

ABSTRACT: Hypocrites are often thought to lack the standing to blame others for faults similar to their own. Although this claim is widely accepted, it is seldom argued for. We offer an argument for the claim that nonhypocrisy is a necessary condition on the standing to blame. We first offer a novel, dispositional account of hypocrisy. Our account captures the commonsense view that hypocrisy involves making an unjustified exception of oneself. This exception-making involves a rejection of the impartiality of morality and thereby a rejection of the equality of persons, which we argue grounds the standing to blame others.

Hypocrisy and the Standing to Blame

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Jeff and Kate take the LSAT, and both receive high scores. Unfortunately, each scores well only as a result of cheating—an act for which both of them are responsible and blameworthy. After each discovers that the other has cheated, Jeff reproaches Kate for cheating. In response, Kate sensibly calls into question Jeff’s standing to blame her, saying, ‘Look, you hypocrite, you’ve done the same thing. Who are *you* to blame me?’

Call this case *Cheaters*. *Cheaters* illustrates an important point: there are some situations in which an agent, *R*, doesn’t have the *standing* to blame another agent, *S*, for some fault—even if *S* is blameworthy for that fault. Sometimes this is expressed by saying that *R* doesn’t have the right to blame *S* for some fault.

The ethics of blame concerns the appropriateness of *R*’s blaming *S* for some fault.¹ While *S*’s being blameworthy for the fault is a central consideration in the ethics of blame, there are further considerations that bear on whether it would be appropriate for *R* to blame *S* for that fault. In this paper, we will argue that standing must be included as a consideration in a complete ethics of blame, and there is at least one necessary condition on the standing to blame that concerns facts about *R*’s own moral record. We will call this condition the Nonhypocrisy Condition (NH):

NH: *R* has the standing to blame some other agent *S* for a violation of some norm *N* only if *R*

is not hypocritical with respect to violations of *N*.

Notice that NH states a necessary condition on standing, not a sufficient condition. We hold that further conditions must be satisfied for *R* to have the standing to blame *S* for some violation of *N*. For instance, facts about *R*'s relationship with *S* (or lack thereof) are relevant to whether *R* has the standing to blame *S* for violations of *N*. Though we think that there are further necessary conditions on standing, we will not argue for those conditions here.

The fact that *R* lacks the standing to blame *S* for violations of *N* is a consideration that weighs heavily against the appropriateness of *R*'s blaming *S* for violations of *N*. But because standing is only one consideration in the ethics of blame, the fact that *R* does not have the standing to blame *S* for violations of *N* does not entail that it would be inappropriate for *R* to blame *S* for violations of *N*. Relatedly, *R*'s having the standing to blame is not sufficient for its being appropriate for *R* to blame. Many other considerations bear on the question of whether an instance of blame is appropriate, but these lie outside the scope of this paper.² Here, then, we are not concerned with the *appropriateness* of blame; rather, we are only concerned with establishing a particular necessary condition on the standing to blame.

To understand NH, we must explain the nature of blame and the nature of hypocrisy. We deal with each of these in sections 1 and 2, respectively. In section 3, we offer an argument for NH. Section 4 is reserved for further concerns and subtleties regarding hypocrisy. Finally, in section 5, we answer some objections to our thesis—including one raised by Macalaster Bell, who has recently argued that standing is not a consideration in the ethics of blame and that NH is false.

1. The Nature of Blame

NH is a thesis about blame. There are a variety of blaming responses, and blame comes in different forms. We hold the view that whenever *R* blames *S* for some item, *A*, *R* has a certain kind of belief-attitude pair:

- (i) a belief that *S* acted wrongly in *A*-ing (or in failing to perform some action, where *A* is that omission) or a belief that *A* is morally bad.³
- (ii) a negative morally reactive attitude towards *S* on the basis of that belief (e.g., resentment, indignation, disapprobation, and, in cases of self-blame, guilt).⁴

A negative morally reactive attitude is an attitude some agent has in response to the belief that

another has done wrong (or wrongly omitted to do something), has brought about some morally bad state of affairs, or is morally bad in some way. This demarcation of the morally reactive attitudes diverges from the way that some others have understood them. For instance, we think that R. Jay Wallace (1994) may restrict the morally reactive attitudes too narrowly when he insists that these attitudes are in response to obligation violations, since agents might be blameworthy for the non-voluntary (e.g., attitudes, character traits, etc.). While we do not argue for our understanding of the negative morally reactive attitudes here, we take this demarcation to be sufficient to clarify our understanding of blame. To proceed on common ground, we will focus on the paradigm sorts of negative morally reactive attitudes listed in (ii).

As Michael McKenna (2013) helpfully emphasizes, blame can be private or overt. Private blame may involve nothing more than experiencing some negative reactive attitude toward *S* on the basis of one's belief that *S* has acted wrongly. Overt blame is the conjunction of the belief-attitude pair explained above and the manifestation of this attitude in one's behavior. The attitude may be manifested in a variety of ways, both verbally (e.g., reproach) and nonverbally (e.g., shunning).⁵

Because private blame does not involve overt expression of blame, it does not involve the blamer interacting with the blamed. But overt blame need not involve the blamer interacting with the blamed either. Overt blame itself may be directed or nondirected. Directed blame is a species of overt blame that is directed toward the object of blame (McKenna 2013: 121). Nondirected overt blame is overt blame that is not directed toward the object of blame. For example, Joe may overtly blame President Obama for the Affordable Care Act by expressing indignation to his friends at the bar. Joe's blame is nondirected overt blame.

Given these distinctions, when one makes claims about blame one must be clear whether these claims are about private blame, overt directed blame, or overt nondirected blame. In the remainder of this paper we often discuss hypocritical blame in terms of directed blame, although our argument and defense of NH is meant to establish that claim with respect to any kind of blame. Thus, the fact that *R* is hypocritical with respect to violations of norm *N* undermines her standing to blame *S* either privately or overtly for a violation of *N*.

2. The Nature of Hypocrisy

NH states that *R* has the standing to blame *S* for violations of *N* only if *R* is not

hypocritical with respect to violations of N . In order to determine whether NH is satisfied in a given case, we must determine when an agent is hypocritical. The fact that Jeff is blameworthy for cheating on the LSAT at first seems to divest him of the moral standing to blame Kate for cheating. In *Cheaters*, Kate simply points out that Jeff is also guilty of cheating, and therefore he lacks the standing to blame her for cheating. This might lead one to accept the following account of hypocrisy:

H1: R is hypocritical with respect to violations of N iff R blames S for a violation of N and R is blameworthy for a violation of N .⁶

H1 is subject to counterexamples. The fact that R blames S for a violation of N and R is blameworthy for a violation of N is not sufficient for R 's being hypocritical with respect to violations of N . Suppose that Jeff feels remorse for cheating and blames himself for what he has done. If Jeff recognizes his own fault and blames himself for it, the charge of hypocrisy would no longer have the same force; his standing to blame Kate no longer seems undermined. So, the fact that R blames S for a violation of N and R is blameworthy for a violation of N is not sufficient for R 's being hypocritical with respect to violations of N . One might plausibly think, then, that what makes one hypocritical is not the mere fact that one blames another person for a norm violation for which one is also guilty, but also that one fails to blame oneself for violations of that norm.⁷

In light of these considerations, consider the following account of hypocrisy:

H2: R is hypocritical with respect to violations of N iff R blames S for a violation of N , R is blameworthy for a violation of N , and R fails to blame herself for violations of N .

H2 avoids the type of counterexamples to which H1 is vulnerable by capturing the element of hypocrisy that is commonly seen as unfair: the exception-making on the part of the hypocrite. The hypocrite is willing to blame others for faults but unwilling to blame herself for similar faults.⁸ For these reasons, H2 is preferable to H1.

H2 is still incomplete, however. Suppose that in the past Laura was blameworthy for making a rude remark to a colleague. At the time, she was unwilling to blame herself for the fault, but was willing to blame others for similar faults. Laura has since forgotten about her fault, but her character has changed and now she is more considerate. She is now disposed such that she would blame herself for her past rude remark were she to recall it and would also blame herself for any similar fault she performed now. She is no longer willing to make an exception of

herself with respect to the norm that she violated. H2 implies that Laura is now hypocritical with respect to violations of that norm, but this implication is at odds with current facts about Laura's character. Laura is not currently a hypocrite with respect to violations of the norm.

One might attempt to alter H2 to account for cases like Laura's by adding temporal indices, such that an agent's *past* hypocrisy with respect to violations of *N* does not entail that the agent would *now* be hypocritical were she to blame someone for a violation of *N*. There are two problems with this strategy. First, it is difficult to see exactly how to restrict the scope of these temporal indices. Second, this sort of amendment would still fail to capture what lies at the heart of hypocrisy.

Notice that Laura is now disposed such that she would blame herself for her past rude remark or similar violations of the relevant norm. We take an agent's dispositions to be the key to understanding hypocrisy. An agent's dispositions to treat herself and others in certain ways in response to the violation of moral norms reflect how the agent regards herself and others. The hypocrite's dispositions involve an unwillingness on her part to be regarded in an impartial manner with respect to blaming for certain norm violations. In the past, Laura's dispositions reflected that she didn't regard herself in the same way that she regarded others with respect to violations of a moral norm. Now, however, Laura is disposed to blame herself for violations of that norm just the same as she would blame others for violations of that norm. Her current dispositions reflect that she no longer makes an exception of herself. Laura's dispositions explain why she is not hypocritical in blaming others for violations of the relevant norm.

The hypocrite is disposed to blame others for violations of *N*, but she is not disposed to blame herself for violations of *N*, and she has no justifiable reason for this difference.⁹ For brevity, we can say that the hypocrite has a *Differential Blaming Disposition (DBD)*.¹⁰ We have explained how DBDs lie at the heart of hypocrisy. We are now in a position to offer our favored account of hypocrisy:

H3: *R* is hypocritical with respect to violations of *N* iff *R* is blameworthy for a violation of *N* and *R* has a DBD with respect to violations of *N*.¹¹

Hypocrisy fundamentally involves the nature of an agent's disposition to blame because it reflects how the agent regards herself and others.¹² In identifying DBDs as an essential part of hypocrisy, H3 improves upon H2.

Now that we have offered an account of hypocrisy, we can address why hypocritical

blame is objectionable. We begin with this simple claim:

(1) There is something morally objectionable about hypocritical blame.

To be more precise, the fact that an instance of blame is hypocritical with respect to a violation of some norm *N* is a moral reason that counts against blaming in that case. In particular, hypocritical blame is unfair, and the fact that it is unfair is a moral reason that counts against blaming.

The unfairness of hypocritical blame is rooted in the hypocrite's DBD. Morality demands that persons be regarded equally if there is no morally relevant difference between them. If *R* ought to regard *S* in some way, then, if there are no morally relevant differences between *S* and some other person *T*, *R* also ought to regard *T* in this way.¹³ Because there is no justifiable basis for this difference in the hypocrite's blaming disposition, the hypocrite's DBD unfairly contravenes the equality of persons. The following case illustrates the point: If Max's parents are both equally praiseworthy for raising him and he is disposed to praise his mother but not his father, then Max's disposition with respect to his treatment of his parents is unfair. The unfairness here is not simply a matter of his lacking the disposition to praise his father when his father deserves praise. This may, on its own, be unfair. But there is a further way in which Max's dispositions are unfair; this unfairness stems from the fact that Max is disposed to praise his mother *in conjunction with* the fact that he lacks the disposition to praise his father. *This* kind of unfairness is a matter of the differential disposition that Max holds with respect to his mother and father. A similar kind of unfairness can obtain in cases of blame. If two sons are equally blameworthy for some fault, but, due to a differential disposition to blame, the mother scolds the one and not the other, then she is being unfair. In the case of hypocritical blame, the hypocrite's DBD is a matter of her being disposed to blame others but not herself without a justifiable basis for this difference. The hypocrite's DBD is therefore unfair.

We hold that the hypocrite's DBD confers this quality of unfairness onto a blaming attitude that is a manifestation of that DBD. If this is true, then hypocritical blaming attitudes are morally objectionable. And, if blaming *attitudes* are morally objectionable, then any manifestation of these blaming attitudes (either private and overt) is also morally objectionable, since anything that is objectionable about an instance of blaming attitudes will also be objectionable about a manifestation of those attitudes.

Our defense of (1) supports the following claim:

(2) What is morally objectionable about hypocritical blame is rooted in facts about the blamer.¹⁴

In particular, what is morally objectionable about hypocritical blame is rooted in facts about *R*'s unfair DBD.¹⁵

Wallace (2010) also aims to explain the objectionable nature of hypocritical blame by appealing to facts about the blamer. Additionally, he maintains that what is morally objectionable about hypocritical blame is rooted in the attitudes that the blamer takes towards others and those that she takes (or rather fails to take) towards herself. Wallace points out that, in doing so, the hypocritical blamer shields herself from the moral criticism involved in blame while not doing the same for others. Since we all have an interest in being protected from moral criticism, when the hypocrite blames others for faults similar to those for which she is also blameworthy she treats others' interests as less important than her own. In so doing, she violates the principle of the equality of persons that is fundamental to morality.

We agree with Wallace that the way to understand what is morally objectionable about these attitudes fundamentally concerns the equality of persons. Wallace's explanation, however, seems limited to certain cases of overt blame—namely, cases in which the blamed is aware of or impacted by the blame in some way. We do have an interest in being protected from this sort of overt blame. However, as Wallace himself says, even private hypocritical blame is morally objectionable (324). An explanation of why hypocritical blame is morally objectionable in both cases of private and overt blame, then, must be grounded in something more fundamental than our shared interests in protecting ourselves from overt moral criticism.¹⁶

We maintain that one need not look further than the hypocrite's DBD to find what is morally objectionable about blame. This simpler explanation accounts for the unfairness of both private and overt hypocritical blame. We will further develop this explanation in section 3.

To summarize, it is not sufficient for *R*'s blaming *S* for some violation of *N* to be hypocritical that *R* also be blameworthy for some violation of *N*. In addition, *R* must be blameworthy for a violation of *N* and have a DBD. That is, *R* must be blameworthy for a violation of *N*, and *R* must have the disposition to blame others (including *S*) for violating *N* while at the same time lacking the disposition to blame herself for such violations without any justifiable basis for this difference. *R*'s DBD is unfair, and the impartiality of morality does not warrant such an exception without basis. This explanation justifies the claims that (1) there is

something morally objectionable about hypocritical blame and (2) what is objectionable about this blame is rooted in facts about the blamer.

3. How Hypocrisy Undermines Standing

Even if (1) and (2) are true, one cannot thereby conclude that the hypocritical blamer lacks the standing to blame another. After all, hypocritical blame isn't special in being morally objectionable and being rooted in facts about the blamer. Macalester Bell emphasizes this point nicely:

In fact, people may, and frequently do, evince a wide variety of moral faults through their blame: they can show meanness, pettiness, stinginess, arrogance, and so on. But while people may manifest hypocrisy and other faults in their critical interventions, there is no reason to conclude that these faults always undermine a person's standing to blame (2013: 275).

Bell admits that '[h]ypocrisy is a moral fault' (275). She might also be willing to agree that there is something objectionable about hypocritical blame and that what is objectionable about hypocritical blame is rooted in facts about the blamer. But Bell might insist that (1) and (2) are not sufficient to establish that hypocrisy undermines a blamer's moral standing. If (1) and (2) were sufficient to establish that a blamer's standing was undermined, then not only would the hypocritical blamer lack standing, but also the mean blamer, the petty blamer, the arrogant blamer, and so on. Yet we do not think that the arrogant or petty blamers lack the standing to blame. Bell's challenge for those who accept NH is to establish some deeper connection between hypocritical blame and standing. In doing so, we must explain in what way hypocritical blame is different from other sorts of morally objectionable blame, such as arrogant or petty blame.

Bell's challenge is a strong one. Establishing that hypocrisy is morally objectionable does not establish that the hypocrite lacks the standing to blame. Wallace, for example, offers a careful and forceful account of the morally objectionable nature of hypocrisy, claiming that '[h]ypocrites lack the standing to blame...insofar as their own behavior makes it morally objectionable for them to adopt the stance of blame' (2010: 320). But, although Wallace goes into much detail explaining what it is that is distinctively morally objectionable about hypocritical blame, it is not clear whether he has *thereby* explained how (1) and (2) entail that hypocrisy undermines standing, especially given Bell's challenge. We will try to answer Bell's challenge by showing precisely why hypocrisy undermines standing.

Our argument for this claim rests upon plausible assumptions about the nature of

morality. Persons qua moral agents are equal with respect to the moral norms that apply to them. In this way, morality is impartial.¹⁷ In virtue of the equality of persons, each person has certain defeasible rights, among them the right to expect certain things of other moral agents (e.g., to not be unjustly harmed) and the right to blame others for violations of moral expectations and obligations.¹⁸ The main idea behind the argument is that hypocrisy involves at least an implicit rejection of the equality of persons that grounds one's right to blame. In what follows, we understand *R*'s moral standing to blame *S* for violations of *N* in terms of *R*'s having a certain (non-defeated) right to blame *S* for violations of *N*.

- (1) If *R* is hypocritical with respect to violations of *N*, then *R* has a DBD with respect to violations of *N*.
- (2) If *R* has a DBD with respect to violations of *N*, then *R* rejects the impartiality of morality with respect to violations of *N*.¹⁹
- (3) If *R* rejects the impartiality of morality with respect to violations of *N*, then *R* rejects the equality of persons with respect to violations of *N*.
- (4) If *R* rejects the equality of persons with respect to violations of *N*, then *R* rejects the grounding that gives *R* the right to blame *S* for violations of *N*.
- (5) If *R* rejects the grounding that gives *R* the right to blame *S* for violations of *N*, then *R* forfeits the right to blame *S* for violations of *N*.

So,

- (6) If *R* is hypocritical with respect to violations of *N*, then *R* forfeits the right to blame *S* for violations of *N*.

Let's review each step of the argument. Premise (1) follows from H3, and we have defended H3 in section 2 above.

Next, consider premise (2). *R*'s having a DBD with respect to violations of *N* is at least an implicit rejection of the impartiality of morality with respect to blame for violations of *N*. Moral norms govern both our moral expectations of others and our blaming practices; the hypocrite's DBD is a disposition to blame another person for violating *N* while lacking a disposition to blame herself for violating *N* without a justifiable basis for this difference. *R*'s having a DBD involves an unwillingness on *R*'s part to be regarded in an impartial manner with respect to blaming for violations of *N*. In this way, *R*'s DBD with respect to violations of *N* is a rejection of the impartiality of morality with respect to violations of *N*.²⁰

The justification for premise (3) is simple: the impartiality of morality is entailed by the equality of persons that is fundamental to morality. Because of this, when one rejects the impartiality of morality, one rejects the equality of persons.

The reasoning behind premise (4) may not be initially obvious. We take it as a plausible assumption that every moral agent has certain fundamental rights and obligations, among them the right to expect certain behavior of other moral agents and the right to blame others for violations of moral norms (when they are blameworthy for doing so). In addition, each moral agent is subject to the moral norms governing blame, and so each moral agent may be deserving of blame for violating a moral obligation. We are on par with each other with respect to these fundamental rights, obligations, and norms; they are distributed and apply to us *equally*. Whatever explains why this is so, then, must explain the parity of their distribution and application. We think that the best candidate for this is simply the fact that we are all *persons*. With respect to our personhood, we are equal, and whatever more fundamental facts explain why some beings are persons (while others are not) will further support this claim, since there must be some features that we all have in common and which explain why we are all persons. Those features ground our personhood, and in turn our shared (i.e., equal) personhood grounds the equal distribution and application of fundamental rights, obligations, and norms.²¹

In having a DBD with respect to violations of *N*, the hypocrite regards herself as though the norms governing blame (with respect to violations of *N*) do not apply to her equally as they do to everyone else. The hypocrite's DBD, therefore, involves at least an implicit rejection of the equality of persons with respect to violations of *N*, because the equality of persons grounds the equal application of the moral norms governing blame. But the equality of persons also grounds the right to blame others for violations of moral norms, so in rejecting the equal application of the moral norms governing blame, *R* is rejecting what grounds *R*'s right to blame.²²

Premise (5) requires some clarification. We opt to use 'forfeits' in the consequent of (5) instead of 'rejects' because we don't think that *R*'s rejection of (i.e., unwillingness to accept) the grounds of her right to blame (namely, the equality of persons) entails that *R* is unwilling to accept the right to blame. One may reject the equality of persons with respect to the norms governing our blaming for violations of *N* and still desire the right to blame others for violations of *N*. In fact, this is precisely what the hypocrite wants; she wants to have it both ways. But, of course, one may forfeit something in spite of the desire to have it.

Premise (5) is supported by a more general principle: If *R* rejects the grounding that gives *R* the right to *X*, then unless *R*'s right to *X* is inalienable, *R* forfeits the right to *X*.²³ This principle helps explain other cases of forfeited rights. Suppose that a son has a right to a portion of his parents' inheritance in virtue of being their son. If the son abandons his family, effectively disowning them, he rejects his relationship with his parents. If the son returns years later to demand his inheritance, his parents would be correct in claiming that he no longer has any right to it. The son cannot appeal to his relationship with his family to justify his demand for the inheritance, since in disowning his family he has rejected the ground that would justify this demand. In rejecting his relationship to his parents, he has forfeited his right to their inheritance.²⁴

Finally, (6) follows from (1) - (5), and NH is entailed trivially by (6). Thus, the fact that *R* is hypocritical with respect to violations of *N* defeats *R*'s right to blame *S* for violations of *N*, and so undermines *R*'s standing to blame *S* for violations of *N*.²⁵

The above argument for our thesis does not have the result that the mean, petty, or arrogant blamer would also lack the standing to blame. Mean, petty, or arrogant blaming for violations of *N as such* need not involve a rejection of the equality of persons with respect to blame for violations of *N*. Though meanness, pettiness, and arrogance may often go hand-in-hand with hypocrisy, they are distinct moral faults. The arrogant blamer, for example, feels morally superior to others (as the hypocrite often does), but she need not be unwilling to blame herself for violations of *N*. An arrogant blamer *R* may simply feel superior to another person *S* because *R* has no trouble complying with *N* while *S* does. Arrogance does not essentially involve a DBD, as hypocrisy does, and it is having a DBD that undermines the hypocrite's standing to blame.

We have offered an answer to Bell's challenge. On one hand, Bell is right to push advocates of NH to say more about how hypocrisy is connected to standing. On the other, Bell's motivation for this challenge seems to reflect a fundamental mistake. After she poses the challenge to bridge hypocrisy and standing, Bell justifies the challenge:

But while people may manifest hypocrisy and other faults in their critical interventions, there is no reason to conclude that these faults always undermine a person's standing to blame. As we have seen, blame has multiple aims and modes of value. The educational or motivational value of blame is not undermined by the blamer's hypocrisy; we can learn from the morally corrupt just as we can learn from the morally pure. (2013: 275)

Bell's reasoning here seems to be that hypocrisy doesn't always undermine one's standing to blame since even hypocritical blame may achieve one or more of the aims of blaming and thus have good consequences. The problem with Bell's reasoning is that it confuses the *value* of blaming with the *standing* to blame. Blame may achieve certain aims and have valuable consequences, and when it does, this fact counts as a reason in favor of blaming. However, one's *standing* to blame does not concern the consequences or possible consequences of one's blaming.²⁶ The consequences of blame are altogether irrelevant to whether one has the standing to blame, as the former concerns value, while the latter concerns rights. So the fact that an instance of blame is valuable does not prevent hypocrisy from undermining one's standing to blame.

Bell begins shifting her focus to value when explicating Wallace's defense of NH. Bell mistakenly understands Wallace's claim that the blaming attitudes involve a commitment to self-scrutiny as being based in the observation that 'the hostile attitudes that constitute blame may sometimes be valuable for the subject' because the subject may come to recognize and acknowledge her own faults (Bell 2013: 275). But Wallace's claim is not grounded in claims of value; rather, it is grounded in the foundational moral principle of the equality of persons:

My suggestion is that the principle of equality is the ultimate ground of the commitment that we undertake when we blame another person. In acceding to such reactive sentiments as resentment and indignation, we take it that the targets of these attitudes have waived their right to protection from moral opprobrium, insofar as they have flouted the moral standards that make possible relations of mutual regard. But we owe it to those we blame to waive our own claim to protection from such negative social effects for infractions of the very same kind. This is the commitment to critical self-scrutiny that we impose on ourselves when we are subject to attitudes of resentment or indignation that we do not repudiate. (Wallace 2010: 329)

Wallace's explanation here does not at all rely on the observation that blame may have educational value for the blamer. Rather, as he says, the commitment to self-scrutiny concerns what blamers owe to others. Wallace does point out that the blaming attitudes may cause the blamer to reflect upon her own moral faults (326). However, Wallace's reason for making this observation is to draw attention to the fact that whether blame is hypocritical depends on the agent's response to her own faults; he is not using it to defend the claim that blaming involves a commitment to self-scrutiny.

Consequently, while Bell is warranted in challenging us for a connection between hypocritical blame and undermined standing, she is not warranted in translating a defense of NH into talk of value. The value of blame, which may be derived in part from the consequences of

blame, is distinct from having the right to blame. The standing to blame concerns the latter. Insofar as Bell's rejection of NH relies on claims that hypocritical blame might still have value for the blamer or for society, her criticisms miss the mark regarding hypocritical blame and undermined standing.

4. Further Subtleties Regarding Hypocrisy

Recall our above formulation of hypocritical blame:

H3: R is hypocritical with respect to violations of N iff R is blameworthy for a violation of N and R has a DBD with respect to violations of N .

Whether an agent R is hypocritical seems to depend in part upon how recent, frequent, and significant R 's violation of N is. For example, if R 's violation of N happened once, twenty years ago, one might think that R is not now hypocritical in blaming others for violations of N . But if R 's violation of N is frequent and recent, then R certainly seems hypocritical in blaming others for violations of N . Similarly, it seems that if R 's fault is relatively insignificant in comparison with S 's fault, then R is not hypocritical in blaming S , whereas if R 's fault is more significant than S 's fault, R is hypocritical in blaming S . A satisfactory account of hypocrisy, then, should be able to explain why these considerations seem to bear on whether R is hypocritical. According to our account of hypocrisy these considerations do not, on their own, entail anything about whether an agent is hypocritical. However, our account explains why these considerations may in some cases give us reason to *believe* that an agent is hypocritical.²⁷

Let's begin by focusing on temporal distance. Recall our cheaters, Jeff and Kate. Suppose that Jeff cheated on the LSAT twenty years before Kate. We might further suppose that Jeff has not cheated since then. It is natural to think that Jeff would not now be hypocritical for blaming Kate for cheating, given that Jeff's cheating took place twenty years ago, but H3 doesn't take into account temporal distance. On H3, whether an agent who is blameworthy for the violation of some norm N is hypocritical with respect to violations of N depends solely on whether that agent has a DBD with respect to violations of N . But, whether an agent's violation of N is recent does not entail anything about whether that agent has the relevant DBD. Suppose that Jeff never blamed himself for cheating on the LSAT but maintained the disposition to blame others who cheat while continuing to lack the disposition to blame himself for cheating. If so, then Jeff would be hypocritical in blaming Kate for cheating, regardless of how recent his fault is. Of

course, if Jeff had recognized his fault and blamed himself for cheating in the interim, matters might be different. Indeed, Jeff might have never actually blamed himself for cheating on the LSAT and yet still fail to be hypocritical. Suppose that Jeff has forgotten about cheating on the LSAT twenty years ago, but since then has come to develop a disposition to treat himself the same as others with respect to cheating. Were he to recall cheating on the LSAT, he would feel remorse and guilt for it. Since he regards himself as he regards others with respect to cheating, Jeff lacks a DBD. H3 implies, then, that Jeff would not be hypocritical in blaming Kate in this case. In general, agents who are hypocritical with respect to violations of some norm forfeit the standing to blame for violations of that norm. In coming to regard others equally with respect to violations of that norm, however, such agents may regain the standing to blame for violations of that norm.

If H3 is correct, then how recent *R*'s norm violation is does not bear on whether *R* is hypocritical. However, H3 can explain why *R*'s temporal distance from her fault is a reason to believe that *R* is not hypocritical: the passage of time allows *R* not only to blame herself for her fault, but also to develop the disposition to blame herself for violations of the relevant norm.

Like temporal distance, how frequent an agent's violation of *N* is seems to bear on whether that agent is hypocritical with respect to violations of *N*. Imagine that Jeff has been cheating on tests every week or so for the past twenty years. Given his moral record, it seems that Jeff would be hypocritical in blaming another agent for something for which he is frequently blameworthy. Whether an agent's violation of *N* is frequent does not entail anything about whether that agent has the relevant DBD, so H3 does not entail that Jeff would be hypocritical in blaming another agent for cheating. To illustrate this point, consider a different case. Nina sincerely believes that it's wrong to lie, and feels awful about lying every time that she does. She truly desires not to lie but continues to do so due to weakness of will. According to H3, Nina would not be hypocritical in blaming someone else for lying. Nina is not differentially disposed to blame for lying; she does not regard others unequally with respect to violations of that norm. Although H3 does not take the frequency of an agent's faults into account, it does explain why the frequency of *R*'s faults is a reason to believe that *R* is hypocritical. If *R* continues to violate a norm, this is at least some reason to believe that *R* does not feel guilt or remorse for violating that norm.

Finally, one might think that the significance of *R*'s fault relative to *S*'s fault bears on

whether *R* is hypocritical in blaming *S*. Imagine that instead of cheating on the LSAT, Jeff cheated on one question of a minor spelling quiz. One might think that it would not be hypocritical for Jeff to blame Kate for cheating on the LSAT when Jeff is guilty of only a minor misdeed. While both Jeff and Kate have cheated, Kate's action is wrong to a much more significant degree than Jeff's.²⁸ As with how recent and frequent *R*'s fault is, H3 says nothing about significance of fault. *R* can have a DBD with respect to some norm violation, even if *R* is blameworthy only for a relatively minor violation of that norm. According to H3, then, if Jeff has a DBD with respect to cheating then he is hypocritical with respect to violations of that norm.²⁹

One may think that the significance of fault is relevant in some way to hypocrisy because coming to be disposed to blame oneself for a minor fault when one previously was not is far less difficult than coming to be disposed to blame oneself for a significant fault when one previously was not. Consider how much effort Jeff might have to put in to alter his character so that he is disposed to blame himself for cheating on the spelling quiz. This norm violation is relatively minor and requires little blame, so Jeff will not have to put forth much effort. In contrast, consider someone who previously murdered several people and was initially not disposed to blame herself for it. The amount of blame that murder calls for is much higher, and may require much more effort from the murderer. Thus, while the significance of *R*'s violation does not bear directly on whether *R*'s blame is hypocritical, it may indicate how difficult it is for *R* to rid herself of a DBD with respect to violations of *N* and thus regain the standing to blame for violations of *N*.

In sum, while facts concerning how recent, frequent, and significant *R*'s violation of *N* is do not directly bear on whether *R* is hypocritical with respect to violations of some norm, they may give us reason to believe that *R* has a DBD and is therefore hypocritical.

5. Objections and Replies

We have offered an argument as to why hypocrites lack the standing to blame. In this section we examine two of the most salient objections or worries for our view and explain why they do not pose a problem.

First, one might worry that the reasoning behind our argument in section 3 has the problematic implication that not only hypocrites lack the standing to blame, but also that anyone with some type of differential blaming disposition lacks the standing to blame. In particular, our

argument seems to imply that agents who inconsistently blame by making exceptions of others lack the standing to blame just as agents who make exceptions of themselves lack the standing to blame.

The hypocrite has a certain type of differential blaming disposition: she is disposed to blame others for violations of some norm N and yet lacks the disposition to blame herself for violations of N without a basis for this difference. One might not be a hypocrite, but still be an *inconsistent blamer*. For instance, R might be disposed to blame herself just the same as S for violations of N , but lack the disposition to blame some other agent T for violations of N . This sort of inconsistent blamer has a type of differential blaming disposition—call this type of disposition a *DBD**. One might think that, given our reasoning in section 3, this inconsistent blamer might lack the standing to blame just as a hypocritical blamer does simply in virtue of having a *DBD**. The inconsistent blamer would reject the impartiality of morality with respect to violations of N in virtue of her *DBD**. In rejecting the impartiality of morality, the inconsistent blamer would reject the equality of persons with respect to violations of N , thereby rejecting the grounding to blame others for violations of N . Without this grounding, one's right to blame for violations of N is forfeited. Consequently, the inconsistent blamer with respect to violations of N does not have the standing to blame others for violations of N .

To illustrate, imagine that Olivia is enamored with Paige. Olivia is disposed to blame both herself and others for lying. But she is not disposed to blame Paige for lying. Olivia's regard for Paige is unequal in comparison with her regard for herself and others. In this case Olivia has a *DBD**. According to our reasoning, Olivia rejects the impartiality of morality with respect to violations of N , and this entails that she forfeits the right to blame others for violations of N . But, the objector claims, Olivia's right to blame others for violations of N is not forfeited in this case. After all, it's not as though Olivia has unfairly made an exception of herself. Because our reasoning has this counterintuitive implication, one might press, our reasoning must be flawed.

We maintain that the fact that there is no justifiable basis for the differential nature of the hypocrite's blaming disposition is the reason why the hypocrite's *DBD* is an instance of unfair exception-making that contravenes the equality of persons. We supported this claim in section 2 in part by appealing to the unfairness of other types of differential dispositions to praise and blame. The mother who, due to a *DBD**, scolds one of her sons and not the other even though

they are equally blameworthy for some fault is unfair in the relevant way. This case makes salient the unfairness of the exception-making that is common to both kinds of differential blaming dispositions. So, we accept that our argument has the implication that such an inconsistent blamer lacks the standing to blame others, but we deny that this implication is counterintuitive. In fact, this implication emphasizes the fact that what we take to justify our reasoning about the hypocrite is not merely a matter of the hypocrite's making an exception of herself; our justification is fundamentally about the rejection of the impartiality of morality (and thereby the equality of persons) implicit in one's having a DBD. The inconsistent blamer described above also rejects the impartiality in virtue of having a DBD*. The same sort of reasoning that entails that the hypocrite lacks the standing to blame entails that those with a DBD* lack the standing to blame.³⁰ Of course, one might think that hypocrisy is a more objectionable fault than that of the inconsistent blamer. This may be right. Although our view implies that the hypocrite and inconsistent blamer each lack standing, it doesn't entail that their faults are equally morally objectionable. Here we only want to point out that if one finds compelling our argument that the hypocrite lacks the standing to blame, one should similarly find compelling the argument that the inconsistent blamer described above lacks the standing to blame.

Although our view has the implication that the inconsistent blamer described above lacks the standing to blame, it does not have the implication that anyone who blames inconsistently lacks the standing to blame. Contrast the type of inconsistent blamer we have been discussing with another type of inconsistent blamer. This type of inconsistent blamer sometimes blames others for violations of *N* and sometimes does not. Likewise, he sometimes feels guilty for his own violations of *N* and sometimes does not. Whether he is likely or inclined to blame someone else or himself varies depending on his mood and his preoccupation with other things, and this results in his blame being quite variable.³¹ Though his blame is inconsistent, this particular type of inconsistency does not arise from any differential blaming dispositions. He does not reject the impartiality of morality, and so our view does not have the implication that this second type of inconsistent blamer lacks the standing to blame.

We take our second objection from Macalester Bell. Bell has recently presented what she takes to be a problem for placing conditions on the standing to blame: 'Very often those who defend [conditions on the standing to blame] do so with the aim of limiting or eliminating blame:

the standing conditions will rarely be satisfied, and because of this, few persons, if any, will have standing to blame' (2013: 264). Because few persons will have the standing to blame, Bell worries, blame will be rendered inappropriate in nearly every case.

Bell identifies the following claim as the Nonhypocrisy Condition that is held by those who defend conditions on standing: the agent 'has not engaged in similar wrongdoing in the past' (264). Bell rightly observes that this condition will rarely be satisfied. Nearly every person has lied, cheated, stolen, or engaged in some other wrongdoing at some point in his or her life. And since nearly everyone is guilty of each of these wrong acts, nearly everyone will lack the standing to blame others for lying, cheating, stealing, etc. Only those saints with a pristine moral record will have the standing to blame. But something has clearly gone wrong, since we don't think that only moral saints have the standing to blame. So there cannot be such a condition on the standing to blame on pain of eliminating justified blame from our everyday lives.

We think that the problem lies in Bell's understanding of the Nonhypocrisy Condition. As we argued in section 2, in order for an agent to be hypocritical she must be blameworthy for some violation of *N* and have a DBD with respect to violations of *N*. Agents who have engaged in similar wrongdoing in the past might be blameworthy for some violation of *N*, but unless the agent has a DBD with respect to such violations, the agent is not hypocritical on our view. Consequently, simply engaging in similar wrongdoing in the past is not sufficient for hypocrisy or for undermining one's standing to blame.

Recall also that agents can regain their standing to blame. In order for *R* to regain the standing to blame *S* for violations of *N*, *R* must no longer have a DBD with respect to violations of *N*. This may happen when an agent recognizes her fault and becomes disposed to blame herself for such faults just as she would others. Or it may happen over time as the agent grows and matures, developing a better character that regards others equally and manifests itself in equal dispositions to blame agents who violate some norm. Agents who have a DBD with respect to violations of *N* do not lack the standing to blame others for violations of *N* permanently, but only as long as they have a DBD with respect to violations of *N*. Once that DBD is gone, the agent's standing is restored.³² Thus, we hold that Bell (and those who share her worry) should not be concerned that most agents will lack the standing to blame in virtue of having committed similar wrongdoing in the past. On our view, standing is not so rare.

Conclusion

We have argued for and defended the claim that nonhypocrisy is a necessary condition on the standing to blame. More precisely, we have argued that R has the standing to blame S for some violation of N only if R is not hypocritical with respect to violations of N . Our argument for this claim draws attention to the connection between the morally objectionable nature of hypocrisy and the standing to blame, explaining how the former entails a forfeiture of the latter. Hypocrisy involves making an exception of oneself where there is no basis for that exception. This exception-making involves a rejection of the impartiality of morality and thereby a rejection of the equality of persons, which is the very basis for the standing to blame others.³³

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NOTES

¹ We understand the appropriateness of blame as an all-things-considered moral notion. Sometimes the phrase ‘all-things-considered’ is used in a subjective sense. In this sense, an agent’s acting contrary to her all-things-considered best judgment is a matter of her acting contrary to her own weighting of all of the considerations at hand. We understand ‘all-things-considered’ in an objective sense. In this sense, ‘all-things-considered’ is a matter of the actual weight of the moral reasons or considerations relevant in a given situation. Coates and Tognazzini briefly wrestle with how to analyze the appropriateness of blame: ‘We use the word “appropriate” at this juncture to cover a wide range of normative terms, since we may ask when blame is good, or permissible, or fair, and so on, each of which may raise distinct issues’ (2013: 17, n. 37). We hold that, where blame is under one’s voluntary control, its being appropriate is a matter of its being *permissible*. However, it is more difficult to analyze the appropriateness of blame where it is not under one’s voluntary control. We think that the best candidate for such an analysis is *justification*.

² For instance, the consequences of not blaming S may be so dire that it is appropriate for R to blame S for violating N even if R lacks the standing to blame S for this violation.

³ We leave it open that A might be a non-voluntary item, such as a character trait, an attitude, or a belief.

⁴ We don’t mean to take a stance on whether (i) and (ii) are jointly sufficient for blame. For accounts of blame that differ from what we say here, see Scanlon (2008), Sher (2006), and Smith (2013). For accounts of blame that are similar to what we say here, see Wallace (1994), McKenna (2012), and Bell (2013).

⁵ For a survey of overt blaming responses, see Bennett (2002). Notably, blame can be voluntary or nonvoluntary. In fact, one might suggest that the distinction between private blame and overt blame tracks the distinction between nonvoluntary blame and voluntary blame. This would be a mistake. The belief-attitude pair involved in blame is not under an agent’s direct voluntary control. However, private blame may include elements that are voluntary. For example, one may engage in an internal diatribe against the person blamed without any outward expression of one’s blame. Additionally, overt blame may include elements that are not voluntary, as when one reflexively furrows one’s brow in response to another’s wrongdoing.

⁶ While in *Cheaters* Jeff and Kate have both violated some moral norm forbidding cheating in the same way (i.e., cheating on the LSAT), R need not violate N in the same way that S has in order for R to be hypocritical. Precisely what actions or omissions count as violations of N is a complex matter, but we work with fairly clear cases in this paper. For instance, if Jeff were guilty of hurting someone in a bar fight, this fact would not seem to bear on whether

he would be hypocritical in blaming Kate for cheating on the LSAT, but his being guilty of cheating on a test clearly would.

⁷ Wallace (2010) suggests that whether *R* is hypocritical in blaming *S* depends at least in part on *R*'s response to her own fault.

⁸ Macalester Bell distinguishes between three types of hypocrites (2013: 275-76). The first and second types she discusses do not count as hypocrites in the way we discuss hypocrites here: the first kind ('weak-willed hypocrites') don't act in accordance with their own values but do recognize and acknowledge their own faults, and the second kind ('clear-eyed hypocrites') don't really care about the moral norms that have been violated; they merely pretend to blame. The third kind Bell describes ('exception-seeking hypocrites') is the closest to displaying the kind of hypocrisy that we believe to undermine the standing to blame. This kind of hypocrite 'genuinely blames others while seeing himself as blameless' (276). On our understanding of hypocrisy, though, the blamer need not have a belief that he is blameless. For instance, he may recognize his own faults but simply choose to ignore them when blaming others for similar faults.

⁹ When we say that *R* is not disposed to blame herself for violations of *N*, we do not mean that there are absolutely no conditions under which *R* would blame herself for a violation of *N*. We mean that under some range of normal conditions, *R* would not blame herself for violations of *N*. While we do not have a clear way of delineating 'normal conditions,' this is not a problem unique to our view, but rather a difficulty with understanding disposition attributions generally. For example, we would not ordinarily describe a block of wood as being fragile, although it is true that there are certain conditions under which it would break when struck. In a similar way, though a hypocrite may blame herself under rare conditions, this is not the case under normal conditions.

¹⁰ Sometimes *R* might believe that there is a justifiable reason for being disposed to blame others but not herself. This belief might be in recognition of some objective reason that does justify *R*'s having differential dispositions to blame. If so, *R* does not have a DBD. Sometimes, however, *R* might be mistaken or might not have sufficient grounds for her belief. If *R*'s belief is not in recognition of some objective reason that justifies a differential disposition to blame—even if such an objective reason exists—then *R* has a DBD.

¹¹ One anonymous referee suggested the following concern for H3: Because dispositions can be retained even when not manifested, it is possible that, due to some unusual circumstances, *R* has a DBD with respect to some norm violation and yet blames herself for that norm violation (recall note 9). For example, suppose that Joe has a DBD with respect to lying to his friend. While drinking at the pub, Joe finds out that Jane has lied to her friend (as he himself has done) and blames Jane for her fault. In his drunken and emotional state, though, Joe's DBD fails to manifest, and he ends up also blaming himself for lying to his friend by expressing sincere guilt to Jane. H3 implies that Joe is hypocritical with respect to lying. However, given his self-blame, this may seem counterintuitive. The referee suggested H4 instead:

H4: *R* is hypocritical with respect to violations of *N* iff *R* is blameworthy for a violation of *N*, *R* does not blame herself for a violation of *N*, and *R* has a DBD with respect to violations of *N*.

We are amenable to adopting H4 in place of H3, but have some reservations about doing so. H4 places an additional condition on hypocrisy, namely that the agent fail to blame herself for her own violation(s) of *N*. Our worry is that this implies that agents who retain their differential dispositions to blame are not hypocritical with respect to violations of some norm simply because of a one-off instance of blaming themselves. The *instance* in such a case may not be an instance of hypocrisy, but *R* is still hypocritical with respect to violations of *N* even in this case, just as a glass maintains its fragility even if it does not break during one instance of falling off the table. Our concern here, then, is that hypocrisy is fundamentally a matter of an agent's character, which remains unchanged through the sort of scenarios discussed here. In any case, whether H3 or H4 is the better characterization of hypocrisy will not impact our remarks or our argument in what follows. The heart of hypocrisy, we hold, lies in the DBDs an agent has, and both H3 and H4 recognize these DBDs as fundamental. Thanks to an anonymous referee for suggesting the case and for offering H4 as a possible way to amend H3.

¹² Because this paper is focused on the ethics of blame, H3 analyzes hypocrisy in terms of differential dispositions to *blame*. We leave open the possibility that that hypocrisy may also be analyzed in terms of differential dispositions to *judge blameworthy*, but we will not explore this possibility in this paper.

¹³ We take *R*'s regard for another person *S* to include *R*'s actions, attitudes, and dispositions toward *S*, as well as *R*'s beliefs about *S*. Note that the fact that *R* has a special relationship with *S* and not with *T* is a morally relevant difference between *S* and *T*, and this difference may imply that *R* has different obligations or rights with respect to *S* than *R* does with respect to *T*. Consider the example we offer below. Since the two sons are equally blameworthy for some fault, if the mother ought to blame one then she ought to blame both. However, this doesn't imply that the mother also ought to blame all of the other children in the neighborhood that are blameworthy for similar faults,

since she does not have the same special relationship with them as she does with her own children.

¹⁴ Bell illustrates this point by stating some common responses that call into question the standing of the blamer, such as ‘Who are you to judge?’ and ‘Who do you think you are?’ (2013: 264).

¹⁵ Notice that there are other morally objectionable features that an instance of blame may have that do not relate to the blamer’s standing to blame. For example, the fact that an instance of blame would have terrible consequences makes that instance of blame morally objectionable in some way (i.e., that this instance of blame would have terrible consequences is a moral reason that counts against blaming in this case).

¹⁶ Wallace may think that his explanation can account for what is morally objectionable about private blame as well, since (he might argue) we have an interest in protecting ourselves from both overt and private forms of blame. Though one might push this line, we believe that a more satisfying explanation can be given for why hypocritical blame is objectionable even when unexpressed.

¹⁷ In section 2 we explain how we understand the impartiality of morality.

¹⁸ That there is a right to blame is an assumption that Wallace, Bell, and others in the literature (e.g., Smith 2007) seem to share. If our argument below is sound, then if there is a right to blame, hypocrisy defeats this right.

¹⁹ Of course, many (and likely most) instances of hypocrisy do not involve an explicit, recognized rejection of the impartiality of morality. In many cases, the hypocrite fails realize that he is a hypocrite (e.g., he may be self-deceived), and so fails to realize that his blaming dispositions are at odds with the impartiality of morality. Our position is that hypocrisy involves at least an implicit rejection of this impartiality. In our defense of premise (2) below, we explain more about how we understand this rejection.

²⁰ Note again that this rejection need not be an explicit rejection. We understand this rejection of the impartiality of morality with respect to some violation of *N* as a matter of regarding oneself differently with respect to violations of *N*. This regard includes one’s actions, attitudes, beliefs, and dispositions towards others. So premise (2) says that, in having a DBD with respect to some violation of *N*, *R* regards herself differently with respect to violations of *N* and has certain beliefs and attitudes regarding others that she lacks towards herself. Thus, she rejects the impartiality of morality with respect to violations of *N*.

An anonymous referee notes that a weak-willed person might have a DBD with respect to some violation of *N* and yet not reject the impartiality of morality with respect to violations of *N*. Perhaps the weak-willed agent wholeheartedly endorses the impartiality of morality but, due to her weak will, finds herself with a DBD with respect to violations of *N* nonetheless. But note that *R*’s having a DBD does not rule out the possibility that *R* may *also* have certain attitudes that are consistent with the impartiality of morality. For instance, *R* may have a desire to be regarded impartially with respect to blaming for violations of *N*, as in the case of the weak-willed agent. Even so, in virtue of having a DBD, one regards herself differently with respect to violations of *N*, and in this sense rejects the impartiality of morality with respect to violations of *N*. The reason why *R* has a DBD (instead of a non-differential blaming disposition) is that, whatever other desires *R* has, the explanatorily salient one is a desire not to be regarded impartially. The truth of premise (2) requires only that *R* have a DBD with respect to violations of *N* and that *R*’s having this DBD reflects an unwillingness (that explains *R*’s DBD) to be regarded impartially with respect to violations of *N*. Thanks to an anonymous referee for encouraging us to say more on this issue.

²¹ We are not committed to saying that every person has the same *particular* obligations and rights. Rather, there are basic or fundamental rights, obligations, and norms that all persons have in virtue of being persons (e.g., the right to blame, the obligation not to cause unnecessary harm, the norm that one deserves blame when one freely and wittingly violates an obligation). People are equal with respect to these *fundamental* moral norms. Of course there are nonmoral differences that make a difference to the particular obligations that a person has (for instance, one may have special obligations to those with whom one has a close relationship). Thanks to an anonymous referee for pressing us to say more on this issue.

²² We maintain that the equality of persons fully grounds one’s right to blame. However, one may accept that the equality of persons is sufficient grounding for one’s right to blame yet insist that something else is also a sufficient ground for the right blame, such that *R*’s having a (defeasible) right to blame *S* is overdetermined. If that is correct, then even if *R* rejects the equality of persons, *R* may retain the right to blame because that right nevertheless remains sufficiently grounded in something else. While this is a conceptual possibility, the objection is toothless absent an independent story about what grounds the right to blame that makes no appeal to the equality of persons. As no alternative explanation of *R*’s right to blame is forthcoming, we conclude that premise (4) is plausible.

²³ We take it that there are certain moral rights that are inalienable, such as the right to be respected as a moral agent. Even if a moral agent rejected the grounds of her right to be respected as a moral agent, she would not thereby forfeit the right to be treated as one. The right to blame, however, is not inalienable, so only this restricted principle is at work in support of premise (5).

²⁴ We want to emphasize that we do *not* think that the grounding that gives *R* the right to blame is *R*'s *recognition* of the equality of persons, but rather the equality of persons itself. To assume that the former is our view is to conflate premises (4) and (5). Premise (4) concerns what grounds the right to blame, while premise (5) concerns how this right is forfeited.

²⁵ Note that our justification for the claim that hypocrisy undermines the standing to blame is different from Wallace's. Like Wallace, we rely on the notion of the equality of persons in our justification, but we use this notion in different ways. Wallace thinks that we all have an interest in being shielded from blame and that hypocritical blame involves treating someone else's interests as less important than one's own. In this way, Wallace argues, hypocritical blame violates the equal standing of persons. We argue instead that hypocrisy involves an implicit rejection of the equality of persons and thereby a rejection of the ground of one's right to blame.

²⁶ This understanding of standing is not a mere stipulation on our part. In the ethics of blame literature, defenders of standing hold that standing concerns facts about the blamer, not the consequences of blaming (Wallace 2010; Smith 2007: 478-80; Scanlon 2008). If Bell groups the consequences of blaming with the standing to blame in her arguments against those who defend standing, then her argument misses the mark.

²⁷ Here we rely on the notion that something *X* can be a reason to believe the truth of some proposition *p* without *X*'s making it the case (or contributing to make it the case) that *p*. For a defense of this distinction, see McNaughton and Rawling (2011).

²⁸ Some may protest that Jeff's action of cheating on his spelling quiz is not a violation of the same norm as that of Kate's action of cheating on the LSAT. After all, a spelling quiz is not the LSAT. We take action-types here to be fairly coarse-grained, such that cheating on the LSAT and cheating on a spelling quiz are both action-types under the description cheating, and therefore violations of the same norm forbidding cheating. Nevertheless, they are action-types with different degrees of wrongness; plausibly it is worse to cheat on the LSAT than it is to cheat on a spelling quiz.

²⁹ We leave it open that Jeff's hypocritically blaming Kate would itself be a less significant fault because Jeff's own cheating is a fairly insignificant fault. But according to H3, the fact that Jeff's fault is minor compared to Kate's fault has no bearing on whether Jeff would be hypocritical in blaming Kate.

³⁰ Notice that if one opts for H4 rather than H3 (see note 11), there will be fewer instances of hypocrisy given the stronger standard. But the reasoning behind our argument for the conclusion that hypocrisy undermines the standing to blame applies to more than just hypocrisy, so the difference between H3 and H4 will not affect the broader application of this argument to other types of differential blaming dispositions.

³¹ Whether he does blame a person in a given situation may be influenced by that person's personality. For example, Wallace offers the case of a person who believes that his colleague is blameworthy but, because his colleague is so charming, can't bring himself to blame this person (1994: 76-77). This case doesn't imply that the agent has a DBD* like the first type of inconsistent blamer. We can suppose that he retains the disposition to blame his colleague, but that this disposition is masked by his colleague's charm. For more on masking, see Johnston (1992).

³² Of course, an agent's standing may be compromised in some other way, such that even though the agent is no longer hypocritical, she lacks the standing to blame by failing to meet some other necessary condition. We avoid this complication here for ease of exposition.

³³ Thanks to Randolph Clarke, David McNaughton, Brian Coffey, Gabriel DeMarco, Nathan Helms, Carmen Marcous, Steven McFarlane, Bia Sorrentino, an audience at the 8th annual Felician Ethics Conference, and two anonymous referees for *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* for very helpful conversations and comments on earlier drafts and predecessors of this paper.

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