MORAL DEVELOPMENT AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

1. Introduction

At the end of Section III of "Freedom and Resentment,"1 just after he has drawn our attention to the reactive attitudes, P. F. Strawson remarks, "The object of these commonplaces is to try to keep before our minds something it is easy to forget when we are engaged in philosophy, especially in our cool, contemporary style, viz., what it is actually like to be involved in ordinary inter-personal relationships, ranging from the most intimate to the most casual (50)." It is striking, then, that the proponent of so thoroughly naturalistic an account of moral responsibility seems himself largely to ignore the fact that moral agents do not spring into existence ab initio. The adult moral agent, who is the central character of normative theory and of accounts of moral responsibility, was once a child. Our juvenile selves get a mention in Strawson's paper, but only as examples of creatures who are paradigmatically not responsible or who inhabit "a borderline, penumbral area (61)" with respect to responsibility.2 Thus it remains a mystery, on Strawson's account, how we become the morally responsible creatures he takes us to be.

It is a constraint on any account of moral responsibility that it not attribute to adult moral agents capacities and abilities they could not (and thus do not) acquire in the usual course of human development. This commonplace, true of any interesting adult competence, from language to moral agency, cannot be gainsaid. However, the constraint might have more or less import. Given a description of the relevant adult competence in question, the constraint demands an answer to the following question: how could children in the normal course of development come to acquire the capacities and abilities so described? The 'could' leaves it open to empirical inquiry to determine whether children learn all they need to know from the environment or whether such experience supplements some more-or-less rich innate endowment. But whatever the respective contributions of nature and nurture turn out to be with respect to particular competen-
cies, we can be confident that the more complex the initial description of the competencies, the more pressing the developmental question becomes.

Strawson’s account of moral responsibility is quite complex. But the very appealing story in “Freedom and Resentment” need not be rejected, if we can identify some mutually supportive connections between the elements of that story and what we (now) know about the moral development of children. That is the aim of this paper.

In addition, Strawson—or at least Strawsonians—have a theory-internal reason to acknowledge the developmental dimensions of moral responsibility. Strawson’s rescuing of our ordinary conception of moral responsibility from the clutches of determinism has been thought to come at a very high price. According to Strawson, at the heart of that ordinary conception are our reactive attitudes—responses, like resentment and gratitude, which we naturally have to the perceived ill or good will or indifference borne by one individual toward another. Against the incompatibilist, Strawson claims that we couldn’t give up these attitudes even if we tried. Human nature bequeaths to us the ineliminable propensity to have reactive attitudes, social life would be unimaginable without them, and, given the kind of states reactive attitudes are, they are not open to wholesale revision. Hence, retaining the idea that we are morally responsible creatures appears to commit us to irrationalism in an area of our lives where we are least in need of it. Moreover, if the reactive attitudes come for free, as it were, they appear to be literally indefensible, raising serious concerns about a host of social practices predicated on what we take to be justified attributions of moral responsibility. Such considerations underpin the criticism that Strawsonian moral responsibility is no more than a useful fiction.

Extending the picture in “Freedom and Resentment” to include a richer developmental account of moral agency might help. For empirical findings might explain why abandoning the reactive attitudes is not an option for us. It’s not so much that human social life without the reactive attitudes is a conceptual impossibility. Rather, such a life is, to coin a phrase, maturationally impossible; that is, not possible, given how actual human beings develop.

2. The reactive attitudes and moral responsibility

The reactive attitudes, initially characterized as “natural human reactions to the good or ill will or indifference of others towards us, as
displayed in their attitudes and actions (53),” actually comprise a network of first-, second-, and third-personal responses. The second-personal responses are phenomenologically the most familiar: we resent the person who injures us deliberately, and we feel gratitude to the person who helps us without concern for his own profit. In the third-personal case, we are indignant at the rotten treatment meted out to A by B, and we admire the sacrifice that C makes to promote D’s well-being. And, in the first-personal case, we feel guilty or ashamed of the ill will or indifference we have shown others, and (perhaps) some measure of righteous pride in the concern and respect we have shown to them.

The three types of reactive attitude are connected logically. In the first place, they all reflect a set of expectations of and assume a set of demands for “the manifestation of a certain degree of goodwill or regard on the part of human beings” one to another, or, the “absence of the manifestation of active ill will or indifferent disregard (57).” My resentment, indignation, or guilt are occasioned by the recognition that these expectations and demands have been flouted or not met.

In the second place, and more germane to our concept of moral responsibility, there are reasons common to the first-, second-, and third-personal situations for modifying or withholding feelings of resentment, indignation, and guilt. Other things equal, if you break my vase by accident, resentment on my part towards you would be inappropriate. Other things equal, if A injures B unintentionally, our indignation is out of place. And, other things equal, if I uncover the previously hidden and craven motives of my action, self-congratulation is unwarranted. These modifications to or withholdings of the reactive attitudes are agent- and event-specific. They parallel the typical cases where we admit that a person is not morally responsible for a particular action—in the sense of it being inappropriate to praise or blame him for the action in question. We continue to see him as a morally responsible creature, we simply do not hold him responsible for this, now.

In more extreme cases, we may come to see the inapplicability of the latter distinction altogether. The injury done to us by the severely mentally disordered individual or, according to Strawson, by the young child, does not occasion a temporary suspension of resentment. For in these cases, our default assumption is that the individual is not a morally responsible creature at all.
The reactive attitudes, then, are central to two types of discriminatory tasks. First, to our distinguishing *between* the set of morally responsible creatures and the set of morally non-responsible creatures. Second, to our evaluating *within* the former set, the moral responsibility of particular individuals for particular actions. For Strawson, it is the pattern of our experiencing, inhibiting, and withholding the various reactive attitudes that provides shape and content to our concept of moral responsibility. Suppose we feel indignant at A over his treatment of B. It is not that we have independent grounds for judging A to be a morally responsible creature—say, that he is, in some sense, free—and we have independent grounds for holding him responsible in this particular case, and *only then* feel indignant. Rather, our indignation just is what it is to judge him responsible—in general and in this instance. And, to be judged in this way is what it is to be morally responsible.

For Strawson, the reactive attitudes and the various practices with which they are typically associated (e.g., praising, admonishing, blaming) are constitutively expressive of interpersonal relations. To be a person among persons just is to experience the reactive attitudes and to inhibit or withhold them altogether when the relevant conditions obtain. It is this idea that underpins Strawson's insistence that attributions of moral responsibility (effected through our experience of the reactive attitudes) do not stand in need of external justification. The reactive attitudes and our right to take them seriously do not depend on their expression satisfying some condition outside of human social life; nor are they justified internally in terms of their fulfilling some further function, like behavior correction. Rather, the reactive attitudes, or, more precisely, our proneness to experience them, represent very deep facts about the kinds of creatures we are. To inquire after what might justify this central area of human life is to fail to understand the phenomena in question. Trying to justify them by appeal to some facts external to the practices they comprise would be akin to trying to justify human nature.

3. *Being a morally responsible creature*

To be a morally responsible creature is to be a target of reactive attitudes amongst other such targets. Put this baldly, the view triggers the following concerns: being morally responsible has little to do with non-relational facts about those to whom the predicate applies and everything
to do with the contingent responses of others towards them. But something is amiss in thinking that an individual is morally responsible just in case others react to him in this way rather than that. Surely, there is something about him that makes him morally responsible or not. Moreover, taking the reactive attitudes to be constitutive of moral responsibility appears to allow no room for error: we feel indignant at A, and that is all there is to it. But aren't our feelings of indignation and resentment sometimes misplaced?

The concerns can be addressed by articulating what it is to be a proper target of the reactive attitudes. First and foremost, one must be capable of action, not just mere behavior. More particularly, one must be capable of manifesting in one's actions good or ill will or indifference towards others. Reactive attitudes are, by definition, responses to the attitudes we discern in agents' actions. Indignation at a photocopier is inapt. However, indignation is entirely appropriate toward the lackadaisical technician whose job it is to keep the machine functioning. Of course, we do get angry with inanimate objects and some of us are grateful to our cars for getting us safely home in a snow storm. But these ways in which we deal with our frustrations and relief concerning non-persons are mediated by anthropomorphization. We have to pretend that the photocopier bears us a grudge, that the car appreciates the care we take of it. Where such pretense is not possible, neither are even faux reactive attitudes. And we are aware of the pretense when we engage in it. This is why we are easily embarrassed at our outbursts at machines.

We do not pretend with each other. For the default assumption among human beings is that our actions are actions and not mere bodily motions, underpinned by intentions and thus expressive of our attitudes. The assumption is defeasible, however, for example, when we see that A's insulting B is the result of a hypnotic suggestion.

Secondly, the capacity to act either with ill- or goodwill or indifference toward others, presupposes some grasp of what counts as good or ill will or deliberate indifference to others. On Strawson's account such attitudes are relativized to commonly accepted expectations and demands. I bear you ill will when I deliberately flout those expectations and demands. Absent some grasp on the requisite expectations and demands, I am not able intentionally to act toward you with good or ill will. Hence, the proper target of reactive attitudes must have some understanding of what
is minimally required of him vis-à-vis his treatment of others. Moral demands are by their very nature general. So, the individual who takes himself to be bound by them, takes others to be bound by them also. As Strawson describes it, “A demand made on an individual is to be regarded as a moral demand only if it belongs to a system of demands which includes demands on others in his interest.”

This second capacity required of proper targets of the reactive attitudes suggests a third; namely, the ability to experience the reactive attitudes themselves. The natural human reaction to the flouting of a moral demand is indignation. Holding others to moral standards essentially brings with it susceptibility to the reactive attitudes. If an individual systematically failed to experience resentment, indignation, gratitude and the like, we would rightly wonder whether he took others to be bound by moral rules at all.

Fourthly, since it will not be enough just to expect a certain degree of consideration from others, experiencing the reactive attitudes will depend upon being able to discern in another’s action the good or ill will or indifference toward oneself or others that is manifest therein. And this in turn requires the capacity to attribute intentions to others.

This set of capacities illustrates the deeply reciprocal nature of the reactive attitudes that Strawson is so keen to emphasize. Being correctly judged to be morally responsible is intimately connected to being able to make such judgments of others. Indeed, we can say that being a morally responsible creature is to be able to hold and be the target of the reactive attitudes. In one of the rare passages where Strawson mentions children, he writes (referring initially to parents): “They are dealing with creatures who are potentially and increasingly capable both of holding, and being objects of, the full range of human and moral attitudes, but are not yet truly capable of either” (60–61, emphasis added).

Alas, Strawson stops short of explaining the relevant transition. And we need a satisfying explanation of this transition if we are to accept the account of the morally responsible agent Strawson offers us. This is the thrust of the constraint I discussed in Section 1 above.

Strawson’s view of the fundamental difference between the child and the adult may be illustrated in terms of his contrast between the fully engaged human reactive attitudes (of which I have already spoken) and the objective attitude—the stance we adopt towards a creature whom we judge as an
improper recipient of the reactive attitudes. For example, the severely mentally disordered individual is, in a sense, an object we may seek to control or manage or treat. As Strawson puts it, "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 (52)." Strawson recognizes that parents do—indeed, must—oscillate between "objectivity of attitude and developed human attitudes (61)." But apart from the uncharacteristically vague remark that "Rehearsals insensibly modulate towards true performances (61)," Strawson does not attempt to explain how children come to be fully developed moral agents—that is, persons.

This is the central question of moral psychology. How do we move from being non-responsible creatures, who somehow have the potential to become proper targets of the reactive attitudes, to being full-blown moral agents? Aristotle and Wittgenstein who, unlike Strawson, do explicitly address this question, invoke respectively, habituation and training as the necessary mechanisms. But, as I have argued elsewhere, it is not at all clear how witnessing behavioral regularities or engaging in social imitation could give rise to adult moral competence. Fortunately, there are other approaches.

4. Becoming a morally responsible creature

Being a morally responsible creature on Strawson's account requires, as we have seen, a combination of cognitive and affective capacities. Some of these capacities—for example, the ability to attribute mental states like beliefs and intentions to others—are not specifically moral capacities. Others would appear distinctly to be moral, for example, the recognition and the ability to regulate one's actions in light of generally accepted constraints on interpersonal interaction. And while a species of amoral intentional creatures is not inconceivable, the existence of a species of moral creatures without the requisite cognitive and affective skills is implausible. So, one might expect that moral development goes hand-in-hand with the emergence of basic cognitive and affective capacities. This is precisely what recent research suggests.

It is not possible to replicate the excellent surveys of the relevant material here. Instead, four significant areas of research likely to be of
interest to philosophers and central to the task of fleshing out the Straw-sonian account of moral responsibility will be considered.

First, representing one of the ways in which many developmental psychologists now incorporate philosophical accounts of morality into their work—in this instance, 18th century moral sense theory—a considerable amount of data has accumulated demonstrating that very young children, within the first year of life, manifest a range of pro-social behaviors, like helping, comforting, and sharing.11

The prevailing hypothesis about the psychological substrate of these pro-social behaviors is that human beings are innately empathic, built to respond spontaneously to the distress of con-specifics. Martin Hoffman provides a description of empathy as developing from a primitive sort of emotional contagion (babies are apt to cry when other babies cry) to the detached, reflective acknowledgment of others' pain and suffering that characterizes mature adults. The transition is made possible, in part, by the child's growing psychological differentiation from others.12

The role of empathy in moral development must not be overstated, however. Our ever-present capacity to be affectively responsive to our con-specifics would seem to signal an interest in others, a proto-recognition of community. But empathy is insufficient by itself to explain the full extent of adult moral competency. Moreover, it would be a mistake to construe this research as evidence that human beings are innately good. Everyone knows that even very young children can be mean and aggressive. And some recent studies have begun to examine the connections between non-compliant and aggressive behavior in toddlers with an eye to its connection to problematic behavior later in life.13

Second, very young children are, as we might say, normatively sensitive. Beginning in the second year of life, children notice and appear to care about standards of various kinds. Given the restrictive and didactic nature of child-rearing, this is not by itself surprising. What is interesting is that well over fifty studies show that even toddlers recognize different kinds of standards. In particular, they discern a difference between moral and conventional rules.14 Preschool children discriminate between moral transgressions (e.g., stealing a pencil, pushing someone off a swing) and transgressions of non-moral rules (e.g., wearing pajamas to school).15 This discrimination is manifested in three ways. First, children's spontaneous reactions to transgressions of each type differ: they are more likely to
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Initiate physical responses to actors who have broken a moral rule than to those who have broken a conventional rule. Second, children offer different types of verbal responses to various transgressions: in the case of a moral transgression children will advert to the pain and injury experienced by the victim of an act and they will often employ the language of rights and fairness; whereas in the case of non-moral transgressions, children are inclined to focus on issues of social order and disorder, and on the explicit commands of their caretakers or teachers. Third, children differentially modify their judgments of an action's permissibility when told that an authority figure has lifted a prohibition. Such a change affects judgments about conventional transgressions (if the teacher says it is okay to wear pajamas to school, children agree), but do not affect judgments about moral transgressions (if the teacher says it is okay to steal someone's eraser, children continue to judge the action impermissible). There is some disagreement about how the boundaries between the moral and the conventional domains are inscribed cross-culturally. However, it appears that young children in different cultures judge the same types of actions (e.g., breaking promises, destroying another's property) as moral transgressions. It also appears that, contrary to Piaget and Kohlberg, children attach significance to moral rules above and beyond, and sometimes independently of any punishment that might be thought to follow their being broken.

Elsewhere, I have argued that these consistent findings from what is called "domain theory" support the view that humans have some innate moral endowment. Explicit parental instruction radically underdetermines the child's ability to distinguish between transgressions of different kinds, and children make these discriminations long before they are able to articulate moral (or conventional) rules as such rules.

Children's early sensitivity to others' distress (mentioned above) surely plays some role in the features of specifically moral transgressions—injury and harm—being salient to them, as is revealed in a third area of work that tracks the emotional attributions children make to agents. Arsenio presented children with a range of scenarios and quizzed them about how they thought various actors, patients and observers would feel. For example, children reliably attribute happy emotions to the agents and recipients of pro-social behaviors, like helping someone pick up pieces of a game. More interestingly, while acts of victimization, like stealing another's toy, were judged to result in negative emotions in victims and observers,
children thought that the perpetrators of these transgressions would feel happy. Further investigation into this “happy victimizer” expectancy has revealed that there is an age-related change: all children believe that victims will feel bad, but kindergarteners are apt to judge that victimizers will be happy, while older children (sixth graders and above) tend to attribute mixed emotions to victimizers, acknowledging that thieves’ satisfaction at having got some material possession will be tempered by their recognition that their victims will be sad.¹⁹

A plausible explanation for this transition is that the capacity to attribute conflicting or mixed emotions to actors develops with age: very young children can attribute only one type of emotion at a time. (There may be parallels here with the trajectory found in children’s conceptions of other minds: it is only after about four and a half years of age that children appear able to attribute to others mental states—in particular, beliefs—with content different from their own.²⁰) In addition, Arsenio and Lover have found that children’s emerging interest in and concern for maintaining interpersonal relationships seems to affect their judgments of victimizers’ emotions. As they write, “the more affectively salient gains produced by acts of victimization [getting a wanted toy, say] become subordinated to the more long-term affective considerations involved in friendships and other social relationships” (121).

The fourth area of developmental work worth mentioning here concerns children’s actual ascriptions of responsibility and their judgments of blameworthiness. Children’s early capacity for empathy (of the contagion variety), their discrimination between moral and conventional domains, and their differential attributions of emotions to various types of agents and patients in scenarios involving moral and immoral behavior indicates that their focus in the early stages of development is on the outcomes or consequences of action rather than on the psychological antecedents of action. Up to the age of five, children’s judgments and emotional reactions are largely the result of a fairly superficial (but not for that reason false) reading of events. This is as expected, given what we know about the development of children’s conception of mind. However, between about four and six years of age children begin to discriminate between intentional and unintentional harm, and between foreseeable and unforeseeable harm. They make their judgments of responsibility and blameworthiness accordingly, seeing the agents who bring about intentional and foreseeable harm as
more blameworthy and more deserving of punishment than agents who bring about harm accidentally or who bring about unforeseeable harm. These judgments are reflected in the kind of excuses and justifications that children are apt to provide for their own harmful behavior.\textsuperscript{21}

5. Moral development and Strawsonian responsibility

Recall, to be a morally responsible creature is, on Strawson's account, to be the proper target of the reactive attitudes. And that condition itself requires that one be able properly to target others, an ability underpinned by a number of affective and cognitive capacities (see Section 3). Empirical research in moral development—conducted, by the way, entirely independently of any knowledge of Strawson's work (so far as I know)—seems to reveal that moral development is just what the Strawsonian model would predict.

An innate disposition to take an interest in and show concern for the distress of con-specífics and the very early ability to distinguish between normative domains gradually develop into a set of mature moral capacities, including the capacity to make judgments of others' responsibility.

Strawson is right to focus on our reactive attitudes as the core of our moral agency. This is where it all begins. As Myles Burnyeat notes, “a mature morality must in large part continue to be what it originally was, a matter of response deriving from sources other than reflective reason.”\textsuperscript{22} Our moral capacities come from somewhere, and while they become more nuanced as a result of our increasingly cognitive capacities, they are not reducible to adult reasoning abilities. If, as Adler\textsuperscript{23} contends, resentment presupposes full-blown beliefs about the states of minds of others, then we cannot say exactly that human children are natural-born resencers. But we come close. The reactive attitudes have psychological precursors. And these are what allow the bootstrapping that takes us from non-responsible creatures to full-blown moral agents.

As the studies discussed above show, quite young children appear to have substantial moral knowledge: they know that stealing and causing physical harm are wrong and that helping others is right. They recognize a difference between moral and conventional transgressions. And there is reason to believe that innate affective and cognitive capacities develop in tandem, changing as the child begins to grasp that she is just one among many other similar creatures and as she begins to value that fact.
6. Improper targets and maturational failures

So far, the discussion, both of the Strawsonian moral agent (person) and of the moral development of children, has concerned normal cases. To be morally responsible is to be the proper target of the reactive attitudes, and we have seen how the capacities necessary to achieve that status are acquired in the usual course of human development. Becoming a person is a natural process, something that, ceteris paribus, happens to all members of the species, very much like becoming a competent speaker of a natural language. But naturalness does not imply inevitability: things can go wrong. And indeed they do.

Some human beings are psychopaths. A diagnosis of psychopathy (not to be confused with Antisocial Personality Disorder) is warranted on the basis of the presence of a constellation of personality and behavioral traits.24 Among the former are shallow affect, callous disregard for the feelings and rights of others, lack of genuine guilt and remorse, superficial charm, and a talent for interpersonal manipulation. Among the latter are impulsivity, thrill seeking, promiscuous sexual behavior, and criminal versatility. Psychopaths are not insane; they are often quite intelligent; and while they have an intellectual grip on the expectations and demands of interpersonal interaction, they appear to be unable to deploy this knowledge in their practical reasoning. As the most elegant expositor of the disorder, Hervey Cleckley, writes, "in complex matters of judgment involving ethical, emotional, and other evaluational factors" the psychopath "shows no evidence of a defect. So long as the test is verbal or otherwise abstract, so long as he is not a direct participant, he shows that he knows his way about."25 As his pathological lying and disregard for others show, when he tries to be a direct participant in human social life, the psychopath fails miserably.

It is not just that the psychopath is an habitual wrongdoer. Rather, he seems not to care about wrongdoing, or, interestingly, about acting imprudently either.26 Cleckley speculates that an affective deficit is at the heart of psychopathy: "mature, wholehearted anger, true or consistent indignation, honest, solid grief, sustaining pride, deep joy, and genuine despair are reactions not likely to be found with this scale" (348). If this is correct, then the psychopath is incapable of experiencing the reactive attitudes himself.27 As such, he is not a proper target of the reactive attitudes and is not to be thought of as a morally responsible creature.
The psychopath is not exempted from moral responsibility because he is crazy, nor because he is a child. But something has clearly gone wrong in his development. Finding out what this something is is of pressing importance. First, because the psychopath falls between institutional cracks. If the psychopath is not insane, we may not commit him. If he is not a morally responsible creature, we may not punish him. And yet psychopaths consistently harm others. Second, because charting the developmental trajectory of the disorder may suggest points and methods for preventative intervention.

Recent work extending the construct of psychopathy to children has revealed that “fledging” psychopaths score low on empathy and fail to mark the moral/conventional domain distinction in the same way that non-psychopathic children do. It is too early to say precisely what, if any, are the underlying mechanisms of psychopathy. But, however that inquiry turns out, the existence of the psychopath throws into sharp relief the virtues of Strawson’s account of moral responsibility. To reiterate: to be morally responsible is to be a proper target and holder of reactive attitudes, where this in turn requires the possession of a cluster of affective and cognitive capacities that emerge in the usual course of human development. The shock and frustration of confronting sane adults who lack these capacities only serves to reinforce how much we take each other’s moral responsibility for granted.

6. Conclusion

Strawson is right to stress that any plausible theory of moral responsibility will be constrained by considerations quite independent of metaphysical questions having to do with what it is to act freely. Recent work in developmental moral psychology is beginning to articulate some of these considerations. And emphasizing this developmental dimension helps to de-fang concerns about the irrationalism of Strawson’s account of moral responsibility.

Given that the Strawsonian account can benefit from paying attention to developmental psychology, Strawson’s own failure to consider at any length how we become morally responsible agents is a bit of a puzzle. A partial explanation, I believe, lies in Strawson’s anti-reductionism. Strawson frequently makes reference to human nature and suggests that this nature is manifest (to all whose nature it is) in the course of their ordinary inter-
personal transactions. He is no behaviorist; but he warns us against looking outside our everyday commitments and practices for deeper, "rational" explanations of those commitments and practices. They are, in a sense, just given in virtue of our nature. This is surely correct. However, things cannot be left here. Human nature itself has a natural history that unfolds in each individual person in the usual course of her development.30

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NOTES


2. For example, "'He's only a child'" is listed along with "'He's a hopeless schizophrenic', 'His mind has been systematically perverted', [and] 'that's purely compulsive behavior on his part'" ("Freedom and Resentment," 51) as pleas that exempt an individual from being responsible in general. Later in the essay Strawson finesses this crude view of children by recognizing that they are at least on their way to becoming responsible agents. However, he does not explain how that transition is effected.

3. 'Now know' because, at the time "Freedom and Resentment" was published, children's moral development had received serious attention only from Freud and his followers and from Piaget and his. Certainly, moral philosophers were not much interested in what empirical psychology had to offer, and psychologists operated with little philosophical understanding of morality. Lawrence Kohlberg's work, beginning in the early 1960s, changed that. Since then the study of children's moral development has burgeoned into a significant area of specialization in psychology. For a thorough survey, see Elliot Turiel, "The Development of Morality," Handbook of Child Psychology, 5th ed'n., vol. 3, Social, Emotional, and Personality Development, edited by Nancy Eisenberg (New York: John Wiley, 1998), pp. 863-932.

4. Strawson writes, "The human commitment to participation in ordinary inter-personal relationships is, I think, too thoroughgoing and deeply rooted for us to take seriously the thought that a general theoretical conviction might so change our world that, in it, there were no longer any such things as inter-personal relationships as we normally understand them; and being involved in inter-personal relationships as we normally understand them precisely is being exposed to the range of reactive attitudes and feelings that is in question" ("Freedom and Resentment," 54).

5. Notice that while withholding resentment might be natural for us with respect to the young child, the withholding of blame might not be. This raises quite deep questions about
the precise relation between blame and resentment, and indeed, between gratitude and praise. At the very least, if we believe that blame is sometimes appropriate in the absence of resentment, then attributing moral responsibility is less about meting out praise and blame than philosophers have heretofore thought. Further consideration of these issues is beyond the scope of the present paper.

6. Cf. Rajendra Prasad, "Reactive Attitudes, Rationality, and Determinism," *The Philosophy of P. F. Strawson*, edited by Pranab Kumar Sen and Roop Rekha Verma (New Delhi: Indian Council of Philosophical Research), pp. 346–76. Prasad suggests that we withhold reactive attitudes, when we do, only because we think manifesting resentment or indignation will do no good. The insane and (possibly) the very young will be unmoved by our responses. On this account, holding individuals responsible has a proper function, and where that function cannot be realized, expressions of reactive attitudes and attributions of responsibility are unwarranted. To reject Prasad’s view is not to deny that expressing indignation can play a role in getting a rotter to change his ways. Quite obviously, it can.


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30. I am grateful to Paul Pietroski and Catherine Wilson for discussion and advice.

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