

## PRIDE AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

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### *Abstract*

Having the emotion of pride requires taking oneself to stand in some special relation to the object of pride. According to agency accounts of this pride relation, the self and the object of pride are suitably related just in case one is morally responsible for the existence or excellence of the object of one's pride. I argue that agency accounts fail. This argument provides a strong prima facie defence of an alternate account of pride, according to which the self and the object of pride are suitably related just in case one's relation to the object of pride indicates that one's life accords with some of one's personal ideals. I conclude that the pride relation, though distinct from the relation of moral responsibility, is nonetheless a relation of philosophical interest that merits further attention.<sup>1</sup>

... the objects which excite these passions [pride and humility], are very numerous, and seemingly very different from each other. Pride or self-esteem may arise from the qualities of the mind; wit, good-sense, learning, courage, integrity: from those of the body; beauty, strength, agility, good mien, address in dancing, riding, fencing: from external advantages; country, family, children, relations, riches, houses, gardens, horses, dogs, cloaths. [I] afterwards proceed to find out that common circumstance, in which all these objects agree, and which causes them to operate on the passions.

—David Hume<sup>2</sup>

### 1. Introduction

Hume brought to light two important features of the emotion of pride. First, people take pride in an enormous variety of objects, including achievements, family, material possessions, reputation,

<sup>1</sup> For very helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper I would like to thank Angela Smith, William Talbott, Ingra Schellenberg, David Keyt, Rachel Fredericks, Sarah Buss, Noa Latham, Krista Thomason, Rebecca Stangl, and the anonymous referee for *Ratio*. I am also grateful to the audience members of colloquia at the University of Calgary, the University of Alabama in Huntsville, and the 2014 Meeting of the Pacific Division of the American Philosophical Association.

<sup>2</sup> David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 659–660.

and physical appearance. Call this feature pride's *heterogeneity*. Second, like guilt and fear but unlike contempt and admiration, experiencing the emotion of pride requires that we view ourselves as standing in some special relation to the object of our emotion. I might feel proud of my best friend or my grandparents, but it would be awfully strange for me to take pride in my best friend's grandparents. Call this feature pride's *partiality*.

This article critically assesses one leading philosophical account of pride's partiality. According to the *agency account* of the partiality relation, the self and the object of pride are suitably related just in case one is morally responsible for the existence or excellence of the object of one's pride.<sup>3</sup> Robert Solomon characterizes his agency account of pride as follows:

The key to the emotion of pride is that it is about our achievements in the world. "False pride" grossly overestimates those achievements, or perhaps even takes credit for something that is not our doing at all. (A person who has taken steps to make himself beautiful or healthy may be proud of his appearance or his health. A person who simply is beautiful or healthy would only be grateful—or perhaps vain—the passive emotional partners of pride. Our frequent confusion of pride and vanity—our calling ourselves proud when in fact we are only vain—is clearly more than verbal slippage).<sup>4</sup>

In Solomon's view, we cannot even intelligibly attribute pride to a passive subject; rather, the passive analog to pride is vanity or gratitude. Solomon concludes that a defining feature of pride is that 'One takes responsibility (in praise) for his own works'.<sup>5</sup>

I shall argue that objects of pride need not be connected to one's agency. In §2, I review a set of distinctions between three kinds of appropriateness conditions for attitudes that will make the subsequent discussion more perspicuous. In §3–§5, I articulate three versions of the agency account of pride that correspond to the three kinds of appropriateness discussed in §2, and I provide

<sup>3</sup> See Henry Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1981); Robert Solomon, *The Passions* (New York: Doubleday Press, 1976); Norvin Richards, *Humility* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992); Richard Taylor, *Restoring Pride* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 1996); and Kristján Kristjánsson, *Justifying Emotions: Pride and Jealousy* (London: Routledge Press, 2002).

<sup>4</sup> Solomon, *The Passions*, p. 345.

<sup>5</sup> Solomon, *The Passions*, p. 346.

reasons to reject each account. These reasons also constitute a strong *prima facie* defence of an alternate account of pride, according to which the self and the object of pride are suitably related just in case one's relation to the object of pride indicates that one's life accords with some of one's personal ideals.<sup>6</sup> This *personal ideals account* explains how something might be worthy of one's pride even if one is not morally responsible for it, because living in accordance with worthy personal ideals does not always require the exercise of one's agency.

## 2. Attribution, Fittingness, and External Propriety

One can evaluate attitudes in several ways. When it is said, for example, that one should not feel proud about something for which one does not bear moral responsibility, the claim being made might be that such pride is caused by or embodies false judgments about the scope of one's accomplishments or about the nature of personal merit, and so is *epistemically* objectionable; or, that feeling such pride leads one to rest on one's laurels, and so is *prudentially* bad; or, that such pride is *morally* blameworthy insofar as it is a form of 'taking credit' from another. Alternately, as Solomon asserts, the claim may be construed in terms of the 'should' of intelligibility, that pride taken in the accomplishments of others would be unintelligible.

Let us distinguish, then, between the conditions under which a token emotion (1) is intelligibly attributable to a person (*attribution conditions*), (2) accurately presents its intentional object (*fittingness conditions*), and (3) is morally or prudentially good (*external propriety conditions*). By setting forth the conditions under which a token emotion is intelligibly attributed to a person, a set of *attribution conditions* defines a type of emotion, since it provides the conditions under which a token emotion is a token of some type of emotion. Attribution conditions supply the answer to the question of what makes your fear of spiders *fear* rather than an instance of some other type of mental state, such as disgust or hatred. One plausible attribution condition for *S*'s fear of *x* is that *S* takes *x* to pose a threat to herself. *Fittingness conditions*, on the other hand, are conditions under which a token emotion accurately represents

<sup>6</sup> For further discussion and defence of this alternate account, see my article, 'Being Proud and Feeling Proud: Character, Emotion, and the Moral Psychology of Personal Ideals', *Journal of Value Inquiry* 46 (2012), pp. 209–222.

its intentional object. One plausible fittingness condition for *S*'s fear of *x* is that *x* poses a threat to *S*. So, if *S* does not take *x* to pose a threat to herself, then *S* does not experience fear; and if *S* mistakenly takes *x* to pose a threat to herself (and if all other attribution conditions for fear are satisfied), then *S*'s fear is unfitting.

Whether some emotion is fitting is logically independent of whether experiencing it is in some respect good. *External propriety* conditions provide conditions under which a token emotion is in some way (say, morally or prudentially), and in some of set of circumstances, a good attitude to have. Fear of public speaking may be prudentially bad regardless of whether it is fitting, insofar as it interferes with one's ability to make an effective public presentation. Likewise, a hypocrite who holds another in contempt for behavior that he also engages in might be morally blameworthy for his hypocritical contempt, even if this attitude is fitting. So, I assume in this paper that external propriety conditions bear on the question of whether an attitude is in some way good to have, whereas fittingness conditions bear on a different question that concerns the content of an attitude.<sup>7</sup>

### 3. The Agency Account of Pride's Attribution Conditions

The promising idea that objects of pride are specially connected to one's agency can be developed into an account of some of pride's attribution conditions, fittingness conditions, or external propriety conditions. I begin by considering attribution conditions.

Like Solomon, Kristján Kristjánsson defends the claim that an emotion is not intelligible as pride in the absence of the subject's belief that he is to some extent morally responsible for the object of his pride. He offers the following case to support his claim:

The fan who has cheered the team on to victory, bought tickets to its matches and so forth, can of course unproblematically feel proud of the team's success, and prideful with respect to the recognition it gets. But what about the only person on a desert island who suddenly decides to become a fan of the San Francisco Forty-Niners football team, without ever having shown an interest in the team before, and subsequently, upon hearing via transistor radio about the team's victories, claims to feel proud?

<sup>7</sup> See Pamela Hieronymi, 'The Wrong Kind of Reason', *Journal of Philosophy* 102 (2005), pp. 437–457.

What grounds do we have for saying that this person is experiencing the emotion of pride as distinct from simply that of joy? None, it seems to me—the person is surely better described as joyful than proud—for the kind of group *membership* required for taking pride in the group's successes cannot be claimed simply on a whim. It must require some minimal effort, some minimal participation—that is, some responsibility, however small and partial.<sup>8</sup>

Kristjánsson claims that without the activity required for moral responsibility there are no grounds for attributing pride rather than joy to a person, just as, to return to a previous example, there would be no grounds for attributing fear rather than disgust to a person who does not take the spider before him to pose a threat. According to Solomon and Kristjánsson, then, we are often mistaken not only in our assessments of who is *worthy* of pride but also in our attributions of pride.<sup>9</sup>

Before assessing this account, I should specify the relevant notion of moral responsibility that I take agency accounts of all kinds to invoke: namely, that for a person to be morally responsible for something is, among other things, for her to be related to that thing in such a way as to make her an appropriate target, in principle, of moral praise or blame for it.<sup>10</sup> The arguments in this paper do not attribute to agency accounts any particular account of the conditions under which a person stands in such a relation to something. Rather, the present discussion merely assumes that moral responsibility is whatever relation that must hold between a person and something for it to be appropriate, in principle, to praise or blame her for that thing.

<sup>8</sup> Kristjánsson, *Justifying Emotions*, p. 125; see also p. 104.

<sup>9</sup> In such a spirit, former New York State Governor Mario Cuomo denied that he was proud of his son's re-election as Governor of New York: "There's relief, great relief for his mother and his family, including myself", he said. "There is not pride. People keep insisting that you must be proud. It's not so much proud. I think gratitude is a better word. We're grateful for the good luck that gave us the opportunity to serve, the good luck that gave Andrew all the wonderful gifts he was born with — a good mind, a strong body — and we were lucky he's made the most of that good luck". Danny Hakim, 'A Father Looks On Not With Pride, but With Gratitude', *New York Times*, 2 January 2011, A19.

<sup>10</sup> See Angela M. Smith, 'Responsibility as Answerability', *Inquiry* 58 (2015), pp. 99–126; and T.M. Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998). The clause, 'in principle', allows that one might be morally responsible for something even if there is not in fact anybody with proper standing to praise or blame one for that thing.

According to agency accounts of pride's attribution conditions, pride is an emotion of self-praise and, so, an emotion that one has only when one takes oneself to be morally responsible for the object of pride.<sup>11</sup> This account has considerable intuitive appeal, but it runs counter to common linguistic and interpretive conventions regarding pride. As a result of this revisionism, accepting the account requires that we adopt a theory of error in order to explain widespread misattributions of pride. In general, when a person, *S*, sincerely misattributes an attitude,  $\phi$ , to a person, *T*, one of the following claims must be true: either *S* falsely judges that *T* satisfies the actual attribution conditions for  $\phi$ , or *S* mistakenly identifies the attribution conditions for  $\phi$  (perhaps by conflating the attribution conditions for  $\phi$  with those for a different attitude,  $\varphi$ ) and takes *T* to satisfy those mistakenly identified attribution conditions. Instances of *self*attribution, such as those cited by Solomon and Kristjánsson, are special cases in which *S* and *T* refer to the same person. So, agency theorists face the following dilemma:

- (1) If taking pride in something requires self-attributions of agency, then sincerely claiming to experience pride in something that does not in fact implicate one's agency always involves either:
  - (a) making the false judgment that one's agency is implicated, or
  - (b) profound linguistic or conceptual confusion about pride (perhaps by mischaracterizing joy or gratitude as pride).

There is no third alternative for the agency-based theorist. I shall argue that implementing the requisite error theory for the agency

<sup>11</sup> An anonymous reviewer has suggested that the conditions of moral responsibility may differ for praise and blame—or, alternately, that praise might not presupposes the target agent's moral responsibility at all. Thus, since defenders of agency accounts are best understood as claiming that the emotion of pride is a form of self-praise, it is misleading to define these accounts in terms of a notion, moral responsibility, which may turn out to be irrelevant to praise. Alternatively, if there are varieties of responsibility in addition to the sort that agency accounts typically presuppose (differentiated perhaps by their respective kinds of objects, such as actions or persons), then the failure of agency accounts would not entail that pride presupposes no form of responsibility. I agree that agency accounts are best understood as entailing that pride is an emotion of self-praise. However, it follows from the characterization of moral responsibility in the body of the text, which I cannot here defend, that, so long as there is some relation between the agent and what she is praised for that is required in order to render praise appropriate in principle, praise must presuppose moral responsibility. Thus, praise-based accounts of pride's partiality must be defined in terms of moral responsibility. As to the truth-conditions of claims about moral responsibility and whether these truth-conditions are symmetrical in claims about praise and blame, I remain agnostic.

account of attribution is less plausible than rejecting the account altogether. That is to say, Solomon's and Kristjánsson's *modus ponens* is my *modus tollens*. Since all agency-based attribution accounts must make recourse to such an error theory, an argument against the latter constitutes an argument against the former.

Taking the first horn of the dilemma requires making extremely uncharitable belief attributions. It would be uncharitable to attribute to one who is proud to be an American, say, the judgment that one's agency is implicated in one's being an American (at least among natural born citizens).<sup>12</sup> Not all proud Americans take themselves to be morally responsible for their being Americans. Likewise, taking pride in one's rugged good looks does not seem to require taking oneself to be morally responsible for one's natural physical qualities. So, sincerely claiming to experience pride in something that does not in fact implicate one's agency does not *typically* involve making the false judgment that one's agency is implicated.

Taking the second horn of the dilemma requires regarding people who claim to feel agency-free pride as failing to understand at a basic level the meaning or proper extension of the concept of pride. Solomon and Kristjánsson embrace this result and declare that such people mistakenly describe joy or gratitude as pride. Thus, they defend their account of pride's partiality by denying pride's heterogeneity. However, unless there are strong independent grounds for accepting the agency view, such a revisionary conclusion must be avoided. For a core constraint on any account of an emotion is to save the phenomena of our mental life and of our ways of talking about that life. After all, these phenomena make up a large share of the very data needed for constructing such an account. So, if there is an established practice of recognizing certain emotions as pride, then we should be wary of countering it on the basis of the (albeit antecedently plausible) intuition that feeling pride towards something requires taking oneself to be morally responsible for it.<sup>13</sup> No compelling grounds have been presented for revising our linguistic and interpretive conventions in the

<sup>12</sup> Recall the following quip, sometimes attributed to G. B. Shaw: 'patriotism is the conviction that your country is superior to all others because you were born in it'.

<sup>13</sup> This point relates to the general danger of the 'moralization' of our psychology by means of interpreting mental states and capacities so as to maximize their conformity with moral judgments of which we are antecedently confident. See John Deigh, 'Shame and Self-Esteem: A Critique', *Ethics* 93 (1983), pp. 225–245; and Bernard Williams, 'Nietzsche's minimalist moral psychology', in *Making sense of humanity and other philosophical papers* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

proposed manner, and I see no prospect of finding any such grounds without begging the question against those who reject the agency account. I conclude that

- (2) Sincerely claiming to experience pride in something that does not in fact implicate one's agency *does not* always involve either:
- (a) making the false judgment that one's agency is implicated, or
  - (b) profound linguistic or conceptual confusion about pride (perhaps by mischaracterizing joy or gratitude as pride).

and, so,

- (3) Taking pride in something does not require self-attributions of agency.

In defence of the agency account, one might appeal to a conception of group agency in order to render vicarious pride and group pride intelligible. The sports fan who has contributed some effort, say by cheering the team on to victory, might thereby regard herself as having earned membership to the team and an intelligible relation to the object of her pride. Kristjánsson suggests that this membership relation may establish some degree of derivative individual moral responsibility for the present and future (and, perhaps, the past) activity of the group. I conclude this section with three reasons to believe that this proposal can offer only limited support for agency accounts.

First, it is plausible that collective emotions and their corresponding individual emotions are different types of emotions. For instance, whereas collective guilt plausibly takes a group as its intentional object, individual guilt is about the self.<sup>14</sup> So, an account of an individual emotion should not be assimilated to an account of the corresponding collective emotion without further argumentation. Since the present paper concerns individual pride, care must be taken in introducing the notion of group agency to ensure that we are not changing the subject. Second, the group agency defence of the agency account fails to render intelligible instances of pride in one's gifts or natural attributes. Thus, even if this proposal succeeds in explaining pride in one's

<sup>14</sup> See Deborah Tollefsen, 'The Rationality of Collective Guilt', *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 30 (2006), pp. 222–239.

country, say, it still fails to explain the very possibility of pride in one's natural beauty, agility, or good memory. Third, agency accounts of group pride entail the same *prima facie* implausible denial of pride's heterogeneity at the group level as we have seen agency accounts of individual pride entail at the individual level. By all appearances, a nation may intelligibly take pride in the natural beauty of its environment or in the natural athleticism of its individual members. So, the claim that groups may only intelligibly take pride in what they are morally responsible for is highly revisionary and *prima facie* implausible. Thus, introducing the notion of group agency fails to deflect the charge that agency accounts of pride's attribution conditions implausibly deny pride's heterogeneity.

#### 4. The Agency Account of Pride's Fittingness Conditions

In rejecting agency accounts of attribution, I agree with Sidgwick, who allows that one might not be morally responsible for objects of one's pride. However, Sidgwick condemns such pride on grounds of fittingness: 'As for such pride and self-satisfaction as are based not on our own conduct and its results, but on external and accidental advantages, these are condemned as involving a false and absurd view as to the nature of real merit'.<sup>15</sup> Norvin Richards has recently defended an agency-based fittingness condition combined with a credit-based attribution condition for pride, according to which experiencing pride about something requires taking that thing to be to one's credit, broadly construed. According to Richards, a person who takes pride in things that are not his doing judges that the relevant sort of credit does not require the exercise of agency. Richards agrees with Sidgwick that this judgment is mistaken:

[T]o be proud of something is not the same as simply taking pleasure in it. You might take pleasure in the lovely view from a secluded hillside, for example, taking every opportunity to visit and enjoy it, without being at all *proud* of the view. . . . One reason to think it is wrong to be proud of what is not at all your doing is that such things are very like the view from the hillside, in an important respect. In both cases, you are only a beneficiary of some good thing; you have nothing more to do with it than

<sup>15</sup> Sidgwick, *Methods*, p. 336.

that. That is what makes it so odd to be proud of the view from the hillside, I think: you are only in the right place at the right time for this to fall into your lap. If so, the same should apply to being proud of *anything* that you received only by chance. If your talent or your ancestry or your wealth came your way only by the luck of the draw, it would be equally inappropriate to be proud of them.<sup>16</sup>

Richards suggests that, with respect to the attitude of pride, we should regard all qualities for which we are not morally responsible as having fallen into our lap, as matters of mere chance. If such qualities are valuable, then we should at most regard ourselves as beneficiaries of them. So, for instance, matters relating to one's ethnicity, nationality, and ancestry in which one might take pride should be regarded, instead, as being on par with winning the lottery.

The Sidgwickian view according to which it is unfitting to take pride in what does not directly reflect one's worth as an agent has its roots, I believe, in the idea that human agency is the only significant measure of a person's life—the only sort of quality worth taking pride in. On this view, no progress can be made toward living in accordance with worthy personal ideals without personal activity.

There is a profound split in our thinking on this matter. On the one hand, there is considerable force to the intuition that what makes something attributable to a person, in the sense of forming a reasonable basis for our evaluation of her, is that it reflects some aspect of her agency. It is unreasonable to praise a person for something, such as winning the lottery, that she had no active part in. Where we do praise someone for something apart from his or her agency, say for the luster of his or her hair, we are willing to acknowledge that such features are superficial. Thus there is theoretical pressure to accept that the evaluable person is nothing more than the agent and that, as a result, it is unfitting to take pride in what does not depend upon or reflect one's agency.

On the other hand, much of what we take pride in, which is also much of what appears to make one's life meaningful by giving one a 'sense of self', does not depend on one's agency. The first-personal point of view seems to confirm that some of what is

<sup>16</sup> Richards, *Humility*, p. 202; p. 204.

worthy of pride lies beyond our agency, and beyond the realm of that for which one may deserve moral praise. In what follows I suggest that such pride might reflect, not an absurd view as to the nature of real merit, but rather a different conception of pride, one that rejects the agency account's assimilation of pride to the judgment of praiseworthiness.<sup>17</sup> Richards's argument, I claim, begs the question against this different conception of pride.

Consider the following lyric from the autobiographical Dolly Parton song, 'Coat of Many Colors':

There were rags of many colors and every piece was small  
 And I didn't have a coat and it was way down in the fall.  
 Momma sewed the rags together sewin' every piece with love.  
 She made my coat of many colors that I was so proud of. . .  
 My coat of many colors that my momma made for me  
 Made only from rags but I wore it so proudly.<sup>18</sup>

It would be a mistake to interpret Parton as claiming moral responsibility for the coat of many colors and it would be obtuse to claim that Parton's pride is unfitting on the grounds that she lacks moral responsibility for the coat. Likewise, we have little reason to reinterpret Parton's invocation of pride merely as a defensive refusal to be ashamed of her coat. For this lyric surely describes some emotion that Parton experienced towards her coat, and we may as well follow her interpretation and understand that emotion to be pride. Rather, Parton's pride in her coat appears to embody her judgment that, among other things, she is secure in the love of her generous and talented mother. In experiencing pride, Parton values herself as a person who enjoys such a relationship. Her coat of many colors is evidence that her life accords with this personally important value.

Consider, further, the following passage from James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room*, which describes a Black American ex-pat living in Paris in the 1950s, who cannot help but take pride as an American, even though he is deeply ambivalent about his home country:

<sup>17</sup> For a full defence of this suggestion, see my unpublished manuscript, 'Self-Evaluation and Social Practices'. For a similar view of the emotion of shame, see Cheshire Calhoun, 'An Apology for Moral Shame', *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 12 (2004), pp. 127–146.

<sup>18</sup> Dolly Parton, 'Coat of Many Colors', *Coat of Many Colors* (RCA Nashville, 1971).

When Giovanni wanted me to know that he was displeased with me, he said I was a *'vrai américain'*; conversely, when delighted, he said that I was not an American at all; and on both occasions he was striking, deep in me, a nerve which did not throb in him. And I resented this: resented being called an American (and resented resenting it) because it seemed to make me nothing more than that, whatever that was; and I resented being called *not* an American because it seemed to make me nothing.<sup>19</sup>

This character sees himself as inextricably American in the sense that when stripped of this identification 'it seemed to make me nothing'. His identification as an American is an essential part of his particular identity. It is a self-conception under which he values himself. Some of his personal ideals make ineliminable reference to his being an American, which is to say, a good American. Our commitments to reduced-agency personal ideals, like the ideals of having talented and loving parents or being a 'real American', partially constitute our identities as the particular persons that we are. These personal ideals are properly called 'reduced-agency' because while they sometimes call for activity, it is also possible *on occasion* to be in accordance with them without having to do anything. So, even if the exercise of one's agency were required in order for one to have an American identity in the first place, it may still be possible to take sensible pride in, say, the victories of the U.S. Olympic hockey team, even supposing that such victories were removed from one's agency. These victories would be like Parton's coat, tokens that indicate that one's life accords with personal values that are central to one's identity. Such pride need not reflect an absurd view about merit.

One might object that, tragically perhaps, it is possible for a worthless personal ideal to figure centrally in one's identity as the particular person one is. If so, the fact that one takes pride in being an American does not entail that the ideal of being an American is worthy. Likewise, Dolly Parton's heart-warming song does not establish immunity against Sidgwick's charge that pride in gifts presupposes an absurd view about merit. Even so, values that help to structure one's identity and attune oneself to the world play no small role in making one's life worthwhile. As such, these values may be worthy of our commitment and far from absurd. The important point is that one's commitments to such personal ideals are integral to one's identity as the particular

<sup>19</sup> James Baldwin, *Giovanni's Room* [1956] (New York: Random House, 2000), p. 89.

person that one is and, so, taking pride in some external good like one's ancestry or one's nation of birth is disanalogous to taking pride in winning the lottery or the view from the hillside. Pride in one's family, say, may be an affirmation of the importance to one's identity of narratives involving one's family members. Pride in the view from the hillside, on the other hand, is difficult to imagine as being fitting insofar as it is difficult to imagine the person whose identity as the particular person that she is involves this view.<sup>20</sup>

Although the Sidgwickian claim is not implausible, we are now in a position to see that we have good reason to reject Richards's argument for it. Much of what one finds meaningful and worthy of pride is indeed the result of chance, in what we may call 'chance' in an *impersonal sense* of the term. My parents could have raised their child to have a different ethnicity, nationality, and perhaps gender. But from a first-personal point of view, these qualities are not, in my case at least, a matter of chance in what we may call the *ethical sense* of the term.<sup>21</sup> From my point of view these qualities partially constitute my practical identity, so that, without them, I would be an ethically (if not metaphysically) different person. Many qualities for which I lack moral responsibility, for instance that I was raised to have a masculine identity and that I care about the ancestors or cultural works that I care about, are necessary features of my identity as the particular person who I am.<sup>22</sup> That is to say, from the point of view of the proud family member or citizen herself, the significance of such features is not on par with the significance of winning a lottery or the significance of the beautiful view from the hillside.<sup>23</sup> That I have been raised to appreciate and identify with my family, for instance, is not a matter of chance from my point of view—in the way that winning the lottery would be—because I can easily imagine *myself*

<sup>20</sup> By 'identity', I refer to the phenomenon that has recently been well described by Bennett Helm, *Love, Friendship, and the Self: Intimacy, Identification, and the Social Nature of Persons* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), at p. 134. Defending this account of practical identity, which I cannot do here, would require defending the claim that one's identity is reasons-responsive, though not necessarily deliberately or autonomously chosen, nor necessarily based upon what one is responsible for.

<sup>21</sup> See Thomas Nagel's related discussion of 'constitutive luck' in 'Moral Luck', reprinted in his *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

<sup>22</sup> See Anthony Appiah, "But Would That Still Be Me?" Notes on Gender, "Race," Ethnicity, as Sources of "Identity", *The Journal of Philosophy* 87 (1990), pp. 493–499.

<sup>23</sup> Likewise, we may agree, without accepting Kristjánsson's conclusion, that Kristjánsson's desert island fan (who 'suddenly decides to become a fan ... simply on a whim' [emphasis added]) does not feel pride.

never winning the lottery, though I cannot imagine *myself* with a different family.

So, among the qualities of a person for which she is not morally responsible, some may be more significant and worthy of pride than others to her. Significance of this sort is limited neither to what one is morally responsible for, nor to what is to one's credit. Richards's argument begs the question against this view, since he assumes that the sense in which one's family would be worthy of pride is identical to the sense in which some view from a hillside would be to one's credit. With practical identity-related qualities on the table, we are in a position to see that there is room for a view according to which some objectively randomly distributed qualities (e.g., one's ethnicity) and not others (e.g., winning the lottery) might merit pride.

One might object that gratitude or simple pleasure would be a more fitting response than pride to these significant qualities. This is not necessarily so, though the defence of this claim would require discussion of those attitudes, which I cannot provide here. However, we can note that fitting gratitude is always a response to benevolence, though fitting pride need not be so.<sup>24</sup> One might be proud of one's friend having overcome a hardship without regarding him as having done so benevolently, and Americans might be proud of Buzz Aldrin without regarding the Apollo 11 mission as benevolent. On the other hand, simple pleasure, unlike pride, is plausibly never unfitting; nor can simple pleasure represent the significance to one's self-conception of the qualities under discussion.

### **5. The Agency Account of Pride's External Propriety Conditions**

Even if we have no reason to believe that fitting pride requires the exercise of one's agency, the question remains as to whether experiencing such pride is ever externally appropriate. For example, if it were true that agency-free pride, even when fitting, led one to rest on one's laurels, then there might be a prudential external propriety condition according to which agency-free pride is unjustified. Such pride would be unjustified not in the sense of misrepresenting something but in the sense of leading to bad

<sup>24</sup> See Fred Berger, 'Gratitude', *Ethics* 85 (1975), pp. 298–309.

consequences for the agent herself. Whether such a prudential condition exists must be determined by empirical study.

Whether there exists a moral external propriety condition against agency-free pride is a more philosophically tractable question. If there is such a condition, and if the conclusions of the preceding sections are correct, then even tokens of fitting pride may be morally inappropriate.

A moral propriety condition of moral responsibility would render morally inappropriate instances of pride, such as pride in winning a game of Bingo, that do not offend anyone. I submit that there is no reason to be morally offended by such trivial pride. Moreover, even if the experience of trivial pride manifested some human failing, such a proud person would not *owe* it to us as a matter of respect for our humanity to remedy this failing. At most they would owe us the courtesy of refraining from expressing their emotion, so as not to arouse our annoyance or envy. So, I tentatively conclude that we do not in general owe to others either lack of pride about external goods or lack of concern about personal ideals that do not require agency to be satisfied.

What we find morally offensive in some cases of agency-free pride—and legitimately so—is a sense of entitlement. Some obnoxiously proud people take themselves to be entitled to praise from others, for instance, as when a proud family member brags about their ancestor's achievements. However, these faults are independent of the emotion of pride, and are better located as expressions of vicious character traits or of offensive beliefs about social hierarchy.

## 6. Conclusion

I have argued that moral responsibility is not a necessary condition of pride's attribution, fittingness, or moral external propriety. Agency accounts are based on the plausible intuition that pride is in some way closely related to moral responsibility. If the arguments of this paper are sound, however, then how to make sense of this intuition remains an open question. I suggested in §4 that personal ideals are central to pride. If this claim is correct, then we may get a handle on the question of the relation of agency to the attitude of pride by answering the following first-order normative question: to what extent and in what ways is the exercise of

one's agency necessary for one's life to accord with worthy personal ideals?

Finally, I hope to have shown that pride's partiality relation, though distinct from the relation of moral responsibility, is nonetheless a relation of philosophical interest which merits further attention. I have challenged the view that human agency is the only sort of quality that is, ultimately, worth taking pride in. Thus, in addition to illuminating pride and other partial emotions like shame, this conclusion illuminates the values that these partial emotions are *about*, insofar as it helps us to understand the qualities that make anything, including one's entire life, worthy of pride.

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