

## Uehiro Lectures in Practical Ethics 2026, *Moral Pressures: Bending Time, Shaping Wills*

### Lecture 1 Minimalist Blame: From Normative Function to Core Definition

There are many practices of blaming, and probably as many concepts of blame. This basic disunity in our subject matter makes trouble for conceptual analysis, and inspires a morally functionalist approach that asks what form blaming takes when it performs a morally positive role in our lives. My answer to this question is Communicative Blame—a kind of blame that aims to exert suasive moral and social pressures to bear in two-way dialogue with the wrongdoer in order to bring them to an appropriate appreciation of the moral significance of what they've done, with a view to establishing a *shared moral understanding* of it. This normative functional ideal, however, raises anew the question of what blame *is*, though now in a specific and manageable form: What is communicated in Communicative Blame? My answer to this question is 'minimalist blame' which is defined, and its various explanatory and theoretical advantages considered.

### Lecture 2 'Say you're sorry!' Apology as Foucauldian Avowal

From childhood we learn what apology is through learning it can be required of us when we do wrong. Apology is something a wronged party has the moral right to demand from a wrongdoer. I substantiate the intuition that the practice of apology has essential moral value, because it confirms what Communicative Blame aims at—shared moral understanding—and it does so with some reparative commitment. The practice of demanding apology inherits the value of apology itself, but has the added value that it specifically empowers those who have been wronged to take matters into their own hands and set what is needed for moral repair. However, our starting intuition about the value of demanding apology has a darker flipside, for we also sense it is a practice that can all too easily deteriorate into moral coercion. I aim to substantiate this flipside intuition too, proposing we understand demanded apology as the 'strange' speech act which Foucault discerns as operative through many historical contexts: 'avowal' (*aveu*). Understanding that apology is a sub-species of Foucauldian avowal, I argue, provides a philosophical model of demanded apology that keeps both its special moral value and its inherent tendency to deterioration into coercion simultaneously in view.

### Lecture 3 Moral Protagonism: Bending Time in Our Responses to Wrongdoing

Moral address occurs in time, not only in the sense of having a duration, but in another sense that bends our relationship to time. Bernard Williams introduced the idea of a blame's sometimes functioning by way of a 'proleptic mechanism'. I will consider proleptic moral address independently from the specifics of Williams' internalist conception of reasons, and argue that proleptic blame is not, as it at first seems, an unusual variant or deviant case of blame at all. On the contrary, granted blame's power to reconfigure people's moral psychology, however slightly, we must allow that *all* blame is at least a little proleptic. It addresses a hoped-for future version of the wrongdoer—a version who would not do the wrong. Demands for apology too can be seen to operate this same mechanism. In this sense, we cannot help but 'bend' time when we respond to wrongdoing with blame, or a demand for apology, for we are effectively *willing* the hoped-for future other into existence. The resultant picture of moral address reveals moral subjects not as neutral discoverers and sharers of static moral reasons, but rather as *moral protagonists*, exerting mixed suasive pressures on one another in the construction of a shared moral consciousness.