‘Personal’ Reactive Attitudes and Partial Responses to Others

Introduction

Strawson’s discussion of the reactive attitudes in “Freedom and Resentment” (1962) distinguishes between three types of reactive attitudes: ‘personal’, ‘impersonal’, and ‘self-reactive’ attitudes. According to Strawson, the ‘personal’ attitudes reflect our concern that we ourselves are treated with goodwill and regard; the ‘impersonal’ attitudes reflect our concern that others receive a similar degree of goodwill and regard; and the ‘self-reactive’ attitudes reflect the demands we make on ourselves to treat others well.¹ Thus, when someone insults me, I react with the ‘personal’ attitude of resentment; when someone insults a person sitting next to me on the bus, I react with the ‘impersonal’ attitude of moral indignation or disapprobation; and when I am the insulter and realize the my own behavior is unacceptable, I react with the ‘self-reactive’ attitude of shame or remorse.

On this conception of the distinction between ‘personal,’ ‘impersonal,’ and ‘self-reactive’ attitudes, ‘personal’ and ‘self-reactive’ attitudes each manifest a special kind of self-concern. ‘Personal’ attitudes reflect our egocentric concern for our own treatment; ‘self-reactive’ attitudes manifest the special preoccupation we all have with our own good (or bad) behavior. Only the ‘impersonal’ attitudes are thoroughly other-regarding in that they reflect our concern that all people receive from all other people the treatment they are owed as members of the moral community.² And as Strawson sees it, it is this impartial character of the ‘impersonal’ reactive

¹ For Strawson’s discussion of the “personal” and “impersonal” reactive attitudes, see especially §5 of “Freedom and Resentment”.
² Though I speak here of ‘demanding’ consideration and regard, I intend to take up a relatively neutral conception of the reactive attitudes. I think some reactive attitudes make moral demands, others play other forms of communicative and expressive roles, and some likely do neither. What unifies the reactive attitudes, on my view, is the Strawsonian idea that they are responses to the quality of will displayed by ourselves and others. For the purposes of this paper, I also assume that this quality of will can be understood in both character-oriented and action-oriented
attitudes that earns them the distinction ‘moral’.

In presenting the distinction between the ‘personal,’ ‘impersonal,’ and ‘self-reactive’ attitudes in this way, Strawson paints a complex (and in some respects unharmonious) picture of the role of ordinary interpersonal relationships in our theorizing about moral responsibility. On the one hand, Strawson argues that we should begin with our ordinary personal relationships when approaching questions about moral responsibility. On the other hand, in suggesting that only the ‘impersonal’ reactive attitudes count as moral, Strawson turns away from our ordinary personal relationships as promising to explain the ‘moral’ character of our responsibility practices. For insofar as our responses to others count as moral only to the extent that we respond to them as human beings in general, our interactions with one another qua friends, lovers, family members, and so on will not reveal to us the character of genuinely ‘moral’ interaction.

senses and that reactive attitudes can reflect attributions of responsibility in both the ‘attributability’ and ‘accountability’ senses articulated in Watson (1996, reprinted in 2004).

3 As Strawson writes, it is “the generalized aspect of the demand” made by the impersonal reactive attitudes that explains why we think of them as particularly pertinent to morality; someone who failed to manifest any of the ‘impersonal’ attitudes would appear to us as an “abnormal case of moral egocentricity, as a kind of moral solipsist” (Strawson 1962, §5, p 9).

4 It is worth stressing that the distinctions discussed here do not track Strawson’s distinction between the ‘participant’ attitude and the ‘objective’ attitude. Rather, the ‘personal,’ ‘impersonal,’ and ‘self-reactive’ attitudes are all species of ‘participant’ attitudes. The ‘objective’ attitudes we can instead characterize as ‘non-reactive’ attitudes.

5 As Strawson puts it, we must “keep before our minds something it is easy to forget when we are engaged in philosophy […] viz., what it is actually like to be involved in ordinary interpersonal relationships, ranging from the most intimate to the most casual” (Strawson 1962, §3, p 4).

6 Thus, Strawson fixes our intuitions about the reactive attitudes and our responsibility practices by appealing to our ordinary personal relationships, but at the same time he holds that our moral responses to others ultimately transcend all of these particular relationship roles.

7 All this said, it is worth noting that Strawson’s “Social Morality and Individual Ideal” (1961) paints a different (and to my mind more compelling) picture of the role of personal relationships in morality. There, Strawson argues that morality need not be a system of universal principles, but it does need to be a system whose participants recognize at least some reciprocal claims. Strawson clarifies this point as follows: “Here are two reasons why it is misleading to say that moral behaviour is what is demanded of men as men. It might, in some cases, be essentially what is demanded of Spartans by other Spartans, or of a king by his subjects. What is universally demanded of the members of a moral community is something like the abstract virtue of justice: a man should not insist on a particular claim while refusing to acknowledge any reciprocal claim. But from this formally universal feature of morality no consequences follow as to the universality of application of the particular rules in the observance of which, in particular situations and societies, justice consists” (Strawson 1961, p 11). Elsewhere in the article, Strawson is willing to embrace the notion of an “internal morality of an intimate personal relationship” (p 7), and more generally, he is content with role-based obligations. In short, Strawson does not suggest that morality needs to be fully impartial, even if he insists that one cannot participate in a moral system without meeting the abstract demand of acknowledging some reciprocal claims. In light of all this, it might be that the revision I propose to Strawson’s taxonomy of reactive attitudes in
This paper proposes to remove this tension by revising the traditional Strawsonian distinction between ‘personal,’ ‘impersonal,’ and ‘self-reactive’ attitudes. In particular, I argue that we should categorize the reactive attitudes not in terms of their objects but rather in terms of whether they express partial or impartial concern. Once we do this, we see that the ‘personal’ and ‘self-reactive’ attitudes can be other-directed and that what distinguishes them from other attitudes is that they are partial forms of response; we often feel attitudes like resentment, gratitude, pride, and shame concerning our own treatment and behavior, but we can also experience these attitudes in response to the treatment and behavior of our close ties.

The plan for the paper is as follows. I begin in section 1 with a brief summary of Strawson’s taxonomy of reactive attitudes in “Freedom and Resentment”. In section 2, I present four cases motivating the conclusion that the ‘personal’ and ‘self-reactive’ attitudes are sometimes other-concerning in ways Strawson does not recognize. If my assessment of these cases is correct, then the ‘personal’ and ‘self-reactive’ attitudes should be understood as reactions partial concern (rather than as reactions of two kinds of self-concern). In section 3, I consider and respond to the objection that cases of the sort discussed in section 2 can in fact be reduced to cases of self-concern. In section 4, I highlight a further theoretical advantage of my proposal, viz., it has a natural place in an account of relationship-based obligations.

1. Strawson’s Taxonomy of the Reactive Attitudes in “Freedom and Resentment”

Strawson’s basic taxonomy of the reactive attitudes in “Freedom and Resentment” is threefold. First, as we have seen, Strawson identifies a category of ‘personal’ reactive attitudes, which include resentment, gratitude, and hurt feelings (among others) and which arise as

“Freedom and Resentment” is not at odds with the picture of morality he ultimately meant to endorse.
responses to the quality of will others display towards us. Second, Strawson identifies a category of ‘impersonal’ or ‘vicarious’ reactive attitudes, which include moral indignation and disapprobation and which arise as responses to the quality of will others show others. Finally, Strawson identifies a category of ‘self-reactive’ attitudes, which include shame and guilt (among others) and which arise as responses to the demands we make on ourselves to show goodwill and regard to others. According to Strawson, both the ‘personal’ and ‘self-reactive’ attitudes are self-concerning in the sense that they reflect the special concern we have for our own treatment and behavior (respectively). The following table summarizes Strawson’s taxonomy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Personal’ Reactive Attitudes</th>
<th>‘Self- Reactive’ Attitudes</th>
<th>‘Impersonal’ Reactive Attitudes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examples:</td>
<td>Examples:</td>
<td>Examples:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- resentment, - gratitude, -</td>
<td>- shame, - guilt, - remorse,</td>
<td>- disapprobation, - indignation,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hurt feelings, - love⁹</td>
<td>- feeling obligated, - pride</td>
<td>- disapproval, - admiration, -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~ reactions to the demands we</td>
<td>~ reactions to the demands we make</td>
<td>~ reactions to the demands we make</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make on others concerning our</td>
<td>make on ourselves concerning others’</td>
<td>make on others concerning others’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>own treatment</td>
<td>treatment</td>
<td>treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~ express our self-interested</td>
<td>~ express our concern with the quality</td>
<td>~ express our concern for others’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concern in our own well being</td>
<td>of our own wills (as manifested in our</td>
<td>treatment and behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>behavior)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Though Strawson makes clear that the reactive attitudes belong to a “field of phenomena” too complex to give a precise or exhaustive characterization, he is clear that all three of the general categories of ‘personal’, ‘impersonal’, and ‘self-reactive’ attitudes are essential to ordinary human life. As Strawson writes, “[a]ll these three types of attitudes are humanly connected”; a person

⁹ The ‘self-reactive’ and ‘impersonal’ attitudes similarly have something important in common, for they both reflect norms of consistency: insofar as we make claims on others to treat us with goodwill and regard, we think we should be prepared to make similar claims on behalf of others (i.e., we think we should manifest the ‘impersonal’ reactive attitudes insofar as we manifest the ‘personal’ ones); and insofar as we make claims on others to treat others and ourselves with goodwill and regard, we think we should be prepared to acknowledge that similar claims bind us (i.e., we think we should manifest the ‘self-reactive’ attitudes).

Strawson also lists forgiveness as a ‘personal’ reactive attitude, but since he also holds that forgiveness consists in forsaking resentment (and resentment is itself a reactive attitude), I exclude forgiveness from the list here.

¹⁰ Thus, scholars such as Clarke, McKenna, and Smith (2004), Helm (2017), Watson (2004) have felt free to add attitudes like pride, admiration, and approbation to the list of reactive attitudes, even though Strawson never explicitly discusses them.
who failed to manifest the impersonal reactive attitudes would be “an abnormal case of moral egocentricity” even if she manifested the self-reactive attitudes and recognized that others have claims on her.\textsuperscript{11} And a person who failed to manifest one or two of the other kinds of responses would likewise result in “something far below or far above the level of our common humanity—a moral idiot or a saint.”\textsuperscript{12} In light of this, Strawson concludes that all three attitude types “have common roots in our human nature and our membership of human communities”—according to Strawson, being a moral agent involved in ordinary human relationships requires all three types of attitude.\textsuperscript{13,14}

2. Case-Based Support for Partial, Other-Concerning Reactive Attitudes

Even if Strawson is right that we should manifest other-concerning attitudes insofar as we manifest self-concerning ones, I think there is nonetheless compelling evidence that we also expect of one another special kinds of partial treatment in the context of close relationships. And insofar as this is the case, we should allow that the ‘personal’ or the ‘self-reactive’ attitudes can be other-oriented.\textsuperscript{15} To see that this is the case, consider the following four scenarios. The first two involve attitudes Strawson considered ‘personal’, whereas the last two involve attitudes he

\textsuperscript{11} As Strawson puts it, such a person “would then see himself as unique both as one (the one) who had a general claim on human regard and as one (the one) on whom human beings in general had such a claim. This would be a kind of moral solipsism. But it is barely more than a conceptual possibility; if it is that” (Strawson 1962, §5).

\textsuperscript{12} Strawson (1962), §5.

\textsuperscript{13} Strawson (1962), §5.

\textsuperscript{14} Note: some philosophers such as R. Jay Wallace (1994) argue that we should limit the reactive attitudes to include only resentment, indignation, and guilt. For Wallace, this is to account for the link between the notion of a reactive attitude and the notion of an expectation (see especially his chapter 2.2). Though I take up a much more expansive conception of the reactive attitudes here, my arguments below concerning the potentially other-concerning character of ‘personal’ attitudes such as resentment should still bear on more restrictive accounts like Wallace’s.

\textsuperscript{15} Note: In line with my permissive approach to which attitudes count as reactive in this paper (see footnote 14 above), I also take a permissive approach to the nature of reactive attitudes. For instance, I think reactive attitudes often play communicative roles and often make demands, but they need not always do so. Whether reactive attitudes rest on or include judgments and whether they must be expressed or sometimes can be privately held are additional issues I hope to be ecumenical on. For a variety of different views on these issues see Hieronymi (2001), Macnamara (2015), McKenna (2012), Wallace (1994), and Watson (1987), among others.
considered ‘self-reactive’—but in contrast to Strawson’s account, in each of the scenarios I present these attitudes manifest as other-concerning:

CASE 1 - RESENTMENT

Your lifelong best friend discovers that his partner has been having an affair. You are outraged, resent your friend’s partner, and realize that it will be very difficult for you to forgive him for what he did to your friend.

CASE 2 - GRATITUDE

Your partner’s colleague nominates her for a community service award. Your partner feels that her hard work often goes overlooked, and you know how much the nomination means to her — you are grateful to your partner’s colleague for her thoughtful gesture and decide to express your appreciation when you next see her.

CASE 3 - PRIDE

Your brother decides to get fit. After three years of training and countless minor injuries, he completes his first marathon. You know how much resolve it took for him to keep up his training regimen and are proud of him for sticking with it and achieving his goal.16

CASE 4 - SHAME

You spend your semester abroad in college with your best friend Sam, who is like a sister to you. One night, Sam drinks too much and vandalizes a temple. You are ashamed of her and worry that you won’t be able to have the same kind of friendship anymore.17

16 See Philippa Foot (2002) for one expression of the traditional view that one must take the object of pride to be one’s own achievement (p 76).

17 One might object here that you must feel only disappointment in your friend unless you see her behavior as somehow reflecting on you. This may in fact be the right thing to say about this particular case, but I think it is plausible to allow that, in at least some circumstances, one could feel shame on behalf of another.
In all of these cases, agents involved in close personal relationships respond to their close ties’ treatment with attitudes that Strawson characterized as appropriate only as responses to our own treatment or behavior. And yet in each of the cases, the agents’ responses seem perfectly appropriate. In fact, we might even say that the responses are exemplary of good relationships of the relevant type. In case 1, your inclination to resent your friend’s partner is grounded in the strength of your friendship; as a close friend, you should be prepared to stand up for him, and your resenting his wrongdoer promotes this end. In case 2, given the nature of your relationship with your partner and the special concern you have for her, it is fitting for you to respond to her benefactor with gratitude rather than with mere approval or approbation. Cases 3 and 4 can be given a similar analysis. Although it is normally not fitting to respond with pride and shame to the behavior of perfect strangers, we can appropriately respond with these attitudes when our close ties behave in ways that are admirable or shameful, respectively. This is because our close personal relationships entitle us to take a special interest in our loved ones’ behavior (their accomplishments, the quality of will they show others, etc.).

If these remarks are correct, then attitudes like resentment and gratitude are not merely attitudes of self-oriented concern, and attitudes like pride and shame do not necessarily concern only our own behavior and appraisal. Instead, what is essential to these attitudes is that they are manifestations of partial concern. If this is correct, then we should revise the traditional Strawsonian taxonomy of reactive attitudes as follows. Rather than distinguishing at the fundamental level between self- and other-concerning attitudes, we should instead distinguish

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18 I put the qualifier ‘normally’ here because it may be appropriate to have shame and pride responses concerning, say, one’s country or other group association. I want to remain neutral on this and commit only to saying that if it is appropriate to feel shame or pride in one’s country or association, then it is appropriate because partial attitudes concerning those groups are appropriate for their members.

19 This discussion further helps us see that partiality has both negative and positive faces. It is positive when I prioritize the interests of my partner over the interests of others. It is negative when the bad behavior of someone close to me causes me to feel shame that I would not feel when witnessing a stranger behave in that same way.
between reactive attitudes that express partial and impartial concern. That is, we should categorize the reactive attitudes as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partial Reactive Attitudes</th>
<th>Impartial Reactive Attitudes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(reactions of partial concern)</td>
<td>(reactions of impartial concern)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Examples:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Examples:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- resentment</td>
<td>- disapprobation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- gratitude</td>
<td>- indignation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- shame</td>
<td>- disapproval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- pride</td>
<td>- admiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- hurt feelings</td>
<td>- approbation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- love</td>
<td>- approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- guilt</td>
<td>- (disinterested love)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- remorse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are a variety of advantages to looking at the reactive attitudes in this way. First, as already noted, this taxonomy allows us to acknowledge that attitudes such as resentment, gratitude, shame, and pride are not exclusively reactions of self-concern. In many cases our close relationships call on us to respond with these attitudes even when our own treatment or behavior is not at issue. Second, in making our fundamental distinction between attitudes that express partial concern and attitudes that express impartial concern, we are able to leave it open exactly which attitudes have the capacity to be both self- and other-concerning. That is, although I have suggested that resentment, gratitude, pride, and shame are flexible in this regard for many agents, we might want to allow that not all agents manifest these attitudes as both self- and other-concerning. My account allows for this and even allows for the possibility that there are some partial attitudes (such as guilt and remorse) that most agents experience as self-directed.

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20 Though I do not wish to endorse his account of love in particular, Helm’s (2009) discussion of “person-focused emotions” is closely related my discussion of 'personal' reactive attitudes. According to Helm, the ‘person-focused’ emotions that play a central role in love evince a kind of concern that is the same as the kind of concern we have for ourselves (though we are not to take the notion of self-concern as conceptually prior).

21 Whether we in face have special reasons to care about ourselves and our loved ones is something I simply take for granted here. However, for more discussion of these issues (even if not for an argument for the justification of partiality for ourselves and our close ties), see section 4 below.

22 Note: Although Strawson does not discuss it, I have also added ‘disinterested love’ to the category of impartial attitudes. I take it there are sufficiently strong reasons to distinguish between partial and impartial love to warrant this.

23 Note: these reflections also help to resolve a problem Strawson acknowledges in his own account. For although Strawson defines the ‘personal’ attitudes as “essentially those of offended parties or beneficiaries,” he is clear that the
3. An Objection: Concern for Others in Close Relationships as Self-Concern

How might one object to these arguments? One natural line of resistance is to suggest that partial concern for others in the context of close relationships in fact reduces to a special kind of self-concern. If this is correct, then Strawson’s original characterization of the ‘personal’ and ‘self-reactive’ attitudes stands.

To see how this line of reasoning might be spelled out, consider the fact that close relationships often call on us to identify with our relationship partners. That is, part of what it is to be in, say, a loving romantic partnership, or a strong friendship, is to consider my relationship partner’s well-being as part of my own. Given this, one might reason that in cases of the sort discussed above, your partial reaction to your close ties’ treatment is in fact grounded in the relationship it has to your own well-being or appraisal. Thus, perhaps in case 1 you resent your friend’s partner only because you see your friend as such an important part of your life that a wrong done to him is relevantly like a wrong done to you. Or perhaps in case 3, you are proud of your brother because you identify with him so as to see his accomplishments as your accomplishments too. This would suggest that the ‘personal’ and ‘self-reactive’ attitudes always

‘impersonal’ attitudes are not to be understood as essentially reactions to the quality of will others show others (1962, §5, my emphasis). As Strawson puts it, “It is not that these [impersonal] attitudes are essentially vicarious—one can feel indignation on one’s own account—but that they are essentially capable of being vicarious. But I shall retain the name for the sake of its suggestiveness; and I hope that what is misleading about it will be corrected in what follows” (1962, §5, p 8). In saying that the ‘impersonal’ attitudes can be responses to one’s own treatment as well as to the treatment of others, Strawson acknowledges that we should be able to manifest ‘impersonal’ attitudes in response to the quality of will others show us. But in saying this and in allowing that the actual object of concern (self or other) does not ultimately distinguish the personal from the impersonal attitudes, Strawson leaves the following question unanswered: what determines whether a reactive attitude counts as personal or impersonal if it is a response to the quality of will others show me? My account has a ready answer to this question: if the attitude expresses or manifests impartial concern for myself, then the attitude is ‘impersonal’; if the attitude expresses or manifests partial concern for myself, then the attitude is ‘personal’. Strawson may in fact be implicitly relying on an idea like this in his account, and if this is the case, then the suggestion of this paper is simply that he should also allow that our partial responses can be reactions to the quality of will others show others (and call them ‘personal’ on account of their partiality rather than on account of their being self-concerned).
do involve self-concern and that no revision of the Strawsonian taxonomy is needed.\footnote{We can imagine a similar story being told for the cases not yet discussed: in case 2, you feel gratitude towards your partner’s co-worker because the good of your partner is \textit{your} good as well; in case 4, you are ashamed of your friend’s behavior because of how her behavior reflects badly on \textit{you}.}

However, I don’t think the above considerations provide a compelling case that the ‘personal’ and ‘self-reactive’ attitudes are essentially self-concerning responses. For although our well-being does become (at least partially) dependent on others’ well-being in close relationships, this does not prevent us from distinguishing between our own well-being and the well-being of our relationship partners notwithstanding the effect it has on us. In fact, when our loved ones are harmed or benefited, the primary object of our concern is the well-being of our loved ones rather than our own well-being; when my close friend is harmed, the harm done to my friend is the object of my concern, and so we should conclude that my concern for my friend (rather than self-concern) is also what justifies my resentment. Likewise, when someone benefits my partner, my gratitude is directed at the good done for my partner rather than the good done for me. If this is correct, then we can conclude that objection laid out above paints an implausible picture of the justification of our ‘personal’ responses to our loved ones’ treatment and behavior: it suggests that self-concern justifies our reactive responses to our loved ones’ treatment and behavior, but our experiences as participants in close relationships suggests otherwise—our concern for our relationship partners plays this justificatory role.

4. Further Advantages for Proponents of Relationship-Based Obligations

Before closing, I want to point to one further theoretical advantage of reconceiving of the ‘personal’ and ‘self-reactive’ attitudes as responses of partial concern. In particular, construing
these attitudes in terms of partial concern gives them a natural place in an account of relationship-based obligations.

Recall that the traditional Strawsonian account of the reactive attitudes takes the moral attitudes to be fundamentally ‘impersonal’. As Strawson writes, it is the “impersonal or vicarious” character of an attitude “which entitle[s] it to the qualification ‘moral’”. However, against this idea that morality must be impartial, proponents of associative and relationship-based obligations have argued that some of our moral obligations are in fact compatible with (and even require) partiality. For instance, perhaps relationships of love, family, and friendship generate special moral obligations and entitlements to prioritize caring for some people over others. Arguments of this sort can be found in Brink (2001), Darwall (2010), Hardimon (1994), Kolodny (2010), Scheffler (2010), and Stroud (2010), among others.

If our personal relationships do indeed require us to be partial towards our friends, family members, and other loved ones, then our reactive attitudes ought to register this fact. That is, there should be an important difference between the other-concerning reactive attitudes that express our partial concern for our close ties and the other-concerning reactive attitudes that express our impartial concern for people in general. The account I have sketched above provides exactly the kind of taxonomy of reactive attitudes that proponents of relationship-based obligations need. For as I have argued, we have some other-concerning responses that are impartial (responses involving indignation, disapprobation, approval, and so on), but we also have other-concerning responses that reflect our special investment in the well-being and behavior of our close ties (responses involving resentment, gratitude, and so on). These latter kinds of

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25 Strawson (1962), §5.
26 We might add Wallace (2012) to this list, were it not for the fact that he denies that relationship-based obligations count as moral.
attitudes play an important role in our close relationships, for insofar as reactive attitudes have communicative (and sometimes even defensive and sanctioning) roles, they can help us fulfil the special obligations we have to our loved ones. For instance, my resenting my partner’s wrongdoer helps me to protect and defend him by motivating me to hold his wrongdoer to account and by signaling to others that I am committed to securing his interests. Likewise, my pride in my brother expresses my investment in his personal projects and (given his personality profile) motivates him to pursue further personal goals. We can presumably tell similar stories for other attitudes insofar as they (a) have motivational and social significance for their targets and (b) express commitments of care and concern that we take to be required by our close relationships.

5. Conclusion

This paper has aimed to show that the attitudes Strawson called ‘personal’ and ‘self-reactive’ are best understood as attitudes of partiality rather than as attitudes of self-concern. As I have argued, our relationships with our close ties sometimes give us reasons to react partially to the way others treat them and to their own good or bad behavior, and in these cases, attitudes like resentment, gratitude, pride, and shame are appropriate forms of response. If this is correct, then we can conclude that the attitudes Strawson called ‘personal’ and ‘self-reactive’ can express the special concern we have for certain others just as well as they can reflect the special concern we have for ourselves. Hence, we should adopt a new taxonomy of reactive attitudes such that the fundamental distinction between reactive attitudes concerns their partiality or impartiality.

Note, however, that I do not mean to suggest here that we have duties to have particular reactive attitudes in particular circumstances. Rather, we have duties to be partial to our close ties (in at least some circumstances), and these duties can rationalize or justify our having partial reactive attitudes in response to their treatment and behavior (insofar as these attitudes can help us in our efforts to fulfill our obligations to care for them and promote their interests).
rather than their self- or other-directedness.

28 A further question one might have: could one accept my proposed reconceptualization of Strawsonian taxonomy of reactive attitudes without accepting the conclusion that morality allows for and sometimes requires partial treatment of others? That is, could one accept my proposed reconceptualization of the taxonomy of reactive attitudes and maintain that only the impartial attitudes count as ‘moral’? I see no incoherence in a view like this, but to the extent that we take seriously the Strawsonian insight that we should look to our ordinary interpersonal relationships to understand our moral practices, there is significant pressure to acknowledge a role for partiality in moral interaction. For just as we expect ordinary moral agents to show concern both for their own good treatment and for the good treatment of others, so too we expect ordinary moral agents to show differential concern for others in the contexts of their close relationships.
**Bibliography**


