

PERSONAL REACTIVE ATTITUDES AND PARTIAL RESPONSES TO OTHERS

A PARTIALITY-BASED APPROACH TO STRAWSON'S REACTIVE ATTITUDES

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STRAWSON'S discussion of the reactive attitudes in "Freedom and Resentment" distinguishes between three types of reactive attitudes: the *personal*, the *impersonal*, and the *self-reactive* attitudes.¹ According to Strawson, personal attitudes paradigmatically reflect our concern that we ourselves are treated with good will and regard; impersonal attitudes paradigmatically reflect our concern that others receive the same good will and regard that we demand for ourselves; and self-reactive attitudes paradigmatically reflect the demand we make on ourselves to treat others with good will and regard.² Thus, when someone insults *me*, I react with the personal attitude of resentment; when someone insults a person sitting next to me on the bus, I react with an impersonal attitude, such as moral indignation or disapprobation; and when *I* am the insulter and later judge my own behavior to be unacceptable, I react with a self-reactive attitude, such as guilt, shame, or remorse.

- 1 For ease of reference, all citations of Strawson's "Freedom and Resentment" refer to page numbers in Pamela Hieronymi's recent reprint in *Freedom, Resentment, and the Metaphysics of Morals*.
- 2 Note that these distinctions do not track Strawson's distinction between the *participant* attitude (or stance) and the *objective* attitude (or stance). Rather, the personal, impersonal, and self-reactive attitudes are all species of participant attitudes for Strawson. Thus, the objective attitudes are properly characterized not as *impersonal* but rather as *nonreactive* in Strawson's view. In this paper, I do not take a stand on exactly how the reactive attitudes as a general class are to be characterized, though I do adopt Strawson's claim that they are responses to the quality of will displayed in our and others' actions (remaining agnostic as to exactly how quality of will is to be understood). And in line with Strawson, I also adopt a relatively permissive approach to which attitudes can count as reactive, assuming (against someone like Wallace in *Responsibility and the Moral Sentiments*) that reactive attitudes can pertain to attributions of responsibility in both the *attributability* and *accountability* senses articulated in Watson's "Responsibility and the Limits of Evil."

A number of philosophers working in the Strawsonian tradition have taken this tripartite taxonomy to reflect a more general commitment to distinguishing between reactive attitude types according to *who* is the target of good or ill will and *who* is the subject displaying good or ill will. Hieronymi's recent characterization typifies this approach, though similar claims can be found in the works of various other prominent moral responsibility theorists.³ Hieronymi writes:

In general, then, a reactive attitude is *x*'s reaction to *x*'s perception of or beliefs about the quality of *y*'s will toward *z*. In the impersonal reactive attitudes, *x*, *y*, and *z* are different persons. In the case of the personal reactive attitudes, the same person stands in for *x* and *z*. In the case of self-directed attitudes, the same person stands in for *x* and *y*.⁴

Notice that if we accept this characterization without emendation, then a personal attitude, such as resentment, always occurs as a reaction to one's own treatment; an impersonal attitude, such as moral indignation, always occurs as a reaction to the treatment of another; and a self-reactive attitude, such as shame, always occurs as a reaction to one's own treatment of others.⁵ One may even be tempted to say that what *makes* resentment different from moral indignation is that the former expresses a kind of self-concern, whereas the latter expresses our concern for others (and so on for other attitude pairs).

However, close readers of Strawson will immediately notice that this way of interpreting Strawson's taxonomy cannot be completely correct, for Strawson himself says that "one can feel indignation on one's own account."⁶ If one can feel indignation on one's own account (i.e., for a wrong done to oneself), then the difference between indignation and resentment cannot be that indignation concerns a wrong done to another, whereas resentment concerns a wrong done to oneself. Likewise, it cannot be the case that indignation *essentially* expresses concern for another, whereas resentment *essentially* expresses concern for the self. Strawson's own remarks thus provide some reason to reassess

3 See Helm, *Communities of Respect*, ch. 3; McKenna, *Conversation and Responsibility*, 66; Wallace, *Responsibility and the Moral Sentiments*, ch. 2; and Watson, "Responsibility and the Limits of Evil," 223n4.

4 Hieronymi, *Freedom, Resentment, and the Metaphysics of Morals*, 8.

5 In this paper, I focus on shame rather than guilt because of what I take to be the special plausibility of claiming that shame can concern the behavior and character of others as well as oneself. In contrast, I believe guilt is linked to making amends in a way that does, in fact, limit it to our own wrongdoing. This said, I am open to the possibility that guilt has a wider scope than I have acknowledged, and I thank an anonymous referee for convincing me that one could reasonably disagree on this point. See note 25 below for further discussion of how the intuitions I have just registered concerning guilt are consistent with my overall proposal.

6 Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment," 121.

the standard interpretation of the distinction between personal, impersonal, and self-reactive attitudes.

In this paper, I propose an improved way of understanding Strawson's distinction between fundamental reactive attitude types, and I argue that this new alternative better captures the core insight animating Strawson's discussion in "Freedom and Resentment." What matters most in Strawson's original framework is not whether an attitude arises as a response to the treatment of the *self* or *another*, or whether an attitude is directed at the *self* or *another*. Instead, what matters most is whether an attitude expresses *partial* or *impartial* concern. Resentment is an attitude expressing partial concern, and this is what distinguishes it from attitudes such as moral indignation, which Strawson calls "impersonal." In contrast, moral indignation arises from our impartial concern that all people are treated with good will and regard, and this impartial character (rather than its other-concerning nature) is what distinguishes it from resentment. In principle, we can have impartial concern both for others and for ourselves, and this insight is at the heart of Strawson's claim that one can have indignation on one's own account.

I also argue that once we distinguish between reactive attitudes according to their partiality or impartiality (rather than according to whether the subject and target of the attitude is the self or another), we are better able to accommodate an important fact about our moral lives; namely, many reactive attitudes have a wider scope than is often acknowledged, and the attitudes that express partial concern play an especially important role in the maintenance of our close personal relationships. For although attitudes like resentment and gratitude (Strawson's "personal" attitudes) *can* reflect the special concern we have for our own treatment, they can also reflect the special concern we have for our close ties. Similarly, attitudes such as shame (Strawson's "self-reactive" attitudes) *can* reflect our interest in our own behavior and character, but they can also reflect the special interest we have in the behavior and character of those with whom we stand in close relationships (and can similarly have third-party manifestations). The traditional characterization of reactive attitude types (adopted by Hieronymi and others) obscures these facts, whereas a bipartite distinction between attitudes that express partial and impartial concern sheds light on them.

The plan for the paper is as follows. In section 1, I briefly review the elements of Strawson's discussion that have motivated the traditional way of characterizing his distinction between basic reactive attitude types, and I highlight some further parts of "Freedom and Resentment" that suggest he may have embraced a different picture. In section 2, I present four cases that motivate the conclusion that the attitudes Strawson calls "personal" and "self-reactive" are, in fact, unified by a common characteristic: they reflect the *partial* concern we have for the treatment and behavior of certain agents (including but not limited to ourselves).

If my assessment of these cases is correct, then attitudes like resentment, gratitude, pride, and shame have a wider scope than the standard characterization of Strawson's taxonomy allows for. In section 3, I consider whether my proposed expansion in scope can be undermined by the claim that a particular kind of concern for the *self* always grounds our partial concern for others. If this is the case, then the attitudes Strawson calls "personal" may always concern our *own* treatment after all, and the attitudes he calls "self-reactive" may always concern our *own* behavior (or character traits, depending on the case). I respond to this objection by showing that the cases discussed in section 2 involve concern for the treatment and behavior of others *for their own sakes* (i.e., independently of any effects on us). Given this, they cannot plausibly be reduced to cases of self-concern. Finally, in section 4, I close with some reflections on how a bipartite, partiality-based taxonomy of fundamental reactive attitude types relates to Strawson's claim that only the "impersonal" attitudes deserve "the qualification 'moral.'"⁷ In saying this, I take Strawson to be expressing his commitment to the idea that morality demands impartiality, for he thinks the *impersonal* attitudes are uniquely "moral" because they express *impartial* demands. While my discussion of the role of partial reactive attitudes in helping us fulfill our relationship-based obligations may be in tension with this part of Strawson's view, it clearly fits his understanding of the nature of the basic reactive attitude types—namely, as expressing either partial or impartial concern.⁸

1. THE STANDARD TRIPARTITE TAXONOMY OF STRAWSON'S REACTIVE ATTITUDES

As Hieronymi's discussion (quoted above) makes clear, it is tempting to think that Strawson appeals to a distinction between *self* and *other* to generate the tripartite taxonomy of reactive attitudes that has become the standard reading of his basic classificatory scheme. And indeed, Strawson's own characterizations sometimes suggest that he intends for the distinction between basic reactive attitude types to be understood in this way. For instance, he writes that the

7 Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment," 121.

8 Though I argue below that the partial reactive attitudes help us fulfill the demands of our close relationships, I hope to remain ecumenical as to the nature of reactive attitudes more generally. For instance, I think reactive attitudes often play communicative roles and often make demands, but they need not always do so. I also remain neutral on whether they rest on or include judgments and on whether they must be expressed or sometimes can be privately held. For a variety of different views on these issues, see Helm, *Communities of Respect*; Hieronymi, "Articulating an Uncompromising Forgiveness"; Macnamara, "Reactive Attitudes as Communicative Entities"; McKenna, *Conversation and Responsibility*; Wallace, *Responsibility and the Moral Sentiments*; and Watson, "Responsibility and the Limits of Evil."

personal attitudes are “essentially those of offended parties or beneficiaries” and that they are “essentially reactions to the quality of others’ wills towards us, as manifested in their behaviour.”⁹ When introducing the impersonal attitudes, he describes them as “reactions to the quality of others’ wills, not towards ourselves, but towards others,” and he initially glosses moral indignation as “resentment on behalf of another, where one’s own interest and dignity are not involved.”¹⁰ Finally, turning to the self-reactive attitudes, Strawson says: “Just as there are personal and vicarious reactive attitudes associated with demands on others for oneself and demands on others for others, so there are self-reactive attitudes associated with demands on oneself for others.”¹¹

Thus, there is good reason to take seriously the idea that Strawson bases his taxonomy of reactive attitude types on the distinction between self and other. His discussion does, at times, seem to suggest that personal reactive attitudes reflect our interest in how others treat us; impersonal reactive attitudes reflect our interest in how others treat others; and self-reactive attitudes reflect our interest in how we treat others. Summarized in a table, this standard picture looks as follows:

Table 1

Personal reactive attitudes	Self-reactive attitudes	Impersonal reactive attitudes
<i>Examples:</i> · resentment · gratitude · hurt feelings · reciprocal love · forgiveness	<i>Examples:</i> · shame · guilt · remorse · feeling obligated · pride	<i>Examples:</i> · disapprobation · indignation · disapproval · admiration · approbation · approval
Reactions to the demands we make on others concerning our own treatment	Reactions to the demands we make on ourselves concerning others’ treatment	Reactions to the demands we make on others concerning others’ treatment

Notably, Strawson himself does not mention all the particular attitudes included in this table. For instance, he does not explicitly mention pride, admiration, or approbation. But Strawson qualifies his discussion by remarking that the reactive attitudes belong to a “field of phenomena” “too complex” to be neatly characterized, and as many scholars have noted, it therefore seems in keeping with the spirit of “Freedom and Resentment” to enrich his list, per the table above.¹²

9 Strawson, “Freedom and Resentment,” 121.

10 Strawson, “Freedom and Resentment,” 121.

11 Strawson, “Freedom and Resentment,” 122.

12 Strawson, “Freedom and Resentment,” 111. Scholars who advocate adding attitudes like pride, admiration, and approbation to the list of reactive attitudes include Clarke, McKenna,

However, as noted above, Strawson also indicates that his initial characterization of the basic reactive attitude types is, in some respects, “misleading.”¹³ As he explains, “one can feel indignation on one’s own account,” and so it cannot be the case that indignation is resentment on behalf of another, as he had earlier claimed.¹⁴ Strawson thus corrects himself by saying that the impersonal reactive attitudes should be understood not as “essentially vicarious” but rather as “essentially capable of being vicarious.”¹⁵ What is important is that they express a kind of “disinterested or generalized” concern—that is, they express “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.”¹⁶ With this in mind, Strawson remarks that the impersonal reactive attitudes are therefore distinctively deserving of “the qualification ‘moral.’”¹⁷ Since they reflect our demand that all people as members of the moral community be treated with good will and regard, they express a distinctively moral demand (at least in Strawson’s eyes).

If Strawson’s initial characterization of a tripartite taxonomy is misleading in these respects, what are we to make of his basic conceptual framework? That is, how should we understand the difference between a “personal” attitude, like resentment, and an “impersonal” attitude, like indignation, and is a better characterization of Strawson’s basic taxonomy of reactive attitude types available to us? I turn now to an articulation and defense of a *bipartite* approach. As I argue, Strawson’s framework is best understood as distinguishing between reactive attitudes according to whether they express *partial* or *impartial* concern (rather than whether they reflect concern for the *self* or concern for *others*). Thus, the attitudes

and Smith, *The Nature of Moral Responsibility*; Helm, *Communities of Respect*; and Watson, “Responsibility and the Limits of Evil.” Against this, Wallace has argued in *Responsibility and the Moral Sentiments* that we should restrict the reactive attitudes to resentment, indignation, and guilt, since only these three attitudes are plausibly part of our practices of holding one another morally responsible (per Wallace). However, as Wallace himself acknowledges, this means we must abandon the Strawsonian claim that involvement in interpersonal relationships is inseparable from susceptibility to the reactive attitudes, since resentment, indignation, and guilt do not seem required for interpersonal relationships *as such* (30). Note that although I do not endorse Wallace’s restriction of the reactive attitudes, my arguments below still bear on his account insofar as he adopts the traditional approach to distinguishing between personal, impersonal, and self-reactive attitudes.

13 Strawson, “Freedom and Resentment,” 121.

14 Strawson, “Freedom and Resentment,” 121.

15 Strawson, “Freedom and Resentment,” 121.

16 Strawson, “Freedom and Resentment,” 121–22.

17 Strawson, “Freedom and Resentment,” 121.

Strawson calls “personal” and “self-reactive” express two different kinds of *partial* concern, while the attitudes he calls “impersonal” express *impartial* concern.

2. AN IMPROVED BIPARTITE TAXONOMY OF REACTIVE ATTITUDES

We have seen that if the standard approach is correct, “personal” attitudes such as resentment and gratitude express our concern with our *own* treatment, and “self-reactive” attitudes such as pride and shame express our concern with how we *ourselves* treat others. Only “impersonal” attitudes can arise as reactions to how *others* treat *others*. However, consider the following four cases, which suggest that both the personal and the self-reactive attitudes are capable of being appropriate responses to the treatment and behavior of certain others—namely, those with whom we stand in close personal relationships:

Case 1: Resentment. Your lifelong best friend discovers that his partner has been having an affair. You are outraged, resent your friend’s partner, and realize that it will be very difficult for you to forgive him for what he did to your friend.

Case 2: Gratitude. Your partner’s colleague nominates her for a community service award. Your partner feels that her hard work often goes overlooked, and you know how much the nomination means to her. You are grateful to your partner’s colleague and decide to express your appreciation when you next see her.

Case 3: Pride. Your brother has a bad habit of snapping at others and making mean or embarrassing remarks when irritated. He regrets this habit and decides it is time to make a meaningful change. After months of incremental progress, you realize that his interactions with others have become noticeably more sensitive and respectful. You know how much effort it took for your brother to change, and you are proud of him for improving.¹⁸

Case 4: Shame. You spend your semester abroad in college with your best friend, Sam. One night, Sam drinks too much and vandalizes a temple.

18 See Philippa Foot’s *Virtues and Vices and Other Essays in Moral Responsibility* for one expression of the traditional view that one must take the object of pride to be one’s own achievement (76). But as cases like this suggest, pride can be an appropriate response to the achievements of one’s loved ones and can play an important role in signaling or expressing a special commitment to one’s loved ones.

You are ashamed of her and worry that you will not be able to have the same kind of friendship anymore.¹⁹

In each of these cases, agents involved in close personal relationships respond to their close ties' treatment and behavior with attitudes that the standard approach limits to situations involving our *own* treatment (in the case of the personal attitudes of resentment and gratitude) and our *own* behavior (in the case of the self-reactive attitudes of shame and pride).²⁰ Recall Hieronymi's claim: "a reactive attitude is *x*'s reaction to *x*'s perception of or beliefs about the quality of *y*'s will toward *z*. . . . In the case of the personal reactive attitudes, the same person stands in for *x* and *z*. In the case of self-directed attitudes, the same person stands in for *x* and *y*."²¹ If we accept this characterization of personal and self-reactive attitudes, then we cannot account for the four cases just described. And yet in each of these four cases, the agents' responses appear to be both intelligible and appropriate. We might even go as far as to say that their responses are exemplary of *good* relationships of the relevant type. In case 1, your inclination to resent your friend's partner is grounded in the strength of your friendship; as a close friend, you *should* be prepared to stand up for him, and your resenting his wrongdoer promotes this end. In fact, if you responded to your friend's bad treatment in the same manner in which you would respond to the bad treatment of a perfect stranger, we might worry that you have revealed a problematic kind of disinterestedness in your friend. Close friends should not react to one another's injuries in the way in which they would react to the injuries of perfect strangers; rather, they should react with the same kinds of attitudes they manifest in cases involving their *own* bad treatment. Similarly, in case 2, given the nature of your relationship with your partner and the special concern you have for her, it is fitting for you to

19 One might object here that you must feel only disappointment in (or perhaps contempt for) your friend unless you see her behavior as somehow reflecting on you. However, given a close enough relationship between the two of you, I do not find this objection plausible. Consider a case where Sam is your sister. Here, there is not a plausible case to be made that her behavior reflects badly on you since your association with her is not voluntary. Still, shame on your part seems like an appropriate response to her conduct, given that you care about her in the right kind of way. Thus, although I think our friends sometimes reflect badly on us (in which cases we may experience self-directed shame), there are other cases in which our shame responses are fully independent of self-evaluation and, instead, reflect our special concern for our close ties.

20 Here I do not mean to deny that shame often (or even paradigmatically) concerns a person's character. But we often take behavior to reveal character, and so, in practice, a particular instance of behavior is often what prompts shame. I also want to remain open to the possibility that we can be ashamed of behavior directly, i.e., independently of what it reveals about character.

21 Hieronymi, *Freedom, Resentment, and the Metaphysics of Morals*, 8.

respond to her benefactor with gratitude rather than with the more disinterested kind of approval that would be appropriate in contexts involving strangers. Cases 3 and 4 should elicit similar judgments. While it would be strange for you to feel ashamed or proud of a stranger, it is not inappropriate for you to feel pride and shame for your siblings, your children, and your close friends, and these reactions can even reveal the depth of your concern for them.²²

Assuming these observations are correct, what conclusions can we draw? We can now articulate the following explanation of *why* attitudes like resentment, gratitude, pride, and shame are appropriate in cases such as the ones described above (and why they have a wider scope than the traditional approach allows).²³ In particular, all four of these attitudes evince *partial* forms of concern, and it is their *partiality* that explains why they extend beyond circumstances involving ourselves to situations involving our close ties. Just as we resent our own wrongdoers because of our special concern for our *own* well-being and treatment, so too we resent our loved ones' wrongdoers because of our special investment in *their* well-being. Just as I am grateful to my own benefactors because I have a special reason to care about *myself*, so too I am grateful to my loved ones' benefactors because I have a special reason to care about *them*.²⁴ Turning to the so-called self-reactive attitudes of pride and shame, we can say

- 22 Further considerations can bolster the judgment that apt attitudes in situations involving our close ties are different in kind from the attitudes we have as third-party observers in situations involving strangers. For one, the attitudes we have toward our loved ones' wrongdoers come with different ranges of dispositions to action than do the attitudes we have toward strangers' wrongdoers, even when the seriousness of the wrongs are the same (e.g., we may be disposed to intervene in situations involving our loved ones in ways that we would not in cases involving strangers). Second, phenomenological differences in the attitudes arguably are different in kind, rather than merely in degree; i.e., apt responses in impersonal cases involving strangers are not simply less intense manifestations of the same attitudes we have in cases involving our loved ones. When a loved one is wronged, our reactive attitudes do not simply feel like more intense versions of the very same attitudes we have toward strangers' wrongdoers, and this reflects the fact that our loved ones matter *differently*, and not merely *more*, to us than do strangers.
- 23 What should we say to someone with the impartialist judgment that, intuitions aside, we ought to react in the same way to *everyone* (even when it comes to our reactive attitudes)? Although full discussion of this exceeds the scope of this paper, one point to make is that this would imply a quite radical revision of the Strawsonian approach since it would imply that we really ought to restrict ourselves to the "impersonal" attitudes alone, even when it comes to our own treatment. I thank Jackson Bittick for raising this issue.
- 24 Here it is important to distinguish between partial concern for another that has an egoistic basis and partial concern for another that does not have an egoistic basis. If I take a special interest in my family member's welfare because of how that person's flourishing stands to benefit me, my partial concern reduces to partial egoistic concern. But I might also have partial concern for my family member *for her own sake*, and I intend for the cases I have

something similar. I have a special interest in my *own* character and quality of will, which explains why I feel pride or shame when I behave especially well or poorly; similarly, I have a special interest in my loved ones' character and quality of will, which explains why I feel pride or shame when *they* behave in ways that are admirable or shameful, respectively.²⁵ More generally, then, what distinguishes attitudes like resentment and gratitude from attitudes like indignation and approval is that the former, but not the latter, are manifestations of partial concern for the well-being of the wronged or benefited party. Similarly, what distinguishes attitudes like pride and shame from attitudes like admiration and disapproval is that the former, but not the latter, are manifestations of partial concern for the agency or character of the attitude's target.²⁶

Notice also that we have a ready explanation as to why partiality is appropriate in each of the four cases: in each case, the agent's personal relationship grounds the appropriateness of a partial response. In case 1, your relationship with your friend makes it appropriate for you to resent his cheating partner, for friends *should* be especially invested in one another's good treatment. In case 2, your relationship with your partner makes it appropriate for you to react with gratitude to her good treatment since intimate relationships entitle us to have special concern for our partners' well-being. Turning to cases 3 and 4, we can similarly say that our relationships with our close ties call on us to respond partially to circumstances that reflect *their* good or bad quality of will, even when our own treatment is not at issue. Indeed, being in a close relationship with someone often requires special concern not only for their well-being but also for the kind of agent they are (the character traits they display in their actions, the quality of will they reveal toward others, and so on).²⁷ Thus, our close relationships entitle

just discussed to be understood in this way; partial concern for our relationship partners for their own sakes grounds the appropriateness of third-party resentment and gratitude.

- 25 As noted in note 5 above, I do not discuss the attitude of *guilt* because I take it to be tied to making amends in a way that (typically) renders it fitting only as a response to one's own wrongdoing. (We typically cannot make amends for others' wrongs.) Is this a problem for my view, given that guilt is the paradigmatic self-reactive attitude for moral responsibility theorists following in the tradition of Strawson? I think it is not, since in my view guilt remains a fundamentally partial response in the sense that it expresses the special concern we all have for our own conduct and moral agency. This said, I am also open to the possibility that one can, in principle, feel third-party guilt if one is in a position to make amends as a third party.
- 26 In distinguishing here between agency and character, I mean to leave room for the possibility that we sometimes care about our close ties' behavior because of what their behavior reveals about their character, while at other times we care about their behavior because we care about their quality of will (independently of our conception of their character).
- 27 Helm invokes a related distinction between partial concern for a person's *well-being* and partial concern for her *identity* ("Love, Identification, and the Emotions"). According to

us to have a special interest both in the well-being and in the agency of our close ties. In the four cases above, these two forms of partial concern are on display.²⁸

If these remarks are correct, then we should understand Strawson’s fundamental taxonomy of reactive attitude types differently than the standard approach. Instead of classifying attitudes according to whether they concern ourselves or others (i.e., according to their objects), we should first classify attitudes according to whether they express partial or impartial concern. An appropriately formulated basic taxonomy, therefore, looks like this:

Table 2

Partial reactive attitudes (reactions of partial concern)	Impartial reactive attitudes (reactions of impartial concern)
<i>Examples:</i>	<i>Examples:</i>
· resentment	· disapprobation
· gratitude	· indignation
· shame	· disapproval
· pride	· admiration
· hurt feelings	· approbation
· reciprocal love ²⁹	· approval
· guilt	
· remorse	

There are a variety of advantages to adopting this bipartite taxonomy. First, as already noted, it allows us to acknowledge that attitudes such as resentment, gratitude, pride, and shame have a wider scope than proponents of the traditional characterization allow. In many cases, our close relationships call on us to respond with these attitudes even when our *own* treatment or behavior

Helm, in loving a person we care not just about her well-being, but also about her identity, just as we take a special interest in our own well-being and our own identity.

28 Could it be appropriate to have shame and pride responses concerning, say, one’s country or other group association? I want to remain neutral on this and commit only to saying that if it is appropriate to feel shame or pride in one’s country or other association, then it is appropriate because partial attitudes concerning these groups can be appropriate for their members.

29 I include the qualifier “reciprocal” here to account for the fact that Strawson recognizes a species of disinterested love that does not belong to the participant stance at all. Strawson writes:

The objective attitude may be emotionally toned in many ways, but not in all ways: it may include repulsion or fear, it may include pity or even love, though not all kinds of love. But it cannot include the range of reactive feelings and attitudes which belong to involvement or participation with others in inter-personal human relationships; it cannot include resentment, gratitude, forgiveness, anger, or the sort of love which two adults can sometimes be said to feel reciprocally, for each other. (Strawson, “Freedom and Resentment,” 116)

is not at issue. Insofar as this is the case, it is important that our taxonomy of reactive attitude types makes room for this. Indeed, allowing for this wider scope should be especially appealing to theorists working in the Strawsonian tradition as it allows us to appreciate the role of partial responses like resentment, gratitude, shame, and pride in our close personal relationships, the arena where Strawson noted that our grip on the importance of the reactive attitudes to our ordinary lives is most secure.³⁰

Second, a bipartite, partiality-based taxonomy can also explain Strawson's claim that "impersonal" attitudes do not, in fact, always concern wrongs done to others. As we have seen, Strawson writes that "one can feel indignation on one's own account." This means that the difference between indignation (an impersonal attitude) and resentment (a personal attitude) cannot be that one is a reaction to a wrong done to someone else, while the other is a reaction to a wrong done to the self.³¹ A partiality-based approach can explain the difference as follows. When I take a disinterested look at my own injury, abstracting from the partial concern for myself that I usually feel, I am able to experience the indignation that I normally feel on behalf of injured parties with whom I have no special ties. That is, though my reactions to my own injuries normally manifest my special interest in my own well-being and dignity (giving rise to resentment), I can, in principle, react to my own treatment in a manner that recognizes the agent-neutral fact that a wrong done to me is morally on a par with the same wrong done to any other person.³² This is compatible with the idea that an agent who never resented wrongs done to herself would arguably lack an important kind of concern for herself; for both the impartial and the partial attitudes are important insofar as they help us to secure different values in our moral lives.³³

Finally, a third advantage of a bipartite, partiality-based taxonomy is that it can be flexible as to exactly *which* attitudes have the capacity to be both self- and other-concerning. Above, I have suggested that the partial attitudes of

30 Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment," 111.

31 Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment," 121.

32 In fact, Strawson himself suggests this in a reply to criticisms from Jonathan Bennett: "I freely reaffirm the central importance of that sense of sympathy, and of a *common* humanity, which underlies not only my indignation on another's behalf but also my own indignation on my own" (Strawson, "P. F. Strawson Replies," 266).

33 This is similar in some respects to Wolf's claim in "Morality and Partiality" that considerations of partiality and impartiality often reflect different (and sometimes competing) values. But whereas Wolf stresses that considerations of partiality sometimes reflect our *nonmoral* values, I highlight cases in which it is at least *prima facie* plausible to think that our reasons to react partially *are* moral (being tied to the special obligations we have to both ourselves and others).

resentment, gratitude, pride, and shame are flexible in this regard for many agents (and so do have a wider scope than is often acknowledged). But nothing in the fundamental characterization of attitudes as either partial or impartial demands that *all* agents manifest the reactive attitudes as both self- and other-concerning. Plausibly, there are some partial attitudes (such as guilt and remorse) that most agents experience only as self-directed.³⁴

3. ANTIREDUCTIONISM ABOUT PARTIAL CONCERN FOR OTHERS

The arguments above have attempted to show that the “personal” attitudes are, in the first instance, reactions of *partiality* rather than reactions of *self-concern* (allowing that we are often partially concerned with ourselves and our own circumstances). Likewise, the so-called self-reactive attitudes are also reactions of partial concern rather than of *self-appraisal* and can (at least in some cases) arise as responses to the behavior of our close ties. Thus, rather than classifying reactive attitudes in terms of *whose* treatment and behavior they concern, we should instead classify them in terms of whether they are expressions of partiality or impartiality.

However, one way of resisting this argument might go as follows. Whereas I began by pointing to cases where attitudes like resentment, gratitude, pride, and shame are appropriate as responses to the treatment and behavior of our close ties, one might argue that partial concern for others in these cases in fact reduces to a special kind of self-concern. If this is correct, then the cases I have offered as evidence for a partiality-based approach can be assimilated into the traditional tripartite model after all.³⁵

We can begin to see how this objection might be articulated by considering what a proponent of the standard approach might say about each of the four cases discussed in section 2 above. In case 1, perhaps you resent your friend’s partner only because you see your friend as such an important part of your life that you regard a wrong done to him as a wrong done to you. In case 2, perhaps you feel gratitude toward your partner’s coworker because the good of your partner is a part of your good such that any benefit conferred on her is also a benefit conferred on you. In case 3, perhaps you are proud of your brother because you identify with him such that you regard his goals as your goals and his accomplishments as your accomplishments. And in case 4, perhaps you are

³⁴ See notes 5 and 25 above for further remarks relevant to this.

³⁵ Arguments like this can be found in the literature on forgiveness, where some scholars defend the view that putative cases of third-party forgiveness are always hidden cases of victim forgiveness. See Murphy and Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy*; Walker, “Third Parties and the Scaffolding of Forgiveness”; and Zaragoza, “Forgiveness and Standing.”

ashamed of your friend's behavior because of the way in which her identity is tied up with your own; her behavior reflects badly on you, and its significance for your appraisal is what explains the appropriateness of your shame response. Analyses of cases such as these suggest that the personal and self-reactive attitudes always involve self-concern or self-assessment after all. As the objection goes, it may look like third-party resentment, gratitude, pride, and shame are possible, but a proper understanding of the cases reveals that this is not so; our reactive responses to our close ties' circumstances are grounded in the relationship those circumstances have to our *own* well-being or appraisal. In other words, they are covert cases of *self*-concern and *self*-appraisal.

To assess the plausibility of an objection of this sort, we should first distinguish more carefully between two ways in which it might be interpreted. How should we understand the idea that our concern for the well-being and appraisal of our close ties reduces to our concern for our *own* well-being and appraisal? First, perhaps the objector means to suggest that we care about the well-being and appraisal of our close ties because of the *instrumental* relationship it has to our own good. The proposal concerning case 4 makes especially plausible an account like this, for in that case, it is plausible to think that the friend's behavior has downstream significance for the agent having the shame response. Plausibly, the agent thinks her friend's shameful behavior will cause others to appraise her negatively, in which case her response to her friend's bad behavior would be grounded in the negative instrumental value she thinks it has for *her*. Alternatively, the objector might instead argue that our concern for our close ties is always grounded in the fact that their good partially *constitutes* our own good. The proposals for cases 1-3 above are especially susceptible to an analysis like this; perhaps we care about the harms, benefits, and accomplishments of our loved ones only because those harms, benefits, and accomplishments contribute to our own overall good as constitutive parts.

Although I do not wish to deny that there are cases in which our reactive responses to situations involving our close ties reduce to self-concern or self-appraisal, I do not think it is plausible to argue that *all* cases of special concern for our close ties are susceptible to this kind of reduction. First, notice that in either version of the reductivist proposal (i.e., the instrumental or the constitutive one), the strength of your reactive responses should be proportional to the good or bad done to *you*. That is, if the reductivist objection is correct, then in the case involving your friend's cheating partner, the strength of your resentment should be proportional to the harm done to *you*, given that (according to the reductivist's proposal) the harm done to *you* is what justifies your resentment. But this is an implausible result. Instead, the strength of your resentment should track the seriousness of the wrong done to your friend;

since the wrong done to your friend is serious, it is appropriate for you to have strong resentment for your friend's cheating partner. This is true even though it is not plausible to suggest the harm done to you was very serious.³⁶

Connected to this is a second point, which is that both the instrumentalist and the constitutivist reductivist objections suggest an implausible story about the *focus*, or *object*, of our concern in cases involving our close ties. Consider first the instrumentalist alternative. Although I want to allow that we *sometimes* regard our close ties as sources of instrumental value for ourselves, the norms governing good close relationships are incompatible with our having only instrumental concern for our close ties. Insofar as we are good friends, good romantic partners, and good family members, our relationships call on us to care about the well-being and appraisal of our close ties, notwithstanding the instrumental utility or disutility it has for us. If this is correct, then it is implausible to suggest that when we respond reactively to circumstances involving our loved ones, our responses are justified solely by the instrumental importance of situations involving our loved ones for *us*. Instead, we should regard the well-being of our close ties not only as instrumentally good but also as intrinsically good, and the story we tell about the justification of our reactive attitudes should reflect this.³⁷

A similar point can be made concerning a constitutive parts version of the reductivist objection. Although a constitutive parts view can accommodate the intuition that we should regard our close ties as intrinsically rather than as merely instrumentally valuable, it too struggles to tell a plausible story about how we should conceive of the special concern we have for our close ties in personal relationships (and about the focus, or object, of our reactive responses in situations involving our close ties). To see why this is so, consider the gratitude you feel toward your partner's coworker in case 2. Although we can certainly imagine circumstances in which this gratitude is an expression of the concern you have for your partner's good *qua* constitutive part of your

36 Note that it is not just the instrumentalist version of the objection that cannot tell a compelling story about the appropriateness of the strength of our reactive responses in cases involving our close ties. Even if the good of a close tie is a constitutive part of my own good, it still is not plausible to suggest that a very serious wrong done to friend, which has a significant impact on his overall good, has an equally significant impact on my overall good. And yet it seems that the strength of my reactive responses should be sensitive to the impact on the friend's overall good rather than to the impact on my overall good.

37 This also helps to explain why we do not usually think of *ourselves* as needing apologies or recompense when our loved ones are wronged. Because our resentment is not justified by a wrong done to *us*, an apology to us has no bearing on our decision to forswear resentment or refuse to forswear resentment for wrongs done to our loved ones. For further discussion of how this affects debates about the nature of forgiveness, see Chaplin, "Taking It Personally."

good, your role as a good relationship partner calls on you to feel gratitude toward your partner's benefactor independently of the import of the situation for your own good. Indeed, an especially loving partner might even feel gratitude in a case where the overall upshot for her is bad (a circumstance which is certainly possible).³⁸ Similarly, in the cases involving pride and shame, even if the good of an agent's close tie turns out to be partially constitutive of the agent's own good, the norms of close relationships suggest that the agent's reactive responses should be able to get a hold notwithstanding that agent's concern for her own appraisal. My pride in my brother should be compatible with the possibility that his accomplishments have no impact on anyone else's evaluation of me, and likewise, my shame in my friend should be compatible with my thinking that her behavior reflects only on her own character and not at all on mine.³⁹ In short, even if we admit that our reactive responses to our loved ones' treatment and behavior sometimes stem from self-concern and an interest in our own appraisal (whether in an instrumental or constitutive guise), they need not always do so, and the norms of our relationships suggest that they should not always do so. Indeed, in many paradigmatic cases involving our close ties, it is implausible to suggest that reactive attitudes apparently manifesting our concern for others in fact manifest self-concern. In light of this, we should conclude that an objection appealing to reductivism about partial concern for others fails.⁴⁰

- 38 It is not difficult to imagine cases of this sort. Perhaps her recognition leads to a promotion that means her partner must take on many more of the household duties and chores, making her partner's daily life much less enjoyable.
- 39 An especially radical version of the reductivist's objection might be based on the view that *all* reasons to be altruistic are grounded in egoistic reasons (e.g., see Brink, "Self-Love and Altruism" and "Impartiality and Associative Duties"). In a view like this, when my special concern for my friend motivates me to resent his wrongdoer, my special concern for my friend is intelligible only in light of the fact that promoting his good treatment contributes to my overall good. But notice that in a view like this, we can never have a reason to promote the well-being of our loved ones at the expense of our own overall good, even in principle. For readers that take this to be an implausible result, this constitutes a further reason to reject a radical version of an egoistic reduction such as the one just described.
- 40 Another kind of objection, which I do not take up at length here, suggests that attitudes like resentment, gratitude, pride, and shame need not even express *partial* concern. Consider, for instance, the possibility of feeling gratitude to a great philanthropist for all they have done to fight disease. Or consider the possibility of feeling ashamed by what human beings have done to the planet. One might object that these seem to be cases in which attitudes like resentment and shame express other-regarding and yet *impartial* concern (since they apparently rest on concern for humanity as a whole). However, I think cases like these are most plausibly interpreted in a way that confirms my main claim that attitudes like gratitude and shame are essentially partial. For when I feel shame for what humanity as a whole has done to the planet, my shame is fitting only insofar as *I* am a member of the

Finally, note that the claims just made are fully compatible with the idea that in close relationships there is a sense in which we take on the good or flourishing of our relationship partners *as our own ends*. For to say that I consider it one of *my* aims for my partner to flourish is not necessarily to say that I think of my partner's flourishing as identical to my own, or even as a constitutive part of my own flourishing. Rather, to say that I take my partner's flourishing as my end may just be to say that I have made my partner's ends my special concern (*viz.*, into something I am especially committed to promoting for its own sake). That is, my concern for my partner's flourishing is *partial*, just like my interest in my own good is my special concern, but this need not involve my ceasing to distinguish between my good and my appraisal on the one hand, and my partner's good and my partner's appraisal on the other. Thus, even if we allow that the reasons we have to care about our close ties are in some respects similar to the reasons we have to care about ourselves (insofar as they are sources of partial concern), it does not follow that special concern for our close ties reduces to a kind of self-concern. Rather, we can grant that caring for our close ties involves "making their ends our own" (on some understanding of this locution) and hold that this is simply to be understood as a gloss on what it is to have partial concern for someone else.⁴¹

4. FINAL REFLECTIONS

My discussion above has aimed to show that reactive attitudes such as resentment, gratitude, pride, and shame are best understood as attitudes of partial concern (either for ourselves or for others), and so they should not be understood as belonging to classes of attitudes defined by the notions of *self* and *other*. In line with this, I have also aimed to show that the appropriateness of these attitudes in cases involving our close ties cannot be explained away by an appeal to the way in which our own well-being and appraisal depend on the well-being and appraisal of others. As I have argued, although it is true that our

group who has damaged the planet. That is to say, my shame is in fact partial, for if *I* were not a member of the group whose behavior is shameful, I would not feel shame. Similarly, if my attitude toward the philanthropist does not express any form of partial concern at all, then I think we should say that gratitude is not fitting, properly speaking (though attitudes like approval and admiration would be).

⁴¹ Though I do not wish to endorse his account of love in particular, Helm's discussion of "person-focused emotions" is helpful in articulating how we may want to understand the partiality involved in partial reactive attitudes. According to Helm, the person-focused emotions that play a central role in love evince a kind of concern that is the same as the kind of concern we have for ourselves, but self-concern is *not* conceptually prior (Helm, "Love, Identification, and the Emotions," 42).

close relationships often involve taking on our close ties' interests as our own, it is nonetheless implausible to suggest that self-concern is the sole justificatory or explanatory basis of our partial responses concerning our loved ones.

In closing, I now want to make one final set of remarks about Strawson's claim that only the "impersonal" attitudes qualify as "moral." Recall that Strawson says the "impersonal" reactive attitudes uniquely deserve the label "moral" because they are "disinterested" and demand "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."⁴² I take this to be an expression of Strawson's commitment to the view that morality demands impartiality. As Strawson sees it, although partial attitudes such as resentment and gratitude should be our starting point for theorizing about *moral responsibility* (since they give us our first grip on what it is to regard one another as morally responsible), there is a different sense in which we use the label "moral" to mark out only the *impartial* demands that we make on (and on behalf of) all people. Indeed, for Strawson, the claim that the "impersonal" attitudes are uniquely *moral* is fully compatible with the claim that our theorizing about *moral responsibility* should start with observations about, as Strawson writes, "what it is actually like to be involved in ordinary personal relationships," where our commitment to impartiality may not always be manifest.⁴³

But this observation leads to a second point deserving of emphasis. Although in this paper I have been arguing that a bipartite, partiality-based taxonomy of reactive attitudes captures Strawson's fundamental concerns in "Freedom and Resentment," there is one respect in which I may be advocating a departure from Strawson; namely, in arguing that our close personal relationships sometimes require us to respond with the partial reactive attitudes, I have suggested that our moral obligations and concerns are not thoroughly impartial. As I see it, attitudes such as resentment, gratitude, pride, and shame help us fulfill the obligations of our close relationships by supporting us in our efforts to care for and attend to one another. Indeed, I have even argued that it would be problematic for an agent's reactive attitudes to register no difference between, say, the wrong done to her partner and the wrong done to a perfect stranger.⁴⁴ While I have not argued for the claim that the obligations of our

42 Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment," 121–22.

43 Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment," 113.

44 Perhaps we do not have obligations to have *particular* attitudes in particular instances (since we cannot directly control our attitudes), but if we frequently fail to show any kind of partial concern *at all* for our close ties, something is morally amiss. Plausibly, failure to have any partial attitudes whatsoever within the context of close relationships indicates a failure of uptake with respect to a person's significance to you.

close relationships are *moral*, I take it to be a plausible one, and this aspect of my view may be at odds with Strawson's suggestion that moral demands are fundamentally impartial.⁴⁵

However, even if I have departed from Strawson in this way, I have not departed from his core understanding of the *nature* of the reactive attitudes, for, as I have argued, Strawson's discussion does suggest that the core distinction our framework of reactive attitude types should capture is the distinction between attitudes that express partial and impartial concern.⁴⁶ Moreover, allowing for a role for partiality in morality may in fact give some readers further reason to embrace the entire account developed in this paper. For instance, proponents of relationship-based obligations should be especially eager to embrace a partiality-based taxonomy of basic reactive attitude types, for if relationships of love, family, and friendship generate special moral obligations and entitlements to prioritize caring for some people over others (as proponents of relationship-based obligations hold), then our reactive attitudes ought to register this fact.⁴⁷ That is, while we should expect to see some other-concerning responses

- 45 However, Strawson's "Social Morality and Individual Ideal" is friendly toward the idea of some role for partiality in morality. There, Strawson argues that morality need not be a system of universal principles, but it does need to be a system whose participants recognize at least some reciprocal claims. Strawson writes: "What is universally demanded of the members of a moral community is something like the abstract virtue of justice: a man should not insist on a particular claim while refusing to acknowledge any reciprocal claim" (11). Elsewhere in the article, Strawson indicates a willingness to embrace the notion of an "internal morality of an intimate personal relationship" (7), and, more generally, he is content with role-based obligations and the partial requirements they sometimes make on us. So this paper's claim about relationship-based obligations and the supporting role of partial reactive attitudes may not be at odds with Strawson's considered understanding of morality after all.
- 46 Is my proposal also compatible with the Strawsonian idea that some attitudes are "generalizations" of others? Are the impartial attitudes "generalized analogues" of the partial ones? While spelling out the precise relationship between partial and impartial attitudes requires a separate paper, I think impartial attitudes may be articulable as generalizations of partial ones and that this may provide fruitful material for developing a broader theory of partial and impartial concern. I thank John Fan for suggesting this to me.
- 47 For some arguments for relationship-based obligations, see Bazargan-Forward, "The Identity-Enactment Account of Associative Duties"; Brink, "Impartiality and Associative Duties"; Darwall, "Responsibility within Relations"; Hardimon, "Role Obligations"; Kolodny, "Which Relationships Justify Partiality?"; Scheffler, "Morality and Reasonable Partiality"; Stroud, "Permissible Partiality, Projects, and Plural Agency"; Svirsky, "Responsibility and the Problem of So-Called Marginal Agents"; Wallace, "Duties of Love"; and Wolf, "Morality and Partiality." (Wallace, however, explicitly denies that relationship-based obligations count as *moral*, so I assume he would resist at least this aspect of my proposal. Similarly, Wolf argues that some relationship-based obligations are founded in impartial moral demands, but other considerations of love and friendship

that manifest impartiality (responses involving attitudes like indignation, disapprobation, approval), we should also expect to see other-concerning responses that reflect our special investment in the well-being and behavior of our close ties (responses involving attitudes like resentment, gratitude, pride, and shame).⁴⁸ Indeed, given that the reactive attitudes can play a variety of communicative, defensive, and even sanctioning roles, and given how much we care about what reactive attitudes others have concerning us, it is no surprise that the partial reactive attitudes play an especially important role in the obligations and entitlements associated with our close personal relationships.⁴⁹

All this said, let me end by stressing that Strawson's claim that the impersonal attitudes are uniquely "moral" does get at an important point—namely, that there is an important moral difference between attitudes that reflect our partial concern for ourselves and others and attitudes that reflect our impartial concern for ourselves and others. Both kinds of attitudes play important roles in our moral lives, but they express our different commitments to general principles of impartiality, on the one hand, and principles that allow for (and sometimes demand) differential concern for ourselves and our close ties, on the other. As I have argued, the attitudes Strawson calls "personal" and "self-reactive" play especially important roles in the aspects of our moral lives that allow for, and sometimes demand, *partiality*. And although these attitudes *can* express the special concern we have for ourselves, they can also express the special concern we have for our loved ones. When we are alive to this feature of the so-called personal and self-reactive attitudes, we see that more fundamental than the distinction between self- and other-concerning attitudes is the

give us nonmoral reasons to be partial, which can compete with morality.) Broad's "Self and Others" also makes a compelling case that relationship-based obligations are a part of commonsense morality (in the form of what he calls "self-referential altruism"), but he does not explicitly commit to the thesis that self-referential altruism is true.

- 48 In some relationships, partial concern may even be *constitutive* (or at least partially constitutive) of the relationships. For instance, perhaps I cannot *be* a friend to someone unless I have differential concern for her welfare, her projects, her character, and so on. Whiting's "Friends and Future Selves" makes this especially plausible (though there are egoistic elements in Whiting's account of concern for friends that I do not wish to endorse). Additionally, though she does not focus on partiality, Svirsky shows how regarding norms and expectations as partly constitutive of close relationships can help to explain the responsibility of so-called marginal agents.
- 49 Consider, for example, how my resenting my friend's wrongdoer might help me defend him and protect his interests by motivating me to hold his wrongdoer to account. Or consider how my pride in my brother might signal my support for him and my commitment to helping him achieve his important personal ends. We can tell similar stories for other attitudes (like shame and gratitude) insofar as they have motivational and social significance for their targets.

distinction between partial and impartial ones. As I have argued, a bipartite characterization of Strawson's fundamental taxonomy of reactive attitudes best captures this important point.⁵⁰

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