Ricardo Gutiérrez Aguilar

Globalization and Crisis of Values: Promise and Total Disappointment

Abstract: What should be called (at least according to the views supported by modern moral philosophy schools) the ‘modern moral world’ can be depicted nowadays as an environment in which we consider relations to the community to be morally significant, even when the individuals within the reach of these duties are in fact unknown. So we can blame or we can praise, even in the notorious absence of any identifiable subject of ‘moral obligation’. The fundamental difference is in perceived obligations, not in entitlements: duties versus rights. At first glance, moral entitlement is nothing but an abstract right seeking recognition. Not so the obligation, as the ‘right-bearer’ is waiting for the commitment to be honored. The work of Onora O’Neill, Charles Fried and Thomas M. Scanlon rounds out the argumentation of the normative frame that operates in today’s strongly supererogatory moral world.

Men may seem detestable as joint stock-companies and nations; knaves, fools, and murderers there may be; men may have mean and meagre faces; but man, in the ideal, is so noble and so sparkling, such a grand and glowing creature, that over any ignominious blemish in him all his fellows should run to throw their costliest robes. That immaculate manliness we feel within ourselves, so far within us, that it remains intact though all the outer character seem gone; bleeds with keenest anguish at the undraped spectacle of a valor-ruined man [...] To meanest mariners, and renegades and castaways, I shall hereafter ascribe high qualities, though dark; weave round them tragic graces; if even the most mournful, perchance the most abased, among them all, shall at times lift himself to the exalted mounts. (Melville 1988, pp. 117–118)

This text has been made possible and inspired by the following research projects: *Philosophy of History and Globalisation of Knowledge. Cultural Bridges Between Europe and Latin America: WORLDBRIDGES* (F7-PEOPLE-2013-IRSES: PIRSES-GA-2013-612644); *Prismas filosófico-morales de las crisis: Hacia una nueva pedagogía sociopolítica* (FFI2013-42395-P); the *NEW TRUST-CM. Programa en Cultura de la Legalidad* (GITcP), led by Prof. Dr Jose María Sauca (Universidad Carlos III de Madrid); and last but not least, the *Proyecto de Innovación Educativa (Innova-Docencia)* at Universidad Complutense entitled *Emociones políticas y virtudes epistémicas en el siglo XVIII: Innovación en la enseñanza de Humanidades* (PIMCD-60), with Prof. Dr Nuria Sánchez Madrid as Lead Researcher. The methodology, sources and contents have all been enriched by regular collaborations with the members of these research groups and their invaluable help.

Ricardo Gutiérrez Aguilar, Instituto de Filosofía del Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (IFS-CSIC)

Introduction: *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*

Let me, for argument's sake, recall here a treasured memory of a prolonged and enjoyable research stay in Berlin. I landed there in the early winter of 2010, when journalists were especially attached to the term *außergewöhnlich* ('extraordinary') —'an extraordinary winter'. A born-and-raised Berliner (let alone a German columnist) would not dare to use these words lightly. I remember leaving my apartment in the frigid morning, flakes drifting here and there, to find my dorm's threshold clearly isolated from the world by means of a vast snow blanket. Flabbergasted, I looked around in search of help. Then I looked down—and there they were, those thin layers of snow-soaked paper at my door that promised the first solid step out of the cave. Day after day, the brochure left almost unnoticed on my doorstep helped me out into Berlin life, clearing the initial path to tackling the day's meetings and readings.

That very stitched-together set of pages constitutes to this day—or so they tell me, as I'm now far from Berlin—the *Boulevardzeitung* (BZ). But don't be fooled by its described weight. A quick view of its history points out to those of us who don't yet know, that even in its slenderness we have before us a hundred-and-forty-year newspaper in its prime. The BZ was awarded 'Paper of the Year 2016'—a well deserved prize, considering its half-million readership. On 12th October 2009, the merry people of Berlin woke up to a brand new social initiative within the pages of the 132nd anniversary edition: the *Berliner Helden* [*Heroes from Berlin*], devoted to good deeds and to be featured six times a week.¹ The one-page feature is an homage to all those citizens who render service to the Berlin community, who it names *Ehrenamter* ('honorary civil servants'). It offers particular cases of unselfish civilian management, educational ventures for disadvantaged children, or social inclusion projects. In 2016, for example, the lists of awards were crammed with references to the Syrian refugees. Other mentions include recycling and sustainability initiatives, the implementation of new green areas in the city's neighborhoods. and people who out of sympathy help others in need of medical aid, not to mention those who find animal shelters for our four legged friends. The awarded are always among the aforementioned 'merry people of Berlin'—private citizens with some extra motivation and implication in what makes a city a shared space. Space creates a 'shared life' beyond the matter of simply occupying it. Rather than a matter of mere presence, it is a space thought to be administered in common, jointly—and these are its 'heroes'.

¹ The project can be checked on-line at <http://www.bz-berlin.de/berliner-helden> (visited 23rd December 2017).

In German, this type of engagement is called *Aktion(-en)*, in a way that would have made Hannah Arendt herself proud.² An action merits being called an *Aktion* when it has as its aim a certain type of social or communal commitment in which not necessarily disinterested altruism, but rather what could recall the phrase ‘the greatest good for the greatest number of people’, is accomplished. This tension between ‘private-public obligations’ is key here: not entitlement, but obligation. Why do we sometimes bear such a burden for the fashion of an impersonal need; a voluntary obligation to an allegedly joint stock-company; and furthermore, one with whom we are not acquainted in the least? For in most of the stories in *Berliner Helden*, the local heroes do not know their beneficiaries. The supposed normative content carried on their shoulders is intended to symbolize the living community in which they are immersed. Publicity and transparency are virtues to be counted on, of course—but they are not emblematic of the common behavior. ‘Knaves, fools and murderers’ can equally live there in the imperium of *homo homini lupus* if they please, in the open, recognizing that they live in the jungle and knowing that the game is like that.

‘Berliners’ are not, on the other hand, called ‘heroes’ for nothing, since it is implied that their endeavor is as private and as personal as that of the ‘knaves’, but does not seek an outcome for the self. For some, this is just a special case of craziness; their interest in the commonwealth ends here. Melville’s diagnosis (quoted above) is perhaps apt for our times. It implies that as common individuals, we live in some sort of ‘joint-stock company’. We are laden by our private motivations, but none of them points to the particular fellow on the other side of the table. If we get frustrated in our private goals, ‘with mean and meagre faces’ we always feel like we have at least the right to moan. Only in what we envisage as ‘the ideal’ case are our better angels moved—an *außergewöhnlich* event, in any

2 In *The Human Condition* (1958), Arendt displays her ontology of agency regarding human activities in their various forms. ‘Labor’ is the craft by means of which we take care of our biological needs, and ultimately serve the chain-of-being incarnated in reproduction. The *genus*, the *species*, overlaps the individual. There is no end to it as activity; we are talking about ‘work’ if our labor has an end; a beginning impregnated by an idea, a purpose, some disposed means and lastly an end. Here, the human world comes into play, as production transforms the inertia of the natural realm. The *genus* is slowly substituted by individuality and its teleology; ‘action’ is the highest and most significative activity a human can endeavor to undertake. For by an ‘action’, we are individuals among other individuals, and *for the sake of* individuals in a community. By ‘action’, we make a place for us as unique members of a shared *res publica* and seek to recognize and be recognized. The 1998 edition of *The Human Condition* (University of Chicago Press), with substantial text additions and an introduction by Margaret Canovan, is worthy of consultation.

case. In contrast, for *Berliner Helden*, ‘where some simply moan, they get involved’ (*‘Wo anderen nur jammern, packen sie an’*), as the BZ chief board urges. It is something of an ironic trope to use such a motto, since Berlin citizens are famous indeed for their special way of moaning. They gripe so earnestly that they have created their own special term for it: *jammern*. Its origins are in the dumb gesticulations of the jaw while complaining—no word, all pose. Of course, if you *jammerst*, you are playing the *Berliner*.

“The question of who must blame [versus] the question of who has standing to do so” is a tricky one (Scanlon 2008, p. 175). As an analogy, consider the similar question: who is entitled to praise and who is not? “A judgment of blameworthiness is an impersonal one. It is a judgment that anyone can make, whatever his or her relation to the agents in question, while blame, as I interpret it, is more personal” (Scanlon 2008, p. 175). Both cases contemplate the presence of conceptual judgment. There is a criterion to be held up against in order to judge, and the judges wield it in cases of both personal and impersonal blame. You can blame, in T.M. Scanlon’s view, *if and only if* you are first assuming the possibility of an identifiable ‘blameworthiness’. Equally, you can praise *if and only if* you are assuming the possibility of an identifiable quality that makes something or somebody ‘praiseworthy’.

I agree with Scanlon that anyone can make such judgments as a ‘private or public citizen’, but my views differ on the conceptual independence of personal bias. This is the very view in which the abovementioned *Berliners* are seen as ‘heroes’ for getting involved personally in something taken to be impersonal; they went the proverbial extra mile. But is it not an assumption central to Scanlon’s argument that ‘whatever his or her relation to the agent in question is’, what has changed is in fact a ‘morally (committal) binding’ relation of some kind? Whether the situation seems personal or impersonal, we are affected by our sense of the relation changing. If by ‘personal’ we mean ‘intimate’, then Scanlon’s reasoning is well understood. If not, then he or she who shares the judgment assumes they share a communal relation as well—something *gewöhnlich* (‘customary’). The difference regarding change is non-existent. *Berliner Helden* consider morally significant their relation to the community, even when the individuals comprising the ‘stock’ are unknown. So they can blame and they can praise—but so too can *Jammerers*. The cognitive judgment always comes with a performative effect, because it judges a human relation, with persons and subjects. The fundamental difference is in perceived obligations, not in entitlements.

In what follows, I will address the problem intrinsic to that vision encapsulated in the BZ’s motto. It seems to make plausible a discrepancy between ‘innocuously moaning/praising’ and ‘being compromised’ by that moaning/praising. It is a difference that passes almost unnoticed, but that I hold to have a significant

normative drive. While both activities are personally driven in a sense, I will advocate for a strong normative drive, though one diffused into the community. That is, I will defend a position in which there is in fact some means of explaining what kind of moral force we assume or attribute to an *Aktion*, and how it can be conceptually articulated. Onora O'Neill will have the floor in the first place; Charles Fried and Thomas M. Scanlon will round out the argumentation.

'Entitlements', rights and utter suspicion

Apparently, we have and will always have a sovereign right to moan—or so we are told. It is a perk attached to the position, unassailable, and perhaps even an ontological fact of being individuals. If there is a shared space, or shared life, it begins with the matter of occupying it and claiming one's presence in it. Blaming and moaning are the expressions of noticing someone trespassing—the defense and call to order of the owned ontological niche. The trespassers are also private persons with expectations that can be deceived by none but personally attributed entities. We perceive that their actions damage our rights.

In Berlin, whenever neighbors are too loud for our taste when brushing their teeth, the oft-anthropomorphized *U-Bahn* or *S-Bahn* commits the sin of being late (the *außergewöhnlich Verspätung*), our charcoal heating breaks on the coldest of the evenings, or the local ice-hockey team (another type of 'joint stock-company') loses an easy match against the eternal rival, we feel like moaning. Always in the mood for blaming, we are triggered by these events. We gladly go along with the game; it is so simple. The mere detection of a possible rights infringement is enough to satisfy the cognitive need to *jammern*. This 'epistemic judgment'—of 'what should not be done' and thus, in earnest, 'what must not be done'—is allowed to anyone. This creates an aggravated state of righteousness, in which we defend what we think is and should be *gewöhnlich* ('customary'). Any explanation or verbal expression comes later—detection and reaction comes first, and is sometimes overeager.

However, things being as they are, "by what metric are we to determine the 'size' of a right [or of its far-reaching violation,] or of the 'territory' that is constrained by the counterpart obligations the right imposes?" (O'Neill 1995, p. 196) A right is defined according to the duties it imposes on others, indirectly, on the basis of constraints and obligations. Both sides of the equation are blurred. Furthermore, we must also ask: who is the one that freely and voluntarily picks up the imposed commitment, and why? The journey towards the exalted amounts to the ideals of pretended warrants, and of due 'entitlements'. A 'right' is here a positive interpretation of liberty that entails some kind of posses-

sion: property. Its breach constitutes theft. But on what basis is this property recognized? Such a vision “construes rights as entitlements [and entitlements as a contracted debt] to whatever goods or services [that is, promised and then expected actions], as well as forbearances [when][...] needed.” (O’Neill 1995, p. 196) Property is in our right, and constitutes it, in the form of either goods, services, or our merry fellows’ indulgence—matters in which we entertain expectations. We must then ask: was there any promise made to begin with? Perhaps. There must be; or at least when we struggle to find it, we should try to explain where the error lies in that assumption. For a promise—a social contract—is what seems implied in the demand.

The scope of the domain is uncertain, though; its description unclear. From where should we draw the perimeter, the circumference: from the inside out, positively; or from the outside in, based on constraints and counterpart obligations? What is the ‘size’ to such a right-thing (asks O’Neill), and how do we measure it in view of building frontiers, apart from out of complaints?

Unfortunately, without an idea of the metric or an awareness of its build, we have problems with its accommodation of the rights of an imagined ‘fellow’. In the ideal, one individual’s rights are an unsatisfactory abstraction, because “there is no unique way of accommodating different rights” within this understanding of the issue (O’Neill 1995, p. 196). We can overwrite any possible conflict by redefining the traits involved in the description to accommodate the tensions, just as we can look for conflict by means of the same strategy:

There are indefinitely many ways of describing possible actions [and deducing counterpart obligations], and hence indefinitely many ways of picking out sets of copossible, equal[ly valid] rights. (O’Neill 1995, p. 196)

These rights may collide (or not), as in the case of our ‘moaner’. “Without a metric for rights we could count a set of rights *maximal* [regarding liberties] only if it dominated all other sets of rights” (O’Neill 1995, p. 196). As we are still talking about ‘cognitive judgment’, the counting is nothing but a (rights) pretension—a brute exercise of demanding recognition. It is no big surprise that the ‘moaner’ feels that his or her cause is just—the ideal immaculate one—and should be recognized as such. How could we dare to refuse? Who else can lay blame? Who has the standing necessary for blaming? Only he or she who feels entitled to. Hence, it approaches the ‘maximal’.

The negative expression of moaning, or of blaming, is the visible counterpart of the metric we seek—a particular pole for the fence; the constraint. It is a private normative drive, ascribed regardless of adoption. But for what alleged reason can we ascribe an obligation to a fellow? ‘Men owe’; ‘society owes’—these

are the basic assumptions of the ‘moaner’. “People is [sic] very angry... Believe me, very angry”, pronounced Donald Trump in one particularly belligerent speech before Election Day in November 2016. He set himself up as a unique spokesman for ‘the people’. He adopted the most prevalent position of domination: symbolic representation of the extension of all possible subjects of rights. His voice was the means by which ‘we the people’ moaned, and by which they blamed. Trump provided the standing for their blaming, feeling entitled and establishing an ‘us-them’ divide, with the right-holders facing the right-bearers with contempt. People were sovereignly entitled, and someone had to be held accountable for pressing that logic further. Expectations had been let down and amendments and retribution were demanded in response.

Onora O’Neill controversially describes this situation as generalized. Society wanders on the higher planes of morality, on the exalted mounts—in *the ideal*. Of the common yearning for retribution, O’Neill asks: “is it true that we have stopped trusting? Has untrustworthy action made trust too risky? Is trust obsolete?” (O’Neill 2002, p. vii) And what about its constraining counterpart? Are we prone to cast doubt on the expected actions of others, so severely as to create a constant expectation of failure? We are told constantly that we are living through a so-called ‘revolution in accountability’, in which measures against mistrust are set in motion. Control reaches all spheres of public life nowadays. The era of evaluation and immediate feedback is in full flow.

Sadly, the fact is that we don’t “know whether we have a crisis of trust or only a [promoted] culture of suspicion” (O’Neill 2002, p. 17). Suspicion leads to blame, and blame leads to indignation and outrage—the usual reaction to a damaged right. ‘Moaners’ do not run to their fellows to ‘throw their costliest robes’ over their ignominy in the service of deeply-felt, ‘sparkling’ nobility. Instead, they enterprise an ascension of standards, a raising of the bar—indeed, a pretended ‘moral ascension’. They do so by an escalation of both ‘moral obligations’ and ‘moral duties’—that is, the deduced counterpart constraint. These obligations are thus transformed. They suffer from supererogation both in quality and quantity, in intension and extension—but it is a special type of supererogation. No one can bestow upon me any obligation beyond what is meant in my positive duties, whatever they may be. Let us say that they have a certain content, and that they have a size. Supererogatory actions are (as their Latin name points out) actions in which we ‘overpay’—*supererogare*. Goods, services, and forbearances have a ‘price’, and we ‘pay’ over and above it, to whatever extent we deem proper. Supererogatory actions are and must always be voluntary ones. Otherwise, they are compulsory by definition—they fall within our positive duty or obligation, and are thus not supererogatory at all. As we might infer, this subtle difference is what makes the extra mile a praiseworthy merit. When we

walk the extra mile, we are praised for being ‘so noble and so sparkling’; for being honorable. There is no counterpart here—no blaming if the supererogatory action is not initiated—for it is necessarily considered as separate from due rights.

Consider the notorious (to use an epithet already laden with bias) case of Justine Sacco. It is December 2013. Sacco, a (now, alas, former) Public Relations Consultant is about to board a flight to South Africa. Before boarding, she feels like tweeting in the meager hundred and forty characters the app allows. Soon, the ill-thought-out tweet passes from her 170 followers to almost fifteen thousand: “Going to Africa. Hope I don’t get AIDS. Just kidding. I’m white!” (Waterlow 2015, par. 2). During the eleven-hour flight, an emotional breeding ground under the hashtag ‘#HasJustineLandedYet’ prepares a less than warm welcome in Africa for the thirty-year-old publicist. The news spread rapidly, and by the time Sacco’s flight landed, her job, reputation and privacy had been blown up—worldwide. “I thought there was no way that anyone could possibly think it was literal,” (Waterlow 2015, par. 12) Sacco later claimed. The reverence of literality—the suspicion and prohibition of any indirect use of language, of any trope—amounts to a call for strictness. We are that serious: you will be held accountable for the literality of your words. Joking or not, non-literal uses of language have no moral quality. For many, chastising Sacco seemed a matter of ‘moral obligation’ (Ronson 2015). Her humiliation became a global task. Among the consequences were not only the loss of her professional and personal credibility—the foundations of any possible trust that could have been bestowed on her—but also the forbidding of any attempt to characterize Sacco, at any stage of the process, as a victim. Being deprived of the status of victim amounts to an elimination of the rights that go with it, as well as of any right to appeal.

Indirect uses in speech, humor and even orthographic mistakes can become statements bound to personal and impersonal ‘off the record’ legal claims. The literal is equated with the positive—but it simultaneously invites suspicions, demands and requirements. We are living an era ready and ripe for the newly-coined term that some intellectuals already use as common currency: ‘post-censorship’ (Soto Ivars 2017). Global justice has a gloomy side when it comes to reprimanding. What is supererogatory has its counterpart concept in a pretended ‘compulsory supererogation’—this being an obvious oxymoron. Escalating obligations imposed on others lead to the hypertrophy of the size of positive rights on the part of the right-holders. The scope of entitlement has reached global proportions, of which there is no ‘outer’ part: no one is apart from it; there are no limits. Nothing escapes the reach of that right, and so everything can be made an obligation and everyone is obliged by its total nature. For some claims (and some blames), there is then a correct way of behaving. There is a correct

way in which one conducts his or her life and thus a strong recommendation implicit in such practices. Actions deemed exemplary function as a form of ‘advice’ that, however blurry, had better be taken into account.

The boundaries between justice and animosity are also uncertain. Political correctness is required and in social media instruments, ‘trigger warnings’ are becoming more and more popular. They are letters of safe-passage; they are cautionary posts at the beginning of articles, blog entries and other social network-based forms of expressing personal opinions in public. These ‘warnings’ are intended to prepare the reader, based on the assumption of particular paradigms of moral correctness, and in this way end up criticizing them. They assume a disproportionate ‘trigger effect’ of anger and self-righteous wrath that the expressed opinion could cause. It is not hard to do the math and conclude the age of ‘post-censorship’ goes hand in hand with the age of ‘auto-censorship’: the cognitive judgment of the watchful global agora is assimilated and internalized. Of course, no individual is off limits when pertaining to the universal community. The ‘world wide entanglement’—the so-called ‘revolution of accountability’—raises doubts about whether we are not really in an ‘inquisitorial revolution’. Inquiry and inquisition ask for responses. That is what we have here: the requirement of an ‘all-encompassing responsibility’.

Morally speaking, when no one should be entitled to the supererogatory action of other, and having no right to expect it, here this logic shatters. The last frontier in responsibility is that in which one is unable to label him or herself as a victim, or as a hurttable being, meaning a ‘being in an unassailable (sacred, respected at all costs) position’—his or her last resort. One cannot adopt such a label for her or himself, nor occupy such a position, nor be the recipient of that right. And it is a fundamental right! ‘Man in the ideal’ can follow a slippery slope to abstraction. Abstraction is sometimes tantamount to the vanishment of one’s importance, and of one’s real position. In such an abstraction, no one merits consideration as worthy of the terms ‘human being’ or ‘person’, meaning that communities emerge as the real winners of the old ‘social ontology’ debate: communities and not individuals are the main constituents, the real right-holders and the real right-claimers. Men are those who are detestable, with ‘unbearably mean and meagre faces’; joint-stock companies, on the other hand, are such grand and glowing creatures as to be considered sacred entities. Juridically, they are in fact the *only* right-retainers in these cases—they behave as real persons, ‘real beings’.

But the real question here is: who has standing to label? In June 2015, Spain witnessed the makings of one of these ideological crowds intent on defending publicly via Twitter the honor of a victim—in spite of her own attitudes. In October 1991, twelve-year-old Irene Villa was severely wounded by a car bomb in Ma-

drid planted as a terrorist attack by Basque nationalist terrorist group ETA. Now a well-known journalist and writer in Spain and professionally active in numerous media, Villa participated in a 2015 Twitter debate on the limits of humor, which ended with her in the role of protagonist. Public personalities made some jokes, intended as black humor, about Villa's wounds, inciting outrage among certain crowds of public opinion. Villa herself participated in an effort to end the controversy for good: "My favorite joke is that which defines me as an explosive woman" (La Vanguardia 2015, par. 2). Personally, she had not felt dishonored or offended at all. Furthermore, she did not want others to represent her as if in her absence. Nevertheless, some Twitter users thought otherwise. They seized the opportunity to chastise the jokers and contested the validity of their humor. Consider O'Neill's assertion that:

[w]ithin an account of justice it may seem unimportant whether we adopt the perspective of agents and their obligations, or of recipients and their entitlements. The set of obligations and the set of entitlements will presumably be reciprocally defined. [...] [But] the perspective of recipience and entitlement has other difficulties that obstruct the project of construction. (O'Neill 1995, pp. 214–215)

She further states that even when, ideally, justice would guarantee reciprocity:

[i]n the tradition of the social contract theory but not in its contemporary descendants, principles of justice define obligations rather than entitlements. A return to this perspective is, I believe, required for a nonidealizing constructivism because obligations of justice, unlike entitlements, can be constructed without assuming a metric either for liberty or more generally for actions. (O'Neill 1995, pp. 214–215)

'Obligations', rights and trust

Are we building up and living in a global society populated only by fellows who are not really fellows, but rather mere 'recipients and their entitlements'? Is there any 'agent', with his or her obligations, attentive enough to replenish the content of such demanding rights? If not, it is dubious at best what the content if any could be for the thing designated by the word 'right'. Right-holders reciprocally entail right-bearers—Hohfeld's *salva veritate*.³ The perspective constructed from

³ In the domain of classical rights theory, the work of Wesley Newcomb Hohfeld is paradigmatic. For Hohfeld, rights are in fact entitlements to perform certain actions and to be positioned in certain legal states; and also for the contrary—to not perform certain actions and to avoid certain states. His theory highlights the reciprocity between rights and duties, and proposes a logic of

the easy-to-handle position of the right-holder leads to problems arising from the would-be forbidden operation of idealizing, inviting gluttonous receivers with no apparent duties to others. This fundamental idealization happens in the determining of 'size'. Construction from this perspective grants access to an unprecedented unleashing of rights, and permits a 'maximal set of copossible entitlements'—one which, sadly, would reveal itself to be sometimes contradictory, since no metric has been established to limit the reach of those rights. "Abstraction, taken strictly, is unavoidable and in itself innocuous" (O'Neill 1995, pp. 214–215). It is a formal operation of selection for the purpose of highlighting certain traits, and is dependent on the simple selection of characteristics. On the other hand:

Idealization is another matter. Objections to supposedly 'abstract' ethical principles and reasoning are often objections to idealization. The objection is not to reasoning that is detached from certain predicates that are true of the objects discussed, but to reasoning that assumes predicates that are false of them. Reasoning that abstracts from some predicate makes claims that do not depend on the predicate's either being satisfied or not being satisfied by the objects to which the reasoning applies. Reasoning that idealizes makes claims that apply only to objects that live up to a certain ideal. (O'Neill 1995, p. 209)

The 'metric' being sought is disappointingly 'ideal' in this case. The predicates in question –'supererogatory predicates', 'higher duties' and 'shortly-expected predicates'– are ideal: they do not yet exist; are imagined, pretended and (in most cases) desired. This is the positive moment that reciprocally urges for the consideration of its counterpart obligation—the 'entitlement'. But beyond this point, this construction is founded on a house of cards, applied and attributed –'attribute' here meaning that essential predicate ascribed in ontology, which functions as constitutive of the being—by force, independent of satisfaction.

Evidently, attributed responsibility is a precondition for blaming (Holgado González 2015, p. 79). The 'moaner', the 'blamer' and the 'hater' in social networks all feel an entitled urge for satisfaction after the target of his or her anger fails to honor their commitment. For Scanlon, as 'rational beings' we are in a necessary 'relationship' with each other. It is a class of shared responsibility in a shared ideal community, in light of all that we have the capability or possibility of reasoning. This relation among recognized peers is described in terms of care. There is a preference, concern and care for those identified as

legal relations ordered into eight categories: *jural opposites* – 'right-no-right', 'privilege-duty', 'power-disability' and 'immunity-liability'; and *jural correlatives* – 'right-duty', 'privilege-no-right', 'power-liability' and 'immunity-disability' (Saunders 1989–1990, pp. 465–506).

fellow members. We care in some sense for each other. Thus, recognition is comprehension, allowing in oneself attitudes, emotions, feelings and reactions—and assumptions. In fact, it gives rise not only to assumptions, but to anticipation as well. “A relationship, in the sense I am concerned with, is a matter not only of what one does, or intends to do, but also of the reasons for which one does these things” (Scanlon 2008, p. 173). I would change the order of elements. A relationship implies a set of facts about the parties in it, which involve a shared experience: desire and its instance in intentions; expectations; and finally their justification in the form of reasons (Scanlon 2013, p. 86). The expression of this relationship is just the propositional form; its explanation is constituted by the very attitudes and dispositions involved. These are indeed the forms of ‘care’ in which Scanlon is interested. Relationships of this nature have a normative character, which is reciprocal. From shared facts in the past to expectations of the future, there is an assumed standard of continuity, which is ‘prospective’. Cognitive judgment is rooted in the moment at which the relationship has changed—something expected does not happen, reciprocity fails and recognition is broken. From what is *gewöhnlich*, we have moved to what is *außergewöhnlich*. ‘To blame’ is nothing but the blunt restating of the old standards in the face of new events, once the former balance of what is expected has been disrupted. Blaming is a reaction calling for the modification of the intention (reciprocal balance) and disposition (future forbearances) of the affronted. Scanlon borrows an expression from Peter F. Strawson: blaming—as is moaning—‘is the partial withdrawal of good will’ (Scanlon 2008, p. 227).

And what about ‘impersonal blaming’? What type of conceptual articulation are we constructing when it comes to fellows who do not have a direct or personal acquaintance with us? Let’s keep it simple: what standard is in play when we blame, moan, or *jammern* every time neighbors are too loud, the *U-Bahn* is delayed, our heating breaks in winter, or the local ice-hockey team loses?

It may seem to make no sense to speak of our having attitudes toward people we have no knowledge of, or about what their attitudes may be toward us, of whom they are similarly unaware. But when we do become aware of others and are in actual or potential interaction with them, we generally assume that even if they are strangers they will manifest at least the basic elements of this ideal concern. We assume that this default relationship of mutual regard and forbearance holds between us and the strangers we pass on the road or interact with in the market. When someone does not manifest this concern, it is this relationship that is the standard relative to which our actual relation with them is seen as impaired. (Scanlon 2008, pp. 140–141)

Scanlon calls it a ‘moral relationship’. For him, this type of relation is ‘inescapable’. It is a fundamental condition: just as there is no explicit act by which we

enter the relation, and thus no expression of willingness to do so, nor can there be any way for us to abandon the community. For Scanlon, we are inside the shared community by default, as we are humans, and as rational beings. It is an unconditional compromise (Scanlon 2013, p. 87).

Let's say for the sake of the argument that 'rationality' is a rather restrained condition. If the arguments I have expressed here hold true, then perhaps a better condition for 'reasonable responsibility' is *expectation* rather than rationality. We are bound to those of our fellows who can expect something from us, and we bind ourselves to those of whom we have expectations—to those whose actions have implications for us in both respects.

Charles Fried will help me to conclude my argumentation, and to respond to the moaner, *jammerer* and hater: "The promise principle [...] is the moral basis of contract law [the very core of social contract theory], is that principle by which persons *may impose on themselves obligations where none existed before*" (Fried 2015, p. 1, emphasis added). There is an essential difference between the institution of 'promise' and the institution of 'contract'. Fried's 'promissory logic' states that: (i) 'to promise' is a self-imposing practice, such that no one can promise in my place, nor in my name; (ii) therefore, promise has some moral grounds, for in spite its normative foundations, the difference between it and sheer obligation is that its value is lost whenever I am *forced* to promise; and (iii) related to the latter, promise is the conventional instrument for utilizing *trust*. Promise in the form of a linguistic artifact is an invitation to confidence, and confidence always takes into account and envisions (i. e. *assumes*) future behavior (Fried 2015, pp. 7–8).

Bibliography

- Arendt, Hannah (1998): *The Human Condition*. With an introduction by Margaret Canovan. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- B.Z. *Zeitung* (2017): "Berliner Helden". <http://www.bz-berlin.de/berliner-helden>, visited on 23 December 2017.
- Fried, Charles (2015): *Contract as Promise. A Theory of Contractual Obligation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Holgado González, María Isabel (2015): "La textura abierta del concepto de culpa moral". In: *Revista Laguna* 37, pp. 69–84.
- Melville, Hermann (1988): *The Writings of Herman Melville*. Vol. 6. Chicago: Northwestern University Press.
- La Vanguardia* (2015): "Irene Villa se ríe de sí misma con los tuits de Guillermo Zapata". <http://www.lavanguardia.com/politica/20150614/54432273076/irene-villa-guillermo-zapata-twitter.html>
- O'Neill, Onora (1995): *Constructions of Reason. Explorations of Kant's Practical Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- O'Neill, Onora (2002): *A Question of Trust. The BBC Reith Lectures 2002*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ronson, Jon (2015): *So You've Been Publicly Shamed*. New York: Riverhead Books.
- Saunders, Kevin Well (1989–1990): "A Formal Analysis of Hohfeldian Relations". In: *Akron Law Review* 23, pp. 465–506.
- Scanlon, Thomas Michael (2008): *Moral Dimensions. Permissibility, Meaning, Blame*. Cambridge (MA), London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Scanlon, Thomas Michael (2013): "Interpreting Blame". In: Coates, D. J. / Tognazzini, N. A. (Eds.): *Blame: Its Nature and Norms*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 84–100.
- Soto Ivars, Juan (2017a): *Arden las Redes. La postcensura y el nuevo mundo virtual*. Madrid: Editorial Debate.
- Soto Ivars, Juan (2017b): "De la posverdad a la poscensura: obsesionados con no ofender". <http://www.elmundo.es/papel/historias/2017/04/30/5901ea48268e3e2c078b45c3.html>, visited on 23 December 2017.
- Waterlow, Lucy (2015): "I lost my job, my reputation and I'm not able to date anymore': Former PR worker reveals how she destroyed her life one year after sending 'racist' tweet before trip to Africa". <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2955322/Justine-Sacco-reveals-destroyed-life-racist-tweet-trip-Africa.html>, visited on 23 December 2017.