

“The Weight of Expectations”

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Abstract

Our parents, more so than our friends or close partners, have a special ability to hurt us. As Waverly notes in *The Joy Luck Club*, our mothers know “how to hit a nerve. And the pain [we] feel is worse than any other kind of misery.” The feeling of being burdened by our parents’ beliefs and expectations is a familiar feeling. But how exactly do the expectations our parents place upon us *wrong* us? In this paper I attempt to make sense of this feeling of being wronged by exploring the ways in which expectations can reflect a conflict of values, constrain one’s freedoms and infringe upon our agency, and how expectations can result in a kind of *ontological denial*. My hope is that reflecting on one of our most important relationships we can better understand how our relationships shape our attitudinal and doxastic obligations to one another more generally.