

## **Blame and Forgiveness – Miranda Fricker – Fall Semester 2016-17**

Thursdays 11.45—1.45 Rm 7395 mfricker@gc.cuny.edu

Please read and take notes on the two asterisked readings, and if you can read more, that'll be great for our discussions. Please bring these texts with you to the class.

### **Required work and grading (only for students taking the course for credit):**

Assessment is by term paper for which the deadline is by the end of **Friday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2017** (in order to accommodate those who may wish to write on a topic we're covering late this semester). You are of course welcome, indeed encouraged, to submit your paper earlier than the deadline. Papers should be about 6000 words including notes but not bibliography (absolute maximum 6500—do not exceed this or you risk being marked down).

In addition, by **27<sup>th</sup> October** you are required to have:

(1) sent me a plan for your paper (bullet points, and/or two or three short paragraphs outlining what questions/arguments/accounts you will address/discuss). The plan should include a list of at least four bibliographical references relevant to your planned paper, and overall it should not exceed one side of paper. And

(2) to have emailed me in order to fix a time (which could be later than that date) to talk briefly with me about it.

### **Blame:**

Many papers listed are from *Blame: Its Nature and Norms*, eds. D. Justin Coates and Neal A. Tognazzini (OUP, 2013) – 'C & T'

### **25<sup>th</sup> Aug**

Overview—let's share initial thoughts about the nature of blame and what its moral value, or disvalue, might be. We might also discuss methodological issues. (If you happen to have read my 'What's the Point of Blame?...' *Noûs* (2014) listed in the advance prospectus that will be a useful springboard; but don't worry if you haven't—I can present some main ideas from it so that we can have a free discussion.)

### **1st Sept**

What is blame? A protest? An accusation? Is it paradigmatically a communication, or a judgment? What does 'paradigmatically' mean?

\*Angela M. Smith 'Moral Blame and Moral Protest', essay 2 in Coates & Tognazzini

\*Victoria McGeer 'Civilizing Blame', essay 9 in C & T

Michael McKenna 'Directed Blame and Conversation', essay 7 in C & T  
Miranda Fricker (2014) 'What's the Point of Blame? A Paradigm Based Explanation', *Noûs* 50 (1) 165-183

## 8<sup>th</sup> Sept

Scanlon argues that blame itself is the creation of a ‘rupture in a relationship’—we’ll discuss his view and critical responses.

\*Thomas Scanlon ‘Blame’ ch.4 of *Moral Dimensions* (Harvard, 2008)

\*Susan Wolf ‘Blame Italian Style’, essay 14 in *Reasons and Recognition: Essays on the Philosophy of T. M. Scanlon*, eds. R. Jay Wallace, Rahul Kumar, & Samuel Freeman (OUP, 2011)

Christopher Bennett ‘The Expressive Function of Blame’, essay 4 in C & T

Jay Wallace ‘Dispassionate Opprobrium: On Blame and the Reactive Sentiments’ essay 15 in *Reasons and Recognition: Essays on the Philosophy of T. M. Scanlon* eds. Freeman, Kumar, and Wallace (OUP, 2011)

## 15<sup>th</sup> Sept

George Sher argues that blame is a belief-desire pair (a belief that the culprit had the fault/committed the wrong, plus a desire that not). Is that what blame is? We’ll discuss his view and a response.

\*George Sher *In Praise of Blame* (OUP, 2006)—this is a whole book, so your job is to read selectively if necessary in order to take in his view [also available at Oxford Scholarship Online]

\*Pamela Hieronymi, ‘Sher’s Defense of Blame’, *Philosophical Studies* 137, no. 1 (Jan 2008); 19-30

Angela Smith, ‘Character, Blameworthiness, Blame: Comments on George Sher’s *In Praise of Blame*’, *Philosophical Studies*, Vol. 137, no. 1 (2007) pp. 31-39

## 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept

Some consider blame to be a bad thing—are they right? Could we do without it? Should we aspire to a shared moral life free of blame? What would holding each other responsible look like without any blaming?

\*Martha Nussbaum ‘Transitional Anger’, *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* Vol. 1 Issue 1 pp. 1-16 (2015)

\*Nicola Lacey & Hanna Pickard ‘From the Consulting Room to the Court Room? Taking the Clinical Model of Responsibility Without Blame Into the Legal Realm’, *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* (Nov 2012 online) pp. 1-29

Christopher Evan Franklin ‘Valuing blame’, essay 11 in C & T

Gary Watson ‘Responsibility and the Limits of Evil: Variations on a Strawsonian Theme’ (1987) *Responsibility, Character and the Emotions: Essays in Moral Psychology* ed. Ferdinand Schoeman

## 29<sup>th</sup> Sept

Who has 'standing' to blame a wrongdoer? Does one need to be directly involved or personally invested in some way? What if you've done such a wrong yourself? If we're all wrongdoers from time to time, why isn't it always hypocritical to 'cast the first stone'?

\*Macalester Bell 'The Standing to Blame: A Critique', essay 14 in C & T

\*Gary Watson 'Standing in Judgment', essay 15 in C & T

R. Jay Wallace 'Hypocrisy, Moral Address, and the Equal Standing of Persons',  
*Philosophy and Public Affairs* (2010) 38; pp. 301-341

G. A. Cohen 'Casting the First Stone: Who Can, and Who Can't, Condemn the Terrorists?', *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* (2006) 58; pp. 113-136

## 7<sup>th</sup> Oct

What, more generally, are the conditions on appropriate blame? All sides (trivially) agree that the culprit must be blameworthy, and also that blameworthiness requires responsibility; but what else does it require? Are there some interesting exceptions to blameworthiness, such as a certain kind of historical or cultural distance or ignorance?

\*Gideon Rosen 'Culpability and Ignorance', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*  
Vol. CIII, Pt. 1 (2003); pp. 61-84

\*Erin I Kelly 'What Is an Excuse?', essay 13 in C & T

Miranda Fricker 'The Relativism of Blame and Williams' Relativism of Distance'  
*Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* Supp. Vol. (July) 2010

Pamela Hieronymi, 'Rational Capacity as a Condition on Blame', *Philosophical Books* 48, no. 2 (April 2007); 109-123

## Forgiveness:

### 13<sup>th</sup> Oct

What is *resentment*? A contentless, anger-like feeling, or a cognitively loaded moral emotion? Many people understand forgiveness as crucially involving the overcoming of resentment, but what exactly *is* resentment (if indeed it is one thing)?

\*Jeffrie Murphy 'Forgiveness and Resentment' ch. 1 in their *Forgiveness and Mercy*  
(CUP, 1988)

\*Jean Hampton 'Forgiveness, Resentment and Hatred', ch. 2 in *Forgiveness and Mercy*

P. F. Strawson 'Freedom and Resentment' *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 48: 1-

25 (1962); re-printed in G. Watson ed. *Free Will* (1982)  
Gary Watson 'Responsibility and the Limits of Evil: Variations on a Strawsonian Theme' (1987)

### **20<sup>th</sup> Oct**

Is forgiveness essentially a matter of *curbing* of resentment so that we avoid excess? Is it a kind of moral self-control and proportionality? Perhaps this is just one kind of forgiveness?

\*Joseph Butler (1872), *Fifteen Sermons*; Sermons VIII and IX; reprinted at <http://anglicanhistory.org/butler/rolls/>

\*Christopher Bennett (2003) 'Personal and Redemptive Forgiveness', *European Journal of Philosophy* 11 (2); 127-144

Alice MacLachlan 'Resentment and moral judgment in Smith and Butler', in *The Philosophy of Adam Smith, The Adam Smith Review*, Vol. 5: Essays commemorating the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, eds. V. Brown and S. Fleischacker

Charles Griswold, *Forgiveness: A Philosophical Exploration* (2007); ch.1 [ii] Bishop Butler's Seminal Analysis; pp. 19-38

### **27<sup>st</sup> Oct**

Is forgiveness something a culprit must earn or merit, perhaps through apology or remorse? Those who think so will hold a 'conditional' view of forgiveness.

\*Charles Griswold *Forgiveness: A Philosophical Exploration* (2007); ch. 2 Forgiveness at Its Best, and ch. 3 Imperfect Forgiveness

\*Pamela Hieronymi 'Articulating an Uncompromising Forgiveness', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 62, No. 3 (May 2001); 529-555

Brandon Warmke 'Articulate forgiveness and normative constraints', *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* (online 2015) [on Hieronymi]

Hailey Huget 'Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Accountability: A Critique of Charles Griswold's Forgiveness Paradigm', *Philosophia* 40 (2) pp. 337-355 (2012)

See also the three commentaries on Griswold's book, and his replies, *Philosophia* 38 (3) (2010)

### 3rd Nov

But how are we to make sense of cases in which a victim forgives a culprit who is entirely unremorseful? There are many such cases, and some hold them to be a paradigm of goodness. Isn't forgiveness a *gift*, and so precisely not *earned*, but rather 'unconditional' or elective?

\*Glen Pettigrove *Forgiveness and Love* (OUP, 2012) ch. 6 'Unapologetic Forgiveness' and ch. 7 'Forgiveness and grace'

\*Eve Garrard and David McNaughton 'In Defence of Unconditional Forgiveness', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (2003) Vol. 103, Issue 1; pp. 39-60

Chris Cowley 'Why Genuine Forgiveness Must be Elective and Unconditional', *Ethical Perspectives* vol. 17 (2010)

Anca Gheaus 'Is Unconditional Forgiveness Ever Good?' in P. Anderson ed. *New Topics in Feminist Philosophy of Religion* (Springer 2010)

### 10<sup>th</sup> Nov

Is forgiveness a change of heart, a shift of perception, and/or a performative speech act with the power to change the culprit's moral status (from unforgiven to forgiven)? Perhaps it can be all of these things...though they will be worth separating as different forms of forgiveness.

\*Glen Pettigrove *Forgiveness and Love* (OUP, 2012) ch. 1

\*Lucy Allais 'Wiping the Slate Clean: The Heart of Forgiveness', *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 36: 1 (2008); pp. 33-68

Cheshire Calhoun 'Changing One's Heart', *Ethics* Vol. 103, No. 1 (1992); pp. 76-96

Kathryn Norlock *Forgiveness from a Feminist Perspective* (Lexington Books, 2009) chapter on performative forgiveness

### 17<sup>nd</sup> Nov

Who has 'standing' to forgive? Is it only the wounded party, or may other morally interested parties forgive the wrongdoer for what s/he did to another?

\* Trudy Govier and Wilhelm Verwoerd 'Forgiveness: The Victims Prerogative', *South African Journal of Philosophy* 21 (2002) [might be difficult to access?]

\*Glen Pettigrove *Forgiveness and Love* (OUP, 2012) ch. 2; alternatively ---'The Standing to Forgive' *The Monist* 92.4 (October 2009); pp. 583-603

Charles Griswold *Forgiveness: A Philosophical Exploration* (2007), ch. 3 [ii] Third-

Party Forgiveness' pp. 117-120

Alice MacLachlan (2017) 'In Defense of Third Party Forgiveness' *The Moral Psychology of Forgiveness* ed. Kathryn J. Norlock

### 23<sup>rd</sup> Nov

Is it possible to forgive yourself for something bad you have done to someone else? Is it possible to be justified in so doing?

\*Robin Dillon 'Self-Forgiveness and Self-Respect', *Ethics*, Vol. 112, No. 1 (2001); pp. 53-83

\*Nancy Snow 'Self-forgiveness', *Journal of Value Inquiry* 27 (1993); pp. 75-80

Charles Griswold *Forgiveness: A Philosophical Exploration* (2007); ch. 3 section [iv] Self-forgiveness pp. 122-130

Kathryn Norlock *Forgiveness from a Feminist Perspective* (Lexington Books, 2009) chapter on 'Self-forgiveness'

### 1st Dec

Is forgiveness possible after moral disaster in a community (for instance after civil war, perhaps genocide)? Is it necessary for communal moral healing? Perhaps there can be healing and restoration of functional, trusting social relationships without interpersonal forgiveness? Perhaps political apology and/or memorial is an important factor in such communal healing?

\*Alisa L. Carse and Lynne Tirrell 'Forgiving Grave Wrongs' in Christopher Allers & Marieke Smit (eds.) *Forgiveness in Perspective* [paper available online]

\* Jeffrey Blustein 'Forgiveness, Commemoration, and Restorative Justice: The Role of Moral Emotions', *Metaphilosophy* (2010) Vol. 41 No. 4; pp. 582-617

Charles Griswold *Forgiveness: A Philosophical Exploration* (2007); ch. 4 'Political Apology, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation'

Lynne Tirrell 'Apologising for Atrocity: Rwanda and Recognition', in Alice MacLachlan & C. Allen Speight eds, *Justice, Responsibility, and Reconciliation in the Wake of Conflict* (Springer)

[8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Dec -- No class – Happy Holidays!]

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