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ist story of the transition from an undifferentiated glob of nonpresence to a world of presence and differentiation tracks in striking ways the story of male development told over the last thirty years by some feminist psychologists: the boy child individuates himself by differentiating his own sex and his own being from that of his primary caregiver (his mother), from whom he is, at birth, undifferentiated. The girl child, by contrast, does not go through this process of individuation through differentiation, and in fact as she individuates herself, she understands her sex and being as similar to or the same as, rather than different from, her caregiver's (Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978]). If there's anything to this account, it is surely a difference that matters. One thing it might suggest, among much else, is that the core, animating deconstructionist insight—that presence is a function of difference (and vice versa)—is itself gendered, and hence considerably less metaphysical, and more mundane and political, than it has heretofore been taken to be.

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Lamb, Sharon. *The Trouble with Blame: Victims, Perpetrators, and Responsibility*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995. Pp. 231. \$22.95 (cloth).

Sharon Lamb is an academic and clinical psychologist whose impressive book *The Trouble with Blame* will be invaluable to philosophers. Lamb engages the politically charged topic of victimization in the context of sexual abuse, domestic physical abuse, and rape (including date rape). She brings together an extraordinary amount of empirical and theoretical material on these matters. At the same time, Lamb's own argument is extremely interesting in its own right, and is set in an overall context informed by philosophical writers on these topics (such as Dennett, Kekes, Hampton, Jeffrie Murphy, Robert Adams). Finally, *The Trouble with Blame* is exceptionally well written and free of jargon.

Lamb thinks that victims', perpetrators', and therapists' views of blame and responsibility, especially with regard to the above-mentioned gender-related crimes, are askew. Victims tend to blame themselves too much for their victimization. Perpetrators blame themselves too little. Therapists blame victims too little. Lamb attempts to steer a path between these errors and, more generally, wishes to preserve space for human agency, on the part of both victims and perpetrators, while acknowledging the social and psychic forces that constrain and shape the exercise of that agency.

Lamb credits the feminist movement with injecting into the larger culture an understanding of the plight of sexual and domestic abuse victims, so that the "blame the victim" approach is no longer so prevalent. Nevertheless, she argues in chapter 2 ("Victims"), some advocates for women have gone too far in the other direction with the result of totally discrediting the voices of women who were victimized but who feel some responsibility resting on their own shoulders for its having happened. Lamb lays out an array of distinct theories purporting to explain why women tend to blame themselves for their being

abused, beaten, raped—warding off loss of loved one; attempt to maintain control by positing a just world; women being socialized to take responsibility for men's emotions and actions; and others. Lamb does not discuss these views with an eye to assessing each one individually. She is critical of all, however, for their tendency to claim a totalistic, deterministic explanation of the victim's behavior. Lamb acknowledges that these theories do articulate plausible candidates for forces operating on victims, and she adds an insightful account of ways that male perpetrators undermine their partners' ability to stay in full control of their mental faculties (as well as economic and social constraints on women leaving their battering partners). However, Lamb wants to emphasize, most victims' agency is never fully undermined; they retain some responsibility, very few are reduced to absolute passivity.

One reason Lamb is leery of deterministic explanations in the case of victims is that the same outlook readily serves to let perpetrators off the hook for their actions. If the sexual abuser turns out to have been brutalized and unloved in his own family, then how can we hold him responsible for the brutality he visits upon his own victim?

In a later chapter on "Perpetrators," Lamb methodically examines excusing conditions cited by perpetrators—"sex addiction," influence of alcohol, uncontrollable anger (provoked by partner). She demolishes the second (widely accepted in our culture, Lamb shows, as a valid excuse or mitigation, e.g., for date rape or battering) by citing an elegant study finding that a group of men who believed that they had consumed alcohol but had not acted more aggressively than a comparable group that had consumed alcohol but believed they hadn't.

Lamb discusses "backlash" movements against the acknowledgment of female victimization—alleged hysteria about, or wildly inflated accusations of, sexual abuse of children (Richard Gardner) and date rape (Katie Roiphe). She scores good points against all these views. For example, against the False Memory Syndrome Foundation's attacks on repressed memory of childhood sexual abuse, Lamb cites a study of women who seventeen years earlier had come in for treatment for sexual abuse; 38 percent no longer remembered having been abused. Yet Lamb shares with some backlashers a desire to jettison the image of the totally passive and innocent victim.

Lamb also takes on the too-familiar link between engaging in sexual abuse (e.g., of one's children) and having been sexually or physically abused as a child. Looking at the studies on this matter, Lamb makes the useful point that whether or not the correlation is high in that direction, the much more relevant comparison is the percentage of abused who become abusers; and there the correlation is much lower. However, no matter what the correlation in either direction, Lamb wants to insist on the perpetrator's moral responsibility for his actions.

While Lamb clearly recognizes differences in severity between different sorts of victimizing acts, when it comes to theorizing about the conditions under which we should hold people responsible for their actions, she does not clearly distinguish that variable from an independent one: the degree to which people are constrained by social forces outside their control. A brutal rapist may rightly be held responsible despite an appalling background that might, in a different case of a less severe crime, count as sufficiently mitigating

that we do not hold that person responsible. Similarly, with regard to the same crime, different backgrounds might provide different degrees of mitigation.

Other topics thoughtfully addressed in *The Trouble with Blame* are cultural pressures on victims and their supporters to portray victims as absolute innocents and to portray their victimization as always having devastating consequences on their lives; forgiveness and absolution; punishment, repentance, and reparation to victims; media portrayal of abuse as a "condition" without agents who bring it about; children's moral development, especially with regard to shame and the making of excuses; and several different kinds of gender socialization effects contributing to men's victimization of women.

Lamb wants perpetrators to be held fully morally blameworthy for their crimes and, rightly, wishes victims' acknowledgment of their own agency and responsibility for their victimization not to be seen as detracting from perpetrator blame. She notes a "zero-sum" or quantitative conception of responsibility—if victims are partly responsible, then perpetrators must be not fully responsible—as clouding our thinking on this point, though she herself sometimes lapses into language suggesting this same conceptual error. That Lamb does not present a genuine and full alternative picture of victim and perpetrator responsibility to this quasi-quantitative one is not a deficiency, but a sign of the important questions and tasks for future exploration that her book suggests.

With regard to the book's title and guiding theme, I thought Lamb failed sufficiently to distinguish "blaming" as (1) an attitude toward someone in which one regards him as having been responsible for perpetrating an evil and as (2) an activity, of expressing blame in sense (1) to the perpetrator. Arguments about effectiveness in getting perpetrators to acknowledge their actions apply only to (2) and not to (1), while general considerations about free will, determinism, and responsibility apply directly to (1) and much less centrally to (2).

Lamb stakes out a very subtle and nuanced feminist position on the concrete issues of sexual victimization, as well as on the more philosophical terrain of free will and determinism. Philosophers, and anyone interested in either of these two sorts of concerns, would do well to avail themselves of the riches of *The Trouble with Blame*. Would that more philosophers and psychologists were so engaged with one another's disciplines.

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Cohen, Carl. *Naked Racial Preference: The Case against Affirmative Action*. Lanham, Md.: Madison Books, 1996. Pp. 242. \$21.95 (cloth).

Carl Cohen's *Naked Racial Preference: The Case against Affirmative Action* is a philosophically and constitutionally passionate attack upon the institutionalized racial preference that is exemplified by race-based admission and hiring policies and race-based set-asides. (Here "race" and its cognates are to be understood broadly so as to include race, nationality, ethnicity, and I presume