Canadian Journal of Philosophy (2026), 56: e35, 1–9
doi:10.1017/can.2026.10075

SYMPOSIUM

Wrongs Without Rights?

Anni Aliisa Räty

Department of Philosophy, University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria
Email: anni.raety@univie.ac.at

Abstract
There is a difference between doing something that is wrong and wronging someone in particular. Texting while driving is wrong; injuring a pedestrian because you were texting while driving is a wrong against that particular pedestrian. It has been common to think that wrongs just are violations of the wronged party's rights, but recent arguments suggest otherwise: there can also be wrongs without rights violations. Supposing these arguments are correct, what is it to wrong someone?

Keywords: rights; wrongs; wronging; directed duty; claim rights

1. Doing Wrong and Wronging Someone

There is a difference between doing something that is morally wrong and wronging someone in particular. Texting while driving is wrong. Contributing to the climate disaster through over-consumption is wrong. Refusing to ever help people in need is wrong. But injuring a pedestrian because you were texting while driving, polluting a neighboring farmer's field, or failing to perform an easy rescue of a drowning child constitutes a wrong against a particular individual (Thompson, 2004).

The concept of a wrong is, as Judith Thomson put it, a "two-hat concept": a concept that "attaches two people," so that in every case of wronging there are two parties—the one who wrongs, and the one who is wronged—the victim of the wrong done (Thomson, 1990, p. 62). The concept of a right against another person is also a two-hat concept, and it has been common to maintain that these 2 two-hat concepts are closely connected to one another: to wrong someone just is to violate a right that the victim has against the wrongdoer.[1] Rights and wrongs always go hand in hand.

This long-standing view has recently been challenged by authors who argue that there are also wrongs that are *not* rights violations (Cornell, 2015, 2025; Martin, 2021). Rights and wrongs come apart (Cornell, 2025).

In this article, I will suppose that these challengers of the long-standing view are correct. Their arguments raise a further question: what *are* wrongs, if not just rights violations? Here, I offer an account of what it is to wrong someone that accommodates wrongs that are, and wrongs that are not, violations of someone's rights.

[1]More precisely, as we will see below: that to wrong someone just is to violate the wronged party's *claim rights* (sect. 3). Cornell (2015, pp. 111–112) cites a number of proponents ranging from G.E.M. Anscombe to Jeremy Bentham.

© The Author(s), 2026. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Canadian Journal of Philosophy, Inc. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution licence (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0), which permits unrestricted re-use, distribution and reproduction, provided the original article is properly cited.

https://doi.org/10.1017/can.2026.10075 Published online by Cambridge University Press

2. The Stakes

Before we proceed, let me explain what is at stake in accepting or rejecting the idea that wrongs and rights go hand in hand and in answering the question of what wrongs are, if not just rights violations.

First and most importantly, accepting or rejecting this idea makes a practical (moral) difference. A wrong is suffered by *someone*—the victim of the wrong—and victims of wrongs are standardly owed amends (remedies) for the wrongs they have suffered: compensation, apology, expressions of remorse, and the like, as is appropriate to the case.[2] If wrongs and rights in fact come apart but our interpersonal and institutional practices for making amends embody the assumption that they go hand in hand, then some victims may be denied amends that they are entitled to (Cornell, 2015, 141–143).

Accepting or rejecting the idea also makes a difference in theory. Many writers who endorse the idea do so largely (or entirely) for terminological reasons, and some of them acknowledge that the choice to do so leaves out something of interest. For example, Judith Thomson writes:

> I will use "Y wronged X" and "Y did X a wrong" only where Y violated a claim of X's. So on my use of these locutions, they entail that Y acted wrongly; but they entail more than just that Y acted wrongly—they entail that Y wrongly infringed a claim of X's. I think in fact that this use of these locutions is rather stricter than our ordinary use of them. If I break your nose for no good reason, then I surely wrong you and do you a wrong; so far so good, that would be my violating a claim of yours. But what if I think you killed Cock Robin, when as things turn out you did not? I think we might in the ordinary way say I wronged you and did you a wrong, though it can hardly be thought that my merely harboring that thought was my violating a claim of yours. (Thomson, 1990, 122)

Thomson's task in the context of this passage was to investigate what rights are, so the choice to restrict our ordinary way of talking makes sense. Insofar as we want to investigate what wrongs are, it would be a mistake to limit our attention to rights-violation alone. That would leave out something significant to our inquiry: wrongs without rights, like the wrong that I commit against you when I think you killed Cock Robin, when in fact you did not.[3]

More of what is at stake in theorizing wrongs without rights, in practice and in theory, will come to light by considering some of the ways in which the two have been said to come apart. In the following section, I will introduce some of the kinds of wrongs that plausibly occur without rights violation; an account of what it is to wrong someone should accommodate these cases and explain what these wrongs have in common with wrongs that are violations of the victim's rights.

3. Wrongs and Rights Come Apart

A second long-standing idea about rights is that rights correlate with duties that are owed to the right holder or directed duties.[4] But—contrary to that long-standing idea—some directed duties do

[2]We would not ordinarily use the word "victim" in every case where it would be natural to say that someone has been wronged, e.g., in cases of ingratitude (sect. 3). We sometimes use the word in cases where no wrong is committed, as in "victims of a natural disaster." By "victim" in what follows I simply mean the wronged party; I focus here only on the primary victims of a wrong in the sense of Govier and Verwoerd (2002).

[3]The example is not uncontroversial. Many argue that we can wrong particular others by thinking about them, or by orienting our thoughts toward them, in certain ways (Basu 2019; Basu & Schroeder, 2018; Cornell, 2025; Morris, 1971; Owens, 2012). Others disagree (Begby, 2018; Enoch and Spectre (forthcoming)). Given the controversy, I will set aside these kinds of wrongs in what follows. The account of wrongs I defend here is also applicable to wrongs of this kind.

[4]Wesley Hohfeld familiarly analyzed the notion of a claim right, or a right "in the strictest sense," as equivalent to a duty to the right holder (Hohfeld, 1913). The idea I have in mind here is broader than the Hohfeldian thesis about correlativity of claims and duties-to. Many familiar rights (e.g., property rights, the right to privacy, the right to life) are what Thomson (1990) called

https://doi.org/10.1017/can.2026.10075 Published online by Cambridge University Press

not correlate with rights. So one way in which wrongs and rights can come apart is as follows: a wrongdoer violates a duty that is directed but does not correlate with a right.

Duties of this kind often arise in the context of close personal relationships (Martin, 2021). Friendship, partnership, and family relations give rise to legitimate expectations in the parties to each other's care, emotional investment, attention, and support. When we fail to act in ways that our loved ones can legitimately expect us to act, we sometimes wrong them.[5]

Imagine, for example, that a close friend of yours has experienced a difficult breakup. She is now in need of emotional support from someone who knows and understands her, and whose guidance she can trust. You are well-positioned and able to provide such support to your friend. But you choose not to do so, for no good reason. Maybe you think that the lost relationship is not worth crying over, or maybe you just want to do something that is more fun.

We would ordinarily say that you have wronged your friend in this case by failing to support her and by ignoring her needs. We owe our friends these kinds of things, and we wrong them when we fail to live up to what our friendship requires of us. Of course, close personal relationships sometimes give rise to duties that do correlate with rights: children have certain rights against their caregivers, spouses have certain rights against one another, and so on. But not all duties that arise in the context of such relationships are matters of right. We would not ordinarily say that your friend has a right to your giving her your attention and advice, or that she has a right to your emotional support.

Duties of gratitude have a similar structure: gratitude is something that we owe to a particular other —the benefactor—but gratitude is not owed as a matter of right.[6] And ingratitude is not merely wrong, but a wrong against the benefactor to whom one owes one's gratitude (Manela, 2015).

We might wonder why the language of rights seems inappropriate to describe the sense in which gratitude is owed and the sense in which we owe care, attention, and emotional investment to our loved ones. One plausible idea has to do with the role that rights have in regulating the conduct of third parties. If Sandra is about to do something that would violate Susan's rights—say, steal Susan's car—then third parties who are in a position to protect Susan against that rights violation (by means that are permissible, proportionate, and so on) have reason to do so. Susan's right against Sandra can justify interfering with Sandra's actions in ways that would otherwise be impermissible (Hart, 1955). In some sense, our rights against others are the business of the moral community at large.

By contrast, duties of gratitude and duties that arise from our close personal relationships are typically *not* the business of unrelated third parties (Martin, 2021). A stranger who overhears you talking about how much you do not want to listen to your friend after their breakup would be overstepping their boundaries if they intervened by, say, urging you to do so. Citing the fact that you owe it to her as a friend would not justify meddling in what is not their business.

4. Wrongs and Directed Duties Come Apart

Based on what I have said so far, we might think that to wrong someone just is to violate a directed duty. That idea is plausible, but it is complicated by cases where wrongs appear to come apart from both rights and directed duties. In one kind of case discussed at length by Nicolas Cornell (2015,

"cluster rights": rights that can be understood as various Hohfeldian relations "clustered" together by the fact that they all protect some common thing or value (e.g., property, privacy, life) (Thomson, 1990, 55, 285). What I have in mind is the idea that rights of this kind—rights in a not-so-strict sense—correlate with duties that are owed to the right holder.

[5]Martin (2021) argues that personal relationships give rise to "personal bonds," which are directed duties that do not correlate with rights. Martin reserves the term "wrongs" for rights violations for terminological reasons, but what I am suggesting here is essentially that violations of personal bonds can constitute wrongs.

[6]Many philosophers maintain that duties of gratitude are *imperfect duties*, and that it is a characteristic feature of such duties that they do not correlate with rights. Since it has been common to think that to wrong someone just is to violate their rights, some have been puzzled as to how it is possible to wrong a benefactor by ingratitude, or how failures of beneficence can wrong particular others (Korsgaard, 2018; Manela, 2015).

https://doi.org/10.1017/can.2026.10075 Published online by Cambridge University Press

2025) a wrong is suffered by a third party whose rights are not violated, and who has no directed duty against the wrongdoer.

Suppose a drunk driver tragically causes a severe injury to a small child. The child's parents, it seems clear, are wronged. The driver violates the child's right, but it is not obvious that the driver violates any right of the parents. So the parents suffer a wrong without a violation of their rights.

It is also not obvious that the driver violates any directed duty that he owes to the parents in particular. He does, of course, violate his duty not to drive while drunk. But that duty is not owed to any particular person: the driver would have violated that duty even if no one was harmed as a result of his drunk driving. So the parents suffer a wrong that is not a violation of their rights and is also not a violation of a directed duty that the driver owes to them.

Now, intuitions about the case (and its variants) may (and do) differ.[7] But when understood as I have described it here, the case illustrates a central difference between wrongs and rights (and their correlative duties). As Cornell puts it,

> wrongs, at their core, describe a kind of relationship that exists ex post and makes fitting a kind of moral repair. They are what we resent, apologize for, make reparations for, forgive, and so on. (Cornell, 2025, 214)

Whereas rights describe a kind of relationship that can be invoked to constrain the actions of another "ex ante." Rights are what we can enforce, claim from, and assert against one another.

Another case that is likely to elicit diverging responses, but provides an even starker illustration of essentially the same point, is Bernard Williams's unlucky lorry driver who—without any wrongdoing and without being neglectful or reckless—causes severe injury to a small child (Williams, 1981).[8]

The lorry driver does not violate a right or a duty owed to the child or the parents. That is to say, there is no relationship that could be invoked ex ante to constrain his actions, or to show that the decision he made was unjustified. But, as Williams tells us, it would be appropriate for him to (agent-)regret over that decision and the outcome of his actions (ibid. 27). And an appropriate expression of that regret would be for the driver to "act in some way which he hopes will constitute or at least symbolise some kind of recompense or restitution" (ibid. 28). Failure to feel any regret and refusal to express it in appropriate ways would be an added insult against the injured child. So the case involves an ex post relationship that makes moral repair at the very least fitting, if not required. It involves a wrong without rights, and without directed duty.

Is there any reason to think that the lorry driver does *not* wrong the child? We might think that since the driver's decision to drive was justified ex ante, he did nothing wrong. And on certain views of moral obligation, wronging a particular other always entails that what the wrongdoer did was wrong, *period.* Stephen Darwall writes:

> If X is under a moral obligation to Y to do A, then X is, other things equal at least, under a moral obligation period to do A. Actions that wrong someone (violate a bipolar obligation) are also wrong period, all else being equal, at least. (Darwall, 2013, 24)

Since the lorry driver does nothing wrong *period*, this view of obligation entails that he also does not wrong the child who is injured.

But this way of thinking about the relation between directed (bipolar) duties and moral obligation *period* does not sit well with some of the less controversial cases of wrongs without rights. Recall the friend who needs your emotional support. Suppose that instead of helping her, you

[7]For further discussion and a different take on the case, see Wallace (2019).

[8]The illustration is starker because the drunk driver case does involve an "ex ante" relation of a different kind between the driver and the parents: the general duty to not drive drunk. The case of the lorry driver does not.

https://doi.org/10.1017/can.2026.10075 Published online by Cambridge University Press

spend your day leisurely at the beach with your partner. If doing this is not only a wrong against your friend but wrong *period*, then at least some third parties should be in a position to rebuke you for choosing to prioritize leisure time with your partner. At least some third parties should be able to urge you to do otherwise and blame you for not helping the friend. At least some third parties should have, as Darwall calls it, "representative authority" to hold you accountable on behalf of the moral community (Darwall, 2013, 2006). But whether you provide emotional support to your friend or not is not the business of the moral community: it is between you and her.

The possibility of wrongs without rights, then, puts pressure on the idea that something that wrongs another is also always wrong, *period.* And since the case of the lorry driver does involve an ex post relationship that makes moral repair fitting, I will assume in what follows that the driver does wrong the child who is injured. The child is a victim of the lorry driver's misfortune—a victim of something the driver could not foresee when making his decision to drive, of course, but a victim nonetheless.[9]

5. What it is to Wrong Someone

The various cases encountered so far all involve wrongs against particular others. To understand what it is to wrong someone, we should ask what these cases have in common. Very simply put, I think what the cases have in common is that they involve a victim—someone who stands to be wronged by another's behavior.[10] In this section, I will propose an account of the conditions in virtue of which someone can stand to be wronged by another's behavior. In a nutshell, there are two such conditions: a duty (or duties) in the wrongdoer to right the wrong against the victim, and the victim's prerogative to determine when the wrong against them has been righted. Let us consider each element in turn.

Consider again the thought that "wrongs, at their core, describe a kind of relationship that exists ex post and makes fitting a kind of moral repair" (Cornell, 2025, p. 214). The fact that wrongs call for a response from the wrongdoer seems essential to what they are. The response that wrongs call for is moral repair: familiar, formal, or informal reparative actions and reactions like apology, compensation, confession, feelings and expressions of remorse, explanations, and the like.

Reparative responses are standardly owed to the victim who has suffered a wrong. But there are exceptions: for example, an apology for a wrong against one person can also be due to that person's family or to their community (Radzik, 2004). So standing to be wronged is not simply a matter of being owed some form of moral repair. But the fact that moral repair is owed at all, and that reparative actions are owed to particular others on account of what the wrongdoer has done to the victim, seems essential to what it is to wrong someone. That is to say, the standing to be wronged consists in part of a relation between the wrongdoer and the victim that entitles the victim to moral repair from the wrongdoer. Let us call this element the wrongdoer's accountability for amends.

The second element is a relation that distinguishes the victim of a wrong from third parties, including third parties to whom reparative actions are owed. What distinguishes the victim from such third parties is a prerogative that the victim has to make a determination as to which amends are owed on account of the wrong they have suffered, and which amends would constitute adequate repair for the wrong they have suffered (within limits—I'll come to this in a moment). Call this element the victim's prerogative over amends.

These two elements are present in each of the cases of wronging that we have encountered thus far. In each, the wrongdoer is accountable for righting the wrong that the victim has suffered; by

[9]Cornell (2015) discusses a case of unforeseeable wronging which involves a third party who overhears a lie told to someone else, and who then suffers adverse consequences as a result (121–122).

[10]For the time being, I will set aside the question of *who* can stand to be wronged by another's behavior (as Michael Thompson put it, "What makes [someone] not just *raw materials for wrongdoing*, but *someone whom someone might 'wrong'*, in one sense or other?" (2004, 352)). I will briefly return to it below.

https://doi.org/10.1017/can.2026.10075 Published online by Cambridge University Press

apology, compensation, expressions of remorse, and so on, as is appropriate in the circumstances. And in each case, the victim of the wrong done plays a distinctive role in determining what kind of moral repair would be appropriate in the circumstances.

5.1. The victim's prerogative

To get a clearer sense of what that role is, and why I consider it a kind of prerogative, consider again the wrong that you commit against your friend when you fail to attend to her at a time of need. What you owe to your friend in the aftermath of that wrong is not something that you could know in advance (Cornell, 2025).[11] What actually happens to your friend—for example, the extent of the harm that she suffers as a result of your failure, and more generally her experience of the events—makes a crucial difference to what you have *done to her* (ibid. 102).[12] Since the appropriate reparative responses for a wrong need to be responsive to what you have in fact done, what reparative responses are appropriate can only be appreciated in light of how things unfold.[13]

For this reason, it is important for wrongdoers (and other involved third parties) to defer to victims' testimony about their experience of a wrong: victims are owed deference to their testimony (Cornell, 2025, 110). But that is not all they are owed. I think that the deference owed to a victim is not merely epistemic; it is also practical. As I say, victims have a prerogative to determine by their choice which reparative responses are appropriate for a wrong done to them.

That prerogative is in play when we release others from their duties to amend wrongs done against ourselves—when we say things like "There is no need for you to apologise," or "You don't owe me anything" to those who have done us a wrong.[14] It is also in play when we negotiate how to go on as friends, partners, or loved ones after a wrong has been done in the context of a close personal relationship, and that wrong makes it impossible (or unfeasible) to simply continue relating as we did before. A partner who cheats, for example, does not merely owe epistemic deference to the other's testimony about the injury that they experience. They also owe deference to the other's choice about how they wish to relate going forward, and how the relationship can be restored—if restoration is what the other wants.

There are limits to the victim's prerogative, of course. The betrayed friend cannot make it the case that you owe her a first-class flight to Dubai. Like any moral or interpersonal entitlement, the victim's prerogative is constrained by what is reasonable, fair, proportionate, and consistent with the rights and interests of others. Just like we are not owed *complete and unconditional* deference to a victim's testimony about their experience, we are not owed *complete and unconditional* deference to their choice regarding what amends would constitute adequate repair for the wrong done.[15]

For many wrongs, the facts of what happened and the constraints on what can be demanded by way of repair do not determine a specific response that is now owed to the victim. Once you know that your friend has been hurt by your failure to attend to them, and that they have not forgiven you for what you did, and that demanding certain kinds of repair (e.g., material compensation) would *not* be appropriate, there remains an open question about what you now ought to do for her. This is

[11]The thought that what reparative responses are appropriate in response to a wrong cannot be known "ex ante" motivates one argument for the claim that wrongs and rights come apart in Cornell (2025); see chapter 4, especially pp. 100 ff.

[12]See Cornell (2025, 100–108) for a series of illustrative examples of how other features (e.g., the magnitude of harm caused) factor into the nature and extent of a wrong done.

[13]As Cornell notes (2025, 103), it follows that what wrongs one commits is to a significant extent a matter of moral luck (as suggested by the case of the lorry driver).

[14]For a discussion of why *forgiveness* is the victim's prerogative, and how the primary victim's prerogative to forgive interacts with the standing of secondary or tertiary victims, see Govier and Verwoerd (2002). For a dissenting view, see Chaplin (2019).

[15]Cornell objects to the idea of the victim's prerogative over amends, arguing that it "opens the door to opportunism and abuse" (Cornell, 2025, 109). I take it that the constraints mentioned here would rule out demands that are opportunistic and abusive. There are plausibly further norms that govern the *manner* in which a victim should exercise their prerogative (e.g., that they should not do it in a way that is demeaning, belittling, or disrespectful).

https://doi.org/10.1017/can.2026.10075 Published online by Cambridge University Press

where the victim of your wrong may determine what you ought to do to repair the wrong you have done. As mentioned, your friend could exercise her prerogative by saying that you owe her nothing at all. Or she could tell you that what she needs is some space to herself. Or that she needs you to promise that you will do better in the future. The authority she thereby exercises is not merely epistemic; her authority is practical.

Notice that if your friend tells you that you owe her nothing at all, it would be inappropriate for third parties to continue blaming you, or urge you to apologize or explain yourself to her, contrary to your friend's wishes. The victim's exercise of their prerogative constrains what third parties can hold the wrongdoer accountable for (Priest, 2016).[16] So we can distinguish between involved third parties and the primary victim of a wrong by asking who possesses the prerogative to determine what amends are due to any of the affected party or parties.

Notice also that if the victim's authority with respect to moral repair were merely epistemic, then it could be shared by third parties who are equally well—or better!—positioned to know the facts of the case. On the account that Cornell proposes, there is no particular reason for a wrongdoer to defer to the *victim's* testimony; what they should defer to is the testimony of *whoever* is best positioned to know the facts of the case.

5.2. A worry about the victim's prerogative

Standing to be wronged, I have suggested, consists of two relations between the wrongdoer and the victim: a relation which entitles the victim to seek amends from the wrongdoer, and a relation that amounts to the victim having a prerogative to determine which amends are owed, or would constitute adequate repair for the wrong that they themselves have suffered.

Before moving on to some upshots of this view, let me address a worry about the victim's prerogative over amends. The prerogative in question is essentially a normative power to amend what a wrongdoer is obligated to do by way of repair. If possessing a normative power of some kind is necessary for the standing to be wronged, then it may seem that some parties who clearly can be wronged are excluded from the standing to be wronged—for example, victims who have perished, who are children, or who have lost the capacity to exercise any normative powers.

The worry is well motivated, but can be addressed by highlighting two points. First, we should note that there is a difference between having a prerogative and being in a position to act on it (or possessing a normative power and being in a position to exercise it). It makes sense to say, for example, that the victim of a wrong has a prerogative to forgive, even though they are not in a position to do so due to incompetence, immaturity, or lack of opportunity to communicate with the wrongdoer. Victims who, for reasons of immaturity or incompetence, cannot exercise their prerogative are not excluded from possessing it and are therefore not excluded from standing to be wronged.

Second, it is commonplace that normative powers can be delegated to others when the agent who possesses the power is not in a position to exercise it. Such delegating can be done deliberately, by agreement, or it may occur as a matter of course, by convention. Consider, for example, the transfer of a patient's power to give medical consent; this can occur by deliberate agreement between the patient and another person, or by convention, as when a patient's next of kin becomes authorized to consent on behalf of a patient who is not competent to do so herself. The same is true of the victim's prerogative over amends. For example, the prerogatives of deceased victims may be delegated to family or loved ones, who are then bound to act as a proxy for the victim and execute the victim's will in their stead.

[16]Priest (2016) goes on to argue that there may be a more detached blame-like attitude which she calls "spectator blame," which is not blame on behalf of the particular victim, and is not similarly made inapt by a victim's forgiveness. See also Snedegar (2025) on when warranted blame becomes "meddlesome."

https://doi.org/10.1017/can.2026.10075 Published online by Cambridge University Press

6. Remaining Questions

To recap, I have proposed that what the various cases of wrongs against a particular other have in common is just this: that they all involve someone who stands to be wronged by someone else's behavior. The standing to be wronged consists of two elements: the wrongdoer's accountability for amends, and the victim's prerogative over those amends. What it is to wrong someone is to behave in a way that makes one accountable to a particular other for amending the wrong, where that particular other has a prerogative to determine which amends are owed, and which amends would be adequate.

The next questions we should ask are, first, what explains *why* someone stands to be wronged by another's behavior, and second, *who* can be wronged.

Beyond addressing the objection that the account excludes some parties who clearly can be wronged, I have not attempted to answer these questions here. But my answer to the question of *what* it is to wrong someone does offer a starting point for thinking about who can be wronged, and it may lead us to discover that certain cases of apparent wrongdoing are in fact wrongs against particular others. Recall the contrast I made at the outset between wronging your neighboring farmer by polluting their field, and doing wrong by contributing to the climate catastrophe through overconsumption. This description of the two cases suggests that only the former is a wrong against a particular other. But for all that has been said so far, there may be someone, or some group of individuals, who do stand to be wronged in the latter case also.

One initial answer to the first question—*why* does a particular person (or group) stand to be wronged—might be that there is no single answer. What has been said so far tells us that someone can stand to be wronged by another's doing thus-and-so in virtue of the fact that she has a right that the other not do thus-and-so; or in virtue of the fact that she is owed a duty by the other that they not do thus-and-so; or simply in virtue of the fact that the other's doing thus-and-so calls for moral repair. It remains to be seen whether these scenarios have something in common beyond the fact that they each involve standing to be wronged.

Acknowledgments. Thanks to audiences at MIT and the University of Toronto for helpful discussion and feedback on earlier versions of this article. Special thanks to James Lewis for written comments on the work, and to Rahul Kumar and Jonas Vandieken for editing the special issue on Relational Ethics and for organizing the workshop where I presented the main ideas of this article.

Funding statement. This research was funded in part by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) [10.55776/COE3].

Anni A. Räty is a University Assistant in Philosophy at the University of Vienna and a member of the Knowledge in Crisis FWF Cluster of Excellence. Their current research is focused on the nature of rights, relational duties, and normative powers.

References

Basu, R. (2019). The wrongs of racist beliefs. *Philosophical Studies*, 176(9), 2497–2515. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-018-1137-0

Basu, R., & Schroeder, M. (2018). Doxastic wronging. In B. Kim & M. McGrath (Eds.), *Pragmatic encroachment in epistemology* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315168197-11

Begby, E. (2018). Doxastic morality. *Philosophical Topics*, 46(1), 155–172. https://doi.org/10.5840/philtopics20184619

Chaplin, R. (2019). Taking it personally: Third-party forgiveness, close relationships, and the standing to forgive. In M. Timmons (Ed.), *Oxford studies in normative ethics volume 9*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198846253.003.0004

Cornell, N. (2015). Wrongs, rights, and third parties. *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 43(2), 109–143. https://doi.org/10.1111/papa.12054

Cornell, N. (2025). *Wrongs and rights come apart*. Harvard University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.21275861

Darwall, S. (2013). *Morality, authority, and law*. Oxford University Press UK. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199662586.001.0001

Darwall, S. (2006). *The Second-Person Standpoint: Morality, Respect, and Accountability*. Harvard University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1bzfp0f

https://doi.org/10.1017/can.2026.10075 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Enoch, D., & Spectre, L. (forthcoming). There is no such thing as doxastic wrongdoing. *Nous-Supplement: Philosophical Perspectives*. https://philpapers.org/rec/ENOTIN

Govier, T., & Verwoerd, W. (2002). Forgiveness: The victim's prerogative. *South African Journal of Philosophy*, 21(2), 97–111. https://doi.org/10.4314/sajpem.v21i2.31338

Hart, H. L. A. (1955). Are there any natural rights? *The Philosophical Review*, 64(2), 175–191. https://doi.org/10.2307/2182586

Hohfeld, W. N. (1913). Some fundamental legal conceptions as applied in judicial reasoning. *The Yale Law Journal*, 23(1), 16–59. https://doi.org/10.2307/785533

Korsgaard, C. M. (2018). The claims of animals and the needs of strangers: Two cases of imperfect right. *Journal of Practical Ethics*, 6(1), 19–51.

Manela, T. (2015). Obligations of gratitude and correlative rights. In M. Timmons (Ed.), *Oxford studies in normative ethics* (Vol. 5). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198744665.003.0008

Martin, A. M. (2021). Personal bonds: Directed obligations without rights. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 102(1), 65–86. https://doi.org/10.1111/phpr.12620

Morris, H. (1971). Guilt and suffering. *Philosophy East and West*, 21(4), 419–434. https://doi.org/10.2307/1398170

Owens, D. (2012). *Shaping the normative landscape*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199691500.001.0001

Priest, M. (2016). Blame after forgiveness. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 19(3), 619–633. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10677-015-9669-2

Radzik, L. (2004). Making amends. *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 41(2), 141–154.

Snedegar, J. (2025). Meddlesome blame and negotiating standing. *Noûs*, 59(2), 495–516. https://doi.org/10.1111/nous.12521

Thompson, M. 2004.What is it to wrong someone? A puzzle about justice. In R. J. Wallace, P. Pettit, S. Scheffler, & M. Smith. (Eds), *Reason and value*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780199261888.003.0014

Thomson, J. J. (1990). *The realm of rights*. Harvard University Press.

Wallace, R. J. (2019). *The moral nexus*. Princeton University Press. https://doi.org/10.23943/princeton/9780691172170.001.0001

Williams, B. (1981). Moral luck. In *Moral luck: Philosophical papers 1973–1980*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781139165860.003

Cite this article: Räty, A. A. 2026. Wrongs Without Rights? *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 56: e35, 1–9, doi:10.1017/can.2026.10075

https://doi.org/10.1017/can.2026.10075 Published online by Cambridge University Press