

Making Amends: How to Alter the Fittingness of Blame

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Abstract

On one popular approach to blameworthiness, an agent is the fitting target of blame in virtue of culpably doing wrong. But this view faces a puzzle. If an agent culpably performs a wrong action, then this fact will always be true of them, and so they will be the fitting target of blame forever. But this seems counterintuitive—we typically judge that it is not fitting to blame culpable wrongdoers in perpetuity. So, there must be more to being blameworthy over time than culpable wrongdoing. In this paper, I defend a reparative account of blameworthiness over time, according to which blameworthy agents have reparative obligations to their victims and remain the fitting target of blame until these obligations are fulfilled.

Keywords: blame, blameworthiness, fittingness, reparative obligations

1. Introduction

It is typically thought that all and only blameworthy agents are the fitting targets of blame.¹ And on one popular approach to blameworthiness, agents are blameworthy in virtue of culpably performing some wrong action. But this view faces a puzzle. If an agent culpably performs some wrong action, then this fact will always be true of them. So, an agent, once blameworthy, will be the fitting target of blame, forever (or, to be more precise, until they cease to exist). Many find this to be counterintuitive—we typically judge that agents who culpably perform wrong actions are not the fitting targets of blame in perpetuity. Most would see no reason to continue to blame themselves or others for decades-old wrongs, especially once amends are made and apologies accepted.² To

¹ In this paper, I assume that blameworthiness is necessary and sufficient for blame to be fitting, though I'll remain as neutral as possible about the nature of the fittingness relation and focus instead on the conditions under which blame is fitting. In assuming that blameworthiness is both necessary and sufficient for the fittingness of blame, I part ways with others who defend views of blameworthiness over time, particularly Khoury, who, in recent work, commits only to the necessity claim (forthcoming; ft. 1). Though this is a significant difference between our views, it will not affect my criticism of his and Matheson's (2018) account of diachronic blameworthiness, which only relies on blameworthiness being necessary for blame to be fitting.

² Discussions of the fittingness of blame over time are closely related to recent debates regarding the fittingness of emotions over time (Callard 2017; Howard in prep; Marušić 2018; Moller 2017; Na'aman 2020). But how closely these debates are related will depend on one's view of blame. They will overlap to a much greater extent if one defends an emotion-based view of blame as opposed to a cognitive account, for example. In this paper, I try to remain neutral on the nature of blame (though I briefly make reference to an account of blame's evaluative and communicative content in section 4.c.) such that it will be possible to answer the question of whether blame can become less fitting over time without also supplying an answer to the question of whether emotions can become less fitting over time (and vice versa).

accommodate the intuition that blame is not fitting forever, philosophers have made a distinction between accounts of synchronic blameworthiness—the set of conditions under which an agent is blameworthy for an action *at the time of the action*—and accounts of diachronic blameworthiness—the set of conditions under which an agent is blameworthy for an action *at some later time* (Khoury 2013, forthcoming; Matheson 2014; Khoury & Matheson 2018). While accounts of synchronic blameworthiness typically feature conditions for culpable wrongdoing, such as control and epistemic conditions,³ those who wish to argue that blame can become less fitting over time offer accounts of diachronic blameworthiness that go beyond culpability.⁴

For example, Andrew Khoury and Benjamin Matheson (2018) have developed a view of diachronic blameworthiness in terms of psychological connectedness. On their view, if an individual bears no, or a diminished number of, relevant psychological connections to a past individual who culpably committed a wrong action, then the current individual is not blameworthy, or less blameworthy, for that action. This is so even if the current individual is personally identical to the past individual. While Khoury and Matheson allow for a whole host of psychological changes to impact diachronic blameworthiness, others focus on more specific psychological states.⁵ For example, Andreas Carlsson (2017; forthcoming) and Douglas Portmore (2019; forthcoming) argue that blameworthy agents deserve to suffer the pains of guilt to a particular degree, and are thus no longer blameworthy, or the fitting targets of blame, once they've experienced the requisite amount of guilt.

³ Other examples of conditions for culpable wrongdoing include quality of will conditions (Arpaly 2003, Arpaly & Schroeder 2013; McKenna 2012), ownership conditions (Fischer 2012), and tracing conditions (Fischer & Tognazzini 2009).

⁴ Another way to accommodate this intuition is to make a distinction between being blameworthy and being the fitting target of blame. On such a view, an agent, once blameworthy, will be blameworthy forever but it can become less fitting to blame them over time. I don't take this route, since I take being blameworthy to be necessary and sufficient for blame to be fitting, but if one prefers this way of carving up the conceptual space, then one can simply take the accounts of diachronic blameworthiness discussed in this paper to be account of the fittingness of blame over time. Thanks to Oded Na'aman for raising this concern.

⁵ Per-Erik Milam (in prep) also defends a view according to which an agent's change of heart is sufficient for a reduction in their diachronic blameworthiness.

While these accounts of diachronic blameworthiness have many virtues, including their ability to capture the intuition that blame can become less fitting over time, I'll argue that both views are incomplete. Though changes in psychological connectedness may be necessary to diminish diachronic blameworthiness, these changes are not sufficient to render agents entirely unblameworthy for past wrongs. If they were, then privately reformed wrongdoers—agents who undergo significant psychological changes without making any form of amends to their victims—wouldn't be blameworthy for former wrongs. And though experiencing guilt may be necessary for agents to stop being blameworthy for past wrongs, it is not sufficient. If it were, then privately remorseful wrongdoers—agents who feel the requisite amount of guilt without offering amends—would not be the fitting targets of blame. I contend that these counterintuitive implications indicate that there is more to diachronic blameworthiness and fitting blame than psychological connectedness and deserved guilt. In particular, I'll defend a *reparative account* of diachronic blameworthiness, according to which blameworthy agents have reparative obligations to their victims and remain blameworthy, and the fitting target of blame, until these obligations are fulfilled. I'll conclude by defending the reparative account from the objection that reparations are irrelevant to diachronic blameworthiness.

2. Psychological Connectedness and Guilt-Based Accounts of Diachronic Blameworthiness

The view that blame, if fitting, is fitting forever is an accepted implication of many accounts of blameworthiness. Ledger theorists, for example, like Joel Feinberg, are happy to embrace this consequence.⁶ He argues:

Moral responsibility, so conceived, is a liability to charges and credits on some ideal record, liability to credit or blame (in the sense of “blame” that implies no action). Just

⁶ Other theorists who defend the view that blameworthiness is forever include: Haji 1998; Tognazzini 2010; Zimmerman 1988.

as it is, as we say, “forever to the credit” of a hero or saint that he performed some noble act, so a man can forever be “to blame” for his faults.” (Feinberg 1970: 30)

On this view, while it may not be appropriate to punish, sanction, or even openly criticize an individual for past wrongs, these wrongs will always reflect poorly on the agents who performed them, and in this sense they will be blameworthy, and the fitting targets of blame, forever. There is very little difference between synchronic and diachronic blameworthiness on such an approach—all that is required to be diachronically blameworthy for an action is to be personally identical to an agent who was synchronically blameworthy for that action. Khoury and Matheson present a helpful formulation of this view of diachronic blameworthiness:

Blameworthiness is Forever (BIF): If a person A at t_1 is blameworthy to degree d for committing act X at t_1 , then an individual B at t_2 is blameworthy to degree d for act X if A is personally identical with B. (2018: 207)

Recently, BIF has come under attack and philosophers have begun to develop accounts of diachronic blameworthiness that can compete with it. Khoury and Matheson (2018) argue that synchronic blameworthiness coupled with personal identity is not sufficient for diachronic blameworthiness, for the diminishment of psychological connectedness alone can impact diachronic blameworthiness. And Carlsson (forthcoming) and Portmore (2019; forthcoming) argue that an agent can cease to be blameworthy even if they are identical to an agent who performed a past wrong, so long as the agent experiences the deserved amount of guilt in virtue of their culpability. In this section, I present the psychological connectedness and guilt-based approaches to diachronic blameworthiness.

2.a. Psychological Connectedness and Diachronic Blameworthiness

In arguing that personal identity is not sufficient for diachronic blameworthiness, Khoury and Matheson highlight an important feature of this relation: It is possible for an individual to be personally identical to a past individual despite sharing no distinctive psychological features with that individual.

On Khoury and Matheson's view, distinctive psychological features are those that tend to vary across persons—memories, desires, character traits, beliefs, etc. (2018: 211). And even on views of personal identity that take these states to play an important role in persistence, like the psychological approach to personal identity, it will be possible for a present individual to be identical to a past individual despite having none of the same memories, desires, character traits, beliefs, etc.⁷ This is because the psychological approach analyses personal identity in terms of psychological continuity, which consists in overlapping chains of strong psychological connectedness (Parfit 1984). And while individuals who are strongly psychologically connected will share a substantial number of distinctive psychological features, overlapping chains of strong psychological connectedness can form between individuals who don't possess any of the same psychological features. For example, I now am strongly psychologically connected to one-year-ago me—both individuals possess many of the same memories, desires, character traits, and beliefs. And one-year-ago me is strongly psychologically connected to two-years-ago me, who is strongly psychologically connected to three-years-ago me, and so on and so forth all the way back to thirty-years-ago me. So, I now am psychologically continuous with thirty-years-ago me, since there is an overlapping chain of strong psychological connectedness between us, and this is true even though I now have none of the same memories, desires, character traits or beliefs as thirty-years-ago me.

The fact that agents can be personally identical to individuals they are not psychologically connected to is not objectionable—we want our theories of personal identity to explain how an individual can persist while also changing over time. But what works for a theory of persistence over time does not necessarily work for a theory of blameworthiness over time. And according to BIF, agents will be blameworthy for the wrongdoings of individuals they are personally identical to, despite

⁷ According to biological accounts of personal identity (e.g., DeGrazia 2005; Olson 1997), personal identity involves the persistence of biological animals, and this does not require the persistence of any psychological features at all.

sharing no psychological features with these individuals. This, according to Khoury and Matheson, is counterintuitive. Consider an agent who performs a wrong action early in their life, and is synchronically blameworthy for this wrong, but then goes on to develop into a moral saint who has no memory of this earlier wrongdoing, shares no objectionable character traits with their youthful counterpart, and fails to possess any moral failings of any kind. Surely the moral saint is not blameworthy for the youthful indiscretion. Khoury and Matheson argue:

It seems that whether blame is appropriately directed at a person at a time *t* must depend in *some* way on what that person is like at *t*...blameworthiness seems to involve a particular kind of criticizability—that is, a blameworthy individual is criticizable in light of a particular kind of flaw. A moral saint, however, is not so criticizable because she, by definition, lacks any such flaws. (2018: 214)

On Khoury and Matheson's view, being blameworthy involves being flawed in a particular way. But the moral saint doesn't possess the flawed psychological features that gave rise to the earlier performance of a wrong action. Indeed, they don't possess any moral flaws at all. Thus, the moral saint is not blameworthy for the wrongdoing they committed in their youth because they share no relevant psychological features with their younger self. This indicates that psychological connectedness, and not personal identity, is the relation relevant for diachronic blameworthiness, which leads Khoury and Matheson to develop the psychological connectedness account of diachronic blameworthiness (PCA). First, they argue that maximal psychological connectedness is sufficient for diachronic blameworthiness:

PCA's sufficiency claim: If a person A at t_1 is blameworthy to degree d for act X which occurs at t_1 , then an individual B at t_2 is blameworthy for X to degree d if B is maximally psychologically connected to A. (2018: 216)⁸

They go on to argue that some degree of psychological connectedness is necessary for diachronic blameworthiness and mitigated psychological connectedness also mitigates diachronic blameworthiness: "When there is no distinctive psychological connectedness, there is no diachronic blameworthiness... Furthermore, if there is diminished relevant psychological connectedness, then we think there is diminished blameworthiness" (2018: 217). We can represent these claims in the following way:

PCA's necessity claim: If a person A at t_1 is blameworthy to degree d for act X which occurs at t_1 , then an individual B at t_2 will not be blameworthy to any degree for X if B shares no distinctive psychological connections to A.

PCA's scalar claim: If a person A at t_1 is blameworthy to degree d for act X which occurs at t_1 , then an individual B at t_2 will be blameworthy to a degree less than d for X if B is not maximally relevantly psychologically connected to A.

These claims are squarely at odds with BIF, for they indicate that an agent can fail to be diachronically blameworthy, or will be less blameworthy, for past wrongs even if the agent is identical to the individual who committed these wrongs. And because most agents' distinctive psychological features change over time, it will be rare (though not impossible) for an agent to be maximally diachronically blameworthy for past wrongs for their whole lives. Thus, on PCA, blame will rarely be fitting forever.

⁸ Unlike personal identity, psychological connectedness is not a one-to-one relation, and it's possible for an individual at t_1 to be maximally psychologically connected to two or more individuals at t_n (as in cases of fission, for example). It's not clear whether Khoury and Matheson would be happy to accept the implication of their view that the individuals at t_n would both be diachronically blameworthy, and the fitting targets of blame, for wrongs that the individual at t_1 committed or if they'd prefer to amend their view to claim that maximal *and unique* psychological connectedness is sufficient for diachronic blameworthiness.

2.b. Guilt and Diachronic Blameworthiness

Not everyone who rejects BIF accepts PCA. Carlsson (forthcoming), for example, argues that psychological connectedness can be diminished in ways that do not diminish the degree to which agents are diachronically blameworthy. If an agent acts wrongly, and then their distinctive psychological features are altered by accident, or because they took a pill to purposefully diminish the degree to which they are psychologically connected to the agent that committed the wrong act, then the agent would not intuitively be less blameworthy for their wrongdoing (Carlsson forthcoming: 7). For Carlsson, diachronic blameworthiness does not depend on the persistence of an agent's distinctive psychological features. Rather, it depends on the experience of a particular psychological state: guilt.

In a series of recent papers, both Carlsson (2017; forthcoming) and Portmore (2019; forthcoming) present guilt-based accounts of blameworthiness that give rise to an interesting solution to the puzzle of blameworthiness over time. Though there are important differences between their accounts of blameworthiness, both argue that an agent is blameworthy for performing some action if and only if they deserve to feel guilty (or regretful or remorseful) for performing the action (Carlsson forthcoming: 12; Portmore forthcoming: 17). So, if a blameworthy agent experiences none of the guilt they deserve to experience in virtue of being blameworthy for a past action, then it will continue to be true that they deserve to feel guilty for this action and will continue to be blameworthy for it. And, once a blameworthy agent experiences the deserved amount of guilt for acting wrongly, then it will be false that they continue to deserve to feel guilty for their wrongdoing and they will cease to be blameworthy. Both theorists also argue that the degree to which an agent is blameworthy over time depends on the degree of deserved guilt they experience—the more deservedly guilty an agent feels, the less blameworthy they will be (Carlsson forthcoming: 14; Portmore forthcoming: 25). We can represent these claims in the following way:

GBA's sufficiency claim: If a person A at t_1 is blameworthy to degree d for act X which occurs at t_1 , then A at t_2 will be blameworthy for X to degree d if A experiences none of the guilt they deserve to experience in virtue of being blameworthy to degree d for X at t_1 .

GBA's necessity claim: If a person A at t_1 is blameworthy to degree d for act X which occurs at t_1 , then A at t_2 will not be blameworthy for X if A experiences all of the guilt they deserve to experience in virtue of being blameworthy to degree d for X at t_1 .

GBA's scalar claim: If a person A at t_1 is blameworthy to degree d for X which occurs at t_1 , then A at t_2 will be blameworthy to a degree less than d for X if A experiences some of the guilt they deserve to experience in virtue of being blameworthy to degree d for X at t_1 .

GBA can easily make sense of the intuition that blame becomes less fitting over time, since blameworthy agents often feel at least somewhat guilty about their past wrongdoings, particularly once they are blamed by those they have wronged. This places GBA at odds with BIF. According to GBA, an agent can cease being blameworthy for past wrongs by feeling deservedly guilty for these wrongs even if they remain personally identical to the individual who committed these wrongful actions. And because the experience of guilt comes apart from psychological connectedness, GBA and PCA will issue different verdicts about diachronic blameworthiness in certain cases. For example, an agent who becomes less psychologically connected over time without ever experiencing any degree of guilt will be less diachronically blameworthy for past wrongs on PCA but remain equally blameworthy across time on GBA.

2.c. Reformed and Remorseful Wrongdoers

Though these accounts differ in important ways, PCA and GBA will issue the same judgments of diachronic blameworthiness in a wide range of situations. Take the following pair of cases:

Reformed and Remorseful Gardener: Edie asks her friend Jackie to care for her houseplants while she's traveling for work. Edie loves her houseplants very much, and writes up detailed instructions for Jackie on how to care for them. But Jackie never reads the instructions, exhibiting a culpable degree of carelessness. Jackie waters the plants twice a day, which she would have known is far too often if she had read Edie's instructions. By the time Edie returns home, most of the plants have died due to overwatering. When it comes to light that Jackie overwatered the plants because she didn't read Edie's instructions, Edie blames Jackie for being so careless. Jackie realizes that she was wrong to be careless, feels guilty about her behavior, and apologizes profusely to Edie. She offers to buy her new houseplants and promises to be more attentive in the future. Over time, Edie succeeds in becoming a more attentive person and never treats her friends' possessions carelessly again.

Unchanging and Unrepentant Gardener: A year later, Edie asks another friend, Lee, to look after her plants while she travels for work. However, Lee, like Jackie, also fails to read Edie's detailed instructions due to culpable carelessness. And, like Jackie, Lee overwaters the plants, killing most of them by the time Edie comes home. When it comes to light that Lee overwatered the plants because she didn't read Edie's instructions, Edie blames Lee for being careless, just as she had blamed Jackie. However, unlike Jackie, Lee does not realize that she was wrong to be careless or feel guilty about her behavior, even after being blamed by Edie. She does not apologize, offer to buy Edie new houseplants, or promise to be a more attentive plant sitter in the future. Over time, Lee remains exactly as careless as she was with Edie's houseplants.

Though both Jackie and Lee performed the same wrong action, and are equally synchronically blameworthy when they perform it, Jackie is intuitively less blameworthy than Lee as a result of the way she responds to Edie's blame. Many would find it unfitting for Edie to continue to blame Jackie to the same degree after Jackie expressed remorse for her action, apologized, and bought Edie new houseplants. It certainly seems permissible for Jackie to object to being the target of Edie's continued blame once she recognized the error in her ways, made amends, and did all she could to become a more attentive friend. In contrast, there would be nothing objectionable about Edie continuing to blame Lee long after the incident occurred. As long as Lee remains an unrepentant and careless person, it will intuitively be fitting for Edie to blame her.

Both PCA and GBA can easily make sense of the judgment that Jackie becomes less blameworthy than Lee over time, though these views provide distinct explanations for *why* this is so. According to PCA, agents become less blameworthy for past wrongs as they become less distinctively psychologically connected to the agents that committed these wrongs, and once they share no distinctive psychological features with their former selves, they are no longer blameworthy at all. So, as Jackie works to reform herself into a less careless person, she becomes less diachronically blameworthy, and when she eventually gets rid of the flawed psychological features that gave rise to her careless action, she will cease to be blameworthy entirely.⁹ In contrast, the flawed psychological features that gave rise to Lee performing a wrong action persist over time—Lee remains exactly as careless as she was when she overwatered Edie's plants. Thus, on PCA, Lee will remain exactly as blameworthy as she was when she committed the careless action.

⁹ In this paper, I'm assuming that it is the flawed psychological features that gave rise to a synchronically blameworthy action that must change in order for agents to become less blameworthy, which coheres well with Khoury and Matheson's discussion of why the moral saint is not blameworthy for their youthful indiscretions. However, Khoury and Matheson intend to only give a model of diachronic blameworthiness in this paper, and leave open the possibility that a change in *any* psychological connection could impact diachronic blameworthiness (2018: 219), though they take stronger stances on the nature of the relevant psychological connections in other work (Khoury 2013, forthcoming; Matheson 2014).

According to GBA, agents become less blameworthy for past wrongs as they experience the guilt they deserve to feel and once they feel precisely the degree of guilt they deserve to feel, they are no longer blameworthy. On this view, Jackie becomes less blameworthy in the wake of being blamed by Edie not because she becomes a more attentive person but because she begins to feel guilty for her culpably careless behavior. And Lee remains equally diachronically blameworthy not because she fails to become a better, less careless person, but because she never feels guilty for her carelessness.

In this way, PCA and GBA both provide promising accounts of diachronic blameworthiness, each offering an intuitively plausible explanation of how blame can become less fitting over time. However, in the next section, I'll argue that PCA and GBA fail to offer a complete account of how and why agents can become less blameworthy over time. While psychological change and the experience of guilt may contribute to, and even be necessary for, the diminishment of diachronic blameworthiness, these factors are neither independently nor jointly sufficient.

3. Privately Reformed and Remorseful Wrongdoers

Though PCA and GBA can each capture the intuitive differences in blameworthiness between the reformed and remorseful and unchanging and unrepentant gardener cases, both views also imply that there are differences between cases where there is intuitively none to be found. Consider a modified version of the reformed and remorseful gardener case:¹⁰

Privately Reformed and Remorseful Gardener: Edie asks her friend Jackie* to care for her houseplants while she's traveling for work. Edie loves her houseplants very much, and writes up detailed instructions for Jackie* on how to care for them. But Jackie* never reads the instructions, exhibiting a culpable degree of carelessness. Jackie* waters the plants twice a day, which she would have known is far too often if she had read Edie's instructions. As the plants start to die from overwatering, Jackie*

¹⁰ I consider similar cases in "Expanding Moral Understanding" (2021a) and "Guilty Confessions" (2021b).

realizes the error in her ways and feels incredibly guilty for being so careless with her friend's plants. She disavows her careless ways and takes immediate action towards becoming a more attentive friend. By the time Edie returns home, Jackie* has experienced precisely the amount of guilt she deserved to feel in virtue of her culpable carelessness and has evolved into an attentive and caring person. When it comes to light that Jackie* overwatered the plants because she didn't read Edie's instructions, Edie blames Jackie* for being so careless. In response, Jackie* apologizes profusely, offers to buy Edie new houseplants, and promises to be a more attentive plant sitter in the future.

According to both PCA and BGA, there is a significant difference between Jackie and Jackie* at the time Edie blames them. Because Jackie does not undergo psychological change or feel guilty prior to Edie's arrival, she is blameworthy, and the fitting target of blame, when Edie blames her. But Jackie* has already eliminated the relevantly flawed features of her psychology and experienced the exact amount of guilt she deserves to feel before being blamed by Edie. So, according to both PCA and GBA, Jackie* is not blameworthy at the time Edie blames her—the blame is unfitting. But this is counterintuitive. Edie's blame is intuitively fitting in the privately reformed and remorseful gardener case, just as it is in the reformed and remorseful gardener case. Jackie* certainly takes Edie's blame to be fitting—she accepts and responds to Edie's blame just as Jackie does: by apologizing profusely, offering to buy her new houseplants, and promising to do better in the future. And this seems like the morally appropriate response in both cases. It would be bizarre if Jackie*, upon being confronted for the first time by Edie, objected to her blame, arguing that she had already changed and/or felt guilty enough such that Edie's blame is unfitting. Notice that this is so even though Jackie* is intimately familiar with the fact that she has changed and suffered sufficiently for her wrongdoing.

Of course, just because blame is unfitting doesn't entail that it is all-things-considered inappropriate. And PCA and GBA theorists could attempt to accommodate the intuition that Edie's blame is appropriate in the immediately reformed and remorseful gardener case without granting that it is fitting by appealing to epistemic considerations. After all, Edie doesn't know that Jackie* has become a sufficiently attentive person or suffered to the deserved degree prior to being blamed. And Jackie* knows that Edie doesn't know the degree to which she's changed and suffered. This could explain both why we take Edie to be justified in blaming Jackie* and Jackie's* acceptance of the blame to be appropriate. Just as a belief can be justified without being true, an expression of blame can be justified without being fitting. Edie has good reasons to think that Jackie* is blameworthy: she performed a wrong action, possessed the agential capacities to be able to avoid performing the action, and had the epistemic capacities to be able to know its moral status. This information could justify Edie's blaming response without rendering it fitting. And, because Jackie* knows that Edie's blame is justified, this could explain why it would be inappropriate for Jackie* to object to it.

I do not deny that epistemic considerations can render unfitting blame all-things-considered appropriate. It is certainly true that we are sometimes unaware, or only dimly cognizant, of others' psychological changes and emotional states, and this can lead to a whole host of justifiable but unfitting reactions, including blame. But this isn't always the case. People will often let us know how they've changed and what emotions they are experiencing, and reform and remorse are no exception. In fact, we can imagine a version of the privately reformed and remorseful gardener case where this is true.

Expressively Reformed and Remorseful Gardner: Edie asks her friend Jackie** to care for her houseplants while she's traveling for work. Edie loves her houseplants very much, and writes up detailed instructions for Jackie** on how to care for them. But Jackie** never reads the instructions, exhibiting a culpable degree of carelessness. Jackie** waters the plants twice a day, which she would have known is far too often if

she had read Edie's instructions. As the plants start to die from overwatering, Jackie** realizes the error in her ways and feels incredibly guilty for being so careless with her friend's plants. She disavows her careless ways and takes immediate action towards becoming a more attentive friend. By the time Edie returns home, Jackie** has experienced precisely the right amount of guilt she deserved to feel in virtue of her carelessness and has evolved into an attentive and caring person. As soon as Edie walks in the door, Jackie** tells Edie that she's overwatered the plants because she carelessly didn't read Edie's instructions and that she feels incredibly guilty for doing so. She also tells her how much more attentive and caring she's become since Edie left town. Upon hearing Jackie**'s confession, Edie blames Jackie** for being so careless. In response, Jackie** apologizes profusely, offers to buy her new houseplants, and promises to be a more attentive plant sitter in the future.

In this case, Edie is quite aware that Jackie** has significantly reformed and experienced the amount of guilt she deserves to feel for what she's done. So, Edie's blame cannot be justified by appeal to epistemic considerations. Still, it strikes me that Edie's blame of Jackie** is fitting in this case. We often continue to blame those who wrong us, even when we know they have changed significantly and feel guilty for what they've done; this is particularly true when we first learn that someone has wronged us through their expression of reform and remorse. And just as it would be bizarre for Jackie* to object to Edie's blame in the privately reformed and remorseful gardener case, it would also be bizarre if Jackie** objected to being blamed in the expressively reformed and remorseful gardener case. Often, moral reform prompts us to confess to those we've wronged, and express guilt for what we've done, in order to give them the opportunity to blame us, not to shield ourselves from their blame. Presumably, this is because we think it is fitting for our victims to blame us. In this way, reform and remorse often lead us to see others' blame as fitting, contrary to what PCA and GBA would

predict. And when agents reference their own reform or remorse in an attempt to deflect others' blame, this is rarely taken as a reason to think that the blame is unfitting. These observations indicate that Edie's blame is appropriate not because of epistemic considerations, but because it is fitting. And this is so despite the fact that Jackie** is no longer a careless person and has suffered the deserved degree of guilt prior to being blamed by Edie. If this is right, then PCA and GBA are incomplete and there is likely more to the reduction of blameworthiness over time than reform and remorse. In the next section, I propose a competing account of diachronic blameworthiness.

4. Repair and Diachronic Blameworthiness

Why do we think that Jackie* and Jackie** are blameworthy and Edie's blame is fitting in the privately and expressively reformed and remorseful gardener cases? I suspect that it is because Jackie* and Jackie** have yet to do all that is required of them in virtue of their culpable wrongdoing and Edie's blame both reflects this fact and calls upon them to fulfill their obligations. Although Jackie* and Jackie** are sufficiently reformed and experience the deserved degree of guilt, it isn't until they are blamed that they apologize, offer to buy Edie new houseplants, and promise to be more attentive. Indeed, in the privately reformed and remorseful gardener case, Jackie* doesn't even admit to wrongdoing prior to being blamed by Edie. But acknowledgement, apology, and restitution are all things we typically think blameworthy agents owe to those they have wronged. Though PCA and GBA theorists focus only on what occurs inside blameworthy agents' heads, the idea that blameworthy agents also have duties to their victims and must take action to fulfill them is familiar in the literature (Nelkin 2013; Radzik 2009; Walker 2006; Wallace 2019). And just as many theorists take blameworthy agents to owe something to their victims, they also take blame to express a demand or call for these obligations to be fulfilled (MaCnamara 2013; McGeer 2013; Smith 2013). But these familiar features of both blameworthiness and blame are missing from PCA and GBA. It's possible for an agent to undergo significant psychological change and experience a deserved amount of guilt without

attempting to fulfill any of their reparative duties to their victims. And on these views, once an individual is sufficiently psychologically disconnected to the agent who performed a wrong action, or feels as guilty as they deserve to feel, they are no longer blameworthy and are thus neither subject to the reparative obligations that come along with blameworthiness nor the fitting targets of blaming reactions that call for the agent to fulfill these obligations.¹¹ But this is deeply counterintuitive. Jackie* and Jackie** owe Edie an apology, and this remains true even after they become attentive people and experience a deserved amount of guilt. Thus, in order to make sense of the full range of gardener cases, a theory of diachronic blameworthiness must focus not only on what happens in blameworthy agents' heads but also the kinds of obligations blameworthy agents must fulfill. Such a view will also provide a satisfying account of how blame can become less fitting over time. I will present a sketch of just such a view in this section.

4.a. Obligations to Repair

Why think that blameworthy agents have reparative duties to those they wrong? An answer to this question can be found in Linda Radzik's (2009) work on atonement. Radzik builds on the view that blameworthy actions express a kind of disrespect and/or threat to their victims and negatively impact the wrongdoers and victims' moral relationships. These views of blameworthy action are quite common in the literature. For example, Jeffrie Murphy argues "[moral] injuries are also *messages*—symbolic communications. They are ways a wrongdoer has of saying to us, 'I count but you do not,' 'I can use you for my purposes,' or 'I am up here on high and you are down there below.'" (Murphy & Hampton 1988: 25). And quality of will theorists like Nomy Arpaly (2003) and Michael McKenna (2012) take blameworthy actions to express ill will (or insufficient good will) towards their victims,

¹¹ Defenders of PCA and GBA can attempt to accommodate to existence of reparative obligations and the role they play in our blaming practices by arguing that something other than blameworthiness confers these obligations. I consider this possible line of defense in section 4.

while Pamela Hieronymi argues that past wrongdoings persist as threats if certain conditions are not met:

I suggest that a past wrong against you, standing in your history without apology, atonement, retribution, punishment, restitution, condemnation, or anything else that might recognize it as a wrong, makes a claim. It says, in effect, that you can be treated this way, and that such treatment is acceptable. That—that claim—is what you resent.

It poses a threat. (2001: 546)

Finally, T.M. Scanlon defends a relational view of blameworthy actions, according to which blameworthy actions are those that impair an agent's relationship with others (2008; 2013). Building upon the idea that blameworthy actions express disrespect, pose a threat, and damage moral relationships, Radzik argues that blameworthy agents have an obligation to eliminate the disrespect, defuse the threat, and repair the damage to their victims and relationships that their actions have caused.¹²

But what, precisely, do these reparative obligations amount to? According to Radzik, blameworthy agents are required to achieve three goals:

First, the wrongdoer must morally improve herself. It is not enough to convince herself or others that she is trustworthy. She must actually become trustworthy. Second, the wrongdoer must communicate with the victim and in some cases the community in a way that withdraws the insult and the threat that the wrongful act expressed. Third, the wrongdoer must make reparation for the various sorts of harms she created. (2009: 85)

¹² Radzik also discusses the ways in which blameworthy actions damage wrongdoers' relationships with the moral community and themselves (2009: 80–83). This will no doubt give rise to a distinct set of reparative obligations, but in order to be concise I focus only on the obligations blameworthy agents have to their victims in this paper.

Interestingly, reform and remorse both have roles to play in Radzik's reparative account. The first goal of moral improvement can only be achieved if the agent undergoes psychological change and eliminates the flawed psychological features that gave rise to their blameworthy action. And, according to Radzik, experiencing guilt and remorse (as well as shame and humility) are necessary to achieve the first goal of moral improvement as well (2009: 87–90).¹³ Reform and remorse also play a role in achieving the second goal, for communicating that these changes have occurred and expressing one's guilt and remorse are important aspects of eliminating the disrespect and withdrawing the threat that a previous wrong action generated (2009: 88). But, for Radzik, there is much more to the reparative process than experiencing and expressing psychological change and self-critical emotions. Blameworthy agents must also make reparations for the harms they've caused, be they material, physical, psychological, or relational.

Importantly, moral improvement and the experience of guilt alone cannot fulfil the third goal of making reparations. Morally improving and feeling guilty for past wrongdoing will likely motivate agents to repair the harms they've caused, but reform and remorse do not in and of themselves constitute a form of reparation. And informing others that one has morally improved and feels guilty for past wrongdoing will likely communicate that the agent has disavowed the action and defused it as a threat, but again, this alone cannot serve as an act of reparation. As I've argued in earlier work:

Being told by the person who wronged you that they feel very bad for what they have done is a lot like a third-party report on the wrongdoer's guilt. While it might give a victim some comfort to know that the person who wronged them blames themselves for their behaviour, this alone cannot repair the relationship. Victims should be given

¹³ However, Radzik argues that these emotions are required not because they generate deserved suffering (though she does not deny that they in fact are painful), but rather because they fulfill an important reparative function. In this paper, I'll remain neutral on whether blameworthy agents deserve to feel guilty or are simply required to do so in order to complete the reparative process.

moral attention and care in light of being wronged, but expressions of self-blame that focus only on the negative affect of feeling guilt cannot do this. (forthcoming: 15).

The same is true for moral reform. Being told by a person that they no longer possess the same character traits, values, or desires that caused them to wrong you in the past is valuable in that it may give you good reason to think that they won't wrong you in a relevantly similar way in the future. But this doesn't address the harm that was generated by the past wrong. Knowing that a friend will not steal from you in the future does not replace what they stole from you in the past, just as knowing that a friend is no longer a liar will not repair the psychological and relational harms that their past lies caused.

In order for blameworthy agents to make reparations, they must do more than report to their victims the extent to which they have changed or suffered in light of their wrongdoing. They must also provide their victims with special forms of moral attention and concern. While the precise form of attention that is owed will vary with context, typical forms of readdress include apology, material restitution, acceptance of blame and perhaps even punishment.¹⁴ And this duty cannot be fulfilled by a blameworthy agent's becoming psychologically disconnected to the person they were when they did wrong or experiencing any amount of guilt. This is so even if the blameworthy agent informs their victim of the degree to which they have reformed and felt remorse.

4.b. The Reparative Account of Diachronic Blameworthiness

I am now in a position to offer a reparative account (RPA) of diachronic blameworthiness that can compete with PCA and GBA. On this view, agents who are blameworthy for performing wrong actions must fulfill a set of reparative obligations in virtue of their culpable wrongdoing and agents

¹⁴ In other work (in prep), I go into more detail on how blameworthy agents can fulfill their reparative obligations to their victims. In this paper, it will be sufficient to argue that blameworthy agents in fact have reparative obligations to their victims and the mere experience, and even expression, of psychological change and guilt cannot discharge these obligations.

who must fulfill reparative obligations in virtue of culpably doing wrong are blameworthy for this wrong. So, if an agent is blameworthy for a past wrong, then they will continue to be blameworthy at future times if it continues to be true that they must fulfill their reparative obligations. And if an agent who is blameworthy for a past wrong continues to be blameworthy for this wrong into the future, then this agent will continue to be required to fulfill their reparative obligations. However, once an agent fulfills these reparative obligations, it will be false that they must continue to fulfill them, and they will cease to be blameworthy and the fitting target of blame. So, the degree to which blameworthy agents fulfill their reparative obligations will impact the degree to which they are blameworthy, such that the more one does to fulfill these obligations, the less blameworthy they become. We can represent these views of diachronic blameworthiness in the following way:

RPA's sufficiency claim: If a person A at t_1 is blameworthy to degree d for act X at t_1 , then A at t_2 will be blameworthy for X to degree d if A must fulfill all of the reparative obligations they possess in virtue of being blameworthy to degree d for X at t_1 .

RPA's necessity claim: If a person A at t_1 is blameworthy to degree d for act X at t_1 , then A at t_2 will not be blameworthy for X if A completely fulfills the reparative obligations they possess in virtue of being blameworthy to degree d for X at t_1 .

RPA's scalar claim: If a person A at t_1 is blameworthy to degree d for act X at t_1 , then A at t_2 will be blameworthy for X to a degree less than d if A partially fulfills the reparative obligations they possess in virtue of being blameworthy to degree d for X at t_1 .

With RPA in hand, let's return to the series of gardener cases. Like PCA and GBA, RPA can explain why Jackie in the reformed and remorseful gardener case is less blameworthy than Lee in the unchanging and unrepentant gardener case once they have each responded to Edie's blame. According

to RPA, Jackie is less blameworthy than Lee after responding to Edie's blame because she begins to fulfill her reparative obligations to Edie while Lee does not. Jackie makes progress towards all three reparative goals: the remorse she feels contributes to her moral improvement, her apology withdraws the disrespect her past wrong communicates and the threat it poses, and her offer to buy new houseplants and her promise to become more attentive begins to repair the harm done to Edie and their relationship. In contrast, Lee doesn't take any steps to fulfill her reparative obligations—she doesn't morally improve, or withdraw the disrespect and threat her past action communicates, or offer any reparations to Edie. And this is why Lee remains blameworthy for her culpably careless behavior even after Edie blames her.

RPA can also accommodate the intuition that Jackie* and Jackie** are blameworthy in the privately and expressively reformed and remorseful gardener cases, unlike its competitors. Though Jackie* and Jackie** undergo significant psychological change and feel exactly as guilty as they deserve to feel for being culpably careless with Edie's plants, neither offers reparations prior to being blamed by Edie. While Jackie** acknowledges her wrongdoing, expresses how much she's changed and how guilty she feels, these cannot function as a form of reparation and she fails to apologize, offer to buy Edie more houseplants, or promise to do better in the future until Edie blames her. And according to RPA, blameworthy agents remain at least somewhat blameworthy until *all* of their reparative obligations are fulfilled. So, on this view, Jackie* is blameworthy at the time that Edie blames her. In contrast with PCA and CBA, then, RPA indicates that there is nothing inappropriate about Edie's response to Jackie* and Jackie**—in fact, it is perfectly fitting.

Before exploring the implications of RPA, it will be useful to clarify a few features of the view. First, RPA is largely compatible with PCA's and GBA's scalar claims. Because one of the reparative goals is moral improvement, and moral improvement requires psychological change and the experience of guilt, these things will decrease the degree to which agents are diachronically

blameworthy on RPA, just as they do on PCA and GBA.¹⁵ Likewise, if a blameworthy agent experiences *no* guilt or psychological change, then this agent will be at least somewhat diachronically blameworthy on RPA. However, such agents will not necessarily be maximally diachronically blameworthy on this view, since it's possible (though unlikely) that such an agent could fulfill some of their reparative obligations, like providing material restitution or accepting punishment, without undergoing a change in their relevant psychological features or experiencing any degree of guilt. In this way, RPA rejects both PCA's and GBA's sufficiency claims. RPA is also incompatible with these views' necessity claims. An agent could be diachronically blameworthy for a past wrong on RPA even if they are not psychologically connected to the agent who performed the wrong action and even if they experienced the deserved amount of guilt for performing this action. Of course, such agents will be less blameworthy than they would otherwise be if they didn't morally reform or feel remorse, but they will still be somewhat blameworthy if they fail to make reparations for the harm their culpably wrong actions caused.

4.c. Implications and Advantages

RPA has several implications and advantages that are worth highlighting. First, it will be possible for two agents to be equally synchronically blameworthy for performing relevantly similar wrongs, but for one agent to become less diachronically blameworthy than the other over time. This will occur when one agent does more to fulfill the reparative obligations they possess in virtue of culpably performing the past wrong than the other agent, as in the cases of Jackie and Lee. I take this to be an intuitive implication of the view—we typically think it is fitting to blame those who fail to reform, feel remorse, or make reparations for much longer than agents who address their wrongs.

¹⁵ Of course, not all psychological changes will impact diachronic blameworthiness according to RPA, only those that contribute to their moral improvement, though this is compatible with the interpretation of PCA I'm operating with in this paper. And, again, I'm remaining neutral on whether blameworthy agents *deserve* to feel guilty or are simply required to experience guilt as part of the reparative process.

And while it will likely be rare, it is possible for agents to remain diachronically blameworthy, and the fitting target of blame, for as long as they exist on RPA. This will occur when a blameworthy agent never takes steps to fulfill their reparative obligations.¹⁶ Notice that this can occur for even minor wrongs. Again, I take this to be an intuitive implication of the view. Consider Lee, the plant sitter who never acknowledges that she was wrong to treat Edie's plants carelessly, never feels guilty or remorseful, and never apologizes or attempts to make amends. It strikes me as entirely fitting for Edie to blame Lee in perpetuity. After all, Lee in fact has reparative obligations to Edie, so it is entirely fitting to demand, or call for, Lee to fulfill these obligations. Of course, this isn't to say that it will always be all-things-considered appropriate for Edie to openly blame Lee—there may be pragmatic reasons for Edie to stop expressing blame after a certain point.

In addition to capturing a wide range of intuitions about the fittingness of blame over time, RPA can also explain why our blaming practices are valuable and important. Recall that one way of taking steps to fulfill the reparative obligations that come with being blameworthy is to open yourself up to, and accept, blame from others, particularly those you have wronged. There are several reasons for this. First, when a victim blames those who wrong them, they are able to express respect for themselves. In previous work, I've argued that expressions of blame can communicate self-respect because they convey that an agent takes themselves to:

¹⁶ One might also wonder about cases in which a wrongdoer is unable to fulfill their reparative obligations because their victim is dead or otherwise unreachable. There is much to say about these kinds of cases, and much will depend on the details of the case. But briefly, many reparative obligations don't require one to engage in any way with one's victims (i.e., expressing remorse to the moral community, morally improving, etc.), so even wrongdoers who are unable to interact with their victims can become less blameworthy over time by fulfilling at least some of their reparative duties. But even in these cases, such agents will remain at least somewhat blameworthy, since it will always be true of them that they were unable to make reparations to their victim. I take this to be an unfortunate, but not counter-intuitive, implication of RPA. I plan to explore these cases in more depth in future work (Tierney in prep).

- (1) be the kind of agent who ought not be shown ill will, or who should not be treated in a way that is blameworthy, or whose legitimate demands should be respected by others. And,
- (2) deserve moral attention, care, or concern in light of being shown ill will, or being treated in a way that is blameworthy, or having her legitimate demands being disrespected. (Tierney 2021b: 193)¹⁷

These messages of self-respect are important for blameworthy agents to receive, particularly when they are attempting to counteract the disrespect expressed by their previous wrongs and repair the psychic and relational damage that these wrongs imposed. Expressions of blame are also important to the reparative process because they allow the victim to make clear what forms of reparation they take to be appropriate. While all blameworthy agents have reparative duties to their victims, there are a variety of ways an agent can fulfill these duties, and what kinds of action are appropriate will depend, at least partially, on what the victim takes to be appropriate. Material restitution will do little to repair a blameworthy agent's relationship with their victim if the victim doesn't care about material restitution and instead wants an apology. And a public apology will likely do more harm than good if the victim would have preferred a private apology.¹⁸ Given the important role our practices of blame play in the reparative process, it will be unlikely that an agent will be able to fulfill all their reparative duties without ever being blamed by others. Thus, an agent will likely remain at least somewhat blameworthy until they receive and respond to others' blame.

¹⁷ Notice that this view of the communicative and evaluative content of blame provides independent support for RPA— if blame's evaluative content represents its targets as owing reparations to their victims in virtue of culpably wronging them, then blame will only be fitting if the target in fact owes reparations in virtue of their culpability. But it would take me too far afield to argue for this view of blame in this paper, so I'll limit my defense of RPA to the considerations in the body of the paper.

¹⁸ I also discuss this important feature of blame in Tierney 2021a.

Of course, there are bound to be exceptions. Perhaps partners or friends who have come to an agreement on how culpable wrongs be addressed in the context of their relationship could successfully discharge their reparative obligations without being the target of the other's blame. There may even be good reasons to form such an arrangement, since experiencing and expressing blame are not without costs. These agreements will be rare (and even more rarely successful), since they require agents to have a long history of trust and open communication.¹⁹ These situations are also precisely the kinds of contexts in which blame is not valuable, since both parties respect one another, know that the other respects them as well as themselves, and are confident in how they can repair the damage their culpable wrongs cause. In this way, RPA can account for when our blaming practices are valuable and when they are not. This is not so for its competitors. On PCA and GBA, there will be far more situations in which an agent will cease being blameworthy before ever being blamed by another agent, even their victims. In these scenarios, blame will be unfitting, even though it could contribute to the reparative process. Not only is this counterintuitive, it also fails to capture one of the key values of our blaming practices, which many take to be an important desideratum of theorizing about blameworthiness (e.g., Carlsson 2017).

5. Objection: Reparations without blameworthiness

According to RPA, there is a tight connection between blameworthiness and reparative obligations: agents who are blameworthy for performing wrong actions must fulfill a set of reparative obligations in virtue of their culpable wrongdoing and such agents will remain blameworthy until these obligations are fulfilled. So, one could object to the view by challenging this connection. One way to do this would

¹⁹ There will also be a limited range of wrongs for which such arrangements can be made. While we can plausibly form arrangements about how to handle "everyday" expressions of ill will and disregard that most of us, unfortunately, engage in from time to time, there are many wrongs that are so out of the ordinary and so serious that we cannot reasonably or advisably expect them to be resolved without expressions of blame. In these situations, receiving and responding to others' blame will be necessary to diminish one's blameworthiness. Thanks to Oded Na'aman for discussion on this point.

be to argue that reparative obligations are not unique to blameworthy agents.²⁰ Indeed, defenders of both PCA and GBA explicitly argue that agents can possess reparative duties even if they are not blameworthy. Khoury and Matheson contend that agents can be required to fulfill compensatory duties in virtue of benefitting from a past wrong action (2018: 215-216). On this view, an agent can fail to be blameworthy for a past action because they are not psychologically connected to the agent who performed it, but nevertheless continue to benefit from this action and thus owe some form of reparations to its victims. And Carlsson argues that we can treat others poorly, and owe them special moral attention, care, or concern in virtue of doing so, without being blameworthy for treating them this way. He writes: “Suppose I forgot my wife’s birthday. It may be the case that I don’t deserve to feel guilty for this. Nevertheless, it seems quite clear to me that my wife ought not to be treated this way, and that she deserves moral attention, care etc. in light of my omission” (Carlsson forthcoming: 15-16).²¹ But if agents can be required to fulfill reparative duties for actions they are no longer, or were never, blameworthy for, then it would be a mistake to argue that the possession of reparative obligations is sufficient for diachronic blameworthiness.

First, it’s important to note that RPA is not committed to the view that the possession of *any* kind of reparative duty entails that an agent is blameworthy. Rather, RPA’s sufficiency claim indicates that agents who continue to possess reparative obligations *in virtue of culpably performing some past action* will continue to be blameworthy for this action. In this way, RPA does not deny that agents can possess reparative obligations in virtue of performing actions that they are not blameworthy for. The

²⁰ Another way to do this would be to argue that an agent can discharge their reparative obligations yet continue to be blameworthy. But because discharging one’s reparative obligations includes psychological change and the experience of guilt, both of which are sufficient to eliminate diachronic blameworthiness on PCA and GBA, it is unlikely that defenders of these views will take this route.

²¹ Though I won’t press the point, I do not share the intuition that these kinds of omissions are non-culpable. Forgetting a spouse or partner’s birthday strikes me as precisely the kind of expression of insufficient good will, and failure to meet a legitimate demand, that are blameworthy and that we ought to hold others accountable for.

view is entirely compatible with agents owing reparations to others due to strict liability, non-culpable negligence, etc.

The view also doesn't deny that agents who are no longer blameworthy for past actions could still possess reparative obligations related to their wrongs *for reasons not having to do with their culpability*. Consider Khoury and Matheson's observation that agents can be required to make reparations for past wrongs for which they are no longer blameworthy if they continue to benefit from these wrongs. This is entirely compatible with RPA, which claims only that an agent will cease being blameworthy for a past wrong when they fulfill the reparative obligations that they possess *in virtue of culpably performing this action*. It's possible for an agent to engage in culpable wrongdoing, then go on to fully discharge their reparative obligations—i.e., by morally reforming, withdrawing the disrespect/threat the wrong posed, and making amends—yet continue to benefit from this wrong action. On RPA, the agent in question would no longer be blameworthy, but they could be required to continue to fulfill compensatory obligations because of the benefits they continue to accrue. In this way, pointing out that agents can be required to fulfill reparative obligations for actions that they are not, or are no longer, blameworthy for does not undermine the reparative view.

Thus, in order to sever the connection between reparations and blameworthiness that RPA is committed to, one must argue that the reparative obligations we take blameworthy agents to possess are not in fact possessed in virtue of these agents being blameworthy. If defenders of PCA and GBA could defend this claim, not only would this successfully challenge RPA, it could also allow these views to address many of the challenges they face. Take the privately and expressively reformed and remorseful gardener cases. I objected to PCA and GBA on the grounds that they render Edie's blame of Jackie* and Jackie** unfitting in these cases, despite the fact that Jackie* and Jackie** fail to make reparations to Edie. But if Jackie* and Jackie** could owe reparations to Edie without being blameworthy, then this could justify Edie's blame on the grounds that it could motivate Jackie* and

Jackie** to fulfill her reparative obligations. If this is right, then PCA and GBA could make sense of the intuition that it is appropriate for Edie to blame Jackie**, even if unfitting, which could render these views less objectionable than previously thought.

But if Jackie* and Jackie** don't possess their reparative obligations in virtue of being blameworthy, why do they owe these reparations? Neither Jackie* nor Jackie** continue to benefit from their past wrongs, so they can't owe Edie reparations for this reason. Perhaps defenders of PCA and GBA could argue that Jackie* and Jackie** owe reparations to Edie because they *harm* her when they carelessly overwater her plants. After all, agents can harm others without being blameworthy and harm is also something that calls out for repair. This coheres nicely with Carlsson's claim that we can owe agents special moral attention when we treat them in ways that they ought not be treated, without being blameworthy for such treatment.

While I don't deny that non-blameworthy harm could ground a host of reparative obligations, it is unlikely that generating harm can give rise to the kinds of reparative obligations we take to be associated with blameworthy agents. This is because the kinds of reparative obligations that arise from acting in ways that harm others will depend on whether the agent is blameworthy for their action. Non-culpably harming someone does not communicate disrespect or stand as a threat in same the way that culpable wrongdoing does, nor does it inflict the same kind of psychic and relational damage. Thus, non-culpable harms will generate different kinds of reparative obligations than culpable wrongs. Imagine a version of the reformed and remorseful gardener case in which Jackie*** was careless with Edie's plants due to an unknown side effect of a lifesaving medication she recently began taking. In this case, Jackie*** is not blameworthy for carelessly overwatering Edie's plants, though her action still harms Edie, and may well give rise to some reparative obligations. But Jackie*** wouldn't be required to engage in moral reform in order to repair her relationship with Edie, since her carelessness wasn't the result of a moral flaw. And withdrawing the disrespect or threat her action communicated

would only require an explanation of what occurred, not an expression of guilt or remorse. And while offering to buy Edie new plants may be required to repair the harm the action caused, apologies and promises to be morally better in the future are not necessary. In contrast, Jackie* and Jackie** are required to morally improve in order to repair their relationships with Edie, just as they are required to feel and express guilt, and attempt to make amends and apologize. But the only difference between Jackie*, Jackie**, and Jackie*** is that Jackie* and Jackie** are blameworthy for carelessly overwatering Edie's plants, while Jackie*** is not blameworthy for this action. So, the best explanation for why Jackie* and Jackie** possess the reparative obligations they do is that they are blameworthy for their careless actions. Thus, it is unlikely that PCA and GBA can make sense of the kinds of reparations Jackie* and Jackie** owe Edie, or why it is fitting for Edie to blame them, without granting that they possess these obligations in virtue of being blameworthy.

If the above reasoning is right, then the connection between reparations and blameworthiness at the heart of RPA remains unscathed—blameworthy agents possess a distinctive set of reparative obligations in virtue of culpably performing wrong actions and such agents will remain blameworthy until these obligations are fulfilled.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, I've defended a reparative account of diachronic blameworthiness, RPA, according to which blameworthy agents have reparative obligations to their victims and remain blameworthy, and the fitting target of blame, until these obligations are fulfilled. I've argued that RPA outperforms its competitors because it captures a wider range of intuitions about blame's fittingness over time and better accounts for the value and importance of our blaming practices. While there is much more to say about the particular kinds of reparative obligations blameworthy agents possess, and how they can successfully fulfill them, I hope that the reflections here will serve as a useful foundation for these future discussions.

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