Epistemic Blame

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The Nature and Norms of Epistemic Relationships

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Preface

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CFP1   I started working on epistemic blame about four years ago, with a draft paper called "Against Epistemic Blame." In that paper, I argued for the opposite of what this book concludes. At the time, it seemed to me that talk of "blame" in epistemology was at best misleading, and at worst deeply mistaken. But I soon found in conferences, workshops, and comments on the paper, that many were opposed to my ideas. "*Viva* epistemic blame!" I gradually became convinced that being *against* epistemic blame is not a straightforward matter.

CFP2   The next draft of the paper was titled "Epistemic Blame?" I took a more tempered stance, outlining worries about epistemic blame, but also developing a more positive approach to the idea. This too was met with all kinds of objections. And they now came from the other direction. "Epistemic *blame*? Makes no sense!" Naturally, I was sympathetic, but because I'd also been convinced that things are not straightforward, it occurred to me that perhaps the most fruitful way of thinking about epistemic blame is in terms of a *puzzle.* There are competing sources of pressure in our intuitions about this concept, ones that are not easy to reconcile. To put it one way, the more *blame*-like a given response is, the less at home in the epistemic domain it seems—but the more at home in the *epistemic* domain a given response is, the less blame-like it seems. There is a kind of Catch 22 here. The puzzle is finding a way out.

CFP3   What is exciting about this puzzle is that its solution has implications for fundamental issues in normative theorizing, including the nature of epistemic normativity, and the relationship between epistemology and ethics. By the end of this book, I will be saying that epistemic blame is like a *mirror* of epistemic normativity. Its properties reflect properties of the norms and values that structure our intellectual lives. By investigating these properties, we can put illuminating structure on the *parallels* and complex points of *interaction* between the epistemic and practical domains. Given the well-established and growing interest in the relationship between these domains, epistemic blame promises to be a valuable topic of study for many working in epistemology and beyond.

CFP4   In my view, the most interesting and fruitful way to confront the puzzle of epistemic blame is to think about epistemic blame as a distinctive kind of *relationship modification.* Roughly, members of an epistemic community stand in a kind of "epistemic relationship," and epistemic blame is a distinctive way of modifying this relationship. This idea is inspired by the work of T.M. Scanlon, who famously argues that moral blame is a kind of relationship modification. When I read Scanlon's ideas in *Moral Dimensions*, they immediately struck me as

a fascinating way of thinking about moral blame. But plans for extending these ideas to the epistemic domain were slow in the making. For a start, just as my initial work on the topic of epistemic blame was "against" epistemic blame, so too was my initial approach to Scanlon's framework against the idea that it could be extended to the epistemic domain. I even wrote a short paper about how this would mean embracing the idea of an "epistemic relationship," and arguing that we clearly have no such things . . . Coming at the epistemic domain from an individualistic perspective, thinking about things like proportioning one's beliefs to the evidence, the nature of perceptual justification, and whether knowledge of an external world is possible, it can of course be difficult to make sense of what this would even mean. But then I started thinking more about the *interpersonal* side of the epistemic domain—about how we rely on one another in pervasive ways for the most basic of information, and how we seem to have a corresponding set of *expectations* of one other, as potential sources of information. It occurred to me that there are plenty of materials in the epistemic domain for developing an account of epistemic relationships. It turns out that developing an account of epistemic relationships is a lot more interesting and fruitful than arguing they don't exist. It also leads to a way of solving the puzzle of epistemic blame.

CFP5   By thinking of epistemic blame as a distinctive kind of relationship modifica-tion, we locate a response that is blame-like enough to warrant the term "blame," but also very much at home in the epistemic domain. Epistemic relationships can reconcile the competing sources of pressure generating the puzzle of epistemic blame. They can also do a lot more. In the second part of this book, I will be arguing that epistemic relationships help us make sense of a unique set of issues in the "ethics of epistemic blame," ones that broadly mirror a corresponding set of issues in the ethics of moral blame. I will examine the scope of appropriate epistemic blame, the idea of "standing to epistemically blame," and the role and value of epistemic blame in our social and political lives. These issues are unique in the sense that they take on their own character in the epistemic domain, and cannot be resolved simply by applying existing work in moral philosophy.

CFP6   Our moral blaming practices give essential colour and shape to our experience as responsible agents. A vast literature is dedicated to analyzing, theorizing, and otherwise philosophizing about moral responsibility. Correspondingly very little has been done to analyze, theorize, or even *make sense* of the epistemic dimension of our blaming practices. And yet, epistemic blame plays a central role in our social and political lives. To my knowledge, this is the first book-length study of the nature and ethics of epistemic blame.[1] I hope that I have made a good start on these issues. But there is a lot of work to do.

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[1] There are of course rich discussions of closely related and connecting topics in epistemology, including doxastic and epistemic responsibility. I explain how these discussions relate to this book in Chapter 1, section 1.3.

Acknowledgments

CFP7   I have received helpful feedback and support from many people since starting this project. Most importantly, my wife Fiona has been there through all of my worries, ideas, and ruminations while battling "the beast"—our code-name for this project.

CFP8   Robin McKenna and Sebastian Köhler also deserve special thanks. In some ways, my philosophy career feels like one big long extension of my time commiserating with these two in grad school reading groups: we've gone our separate ways, but we keep in touch and trade notes on all the major milestones. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to both of them for this project in particular. Robin was the first to read an entire early draft. He gave characteristically useful feedback, and has since been a source of advice on many practicalities. Sebastian has given lots of helpful feedback on the central ideas in this book, in various stages of development. He is also just always there with a quick reply to my text messages, which usually seek practical wisdom, or substantive reflection on some half-baked argument.

CFP9   In the Fall of 2021, while on sabbatical, I benefitted from the amazing support of Chris Kelp and Mona Simion, and the entire COGITO group in Glasgow. We did a mini-workshop on the first draft of the book. The comments I received helped me write a much-improved second draft (and third and fourth . . .). Chris and Mona are a central guiding inspiration and source of endless amounts of advice and good philosophy.

CFP10   Another person who read an entire early draft is Eugene Chislenko. His incisive feedback and positive encouragement—particularly as someone with expertise in the moral blame literature—was a godsend. Eugene's comments made a significant difference to a big chunk of this book. At the other end of the writing process, Lani Watson very generously read the entire penultimate draft. I can't thank her enough for the careful attention to detail and constructive suggestions on a number of subtle but crucial issues. I also owe Sebastian Schmidt big thanks for his enthusiastic engagement with this project. His thoughtful comments have improved many pages, especially in Chapters 5 and 7. Others have read some chapters, given comments on related papers, or been helpful in conversation/ emails. I will forget important names here, but some that especially come to mind include: Craig Agule, Bob Beddor, Fernando Broncano-Berrocal, Jessica Brown, Daniel Buckley, Adam Carter, Matthew Chrisman, Marc-Kevin Daoust, Rachel Elliott, Davide Fassio, Miranda Fricker, Eric Bayruns García, Mikkel Gerken, Sara Ghaffari, Harmen Ghijsen, Sandy Goldberg, Thomas Grundman, Allan Hazlett,

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CFP11   Material from this book was presented at the following workshops and conferences, and I would like to thank all audience members at those events for helpful feedback: Epistemic Wrongs and Epistemic Reparations Workshop, African Centre for Epistemology and Philosophy of Science, University of Johannesburg; Responsibility for Beliefs Workshop, University of Helsinki; The Social and Political Dimensions of Epistemic Risk, University of Seville; Epistemic Blame: Theory and Practice Workshop, University of Johannesburg; MANCEPT Workshops in Political Philosophy—Epistemic Responsibilities of Democratic Citizens, University of Manchester (online), Brown Bag Meetings, CONCEPT Cologne Center for Contemporary Epistemology and the Kantian Tradition, University of Cologne (online); 2021 Eastern APA Meeting, Symposium Session—commentators: Tim Kwiatek (Columbia University) and Sara Ghaffari (Bowling Green State University), New York, NY (online); Social (Distance) Epistemology: Weekly Virtual Events, Social Epistemology Network Online; COGITO Work in Progress Seminar, University of Glasgow (online); Philosophy Visiting Speaker Colloquium, University of Manitoba; GOGITO New Directions in Social Epistemology Speaker Series, University of Glasgow; 55th Annual Meeting of the Western Canadian Philosophical Association, University of Calgary.

CFP12   On a more personal note, I want to thank Mikias, Angelika, Ulla, and the "Dream Team" from Dreamville Apartments, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. I wrote a lot of this book while there on sabbatical in Fall 2021. You guys were amazing companions and I will never forget those times. This book is dedicated to the memory of my mother, Rosemary Scurfield. I have such a vivid memory of early Spring in 2019, we were walking Logan in Assiniboine Park, and I was telling her about my idea for this book. She would not believe me if I told her what the world has been through since 2019. But one thing that stayed pretty much the same is my idea for the book.

CFP13   My aim has been to create a book that stands by itself, something that unifies, develops, and takes in new directions a number of ideas I've had since I started thinking about epistemic blame. Much of the book is new, including the Introduction, most of Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6, large chunks of Chapter 3, and all of Chapter 7 and the Conclusion. The book includes passages that have been published elsewhere. In many cases these passages have been gradually re-written or slightly changed—hopefully improved. I am grateful to Wiley and Springer for permission to adapt and include the following material: Chapter 1, section 1.5,

Introduction

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CIP1   This book is about the interpersonal side of thinking. It is about how our beliefs, biases, and methods of inquiry, matter to other people.

CIP2   We often regard the epistemic dimension of our lives as a comparatively private affair. Belief and inquiry are of course bound up with action in innumerable ways, and so equally bound up with other people in at least that sense. But it also seems true that when I form a belief, for example, that it's going to rain tonight, this belief is somehow more my *own*, something that largely concerns *me*, in a way that my act of betraying your confidence is not. And yet, we clearly do keep an eye on one another's intellectual conduct. People are often exercised and engaged—in both negatively and positively valanced ways—by their perceptions of the intellectual conduct of others. We can be deeply impressed by someone's wit or cleverness, or the ingenuity with which they solve a problem. Words of intellectual praise, such as "clever" or "brilliant," are sometimes used to express this. Conversely, when we're not so impressed, we sometimes call one another "short-sighted," "irrational," "silly," or even "stupid." We sometimes rebuke, feel frustrated by, and demand better from people for beliefs they hold, assertions they make, or methods of inquiry they pursue.

CIP3   And this seems fair. Some of us get justifiably upset when certain politicians appear to *believe* that humans have no impact on climate change. Some of us get justifiably frustrated by colleagues, or friends, who form their beliefs about contemporary issues solely on the basis of their social media news feed. How people conduct their intellectual lives is important—regardless of whether they are colleagues, friends, loved ones, or leaders of large countries. So, naturally we have an interest in doing so skillfully, and with success. It is also natural that we have ways of responding to one another when things don't go so well. This book is about that response: I call it *epistemic blame*.[1]

CIP4   To bring my topic into sharper focus, consider a scenario:

CIP5   THE OFFICE: One day while sitting at their desks, Dwight reveals to Jim that he believes there is a conspiracy amongst their coworkers. The aim of this supposed

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[1] Why not examine "epistemic praise" and other related positively valanced responses? First, doing so would probably require a book in its own right. Second, epistemic blame will give us plenty to grapple with in what follows. I will discuss positively valanced responses in Chapter 7, sections 7.5 and 7.6. For recent overviews of work on praise, see Stout (2020) and Telech (2022).

2   EPISTEMIC BLAME

conspiracy is to ensure that Dwight will be laid off in the company's upcoming plans to downsize. Dwight is so convinced, he secretively entreats Jim to form an "alliance" to counteract the efforts of the conspiracy. It doesn't take long for Jim to realize Dwight's conspiracy beliefs are unfounded; he has no evidence in support of them. When Jim realizes this, he criticizes Dwight, quite severely (mainly privately, but also through certain overt actions, such as requests for reasons—"how could you think this, Dwight?"—or sighs of exasperation). He criticizes Dwight in a way that goes beyond merely assigning him a bad epistemic grade for his epistemic failing.

CIP6   Readers familiar with US TV series *The Office*[2] will know the dynamics of this situation. For those unfamiliar, a salient feature of the case is Dwight's tendency to get too wrapped up in his own thoughts. He's a smart enough guy. But he also tends to lose perspective. In our case, Jim realizes that this is one of those moments—a particularly bad instance. So, he reacts in a negatively valanced way. Jim criticizes Dwight for believing something so silly, without any supporting evidence. Importantly, however, he does not think Dwight has done anything *morally* wrong. In essence, what Jim is exercised and engaged by is the fact that Dwight has gone down another rabbit hole. He is being unreflective, careless, and irrational. Jim's response is an example of what I am calling "epistemic blame."

CIP7   Epistemic blame is not simply a negative form of epistemic evaluation. It is not the same as merely judging that someone is being irrational, or has an unjustified belief. I might judge that you are being irrational, but take a certain pleasure in this fact because of a friendly rivalry between us. Epistemic blame, as I have already implied, is a more exercised or engaged kind of response than a negative epistemic judgment. It involves something more than merely noticing or believing that someone has fallen short of an epistemic standard. It turns out that this "something more" is quite difficult to articulate. One reason it is difficult to articulate is because, whatever it is, the "something more" of epistemic blame seems to have a complex and at times deeply intertwined relationship with the kind of engagement that characterizes *other* forms of blame, such as moral blame.

CIP8   This book concerns a puzzle about the very idea of epistemic blame. The puzzle arises when reaching for two closely related, but distinct theoretical goals. These goals are: (i) to explain what makes epistemic blame more *significant* than mere negative epistemic evaluation—to explain what the engagement characteristic of epistemic blame consists in; and (ii) to do so without invoking attitudes, behaviors, or practices that seem out of place in the epistemic domain. A related challenge exists in the moral domain—the challenge of explaining what makes moral blame more significant than judging that someone has done something

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[2] Based on the BBC series of the same name.

wrong, without invoking attitudes, behaviors, or practices that invite clear coun-terexamples. Interestingly, many of the most prominent responses to that chal-lenge do not seem like helpful models upon which to build an account of epistemic blame. Many of our best ways of understanding the significance of moral blame seem ill-suited to helping us understand the significance of epistemic blame. Or so I will argue.

CIP9   In what sense is this a *puzzle*, as opposed to a set of theoretical desiderata? Making sense of epistemic blame generates a puzzle because goals (i) and (ii) are in tension. A helpful way of understanding this tension is in terms of opposing sources of pressure. On the one hand, epistemic blame seems like a kind of *blame*, in ways that somehow parallel the moral domain. Accounting for this intuition is one source of pressure. As Adam Piovarchy puts it: "if our conception of epistemic blame is too distinct from our conception of moral blame, there is a risk that there won't be any shared features that warrant considering both to be a species of blame" (Piovarchy 2021a, 2). On the other hand, typical ways of understanding what blame is—for example, in terms of negative emotions, or as a kind of protest to wrongdoing—can easily seem out of place in the epistemic domain. It is far from clear how to capture the *engagement* characteristic of blame with attitudes, behaviors, or practices that also seem at home in the epistemic domain. The project of keeping things epistemic, so to speak, is a competing source of pressure.[3]

CIP10   One way of responding to this puzzle is to simply reject the idea that there is an epistemic kind of blame. Perhaps our sense that Jim blames Dwight for his epistemic failing can be explained in some other way. Another approach is to double down and insist that blame—*whatever* it is—is as equally at home in the epistemic domain as anywhere else. In my experience, people tend to be sympa-thetic to one or the other of these stances in equal measure. Some find it obvious that blame just is a moral notion. Others find talk of epistemic blame perfectly natural. People seem pulled in opposing directions. Why is this? In my view, it is because it is easy to inadequately appreciate *both* of these competing sources of pressure. We really *do* seem to react to one another for culpable epistemic failings in a way that goes beyond negative epistemic evaluation—and appropriately so. But it also seems true that people aren't fitting targets of ordinary forms of moral blame just for epistemically failing. My aim is to solve this puzzle, not by rejecting one or the other of these plausible ideas, but rather by explaining how they can both be true.

CIP11   Solving the puzzle of epistemic blame requires developing an account of epistemic blame that can achieve goals (i) and (ii), while satisfying a number of other desiderata, ones that will be articulated throughout this investigation. I will

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[3] Thanks to Elise Woodard and Mona Simion for helpful discussion about ways of framing the puzzle.

argue that the key to solving this puzzle lies in focusing on the distinctive way our epistemic lives are *interpersonal.* Many paradigmatic epistemic failings do not amount to direct personal harms or wrongs, but they are not devoid of an interpersonal dimension altogether. I will argue that people have certain *expectations* of one another as epistemic agents. When someone falls short of an epistemic standard, often they also fall short of a normative expectation that others may legitimately hold them to. This is a kind of interpersonal failing. Making sense of it as such is key to locating a kind of response that has the requisite significance, while fitting neatly within the epistemic domain, to deserve the label "epistemic blame." Developing these ideas is a central aim of this book. The result is what I call the *relationship-based* account of epistemic blame.

CIP12   According to the relationship-based account, epistemic blame is a distinctive kind of *relationship-modification.* The account draws on some influential, but admittedly controversial ideas in the literature on moral blame. It draws on approaches to moral blame that understand blame as essentially involving a kind of relationship modification.[4] At the heart of the account is the idea of an "epistemic relationship," a kind of relationship that people have insofar as they are epistemic agents in an epistemic community. This book will develop a unique understanding of what it is to *modify* one's epistemic relationship with another person (and oneself), and it will argue that certain ways of modifying one's epistemic relationship with another (or oneself) can, under the right conditions, amount to a kind of blame response. One interesting feature of my development of these central ideas is that, as an account of epistemic blame, the relationship-based approach avoids some of the most important controversies it faces in the moral domain. Some of its perceived weaknesses as a theory of moral blame are precisely what make it promising as a solution to the puzzle of epistemic blame.

CIP13   Along the way, we will encounter a number of alternative accounts of epistemic blame, alternatives that fall short in instructive ways. Our primary focus will be accounts that model epistemic blame as a kind of *negative emotion*, and accounts that model epistemic blame as the manifestation of a kind of *frustrated desire.* Investigating these options, including my preferred one, is key to resolving the puzzle of epistemic blame. But it also has broader implications. Most importantly, engaging with the puzzle of epistemic blame reveals a great deal about the relationship between the epistemic and practical domains. More precisely, finding an adequate account of epistemic blame deepens our understanding of how the epistemic and practical domains *parallel* and *interact* with one another. This point is worth pausing to elaborate.

CIP14   It seems clear that when we appropriately blame people for epistemic failings, practical factors often play a role in what *makes* blame appropriate. Consider an

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[4] Most notably the framework of T.M. Scanlon (2008).

employee who earns an unfair salary because of their boss's culpably prejudiced and irrational beliefs about the employee's competences. Other things being equal, it is natural to suggest that the practical *harm* or *wrong* done to the employee is what makes blaming the boss for their prejudiced beliefs seem called for. But is that the whole story? Must there *always* be something moral or practical at stake when blame for epistemic failings is appropriate? Studying epistemic blame forces us to get clear on the role that non-epistemic factors play in our responses to epistemic failings. I will be arguing that "epistemic relationship modification" can play a role in our blaming practices *independently* of moral and practical considerations, and, in this sense, constitutes a genuine kind of blame in its own right—one that *parallels* the moral domain. That said, I will defend this idea while accounting for the platitude, just noted, that most of the time the character, or force, of our responses to one another for epistemic failings is clearly influenced by non-epistemic factors. In fact, this is yet another way in which epistemic relationships are useful tools. Understanding epistemic blame in terms of relationships positions us, not just to make sense of an epistemic kind of blame, but also to put a new kind of *structure* on our understanding of its interaction with moral blame. One of my aims is to model abstract questions about epistemic blame's connection with the moral and practical domains in very familiar and concrete terms—ones having to do with relationship dynamics. This in turn is interesting because it gives structure to the broader notion that the epistemic domain itself is deeply intertwined with other normative domains. This is of course a familiar idea. Early forms of pragmatism, the literature on practical reasons for belief, and more recently the literature on pragmatic and moral encroachment, all tell us a great deal about (potential) points of interaction between the epistemic and practical domains. I will argue that epistemic blame provides a novel angle, one that is interesting not least because it illuminates an important aspect of this interaction independently of commitments about things like pragmatic or moral encroachment, or whether there are practical reasons for belief.

CIP15   Perhaps most interesting of all, with an adequate understanding of the possibility of epistemic blame in hand, a wide range of new questions come clearly into view—many of which broadly mirror the sorts of questions that moral theorists have been engaging with in increasing detail over the last twenty years or more. The most pressing of these questions concern the *ethics* and *value* of epistemic blame. What are the appropriate targets of epistemic blame? What, if anything, does it take to have the proper *standing* to epistemically blame? What is the purpose and value of our practice of epistemically blaming others? Is it possible that we would be better off abandoning this practice for some other form of responding to one another for epistemic failings? The relationship-based account of epistemic blame can shed useful light on these questions. More specifically, I will be arguing that epistemic relationships can help us achieve the following surprisingly disparate set of goals: set principled limits on appropriate targets of

epistemic blame; explain why some people but not others have the standing to epistemically blame; and explain why our epistemic blaming practice has distinctive value. We will also see that there is much to be done in this new area of social epistemology—including examining the connections between epistemic blame and social power, and using epistemic relationships to illuminate a wide range of epistemic harms, such as testimonial injustice, epistemic exploitation, and gaslighting.

CIP16   Here is the plan of the book. Chapter 1 introduces the very idea of epistemic blame. It motivates the thought that there is a distinct form of epistemic blame. It does so in two ways: first, by arguing that we should *expect* there to be an epistemic kind of blame, in light of considerations about the parallels between ethics and epistemology; second, it does so by explaining the role that the concept of epistemic blame already plays (often implicitly) in a number of central debates in epistemology, including debates about epistemic norms and epistemic justification, doxastic control, and the "authority" of epistemic normativity. Motivating the idea that there is an epistemic kind of blame is intimately connected with the project of accounting for the *nature* of epistemic blame. Successfully accounting for the nature of epistemic blame is first and foremost a matter of solving the puzzle of epistemic blame. The rest of Chapter 1 lays out that puzzle.

CIP17   Laying out the puzzle requires articulating a clear way of understanding just what it means to talk about the "significance" and "fittingness" of a blame response. I propose that the significance of blame has something crucial to do with the *interpersonal* nature of blame, which I in turn cash out in terms of normative expectations. In blaming others, we hold them to normative expectations in a distinctive way, underlining the significance of blame. Regarding fittingness, I propose that a response counts as fitting to a failure in the epistemic domain just in case an epistemic failing can be sufficient to render the response legitimate. That is to say, there must be circumstances under which it can be legitimate to direct the response toward someone for an epistemic failing, as opposed to downstream practical consequences of the epistemic failing. As we'll see, developing this condition requires a fairly in-depth examination of just what it means for an evaluation to be made "independently of practical considerations," and this is something that will come up in various places throughout the book.

CIP18   Chapter 2 examines two ways we might try solving the puzzle of epistemic blame. These are: understanding epistemic blame in terms of a kind of negative emotional response, and understanding it as a characteristic range of dispositions, unified insofar as they are manifestations of a desire that people not "believe badly." I argue that both of these approaches fail, but instructively so. What's common and instructive about their respective failures is that both approaches lean quite heavily in the direction of understanding epistemic blame as having something essential to do with our *relationships* with one another. The problem with these accounts is that they either do not go far enough with this idea, or they

do so in the wrong sort of way. In a word, emotion-based accounts cannot do justice to the requirement of *fittingness,* while desire-based accounts have a hard time with epistemic blame's *significance.*

CIP19   Chapter 3 takes a cue from this observation and develops an account of epistemic blame that appeals directly to relationship modification. The key to successfully doing this is to develop an account of "epistemic relationships." The bulk of the chapter is dedicated to doing so. The chapter develops an account of what modifications to our epistemic relationships consist in, and how this can be understood as a form of blame. The chapter also addresses a number of initial concerns we might have about the relationship-based approach to epistemic blame, setting the stage for an argument that the account successfully resolves the puzzle of epistemic blame.

CIP20   It is worth noting again that the relationship-based framework is controversial as an account of (moral) blame. In the process of developing my epistemic extension of the account, I take it upon myself to defend the framework against a number of challenges it has been presented with in moral philosophy. One of the more significant proposals I make in this regard involves some substantive adjustments to a few key ideas in the Scanlonian account, largely in response to recent worries from Angela Smith (2013) and Eugene Chislenko (2020). To the extent that the basic approach I take to the framework diverges from Scanlon, it should be emphasized that I am not engaged in a project of Scanlon exegesis. Some may find that what I call an "epistemic extension" of the relationship-based framework bares resemblance to Scanlon's original work in fairly superficial respects only. I leave it to the reader to decide for themselves what to make of my interpretation of Scanlon, in addition to whether they consider my revisions to the account a welcome development—though I will of course be doing my best to make the case that they are.

CIP21   Chapter 4 argues that the relationship-based account resolves the puzzle of epistemic blame. The relationship-based account can explain the significance of epistemic blame without invoking practices, behaviors, or attitudes that seem out of place in the epistemic domain. The key to the former claim is arguing that—contrary to proponents of emotion-based approaches to blame—we can account for what it is to hold one another to *normative expectations* without giving a central role to negative emotions. The key to the latter claim is arguing that epistemic relationship modification is something that we can appropriately do "independently of practical considerations." This goes a long way toward demonstrating the relationship-based account's promise in resolving the puzzle of epistemic blame. But it is also important to ensure confidence that the account is well-motivated on independent grounds, and that it is not itself vulnerable to obvious fatal objections. So, the chapter also advertises some further advantages of the account over the alternatives, and responds to the most pressing remaining objections.

CIP22   With the puzzle of epistemic blame resolved, Chapters 5 to 7 turn to new avenues of exploration. The primary foci are a number of issues in the ethics of epistemic blame. The first of these concerns the *scope* of appropriate epistemic blame. People are typically regarded as appropriate targets of epistemic blame for things like dogmatism, wishful thinking, and other forms of biased cognition. Is this really the case, and what other sorts of things might be appropriate targets of epistemic blame? In Chapter 5, I address this question by taking a step back and considering whether dogmatism, wishful thinking, and other forms of biased cognition really can be failings for which people are appropriate targets of epistemic blame. I examine whether doxastic states, acts of inquiry, and assertions can be appropriate targets of epistemic blame, ultimately arriving at the conclusion that they can. Expanding the discussion, I then examine how epistemic blame connects with the growing literature on *testimonial injustice,* and other related epistemic harms. I consider the possibility that another central and important kind of failing for which people can be appropriate targets of epistemic blame is the harm of testimonial injustice. This opens the door to a unified framework for making sense of a wide range of epistemic harms, including testimonial injustice through credibility excess, epistemic exploitation, and gaslighting.

CIP23   In addition to examining who the appropriate *targets* of epistemic blame are, we can also examine who the appropriate epistemic *blamers* are. In Chapter 6, the second issue in the ethics of epistemic blame I explore concerns the "standing" to epistemically blame. My main focus is resolving a seeming tension between the so-called "business condition" on standing to blame, and the fact that it is not immediately obvious in what way a person's typical epistemic failing is the business of anybody else. As will be clear by the time we reach this point in the book, the relationship-based approach is well-suited to make good sense of this apparent tension. But spelling this out carefully requires connecting the relationship-based account to recent work from Sandy Goldberg (2017, 2018) on "practice-based entitlements to expect." The chapter puts structure on a wide range of ways our epistemic blame responses can be differentiated, partly with the help of Goldberg's work on entitlements to expect. Exploring this connection between epistemic relationships and the epistemic expectations involved in other kinds of relationships ends up being a central way the relationship-based account gives concrete shape to epistemic blame's interaction with the moral and practical domains. More specifically, I will argue that the extent to which our epistemic relationships are impacted by intentions and expectations constitutive of other kinds of relationships, is the extent to which epistemic blame interacts with normative domains beyond the epistemic. A key advantage of my approach, we will see, is that it frames this issue in terms of some familiar ideas about how the dynamics of our relationships can change.

CIP24   Finally, Chapter 7 asks the question: should we epistemically blame one another? Might there be other, better ways of responding to one another for

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epistemically blameworthy conduct? The discussion has two main parts. First, I develop a positive defense of the value of epistemic blame, understood as a negatively valanced form of epistemic relationship modification. I focus on *democratic participation* as a case study to highlight one important role for epistemic blame in our social lives. The connection between responsibilities of citizens in a democracy and epistemic blame also generates further support for the relationship-based account of epistemic blame. In the second part of the chapter, I turn my attention to the question of whether negatively valanced relationship modification is the best way to respond to people for epistemic failings. I examine an alternative proposal, namely that *positively* valanced epistemic relationship modification is a better way to respond to epistemic failings. I challenge this proposal on the grounds that, in many circumstances, positively valanced epistemic relationship modification would be paternalistic, inefficacious, and demanding it of epistemic agents will track social and material inequalities in unjust ways.