It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts.

SHERLOCK HOLMES, *A Scandal in Bohemia*

In philosophy. . . we have to take account of the facts in *all* their bearings; we are not to suppose that we are required, or permitted, as philosophers, to regard ourselves, as human beings, as detached from the attitudes which, as scientists, we study with detachment.

P. F. STRAWSON, "Freedom and Resentment"

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The Strains of Involvement

Neal A. Tognazzini

I.

One of the insights of P. F. Strawson's "fascinating, deep, subtle, important, and sometimes really quite annoying paper" (Allais 2014: 33) is his provocative claim that the center of the moral responsibility universe is not freedom, or the ability to do otherwise, or the utility of punishment, but "our natural human commitment to ordinary inter-personal attitudes" (Strawson 1962, as reprinted in Watson 2003: 83).[1] It is thus misguided, according to Strawson, to attempt to combat our anxiety about determinism either by trying to peer deeper into the metaphysical nature of persons (only to be frustrated that there "still seems to remain a gap" between the exercise of whatever capacity we locate and "its supposed moral consequences" (92)) or by appealing to how efficient our blaming practices are "in regulating behavior in socially desirable ways" (73). Instead, Strawson suggests that we can regain our confidence simply by remembering, and acknowledging, that we are human—not any easy thing for a philosopher to do (especially one who does philosophy "in our cool, contemporary style" (77)), but a requirement for avoiding the varieties of skepticism that are a perennial hazard of the profession.

In this particular case, the relevant aspect of "our common humanity" (85) is "the general structure or web of human attitudes and feelings" (91) that makes possible,

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[1] All subsequent quotations from Strawson are from the version that appears in Watson 2003.

or perhaps even constitutes, ordinary interpersonal relationships. This structure includes attitudes that "rest on, and reflect, an expectation of, and demand for, the manifestation of a certain degree of goodwill or regard on the part of other human beings towards ourselves" (84), a demand that presupposes, or perhaps constitutes, the moral responsibility of those to whom it is addressed. Since this framework of attitudes is simply "given with the fact of human society" (91), being reminded that we are human should be enough to quell our anxiety about determinism—at least until we stop playing backgammon and head back into the philosophy classroom.

Ever since the publication of Strawson's essay, work on moral responsibility has moved forward by moving backwards. If moral responsibility is to be understood, as Strawson suggested, in terms of the ways we hold one another responsible, then the only way we'll be able to determine the capacities required for morally responsible agency is by examining our practices, including our susceptibility to the moral emotions and the ways we tend to respond to wrongdoing. Thus there has appeared much insightful work on the moral emotions and their connection to responsibility and, more recently, on the nature and ethics of blame more generally.[2] In this way, the problem of free will—that is, the problem of determining which capacities for control are required for morally responsible agency, and whether those capacities can be had in a deterministic world—has become just one of many philosophical issues that fall within the purview of theorizing about responsibility and blame.

And since the impulse to theorize is unavoidable and irresistible, competing conceptions of blame, responsibility, and freedom have been proposed, each quite compelling and seeming to capture something deep and important about our moral life. As someone who is chronically unsure of what to think about most philosophical problems, I view the amount of sophisticated work in this area as a Good Thing. Nevertheless, I think we haven't succeeded in going far enough backwards on the conceptual journey that Strawson initiated. He encouraged us to "keep before our minds. . . what it is actually like to be involved in ordinary inter-personal relationships" (77), and to an extent we have heeded this advice well—witness the great recent work on friendship, love, forgiveness, moral anger, and so on; but I worry that we've let our theoretical commitments too heavily influence our sense of what interpersonal relationships are like. To invoke my epigraphs, I worry that we may be guilty of making facts suit theories, rather than the other way around—or of not taking account of the facts in all their bearings.

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[2] On the moral emotions and their connection to responsibility, see in particular Wallace 1994. On the nature and ethics of blame, see the essays in Coates and Tognazzini 2013.

I'm not *confident* that this has happened, but it does seem to me that too little recent work examines the intricacies of interpersonal relationships *without a theoretical agenda*, and that's what I aim to do in this chapter (which is not to say I don't have theoretical *aspirations* for the work to follow, some of which come out toward the end). Perhaps the work that has come the closest to doing this is a handful of recent papers that attempt to classify some of the ways in which we hold one another responsible—I think in particular of the work of Coleen Macnamara (2011), David Shoemaker (2011), and Angela Smith (2007, 2013). The helpful distinctions that they have introduced—and my own indecision about which framework to adopt—are part of why I think we might continue to make progress in this area by returning to Strawson's sage advice. So, in what follows, I aim to provide an (inevitably incomplete) answer to the question: "What *is* it actually like to be involved in ordinary interpersonal relationships?" My hope is that the data collected from a sincere attempt to answer this question will help to inform our thinking about blame, moral responsibility, and freedom.

<div align="center">2 .</div>

But how can we approach this question? I can think of at least three ways, each with disadvantages. The first is through simple introspection, essentially transforming the question into, "What are *my* interpersonal relationships like?" This can certainly be a useful starting point, but how useful it is for the larger philosophical project will of course depend on the variety of one's own experiences, and on how well they represent the experiences of everyone else. Since analytic philosophers tend to prize a rather robotic brand of rationality—no doubt approving of Sherlock Holmes's sentiment that "the emotional qualities are antagonistic to clear reasoning" (Doyle 1986: 135)—I worry quite a bit about this first way of approaching the question.

Another way to approach the question would be to concoct imaginative examples specifically designed to highlight philosophically intriguing and puzzling phenomena—in the tradition of the venerable *Gedankenexperiment*. This is a bit more promising, but the imaginative examples a philosopher manages to concoct will likely still be a function or a reflection of his or her own idiosyncratic experiences. Moreover, there's a real worry that this method would simply amount to translating one's own theoretical biases into narrative form, and then using that narrative to argue for the plausibility of one's own theoretical biases.

Finally, one could use the imaginative examples of others. Or, more specifically, the imaginative examples of others who have a deep and broad understanding of human nature and a knack for presenting "the ever-interesting and ever-illuminating

varieties of case" (Strawson 1962: 79). In other words, one could look to classic works of fiction. This is what I propose to do.[3]

As I say, this method is not without its disadvantages. For one thing, I can't entirely get myself and my theoretical biases out of the picture; they will be present in the specific works I choose, and in the passages I choose to highlight. For another thing, I read, think, and write in English, so the works I choose may not have, as they say in the social sciences, broad ecological validity. Still, the rationale behind choosing *classic* works of literature isn't to put forth an *argumentum ex erudito*, but rather to tap into the minds of authors whose works, we can be reasonably confident, *do* speak to a wide variety of audiences. So, I'm optimistic that the portrait of interpersonal relationships to be sketched in the following pages will, despite being incomplete, at least be a recognizably human one.[4]

For the sake of this chapter, I've decided to focus on three works of obvious psychological depth that span nearly 350 years of British literature: Shakespeare's *King Lear* (1608/1623), Jane Austen's *Persuasion* (1818), and Graham Greene's *The End of the Affair* (1951). I plan to take them up in chronological order, briefly explaining the story for those who may be unfamiliar, drawing attention to passages and themes that strike me as especially evocative, and finally taking some tentative steps toward characterizing and classifying the various "strains of involvement" they reveal.[5]

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[3] There is perhaps a fourth way to approach our question, which is to study the results of research in fields like social psychology and anthropology. I have no doubt that this would be illuminating in various ways, but since much of the nuance of interpersonal relationships takes place inside the head (or heart, if you prefer that metaphor), the relevant research would have to be viewed through two layers of interpretation: the first to determine what's going on inside people's heads (or hearts) that could explain the data, and the second to determine what that might tell us about the nature of interpersonal relationships. Looking to classic works of fiction allows us to bypass the first layer of interpretation. There's also a worry that the relevant social scientific results would already be theory-laden in a way that would encumber our examination.

[4] Bernard Williams surely has it right when he says (1993: 13), "In seeking a reflective understanding of ethical life, for instance, [philosophy] quite often takes examples from literature. Why not take examples from life? It is a perfectly good question, and it has a short answer: what philosophers will lay before themselves and their readers as an alternative to literature will not be life, but bad literature."

[5] Perhaps it is only because I'm a homebrewer that this particular pun on Strawson's phrase suggested itself to me. I realize that this is not what Strawson himself meant by the phrase. Here is how he uses it: "We look with an objective eye on the compulsive behaviour of the neurotic or the tiresome behaviour of a very young child, thinking in terms of treatment or training. But we can sometimes look with something like the same eye on the behaviour of the normal and the mature. We have this resource and can sometimes use it; as a refuge, say, from the strains of involvement; or as an aid to policy; or simply out of intellectual curiosity. Being human, we cannot, in the normal case, do this for long, or altogether. If the strains of involvement, say, continue to be too great, then we have to do something else—like severing a relationship" (80).

3.

King Lear is actually two connected stories: one about a king and his three daughters, the other about an earl and his two sons.[6] The king is old (and, two of his daughters think, senile) and in the crucial opening scene we see him preparing to retire and divide his kingdom among his daughters and their husbands (so that he can "unburdened crawl toward death" (1.1.43)). Allegedly as a means for determining who should get which share of the kingdom, Lear solicits public professions of love from his daughters. Goneril and Regan, his two eldest, play along for the sake of their inheritance, reaching the height of hyperbole: "A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable" (1.1.66), "I am alone felicitate in your dear Highness' love" (1.1.83–84). On the other hand, Lear's youngest daughter, Cordelia, finds herself unable to "heave [her] heart into [her] mouth" (1.1.100–101), so when asked what she can say to outdo her sisters, she simply says: "Nothing, my lord" (1.1.96). Lear is incredulous, and Cordelia tries to explain why she is unwilling to play her sisters' game: "Why have my sisters husbands if they say they love you all?" (1.1.109–110). In response, Lear is furious (or, at least, acts as though he is furious) and, his pride wounded, he completely disowns Cordelia, in spite of the protestations and exhortations of the Earl of Kent (perhaps the only true hero of the play).

This opening scene sets the play in motion, and when Lear eventually discovers that his eldest daughters were simply pretending (or, perhaps better, they were humoring him), he finds himself without a place to stay in the midst of a wild storm, during which he is forced to confront the truth about himself—that he is human despite being king—and temporarily loses his mind.

Meanwhile, Edmund, the illegitimate son of the Earl of Gloucester, has been lying to his father and his (legitimate) brother Edgar in a successful attempt to drive them apart so that he (Edmund) will "if not by birth, have lands by wit" (1.2.191). Gloucester's loyalty to Lear leads the king's eldest daughters, now drunk with power and both angling for the love of the cunning Edmund, to label Gloucester a traitor, with the result that his eyes are plucked out. When he realizes that he has been tricked and betrayed by his illegitimate son Edmund, he wanders off toward the Cliffs of Dover, where he plans to commit suicide, but is saved from despair by Edgar, in disguise.

Gloucester and Lear meet in Dover, just as Lear is beginning to come back to his senses, and just as Cordelia is arriving back on English soil with the French army (the King of France took her for his wife in the opening scene after Lear disowned

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[6] All quotations from *King Lear* will be from the Folger Shakespeare Library edition of 2005, but they will be flagged in the text by Act.Scene.Line numbers.

her). Cordelia and Lear reconcile but are taken prisoner by Lear's eldest daughters and Edmund during the ensuing battle. The death of nearly every major character in the play soon follows. Gloucester dies off stage after hearing the truth from Edgar (his heart cannot handle the combination of joy and grief), Regan is poisoned by Goneril out of jealousy over Edmund, but Edmund is then slain in a duel with his brother Edgar, leading to Goneril's suicide. Cordelia is secretly murdered by one of Edmund's henchmen, and Lear himself is then overcome with grief and dies. Even Kent, who has stayed by Lear's side in disguise throughout the play, voices an intention to commit suicide out of loyalty: "I have a journey, sir, shortly to go; my master calls me. I must not say no" (5.3.390–391).

To borrow a phrase from Whitman, this play "contains multitudes," and I do not pretend to have either the understanding or the skill to offer any Cavellian reflections on it.[7] Instead, I want to spend some time looking at the interpersonal dynamics of the opening scene, which, despite being fanciful, is still rather homely and not so tragically hyperbolic as some of the later scenes.

Begin with the contrast between Goneril and Regan, on the one hand, and Cordelia, on the other. Perhaps Lear's eldest daughters are partly motivated by selfishness to put on such a grand show of love, but also relevant is the lens through which they see their father. When they are alone at the end of Scene 1, after Cordelia has been disowned and Kent has been banished for daring to challenge Lear about it, we read this exchange (1.1.334–348):

> GONERIL: You see how full of changes his age is; the observation we have made of it hath not been little. He always loved our sister most, and with what poor judgment he hath now cast her off appears too grossly.
> REGAN: 'Tis the infirmity of his age. Yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself.
> GONERIL: The best and soundest of his time hath been but rash. Then must we look from his age to receive not alone the imperfections of long-engraffed condition, but therewithal the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them.
> REGAN: Such unconstant starts are we like to have from him as this of Kent's banishment.

Goneril and Regan see Lear as an old man, someone who can no longer be taken seriously, and who must instead be humored.

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[7] But Cavell certainly does. See ch. 10 of his 2002, which is a sprawling but brilliant essay.

This is in contrast to Cordelia, who finds herself unable to treat him that way, and thus feels bound to speak the truth, though it is less than he apparently wants to hear. To a reader of the scene, Cordelia's response can easily seem bizarre, and one might reasonably wonder why she doesn't simply give Lear what he seems to want. After all, who hasn't sacrificed a bit of honesty for the sake of someone else's feelings or vanity? But to do that in this instance, especially given the context of her being the last of the daughters to speak, would require her to reconceive her relationship with her father, to begin thinking of him as less a father, and more a child himself. This reorientation she is unable to undertake.

Kent, too, sees Lear as Cordelia sees him (Kent even says that he has loved Lear "as my father" (1.1.158)), but his view of the matter is made manifest not so much by plain honesty (though he does offer that), as by a willingness to challenge the king's decision to disown Cordelia:

> KENT: . . . To plainness honor's bound
> When majesty falls to folly. Reserve thy state,
> And in thy best consideration check
> This hideous rashness. Answer my life my
> judgment,
> Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least,
> Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sounds
> Reverb no hollowness. (1.1.165–173)

As a reward for his trouble, Kent is given five days to pack up his things and then leave town forever. Kent explicitly says that his challenge to Lear is motivated by "duty" (1.1.164) and "honor" (1.1.165), but it seems equally plausible to understand him as acting from love and genuine concern, something that Goneril and Regan not only do not have, but perhaps even cannot have because they no longer see in Lear a man capable of being loved in that way.

As she prepares to exit with the King of France, Cordelia exchanges harsh words with her sisters (I imagine Cordelia's benedictions dripping with sarcasm and snark):

> CORDELIA: The jewels of our father, with washed eyes
> Cordelia leaves you. I know you what you are,
> And like a sister am most loath to call
> Your faults as they are named. Love well our
> father.
> To your professed bosoms I commit him;
> But yet, alas, stood I within his grace,

    I would prefer him to a better place.

    So farewell to you both.

REGAN: Prescribe not us our duty.

GONERIL: Let your study

    Be to content your lord, who hath received you

    At Fortune's alms. You have obedience scanted

    And well are worth the want that you have wanted.

CORDELIA: Time shall unfold what plighted cunning hides,

    Who covers faults at last with shame derides.

    Well may you prosper. (1.1.311–327)

This rather admirably restrained exchange nevertheless reveals the emotions of Lear's daughters: Regan and Goneril disdainfully look down on their younger sister as foolish and presumptuous; Cordelia can hardly hide her anger at their manipulative professions of love. As if on cue, immediately upon Cordelia's exit Regan and Goneril turn to the matter of how Lear is to be handled.

I hesitate to turn too quickly to theory before considering the other books (Holmes is constantly whispering in my ear), but let me at least briefly try to organize my thoughts, and explain why I've chosen to focus on this opening scene in particular. Recall that our guiding theme is responsibility, and in particular the varieties of responsibility that are made manifest through our ordinary interpersonal interactions. Strawson himself was concerned to distinguish what he called "the objective attitude" from "the participant attitude." He thought of the former as a lens through which we see another person "as a subject for what, in a wide range of sense, might be called treatment; as something certainly to be taken account, perhaps precautionary account, of; to be managed or handled or cured or trained" (Strawson 1962: 79) and the latter as the lens through which we see another person as a "term of moral relationships" (86), which provides the background against which we experience "the non-detached attitudes and reactions of people directly involved in transactions with each other"—which, for Strawson, includes "gratitude, resentment, forgiveness, love, and hurt feelings" (75). Subsequent theorists have continued to see these attitudes (or, at least, some of them) as of central importance, and have put them at the heart of theories of responsible agency.

The opening scene of *King Lear* is a rich source of data for understanding all of the above concepts: the objective attitude, the participant attitude, resentment, gratitude, love, hurt feelings, blame, holding responsible, and more. I'll return to these issues once we are nearer the end of the chapter. (I'm not trying to generate suspense; only to exercise caution.) For now, let's turn to a discussion of *Persuasion*.

4.

In stark contrast to *King Lear*, Jane Austen's *Persuasion*, her last novel, is a love story with a happy ending. It begins seven years after its heroine, Anne Elliot, has been persuaded by Lady Russell (a family friend who is like a mother to Anne, but who has just a touch too much pride and concern for social rank) to break off her engagement to Frederick Wentworth, then a commander but now a captain in the Royal Navy. Now, at twenty-seven, Anne still lives with her prideful father, Sir Walter Elliot, who pays little attention to her except perhaps to despair of her ever marrying ("her word had no weight, her convenience was always to give way;—she was only Anne" (8)).[8] She, however, still loves Wentworth and has felt intense pangs of regret over her previous decision.

When her father runs into financial trouble and is forced to rent out his house and move to smaller lodgings in Bath, he serendipitously becomes landlord to Captain Wentworth's sister and brother-in-law, which brings Wentworth back into Anne's life. Though the narrator spends much of the time describing what's inside of Anne's head, Anne is a good enough judge of character that we are able to come to some understanding of what Wentworth is thinking, too. He is coolly civil to her, which just wounds her more ("His cold politeness, his ceremonious grace, were worse than anything" (138)), and the feeling he had seven years ago of being "ill-used" (52) when she broke off the engagement seems not to have diminished:

> He had not forgiven Anne Elliot. She had used him ill; deserted and disappointed him; and worse, she had shewn a feebleness of character in doing so, which his own decided, confident temper could not endure. She had given him up to oblige others. It had been the effect of over-persuasion. It had been weakness and timidity. (114)

As the novel progresses, however, Wentworth's position softens as the result of one pivotal event: while flirting with Louisa Musgrove (sister-in-law to Anne's younger sister Mary), Wentworth is persuaded, in spite of himself, to catch Louisa as she jumps down a steep flight of stairs, but she jumps too soon and is seriously injured in the fall. In the aftermath of this event—Anne keeps calm in the emergency and takes a leadership role in helping Louisa, who is eventually nursed back to health—Wentworth comes to appreciate both the strength of Anne's character and the vulnerability of his own.

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[8] All quotations from *Persuasion* are from the annotated edition of 2010.

Thus softened, Wentworth finally expresses his renewed feelings for Anne in a letter confessing the unconscious constancy of his love ("he had imagined himself indifferent, when he had only been angry; and he had been unjust to her merits, because he had been a sufferer from them" (460)). It had taken a moral insight for his unconscious feelings to be brought once again to mind:

> There [at Lyme, where Louisa fell], he had learnt to distinguish between the steadiness of principle and the obstinacy of self-will, between the darings of heedlessness and the resolution of a collected mind. There, he had seen every thing to exalt in his estimation the woman he had lost, and there begun to deplore the pride, the folly, the madness of resentment, which had kept him from trying to regain her when thrown in his way. (462)

Wentworth here comes to the Aristotelian conclusion that a "character of decision and firmness" (166) is a virtue opposed by two vices rather than one: weakness at one end of the spectrum and obstinacy at the other. As Anne puts it earlier in the novel, Wentworth has learned that "a persuadable temper might sometimes be as much in favour of happiness, as a very resolute character" (224). This serves to combat his resentment, and reopen his eyes to Anne.

Again, let me draw attention to passages and themes that seem to be especially relevant. To begin, compare the attitudes of Anne and Wentworth toward her earlier decision to break off the engagement. We've just seen that Wentworth was deeply hurt by the decision, harboring resentment about it for the intervening seven years, which distorted his moral perspective and led him to a naïve appreciation for strength of character. Anne, on the other hand, despite the unhappiness that she suffered as a result of her decision, looks back on it with a bit more poise. After Anne and Wentworth have reunited, she offers these reflections to him:

> I have been thinking over the past, and trying impartially to judge of the right and wrong, I mean with regard to myself; and I must believe I was right, much as I suffered from it, that I was perfectly right in being guided by the friend whom you will love better than you do now. To me, she was in the place of a parent. Do not mistake me, however. I am not saying that she did not err in her advice. It was, perhaps, one of those cases in which advice is good or bad only as the event decides; and for myself, I certainly never should, in any circumstance of tolerable similarity, give such advice. But I mean, that I was right in submitting to her, and that if I had done otherwise, I should have suffered more in continuing the engagement than I did even in giving it up, because

I should have suffered in my conscience. I have now, as far as such a sentiment
is allowable in human nature, nothing to reproach myself with. (470)

Wentworth admits to not being as ready to forgive Lady Russell for the part that
she played in his unhappiness, but Anne "did not blame Lady Russell" (54). She and
Anne had each done what seemed best to them at the time, and to go against the
guiding of one's own moral compass would have been even worse than to give up the
man she loved. Moreover, it seems that Anne, in her maturity, has learned to distin-
guish between persuasion that amounts to manipulation, on the one hand, and the
mundane and benign sort of persuasion that is constantly practiced in relationships
between people who genuinely care about the well-being of each other. Whereas
Wentworth perhaps sees Lady Russell's interference as falling into the former cat-
egory, Anne does not.

Jane Austen has long been appreciated for the subtlety with which she addresses
virtue and moral transformation (see, e.g., Emsley 2005, Goldman 2013, and Ryle
1966), and the topic of responsibility is surely in plain sight in *Persuasion*. It seems
clear that Wentworth blames Anne—whatever exactly that comes to—for break-
ing off their engagement, and although Anne herself explicitly says that she doesn't
blame herself (or Lady Russell), she must have dealt with feelings of guilt and regret,
and the second-guessing that always follows momentous decisions. Wentworth's
resentment only disappears when he comes to the twin realizations that, first, what
he used to think of as Anne's weakness only looked like weakness because of his
morally naïve understanding of strength of will,[9] and second, he is also susceptible
to persuasion. These realizations are mutually reinforcing: the first renders Anne
less worthy *of* blame, while the second renders Wentworth less worthy *to* blame.

Again, though, let me delay further philosophical speculation until we are nearer
the end of the essay. It is my hope that the data gathered from all three works of fic-
tion will be even more suggestive when examined together.

5.

Let's turn, finally, to the most personal and introspective work of the trio: Graham
Greene's *The End of the Affair*.[10] The main character of this book, Maurice Bendrix,
is also the fictional author of the book, so *The End of the Affair* is in fact two books
containing exactly the same words: it's a novel by Graham Greene, and also a memoir

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[9] Compare section II.8 of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.
[10] All quotations from this book are from the Penguin Classics edition of 2004.

by Maurice Bendrix. The opening paragraphs contain the seeds of everything that follows:

> If hate is not too large a term to use in relation to any human being, I hated Henry—I hated his wife Sarah too. And he, I suppose, came soon after the events of that evening to hate me: as he surely at times must have hated his wife and that other, in whom in those days we were lucky enough not to believe. (1)

Sarah is the woman Bendrix loves (yes, and hates) and with whom he has had a passionate affair that lasted for several years but has now ended; Henry is Sarah's "poor silly" (2) husband to whom she has "an enormous loyalty" (4) despite the affair; "those days" are the days encompassing the Second World War; and "that other" turns out to be God.

The story revolves around one particular event that occurred on June 16, 1944, ten days after D-Day. Bendrix and Sarah are in his London flat (the affair has not yet ended) listening to the V1s flying overhead, and when Bendrix runs downstairs to check on his landlady, his building is hit by a bomb and he is knocked unconscious (or, perhaps, he gets killed; it's intentionally left ambiguous). We find out later, when Bendrix is reading that day's entry in Sarah's diary, which he has obtained through a private investigator in 1946, that Sarah heard the bomb and went to check on Bendrix, only to find him lying under a door, apparently dead. Hysterical, she ran back to his room, knelt down, and despite her atheism, she bargained with God:

> I shut my eyes tight and I pressed my nails into the palms of my hands until I could feel nothing but the pain, and I said, I will believe. Let him be alive, and I *will* believe. Give him a chance. Let him have his happiness. Do this and I'll believe. But that wasn't enough. It doesn't hurt to believe. So I said, I love him and I'll do anything if you'll make him alive, I said very slowly, I'll give him up for ever, only let him be alive with a chance, and I pressed and pressed and I could feel the skin break, and I said, People can love without seeing each other, can't they, they love You all their lives without seeing You, and then he came in at the door, and he was alive, and I thought now the agony of being without him starts, and I wished he was safely back dead under the door. (76)

With an impressive and puzzling loyalty to the God in whom she has apparently only now begun to believe (though it comes out later that she had been baptized Catholic as a child), Sarah keeps her promise, and this night in 1944 marks the end of the affair.

She doesn't tell Bendrix about her promise, though, and he assumes she has merely tired of him and moved on to another lover. The first half of the novel chronicles his pain, his jealousy, and his hatred as they have arisen over the two years since that fateful night. Eventually, and prompted by a conversation with Sarah's husband Henry, Bendrix hires a private investigator. This investigator is able to get ahold of her dairy, at which point Bendrix finds out about Sarah's promise, and how Sarah has never stopped loving him and has secretly suffered for the past two years even as her faith in God has become genuine and deep. Her diary reveals her pain, her constancy, and her spiritual transformation, and when Bendrix realizes that she has continued to love him, he begins making plans for them to run away together (he thinks it's silly to keep a promise made to no one). But Sarah is resistant and in any case is deathly ill, and it is only after she dies about a week later that Bendrix finds out the source of her resistance via a letter that had gotten lost in the mail:

> I'm not going to come away with you Maurice, dearest Maurice. I love you but I can't see you again. . . I believe there's a God—I believe the whole bag of tricks, and there's nothing I don't believe, they could subdivide the Trinity into a dozen parts and I'd believe. They could dig up records that proved Christ has been invented by Pilate to get himself promoted and I'd believe just the same. I've caught belief like a disease. I've fallen into belief like I fell in love. I've never loved before as I love you, and I've never believed in anything before as I believe now. I'm sure. I've never been sure before about anything. When you came in at the door with the blood on your face, I became sure. Once and for all. Even though I didn't know it at the time. I fought belief for longer than I fought love, but I haven't any fight left. . . I pray to God He won't keep me alive like this. (120–121)

A series of seeming miracles toward the end of the book, together with Bendrix's knowledge of Sarah's spiritual transformation, leads him into a sort of confused and grief-filled faith, too, despite himself.

> I sat on my bed and said to God: You've taken her, but You haven't got me yet. I know Your cunning. It's You who take us up to a high place and offer us the whole universe. You're a devil, God, tempting us to leap. But I don't want Your peace and I don't want Your love. I wanted something very simple and very easy: I wanted Sarah for a lifetime and You took her away. With Your great schemes You ruin our happiness like a harvester ruins a mouse's nest: I hate You, God, I hate You as though You existed. (159)

This last line is especially meaningful when read in the context of an entry in Sarah's diary. Struggling with her own faith, she says, "I thought, sometimes I've hated Maurice, but would I have hated him if I hadn't loved him, too? Oh God, if I could really hate you, what would that mean?" (89).

I've quoted several passages at length from this book because the sequence of events—the affair, the bomb, the promise to God, the end of the affair, the pain, the discovery of the diary, the death of Sarah, the faith in hatred—is much less important than the psychological turmoil. Still, let me point to a few larger themes.

To start, note the connection Bendrix draws at the end of the book between hatred and acknowledgment. He says, "I hate You, God, I hate You as though You existed" (159), and the implication is that hate is an emotion that presupposes the existence of the thing hated. It sounds a bit paradoxical, but Bendrix comes to a certain sort of faith in God (not *trust*, of course, but acknowledgment) precisely because he understands the presuppositions of his hate. For him, hate comes first. In fact, one major theme of the novel seems to be the way in which paradigmatically opposed emotions, particularly love and hate, are in reality much more similar to each other than either is to something like indifference.[11]

As for Sarah, she is a compelling combination of strength and weakness. She is loyal to Henry and she takes her wedding vows seriously enough that she won't leave him ("I do love Henry in my shabby way" (93)), but that loyalty isn't quite enough to stop her from cheating on him. Likewise, she is faithful to the promise that she makes to God, but throughout the two years that she and Bendrix are apart, she nearly gives into her desire for "ordinary corrupt human love" (99) a number of times, and is only narrowly saved from breaking her promise. What saves her from these temptations, however, is not her own compunction but, apparently, God himself. At one point during their separation we learn that Sarah has made up her mind to leave Henry, but then Henry unexpectedly comes home upset and contrite about the ways he's failed her as a husband, and she finds, in that moment, that she can't bring herself to leave. She says, "I won't leave you. I promise." And then her thoughts continue: "Another promise to keep, and when I had made it I couldn't bear to be with him anymore. He'd won and Maurice had lost, and I hated him for his victory" (95).

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[11] Bendrix: "If we had not been taught how to interpret the story of the Passion, would we have been able to say from their actions alone whether it was the jealous Judas or the cowardly Peter who loved Christ?" (19). Compare, too, Harry Frankfurt's (1988) discussion of how lying and truth-telling are more similar to each other than either is to bullshitting (which he conceives of as indifference to the truth).

But there are many other occasions, too, when God seems to be intervening to ensure that Sarah keeps her promise: she is taken over by a coughing fit at one point when she and Bendrix are about to kiss during a moment of weakness, for example, and then of course there's the fact that just when Bendrix finds out the truth and Sarah's willpower is completely drained, she dies. Though Sarah doesn't explicitly recognize these obstacles as divine interventions, it's clear that Graham Greene intends the reader to recognize them as such, as though God is on constant guard against Sarah's inevitable lapses, until he finally just takes her away.

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The strains of involvement are many and varied: as Strawson says, we relate "as sharers of a common interest; as members of the same family; as colleagues; as friends; as lovers; as chance parties to an enormous range of transactions and encounters" (p. 76). The aim of looking to works of fiction is, in part, to display a sampling of this range of encounters, a sample that is recognizably human, if incomplete. We'll now take a few tentative steps toward abstraction, always with one eye on the bedrock—the actual human relationships—that the abstraction is meant to help us understand in the first place.

A useful place to begin is with Strawson's distinction between the participant attitude and the objective attitude, which I briefly mentioned above.[12] Whatever words we use, the idea is that it's one thing to take someone seriously as an autonomous individual, someone of whom we can make demands and who can make demands of us, someone with whom we can deliberate and debate, and quite another thing to look upon someone as not suited for ordinary interpersonal relationships, as someone who needs to be managed, treated, or controlled (Strawson 1962: 79). Of course, one of the disadvantages of having convenient words to characterize a dichotomy is that it can foster the myth that there is no gray, whereas actual human relationships are always gray. In this case, I think our books can help to illustrate Strawson's distinction and help us to see some of its complexities.

Consider again the contrast between Regan and Goneril, on the one hand, and Cordelia and Kent, on the other, in the way they view Lear. The first pair sees him as a senile old man, someone to be humored and manipulated, whereas the latter pair continues to see him as an autonomous individual in his own right, someone to whom Cordelia owes honesty and an explanation, and someone with whom Kent

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[12] Strawson says that the tension between these two perspectives might be described as a tension "between our humanity and our intelligence." He's certainly right when he goes on to say that "to say this would be to distort both notions" (80), but nevertheless those words do give one some sense of what he's getting at.

presumes to quarrel and debate.[13] Likewise, consider the attitude that Bendrix and Sarah have toward God before they fall into faith—Bendrix: "I find it hard to conceive of any God who is not as simple as a perfect equation, as clear as air" (5)—and the attitude they take later in the novel, which is a robustly second-personal attitude (Darwall 2006) that makes possible both hatred (in Bendrix's case) and the offering of promises (in Sarah's case). For both characters, involvement—hatred, offering a promise—comes first (before belief) but it's the sort of involvement that constitutes an *acknowledgment* of God as a possible "term of moral relationships" (Strawson 1962: 86), and hence leads them both, in the end, to a sort of faith.

One general way to characterize this "involved" perspective is in terms of a "willingness to take a chance on some form of reciprocity." This is Christine Korsgaard's phrase (1992: 312), though she goes on to say that this willingness "is the essence of holding someone responsible" and that further claim strikes a false note in my ear, since "holding" seems to me much more overt and active than does merely inhabiting a perspective.[14] But reciprocity, or at least the possibility of it, does seem to go to the heart of what Strawson calls the participant stance—not that those with whom we are involved will always reciprocate, but that the expectation of reciprocity is not misplaced. (Thus I would have no objection to saying that this willingness is the essence of *regarding someone as* a responsible agent, at least in some sense of 'responsible'. See Smith 2007 for a nice treatment of this distinction.) As Dickens put it, to take up this attitude toward others is to see them as "fellow-travellers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys" (Dickens 2003: 36).

Of course, to suspend the participant attitude and adopt the objective attitude is not, despite the name, to look upon someone merely as an *object*—at least, not entirely. Take Goneril and Regan, for example, who have given up on seeing Lear as fully suited for ordinary interpersonal relationships. (As does everyone whose parents live long enough to become children again.) Still, they are exercised by his actions in a way that they wouldn't be by a mere object. For example, they are annoyed and incensed by what they see as his foolish demand to keep a retinue of one hundred knights. We might say that their continuing to regard him as capable of foolishness, and their susceptibility to frustration and annoyance, despite having given up any attempt to reason with him, indicates an irrational or incoherent attitude on their part. But I think it makes more sense simply to suppose that it's possible to make morally significant judgments about a person's behavior and

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[13] Compare Strawson: "If your attitude towards someone is wholly objective, then though you may fight him, you cannot quarrel with him, and though you may talk to him, even negotiate with him, you cannot reason with him. You can at most pretend to quarrel, or to reason, with him" (79).

[14] A point noted by Coleen Macnamara (2011) among others.

character even if that person is no longer seen as a proper participant in interpersonal relationships.

One way to make this distinction is to say that Lear's daughters think he is still capable of being morally appraised even though he is incapable of the sort of reciprocity and moral understanding one can reasonably expect from an ordinary adult.[15] And moral appraisal of this sort does seem importantly distinct from and independent of the ways we engage with other ordinary adults around their misguided behavior—not least because appraisal need not be a form of "engagement" at all.

Gary Watson (1996, 2011) has called the perspective from which we make judgments about whether certain faults of character are attributable to an agent the *aretaic* face of moral responsibility, to be contrasted with the *accountability* face, which is inextricably intertwined with the notion of being responsible *to* one another, where this implies a distinctive sort of second-personal competence and second-personal interaction. I am not now interested in whether we ought to label these two perspectives with the term 'responsibility'. Instead, I'm interested in the contrast between attributability and accountability, and the connection of these two to Strawson's participant attitude. Based on the foregoing discussion, it seems to me that the participant attitude begins somewhere between a willingness to see actions or vices as properly attributable to agents, on the one hand, and a willingness to hold them accountable for those actions or vices, on the other. If I'm right about the way that Goneril and Regan view their father, for instance, then though they are willing to attribute foolishness to their father (an attribution which leads naturally to emotions such as frustration and annoyance), they are unwilling (or, perhaps, mostly unwilling, for these things certainly come in degrees) to see him as someone with the capacity to reciprocate. They must decide how he is to be handled (they've thus given up reasoning with him) but he hasn't quite lost his mind enough for him to be regarded merely as a "bit of the environment" (Watson 2011: 317).

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[15] Angie Smith has pointed out (in personal correspondence) that if we genuinely take Regan and Goneril to be making a *moral* assessment of Lear's character when they call him "foolish," then this indicates that they continue to hold him to certain normative expectations (in the terminology of Wallace 1994), and thus continue to see him as "answerable" in some significant sense. If so, then perhaps there is a deep tension in their attitudes after all, since their criticism presupposes that Lear is responsible for his foolishness (else it wouldn't be right to call it "foolishness"), whereas the way they treat him indicates that they see him as more like a little kid (whose foolish behavior we wouldn't feel right calling "foolish"). These are difficult issues to sort out, but my inclination is to agree that Regan and Goneril have certain normative expectations of their father, while denying that the having of normative expectations presupposes seeing the object of those expectations as "answerable" in any sense that implies the sort of reciprocity involved in the participant stance.

Cordelia and Kent, on the other hand, are so offended at the other daughters' behavior precisely because they still view Lear as capable of such reciprocity, and thus they see it as disrespectful to treat him as though he is not. Bendrix also gives us a nice illustration of this contrast when articulating why Sarah had never been in love with Henry:

> There was more genuine welcome, I believe, in my moments of hate and distrust. At least to me she was a person in her own right—not part of a house like a bit of porcelain, to be handled with care. (11)

Hate and distrust, as ugly as they can be, are nevertheless ways of taking someone else seriously, as "a person in her own right," and Bendrix is here claiming that Sarah had never been in love with Henry precisely because such romantic love requires each party to view the other with a sort of willingness for reciprocity, of which Henry appears incapable.

Of course, it's one thing to take up the participant attitude toward others—and thus be "poised" for reciprocity[16]—but it's another thing actually to interact with others in the various ways that characterize ordinary interpersonal relationships. What can we say about the forms this interaction takes? At one extreme, perhaps, we have the scene in *King Lear* where Gloucester gets his eyes gouged out as a punishment for treachery. A bit (but not much) closer to the sane end of the spectrum is the scene where Lear disowns Cordelia and banishes Kent as a punishment for disrespect. Closer to home are the scene where Cordelia exchanges harsh words with her sisters before leaving with the King of France and the "cold politeness" that Wentworth expresses toward Anne, clearly motivated by his resentment.

All of these ways of engaging seem to lie in the region of what Watson calls the *accountability* face of responsibility. That is, they are ways of actually trying to *hold* someone accountable for what they have done. Watson says that "the notion of 'holding' here. . . involves a readiness to respond to [people] in certain ways" (2004: 274), as opposed merely to making a judgment about them, but I'm inclined to think that to hold someone accountable *just is* a matter of response, and not merely a readiness to do so. In any case, it's the response bit that's crucial here (and I'd add that the response must be overt in some sense, at least in a sense that allows Wentworth's giving Anne the cold shoulder to count as overt). What of the emotions of resentment and indignation, though? Are these ways of holding someone accountable? Here I am inclined to agree with Coleen Macnamara when she says, "Unexpressed

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[16] 'Poised' is an apt word that I've borrowed from Macnamara 2011 (p. 96).

attitudes do not hold others accountable because they are not communicative acts" (2011: 92). Communication does seem central to the notion of accountability (though I don't think it needs to be unexpressed attitudes that are communicated). Macnamara then goes on to classify the unexpressed reactive attitudes as forms of moral appraisal that serve to hold another *responsible*, even though they aren't ways of holding another *accountable*, but this sounds to me like a distinction without a difference.[17] Still, the unexpressed reactive attitudes are, as Strawson argued, central components of the participant attitude, so it will be important to consider how they fit in. First, however, I want to consider another sort of interaction that seems to me to fall short of accountability even though it involves overt communication.

The clearest case of what I have in mind is perhaps that of Kent challenging Lear's decision to disown Cordelia. I've already mentioned this scene to illustrate that Kent takes up the participant attitude toward Lear, and that certainly is implied by his actions in this scene, but now I want to focus on his actions. Kent begins his protest with a profession of love and honor (1.1.156–159):

> KENT: Royal Lear,
>   Whom I have ever honored as my king,
>   Loved as my father, as my master followed,
>   As my great patron thought on in my prayers—

It is clear from the context that these are not hollow words uttered in deference to a king, but sincere qualifications that help us to understand the spirit of his challenge. He goes on (1.1.167–169): "Reserve thy state, and in thy best consideration check this hideous rashness." And when Lear responds, "Out of my sight!," Kent pleads, "See better, Lear, and let me still remain the true blank of thine eye" (1.1.179–181). Lear continues to resist, and Kent persists:

> KENT: Kill thy physician, and they fee bestow
>   Upon the foul disease. Revoke thy gift,
>   Or whilst I can vent clamor from my throat,
>   I'll tell thee thou dost evil. (1.1.187–190)

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[17] Though I wouldn't object to saying that the reactive attitudes, even when merely felt but not expressed, are indicators that one *regards* the target of the attitudes *as responsible*. Perhaps this is what Macnamara has in mind, but this seems to me just another way of saying that the reactive attitudes are indicators that one has taken up the participant attitude.

By this time, of course, Lear's pride would keep him from recanting even if he were to be convinced that Kent was right, so he banishes Kent, and Kent takes it in stride (I don't even imagine him angry): "Fare thee well, king. Sith thus thou wilt appear, freedom lives hence, and banishment is here" (1.1.204–205). Three scenes later, however, Kent is back, in disguise, and once again serving Lear out of love and loyalty.

What are we to make of this exchange? Is Kent holding Lear accountable for his decision to disown Cordelia? Is he blaming him for it? Certainly he is attempting to reason with Lear, and in a more technical jargon we might even say that he is asserting his second-personal authority to raise worries about Lear's decisions and demand answers. That, I think, is the right word to focus on here: *answer*. Despite the fact that Lear has already announced his intention to disown Cordelia, Kent doesn't view it as a foregone conclusion. He speaks precisely because he thinks that he can persuade the king to change course *before* that course is complete, and this is why it seems awkward to say that Kent is holding Lear accountable. In the relevant sense, Lear hasn't yet *done* the deed in question—he has merely begun down the path. So Kent speaks up, not as a way of holding Lear accountable, but in order to demand an answer from him (though it is also natural to say that Kent is *calling* on him *to account* for the action he has begun). Kent is saying, in effect, "Don't you realize what you are doing here? Why, then, are you doing it?" (The present progressive 'doing' is key.) Demanding answers or explanations is certainly a central component of inter-personal relationships and, I'm inclined to think, it's something different from any of the interactions we've already considered.

It's important not to lose sight of the fact that the interactions associated with responsibility occur over time, and often involve stages (Duff 2010: 123). It's too simple, of course, to imagine that blaming interactions have stages that correspond directly to the courtroom—indictment, plea, trial, verdict, punishment—but there *are* stages of some sort, and they may be importantly distinct, requiring different kinds of standing in the blamer and presupposing different sorts of capacities in the (alleged) wrongdoer. Moreover, although call-ing on someone to answer for a wrong may, if no satisfactory explanation is forth-coming, lead to accountability interactions, it need not. It is here that I think the example of Kent is instructive. In my judgment, although he does call on Lear to explain himself and change his mind, he does not, despite the absence of a satisfactory explanation, condemn Lear for his decision, nor does he attempt to hold Lear accountable for it. Rather, he returns in disguise, and in love, to try to help Lear avoid the disastrous consequences of his misguided decision. This is

not accountability, and it seems to me that it's not even blame.[18] Above, I postponed the question of how the unexpressed reactive attitudes fit into the picture, but we can now say something about that, since those attitudes seem to be precisely what Kent is missing. What this suggests, I think, is that emotions like resentment and indignation are ways of blaming, though not (for the reasons stated above) ways of holding accountable.[19]

It seems to me that something similar is going on in *Persuasion* with respect to the attitude that Anne takes toward her previous decision to break off the engagement with Wentworth. In the intervening years she has had plenty of time to second-guess her previous decision, to wonder at how her life would have turned out differently, and although it pains her to imagine that life, she concludes that she is not to blame. Nevertheless, she clearly looks upon her past self as someone from whom her present self can demand answers. She sees clearly that she wasn't *coerced* by Lady Russell, and she also thinks that she made the decision that seemed reasonable at the time. Thus her attitude toward her past is one of regret, rather than anger or guilt. The decision was attributable to her (and this is one reason she feels no anger toward Lady Russell), but it was not wrong (hence she feels no guilt), even though it has led to unhappiness (hence her regret).

I've said that the demand for answers is in some sense prior to accountability interactions, and part of the reason is that standard accountability interactions seem to be entirely backward-looking, whereas the demand for answers often comes before an action has been completed, or at least before it's clear *what* action has been completed.[20] But there is a forward-looking sense of 'accountability' as well. This sense is particularly familiar to those who spent a portion of their college years involved in the standard sort of evangelical bible study group, where you are encouraged to find an "accountability partner" who will help to ensure that you're reading your Bible regularly. It can be an effective motivational strategy to be put in a

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[18] I should mention that there are at least two ways in which the word "answer" is used in responsibility contexts. One way is the one I have been attempting to explain, where the demand for an answer is more like a request for an explanation. But it seems to me that this is a different sense from the one invoked by R. Jay Wallace in the following quotation: "People who are morally responsible may be made to answer for their actions, in the sense that their actions render them liable to certain kinds of distinctively moral responses" (1994: 54). This idea of someone being "made to answer for" seems to me more like accountability than it does like answerability. For more on these two senses of answerability, see Hubbs 2013.

[19] Blame and holding accountable can come apart in the other direction as well, as they do almost every time I report a student to the Honor Council for suspected plagiarism.

[20] Or, to put it in Scanlonian terms, even if it's clear *what* action has been completed, the demand for answers may nevertheless help us determine the *meaning* of the action. For Scanlon (2008), blame (and, one might think, accountability more generally) is a response to the *meaning* of an action, which is independent of its *permissibility*.

situation where you have to anticipate the embarrassment of admitting that you've not been living up to your own standards. But in this context, one's accountability partner is not (typically) charged with sanctioning or punishing for past lapses, but rather for providing the forward-looking motivation to do as one judges one ought, perhaps simply by reminding one of that judgment. A more apt way to talk about this sort of interaction, in my view, is in terms of the enforcement of a standard.[21]

This is how I think we can understand the apparent interaction between God and Sarah in *The End of the Affair* as he continually intervenes to keep her from breaking her promise. If her coughing fit, which prevents her from kissing Bendrix, is really the result of God's intervention, then it seems apt to describe that intervention as a way of enforcing Sarah's compliance with her own judgment about what she ought to do. God isn't holding her accountable for a breach, but rather is acting as her accountability partner, much as if my college roommate had taken the remote control out of my hand as I picked it up and handed me a Bible instead.

7.

I fear I've already begun to fall too quickly into theory, so let me stop here and take stock. Again, I'm trying not to take a stand on where the ordinary notion of *responsibility* fits into this messy picture; that would be a premature question at this stage. Rather, I have been trying to delineate the "strains of involvement," in an effort to make vivid the character of ordinary interpersonal relationships. The examination has led us, I think, to a helpful but incomplete categorization of attitudes and interactions.

First, and at the broadest level, is our willingness to attribute actions to agents, to appraise people for their foolishness and cruelty, for their kind-heartedness and heroism. This perspective seems to occupy a middle ground between Strawson's objective attitude and his participant attitude, the latter of which seems to involve, as Korsgaard says, a "willingness to take a chance on reciprocity," a readiness to do things like offer promises (Sarah), "vent clamor" (Kent), and resent wrongs (Wentworth). But it is one thing to be *ready* or *willing* to do these things, and quite another to do them.

Among the things we *do* within the participant perspective, some seem to be worth distinguishing. Demanding an answer or explanation, for example, seems different from (and prior to) holding someone accountable for past actions, and both of these in turn seem different from blaming. Kent demands an answer from Lear, but does not hold him accountable and does not blame him (except insofar as

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[21] Macnamara 2011 contains a nice discussion of the idea that there is a subspecies of holding responsible that centers on enforcement, though she seems to think that enforcement applies only to the deontic realm (enforcing an "ought"), which I doubt.

merely attributing fault counts as a form of blame—see Watson 1996). The same is true of Anne with respect to her past decision. Bendrix, on the other hand, blames God for taking Sarah from him, but he does not hold God accountable (it's not even clear he *could* do such a thing).[22] Moreover, although God does not seem to blame Sarah or hold her accountable in the backward-looking sense (she doesn't, after all, break her promise), he nevertheless does hold her to her promise, to her judgment about what she ought to do.

Does this mean that there are several varieties of responsibility, perhaps attributability, reciprocatability, blameability, answerability, accountability, and enforceability?[23] The answer to this question will depend, of course, on the nature of responsibility, an issue on which I don't here intend to take a stand (with apologies to the editors). I can do one thing that might help, though, and that is to quote Gary Watson (2011: 312):

> The core notion [of responsibility] can be formulated in this way. Being a responsible agent is being capable of having and taking on responsibilities and obligations and their corresponding normative burdens. . . Morally responsible agents are apt subjects of a variety of distinctive responses and claims, including moral criticism and complaint in case they disrespect valid moral requirements.

Precisely because the notion of responsibility is intimately tied to the idea of *responding* to the morally significant actions and attitudes of others, I have spent this chapter attempting to explore some of the variety involved in these responses. Perhaps the most rudimentary sort of response is simply recognizing that an action *belongs to*, or can be attributed to, someone—that it is part of "an individual's fundamental evaluative orientation" (Watson 2004: 271). But beyond and distinct from that are further sorts of response: inhabiting a perspective toward another which presupposes a capacity for reciprocity, for example, as well as blaming, demanding explanations, holding accountable, and enforcing norms. Is there unity to be found in this variety of responses?

I'm not opposed to the idea, and certainly there will be some very general description that will plausibly count as a unifying theme—answerability, perhaps, though

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[22] Why might Bendrix not even be capable of holding God accountable? At least two reasons suggest themselves: (1) it's not clear that God is "accessible" in a sense that would make Bendrix's cries of outrage even count as interpersonal interactions (you can perhaps hold me accountable over the phone, but only if you've dialed the right number); and (2) the notion of holding accountable seems to presuppose some position of authority that Bendrix arguably fails to occupy in relation to God.

[23] And of course I haven't even mentioned possible positive counterparts like praisability or rewardability. For more on what's distinctive about praise and the ways it differs from blame, see Eshleman 2014.

we would have to tiptoe carefully around the ambiguities in the word 'answer' as it arises in contexts of responsibility. But I've been told that my own philosophical temperament is that of a divider rather than a unifier, and I suspect that's right. What I have tried to emphasize is that these various responses seem like a genuine *variety* in the sense that each can vary independently of the others. And insofar as our goal in theorizing about moral responsibility is to identify the capacities that enable someone to recognize and respond to those standards at the center of our shared moral life, emphasizing the variety of response is helpful. Those who can intelligibly be asked to explain their actions may well be more (and differently) capable than those who are beyond hope of genuine reciprocity but still act in ways that express a "fundamental evaluative orientation." And those of whom it is intelligible to demand an apology may be more (and differently) capable than those who can intelligibly be asked to explain themselves. And so on. The extent to which these hypothesized differences are real is the extent to which it is useful to resist the urge to unify, even if such unification is ultimately possible.

Theoretical speculations aside, however, I remain confident that Strawson's advice is fundamentally sound: that in order to make progress in understanding "our common humanity" we would do well, as Wittgenstein says in the *Investigations* (§66), to actually "look and see." It's no coincidence, I think, that Strawson's exhortations against "overintellectualizing" the facts (91) and his insistence that we acknowledge our own humanity are reminiscent of the Wittgensteinian "response" to epistemological skepticism: "My attitude toward him is an attitude toward a soul. I am not of the *opinion* that he has a soul" (Wittgenstein 1991: 152).[24] Strawson is notorious for attributing to libertarianism a "panicky" metaphysics (93), but I don't think that's simply rhetorical bluster. Rather, 'panic' is just the right word to use for the result of anxiety, which itself results from a refusal to acknowledge human nature for what it is. The promise of Strawson's paper is that if we remember who we are, we might regain a bit of our confidence.[25]

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