*Australasian Journal of Philosophy (forthcoming)*

**Blameworthiness for non-culpable attitudes**

Sebastian Schmidt

University of Zurich

University of Johannesburg

*Abstract*: Many of our attitudes are non-culpable: there was nothing we should have done to avoid holding them. I argue that we can still be blameworthy for non-culpable attitudes: they can impair our relationships in ways that make our full practice of apology and forgiveness intelligible. My argument poses a new challenge to indirect voluntarists, who attempt to reduce all responsibility for attitudes to responsibility for prior actions and omissions. Rationalists, who instead explain attitudinal responsibility by appeal to reasons-responsiveness, can make sense of blameworthiness for non-culpable attitudes. In response, voluntarists could propose a revision of our actual practices. This would lead us into a quite different debate.

*Keywords*: blameworthiness – responsibility – attitudes – belief – voluntarism – rationalism – reasons – forgiveness – apology

**Link to Open Access Full Text:** <https://doi.org/10.1080/00048402.2022.2055093>

**References**

Adams, Robert M. 1985. Involuntary Sins, *The Philosophical Review* 94/1, 3–31.

Basu, Rima 2019. The Wrongs of Racist Belief, *Philosophical Studies* 176/9, 2497–2515.

Calhoun, Cheshire 1989. Responsibility and Reproach, *Ethics* 99/2, 289–306.

Driver, Julia 2017. Wronging, Blame, and Forgiveness, in *Oxford Studies in Agency and Responsibility Volume 4*, ed. David Shoemaker, New York: Oxford University Press, 206–219.

Fischer, John M. and Neal A. Tognazzini 2009. The Truth about Tracing, *Noûs* 43/3, 531–556.

Fricker, Miranda 2019. Forgiveness – An Ordered Pluralism, *Australasian Philosophical Review* 3/3, 241–260.

Hieronymi, Pamela 2001. Articulating an Uncompromising Forgiveness, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 62/3, 529–555.

Hieronymi, Pamela 2004. The Force and Fairness of Blame, *Philosophical Perspectives* 18/1, 115–148.

Hieronymi, Pamela 2006. Controlling Attitudes, *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 87/1, 45–74.

Hieronymi, Pamela 2008. Responsibility for Believing, *Synthese* 161/3, 357–373.

Hieronymi, Pamela 2009a. Believing at Will, *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, Supplementary Volume 35, 149–187.

Hieronymi, Pamela 2009b. Two Kinds of Agency, in *Mental Actions*, ed. Lucy O’Brian and Matthew Soteriou, New York: Oxford University Press, 138–162.

Hieronymi, Pamela 2014. Reflection and Responsibility, *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 42/1, 3–41.

Hieronymi, Pamela 2019. ‘I’ll Bet You Think This Blame is About You’, in *Oxford Studies in Agency and Responsibility Volume 5*, ed. D. Justin Coates and Neal Tognazzini, New York: Oxford University Press, 60–87.

Jacobs, Jonathan 2001. *Choosing Character: Responsibility for Virtue and Vice*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Kavka, Gregory S. 1983. The Toxin Puzzle, *Analysis* 43/1, 33–36.

Kiesewetter, Benjamin 2017. *The Normativity of Rationality*, New York: Oxford University Press.

McCormick, Miriam S. 2015. *Believing Against the Evidence. Agency and the Ethics of Belief,* New York: Routledge.

McHugh, Conor 2013. Epistemic Responsibility and Doxastic Agency, *Philosophical Issues* 23/1, 132–156.

McHugh, Conor 2017. Attitudinal Control, *Synthese* 194/8, 2745–2762.

Meylan, Anne 2013. *Foundations of an Ethics of Belief*, Frankfurt: ontos.

Meylan, Anne 2017. The Consequential Conception of Doxastic Responsibility, *Theoria* 83/1, 4–28.

Nussbaum, Martha 2016. *Anger and Forgiveness. Resentment, Generosity, Justice*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Oakley, Justin 1992. *Morality and the Emotions*, London: Routledge.

Osborne, Robert C. 2021. A Social Solution to the Puzzle of Doxastic Responsibility, *Synthese* 198/10, 9335–9356.

Owens, David J. 2000. *Reason without Freedom. The Problem of Epistemic Normativity*, London: Routledge.

Owens, David J. 2017. *Normativity and Control*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Peels, Rik 2017. *Responsible Belief: A Theory in Ethics and Epistemology*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Portmore, Douglas 2019. Control, Attitudes, and Accountability, in *Oxford Studies in Agency and Responsibility Volume* *6*, ed. David Shoemaker, New York: Oxford University Press, 7–32.

Roberts, Tom 2015. Emotional Regulation and Responsibility, *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 18/3, 487–500.

Rosen, Gideon 2004. Skepticism about Moral Responsibility, *Philosophical Perspectives* 18/1, 295–313.

Scanlon, Thomas 2008. *Moral Dimensions. Permissibility, Meaning, Blame,* Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.

Schmidt, Sebastian 2020a. Responsibility for Attitudes, Object-Given Reasons, and Blame, in *The Ethics of Belief and Beyond. Understanding Mental Normativity*, ed. Sebastian Schmidt and Gerhard Ernst, New York: Routledge, 149–175.

Schmidt, Sebastian 2020b. Rationality and Responsibility, *Australasian Philosophical Review* 4/4, 379–385.

Schmidt, Sebastian 2021. Epistemic Blame and the Normativity of Evidence, *Erkenntnis*, 1–24, online first, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10670-021-00430-9>.

Smith, Angela M. 2005. Responsibility for Attitudes: Activity and Passivity in Mental Life, *Ethics* 115/2, 236–271.

Smith, Angela M. 2013. Moral Blame as Moral Protest, in *Blame. Its Nature and Norms*, ed. D. Justin Coates and Neal Tognazzini, New York: Oxford University Press, 27–49.

Strawson, Peter F. 1962. Freedom and Resentment, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 48, 1–25.

Sussman, David 2018. Is Agent-Regret Rational?, *Ethics* 128/4, 788–808.

Tognazzini, Neal 2020. Silence and Salience. On Being Judgmental, in *The Ethics of Belief and Beyond. Understanding Mental Normativity*, ed. Sebastian Schmidt and Gerhard Ernst, New York: Routledge, 256–269.

Wallace, R. Jay 1994. *Responsibility and the Moral Sentiments*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Watson, Gary 2013. Standing in Judgment, in *Blame. Its Nature and Norms*, ed. D. Justin Coates and Neal Tognazzini, New York: Oxford University Press, 282–301.

White, Stephen J. 2019. Against Voluntarism about Doxastic Responsibility, *Journal of Philosophical Research* 44, 33–51.

Williams, Bernard 1981. Moral Luck, in his *Moral Luck*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 20–39.