bishop Butler (1900) expounding at length on this theme in his sermon, “Upon Self-Deceit.” This sermon begins with a retelling of the prophet Nathan’s Old Testament charge to King David, “Thou art the man,” finding David guilty of the crime which David himself condemned in another. Such self-deceptive hypocrisy is the case with our contemporary Trump, at least as we are imagining him here: as someone who sincerely believes the facts alone are what have caused him to change his opinion of Comey’s integrity. He need not be aware at all that his change of mind is hypocritical. The same is true of those afflicted by implicit biases, lazy lack of reflection, a general lack of care for one’s rectitude, or a simple lack of adequate intellectual ability.

In their discussion of “pure hypocrisy,” Tony Lynch and A. R. J. Fisher (2012) claim this kind of hypocrisy cannot be captured by the idea of a double standard because pure hypocrisy occurs when people are: sincerely committed to the moral standard they uphold and apply to others, and sincerely believe that their own behavior meets that very same moral standard. Described in this way, Lynch and Fisher worry that morality itself may cause hypocrisy. But given what has been said about self-deception and hypocrisy, there seems to be good reason for thinking pure hypocrites are deceiving themselves about their own rectitude.⁷ Lynch and Fisher explicitly claim that pure hypocrisy does not involve self-deception, because such hypocrites are not protecting themselves but are rather zealously defending morality. But, if “pure hypocrites” are violating their own moral standards, even in the name of upholding them, there is still a double standard involved. The claim that self-deception can be involved in pure hypocrisy is substantiated by Lynch and Fisher’s claim that pure hypocrisy can arise:

precisely because one *is* powerful that one can do what one wants to do, can indulge one’s instincts, or pursue one’s self-interest, or let one’s temperament determine all. To couple this with the vaulting ambition of the crusading moral hero is truly intoxicating (2012: 41).

Consider, for example, that when Dick Cheney was Vice President, he was willing to imprison some people without trial in the name of protecting liberty. Given the way that pure hypocrites can have instincts and interests motivating their behavior

and self-conception, this actually fits the relevant parts of the leading accounts of self-deception now on offer. For example, Al Mele writes that one necessary condition of self-deception is found when:

S's desiring that p leads S to manipulate (i.e., to treat inappropriately) a datum or data relevant, or at least seemingly relevant, to the truth value of p (1983: 370).

And Robert Audi's (1982) analysis of self-deception involves a similar clause involving desire. Such desires can motivate "pure hypocrisy"; sincerity of belief and commitment in the pure hypocrite's mind notwithstanding. Contra Lynch and Fisher's underlying worry, morality is not the cause of hypocrisy. Moral zealots can be hypocrites, but the problem resides in the zealotry, not the morality.

To put this point in another way, let's assume "pure hypocrisy" exists and that moral seriousness can itself lead to hypocrisy. Lynch and Fisher give two forms of pure hypocrisy: when people are furiously committed, regardless of cost, to either their own moral self-preservation or to being a "Force for the Good." The present claim is that these "pure" hypocrites are still best understood as employing a double standard. On the one hand, a person is committed to acting in accord with the dictates of morality, while on the other, he or she is committed to acting in a way that breaks those very dictates—for the sake of upholding them! This has the ring of absurdity to it, but still, if such pure hypocrisy can exist, it need not be morally blameless: choosing the lesser of two evils is still choosing an evil. In some nightmare scenario, one might have to perform some egregious act to prevent some other looming catastrophic disaster. Even though pure hypocrites would presumably do anything to avoid the hypocrisy involved in enacting this lesser evil, they nevertheless have dirty hands (Stocker 1990). The benefits of the egregious act do not make it any less egregious.⁸ These agents have dirty hands because they have chosen to perform an egregious act which is contrary to the principles by which they otherwise live, and this failure to practice what one preaches is one way of having double standards, as discussed above. Pure hypocrites, who pride themselves on being morally upright, ought to condemn themselves for failing to live up to their own principles, by their own lights.

But why is it, one may ask, that the non-intentional character of this hypocrisy does not exculpate the hypocrite? Normally, when people act in non-intentional ways that turn out to be immoral, we excuse the behavior, especially if the person could not have known the behavior was wrong in the circumstance. As we say, "ought implies can," and if a person could not have known something was wrong, then we cannot say the person ought not to have done it. Unintentionally doing the wrong thing may warrant sanction in cases where we determine a "strict liability" for the class of harm done but, other than in cases such as this, acting unintentionally does generally mitigate blame and punishment, if not completely excuse the matter. One range of exceptions to this general rule about blame and intention is when the wrong-doing is the result of negligence, or an omission of something which ought to have occurred. When people are negligent, the wrong-doing may be unintentional, but this is not exculpating, since they are to blame for the negligence which results in the wrong-doing. Since we often blame hypocrites for their

hypocrisy, even when self-deception is the reason why the hypocrisy occurs, we can understand “unintentional hypocrisy” to be the result of a sort of negligence. In general, we do not know ourselves as well as we should and we often fail to be reflective when it would be apt, but when we lack some self-knowledge as the result of negligence, we can be blamed for the hypocrisy which is the final result, especially when the hypocrisy is glaring. This is why Jesus said, “Judge not lest ye be judged” (Matthew 7:1), and why we similarly say, “People who live in glass houses shouldn’t throw stones”⁹ Unintentional hypocrisy that is the result of culpable self-deception or self-ignorance is blameworthy.

Having looked at six of our initial seven cases, we are left with feckless Bates, the rather dull and unreflective Momma’s boy who criticizes his cousin for not handling his mother’s death well. We may stipulate that Bates is not self-deceptive, but that his hypocrisy is the result of his being not very intelligent combined with a lack of self-reflection. One might almost want to say that Bates’s naïve hypocrisy is blameless. Perhaps his hypocrisy is beyond his epistemic ken? In answering this, it seems like we might want to conclude that if this were the case, if his hypocrisy is impossible for him to spot, then he is blameless for it. And to that degree, the same would be true for highly intelligent and reflective people as well. But if it is epistemically possible for one to spot a glaring bit of one’s own hypocrisy, and one fails to do so through laziness or plain thoughtlessness then, as noted above with regard to negligence, the hypocrisy is not blameless. We expect all but the most mentally weak adults to know themselves well enough to avoid blatant hypocrisy, just as we expect anyone capable of making a promise to keep it. And habitual, glaring hypocrisy is inexcusable in all but those who are generally incompetent as adults.

Finally, turning our attention from acts of hypocrisy to the character trait of being a hypocrite, we may begin by noting again that no one is morally perfect or ideally virtuous, so that it seems almost inevitable that everyone, from time to time, engages in small acts of hypocrisy. HYP, from above, applies to us all at one point or another. As Judith Shklar points out (1984: 48), hypocrisy is rife in modern society, and charges of hypocrisy are a dime a dozen.¹⁰ Nevertheless, as Aristotle said, “One swallow does not make a summer”: we do not think that any small, isolated instance of the failure to practice what one preaches turns a person into a hypocrite. We need to distinguish the idea of *acting hypocritically*, or acting in a hypocritical fashion, from actually *being a hypocrite*, where this latter idea involves hypocrisy becoming habitual or developing into a character trait. This distinction can be modeled by the more familiar distinction between acting in accordance with virtue and actually being virtuous or acting from a virtuous disposition: not everyone who acts as a hypocrite acts, as given by HYP, is automatically a hypocrite (Crisp 2015).¹¹ Rather, when we think of characters who seem most clearly to be hypocrites, such as Tartuffe or Uriah Heep, they are people for whom hypocrisy has become their *modus operandi*, their very way of being in the world. The character trait of *being a hypocrite* seems to have bled into every area of their life, which is what makes them so blatantly villainous. Most hypocrites are not that bad, but rather they circumscribe the areas in their lives in which their hypocrisy has become a fixture or firm character trait.¹² Politicians may be hypocrites when it comes to their careers but avoid hypocrisy in their homes, while adulterers may do the opposite.

For reasons to come out below, being a hypocrite in one area of one's life often leads to it spreading into others, but before engaging these psychological issues, let us attend to the harm, *per se*, of being a hypocrite.

As noted, all acts of hypocrisy involve taking unjust advantage over others, and of course these moral problems infect the acts of full-blown hypocrites. So, all the moral problems of hypocrisy remain when considering the hypocrite, but there is a further problem with hypocrites in that *being a hypocrite* makes a person untrustworthy. What hypocrites say is unreliable; their testimony is only accurate by accident as its content is determined by whether or not it is to the advantage of the hypocrite. As noted, most hypocrites are hypocritical in circumscribed areas of their lives, and even in those areas, some hypocrites may be more regularly hypocritical than others: *being a hypocrite* comes in degrees. So, it is more accurate to say that, insofar as a person is a hypocrite, he or she is not to be trusted. When I regularly criticize the table manners of other people as I engage in rude and slovenly behavior, I show myself to be (at best) an untrustworthy judge of etiquette. Or if I were an expert witness at a trial, and I criticize the technique of another expert who happens to disagree with me, when in fact I use the very same technique, then all my testimony ought to be seen as questionable. Perhaps I am merely interested in preserving my reputation or in tarnishing the reputation of those who disagree with me but, in any case, I present evidence that what I say is true when in fact truth-telling is no longer my motivation or my goal. And importantly, it does not really matter what drives a hypocrite's hypocrisy, whether a person is manipulative or self-deceptive or weak-willed or just not very reflective. The fact is that people and their testimony cannot be trusted to the degree that they are hypocrites.

We can gain a better sense of the scope of the untrustworthiness of hypocrites by attending to Annette Baier's (1986) tripartite view of trust. This says that the predicate "trust" implies a structure such that "A trusts B with valued thing C." So, regarding the predicate of "being a hypocrite," we may say, "when B is a hypocrite, B is not to be trusted with valued thing C." Note that the first term in Baier's formula is filled vacuously in the case of the hypocrite: since being a hypocrite involves breaking trust, once B breaks trust with regard to C, once we know that B is a hypocrite, it is not only A who should not trust B with C, no one should trust B with C. (Perhaps needless to say, the claim here is not that only hypocrites are capable of breaking trust, but merely that hypocrites comprise a proper subset of those who do.)

If we understand the logic of trust and being a hypocrite in this way, then we can begin to see the psychology of being a hypocrite is such that it can spread from one area of a hypocrite's life to another. Like a virus, hypocrisy can infect the hypocrite's psyche, and once it has done so, then it becomes harder to contain as the dissimulation can breed more dissimulation in order to preserve itself. The advantages which attend hypocrisy are often lost if the hypocrisy is revealed, while more hypocrisy may yield more advantages. Once one becomes a hypocrite with regard to C, it becomes easier to be hypocritical with everything related to C or similar to C, and eventually of course, anything can be seen as related or similar to everything in one way or another. Hypocrisy breeds hypocrisy as it resists being compartmentalized. This is how we end up with characters like Tartuffe and Uriah

Heep, or people for whom hypocrisy is a way of life, where convenience reigns and truth is of value only insofar as it yields advantages.

Shklar argues forcefully that to some degree we are all hypocrites. She writes, "All of us wrap ourselves in unreality to protect ourselves against people whom we are certainly not crushing, but who we do not choose to see or to help. No one, in fact, can bear all the facts all the time" (1984: 52). This does uncomfortably hit the mark and implies that all of us are hypocrites to this degree, given that protecting ourselves in this way is a character trait most of us have acquired. Perhaps, however, this is morally and epistemically excusable, given the psychological necessity of not "being crushed" by the constant awareness of the achingly great amount of suffering in the world. As long as we help as much as we can, we cannot be blamed for not doing more, nor does it seem fair to hold everyone blameworthy for not reflecting on problems not of our making and beyond about ability to ameliorate.¹³

ENDNOTES

1. The purported self-deception is not much a stretch for the actual Donald J. Trump. In taped discussions with his biographer, Michael D'Antonio, Trump said, "I don't like to analyze myself because I might not like what I see." He also said, "I don't like talking about the past. It's all about the present and the future." Reported by Barbaro 2016.
2. A skeptic may worry that no single analysis of hypocrisy could be adequate to cover the range of cases which are typically called "hypocritical." In response, such a concern would be valid were all the hypotheses which tie hypocrisy to a single analysis were found to be wanting in one way or another. If, for example, the present account of hypocrisy in terms of double standards fails, this is grist for the skeptic's mill. The skeptic, however, shoulders the burden of proof in having to demonstrate the failure of proposed accounts. My thanks to an anonymous referee for raising this concern.
3. Roger Crisp (personal communication) has suggested that the wrong should be considered merely a *pro tanto* wrong, by pointing to a case where someone is a sincere Nazi in the privacy of his or her mind, and yet speaks out against Nazis and even helps Jews in order to curry favor with friends who are not Nazis. My own intuitions are confused by the case, as we have an immoral person feigning morality for the sake of immorally gaining a benefit, which is clearly hypocritical, and yet the behavior is one such that we would not want to discourage it. So, perhaps the wrongs involved in hypocrisy are merely *pro tanto*.
4. Turner seems to go too far, however, in putting no constraints on the disparity pairs, such that any such pair counts as hypocrisy. This leaves him having to say that it "does not seem so objectionable" (1990: 264) to think that when exhausted parents feign interest in their children's games, this amounts to hypocrisy. On the contrary, it does seem quite objectionable to call these parents "hypocritical," which again leads to the conclusion that hypocrisy requires some moral harm or wrong which is absent in these cases.
5. Statman also suggests that since self-deception need not be culpable, hypocrisy born of blameless self-deception is no fault. Again, this seems to overstate the case. If hypocrisy involves double standards which may involve public statements and public behavior, this hypocrisy should be more accessible, at least in principle, to reflective adults in a way that non-hypocritical self-deception may not be.

6. Many think that implicit bias is not something for which people can be held responsible, though I have been convinced otherwise by Holroyd 2012.
7. There is some reason to think that pure hypocrisy involves moral arrogance, which itself has been understood in terms of a “double self-deception.” See Dillon 2004.
8. There are some utilitarians, Brandt 1972 and Hare 1972, who are willing to bite this bullet, insisting that dirty hands must be explained away, though this seems to involve cutting off one’s nose to spite one’s face.
9. In 1385, Chaucer wrote, “Those who are vulnerable should not attack others,” from *Troilus and Criseyde*. In *Don Quixote* 1605, Cervantes wrote,
 If that thy roof be made of glass,
 It shows small wit to pick up stones
 To pelt the people as they pass.
10. “The paradox of liberal democracy is that it encourages hypocrisy because the politics of persuasion requires, as any reader of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* knows, a certain amount of dissimulation on the part of all speakers” (Shklar 1984: 48). Shklar does not build anything like “taking an unfair advantage” into her understanding of hypocrisy, so this particular claim now seems too wide-ranging: being civil to political opponents with whom we vehemently disagree is not a mark of hypocrisy as much as it is a mark of maturity and civility. Still, Shklar makes an important point.
11. There may be no clear line to be drawn between acting hypocritically and being a hypocrite, there may be only a vague distinction between them. So, HYP might be correct as an analysis of *hypocrisy*—acting hypocritically—without anyone being able to say exactly when an individual “crosses the line” and starts actually *being* a hypocrite. Thanks to an anonymous referee for drawing my attention to this.
12. Following the psychologist L. A. Pervin (1994: 108) we may understand a character trait as “a disposition to behave expressing itself in consistent patterns of functioning across a range of situations.”
13. Thanks go to Heather Battaly, Paul Bloom, Roger Crisp, Duncan Pritchard, Maura Priest, Nate Sheff, Don Baxter, Casey Johnson, Hanna Gunn, Ufuk Topkara, Michael Lynch, Josh Knobe, Kyle Fritz, Daniel Miller, and Daniel Statman.

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