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PASSIONS AND EMOTIONS

Edited by

James E. Fleming



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PREFACE

This volume of *NOMOS*—the fifty-third in the series—emerged from papers and commentaries given at the annual meeting of the American Society for Political and Legal Philosophy (ASPLP) in Boston on December 29, 2010, held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division. Our topic, “Passions and Emotions,” was selected by the Society’s membership.

The conference consisted of three panels, corresponding to the three parts of this volume: (1) “Passion and Impartiality: Passions and Emotions in Moral Judgment”; (2) “Passion and Motivation: Passions and Emotions in Democratic Politics”; and (3) “Passion and Dispassion: Passions and Emotions in Legal Interpretation.” The volume includes revised versions of the principal papers delivered at that conference by Jesse J. Prinz, George E. Marcus, and Robin West. It also includes essays that developed out of the original commentaries on those papers by Michael L. Frazer, Carol Sanger, Susan A. Bandes, Cheshire Calhoun, Ken I. Kersch, and Benjamin C. Zipursky. For the published volume, I invited an additional author for each panel: Charles Griswold, Sharon R. Krause, and Bernadette Meyler. I am grateful to all of these authors for their insightful and timely contributions.

Thanks are also due to the editors and production team at New York University Press, and particularly to Ilene Kalish, Despina Papazoglou Gimbel, Alexia Traganas, and Aiden Amos. On my own behalf and on behalf of the Society, I wish to express deep gratitude for the Press’s ongoing support for the series and the tradition of interdisciplinary scholarship that it represents.

Finally, thanks to Christine Dieter, Courtney Sartor Gesualdi, Natalie Logan, and Emily Strauss, my excellent research assistants at Boston University, and to Danielle Amber Papa, my incredibly

capable, expeditious, and resourceful secretary, for providing invaluable assistance during the editorial and production phases of the volume.

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Boston, October 2011

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PART I

PASSION AND IMPARTIALITY:
PASSIONS AND EMOTIONS IN
MORAL JUDGMENT

114. *Azanian Peoples Organization (AZAPO) v. President of the Republic of South Africa* (CCT17/96) [1996] ZACC 16; 1996 (8) BCLR 1015 [CC]; 1996 (4) SA 672 [CC] (25 July 1996).

115. *Ibid.*

116. See Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Knopf, 2008).

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THE NATURE AND ETHICS OF VENGEFUL ANGER

CHARLES L. GRISWOLD

For this is your truth: you are too *pure* for the filth of the words:
revenge, punishment, reward, retribution.

—Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*¹

Vengeful anger is the stuff of countless works of literature and art both great and small. Homer's *Iliad*, one of the founding works of Western literature, begins with a particular word for anger (*ménis*) and is in some sense about anger and its epic consequences.² Myriad representations of vengefulness also pervade contemporary film, as we see in movies such as Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill* series and in numerous Westerns. It is remarkable how often we encounter the phenomenon in life as well. Reading the news reports of Bernard Madoff's thievery, for example, one is struck by the character and intensity of the anger among those he wronged. Elie Wiesel, whose life savings—along with the resources of his philanthropic foundation—were devastated by Madoff's fraud, is quoted as stating that the punishment he wishes for Madoff is that he spend at least five years in a solitary cell that is furnished with a screen on which pictures of his victims are shown one after the other, day and night, while a voice forces his attention to the injury he did to each individual. He is also reported as saying that he cannot forgive Madoff. The judicial sentence imposed on Madoff—150 years of incarceration—might itself express a form of retributive anger.³ We are also familiar with the phenomenon and

its consequences in relatively petty and unimportant situations—academic politics, for example—as well as in graver contexts, such as broken partnerships where the welfare of children and the division of property are at stake. Famously and lamentably, fury is writ large in war and violent conflict. Such examples capture something of the emotion that I shall be discussing here and suggest that vengeful anger broadly conceived is as universal as any emotion is capable of being. It would certainly be hard to find an adult who is not well acquainted with it from personal experience.

Our intuitions about the virtues and vices of vengeful anger are conflicted. Vengefulness is felt to be vindicating on the one hand and vindictive on the other. A long tradition holds that vengeful anger is not an emotion that a virtuous person would feel, in part because pleasure in the pain of another is one of its elements.⁴ That vengeful anger and possibly the taking of revenge are accompanied by pleasure is well established, though there is room for debate about what the pleasure is pleasure in, an issue to which I shall return. Others have argued along consequentialist lines that the desire for revenge is destructive of justice and so is a discreditable motive from which to act. It easily grows into blood feuds, vigilantism, and an unprincipled license to violence. The famous propensity of such anger to consume the soul of its owner and to grow out of all proportion to its causes also supports the intuition that we are better off without it. Vengeful anger does not seem to answer well or at all to the demands of impartiality, proportionality, or norms of fairness. In this light, it is not surprising that the proleptically and comprehensively forgiving attitude of the Amish has been widely praised; their almost heroic stilling of vengeful anger and certainly of revenge in response to the cold-blooded murder of a number of their children several years ago commands admiration.⁵

On the other hand, we readily sympathize with, say, the fury of Madoff's victims. Indeed, we are tempted to judge that a failure to feel that fury signals some defect of character—something like a failure in one's ability to stand up for oneself, a failure of self-esteem. Aristotle seems to be expressing just this intuition when, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he characterizes as "slavish" (*andrapodôdes*)—a socially loaded term, to be sure—the disposition not to react with anger when one is treated contemptuously and as of

no account (literally, as "bespattered with mud," *propêlakizomenon*; 1126a7–8).⁶ From his standpoint, the reaction of the Amish to the murder of their children very likely qualifies as "slavish." The reaction of the Amish did generate critical commentary. Your children are murdered; ought you not experience anger in consequence?⁷ Then there are consequentialist arguments, as well, that can be adduced in favor of vengeful anger, as suggested by Bishop Joseph Butler.⁸ And, of course, in some cultures, the failure to feel anger in response to being wronged and especially the failure to express and act on it are heavily penalized.⁹

Is it ethical to feel such a sentiment or emotion? This is one question I would like to pursue here. I propose to reflect on whether this sentiment or emotion is *ever* justified, by which I shall mean, such as a virtuous person would feel or such as it is virtuous to feel.¹⁰ I am asking not whether it is *always* justified (clearly, it is not) but whether the emotion is ever worth our endorsement and, if so, under what conditions. Of course, the answer is tied to an understanding of the character of this particular emotion, and that is the second question on which I shall focus. As the description of the emotion must precede reflection on its justifiability, I begin with the descriptive or phenomenological issue in section 1.

In section 2, I explore the relation between self-esteem and anger, since this serves as a bridge between the descriptive and definitional issues on the one hand and the normative ones on the other. I further develop the debate about the virtues and vices of vengeful anger in section 3 by examining, briefly and selectively, arguments presented by Aristotle (in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Rhetoric*) and by Seneca (in *De Ira*). My goal in this section of the essay is to articulate several of the key issues involved in the debate about the praiseworthiness of vengeful anger, and the discussion of passages in Aristotle and Seneca is constrained by that purpose. In section 4, I set out conditions that must be met if vengeful anger is to be appropriate and sketch some of the broader considerations that, I believe, would need to be worked out to ground a view about the virtues and vices of vengeful anger. To that end, I develop a distinction (already discussed in section 3) among three senses of "fittingness" and say a bit more about their interconnection as well as their relation to an ethics of vengefulness. I do not attempt to work out these considerations in detail

here, let alone which systematic moral theory would best accommodate my arguments about the ethics of vengeful anger. By way of conclusion (section 5), I suggest that the taking of revenge may be appropriate if certain conditions are met but that it is not justified simply because the emotion from which it springs is justified (if indeed it is justified). As I briefly discuss, this leaves us with a surprising distinction, and possibly divergence, between the merits of the emotion of vengeful anger and those of the action that may (and perhaps normally does) follow from it.

My theme is individual rather than group vengefulness. On the present view, individual vengefulness has three characteristics: first, it is what one might call private vengeance (in which revenge is to be taken by oneself); second, it involves the desire for personal revenge in response to wrongs done to oneself rather than to someone else (my primary focus is not indignation or sympathetic resentment); and third, it is directed at a person or persons. The form of vengeful anger on which I focus here assumes all three of these characteristics. For the sake of brevity, I shall speak simply of vengeful (or moral or retributive) anger but will mean, unless otherwise noted, personal vengeful anger in the sense just sketched. Consequently, I am talking about the desire to *take revenge*, not the desire to *avenge* wrongs. I am not exploring the relation between personal revenge and judicial punishment, let alone setting out a theory of punishment. A separate essay would be required to explore issues of collective anger and vengeance. Further, I am not primarily asking about the social utility of norms that sanction the taking of revenge (utility relative to the goal of deterrence, the equalization of power, and so forth).¹¹ There are many shades or shapes of anger; I am not claiming that the well-known phenomenon I am isolating and evaluating here is the essence or paradigm case of anger and am not committed to any view about anger as a "natural kind."

As to the definition of "emotion," for present purposes I am accepting that offered by Peter Goldie. He writes:

An emotion, I have argued, is a relatively complex state, involving past and present episodes of thoughts, feelings, and bodily changes, dynamically related in a narrative of part of a person's life, together with dispositions to experience further emotional episodes, and to

act out of the emotion and to express that emotion. Your expression of emotion and the actions which spring from the emotion, whilst not part of the emotion itself, are none the less part of the narrative which runs through—and beyond—the emotion, mutually affecting and resonating in that emotion, and in further emotions, moods, and traits, and in further actions.¹²

This sense of "emotion" informs my reflections here on vengeful anger. I shall be assuming that vengeful anger is also a feeling, that is, that it possesses an affective quality for its owner; the feeling in question may be "hot" or "cold" (these labels are themselves slippery). But, as it is in some way about something in the world, it is also an emotion. I am not going to distinguish here between "emotion" and "sentiment" (I will generally avoid the word "passion" when speaking in my own voice, though in its eighteenth-century usage—for example, in Adam Smith—it seems synonymous with emotion and sentiment).¹³ I will speak of vengeful anger, vengefulness, and the desire for revenge, meaning the same by all these phrases.

There are numerous empirical issues involved here, and I am aware of the dangers of armchair psychology passed off as considered convictions, intuitions, and such.¹⁴ While I cite some of the relevant psychological literature and no doubt make assumptions of an empirical nature, this chapter does not attempt to assess systematically the relation between empirical and philosophical analyses of the topic.

1. THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF VENGEFUL ANGER

No, it was not to be that you should scorn my love,
And pleasantly live your life through, laughing at me;
Nor would the princess, nor he who offered the match,
Creon, drive me away without paying for it.
So now you may call me a monster, if you wish,
A Scylla housed in the caves of the Tuscan sea.
I too, as I had to, have taken hold of your heart.

—Euripides, *Medea* 1354–1360¹⁵

Anger is a highly complex, polymorphous phenomenon. Our language reflects some but not all of its forms: we speak of wrath,

indignation, fury, ill temper, ill humor, bitterness, irritation, irascibility, resentment, exasperation, pouting, annoyance, and, of course, vengefulness (which can be “hot” or “cold”). These terms are not synonymous or stable in their meanings. Some of these terms are more behavioral or descriptive; others are more physiological (such as talk of ill humor or of something making your blood boil). We predicate anger of nonhuman animals, as well as of infants and young children. Moreover, the meanings of anger-terms vary over time.¹⁶

By way of isolating the particular shape of anger whose merits I want to assess here, let me start with the relation of hatred and vengeful anger (abbreviated “v-anger” in the rest of the essay): I may hate without being angry and vice versa. For example, I may hate National Socialism or the fact of a significant disparity of economic wealth between peoples or the effects of global warming on my favorite glaciers in Switzerland, but in themselves these are not instances of vengeful anger. In one of its modulations, hatred seems less personal than v-anger, in that it can arise on account of things that don’t affect me personally (or even on account of anybody I know personally) and may be directed at entities that lack intentions or at least that are not responsible for their actions.¹⁷ Further, I could describe myself as hating X without ever actually feeling hatred or anger. The phrase “moral hatred” brings hatred closer to v-anger, though again I can certainly ascribe it to myself, even feel it, without its being vengeful. Finally, as Aristotle remarks (*Rhetoric* 2.4, 1382a12–13), hatred need not be accompanied by pain, whereas, in some sense, the emotion of v-anger is thus accompanied (though it is also, as already noted, pleasurable).

Personal v-anger responds to perceived harm done to oneself. There are, of course, many ways in which this harm can be expressed, among them physical harm, harm to those near and dear, and harm to one’s property. Further, this harm must also be perceived as a moral wrong. Soldiers in combat are out to harm one another but could in principle see the enemy’s attempt to harm them not so much as morally wrong as what soldiers qua soldiers just do. And so it would be possible to respond to being harmed by another—harm one thinks is bad and to be evaded—angrily but not vengefully. V-anger, at least in the form that is the topic of this essay, is elicited by the perception that the harm is

somehow wrong morally and hence is bad in a way that goes beyond its painfulness.¹⁸

Consequently, the anger felt in response to one’s desire being frustrated is not necessarily v-anger. Aristotle remarks in the *Rhetoric* that people “become angry whenever they are distressed; for the person who is distressed desires something” (2.2, 1379a11–12).¹⁹ But even if the cause of the frustration consists in someone blocking one’s desire (say, in the example just mentioned, one’s desire to continue to live), much depends on how or why the blocking is undertaken.

Let me pause for a moment. I have spoken of “perceived” harm or wrong, leaving open the possibility that one’s perception is mistaken. One typically experiences personal v-anger in consequence of what one perceives to be a wrong done to oneself, not in response to what one perceives to be a good done to oneself, however painful. I don’t want to take revenge on the dentist who quite rightly and expertly performed a root canal, excruciating and hateful though that experience may have been. Further, if a wrong is done to me but I don’t know of it, I do not react with v-anger.

As a consequence, v-anger has a cognitive component. No doubt it is also accompanied by a state of bodily excitement or perturbation of some sort. As Aristotle notes in *De Anima* (403a29–403b1), the natural philosopher will describe anger as the boiling of the blood around the heart—a description to be updated but one whose spirit is surely correct. But a necessary condition of v-anger is the perception of wrong, and this may be described, for present purposes, in terms of belief, judgment, recognition, or—in some sense of this ill-defined term—cognition. That cognition is typically described or describable discursively; indeed, a remarkable feature of v-anger is the extent to which it *is* described discursively by its owners, sometimes generating narratives that reach epic length.

Vengeful anger is, then, *moral* anger in the sense I have sketched. Consequently, it takes itself to be *justified*, and quite consciously so; narratives of v-anger are replete with such justification, fueled by and fueling it. Such anger perceives itself as defended by reasons of a noncausal sort. The emotion is thus intrinsically evaluative and highly moralized. V-anger is experienced as righteous.

Part of what makes the relevant harm a *wrong* is that it is *intentionally* inflicted or at least that the offender bears responsibility

for the wrong; this too is essential to explaining the reactive sentiment that is v-anger.²⁰ V-anger is properly directed at an agent capable of intention and of responsibility for its actions. Though you angrily curse the cement step on which you stub your toe, or angrily hit the dog that bites you, or angrily rebuke the person who accidentally steps on your foot in a crowded bus, none of these responses expresses v-anger. We no more wish to take revenge for an unintentional wrong than for an intentional right that inflicts pain. This point may seem obvious, but as we will see, Seneca argues against the propriety of anger in part on grounds that wrong is never intentionally inflicted.

As my use of the Strawsonian phrase "reactive sentiment" indicates, v-anger also has the characteristic just mentioned; it is reactive, a response to wrong.²¹ However, a sentiment might be fitting or appropriate to something taken to be in the world but might not respond to—in the sense of address itself to—that feature in such a way as to seek to affect it. Or to be more precise, a sentiment may or may not seek to affect the agent responsible for that feature. While not all instances of reactive sentiment may have this agent-affecting aim, v-anger does, and revenge is its chosen means to that goal. As should be clear by now, v-anger is other-directed; it has an intentional structure, as it is "about" some value; it targets some agent; and, if it is acted upon, results are deliberately aimed for. There can be no unintentional revenge, for the very meaning of the idea is closely tied to the aim of the angry person.²²

And, because it is reactive in its particular way (seeking revenge in response to a wrong), this emotion also motivates. One can well understand why, in the *Rhetoric* (2.2, 1378a30–32), Aristotle associates anger so closely with desire (this association is, I add, another reason that anger is not simply a feeling). This is an emotion that prompts its owner to *do* something, and it is typically accompanied by deliberation or, more sinisterly, plotting; hence, Bishop Butler characterizes it as "deliberate."²³ In this sense too, v-anger is cognitive; it undertakes means-end reasoning, *inter alia*, and that requires intention on the part of the angry person. Revenge, then, is plotted so as to inflict harm in response to wrong received.²⁴

V-anger therefore possesses an interesting combination of retrospectivity, to borrow a thought from a relevant passage in Anscombe,²⁵ as well as prospectivity—indeed, one is tempted to say,

the latter because of the former. This again distinguishes v-anger from hatred, as the latter may not be retrospective and perhaps, on occasion, may not be prospective either. V-anger is tied to agency diachronically understood, a point to which I shall return in the next section when discussing its connection to self-esteem.

The target of the emotion and, thus, of the revenge is not so much the wrong action or even intention but its author or owner—the wrongdoer, in other words.²⁶ I note in passing that this aspect helps to explain why forgiveness "works" on the victim's emotion of v-anger by moderating or alleviating it, if forgiveness is understood as a response to changes in the offender's attitudes or dispositions (changes signaled by, *inter alia*, contrition). Both v-anger and forgiveness are deeply interpersonal and bilateral and in that sense social; to that extent, they mirror each other. Correspondingly, the notion of v-anger directed against oneself is difficult to make sense of (the mirror notion of self-forgiveness is similarly complex). Further, both are tied to *memory*. One can no more forgive by forgetting than one can be vengeful by forgetting; both vengefulness and forgiving insist that the offender remember. Indeed, the thirster for revenge not only is energetically committed to remembering but has a much-lamented tendency to hang on to the memory in all its vividness.

Unlike ordinary perceptions, v-anger tends not only to linger beyond—often far beyond—the wrong to which it responds but also to augment its intensity.²⁷ Adam Smith wrote, citing Malebranche, that the passions "all justify themselves, and seem reasonable and proportioned to their objects, as long as we continue to feel them." Smith also remarks in the same paragraph that often "every thing appears magnified and misrepresented by self-love," as when the "violent emotions" (of which v-anger is surely an example) consume us.²⁸ Ordinary language reflects this aspect of v-anger, as when we speak of enflamed anger consuming everything in its path. Consequently, the object of this emotion is not simply "payback" but payback and then some; it is not just about "getting even" but about getting more than even. Of course, one could certainly get even without counting that as revenge, as when one evens the score in a tennis match.

The currency in which this abundant payback is supposed to be transmitted is, let us underline, pain or suffering. V-anger aims to

inflict pain for pain, or suffering for suffering, or death for death.²⁹ There is no question but that it involves wishing ill for another.

Next, I must make explicit what is perhaps already clear, namely that v-anger typically understands itself to be *retributive* (I am not denying that there may exist other retributive emotions). By this I mean, first, that it is focused on what is taken to be the wrongdoer's desert. In response to a question about why the offender should be made to suffer, the revenge-taker will frequently say something like "Because he [or she] *deserves* it." This is different from a consequentialist rationale (though, of course, one could seek retribution for consequentialist reasons instead or as well), and that seems to me to be important. The primary purpose of personal v-anger is not deterrence, or the achievement of social utility, or some other such goal. The air of moral purity and even sanctity that can surround vengefulness and revenge-taking derives from their seemingly high-minded devotion to retributivist moral principle.³⁰

However, vengefulness may not be retributively "pure" in that, as I shall also argue, it may aim at consequences of a sort. For example, it may seek to force the offender to acknowledge some moral principle (hence, revenge is sometimes referred to as "teaching the wrongdoer a lesson," though if revenge is not to reduce to retaliation or deterrence, this will have to be construed in a manner that does not absolve the wrongdoer of responsibility for having failed to learn the lesson already) or it may seek to restore the victim's self-esteem or both. The very notion that "payback" is to be repayment (with interest!) suggests that something more than desert alone is at stake here or at least that desert is being understood in an unusually complex way (not that the notion is straightforward in any case!). Payback seems conceptually and perhaps also, at a deep level, psychologically intrinsic to v-anger (there doesn't seem to be nonretributive agent-directed personal moral anger).³¹

There is one further crucial aspect of this remarkable emotion that should be mentioned. As other commentators have noted, vengeful anger would have its target—the wrongdoer—understand the payback not just as painful but as intended by that wrongdoer's victim as payback. This has been referred to as "double intentionality."³² In what one might call the paradigm case, the returned harm loses much of its point if the intended recipient

doesn't know not just that it is a harm (as would be the case if, say, you stole something whose absence its owner—the offender—never discovered) but that it is meant by this particular victim to be payback for this particular wrong. This observation highlights the fact that the exchange is highly personal: it involves a kind of reciprocity at its core and so mutual awareness on the part of both parties in the manner indicated. In that sense, it is fundamentally *interpersonal*.

Consequently, one is robbed of one's revenge if, say, the wrongdoer is indifferent to the harm the vengeful victim inflicts on him, or is dead, or never knows who inflicted the harm, or doesn't know why the harm was inflicted. Vengefulness is also not fulfilled and, indeed, may be usurped if the wrongdoer is punished by a third party (including by a court of law) instead of by the victim.

It seems to follow that v-anger has a communicative purpose that is intrinsic to it. As the wrongdoer is to understand who is taking the revenge and on account of what, he is also to be made to understand that his deed is (held to be) wrong. This message too seems implicit in the structure of v-anger: what you did to me was wrong, I protest it, and you must recognize that.³³ Indeed, is not the chosen method of protest—inflicting pain of some sort—meant at least in part to compel the wrongdoer to recognize and acknowledge all this? If the answer is affirmative, as I take it to be, we have reason to differentiate between the victim's vengeful wish to inflict pain and that of a sadist or cruel person.

How vengefulness is understood by both parties is therefore essential to its meaning and achievement. The victim is not seeking just to inflict harm or just to see the offender suffer; whatever pleasure may accompany vengefulness need (and ought) not lie just in the suffering or pain of another (else revenge would collapse into sadism or cruelty and lose whatever moral character it may possess). To be sure, wrong must have taken place (or at least be believed to have taken place), so what one might call an "objective" dimension must be present and perceived to be so; but also, both parties to the exchange must understand each other's state of mind in a suitable way—what one might call a "subjective" dimension must be present as well.

Vengefulness cannot be the same, then, as the desire for retaliation, though both have a tit-for-tat structure and are part of the

same family of notions. I can retaliate on behalf of someone else—call it third-party retaliation—and could do so without experiencing any particular emotion. Further, I can also retaliate without caring a whit about your recognizing who the retaliator is or why retaliation has occurred. Retaliation does not require my being present to witness your suffering as a result of the retaliation. I can retaliate without thinking that what you did to me is wrong; it may simply have caused me pain.³⁴

Let us take this a step further. I have noted that the desire for revenge seeks, *inter alia*, what is commonly referred to as “getting even.” In some sense, the aim seems to be to balance the scales or to reverse or correct the inequality brought about by the wrongdoing. Reciprocity of a sort seems to be fundamental here. Some elemental sense of fairness is at work—an intuition that revenge would be fair insofar as it restores things to how they were before or at least creates the equivalent thereof. Now, given what I have also just said about the other aims of *v-anger*—including that of forcing the wrongdoer to recognize the source and purpose of the revenge—it appears that there’s a connection between rebalancing (getting even) and the wrongdoer’s painful recognition of his misdeeds. I have also said that *v-anger* is retributive in holding that the wrongdoer deserves the given punishment and in wanting to punish the wrongdoer. And I have pointed to a communicative dimension of *v-anger* as well.

It is difficult to bring these features together into a coherent account, and one possible conclusion is simply that *v-anger* is not itself coherent.³⁵ Let us see if we can avoid that conclusion by reflecting further on the various aspects of the phenomenology. Now, one temptation is to hold that the rebalancing consists in creating equal amounts of pain on both sides. On this view, vengeance seeks to rebalance by reestablishing a semblance of the previous balance, but in a peculiar way—by creating an analogous parity of condition between the parties involved. You took my eye, and now you shall lose yours, so we are once again even—though my sight is not thereby restored. Hence there seems to be something tragic in revenge as a response to loss, in that the simulacrum of the earlier balance is rarely more than that. People frequently seek to dissuade revenge-takers for precisely this sort of reason; taking

the offender’s eye won’t give you yours back, won’t make it not be the case that yours was taken.

What of the natural desire to take two eyes for one, in spite of *Lex Talionis*? And what of the importance of forcing the wrongdoer into awareness of the cause and rationale of the revenge? The account of rebalancing just sketched not only fails to take into consideration the wrongdoer’s consciousness and interpretation of his pain or the victim’s wish both to be and to be known as the instrument of revenge but also ignores the fact that vengeance often seeks to inflict *more* pain than was received. So, reestablishing balance or equality of condition cannot be the whole story, even granting that the status quo ante cannot literally be regained in many cases (I cannot get my eye back by depriving you of yours).

Perhaps the core idea is, instead, something more like this: *v-anger* seeks to restore equality of regard, not of pain or condition, and it sometimes uses means—say, the taking of an eye (or two) for an eye—that *compel* recognition of that equality. Perhaps what vengeance hopes to regain is a kind of parity, with suffering employed in part because of its capacity to symbolize and communicate equality and in part to compel the wrongdoer to acknowledge that parity.

Now, in some cultural contexts especially, vengeance may seek to command regard or recognition by a third party—one’s peers, say—of the equality of the two parties primarily concerned. Aristotle perceptively but perhaps too narrowly defined anger (*orgê*) this way: “Let anger be [defined as] desire, accompanied by [mental and physical] distress, for conspicuous retaliation because of a conspicuous slight [*oligôria*] that was directed, without justification, against oneself or those near to one” (*Rhetoric* 2.1, 1378a30–32; the word translated here by “retaliation” may also be translated as “vengeance” or “revenge”). A “slight” presumably diminishes or belittles one (a connotation implicit in the word Aristotle here uses), at least in the eyes of others. One’s standing—or, as one might say in some contexts, one’s honor or the esteem in which one is held—is diminished. *V-anger* might then be understood as seeking to restore that standing in the eyes of third parties by forcibly asserting that one is not to be treated as inferior (hence Aristotle’s *NE* use of the term “slavish,” earlier mentioned

—as though not to feel the appropriate anger confirms one's lowered standing). Empirical studies evidently support Aristotle's definition.³⁶ So natural is this thought that Elster states: "I believe the phenomenon of honor to be the key to understanding revenge. Asserting one's honor, like enjoying other people's envy of one's assets, is an aspect of a deep-rooted urge to show oneself to be superior to others."³⁷ This would, then, seem to be key to the emotion that typically prompts revenge.

If social standing as determined by a third party is the core issue, however, then forcing the wrongdoer to understand and admit his wrongdoing seems besides the point. The more important object would be to show the third party, rather than the offender, that one is not "slavish." By contrast, it also seems possible to want revenge even though no third party is aware of the transaction or even though social standing is not at issue. Interpreting personal vengefulness in terms of its social usefulness, then, seems not to get to the core of the emotion.

And yet there is some truth to the notion that vengeful anger may counter the perception of lowered standing, as seen from the vantage point of the victim. That is, it initially seems plausible that vengefulness is somehow meant to reassure *the victim* of his or her equal standing and worthiness of equal regard, in that way restoring the earlier balance. Aristotle's definition would limit the cause of v-anger to one or another form of belittling (he mentions three in the chapter of the *Rhetoric* from which I just quoted: contempt, spite, and arrogant insult [*hubris*]); and if what we have in mind here is something like a sense of one's own proper worth in one's own eyes, we arrive at the question of the connection between self-esteem and v-anger. Let us see if further sense may be given to the idea of restoring equality of regard.

2. SELF-ESTEEM AND VENGEFULNESS

Let me reformulate one key thought implicit in Aristotle's account of anger. V-anger is the emotion one feels in response to an affront that both belittles or dishonors or disrespects one in some way and that communicates that one is not and ought not to be accorded due regard or esteem. I said earlier that v-anger assumes that the wrongdoer acts willingly and intentionally, as well as wrongly. Now,

one could imagine responding just as one would to wrong done to another person: with indignation, even calm reasoned indignation and a demand for justice, or with studied indifference, depending on the circumstances (including the kind of wrong done, as well as the status of the wrongdoer). One could also imagine retaliating for, say, purposes of deterrence. But reacting with *v-anger* signals that one takes the wrong *personally* in some sense that goes beyond simply being the target of the wrong.

One intuitive way to make sense of that is as follows: v-anger expresses its owner's suspicion or, perhaps, anxiety about the possibility that he or she deserves the affront, that the negative judgment about oneself implicit in the wrongdoing is true. Someone comments publicly on the inferior status of your scholarly work, and you respond not by laughing it off or by calm refutation but with v-anger; does this not suggest that perhaps you are in fact worried that the accusation may carry a kernel of truth? If it never crossed your mind to imagine that the affront might somehow be true of you, why should you respond specifically with *vengeful* anger, as I have defined it? Responding with v-anger suggests that your self-esteem is called into question.³⁸

There exists clinical literature pointing to interesting ways in which fantasies of revenge can help restore a sense of agency, empowerment, and control over one's life.³⁹ That a wrong might have this effect of requiring restoration of self-esteem is perfectly understandable, of course, but implies that vengefulness is rooted in weakened self-esteem.⁴⁰ Insofar as it is, the term "resentment"—though more narrowly defined here than in Butler (where it comes to what I'm calling v-anger, irrespective of the angry person's level of self-esteem)—seems to capture its meaning. And, insofar as resentment is combined with a feeling of powerlessness, "*ressentiment*"—the French for "resentment," which Nietzsche endowed with this special sense—seems to be the right term.⁴¹ Vengeful resentment may have transient value for its owner, as I have just indicated.

Vengefulness as a response to feeling belittled does make some initial sense of revenge as "getting even" or "payback," for what is to be restored—or so the victim believes—is the victim's own self-regard. V-anger might be thought of as restoring the victim's internal sense of equilibrium by providing "proof" to oneself—in

the form of one's power to inflict harm on the offender—that the implicit or even explicit charge contained in the wrongdoing is false.⁴² A sort of internal rebalancing is achieved that feels like restoration, like an equalizing. Specifically, vengefulness and perhaps the taking of revenge might feel, to one whose self-esteem is in question, like a restoration of a strong sense of self, a sense of one's own agency. This might also feel like a "reversal" of the state of affairs brought about by the wrong that one has suffered. Moreover, understanding v-anger as an effort to restore self-esteem sheds light on the "and then some" character of the "repayment," especially in cases of (what is felt to be) grave injury, for the nature of the task, self-reassurance, naturally seems to call for reiteration and reinforcement. Let me briefly expand on this point.

Vengeful anger is a structurally flawed strategy if the goal is the restoration of lowered self-esteem. Inflicting pain on those who have wrongly harmed you can never really address the causes of a weak sense of self, for those very probably preexisted the event in question. Lowering another person to a level beneath you does not actually raise you in the decisive sense, though it may have the instrumental and passing value of showing you that you have the ability to lower the offender (and may permit you to rank yourself above the offender, without, however, actually making you more estimable). Further, if your self-esteem hinges on forcing the wrongdoer to acknowledge that you ought not to be treated thus, then your sense of self depends in part on the esteem extracted from another. In the nature of the case, such esteem is always going to be contingent, variable, temporary, and suspect in any reassurance it offers. The strategy is unsuccessful, and perhaps that helps to explain the "and then some" character of the "payback" so often associated with v-anger: the disproportion of the returned harm that v-anger often generates expresses the lack of suitability of means (revenge-taking) to the end (restoration of self-esteem). As there is no proportional "getting even" that will work, one is forced to ever greater measures. It would certainly be difficult to formulate a defense of the ethical value of v-anger if v-anger expresses and seeks to counter lowered self-esteem, especially if proper self-esteem is conceived of as an appropriate disposition to be cultivated, rather than thought of simply in terms of its instrumental psychological utility (with regard to, say, restoring a sense of agency).

Putting ethical considerations aside for a bit longer, though, and staying within a phenomenological frame, let us ask: must v-anger stem from or at least be accompanied by lowered self-esteem? The answer strikes me as negative. I can feel v-anger precisely because my self-esteem is *not* harmed. My conviction that I ought not be treated in a certain way may be affectively expressed as protest, as objection, as standing up for myself—all premised on the firm conviction that I am worth defending, worth my own defense. You may treat me in a way that is demeaning and humiliating or belittling; it does not follow that I am demeaned or humiliated or belittled if I do not regard myself as such. I am interested here in describing and evaluating a form of v-anger that does not stem from and is not a response to low self-esteem.

Yet this leads to another puzzle: if one has been wronged and one's self-regard has not thereby been damaged, would not the appropriate response to a wrong to oneself be a bloodless, affect-less rectification of the wrong? The victim would, it seems, respond impersonally, as though the injustice had been done to someone else. Indeed, why not respond in the manner Nietzsche praises in the passage quoted at the start of this chapter—by rising above any thought of revenge? What warrant for personal v-anger could remain if self-esteem were *not* at stake?

In order to pursue this normative question and, more broadly, the ethics of v-anger, let me turn to the debate between Aristotle and Seneca on the virtues and vices of anger.

3. ARISTOTLE AND SENECA

[L]et us cultivate our humanity. Let us not bring fear or danger upon any one. Let us look down on damages and wrongs, insults and carping criticisms. Let us bear with greatness of mind our short-lived troubles. As they say, we have only to look back, only to turn round—quick now, here comes death!

—Seneca, *De Ira* 3.43.5⁴³

My purpose in this section is not, as already noted, to offer a scholarly assessment of the debate between Aristotelians and Stoics about the nature of the emotions or of Aristotle's and Seneca's views as such. Rather, I shall pick out several of their arguments

as a way of furthering, within the confines of this brief discussion, the normative question about the place of v-anger in the good life. In the relevant passages of the *Rhetoric* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle's focus seems pretty clearly to be on the angry desire for revenge, Seneca's subject in *De Ira* certainly includes v-anger and arguably is principally v-anger; indeed, he says that his definition is not far from those of some unnamed others, and Aristotle appears to be among them (1.3.3; see the editors' n. 8, p. 20, in the edition of *De Ira* that I'm using). His analysis at 1.2–3 focuses on vengefulness and distinguishes it from such things as the "anger" of a wild animal or that of a child who falls down and is in pain. I am not claiming, however, that both of their analyses isolate every feature of v-anger in precisely the way that I have. I do believe that what they say about anger sufficiently overlaps with the phenomenology I've offered to permit use of their views to illuminate fundamental features of the debate about the ethics of anger. Further, as will soon become clear, I am not endorsing either of their positions. Let me turn, then, to a brief examination of several relevant aspects of their views.

Aristotle

In Book II of the *NE*, Aristotle writes:

By feelings [*pathê*] I mean appetite, anger [*orgê*], fear, confidence, envy, joy, love, hate, longing, jealousy, pity, and in general whatever implies pleasure or pain. By capacities I mean what we have when we are said to be capable of these feelings—capable of being angry, for instance, or of being afraid or of feeling pity. By states [*hexeis*] I mean what we have when we are well or badly off in relation to feelings. If, for instance, our feeling is too intense or slack, we are badly off in relation to anger, but if it is intermediate, we are well off; the same is true in the other cases. (1105b21–28)

Aristotle argues that virtues are "states." That there is such a thing as being well or badly off with respect to anger is established in Book IV, when Aristotle discusses the virtue of "mildness" (*praotês*), which he declares to be the mean concerned with anger. Aristotle terms the excess of anger "irascibility," and although the defect of

anger is nameless, its possessor, as already noted, is termed "slavish" (1125b26–29, 1126a8). Aristotle remarks: "The person who is angry at the right things and toward the right people, and also in the right way, at the right time, and for the right length of time, is praised." Such a person is "mild" and thus "undisturbed" (*atarochos*), not led by feeling, but irritated wherever reason prescribes, and for the length of time it prescribes" (for both quotations, see 1125b31–1126a1). So Aristotle seems to think that the virtuous person will feel anger as appropriate. Anger is part of the emotional makeup of the virtuous person. Why does Aristotle think this?

It cannot be because *every* emotion has a "mean"; the description of envy in the *Rhetoric* 2.10 (where it is defined as "a certain kind of distress at apparent success on the part of one's peers in attaining the good things that have been mentioned, not that a person may get anything for himself but because of those who have it"; 1387b23–25) does not make it sound like the sort of thing one could have toward the right thing at the right time and so forth. This inference is validated by *Rhetoric* 1386b16–1387a5 and especially 1388a35–36 ("envy is bad [*phaulon*] and characteristic of the bad [*phauloi*]"). Indeed, at *NE* II.6, Aristotle tells us that "not every action or feeling admits of the mean," and he cites envy *inter alia* (1107a8–11). For such feelings are inherently base (*phaulon*; 1107a13); presumably one is to extirpate them from one's soul. Why isn't vengeful anger, an emotion reputed to be ugly and dangerous, inherently base and also to be extirpated?

Aristotle's answer is surprisingly hard to flesh out.⁴⁴ Certainly, the definitions of anger in the *NE* and the *Rhetoric* make it sound as though the emotion can be *fitting* in multiple senses. To begin with, it might be fitting or appropriate to the fact of an affront, to the magnitude of the affront, to the fact that it was an intentional affront, and so forth.⁴⁵ Now, one could perhaps construct a case that envy, too, is "fitting" in this sense, even while holding with Aristotle that one ought not feel envy. Fittingness in this first sense may be a necessary condition of ethical praiseworthiness but cannot be a sufficient condition.

Aristotle's biting comment about the deficiency of anger takes us further. He says:

The deficiency—a sort of inirascibility [*aorgésia*] or whatever it is—is blamed. For people who are not angered by the right things, or in the right way, or at the right times, or toward the right people, all seem to be foolish. For such a person seems to be insensible and to feel no pain, and since he is not angered, he does not seem to be the sort to defend himself. Such willingness to accept insults to oneself and to overlook insults to one's family and friends is slavish. (NE 1126a3–8)

This passage suggests a mix of rationales favoring *v*-anger as commendable (under the right circumstances and so on). One is consequentialist, having to do with the requirements of self-defense. But another, suggested as much by the tone of the passage as by the term “slavish,” holds an appeal to honor as well as to the requirements of pride and to self-esteem. It “is blamed”—the relevant public blames you—if you don't stand up for yourself and yours. You come across as submissive, as deserving humiliation, as not just unable but—far worse—as unwilling to protest affronts. By contrast, anger signals to others that you protest. The context is ineluctably social, and the judgment Aristotle articulates is that of a moral—indeed, moralizing—community.

As the readers of Aristotle's report about how a failure to feel anger appropriately will be interpreted, we are meant to buy in. The way the account is phrased implicitly invites a connection between our self-regard and how others regard us.⁴⁶ This may turn out to be a matter of relative social position; more subtly, it may also evince the view that our nature is fundamentally “political” (in Aristotle's sense). But that sort of approach does not give us a particularly impressive ethical justification for *v*-anger, and in any case it appeals to considerations that are secondary on the analysis I am offering (since it has to do with social status).

There seem to be two other sorts of fittingness at work here, however. One has to do with what is fitting if one is to be a noble person rather than a base (*phaulos*) or slavish person. This sense of the fitting is relative to a picture of the ideal person or life. The other has to do with what is fitting to us as composite (made of body and soul, matter and form), dependent, and vulnerable creatures. Let me say something about these second and third senses of the fitting.

Aristotle's most detailed picture of the noble person is that of

the *megalopsuchos*, offered almost immediately before his discussion of virtuous anger. In the *Posterior Analytics* (97b14–26) Aristotle cites *megalopsuchia* as an example of an equivocal term. It may mean, he says, either the sort of thing that Alcibiades, Achilles, and Ajax had in common, that is, an “intolerance of insults,” or the sort of thing that Lysander and Socrates had in common, an indifference to good and bad fortune, indifference (*apatheia*) instead of “not brooking dishonour.”⁴⁷ Clearly, Aristotle lauds the first meaning and Seneca the second.

Since the *megalopsuchos* is “worthy of the greatest things, he is the best person [*aristos*]” (NE 1123b26–27). One might argue that he's best because he possesses all the virtues (1124a1–2; there it is clear that the *megalopsuchos* does have all the virtues), but that is unhelpful since we are trying to understand why there should be a virtuous state with respect to the feeling of anger. Aristotle doesn't explicitly say that the magnanimous man (for Aristotle, this character does seem to be male, hence my gendered expression) will experience such anger and does say that he is not prone to remember evils (1125a4–5), though he will speak evil of his enemies when it is a matter of their *hubris* (which Irwin translates as “wanton aggression”; 1125a8–9). The magnanimous man does have “hatreds” (1124b26)—presumably of persons who have dishonored him—which surely includes retributive anger. And, since he has all the virtues, he must also have that of “mildness.” The idea seems to be that this noble character will in general not react to wrongs with anger, except when the wrongs are great and are delivered by those worthy of his vengefulness. His opinion of himself is (justifiably, by his lights) extremely high. In not needing the approval of others in any routine way, he is self-sufficient and will “determine his life” (1124b31–1125a1; his friends may help, however). The alternative, Aristotle says, “would be slavish” (*doulikon*; 1125a1). So, self-sufficiency seems to be one mark of noble character but also a kind of self-possession, a self-respect grounded in the perception—which he lives up to without inner conflict—that he is “worthy” or honorable. The *megalopsuchos* is in those ways proud of himself.⁴⁸

At the same time—and arguably this is at odds with his self-sufficiency—he is also concerned not just with being honorable but with being honored, though only by the greatest honors (NE

1123b20–24; 1124a4–12). That is supposed to be another mark of his greatness. While there is much to say about this complicated sketch of the noble soul, it initially seems that when the magnanimous man does rise to anger, it is not because his self-esteem is damaged. Otherwise, magnanimity would be corrupted by low self-esteem, which Aristotle assigns to the vice of pusillanimity (1125a17–27). Magnanimous anger is not the self-doubting resentment I discussed in section 2, and it is certainly not *ressentiment*. Presumably the magnanimous man's appreciation of and desire for honor demands that, when it is denied to him, he react with anger and that those dishonoring him know of his displeasure. It does seem to matter to him that they do know—why else does he care whether or not they honor him (and that he know that they know that he both knows of and appreciates the honor)? Why else would it not suffice that he alone honors himself appropriately? The communicative or signaling function of anger seems crucial here.

At this deep level, he is not self-sufficient but dependent. By implying that the magnanimous man will respond angrily when it is fitting to do so, Aristotle makes it clear that his paragon of ethical virtue is vulnerable: the magnanimous man can be wronged and angered if great honors are inappropriately withheld. Deserved social regard (offered by those of exceptional virtue) is a chief object of concern for him. The corresponding vulnerability is consistent with Aristotle's view that ethical virtue can be frayed and, in extreme cases (such as that of Priam), badly frayed (*NE* 1101a6–13; note the use of *megalopsuchos* at 1100b32–33).

Why the magnanimous man should be vulnerable in regard to honor remains unclear. Aristotle doesn't say enough to help us understand exactly why or how the magnanimous man is dependent in this regard (is it an epistemic question, for example, such that he cannot know he is honorable unless honored by the right people?). He does not explain why being honored *matters* to the magnanimous man, and this corresponds to his silence about why feeling the right degree of anger is a virtue. Suppose that other great souls fail to honor you, a great soul: so what? Why not just brush it off? Why does not the great man's magnanimity flow into the second sense of *megalopsuchia* that Aristotle mentions in the

Posterior Analytics (97b14–26), the one that Lysander and Socrates are credited with?

The opacity of Aristotle's analysis on this issue opens up space for the suggestion that the magnanimous man embodies an unstable combination of self-sufficiency and dependence. It is not that the two *must* form an unstable combination but that, because *honor* matters so greatly to the *megalopsuchos*, the demands of self-sufficiency and of dependence seem destined to collide. Another conception of *megalopsuchia* is required, a Stoic critic might maintain, in order to avoid just this collision.

But perhaps it is possible to help Aristotle out by examining another thought that seems to underlie his picture of virtuous anger, though it is largely unarticulated in the description of the magnanimous man. The thought concerns the importance of assessing what is fitting to us as composite (made of body and soul, matter and form), dependent, and vulnerable creatures. This is the third sense of "fittingness" mentioned earlier, and it stands out by way of contrast when Aristotle sketches the life of theoretical virtue in Book X. The paradigm of theoretical virtue is god, and on Aristotle's account, that noncomposite being lacks emotions to habituate and therefore has no need for the moral virtues. (Aristotle refers in different places to "god" as well as "the gods," but that does not affect the point I am making here.) As a reactive emotion, v-anger concedes that we are vulnerable to other intentional agents and thus that we exist in some sort of community with them, but the divine shares none of these traits (*NE* 1178b10–19). For Aristotle the emotions are in some sense somatic, as we saw with reference to *De Anima* 403a29–403b1, and this may be another reason why Aristotle takes it as a given that we humans cannot be without anger. By contrast, as noncomposite, as pure mind, god has no body. Aristotle's god feels no v-anger and hence cannot stand in a praiseworthy relation with respect to it; god has no interest in honor and is truly "self-sufficient" (see *NE* 1177a27 and context; also 1177b21–22). Insofar as we achieve the godlike life, then, our understanding of which—if any—moral virtues and emotions are appropriate to the noble soul is bound to change profoundly. Aristotle's case for virtuous anger is offered in the context of reflection on what is fitting to embodied, nongodly, political (in his sense) agents.

This line of thought about a third sense of fittingness points to what D'Arms and Jacobson helpfully term "anthropocentric constraints on human value." These come to light through a cluster of reflections on what sorts of emotions and virtues are appropriate to creatures like us, and their weight can be assessed in part by asking what of ourselves we would have to give up if we changed the constraints.⁴⁹ The considerations in question concern what D'Arms and Jacobson call "suitable standards of fittingness for humans."⁵⁰ These determine what I am calling the third sense of fittingness. The second sense of fittingness I sketched has to do with the virtues that are intrinsic to a picture of the ideal person—in the Aristotelian case, a picture of (limited) self-sufficiency and high honor. In combination with Aristotle's view that anger is fitting in the first sense mentioned (as tracking features of the world), we have the core of his defense of the idea that anger can be ethically praiseworthy.

By way of sharpening the issues at stake, let me turn briefly to Seneca.

Seneca

De Ira is a sort of grab-bag of arguments about and against anger. There is no question about the main thesis: anger should be extirpated from the virtuous soul. My present purpose is narrow: I simply aim to articulate elements of Seneca's disagreement with Aristotle that help focus my discussion about the ethics of v-anger.

The first argument is that anger misinterprets the *import* of the (moral) facts about the world to which it takes itself to be responding, and hence it is a species of cognitive error, an example of bad reasoning. As I read Seneca, his point is neither that there does not exist such a thing as wrongful or unjust treatment of a person nor that v-anger necessarily errs in taking itself as responding to injustice. Rather, the idea is that, as the victim, I should not take myself to be harmed thereby and that furthermore I have positive reasons—regard for my own psychic health, for example—not to interpret the wrong as harming me. Consequently, I should not feel angry. I can grant that you did me wrong and insist on the appropriate punishment (1.15.1); yet, at the same time, I may refuse

to see myself as having been harmed, degraded, demeaned, or diminished.⁵¹ The ancestor of this view is undoubtedly Socrates' proud proclamation—delivered, interestingly, to the jurors in the *Apology* (41d1–2)—that no harm can come to a good man. Not surprisingly, Socrates also said that he is not angry with his accusers as they find him guilty (*Apol.* 35e1–36a1), even though what they are doing is unjust (*Apol.* 39b1–6).

Seneca's emphasis on the possibility of choice about whether or not to feel anger (once one is past the pre-anger phase, the initial stirrings caused by the "impression" of the wrong; 2.1–4) helps him to create some space for cognitive readjustment: I was wronged but need not internalize it and need not take myself as harmed. The assumption seems to be that if I had been harmed, then anger *might* be fitting, but as I am not harmed (since I am a Socratic or Stoic), then it is irrational to respond angrily. The important conclusion from this line of reasoning is that anger may be fitting in my first sense of the term but still not warranted or appropriate. Seneca's position is analogous to one that holds that a joke is funny but not morally appropriate to laugh at.⁵²

To turn to a second argument: in response to the question "is it virtuous to be angry at wickedness?" Seneca insists on a negative answer (2.6–10). He notes in support of his answer that people do not do wrong knowingly and thus are not responsible for their wrongdoing. Hence, something like excuse or pardon is the appropriate response: "To avoid anger with individuals, you must forgive the whole group, you must pardon the human race" (2.10.2). It makes no sense to be (vengefully) angry with a child or with nature, and you are able not to be so: "But being human is more of an excuse, and a juster excuse, than being a child" (2.10.2). Instead of responding with anger, look upon the wrongdoers "with the kindly gaze of a doctor viewing the sick" (2.10.7). If Seneca is right about this, then v-anger does look to be based on a mistake. By contrast, I held, with Aristotle, that v-anger assumes that the wrongdoer is responsible for his or her action. Obviously, to settle the matter would require an entirely different discussion. For present purposes, I will stipulate that our commonsense notion that wrongdoers are at least sometimes responsible for their deeds is correct. At least sometimes, they are not to be understood

as though they were children, or natural events, or ill. This does not prevent us from recognizing that Seneca's views about comprehensive excusability go hand in hand with his quite moving appeals to our common fallibility (3.26.4: "All of us are *bad*"; cf. 1.14.2, 3) and humanity (3.43.5).

And this brings me to a third argument of *De Ira*. As the sentences I have quoted suggest, Seneca has a picture of the noble soul to set against Aristotle's. The difference between the two turns on the competing interpretations of *megalopsuchia* or high-mindedness already mentioned. Why is it nobler to rise above all insults and belittlement and expressions of dishonor or disrespect than to respond with anger as the occasion demands? A cluster of considerations directs Seneca to his interpretation of high-mindedness. For example, he says that anger is a sign of a mind aware of its own weakness (1.20.3), that is, lacking self-esteem; but "A mighty mind with its true self-awareness will not avenge, since it has not noticed the wrong done to it" (3.5.7; I take Seneca to mean that a "mighty mind" does not feel harmed). To subscribe to some such view requires that our virtue be invulnerable to external pressure, that it be the case that we are not harmed unless we think ourselves so, and, of course, that it is psychologically possible to prevent ourselves from becoming angry. Seneca insists that we can indeed be rid of anger completely (2.12, 13): "Anything that the mind commands itself it can do" (2.12.4).⁵³ The highest end is happiness understood as tranquility (see 1.21.4), and it is in our power to achieve it. Tranquility and, hence, proper self-care are incompatible with any degree of anger (3.4.4), as anger is toxic to its possessor—especially given the Stoic theory of emotion.⁵⁴ And, with this, the Aristotelian link—Seneca would say, the unstable link—between self-sufficiency and dependence through sensibility to honor is severed.

The debate between these positions is obviously multilayered and complex, and, in the debate about the merits of v-anger, a great deal will hinge on one's conception of the ideal human type, as the disagreement about the desirable sense of *megalopsuchia* shows. That is one upshot of this discussion. In the next section, I shall offer a list of conditions that a defense of v-anger would have to satisfy. Doing so will lead me back to consideration of our third sense of fittingness.

4. THE CONDITIONS OF ETHICAL VENGEFUL ANGER

It seems to me that a number of considerations must be brought to bear on the question of whether it is ever virtuous to feel vengeful anger as I have described that emotion. Whether and how to assign differing weights to these considerations would require a separate essay. However that is worked out, the particular features of v-anger should be preserved in its vindication. It would not be persuasive to vindicate it simply by arguing for the merits of a sense of justice or of righteous indignation. That is too impersonal for present purposes and is a defense of related but distinct dispositions. Vengefulness is, I have argued, personal and requires that the agent (the victim) intentionally wish to inflict harm on the wrongdoer in return for wrong and also that the wrongdoer be able to identify the agent and his or her reason for wanting revenge.

First, for v-anger to be justifiable, it must correctly represent its target. Since v-anger is a response to wrong, the wrong must in fact be just that, and must in fact have been enacted by the person against whom the anger is directed. In those ways, the anger must be fitting in our first sense of the term: the beliefs that it implies or assumes must be true.⁵⁵ Further, it must be proportionate or exhibit what Adam Smith calls "propriety" (*TMS* I.i.3.6). No doubt a separate essay could be written about how proportionality is to be assessed, but we do recognize the notion of over- (and less frequently, under-) reaction. I have also stipulated that the offender is, in some sense, responsible for his or her wrongdoing and that justifiable v-anger assumes that the offender acted intentionally (in whatever sense accompanies responsibility) and is capable of understanding that he or she committed a wrong, specifically against this victim.

Second, it would make no sense to desire vengeance against an offender who is contrite and has expressed contrition, taken responsibility, made amends, and taken every other conciliatory and emendatory step one could reasonably wish for.⁵⁶ This, in turn, means that one ought not be resistant to forgiveness, or become hard-hearted, or succumb to the ongoing pleasures of fury. V-anger should be forsworn and hence be forswearable, so to speak, when faced with the appropriate forgiveness or excuse conditions.

Third, I suggest that v-anger that stems from and is meant to compensate for low self-esteem is not an emotion the virtuous person would endorse. To begin with, raising one's self-esteem by wishing to inflict pain on the wrongdoer is an unsuccessful strategy, as already mentioned. It is true that I can get angry because of my poor self-esteem but refrain from acting on it in recognition of the fact that such anger is self-defeating in practice. But the sort of abiding low self-esteem that is one source of v-anger is itself a sign of a deficiency of character (whether because one actually deserves higher self-esteem or because in fact one deserves low esteem). I do not see how a defense of v-anger can be successful if it hinges on defending low self-esteem. And while v-anger can be instrumentally useful for increasing one's deserved self-esteem, that vindication is not of the sort sought here. So a justification of v-anger has somehow to be compatible with and perhaps the expression of warranted self-esteem.

Fourth, however one is to understand the pleasures of vengefulness, they must not collapse into enjoying cruelty or sadism. In the best case, the pleasure of vengefulness seems to come to pleasure both in what is right and in righting a wrong.

Fifth, v-anger must be such (in its intensity and duration) as not to damage its owner ethically (by making him or her incapable of other virtues). This is necessary in order to answer Seneca's point about the toxicity of anger to its owner.⁵⁷ V-anger that met the conditions just enumerated would seem largely immune to the toxicity he describes. It seems to me that v-anger can, in principle, meet these conditions.

Satisfying the conditions just mentioned would help ensure that v-anger is (on the relevant occasion) not unjustifiable. But a further step is needed if it is to be positively commendable.⁵⁸ As noted at the end of section 3, an upshot of the present inquiry is the suggestion that one cannot resolve the problem of the praiseworthiness of v-anger without also working out which ideal of the good life is to be affirmed and so without working out the second sense of fittingness, as well as the first.

Obviously, I cannot undertake that project here, but as prolegomenon to that effort, I mention two points pertinent to the Aristotle-Seneca debate about archetypes of praiseworthy character that lead back to the third sense of fittingness. The first point

is that Aristotle's paragon of ethical virtue is a social or political being in a way that Seneca's is not. Seneca insists on one's being a part of the community of human beings, as his concluding sentences (quoted at the start of section 3) indicate, and his vision is cosmopolitan rather than political. Aristotle has something much more local in mind, it seems: this virtuous person's standing in and ties to this or that community. The relations of honor are not cosmopolitan. From a noncosmopolitan perspective, sensitivity to this or that belittlement by this or that person is harder to brush off. V-anger is fundamentally social in character: it expresses and assumes one's connectedness to other particular agents. For Aristotle, we care about these individuals but not about all individuals as such; for Seneca, we care about humanity but about no individual (much) more than another. The second point is that while Aristotle is certainly assuming that the virtuous person is self-directed, in the sense of governed by reason in view of the noble (*to kalon*), his paradigm of the virtuous agent is not autonomous in the way that Seneca's is, as is particularly evident in Seneca's notion that one can be wronged but not harmed if the agent judges him- or herself unharmed. Perhaps another rough and ready way to put the point is that Aristotle assumes (I once again bracket *NE X*) that we are embodied and affective rational animals and hence that our character is not immune to the corresponding pressures. On Seneca's picture, that inference need not follow, if only we follow our reason implicitly.

Can we follow our reason in that way? This brings us to the third sense of fittingness mentioned earlier—fittingness to our situation as human beings. Both Aristotle's and Seneca's competing versions of the ideal of high-mindedness are revisionist (imagine what it would mean to take seriously Aristotle's *megalopsuchos* as your role model). One way to assess which revisionist scheme is preferable is to ask what would have to be given up in order to achieve the ideal in question. As already noted, D'Arms and Jacobson have furnished us with a helpful distinction between "wide" and "deep" concerns, and it should be brought to bear here.⁵⁹ That adopting Seneca's view about anger would require wide and deep changes to ordinary human psychology does not seem terribly controversial. Even Seneca seems aware of that, as when he offers the provocative view, already quoted, to the effect that if your father is

murdered and your mother raped, you ought not respond with anger. What would have to be true of you in order that you *not* react with anger to such wrongs? What changes in yourself would you have to make in order to become a Senecan Stoic with respect to anger? If any emotion satisfies the “deep concerns” criterion, it is vengeful anger. To be sure, that is an empirical point, and another upshot of this discussion is that the question of the ethics of vengeful anger cannot be settled absent reliance on empirical propositions of that sort.

The defense of v-anger also seems to satisfy the “wide concerns” criterion, as D’Arms and Jacobson’s comments about anger suggest.⁶⁰ Aristotle does not require us to eliminate anger, and that alone may make his view seem more congenial because it is responsive to wide and deep concerns. While in the *Nicomachean Ethics* he is remarkably silent about such concerns when discussing anger, in *Politics* 7.7 there is a suggestive passage about the connection between “spiritedness”—itself generative of anger—and love as well as friendship. Aristotle writes: “For as to what some assert should be present in guardians, to be affectionate toward familiar persons but savage toward those who are unknown, it is spiritedness [*thumos*] that creates affectionateness; for this is the capacity of soul by which we feel affection. An indication of this is that spiritedness is more aroused against intimates and friends than against unknown persons when it considers itself slighted [*oligôreisthai*]” (1327b38–1328a3).⁶¹ As Fisher suggests, anger seems to be a necessary consequence of others *mattering* to us profoundly; if that is true, then its elimination would require tearing out the emotions of love and friendship, as well—a very high cost to pay.⁶² The combination of these deep and wide concerns, if buttressed by the empirical data, helps explain why the appropriate response to the relevant sort of wrong to oneself ought not be a bloodless, affect-less avenging or simply a calm turn to judicial redress.

But this third sense of fittingness is not sufficient, only necessary for the justification of v-anger. For there may be emotions or dispositions that are undesirable and yet may also, for all we know, satisfy the wide-and-deep-concerns criteria. Indeed, *unwarranted* v-anger (anger that does not fulfill the requirements of the first sense of fittingness, say) may be fitting in this sense. The concerns, that is, must be the right ones. And this suggests that what

is needed in order to build the ethical case for v-anger is the conjunction of all three senses of fittingness I have mentioned. That is a further upshot of this essay. Let me offer a few more words, then, about the connection between the second and third senses of fittingness (i.e., about fit relative to a moral ideal that is not outside the bounds of the wide-and-deep-concerns criteria). Much more remains to be said, to be sure, about the conceptual relations among the three senses of fittingness I have sketched.

Aristotle’s candidate for the ethical paradigm—the *megalopsuchos*—suffers from its own difficulties relevant to the present discussion. I refer not just to the lack of argumentative support with regard to the place of anger in the virtuous life but also to the unstable combination of self-sufficiency and dependence on the appropriate honors granted by (suitably qualified) others. It is, at the end of the day, difficult to tell whether the *megalopsuchos* responds with anger to what he regards as the unjustified denial of honor because his self-esteem is *not* called into question or because it is called into question along with his social standing.

If vengeful anger is to have a defensible place in the emotional repertoire of the virtuous person, we shall have to accept not only the importance of respecting wide and deep concerns but also some sort of dependence of self on other that often is more particularized, less cosmopolitan, than anything Seneca would allow or, at least, “thicker” in its human and moral ties. The picture of the ideal life will in that respect be more Aristotelian than Stoic. However, the instability I have ascribed to Aristotle’s picture would need to be overcome and thus the role of self-esteem stabilized. This would require, I suggest, jettisoning the central importance that Aristotle’s magnanimous man places on being honored for noteworthy achievements and deeds. Reliance on being honored ties one’s sense of self-worth too tightly to public perception of one’s worth. What is needed is a certain dependence on the moral regard of others who matter, one that does *not* call into question self-esteem and yet is not only admirable but also consistent with the wide-and-deep-concerns criteria. The task would be to explain the possibility of v-anger, and thus of being harmed, among people of solid self-esteem who are dependent as well as ethically admirable.⁶³ It seems to be a part of that picture that the offender be granted the standing to be worthy, so to speak, of one’s v-anger;

this comes to a kind of esteem of or respect for the offender.⁶⁴ Some such view about the offender belonging to the same moral community does not fit well with either the Aristotelian or the Stoic picture, albeit for different reasons in each case, though of the two, the Aristotelian is the more congenial. In sum, one would need to make sense of the idea of responsive agency, of the ability to direct one's life on the basis of a firm sense of who one is, while having—and exhibiting—dependency on others (for example, by desiring their esteem).

That is obviously a large task, and I shall move to conclude this much more limited effort by attempting to be a bit more precise about how this task might unfold in the present case. V-anger's insistence that the offender be made to know both the reason for and the agent of the revenge testifies to our interdependence, to our character as social beings, and to the fact that others *matter* to us. How is that dependency compatible with strong self-esteem and lack of concern about social standing? This is one of the deepest issues raised by this analysis, and I do not pretend to have resolved it here. The challenge is to explain how the wrong can be taken personally such that the victim may wish to be the instrument of revenge and wish that the offender know who is taking revenge and why, without the victim's self-esteem or concern for social standing or honor being at stake. At the same time, v-anger does not simply consist in the wish that justice be done (by someone). Perhaps an example will help move the discussion forward.

Imagine the case of a betrayal by a partner you had thought of as committed to you (and vice versa) for life. Given the large amount of time, the effort, trust, intimacy, and importance with which you have endowed the relationship (perhaps expressed through the allocation not just of love but of economic resources as well), the betrayal certainly matters greatly to you and likely elicits your v-anger, but not necessarily because of any weak self-esteem on your part. You do not react angrily because some great honor has been denied you or because your self-esteem or sense of social standing is damaged. Rather, something essential of who you are, your identity over time, is contained in this long-term relationship, and its brutal disruption through betrayal is a harm to you. V-anger acknowledges the importance of the relationship by wanting to force—through the imposition of pain and suffering—the

other to acknowledge and respect you, as well as the role each of you has played in the other's life. It is also the expression of self-respect, not an attempt to maintain one's standing to claim it, let alone to maintain social standing. Something analogous could be said in cases in which one is assaulted by a complete stranger, for relations of mutual respect as fellow citizens or as fellow human beings are also profound and "thick" in their own ways.⁶⁵

The list of human attachments that are enmeshed with our identities is long. To extirpate vengeful anger surely violates the wide- as well as the deep-concerns criteria, as it suggests that we would have to transform our identities such that others don't matter to us very much (which is the implication of what Seneca is saying). It would also violate what I would argue is a defensible, non-Senecan ethical ideal built on stable self-esteem but committed to ethical excellence in our relations—affectively felt and expressed as appropriate—to others and to ourselves. Fittingness in our second sense should, it seems, be regulated by fittingness in the third sense (I leave open the possibility that, in turn, the third should in some way be conditioned by the second). All this suggests, just as many have said, that the Stoic ideal—and with it, the condemnation of anger—is not acceptable. At the same time, as I have argued, the unstable role of self-esteem in Aristotle's ethical version of the *megalopsuchos* requires revision of Aristotle's view, even though that view has the merit of preserving a place for anger in the virtuous life.

5. TAKING REVENGE

Two vices are opposed to vengeance: one by way of excess, namely, the sin of cruelty or brutality, which exceeds the measure in punishing: while the other is a vice by way of deficiency and consists in being remiss in punishing. . . . But the virtue of vengeance consists in observing the due measure of vengeance with regard to all the circumstances.

—St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*⁶⁶

The justifiability of taking revenge does not follow simply from the justifiability of vengeful anger. Let us limit ourselves here to cases in which the wrong would normally be subject to the state's

authority, while acknowledging that there exists a spectrum of vengeful actions that do not normally fall under jurisprudential or police purview (as when one takes revenge in an interpersonal context by withholding love). To take personal revenge in the sorts of cases at issue here is to take the law into one's own hands. If that is to be done justifiably, a number of considerations must be brought to bear. To begin with, if justified revenge-taking expresses v-anger, such that its merits reflect those of the anger from which it springs, then the latter, too, must be justifiable in the ways already described. Further, taking personal revenge is justifiable only if considerations that to considerable extent parallel those mentioned in section 4 with respect to v-anger are satisfied: the alleged wrong must really be such, the target of revenge must in fact be the offender, the revenge must be proportional to the offense, the offender must deserve punishment, and the revenge must not be the instrument of sadism or cruelty.⁶⁷ And one would have to carefully consider the psychological costs to oneself quite possibly involved in actually making another human being suffer or in taking a human life (this roughly parallels the fifth condition enumerated toward the start of section 4).

However, taking revenge is also answerable to a host of other considerations that are not pertinent when evaluating the merits of vengeful anger. One certainly has to justify not deferring to the given judicial system. If the system is working reasonably well and fairly, what could warrant one's taking revenge as one sees fit? That question must be answered impartially before revenge is taken. If it is the case that the system is corrupt or simply does not exist, then one first has to assess the feasibility of alternate routes of action, such as taking steps to get a judicial system up and running. I would argue that those routes would have to be shown to be out of reach or not timely given the circumstances to justify one's taking revenge. One also has to satisfy legitimate demands for impartiality and proportionality across cases, so that the law one has taken into one's own hands preserves relevant features of *law*. Such considerations are motivated not only by the demands of fairness but also by the famous problem of spiraling tit-for-tat violence that revenge-taking can instigate. And, of course, one has to assess the physical dangers to oneself involved in taking revenge. I venture the suggestion that in view of the problems of social coordination

(to which a judicial system should respond), the chaos that results when people take the law into their own hands, and the other considerations just mentioned, the case against taking revenge is overwhelming even if defeasible, though much depends on the empirical circumstances at the relevant time.

In sum, the virtuous person will feel vengeful anger as appropriate but will take revenge only after careful deliberation and in view of the additional considerations and conditions just sketched. This leaves us with what I referred to at the start of this essay as a surprising distinction—in some cases, collision—between justifications for vengefulness and justifications for taking revenge. For if my vengeful anger is justified, then it seems that the wrongdoer deserves to be punished at my hands (and to know that that is the case and why)—this is his or her just desert that only my acting can provide—and yet good reasons of a different order may proscribe my acting, such that the offender must be deprived of this just desert. When reason forbids the revenge to which I am entitled, regret and even angry disappointment may well follow. The potential here for tragic moral conflict is undeniable.⁶⁸

NOTES

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1. Nietzsche, "On the Virtuous," in part II of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. W. Kaufmann (New York: Penguin, 1976), 206.

2. The *ménis* referred to at the start of the *Iliad* is, of course, that of Achilles. Homer's vocabulary for "anger" is complex, and "mênis" (also translatable as "wrath") is but one term that he uses. There may be several types or shapes of anger described in the *Iliad*. For discussion, see D. Konstan, *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 48–56.

3. I am relying on the reports published by CNN, February 27, 2009, <http://www.cnn.com/2009/CRIME/02/27/wiesel.madoff/index.html>, and by the *New York Times*, February 26, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/27/business/27madoff.html> (the latter states that Wiesel and his wife "lost their life savings" as a result of Madoff). On the judicial sentence imposed on Madoff, see the *New York Times* report of June 29, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/30/business/30madoff.html?pagewanted=1&ref=bernardmadoff>. That report contains quotations from other of Madoff's victims.

4. For example, C. S. Lewis remarks: "The least indulgence of the passion for revenge is very deadly sin. Christian charity counsels us to make every effort for the conversion of such a man: to prefer his conversion, at the peril of our own lives, perhaps of our own souls, to his punishment; to prefer it infinitely." *The Problem of Pain* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 109. See also T. Govier, *Forgiveness and Revenge* (London: Routledge, 2002), 11–13; and in a historical vein, D. H. Frank, "Anger as a Vice: A Maimonidean Critique of Aristotle's Ethics," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 7 (1990): 269–281.

5. For an account of the events referred to, see D. B. Kraybill, S. M. Nolt, and D. L. Weaver-Zercher, *Amish Grace: How Forgiveness Transcended Tragedy* (San Francisco: John Wiley, 2007). For a popular case (billed as a "National Bestseller") against anger, see T. N. Hanh's *Anger: Wisdom for Cooling the Flames* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2002).

6. I am using T. Irwin's translation throughout: *Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics* (hereinafter *NE*), 2nd ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1999).

7. On criticisms of the Amish's response to the murder of their children, see Kraybill et al., *Amish Grace*, 57.

8. See *The Works of Joseph Butler*, D.C. L., ed. W. E. Gladstone, 2 vols.

(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896); vol. II, Sermon VIII ("Upon Resentment"), 136–149, and Sermon IX ("Upon Forgiveness of Injuries"), 150–167. My citations and quotations from Butler are from this edition of these sermons. The consequentialist argument just referred to is to be found in "Upon Resentment," 139–143 (the idea is basically that God gave us that emotion for the purpose of the prevention or remedy of injury). I note that Butler uses the term "resentment" as synonymous with "deliberate anger" (e.g., 140), the meaning of which overlaps closely with what I am calling vengeful anger. A similar appeal to the utility of anger or resentment is found in Shaftesbury's *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit*, in *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, introduction by D. Den Uyl (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2001), 2:83–85. However, Shaftesbury also offers stringent criticisms of anger in those pages. I offer commentary on Butler's two sermons, and some discussion of resentment more generally, in my *Forgiveness: A Philosophical Exploration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). The present essay builds on—and, I hope, complements—*Forgiveness*.

9. On cultural norms favoring or even requiring revenge, see J. Elster, "Norms of Revenge," in *Ethics and Personality: Essays on Moral Psychology*, ed. J. Deigh (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 163–165.

10. For an analogous effort, see K. Kristjánsson, *Justifying Emotions: Pride and Jealousy* (New York: Routledge, 2002). However, he grounds his views about the morality of these emotions in what he calls "a sophisticated form of utilitarianism" (5). For an argument in defense of envy, see J. D'Arms and D. Jacobson, "Anthropocentric Constraints on Human Value," *Oxford Studies in Metaethics* 1 (2006): 119–125. See also J. Murphy's instructive "Two Cheers for Vindictiveness," ch. 2 of his *Getting Even: Forgiveness and Its Limits* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 17–26.

11. My focus is thus substantially different from that of C. K. B. Barton, *Getting Even: Revenge as a Form of Justice* (Chicago: Open Court, 1999). He writes: "The central claim [of his book] is that victim justice, to be worthy of that name, requires the substantial empowerment of victims by law, giving them the legal right to become involved in the relevant legal processes, some of which may culminate in impositions of punishment on their wrongdoers." He is out to vindicate "revenge's undeservedly poor image" (see xiv for both quotations), whereas I am primarily out to consider the ethical merits of vengeful anger.

12. P. Goldie, *The Emotions: A Philosophical Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 144. This definition seems broad enough to handle the case of someone who undertakes vengeful plotting over time, only sometimes experiencing the "hot" emotion. For further discussion of the cognitive nature of the emotions, see R. Debes, "Neither Here nor There:

The Cognitive Nature of Emotion," *Philosophical Studies* 146 (2009): 1–27. I shall not be talking about vengeful anger as a "mood," both because that seems out of keeping with common parlance and so as to sidestep the complicated question as to the relation between moods and emotions (about which see Goldie, *The Emotions*, 143–151).

13. Some theorists distinguish between sentiments and emotions. For example, see A. Ben-Ze'ev, *The Subtlety of Emotions* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 83, as well as J. Prinz, "Constructive Sentimentalism: Legal and Political Implications," in this volume, 10 (he there glosses sentiments as "dispositions to feel emotions").

14. J. Prinz remarks in *Gut Reactions: A Perceptual Theory of Emotion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 29: "Intuitions derive from reflecting on our concepts (hence 'conceptual analysis'), and concepts may contain information that is false or misleading." After enumerating other dangers, he continues: "These concerns threaten traditional philosophical methods quite broadly. Anyone who hopes to make progress by reflection alone should be wary. Reflection may reveal more about the person reflecting than about the phenomenon on which she is reflecting. If one wants to explain something other than one's own personal beliefs, one should exploit more objective methods" (ibid., 29). I have perhaps not exploited those methods sufficiently but have nonetheless tried to cultivate the requisite wariness.

15. Trans. R. Warner, in *Euripides I* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 105. This is a volume in *The Complete Greek Tragedies*, ed. D. Grene and R. Lattimore, and includes an Introduction by R. Lattimore.

16. See *Ancient Anger: Perspectives from Homer to Galen*, ed. S. Braund and G. Most (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); R. A. Kaster, *Emotion, Restraint, and Community in Ancient Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); W. V. Harris, *Restraining Rage: The Ideology of Anger Control in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); S. Knuutila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); and especially Konstan, *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks*, ch. 2 (on anger).

17. Ben-Ze'ev notes: "Hate may be characterized as involving a global negative attitude toward someone considered to possess fundamentally evil traits. . . . Anger is similar to hate and disgust in involving a negative evaluation, but it is the evaluation of a specific action rather than a global attitude." He also remarks: "Hate is a long-term attitude whose generation is frequently not triggered by a personal offense. Hate requires an evaluation of the object as possessing inherently dangerous traits; the object of anger is guilty of merely instrumental negative actions." *The Subtlety of Emotions*, 380 and 381, respectively. At *Rhetoric* 2.4 (1382a2–7), Aristotle

too notes that anger is directed at individuals, whereas hatred may also be concerned with classes thereof (say, all thieves). He adds that anger but not hatred is curable in time and that, while anger wants revenge, hatred aims for the extirpation of its object.

18. My approach differs from that of S. Uniacke, who claims that, unlike vengeance, "Revenge can be taken for an injury that is not an offence nor regarded as such by the person taking revenge. We can believe ourselves to have been injured, and resent the injury, without regarding ourselves as wronged." Her examples include resenting "someone's beating me in what I accept was fair competition." Further: "The emotion that gives rise to the desire for revenge is resentment: bitter feelings about an injury sustained. The emotion appropriate to vengeance is moral indignation: anger excited by perceived meanness, injustice, wickedness, or misconduct." S. Uniacke, "Why Is Revenge Wrong?," *Journal of Value Inquiry* 34 (2000): 62–63. That seems implausible. We might jokingly call beating our tennis partner next time around "revenge," but, if it were really such or if the effort really were accompanied by resentment, we would judge it (and the accompanying emotion) inappropriate precisely because no moral wrong is being responded to. So I am also disagreeing with G. Wallace, who urges that we distinguish "between vindictive and non-vindictive revenge. Shylock exemplifies the pursuit of the former, our squash victor achieves the latter. It must be stressed that in both cases it is correct to talk of revenge; it is neither flowery nor metaphorical to suggest that the squash player gains his revenge." "Wild Justice," *Philosophy* 70 (1995): 372. This leads Wallace to such counterintuitive statements as: "Revenge can be sought without malice and without endangering friendship" (373). (I am grateful to Roger Crisp for discussion of the possibility of nonmoralized vengeful anger.)

19. Aristotle, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*, trans. with Introduction, Notes, and Appendices by G. A. Kennedy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 127. I am using this translation of the *Rhetoric* throughout.

20. The relation between intention and responsibility (not to mention the related idea of "taking responsibility") is, of course, complex. There may be a spectrum of cases in which one has warranted v-anger at someone who has not intentionally done wrong but is responsible (or culpable) for the wrong.

21. See P. F. Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment," in *Freedom and Resentment and Other Essays* (New York: Methuen, 1980), 1–25. Strawson speaks of "reactive attitudes and feelings" (6) rather than sentiments, but in the present instance this seems to be a semantic point, especially given his concluding comment: "It is a pity that talk of the moral sentiments has fallen out of favour" (24). Strawson also refers to reactive attitudes such as

resentment and forgiveness as “essentially reactions to the quality of others’ wills towards us, as manifested in their behaviour: to their good or ill will or indifference or lack of concern. Thus resentment, or what I have called resentment, is a reaction to injury or indifference” (14). This is in line with my argument.

22. In this I am in agreement with R. J. Stainton, “Revenge,” *Critica* 38 (2006): 15. He there adds to the condition that an agent taking revenge must intend to do so and have reasons, that the “agent must also have the concept REVENGE.”

23. Butler, “Upon Resentment,” 139.

24. What Prinz says of Aristotle’s theory of the emotions generally fits v-anger nicely: “Emotions are, thus, felt, action-directed, cognitive states of the body.” *Gut Reactions*, 11. In characterizing Aristotle’s theory, Prinz notes that it is a hybrid—a behavioral, a cognitive, as well as a feeling theory. *Ibid.*, 10–11. This much seems to be consistent with the characterization of “emotion” by Goldie quoted at the start of this essay.

25. G. E. M. Anscombe, *Intention* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), 20: “I will call revenge and gratitude and remorse and pity backward-looking motives, and contrast them with motive-in-general,” for they give “something that *has happened* (or is at present happening) . . . as the ground of an action or abstention that is good or bad for the person (it may be oneself, as with remorse) at whom it is aimed.” Further on, she remarks: “I call a motive forward-looking if it is an intention” (21). Anscombe refers in these pages to revenge, not vengeful anger, but her point applies to both.

26. I agree with Prinz’s observation that anger tends to focus on the person who, say, uttered the offensive words, rather than on the words: “Insults instigate anger, but anger latches onto the insulter.” *Gut Reactions*, 227.

27. On the debate about whether emotions are perceptions, see Prinz, *Gut Reactions*, ch. 10. He there concludes that “emotion is a form of perception” (240).

28. Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (hereinafter *TMS*), ed. D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1982), III.4.3. I am using this edition of *TMS* throughout. Interestingly, the famous *Lex Talionis* (*Exodus* 21:24) may be interpreted as an effort to *restrain* the otherwise spiraling ambitions of revenge-taking, as is suggested by N. H. Frijda in “The Lex Talionis: On Vengeance,” in *Emotions: Essays on Emotion Theory*, ed. S. van Goozen, N. Van de Poll, and J. Sergeant (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1994), 264.

29. As Aristotle notes in *De Anima*, 403a30–31.

30. Does the legitimacy of v-anger therefore depend on a retributivist

theory of punishment? The answer may well be affirmative, though the line from a theory of the moral emotions to the theory of punishment is not direct and, in any event, is not my topic here.

31. Of course, not all retribution is revenge or vengeful; judicially administered punishment might be thought of as retributive in some sense but not necessarily as revenge or vengeful. Retribution may thus be impersonal, whereas revenge is personal, as R. Nozick argues in *Philosophical Explanations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 367.

32. I refer to the fine article by G. Bar-Elli and D. Heyd, “Can Revenge Be Just or Otherwise Justified?,” *Theoria* 52 (1986): 71–72. As they put it: “Furthermore, for the act of revenge to be fully successful, it must be understood by its recipient as intentional. This feature of ‘double intentionality’ is very significant for the understanding of the nature of revenge. It highlights the *personal* dimension which is its most important, though theoretically disturbing, trait” (71). Several of the points I am making in this paragraph are elegantly stated by Adam Smith (*TMS* II.i.1.6): “if the person who had done us some great injury, who had murdered our father or our brother, for example, should soon afterwards die of a fever, or even be brought to the scaffold upon account of some other crime, though it might sooth our hatred, it would not fully gratify our resentment. Resentment would prompt us to desire, not only that he should be punished, but that he should be punished by our means, and upon account of that particular injury which he had done to us. Resentment cannot be fully gratified, unless the offender is not only made to grieve in his turn, but to grieve for that particular wrong which we have suffered from him.” For a brilliant argument to the effect that Smith is ambivalent about the emotion of resentment (vacillating between a view tied to an ethic of honor and retaliation and one tied to an ethic of equal dignity and mutual accountability), see S. Darwall, “Smith’s Ambivalence about Honour,” *Adam Smith Review* 5 (2010): 106–123. I am indebted to Darwall’s discussion of Smith and of resentment in that article as well as in his *The Second-Person Standpoint: Morality, Respect, and Accountability* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006). See esp. pp. 67–68 and 80–86 of *The Second-Person Standpoint* on resentment, indignation, and retaliation.

33. Nozick too sees revenge (and in a different way, retribution, which is his main focus in this respect) as having a communicative function. *Philosophical Explanations*, 370. P. J. Ivanhoe has suggested to me that perhaps the communicative character of revenge should be stated more broadly: it informs others that it is wrong to treat *anybody* in the way that I was treated and so is a protest registered on behalf of other victims (even potential ones). Moreover, revenge can also publicly mark the offender as untrustworthy. I have not foregrounded these possible functions of revenge-taking

because I am avoiding reference to social utility as the basis for explaining and defending v-anger. A more Socratic line would emphasize that punishment aims to *cure* the wrongdoer (see *Gorgias* 478e2–4, 480a6–b5).

34. Nozick notes: "Revenge involves a particular emotional tone, pleasure in the suffering of another, while retribution either need involve no emotional tone, or involves another one, namely, pleasure at justice being done. Therefore, the thirster after revenge often will want to experience (see, be present at) the situation in which the revengee is suffering, whereas with retribution there is no special point in witnessing its infliction." *Philosophical Explanations*, 367. I add that interpreters tend to assume that the pleasures of imagining and plotting revenge carry over to the act of taking revenge itself; but different hedonic, as well as moral, valences may attach to each.

35. Indeed, Bar-Elli and Heyd conclude that "the metaphors of balancing, restoration, and equality are misleading when used in this context [of revenge]. They are already hard enough to apply on the 'material' level of penal justice. However, they seem totally paradoxical when extended to the 'mental' level of personal attitudes, which are not controllable by penal intervention and are partly a matter of the individual's free choice." "Can Revenge Be Just or Otherwise Justified?," 84.

36. See J. Haidt, "The Moral Emotions," in *Handbook of Affective Sciences*, ed. R. J. Davidson, K. R. Scherer, and H. H. Goldsmith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 856. With respect to Aristotle's point in the *Rhetoric* 2.2 (1378b1–2) that anger is accompanied by the (pleasurable) expectation of revenge, Haidt remarks: "More recent studies confirm that anger generally involves a motivation to attack, humiliate, or otherwise get back at the person who is perceived as acting unfairly or immorally The fact that anger often involves a motivation for revenge has been noted in a great many cultures." *Ibid.*, 856.

37. Elster, "Norms of Revenge," 176.

38. Uniacke comments: "While the desire for revenge seems principally grounded in notions of self-esteem and reputation, there are significant exceptions." "Why Is Revenge Wrong?," 66. The sorts of exceptions she cites, however, are about (in my terminology) retaliation or even, as she notes, a desire to make sense of a tragedy that has befallen a loved one by "blaming someone, however unreasonably." *Ibid.*, 67. J. Hampton usefully distinguishes an action that has the effect of diminishing one's value and rank from one that has "revealed a rank that is lower" than one had thought. See J. G. Murphy and J. Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 50. In describing the resentment a victim feels in response to wrongdoing, she credits it with the "fear" that one's worth can be lowered or has been revealed to be lower than one

thought. *Ibid.*, 57. Hence resentment is "a personally defensive protest," meaning among things that it is "a defense against the action's attack on one's self-esteem" (*ibid.*, 56, phrase in the second quotation italicized in the original). Hampton also notes: "resentment is nonetheless an emotion which betrays weakness. Resenters mount a defense against a challenge to their value and rank to which they are in danger of succumbing" (*ibid.*, 148). As I understand the argument, this protest or defense is retributive in character (e.g., see *ibid.*, 142–143). In the terms I am adopting, Hampton roots resentment, that is, vengeful anger, at least in part in low (or lowered) self-esteem and thus brings it close to Nietzschean *ressentiment*, as Murphy implies (*ibid.*, 93).

39. See M. J. Horowitz, "Understanding and Ameliorating Revenge Fantasies in Psychotherapy," *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 164 (2007): 25; Frijda, "The Lex Talionis," 276–277; and J. R. Averill, *Anger and Aggression: An Essay on Emotion* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1982), 173–174. As Averill notes, the relationship between low self-esteem and anger is complex, since "persons with very low self-esteem may perceive a threat as justified (e.g., as congruent with their own self-image)" and *not* respond with anger. *Ibid.*, 174. He there continues: "At the other extreme, persons with high self-esteem are less likely than others to perceive as threatening minor slights or rebuffs." R. S. Lazarus writes that anger has several "primary appraisal components," the third of which is introduced as follows: "The basic motive to preserve or enhance self-esteem against assault, which is one *type of ego-involvement*, must also be activated for anger to occur." *Emotion and Adaptation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 222. The close tie between vengeful anger and self-esteem is also drawn by P. Fisher, *The Vehement Passions* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 176–177: "The excitations of anger mark out the places where self-worth or honor has been transgressed"; and "A measure of self-esteem, or of endangered self-regard, is defended with the energies of anger that locate and announce that injustice has been felt and must be revenged." See also Fisher, *ibid.*, 184–194.

40. I agree with the definition of self-esteem in J. Deigh's "Shame and Self-Esteem: A Critique," *Ethics* 93 (1983): 229: "So while we would have said, loosely speaking, that self-esteem came from one's having a good opinion of oneself, we may now say more strictly that it comes from a good opinion of oneself as the author of one's actions, more generally, one's life. Accordingly, this opinion comprises a favorable regard for one's aims and ideals in life and a favorable assessment of one's suitability for pursuing them." I am not here concerned with the interesting problem of the relation between self-esteem and self-respect, about which see S. Darwall, "Two Kinds of Respect," *Ethics* 88 (1977): 48; and D. Sachs, "How to

Distinguish Self-Respect from Self-Esteem," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 10 (1981): 346–360.

41. See F. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. M. Clark and A. J. Swensen (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998), First Treatise, Section 10, p. 19: "The slave revolt in morality begins when *ressentiment* itself becomes creative and gives birth to values: the *ressentiment* of beings denied the true reaction, that of the deed, who recover their losses only through an imaginary revenge. Whereas all noble morality grows out of a triumphant yes-saying to oneself, from the outset slave morality says 'no' to an 'outside', to a 'different', to a 'not-self': and *this* 'no' is its creative deed." Nietzsche's "noble human being" (*ibid.*, 21) bears an interesting family resemblance to Aristotle's *megalopsuchos*, though the latter does permit himself vengeful anger (but not *ressentiment*). There can be no hitting of the Aristotelian mean with respect to *ressentiment*, and I will not be making the case that *ressentiment* could be justifiable.

42. Once again, consider Frijda, who comments on the propensity to cruelty, including that associated with revenge: "Need for proof of power or self-efficacy at this level has a ring of need for proof of a sense of self—again, as the counterpoint of being a victim." "The Lex Talionis," 281.

43. In *Seneca: Moral and Political Essays*, ed. and trans. J. M. Cooper and J. F. Procopé (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 116. I am using this edition and translation of *De Ira* throughout and have incorporated the page references directly into the text. I am not drawing here on any other of Seneca's writings.

44. R. Kraut notes: "Unfortunately, he [Aristotle] finds it so obvious that anger should sometimes be felt and expressed that he does not argue against a hypothetical opponent who advocates its elimination. The latter view was adopted by the Stoics; see esp. Seneca, *De Ira*." *Aristotle: Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 334 n. 23.

45. D'Arms and Jacobson remark in "Anthropocentric Constraints on Human Value": "Reasons of fit are those reasons that speak directly to what one takes the emotion to be concerned with, as opposed to reasons that speak to the advisability or propriety of having that emotion. So reasons of fit for fear are roughly those that speak to whether or not something is a *threat*." *Ibid.*, 108. This seems tolerably close to the first conception of "the fitting" I am sketching here.

46. D. Konstan comments: "Anger for Aristotle, then, is anything but a reflex to pain or harm, even when the cause is intentional. Aristotle envisages a world in which self-esteem depends on social interaction: the moment someone's negative opinion of your worth is actualized publicly in the form of a slight, you have lost credit, and the only recourse is a compensatory act that restores your social position. Anger is precisely the

desire to adjust the record in this way." *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks*, 74–75.

47. See *The Complete Works of Aristotle* (Revised Oxford Translation), ed. and trans. J. Barnes (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), I:161.

48. For some helpful discussion of pride, self-respect, and self-esteem with reference to the *megalopsuchos*, see Kristjánsson's *Justifying Emotions*, 95–97, 104–108. With regard to the relation between gender and (the acceptability of) v-anger, an issue that has much to do with the perceived "standing" to be angry, see M. Frye's "A Note on Anger," in *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory* (Freedom, CA: Crossing Press, 1983), 84–94; E. V. Spelman, "Anger and Insubordination," in *Women, Knowledge, and Reality: Explorations in Feminist Philosophy*, ed. A. Garry and M. Pearsall (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 263–273; and A. Lorde, "The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism," in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (New York: Crossing Press, 1984), 124–133.

49. D'Arms and Jacobson helpfully distinguish between two sorts of considerations bearing on the question of the cost of a revisionist moral view. The first has to do with our "deep concerns," ones that "are firmly entrenched in their possessors, such that it would be either impossible or extremely costly to excise them." The second has to do with our "wide concerns." These "play a broad psychological role in the mental economy of their possessor. When the object of a concern prompts a variety of evaluative attitudes, not just a single emotion or desire; when desire for it (or aversion to it) arises in many different situations; when it is implicated in the ability to get or avoid many other things people care about; when its pursuit or avoidance grounds disparate actions and plans; when, in short, it is firmly enmeshed in our web of psychological responses, this is evidence of the width of a concern." "Anthropocentric Constraints on Human Value," 116. As an example of a wide concern they cite anger, and in disagreement with the "stoic and Christian foes of anger" they note: "Yet anger is not just a passion for vengeance. It also manifests concern for social regulation, which focuses on personal slights and social transgressions." *Ibid.*, 117. They immediately concede that one could have concern for respectful treatment independently of anger, however, which is a bit confusing (and provides Seneca with an opening). The more general claim is "that psychological facts constrain the tenability of norms of fittingness. . . . Rationalists can point to a sublime Socratic ideal of a person so self-sufficient in his virtue that he does [*sic*] care about honor, wealth, or even life; or to an impartial observer whose only concern is to maximize net happiness. If nothing matters but the state of one's soul, and no harm can befall the virtuous person, then there is truly nothing to fear." *Ibid.*, 118. They also remark: "But why should the fact that the stoic has been

able to describe a logically possible human being who can embrace these consequences be thought to show that they are suitable standards of fittingness for humans?" Ibid., 118. I am in sympathy with both these more general points, as will become clearer in section 4.

50. Ibid., 118.

51. Seneca takes this all the way at 1.12.1: "Tell me then, is the good man not angry if he sees his father slain and his mother ravished? No, he will not be angry. He will punish and protect." Consider also 1.12.5: "Anger for one's friends is the mark of a weak mind, not a devoted one." So we are not to rise to indignant anger or sympathetic resentment, either. This seems quite close to the conclusion drawn by the Amish (though no doubt they do so on somewhat different grounds).

52. He thus would not seem to succumb to what D'Arms and Jacobson call the "moralistic fallacy." See their "The Moralistic Fallacy: On the 'Appropriateness' of Emotions," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 61 (2000): 66 (they there use the example of the joke). They remark: "Put most simply, to commit the moralistic fallacy is to infer, from the claim that it would be wrong or vicious to feel an emotion, that it is therefore unfitting. We shall contend, to the contrary, that an emotion can be fitting despite being wrong (or inexpedient) to feel." Ibid., 68–69. Their definition here of "fitting" as a match-up between emotion and features in the world it takes itself to be responding to (ibid., 72) captures my first sense of "fitting."

53. For an interesting discussion of the Epicurean condemnation of anger, see J. Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 194–200. Her remarks on 218–219 about the importance of the conception of our final end to the assessment of the propriety of anger mesh perfectly with my argument.

54. As Seneca indicates in *De Ira* 2.3.4, the emotion of anger (as distinct from the "impression" that sets it going) has already enlisted (faulty) reason on its side. So, once we are angry, reason cannot stand *against* the anger; it is already working on behalf of the anger (e.g., by rationalizing revenge-taking or exaggerating the harm done to the victim). And that underlines the danger of anger—its toxicity—and the impossibility of moderating it to the point that it expresses moral excellence. (My thanks to Julia Annas for pressing this point on me.) The mitigated defense of anger I am working toward in this essay would require rejecting this Stoic theory of the emotions.

55. This may be contested on the grounds that it suffices for the agent to have good reasons for believing that his or her v-anger tracks what is in fact the case (so that the agent's course of action is subjectively right, even if it is objectively wrong). While this is too large an issue to be further

explored here, my broadly Aristotelian approach (for Aristotle, the virtues depend on *phronesis*, and reason or judgment tracks truth; e.g., *NE* 1140b5, 21) avoids the counterintuitive result that it would be virtuous to feel v-anger that is mistakenly directed at the innocent, for example. A full assessment of the matter would have to take into account whether or not the mistake is culpable. (I am grateful to Daniel Star for pressing me to confront this point.)

56. The steps I would argue for are to be found in my *Forgiveness*, ch. 2.

57. One question to be addressed in working out this point is whether a "unity of the virtues" thesis is being assumed.

58. For a similar point, see G. Taylor, "Justifying the Emotions," *Mind* 84 (1975): 397–402. My list is compatible with—and to some extent overlaps with—hers (see 394–397). As she rightly notes: "Justifying one's anger on any particular occasion is, then, a complicated procedure" (397).

59. See note 49.

60. See the passages cited in note 49 from D'Arms and Jacobson, "Anthropocentric Constraints on Human Value." I read their comments about anger as applying to vengefulness.

61. Aristotle: *The Politics*, trans. C. Lord (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 208. Aristotle continues at 1328a8–12: "But it is not right to say that they are harsh toward those who are unknown. One ought not to be of this sort toward anyone, nor are magnanimous persons [*megalopsuchoi*] savage in their nature, except toward those behaving unjustly. And, further, they will feel this rather toward their intimates, as was said earlier, if they consider themselves treated unjustly" (ibid.).

62. I refer to Fisher's gloss on these *Politics* passages: "Aristotle's seemingly odd claim can be restated as an argument that the sudden anger we feel driving us to retaliate also informs us of two things: first, that we have been held in contempt; second, that the person who has slighted us matters to us. The flaring up of anger informs us about how much we care for this person's regard, and how injured we are by any sign of contempt on his or her part." *The Vehement Passions*, 192.

63. One of the greatest modern reflections on the problem of reconciling interdependence, anger, and strong self-esteem is to be found in Rousseau's *Emile* (the epigraph to which is taken from *De Ira*). The present essay will be developed further in conjunction with a study of Rousseau and Adam Smith.

64. Correspondingly, one would have to grant that the offense does not dehumanize the offender or make him or her into a "moral monster." Aristotle's view seems to be that many offenders are simply not worth one's anger—they don't have the standing to warrant it. And while Seneca emphasizes our common humanity, in comparing the offender to a natural

event, child, or illness—with the result that the wrongdoer is not worthy of one's anger—his view risks dehumanizing the offender. By contrast, the view I am pointing to holds that the wrongs to which v-anger responds are the work of agents who *qua* agents have the standing to be addressed by this emotion, as it were. That helps to explain why equality of regard (and therefore the offender's regard of the victim) matters. The idea of second-personal address is worked out systematically in S. Darwall's *The Second-Person Standpoint*.

65. V-anger holds the wrongdoer accountable and thus is also mobilized for the sake of that other, as it seeks to get him or her to see what it means both for you to have been wronged and that you are not to be wronged. In holding the offender accountable, one stands in for his or her better self (this is not incompatible with desert, even when the offender deserves death). This thread of the justification for v-anger preserves its communicative function and might be all the more relevant if the other has mattered greatly to you.

66. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1947), 2:1658 (Q. 108 Art. 2, reply to Objection 3).

67. This list overlaps to some extent with that of P. French, who posits four conditions for defensible revenge-taking. See his *The Virtues of Vengeance* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 115. But French's analysis is not only focused on revenge-taking rather than on the emotion of vengefulness; on his view, revenge may justly be taken on behalf of another (hence he speaks throughout of avenging; see, e.g., *ibid.*, 172).

68. This is not to say, however, that the virtuous person's v-anger is therefore turned into Nietzschean *ressentiment* (such that v-anger is *repressed*) when revenge ought not be taken. Self-command and repression, the reasoned decision not to act on a sentiment and the inability to act on it, are quite different things. The view being sketched here would have to be joined to an appropriate conception of agency such that *not* acting on warranted v-anger does not compromise agency. John Tomasi suggests to me that a conception of political agency (which reflects one's status as citizen) might help to resolve the tension here.

PART II

PASSION AND MOTIVATION: PASSIONS AND EMOTIONS IN DEMOCRATIC POLITICS