# CONTENTS

 Preface ix
 Primer on Free Will and Moral Responsibility xi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Strawson's Strategy</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strawson's Picture of Responsibility</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Central, and Seemingly Facile, Argument</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 The Resource and the Role of Statistics</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 The Further, Implicit Point</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Generalization Strategy</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making Explicit the Further Point</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objections</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Addressing the Crucial Objection</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unearthing Strawson's Naturalism</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Naturalism and the Central Argument</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 The Remaining Objections</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Principles and Cases</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Pessimistic Metaphysics of Morals?</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Against Social Naturalism</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Defense of Social Naturalism</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONTENTS

An Opening for the Generalization Strategy? 93
Error, Inconsistency, and Crises 97
Conclusion 105

Reprint of P. F. Strawson's "Freedom and Resentment" 107
Acknowledgments 135
Bibliography 137
Index 141
Introduction

When P. F. Strawson’s “Freedom and Resentment” first appeared, nearly sixty years ago, it forced a profound shift in the debate about free will and moral responsibility.1 For decades since, it has inspired views on wide-ranging topics.2 Most of the ongoing attention has focused on Strawson’s fascinating and fecund notion of “reactive attitudes.” In contrast, the central argument of the paper has received relatively little attention.3

The central argument claims that, because determinism is an entirely general thesis, true of everyone at all times, its truth would not show that we are not, in fact, morally responsible. It is a startling claim. The neglect given to the argument for it would be surprising, if that argument were not so difficult to discern.

2. Recent titles on further-ranging topics include Stephen Darwall, The Second-Person Standpoint: Morality, Respect, and Accountability (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006) and Akeel Bilgrami, Self-Knowledge and Resentment (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006). Recent Strawson-inspired work on free will and moral responsibility is legion.
3. Some attention has been given to the argument in the (considerable) time this book has been in preparation. See, e.g., the papers collected in David Shoemaker and Neal Tognazzini, eds., Freedom and Resentment at 50, Oxford Studies in Agency and Responsibility, vol. 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).
When the argument is considered, it is often interpreted as relying on a thought about our psychological capacities: we are simply not capable of abandoning the reactive attitudes, across the board, in something like the way we are simply not capable of remembering everything we are told. We do not have the right equipment. Given our psychological limitations, we are stuck treating one another as if we are morally responsible—we are incapable of doing otherwise. Therefore, according to this interpretation, we should rest content in the thought that we are morally responsible—asking whether we ought to treat one another differently is useless. I will call this “the simple Humean interpretation” and the thought on which it relies “the simple Humean thought.”

A different line interprets Strawson as relying on something like a conceptual point: you can neither support nor call into question the whole of a practice using notions that are, themselves, constituted by that practice. Thus, you cannot ask whether our moral practices, taken as a whole, are, themselves, morally just, right, appropriate, or fair. Doing so would be like asking whether the game of baseball is, itself, “fair” or “foul” in the sense of those words established by the game—“fair” or “foul,” in that sense, can be rightly asked of batted balls or of territory in the baseball field, but the question cannot be sensibly asked of the game itself, taken as a whole. On this second interpretation, Strawson accuses his opponent of a sophisticated kind of confusion. I will call this “the broadly Wittgensteinian interpretation” and the thought on which it relies “the broadly Wittgensteinian thought.”

Both the simple Humean thought and the broadly Wittgensteinian thought can be found in Strawson’s paper, and he makes use of each. But neither interpretation would lead you to expect what you will find, looking at the central text: Strawson twice accuses his opponent of being caught in some kind of contradiction. So neither interpretation, on its own, is correct.

By providing a close reading of the central text, I will do my best to articulate Strawson’s more interesting, and more powerful, argument. The argument depends on an underlying picture of the nature of moral demands and moral relationships—a picture that has gone largely unnoticed, that is naturalistic without being reductionistic,
and that is worthy of careful consideration. Having drawn out this underlying metaethical picture, I will begin to subject it to some philosophical scrutiny. I hope to show that it can withstand the objections that are both the most obvious and the most serious, leaving it a worthy contender.
broadly Wittgensteinian interpretation/thought, ix–x, 2, 57, 67–68

capacities: demands adjusted to, 29–33, 77–78, 88–89; determinism and, 95–96; diminished (see incapacities); education required for development of, 83–84; error about, 98; jackass with, 46n5; as moral freedom, 78n8; moral standards attuned to, 76–77, 79, 97; normal, objective attitude adopted toward those with, 38; ordinary, distinction between ordinary practices and, 77; parent or officer, lacked by, 96; psychological, 2; purely natural vs. socially developed, 87–89; resource to enhance (see resource, use of); for respecting others, 77–78; standards of regard adjust to actual, 82–83; statistically ordinary, 79; typical, 105. See also incapacities

Carnap, Rudolf, 57n6

central argument, i, 6–7, 11, 15–21, 71
compatibilism/compatibilist, xi, xiii–xvii, xix, 5

consequentialism, xvi–xvii

contractualism, 74, 75n5, 80n12


demands and expectations, 12, 14n8, 23, 29–34, 37, 41, 61n10, 76–82, 97–98.
See also exemption from moral demands; framework
determinism, xi; freedom and, xii–xvii, 75; as a general thesis, 1, 6, 16; hard, xv–xvi, xix, 6n2; if false, 65, 75; if true, xii–xiv, xvii–xix, 5–6, 16, 19, 21, 23, 34, 38–43, 45–47, 51, 53, 57, 58n8, 63–64, 66–67, 71, 73, 77, 78n8, 95–97, 104; irrelevance of, 74, 76, 93, 106; responsibility and, xv–xvi; thesis of, xi–xii, 1, 6, 15–16, 24, 39n3, 42–49, 106

excuse, xvii, 12–13; of everyone, 16; exemption and, distinction between, 40–41, 45, 59, 64–66, 73; incompatibilist view of, xviii; interpersonal relationships and, 55; of mannequins, 13n6; optimist view of, xviii. See also “will was not ill” (slogan)
exempting conditions, 80–81, 93–94
exemption from moral demands:

cases, reliance on, 45, 73–74;
determinism and, 39n3, 41, 44, 47, 53, 63, 66–67, 106; drunkenness, because of, 31–32, 82; error about reasons for, 98–101; excuse and,
exemption from moral demands
(continued)
distinction between, 40–41, 73;
framework for, 54–55; in the general-
ization strategy, 40; the incompatibilist’s view of, xviii; introduced by Strawson’s, 12–14, 30–31; ordinary personal relationships, incapable of, 40–42, 44–45, 52n1, 74, 81; of outliers (therefore not everyone), 17–18, 20, 23, 33, 37–38, 51, 99, 106; standards of regard and, 85, 93–94; use of the resource to, 34n15, 37, 48, 83n17. See also incapacities; “ill will does not matter” (slogan) existentialist, 92n33, 101
framework, 6, 26, 29, 37, 41, 53–61, 68, 77, 80–81, 90–91, 97, 99, 101
freedom: of all, 80, 92; compatibilist position on, xiv–xvi; determinism and, xi, xiii, xvi, xix, 75; existentialist shirking of, 92n33; God and, xin2; incompatibilist position on, xiv–xvi; indeterminism and, xvii; libertarian/contra-causal, xv–xvi, 6n2, 98, 100; moral, 78n8, 89n25; optimist’s understanding of, xix free will, xi–xv, 1. See also will
general thesis: determinism as, 1, 6, 16; exempt from moral demands, as reason to, 23, 33, 37–38, 51 (see also exemption from moral demands, of outliers (therefore not everyone)); generalization strategy and, 63; relevance, argument against, 77; sus-
pension of reactive attitudes and, 18
Grice, H. P., 67–68n17

hard determinist, xv–xvi, xix, 6n2
Holmes, Oliver Wendell, Jr., 7
Hume, David, 58–59, 131n7
Hume interpretation/response, 2,
58–60, 64
Humean thought, 2, 59, 62
Hume the Naturalist, 58, 60–61
Hume the Skeptic, 58

“ill will does not matter” (slogan), 10–12, 41, 73
incapacities: abnormal capacities/
outliers, 10, 18–19, 24, 30–31, 43–44,
47–48, 98, 100; child/children,
xviii–xix, 10, 12, 30; determinism and,
44, 49n8; disease or severe mental
illness, 10, 30, 41, 45, 100; exempting
people because of, xviii–xix, 17, 31, 33,
38, 44, 47, 74, 82, 85n20, 98, 100 (see also exemption from moral demands);
generalization strategy and, 40–41;
objective attitude and, 18, 43–44;
reasons for, 52n1; standards of regard
and, adjustments for, 31n13, 33, 41, 76,
78–79, 82–84, 90. See also capacities
incompatibilism/incompatibilist, xi,
xiii–xvi, xviii, 5, 39
indeterminism/indeterministic, xii
Induction to Logical Theory
(Strawson), 15, 26n1,
58n7, 67n17, 92–93
induction, rationality or naturalness
of, 55–56, 58, 61–62, 67
interpersonal respect, failures of, 84–86
Introduction to Logical Theory
(Strawson), 56

Kant, Immanuel, 78n8
La Rochefoucauld, François de, 111
legal system, 56–57, 66–67
libertarianism/libertarian freedom, xv–xvi, 6n2

metaphysics of morals: in God or nature, embedded in, 92n33; the pessimist’s, 72, 74–75; Strawson’s, 15, 71. See also social naturalism

moral: framework, 80n12; responsibility, xi, xiiin2, xviii, 1–2, 5, 13–14, 20n13, 32–33, 49 (see also responsibility); sceptic, xiiin2, 67n17, 107

morality: minimal conception of, 28–29, 37; naturalistic, 46

naturalism, Strawson’s: justification and, 55; “natural,” use of the term, 54; social naturalism (see social naturalism)

Nietzsche, Friedrich, 30n12, 92n33

non-voluntary, 86n22

objective attitude(s), 7–8, 10, 18, 23, 26, 40, 45, 59, 64

optimist, the: as compatibilist imagined by Strawson, xvi, 6; consequences, focus on, 5–6, 63–64, 66; as consequentialist compatibilist, xvii; determinism, truth of, 74; freedom, understanding of, xix; incompatibilist and, xviii; pessimist, dispute with, 20, 63–65; reactive attitudes as voluntary, 86n22; relating to others, 65–66; Wittgensteinian thought, answer to, 57

ordinary capacities vs. ordinary practices, 77

ordinary relating: in adult/interpersonal relationships, 19–20, 32–33, 38–39, 40–44, 62–63, 65; appropriateness of, 52–53, 63; atrocities or bad behavior and, 30n11, 77; capacities and, 77–79, 97; capacities in fact required for vs. believed to be required for, 97–98; eliminating, 25, 38, 63, 69, 99, 106; exempting/excusing/discounting because the person is incapable of, 10, 17–18, 30, 33, 40, 42–44, 47, 51, 81, 93–94, 98, 100, 105 (see also excuse; exemption from moral demands); generalization strategy and, 71; goodwill, expectation of, 26–27; illegitcnicity of, 45–46, 63; incapacitation from, Strawson’s reasons for, 52n2; justification of, need for, 64–65; legitimacy of, 66–67, 71–72, 101; as a natural fact, 105; nonrational basis for, 6, 55, 105; objective attitude/reating and, 42, 44–45; possibility of, 41–42, 44–45, 49, 51, 63, 85n20, 93; principle prohibiting, 97; should we continue?, 38, 68 (see also crucial objection); standards of regard and, 86–87, 94; statistically ordinary, 17–18, 20, 23, 77; stopping, contradiction that calls for, 98–99; Strawson’s system, place in, 29, 33, 54; will and, 74

“ought implies can,” 78n8, 89n25

pessimist: determinism and, xix, 6, 63–64, 66–67, 71, 77; dissatisfaction of, 69, 71; exempting, concerns about, 97–99, 101; generalization strategy and, 40, 67; as incompatibilist imagined by Strawson, xvi, 5; metaphysics of morals, 72–75; moral concern of, 66; optimist and, dispute between, 5–6, 20, 63–65; reactive attitudes and, 65; on relating to others, 65–68, 71, 94, 97–99; responsibility/desert,
pessimist (continued)

concern regarding, 5, 64, 68, 71;
social naturalism, rejection of, 66,
71–73, 75–77, 79; Wittgensteinian
argument, vulnerability to, 67

Plato, 90n28

practices, xvii–xix; capacities vs., 77; as
embedding error or contradiction, 4,
98–99, 101; as instruments of social
control, 20, 63–64, 66n15; justification
of, 5–6, 55, 57, 67–68, 76, 79
pressure and counter-pressure, 80n5,
84–90, 94

Quine, W. V. O., 28n8

rational/rationality: choosing of
commitments, 54; consistency,
80, 84, 88n25; to continue ordinary
relating, 68; if determinism is true,
57, 58n8, 63; justification, 6, 57;
rules for judging cause and effect,
55; standards of regard, grounding
of, 92

Rawls, John, 95n37

reactive attitudes: anger as, 8n4; deter-
minism and, 34, 53, 63–64, 73; as
forms of sanction or punishment,
93n34, 96–97; impersonal/vicarious
analogues, 8; incapacity and, 41; as
neither voluntary or involuntary,
86n22, 87n24, 94n36; network of,
65; personal, 8; as requests or
commands, 93n34, 96–97; self-
directed, impersonal, 8; social
naturalism and, 65; standards of
regard and, 80, 82–83; Strawson’s
notion of, 1–2, 7; suspension
of/exemption from, 9–13, 9–14,
16–18, 23–25, 34n15, 48n8, 49, 51,
53, 63–64, 72–73

reasonableness/unreasonableness of
demands, 8n4, 14n8, 31n13, 32, 77,
82, 86, 88–90, 94–97
resentment, 7–8, 26, 68, 86, 88n25, 89,
91n31, 96
resource, use of, 19–20, 31n14, 48n8,
51–52, 59, 63n12; at all times, 23–25,
33–34, 38, 51, 65, 105; as an exemp-
tion, 13n7, 33, 34n15, 83n17; to avoid
the strains of involvement, 11, 19,
46n5, 48, 85, 105; as central to
Strawson’s argument, 11, 19–21;
determinism and, 21, 23–24, 34,
37; against a jackass, 74n3; for
policy or self-protection, 43, 48;
voluntary, 86n22
responsibility: compatibilist/
incompatibilist position on, xvi,
xviii–xix; determinism and, com-
patibility of, xv–xv; exempted
from moral (see exemption from
moral demands); existentialist
shirking of, 92n33; freedom/ free
will and, xi, xiin2, xv–xvi, xix;
moral, xi, xiin2, xviii, 1–2, 5, 13–14,
20n13, 32–33, 49; shirking, 92n33;
Strawson’s picture of, 7, 13–15, 37

Sartre, Jean-Paul, 101n45
Scanlon, T. M., 76n6, 95n37
semi-compatibilists, xviii
simple Humean interpretation/
response, 2, 58–60, 64
simple Humean thought, 2, 59, 62
skepticism, 58, 67n17
Skepticism and Naturalism (Strawson),
20n13, 58, 65
“Social Morality and Individual Ideal”
(Strawson), 27–29
social naturalism: the central argument
and, 62–66, 71; defense of, 79–93,
INDEX 145

101; exempting conditions and, 93; the pessimist’s objections to, 66, 71–73, 75–77, 79, 104; Strawson’s, 58–62, 106

standards of regard, 32, 80–96

—attitude(s): human, 25n1, 26n2, 54, 127, 131–33; objective, 8n4, 10, 17, 24, 42–43, 115–16, 118–20, 126–27, 129; participant, 17, 24, 116, 118; reactive (see “reactive attitudes” under this heading)
—child/children, 17, 24, 115–16, 118, 126–27
—determinism: central concept of, 121; freedom and, 109–10; general thesis of, 117, 120, 125; participant reactive attitudes and, 118; reactive attitudes and the thesis of, 121; reconciliation of pessimists and optimists about, 108; thesis of, 107, 110, 117, 120–21, 125, 127; truth/falsehood of, 107–10, 117, 119–20, 125–28
—forgiveness, 111–12, 116–17
—freedom, 109–10, 127, 131
—guilt, 107, 109, 122, 129–30, 132
—induction, 55–56, 61–62, 131n7
—inter-personal relationships, 24–25, 42, 114, 118
—legal system, 56
—libertarians/libertarianism, 111, 132–33
—moral: condemnation, 107–11, 128; guilt (see “guilt” under this heading); obligation, 107, 124; responsibility, 13–14, 107, 109, 128–32; sceptic, xii, 107, 132
—optimists, 107–9, 111, 128
—pessimists, 107–8, 111
—punishment, xix, 108–10, 127–30
—rational/rationality, 6, 53–55, 58n8, 68n18, 120, 126, 131
—resentment, 111–13, 115–17, 121, 123–24, 129–30
—will: good, 112–14, 117, 121–22, 129; ill, 117, 120–22; quality of, 121

Street, Sharon, 76n6

Taylor, Charles, 102n45

voluntary, 84n36, 86n22, 87n24

Wallace, R. Jay, 27n6

will: absence of, 9; discounting, 10; “does not matter,” 10–12, 41, 73; free, xi–xv, xi–xvi, 1; good, xvii, 11–14, 16, 26–27, 41, 56n4, 73; ill, 9n5, 10–12, 16, 32, 37, 81; ill (or not ill), 11–12, 16, 32, 37, 73, 81; out of person’s control, 74, 85n20; quality of, 7–10, 12–14, 13n6, 14, 16–17, 26, 41, 45, 73, 105; weak, 78n8, 84

“will was not ill” (slogan), 9, 12, 16, 73

Wittgenstein, Ludwig, ix, 58, 61, 65, 76n6

Wittgensteinian interpretation/thought, ix–x, 2, 57, 67–68

For general queries, contact webmaster@press.princeton.edu