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Fitting Attitudes and Forgiveness

Glen Pettigrove

The appropriate response to wrongdoing, many have suggested, is anger or resentment. One way in which such a claim might be defended would appeal to a fitting attitude account of value. Fitting attitude accounts are built around the intuitive link between certain attitudes or emotions and their corresponding objects: There is a connection between love and the lovable, shame and the shameful, delight and the delightful. I shall argue that a fitting attitude account of the link between resentment and wrongdoing is more complicated than one might have thought. The complications that emerge prove illuminating both for our thinking about forgiveness and for our thinking about fittingness.

1. Forgiveness and resentment

Jeffrie Murphy, in 'Forgiveness and Resentment,' asserts that a person ought to resent wrongs that are done to her. The 'ought' in question is not an instrumental 'ought', as in the judgment that one ought to brush one's teeth before bed in order to avoid cavities. Nor is it the 'ought' of etiquette, as in, 'One ought to place the salad fork to the left of the plate when setting the table.' The 'ought' Murphy has in mind is considerably more demanding: 'A failure to resent moral injuries done to me is a failure to care about the moral value incarnate in my own person (that I am in Kantian language, an end in myself) and thus a failure to care about the very rules of morality.'¹

¹ Jeffrie Murphy, 'Forgiveness and Resentment,' in *Forgiveness and Mercy*, Jeffrie Murphy and Jean Hampton (Cambridge 1988) 18.

If we define forgiveness, as Murphy does, as ‘the forswearing of resentment’ then a problem arises.² If one ought to resent, and forgiveness is the forswearing of resentment, then it looks as though the forgiver is doing something she ought not do. Or at least she appears to be neglecting something she ought to do.

Murphy addresses this problem by adding a crucial qualifier to the forswearing of resentment: ‘Forgiveness is ... forswearing resentment on moral grounds.’³ Provided the moral grounds outweigh, cancel, or supersede the moral grounds for resentment, forgiveness will be permissible. The moral grounds Murphy discusses include:

1. He [i.e., the wrongdoer] repented or had a change of heart *or*
2. he meant well (his motives were good) *or*
3. he has suffered enough *or*
4. he has undergone humiliation (perhaps some ritual humiliation, e.g., the apology ritual of ‘I beg forgiveness’) *or*
5. old time’s sake (e.g., ‘He has been a good and loyal friend to me in the past’).⁴

Murphy argues it is permissible to forgive at least some individuals who satisfy one or more of these conditions. Nevertheless, although forgiveness need not be objectionable, the burden of proof still rests squarely on the shoulders of the would-be forgiver to demonstrate that she has not done something dodgy. In other words, the presumption is that the forgiver is guilty until proven innocent.

Murphy has modified his view in a number of ways since the publication of ‘Forgiveness and Resentment.’ In his second book on the topic he made more room for

² Murphy (1988) 15. A number of authors have argued that forgiveness is something other than the forswearing of resentment. The most common alternative involves expanding the range of emotions forgiveness might overcome. Since I have already contributed to this debate (see *Forgiveness and Love* [Oxford 2012] chapter 1), I shall not engage with the issue here. For the purposes of this essay I shall follow Murphy, Hieronymi, and Griswold in treating forgiveness as involving the overcoming of anger or resentment, since they present the most challenging version of the position I wish to contest. Those who argue that wrongdoing elicits a more expansive range of attitudes or emotions and who define forgiveness in terms of overcoming some of these other emotions are invited to apply the argument that follows, *mutatis mutandis*, to their preferred range of emotional reactions to wrongdoing.

³ Murphy (1988) 24.

⁴ Murphy (1988) 24.

forgiveness and identified a wider range of reasons that might justify it. But as the book's title, *Getting Even: Forgiveness and Its Limits*, and chapter titles like 'Two Cheers for Vindictiveness,' make clear, the default response to wrongdoing, by his lights, remains (and should remain) anger or resentment. They are the responses transgressions call for. To respond in some other way requires special justification.⁵

Following Murphy's lead, a number of other theorists have defended views that are built around similar assumptions regarding the link between wrongdoing and resentment. For example, Joram Haber insists that resenting wrongdoing is a key component of a well-functioning 'sense of right and wrong.'⁶ That is because 'resentment is the proper response to personal injury and ... the failure to resent under certain circumstances is indicative of a moral defect.'⁷ A self-respecting person who cares about morality 'will express this care in the form of resentment when she is the object of moral injury.'⁸

Pamela Hieronymi contends that, when we are warranted in judging that we have been unjustly wronged by a responsible member of the moral community, 'our first response is, and ought to be, anger and resentment.'⁹ While it is possible for someone to judge that a wrong has been done to them without feeling anger or resentment – perhaps by recognizing that moral rule R governs a certain class of actions C and that action A falls within C and is a violation of R – the person who both recognizes the wrong and feels anger is better situated vis-a-vis the wrong.¹⁰ 'To be angry and resentful is to be involved with and committed to these judgments in a way that goes beyond merely assenting to their truth. (I take the

⁵ Murphy, *Getting Even* (Oxford 2003).

⁶ Joram Haber, *Forgiveness: A Philosophical Study* (Rowman and Littlefield 1991) 72.

⁷ Haber, 70.

⁸ Haber, 72-3.

⁹ Pamela Hieronymi, 'Articulating an Uncompromising Forgiveness,' *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 62 (2001) 530.

¹⁰ I take anger to be the genus of which resentment is a species. However, in the literature with which I am engaging, 'anger' and 'resentment' are commonly used interchangeably. So, for the purposes of this paper, 'anger' and 'resentment' can be treated as synonymns.

difference between merely assenting to these judgments and being angry or resentful to be the same sort of difference as that between agreeing that something is good and wanting it, or agreeing that something is dangerous and fearing it.)¹¹

Charles Griswold, in *Forgiveness: A Philosophical Exploration*, agrees with Murphy, Haber, and Hieronymi that: ‘it is appropriate ... to respond with anger when wrongly injured.’¹² And like them he defines forgiveness in terms of a reduction in this anger or resentment: ‘forgiveness requires that resentment for the relevant injury be appropriately moderated and that the agent make a further commitment to work toward a frame of mind in which even that resentment is let go.’¹³ However, before it is appropriate to moderate one’s resentment, he argues, a wrongdoer must ‘qualify for forgiveness.’¹⁴ If she does, then ‘forgiveness is commendable because it is what the offender is due.’¹⁵ If not, she should not be forgiven, for she is ‘undeserving of the honor.’¹⁶

Even John Kekes, who objects to views – like Murphy’s, Haber’s, Hieronymi’s, and Griswold’s – that try to define forgiveness as the overcoming of resentment, nevertheless insists that ‘evil ought to “be remembered bitterly and resentfully.”’¹⁷ It is ‘obscene’ to encourage victims of evil to avoid or overcome bitter and resentment-filled remembering. His story is not much different when he turns from evil actions – which he takes to be distinguished by the degree of harm that they cause and their malevolent motivation¹⁸ – to more garden-variety wrongdoing. He argues, it is appropriate for a person to respond to a harm they have suffered with an emotion like ‘resentment, bitterness, anger, hatred, [or]

¹¹ Hieronymi (2001) 530.

¹² Charles Griswold, *Forgiveness: A Philosophical Exploration* (Cambridge 2007) 26 and 39.

¹³ Griswold (2007) 42.

¹⁴ Griswold (2007) 59.

¹⁵ Griswold (2007) 69.

¹⁶ Griswold (2007) 63-64.

¹⁷ John Kekes, ‘Blame versus Forgiveness,’ *The Monist* 92 (2009) 489.

¹⁸ Kekes, 490.

indignation' that 'is roughly proportional to the harm.'¹⁹ Not responding with proportional anger to harms one has suffered is suspicious and calls for special explanation.

The list could go on. The so-called paradox of forgiveness, for example, on which a lot of ink has been spilled since Aurel Kolnai's influential Aristotelian Society address, is built around the assumption that we ought to resent wrongdoers.²⁰ However, the passages cited above are sufficient to show that the assumption that resentment or anger is the appropriate response to a wrong that one has suffered is widespread in the philosophical literature. And they indicate the kind of challenge this assumption poses for forgiveness. The person who forgives is engaging in a practice that is out of step with the appropriate response to wrongdoing, and for that reason her actions demand special justification.

2. *Fitting Attitudes*

How might one go about defending the assumption that anger or resentment is the appropriate response to wrongdoing?²¹ A promising way to motivate these claims is provided by a fitting attitude analysis of value. Fitting attitude accounts come in two sizes. In their broadest, most encompassing form, fitting attitude accounts claim that an object, action, or event has value if and only if it is the 'fitting object of a pro-attitude.'²² How the relevant 'pro-attitudes' are described varies somewhat by theorist. David Wiggins speaks of 'approbation', Franz Brentano of 'love', W.D. Falk of 'favor', 'desire', and 'approval', and A.C. Ewing of 'desire', 'liking', 'approval', and 'admiration' as well as more active

¹⁹ Kekes, 499.

²⁰ See Aurel Kolnai, 'Forgiveness,' *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 74 (1973-74): 91-106; Ingvar Johansson, 'A Little Treatise of Forgiveness and Human Nature,' *The Monist* 92 (2009): 537-555; Leo Zaibert, 'The Paradox of Forgiveness,' *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 6 (2009): 365-393; and Oliver Hallich, 'Can the Paradox of Forgiveness Be Dissolved?' *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* (2013): 999-1017.

²¹ 'Anger' is often used as a parent term for a whole family of hostile emotions, including irritation, indignation, resentment, hatred, and rage. In what follows I adopt this usage and refer to 'anger' rather than 'anger and resentment', since anger so understood includes resentment.

²² A.C. Ewing, *The Definition of Good* (Routledge and Kegan Paul 1948) 152.

responses such as ‘choice’ and ‘pursuit’.²³ Regardless of their preferred parent term for pro-attitudes, it is clear that each of these theorists intends their term(s) to include a wide range of positive affects, attitudes, and action orientations. As Ewing puts it, “‘Pro attitude’ is intended to cover any favourable attitude to something.”²⁴ These theorists advance a similar account of disvalue: an object, action, or event has disvalue if and only if it is the fitting object of a con-attitude. Franz Brentano and Noah Lemos choose ‘hate’ as the parent term that covers the full range of con-attitudes.²⁵ But other theorists prefer to work with more fine-grained responses – such as guilt, remorse, shame, resentment, outrage, blame, and anger – to pick out the negative value range.²⁶ What unites these theorists is a shared commitment to defining good and evil, value and disvalue by reference to fitting attitudes on the part of suitably situated observers.

Fitting attitude theories also come in a smaller, more modestly proportioned size. Theorists of this second sort agree that *some* values should be defined via fitting attitudes. They agree, for example, that the irritating should be defined in terms of its connection with irritation, the enviable in terms of its connection with envy, and the funny in terms of its connection with amusement. They wish to account for the pleasurable, the agreeable, the fearsome, the offensive, and the disgusting in similar ways, defining them in relation to attitudes, emotions, and reactions that fit them.²⁷ But they stop short of trying to define *all* value concepts, properties, or relations in this way.

²³ David Wiggins, ‘A Sensible Subjectivism,’ *Needs, Values, Truth*, 3rd ed. (Oxford 1998) 206; Franz Brentano *The Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong*, Roderick Chisholm and Elizabeth Schneewind, trans. (Routledge and Kegan Paul 1969) 18; W.D. Falk, ‘Fact, Value, and Nonnatural Predication,’ *Ought, Reasons, and Morality* (Cornell 1986) 117; Ewing, 149.

²⁴ Ewing, 149.

²⁵ Brentano, 18; Noah Lemos, *Intrinsic Value: Concept and Warrant* (Cambridge 1994) 12.

²⁶ See, for example, Allan Gibbard, *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings* (Harvard 1990) 41-42.

²⁷ See Mark Johnston, ‘The Authority of Affect,’ *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 63.1 (2001): 181-214; and Justin D’Arms and Daniel Jacobson, ‘Sentiment and Value,’ *Ethics* 110 (2000): 722-748.

Fitting attitude theories stand in contrast to robust realist accounts of value.²⁸ The robust realist takes the goodness of good news and the excellence of personal excellence to exist independently of our valuing attitudes. Some robust realist accounts resemble fitting attitude accounts by giving emotions a central role. When in the presence of valuable properties, joy and pride are explained as the natural response of the clear-eyed observer. Such emotions may even be the means by which we become aware of these value properties.²⁹ But the goodness or badness of these things in no way depends upon our responses. Fitting attitude theorists, on the other hand, think value depends upon valuers in some way, so that if there had never been and would never be any valuers, there would be no value.

Fitting attitude theories also stand in contrast to dispositionalist accounts of value; however, the contrast is not as sharp as the one between FA theories and robust realism. A dispositionalist view of value claims that for an object to have value X is for it to be such that ordinary people in standard conditions respond to it X-ly. For example, ‘a dispositionalist view of value understands funniness ... in terms of whatever amuses normal humans in standard conditions.’³⁰ Similarly, the fearsome will be whatever provokes fear, the shameful what evokes shame, the horrific what elicits horror, and the irritating what causes irritation among standard perceivers in standard conditions. Both the dispositionalist and the FA theorist take concepts like the funny, fearsome, shameful, and irritating, to be response-dependent concepts.³¹ Mark Johnston suggests these value concepts are like colour concepts,

²⁸ Daniel Jacobson, ‘Fitting Attitude Theories of Value,’ *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2011 Edition), Edward Zalta, ed. URL=<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2011/entries/fitting-attitude-theories/>.

²⁹ See Linda Zagzebski, *Divine Motivation Theory* (Cambridge 2004); and Adam Pelsler, ‘Emotion, Evaluative Perception, and Epistemic Justification,’ *Emotion and Value*, Sabine Roeser and Cain Todd, eds (Oxford 2014).

³⁰ Daniel Jacobson, ‘Fitting Attitude Theories of Value.’

³¹ Johnston introduces response-dependent concepts in ‘Dispositional Theories of Value,’ *Aristotelian Society Supplement* 63 (1989) 139-174, at 145. In ‘The Authority of Affect,’ it becomes clear that he

insofar as they depend upon qualities both of the object and of the perceiver. In the case of colour, our perceptions of the redness of an apple depend upon the ways in which different wavelengths of light are reflected from the apple's surface. However, the apple's reflectance profile by itself is not sufficient for the concept of redness. REDNESS also depends upon the cone structure of the human eye. Were there no eyes that processed light in the way ours do, then even though there would still be apples with the same reflectance profile, we would have no reason to formulate the concept of redness, no opportunity to become aware of it, and no way of knowing when or whether it applied to any of them. Our concept of the apple's redness depends upon both its reflectance profile and the phenomenal qualities we experience when the reflected light is processed by the cones of the human eye. Johnston argues that something similar applies in the case of value concepts like being awesome, irritating, shameful, or funny.

What distinguishes a fitting attitude theory from a dispositionalist theory is that the former leaves room for the possibility that the normal response could be mistaken. A fitting attitude theory of value is concerned not with whether it is normal but whether it is fitting to value something in one way or another. An action, attitude, or object has valuable property X, the FA theorist contends, if it is fitting to value it X-ly. For example, a person is admirable if it is fitting to admire her, an action is shameful if it is fitting to feel ashamed of it, etc.³²

One reason to prefer a fitting attitude theory over a dispositionalist one is that it leaves room for moral reformers to challenge widely shared attitudes. For instance, a century ago standard perceivers in standard conditions responded to mixed-race, mixed-caste, and same-sex romantic relationships with indignation. Standard perceivers whose adult children were

does not think a response-dependent account is limited to making claims about concepts. There can also be response-dependent properties that correspond to our response-dependent concepts.

³² Jacobson, 'Fitting Attitude Theories of Value.'

part of such a relationship found it deeply shaming. A fitting attitude theory has space built into it to accommodate criticism of such norms. A second reason for preferring a fitting attitude theory is that it presents itself as a normative theory, rather than a descriptive one. As Daniel Jacobson observes, ‘To call something funny is in some way to endorse amusement at it, not to report or predict it.’³³

Thus, fitting attitude theories are distinguished by a) their attempt to explain at least some value notions in terms of fitting attitudes³⁴ and b) their commitment to response-dependence.³⁵ Within these parameters, however, there is still a lot of scope for disagreement. Some fitting-attitude theorists think that there can be both response-dependent concepts and response-dependent properties. That is, they not only think the *concepts* RED and LOVABLE depend upon our responses but they also think the *properties* of being red or being lovable depend upon our responses. Such theorists are realists about value properties, even though they endorse response-dependence and are thereby distinguished from the robust realists discussed above. Others, like Allan Gibbard who champions an expressivist account of ethics, are happy with response-dependent concepts but do not think we can take the further step to posit ‘real’ properties that correspond to these concepts.

Both realist and expressivist fitting attitude theorists have the resources to make sense of the kinds of remarks that Murphy, Hieronymi, Griswold, et al. have made about the link between anger and the judgment that I have been wronged. According to each, being angry is the fitting response to undeserved injury at the hands of another agent. Furthermore, the wrongness or disvalue of the injury is partly constituted by people having this response when they observe or suffer such injuries.

³³ Jacobson, ‘Fitting Attitude Theories of Value.’

³⁴ That is to say they attempt to explain (some set of) axiological concepts in terms of deontic concepts. As Wlodek Rabinowicz puts it, ‘value is explicated in terms of the stance that *ought* to be taken toward the object’ (‘Value, Fitting-Attitude Account of,’ *The International Encyclopedia of Ethics*, Hugh LaFollette, ed. (Blackwell 2013) 5282.

³⁵ Jacobson, ‘Fitting Attitude Theories of Value.’

Fitting attitude accounts have a number of attractive features. They capture something intuitive about our valuing attitudes. Joy is a fitting response to good news, whereas sadness is a fitting response to bad news. Something would be amiss if you responded to good news with sadness or bad news with joy. Similarly, shame is a fitting response to personal failure and pride to personal excellence. A person who responded to personal failure with pride or to personal excellence with shame would have their wires crossed. Indeed, it would be hard for us to make sense out of their experience at all. And within fitting attitude theories these emotional or attitudinal responses are not just along for the ride. They are in the driver's seat, making the valuing omnibus go.

3. The wrong kinds of reasons for forgiving?

According to fitting attitude theories, the judgment that X is good is the judgment that one ought (or has reason) to respond to it with a pro-attitude. However, not all situations in which one ought (or has reason) to have a pro-attitude toward X are situations in which X is good. To illustrate, imagine that both W and X come from a culture in which arranged marriages are common and, although they have not met, their parents have arranged their betrothal. Knowing that their future life together will be better (happier, more harmonious) if they have pro-attitudes toward one another like love and respect, W and X each recognise that they ought to love one another. But insofar as they do not yet know each other, neither of them is in a position to judge that the other is good (lovable, worthy of respect). In this case the pro-attitudes they ought to have (because it would be advantageous for them to do so) are not fitting. Or, to be more precise, they do not fit what they know of their betrothed. In such a situation, W's reasons are what Wlodek Rabinowicz and Toni Ronnow-Rasmussen have called 'the wrong kind of reasons' for loving X.

What distinguishes the right kinds of reasons from the wrong kinds has been the subject of much debate. Some, like Derek Parfit, have suggested that what distinguishes W's reasons from reasons of the right kind for loving X is that reasons of the right kind are provided by the *object* of the valuing attitude (X), whereas W's reasons are given by facts about being in the *state* of loving X.³⁶ The value of being in the state of loving X gives W a reason to *want to love* X, but it does not give her a reason *to love* X.³⁷ The problem with W's loving X in this case is that the reasons W has for loving X 'have to do with the value of that attitude itself and not with the value of the object.'³⁸

Distinguishing between properties of the object and properties of the attitude and using that as a tool for separating reasons of the right kind from reasons of the wrong kind looks promising. However, Rabinowicz and Ronnow-Rasmussen have drawn attention to a possible problem with this strategy. For every object-property P there is a corresponding attitude-property P', which is 'the property of being such that its object has (or would have) property P. Thus, to each object-given reason corresponds an attitude-given reason, and vice versa.'³⁹ To return to our example, X has the property of being such that if he were loved by W then X's and W's life together would be better. This is a property of the object rather than a property of the attitude, but it is still the wrong kind of reason for loving X.

To address this worry, Gerald Lang, Sven Danielsson, and Jonas Olson have suggested that what distinguishes the right kind of reasons from the wrong kind is that 'reasons of the right kind are not provided by the consequences of taking up the relevant

³⁶ Derek Parfit, 'Rationality and Reasons,' *Exploring Practical Philosophy: From Action to Values*, Dan Egonsson, Jonas Josefsson, Björn Petersson, and Toni Ronnow-Rasmussen, eds (Ashgate 2001) 21-2.

³⁷ Allan Gibbard, *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings* (Harvard 1990) 37; Christian Piller, 'Normative Practical Reasoning,' *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supplementary Volume 75 (2001) 204-5.

³⁸ Rabinowicz and Ronnow-Rasmussen, 402; compare Pamela Hieronymi, 'The Wrong Kind of Reason,' *The Journal of Philosophy* 102.9 (2005) 444-7.

³⁹ Rabinowicz and Ronnow-Rasmussen, 406.

attitude.⁴⁰ Insofar as W's reasons for loving or respecting X have to do with the beneficial consequences of loving or respecting him, they are reasons of the wrong kind to value him in either of these ways or to see him as possessing the corresponding value properties of being lovable or respectable.⁴¹ As Lars Samuelsson puts it, 'if we take a thing to have value, we should not have to enter into *any* consideration regarding what will *follow* if we respond to it (in the way that we take to correspond to its value) in order to find out whether we have *some* reason to respond to it in that way.'⁴²

Regardless of which account one thinks accurately distinguishes the wrong kinds of reasons from the right ones, a number of the reasons that have been offered for forgiving appear to be reasons of the wrong kind. For example, in *Forgiveness and Love* I suggested the following considerations could provide suitable reasons for forgiving:

Ella might forgive David because doing so will improve Ella's own psychological health.... Madison may forgive David because it was her mother's dying wish that she restore the family peace. And Tristan may forgive David because he wants to impress his girlfriend, who thinks anger is a sign of weakness.... A fourth reason may be the forgiver's realization that her resentment will do neither her nor the person at whom it is directed any good.... A fifth reason may derive from the value of the forgiver's relationship with the forgiven.... Finally, a person may choose to forgive simply because she thinks it will bring the one forgiven more joy than he would otherwise have.⁴³

Similarly, Stephen Ingram highlights 'the prudential value of forgiveness.' Because our acquisition of knowledge depends on standing in congenial relationships both with particular individuals and with the wider epistemic community, by maintaining stable and congenial epistemic relations forgiving is conducive to our epistemic welfare. Forgiveness enables former wrongdoers to set aside worries about future punitive demands being made by their former victims and enables those victims to lay aside the prosecution of past offences in order

⁴⁰ Danielsson and Olson, 'Brentano and the Buck-Passers,' *Mind* 116 (2007) 513.

⁴¹ See Gerald Lang, 'The Right Kind of Solution to the Wrong Kind of Reason Problem,' *Utilitas* 20 (2004) 484.

⁴² Samuelsson, 'The Right Version of the "Right Kind of Solution to the Wrong Kind of Reason Problem,"' *Utilitas* 24 (2013) 389.

⁴³ Glen Pettigrove, *Forgiveness and Love* (Oxford 2012) 147-9.

to move on with life and attend to other matters. So forgiving can free both the wrongdoer and the wronged to pursue future goods. In short, he argues, ‘forgiving, and being disposed to forgive, tends to contribute to one’s well-being.’⁴⁴

Comparable reasons feature in much of the therapeutic literature on forgiveness. For example, in *Forgiveness Is a Choice*, Robert Enright lists eight categories of reasons to forgive:

1. You forgive to quiet your angry feelings.
2. Forgiveness changes destructive thoughts into quieter, more healthy thoughts.
3. As you forgive, you want to act more civilly toward the one who hurt you.
4. Forgiveness of one person helps you interact better with others.
5. Forgiveness can improve your relationship with the one who hurt you.
6. Your forgiveness actually can help the one who hurt you to see his or her unfairness and to take steps to stop it. Your forgiving can enhance the character of the one who hurt you.
7. You forgive because God asks you to do so. You forgive as an act of love toward God.
8. Forgiveness, as an act of kindness and love toward the one who hurt you, is a moral good regardless of how the other is responding to you. Loving others, while protecting yourself from harm, is a morally good thing to do.⁴⁵

Fred Luskin, likewise, focuses on the benefits of forgiving for oneself and for one’s friends and family. Forgiveness promises emotional benefits for the forgiver: ‘People who are taught to forgive become less angry, more hopeful, less depressed, less anxious, less stressed, more confident, and they learn to like themselves more.’⁴⁶ It promises physical benefits as well: forgiveness is correlated with lower blood pressure, less frequent short-term physical complaints, and fewer chronic illnesses.⁴⁷ It promises agential benefits: forgiveness enables the forgiver to regain her agency by putting the past behind her, rather than continuing to be a victim who is held hostage by the past actions of another.⁴⁸ And it promises moral and

⁴⁴ Stephen Ingram, ‘The Prudential Value of Forgiveness,’ *Philosophia* 41 (2013) 1070.

⁴⁵ Robert Enright, *Forgiveness Is a Choice* (American Psychological Association 2001) 45-6. A number of the people whose stories are collected in Johann Christoph Arnold’s *Why Forgive?* (The Plough Publishing 2008) echo the reasons Enright outlines.

⁴⁶ Luskin, 78.

⁴⁷ Luskin, 79-80.

⁴⁸ Luskin, 75.

relational benefits: Forgiving reduces the likelihood that we will take the wounds we have suffered in past relationships and reproduce them in present and future ones, and it can inspire others who are struggling with anger, resentment, or bitterness by showing them it is possible to heal.⁴⁹

The problem with the reasons Enright, Ingram, Luskin, and I discuss, a fitting-attitude theorist might urge, is that they are reasons *to want* to have a forgiving attitude rather than reasons *to have* a forgiving attitude. Or they are reasons given by the consequences of forgiving, rather than reasons given by the value of the person being forgiven. Some of the reasons that have been put forward in support of anger also seem to be reasons of the wrong kind. For example, Joseph Butler argues that wrongdoers pose a threat to us, which gives us a reason to defend ourselves and anger is part of that defence.⁵⁰ However, the reasons put forward by Murphy, Hieronymi, and Griswold are reasons of the right kind.⁵¹ Hieronymi, like Butler, presents anger or resentment as a way of responding to a threat, but she does not construe it as a form of self-defence. Rather, she takes resentment to be a form of protest that marks an action as an instance of wrongdoing.⁵² As such, it is the value/truth-tracking aspect of resentment that has centre stage. Murphy and Griswold take anger to be an expression of self-respect or self-esteem and its absence to be indicative of a lack of such.⁵³ And Murphy and Hieronymi take anger to track violations of the moral order. Anger registers this violation from the vantage of someone who has respect for morality and its demands.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Luskin, 74.

⁵⁰ Joseph Butler, 'Upon Resentment,' *Fifteen Sermons* (Lincoln-Rembrandt 1993) 95. Similarly, see Murphy (2003) 19-20.

⁵¹ Most of them are, at any rate. Murphy's example of forgiving for old time's sake is harder to cash out in terms of the right kinds of reasons, unless remembering our past relationship is thought to provide a more accurate perspective on the wrongdoer's character or motivation than would be provided by the transgression alone.

⁵² Hieronymi (2001) 546-7.

⁵³ Murphy (1988) 18; Griswold, 'The Nature and Ethics of Vengeful Anger,' *Passions and Emotions* (*Nomos* 53), James Fleming, ed. (NYU 2013) 78-9.

⁵⁴ Murphy (2003) 19; Hieronymi (2001) 530.

Turning to forgiveness, the fact that the wrongdoer meant well, or has repented and made amends would be a reason for adopting an attitude other than anger or resentment. The wrongdoer has different value properties than he previously had (or would otherwise have had if his intentions had been different) and a different valuing orientation is fitting.⁵⁵

4. *The fitting should and the moral should*

There are a number of ways in which one might respond to the claim that anger is the fitting attitude to wrongdoing and that one should not forgive for the reasons Enright, Luskin, Ingram, and I have offered because they are of the wrong kind. I shall begin with the most irenic and then move on to consider responses that part ways with fitting-attitude accounts more dramatically.

Let us assume that a virtuous agent responds to objects, actions, and events as they should. If the *should* in question is the *should* associated with fitting attitudes, then in many (perhaps most) situations where an agent has been wronged, she should feel a number of different attitudes.⁵⁶ Because the action is wrong and she is its victim, Griswold et al. contend that anger or resentment is the fitting response. However, if she sees the action as a cry for help from someone who feels as though he has run out of other options, then the fitting attitude may be compassion. If the action is performed by someone she greatly admired and this action reflects a deep character flaw, then the fitting response might be sadness or disappointment. If she realises that the action is just like something she did to someone last week, she may feel chagrin.⁵⁷ If the wrongdoer is someone for whose education

⁵⁵ Griswold (2013) 85.

⁵⁶ In subsequent work Murphy has conceded at least part of this point, granting that resentment need not be ‘the *only* fitting response to being wronged.’ Even so, he remains ‘suspicious’ of ‘those who do not resent being wronged’ (Murphy, *Punishment and the Moral Emotions* [Oxford 2012] 224-5).

⁵⁷ This example presupposes that ‘the virtuous person’ can be distinguished from ‘the perfectly virtuous person,’ since the latter would not have done something about which she might feel chagrin. Those who take the virtuous to be perfectly virtuous are invited to lengthen the period of time to something longer than a week. On the assumption that even the perfectly virtuous were not always

she is responsible, then the fitting attitude might be excitement at the teaching opportunity the action affords. If the transgression is the action of an all-too-human being whom she loves, then the fitting response may be to carry on loving him as before. And if there is reason to believe that there is some likelihood the transgressor will eventually come to see the error of his ways and change his behaviour, then the fitting response may be to hope for the realization of that possibility.

Note that, unlike the reasons offered in section 3, each of these considerations is focused on the object of the attitude, not on the state of having the attitude. They are focused on the transgressor or transgression, not on the consequences of adopting a particular attitude toward them. They do not get their purchase on the victim's attitudes by redirecting her attention to something else, like her own future mental health or her mother's dying wish. Each of them involves focusing on different aspects of the transgressor or transgression, seeing this moment against distinct, albeit overlapping, backdrops.

Recognizing the multiplicity of attitudes that fit the situation poses a challenge for those who wish to blaze a trail from a fitting attitude theory to the assertions about anger quoted in section 1. A human agent cannot feel all of the abovementioned attitudes at the same time. Even emotions like anger and sadness, which have often been lumped together as 'negative emotions' are distinct enough that it is not possible to feel certain types of anger and sadness at the same time. They express themselves in different facial expressions.⁵⁸ They are correlated with differences in skin conductance and blood pressure.⁵⁹ They prime

perfectly virtuous, there will be some point prior to reaching perfection at which they will have done some action they now regret. So, for example, the ideally virtuous might realise that the wrong action is just like something she did to someone when she was the wrongdoer's age, in which case a fitting response might be regret or chagrin.

⁵⁸ Paul Ekman and Harriet Oster, 'Facial Expressions of Emotion,' *Annual Review of Psychology* 30 (1979): 527-554.

⁵⁹ John Cacioppo, Gary Berntson, Jeff Larsen, Kirsten Poehlmann, and Tiffany Ito, 'The Psychophysiology of Emotion,' *Handbook of Emotions* 2 (2000): 173-191.

different (and opposing) ways of processing information and making predictions.⁶⁰ They also involve distinct phenomenologies. Even when they attend to the same object, they construe that object differently. Sadness focuses on insufficient levels of value in the situation, whether in absolute terms or relative to what was hoped or expected. Anger focuses on the thwarting of desire, typically against the backdrop of what one thinks was deserved. Sadness involves a desire that things be better than they are; anger a desire that its object suffer harm of some sort. Most forms of sadness involve a stepping back, a withdrawal, whereas anger characteristically involves an aggressive stepping forward, encouraging confrontation with the object of one's anger. The upshot is that one cannot be in the physiological and phenomenological state of feeling many forms of anger and sadness at the same time. This is not to deny that one can *be* sad (i.e., have the dispositional emotion of sadness) while one is feeling angry (i.e., experiencing the occurrent emotion of anger) or vice versa (more on this in a moment). Nor is it to deny that one can readily move from one occurrent emotion to the other and back again. It is merely to say that the occurrent emotions of anger and sadness are unhappy bedfellows, each of which tends to crowd the other out.

When we turn our attention to some of the other attitudes that might fit a situation, the incompatibility is still more pronounced. Anger and chagrin are even less compatible than anger and sadness, which is one of the reasons why helping an angry person see that they have acted in ways that are similar to what has provoked their anger is often an effective way of defusing a conflict situation. The same is true of anger and hope, as well as anger and compassion. Anger focuses on something with negative value, while hope focuses on something with positive value. Anger desires its object to suffer harm, while compassion longs to alleviate suffering. The focal objects, characteristic desires, action tendencies, and

⁶⁰ Dacher Keltner, Phoebe Ellsworth, and Kari Edwards, 'Beyond Simple Pessimism: Effects of Sadness and Anger on Social Perception,' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 64 (1993): 740-752.

defining affects of these emotions not only differ from one another but many of them are at odds with one another. If ought implies can, then it is not the case that the virtuous agent should feel all of the attitudes that fit the situation, because she is not able to do so.

Defenders of the claim that the proper response to wrongdoing is anger have three rejoinders available to them at this point. First, so far the argument has only shown that it is not the case that the virtuous agent should feel every attitude that fits the situation *simultaneously*. However, even if she cannot feel every fitting attitude at the same time, it might still be possible for her to feel them *in sequence*. Perhaps she can begin with anger and then move to sadness, or compassion, etc., working her way through them like the stages of grief. The sequential view is certainly more attractive than the simultaneous one; however, as a general strategy for handling the multiplicity of fitting attitudes it still comes up short. Given the speed with which we move through the populous landscape of valuable objects, actions, and events, it is not possible for finite agents to experience all of the attitudes that fit all of the valuable things we encounter. With a few major events – like the loss of a loved one – we might have the opportunity to remain in the moment, as it were, and sequentially work our way through each of the attitudes that fit. But we can only do so by ignoring other features of the situations around us. Most events on most days will pass us by without our having registered more than a fraction of the attitudes that fit them. And we will not have the luxury of the time needed to make up the difference.

Even if we can surmount that difficulty, the sequential solution will not support the position of those who think that anger is not only called for when one is the victim of wrongful harm but should persist until the wrongdoer has apologized and made amends (a la Griswold). If the virtuous agent is to work through the attitudes that fit a situation in sequence, and anger or resentment is incompatible with some of those other attitudes – at least in the sense of making it difficult to feel them fittingly – then it follows that the virtuous

agent is not obliged to continue feeling anger or resentment toward an as yet unreformed wrongdoer. Even if anger were compatible with each of the other fitting attitudes, there would be limitations on how many of the relevant attitudes could be experienced at once. Given this limitation, in order to move through each of the fitting attitudes in sequence, one would have to set aside some fitting attitudes in order to make space for others. So the theorist who insists that the virtuous victim should feel anger and should continue doing so will need something other than the sequential view in order to motivate his position.

The second rejoinder would begin with the observation that the discussion so far has focused on occurrent emotions. However, it seems unlikely that Hieronymi, Murphy, and Griswold are only talking about occurrent emotions. They are not claiming that one should continuously feel angry from the time of the transgression to the time of its correction. What they mean by being angry includes dispositional as well as occurrent anger.⁶¹ And, as noted above, it is possible for dispositional anger to coexist alongside occurrent sadness, and vice versa. Perhaps the same is true of the other fitting emotional responses we have been considering. While this rejoinder looks more promising than the last one, it suffers from some of the same problems. Dispositional anger alone is not going to be enough to capture what Griswold, Hieronymi, Murphy, and others mean when they claim that we ought to respond to wrongdoing with anger. A disposition to anger that never made itself felt would look more like the sublimated anger that Murphy considers unhealthy than it would like the self-respect preserving emotion he has in view. Mere dispositional anger would not satisfy the fitting-attitude theorist, either. Fitting-attitude theorists routinely liken fitting responses to perceptual experiences. Having the disposition to perceive an object when it is in one's visual field is different than perceiving it. For an agent to perceive the value in a particular action, agent, object, or situation X, they will need to feel the relevant attitudes in response to

⁶¹ I am grateful to Brandon Warmke for encouraging me to say more on this front.

X, that is, they will need to experience the occurrent emotions of anger, sadness, compassion, and the like. At this point, the problems of the last few paragraphs reassert themselves: There will be limits on the number of occurrent emotions a human being can experience either simultaneously or sequentially. There will also be limits on the kinds of dispositional emotions that can co-exist. While it is possible for dispositional anger to co-exist with dispositional compassion when they take different objects (so that one is angry at X and compassionately disposed toward Y), problems emerge when they take the same object. Were our emotions perfectly rational, then it would not be possible for them to co-exist, since one favours an increase and the other a decrease in X's suffering. As it stands, human emotions are not perfectly rational, so it is possible for us to have conflicting dispositional emotions. However, the virtuous agent will be committed to resolving such conflicts when they occur and reducing the likelihood of their reoccurrence.

A third option would be to develop a *hierarchical* account. Within such an account there would be a hierarchy among the fitting attitudes, so that if two of them conflict, one takes priority over the other. The theorist who thinks the virtuous victim should feel anger rather than, say, compassion or disappointment, could give anger a privileged place within the hierarchy. However, she would then owe us an explanation of why anger takes priority over other fitting responses.

The authors cited in section 1 offer three reasons for feeling anger that might be marshaled in support of giving it such priority: 1) anger reflects an accurate perception of one's own worthiness of respect, 2) it expresses respect for morality, and 3) it deters future transgressors. As noted above, the last of these reasons is of the 'wrong kind'. It is built around the consequences of adopting the attitude, rather than on properties of the object of the attitude. Since it is in the same basket as the reasons offered by Enright, Luskin, Ingram, and me that were discussed in section 3, we can set it to one side. With regard to reasons 1

and 2, it is not clear why the forms of respect they identify command more immediate attention than the values highlighted by disappointment, hope, compassion, or love. One might try to dismiss the teacher's excitement by insisting that moral concerns outweigh pedagogical ones. But one cannot shrug off the disappointment, hope, compassion, and love mentioned above, since each of them is built around moral concerns as well. However, let us assume, for the sake of argument, that the values reflected in respect for oneself and for morality override other values that might be present in the situation. Whether respect for oneself and for morality speak decisively in favour of anger will then depend upon whether it is possible for agents with attitudinal stances other than anger to perceive accurately their own worthiness of respect and to express their respect for morality. The answer to this question appears straightforwardly to be, Yes. Widely acknowledged exemplars in Hindu, Jewish, Buddhist, and Christian traditions have worked to root out anger from their field of emotional responses. This does not appear to have undermined either their self-respect or their respect for morality. Nor has it kept them from judging that certain actions are wrong or from being motivated to prevent or correct such actions.⁶²

The options we have considered thus far all assume that the 'should' in the assumption 'a virtuous agent responds to objects, actions, and events as they should' is the should of fittingness. Another possibility is that it is not a fitting should but a moral should. Many theorists who are sympathetic to fitting-attitude accounts of value, including Mark Johnston, Justin D'Arms, and Daniel Jacobson, have defended it as a plausible theory of (at least some) value, but have suggested that other factors might also need to be taken into account before we can determine what a person morally ought to do. A joke might be clever and unexpected and amusement might be a fitting response. At the same time the joke might

⁶² For further discussion see Glen Pettigrove and Koji Tanaka, 'Anger and Moral Judgment,' *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 92 (2014): 269-286.

also be cruel and as a result it might be morally objectionable not only to tell it but also to be amused by it.⁶³ Those who insist that the virtuous victim should feel anger (and continue feeling it) and who wish to pursue this route would owe us two stories. The first would explain the relationship between fitting attitudes and the moral should. The second would build on that foundation in order to show that anger is the moral response.

Depending on how one defines the moral should, there may be yet another step required for the argument to work. Some theorists take the moral should to be identical to the all-things-considered should; it picks out what one ought to do once all relevant factors have been taken into account. Others, however, take the moral should to apply only to what we owe to others. If the moral should is defined in this narrower fashion, then there will be a further step to explain how one goes from the moral to the all-things-considered should. The should of fittingness is an epistemic should. It is concerned with the accuracy of a person's perception of value. This epistemic should will need to be factored in alongside the pragmatic should, which is concerned with effective means to achieve a desired or valuable end. The ethical should, which might be concerned with the pursuit of self-perfecting ideals, will also need to be taken into account. There may be others, as well, such as the should of etiquette and the should of law. All of these 'should's – epistemic, moral, pragmatic, ethical, social, legal – are relevant to determining the all-things-considered should. So those who insist that the appropriate response to being wronged is anger will need to explain how the should of fitting anger, when combined with these other 'should's, prevails in the determination of the all-things-considered should.⁶⁴

⁶³ Justin D'Arms and Daniel Jacobson, 'The Moralistic Fallacy: On the "Appropriateness" of Emotions,' *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 61 (2000): 65-90.

⁶⁴ Some value theorists may wish to treat the legal, social, pragmatic, and ethical as domains of fittingness that call for different characteristic responses. That is to say, they might wish to reduce all of the relations described here to relations between different types of fitting attitude. Such theorists will still need to account for these different kinds of attitudes and the relations between them, so the issues described in this paragraph will still need to be addressed. However, they will address the relationship between the dictates of personal ideals and those of pragmatism, for example, not in a

I have argued that the attempt to support claims made by Murphy, Hieronymi, Griswold, and others that anger is *the* appropriate response to being wronged by grounding them in a fitting-attitude theory of value is more difficult than one might think. There are many attitudes that might fit the same situation and we cannot feel them all, whether simultaneously or in sequence. There is also a question of how one moves from the fitting should to the moral or all-things-considered should. The case becomes even more challenging when one revisits the issue we set aside a minute ago regarding the wrong kinds of reasons (WKR's).

The WKR problem was used in section 3 to help motivate the claim that Murphy and company's reasons for forgiving were superior to Enright's, Ingram's, Luskin's, and mine and to reinforce the claim that in the absence of reasons like Murphy's, the appropriate response was anger. However, we observed above that Butler and Murphy highlight anger's importance as a form of self-defence, which is an appeal to the wrong kind of reason. What is more, their dependence on WKR's is not limited to reasons offered for anger. It also applies to the reasons on which they will depend in a number of contexts in which they deem forgiveness fitting. For example, Griswold argues that a wrongdoer who has expressed contrition and attempted to make amends is 'due' forgiveness.⁶⁵ In some cases such forgiveness will be a natural and immediate response to the offender's contrition. However, in the case of serious wrongs, the kinds of reasons Enright, Ingram, Luskin, and I put forward may be psychologically required in order to forgive. This will not only be true in cases of what Alisa Carse and Lynne Tirrell have called 'grave, world-shattering wrongs,' like those of the Hutu who participated in the genocide of Tutsi in Rwanda.⁶⁶ It will also be true of

separate step beyond the dictates of fittingness, but rather as a step along the way from the should of fittingness to the all-things-considered should.

⁶⁵ Griswold (2007) 51, 62, 69.

⁶⁶ Alisa Carse and Lynne Tirrell, 'Forgiving Grave Wrongs,' *Forgiveness in Perspective*, Christopher Allers and Marieke Smit, eds (Rodopi 2010) 45. Griswold might deem such agents and their actions 'unforgivable'.

those who have been victims of more mundane misdeeds. The victim who suffered years of bullying at school may have trouble seeing even a repentant bully without experiencing anger. There may not be any direct, immediate route from the recognition of a changed state of affairs to the experience of a changed state of emotion. In many cases the only chance she will have of giving the contrite offender his 'due' will be indirect, by attending to the kinds of reasons Enright, Luskin, and other therapists have highlighted.

If all parties to the discussion appeal to factors that would count as the wrong kinds of reasons, it is difficult to use their status as WKR's as grounds for dismissing some of the reasons on offer but not others. Of course, one might attempt to do so by drawing a distinction between different sorts of reasons that have been lumped together as reasons of the wrong kind. The cases that have featured most prominently in the WKR literature have been cases in which there is a conflict between pragmatic reasons and epistemic ones when, for example, a demon threatens to punish us unless we admire him.⁶⁷ In such cases, it would be advantageous to believe something false. Similarly, in the marriage case discussed above, it would be beneficial for W to believe X possesses qualities that would make him lovable, but she lacks the evidence to support such beliefs. However, unlike the reasons offered in each of these cases, the reasons Enright, Ingram, Luskin, and I advanced in favour of forgiving do not involve coming to believe anything false. Thus, the reasons for forgiving that were discussed in section 3 are not ruled out by the most prominent distinction drawn in the current discussion.

Moreover, the fitting attitude account that would make anger the way in which we perceive the disvalue of a wrongful act fails to square with the temporal nature of many of our emotional experiences. It is natural to feel differently about an action or event after the passage of time than we did in the heat of the moment. This is true for a range of emotions

⁶⁷ Rabinowicz and Ronnow-Rasmussen (2004) 407. Similarly, Gibbard (1990) 37.

both positive and negative. But this does not mean that we will assess the value of the action or event differently. At 40, the insults we endured at 14 are unlikely to provoke our anger, but we are still likely to hold fixed our judgment that it was wrong for the insulter to say what he did. So even if – contra the argument offered above – anger were required in order to recognise an action as wrong, there is no reason to think forgiving remains illicit after the passage of time.

5. *Pro Tanto Reasons for Anger?*

Where does the argument of the last section leave the claim that our response to being wronged ‘is, and ought to be, anger and resentment’?⁶⁸ One might try to accommodate the preceding discussion by acknowledging that a number of other readily available reasons can override the reason to feel angry, so it does not make sense to presume the forgiver is guilty until proven innocent. Nevertheless, it might be urged, wrongdoing still gives us a *pro tanto* reason – a reason to that extent – to be angry.⁶⁹ Evaluating this claim would require settling a number of heated debates regarding the nature of reasons, which is more than can reasonably be undertaken in the remainder of this chapter. However, it is worth identifying some of the factors that would contribute to its evaluation.

The first factor concerns the strength of *pro tanto* reasons. A strong conception of *pro tanto* reasons would hold that once we have been presented with such a reason we must comply with it. The only way in which not complying is justified is if that reason is overridden by others. A weak conception would hold that a *pro tanto* reason is sufficient – in the absence of other reasons – to *commend* (re)acting in a certain way, but it need not be sufficient to *compel* (re)acting in that way on pain of irrationality. It will be easier to make

⁶⁸ Hieronymi, 530.

⁶⁹ I am grateful to Dana Nelkin for encouraging me to address this issue.

the case for the claim that being wronged gives us a pro tanto reason to be angry if we are working with a weak conception of pro tanto reasons than if we adopt a strong conception. On a weak conception, it would make sense for someone to respond to being wronged with anger – it would, in this sense, be fitting – but there would be nothing wrong if they didn't. This would not give us anything as forceful as 'one ought to be angry.' But it would give anger at least some normative status. On a strong conception, not getting angry would only make sense if there were some other reason that overrode it. But even here, if there were numerous reasons that were readily available in most contexts and sufficient to override anger, then the claim that wrongdoing gives us a pro tanto reason to be angry might still be defensible. Within such a framework, saying anger is a fitting response to wrongdoing might be a way of picking out the fact that wrongdoing gives us a pro tanto reason to feel angry, but whether we have an all-things-considered reason or a moral reason to feel angry will depend upon how this pro tanto reason relates to the other reasons we have.

The second factor concerns the nature of anger. Murphy claims that anger is important because it expresses a recognition of one's own value and a commitment to the rules of morality.⁷⁰ However, as we have already seen, a number of emotions can express these same commitments. Hope that the wrongdoer will reform her ways and not re-offend can be an expression of these commitments. So can compassion, disappointment, and love. What distinguishes anger from these other responses? The most common answer is the one presupposed in the preceding discussion, namely, anger's desire that its object suffer.⁷¹ If that is correct, then whether or not there is a pro tanto reason to be angry will depend on whether there a pro tanto reason to desire another's suffering. This raises two further questions: 1) Is this the right account of what distinguishes anger from other emotions? 2)

⁷⁰ Murphy, *Forgiveness and Mercy*, 18.

⁷¹ See Pettigrove and Tanaka, 275; Robert Roberts, *Emotions* (Cambridge 2003) 204; and Martha Nussbaum, *Anger and Forgiveness*, 5.

Are there certain kinds of actions that are so morally objectionable that we cannot have even a pro tanto reason to do them?

Regarding the first question, as previously noted, anger comes in many forms, including irritation, indignation, resentment, hatred, and rage. Do they all involve the desire that their object suffer? Resentment, hatred, and rage clearly do. What about irritation and indignation? The question is not whether they *can* involve such a desire but whether they *must*. It seems clear that irritation need not. It is chiefly concerned that the irritant go away, but that departure need not involve harm. Indignation is a harder case. Often the indignant want the object of their indignation to be punished, which characteristically involves suffering of some description. But in some cases it would seem more accurate to describe what they want in terms not of the wrongdoer suffering but rather in terms of her not benefitting from the transgression. They don't want the wrongdoer to get ahead as a result of her wrong. This may be coupled with a desire that the wrongdoer acknowledge her wrong for what it was, but this is not desired because they think the acknowledgment would be painful. If this is right then the normative status of anger need not be contingent on the normative status of desiring another's suffering in at least some instances.

Regarding the second question, a number of people contend that what might have been a reason in some contexts can be neutralised by other factors that take priority. The fact that an action would bring me pleasure would in most contexts provide me with a reason to do it. But what if the action is cruel? John McDowell argues, 'To embrace a specific conception of eudaimonia is to see the relevant reasons for acting, on occasions when they coexist with considerations that on their own would be reasons for acting otherwise, as, not overriding, but silencing those other considerations – as bringing it about that, in the

circumstances, they are not reasons at all.’⁷² On such a view, if it turns out that being angry is inconsistent with the standards of virtue, then being wronged would not provide even a pro tanto reason to be angry. So addressing the question of whether we have a pro tanto reason to be angry when we are wronged will require deciding whether reasons can be nullified (as opposed to overridden).

The last factor I will discuss has to do with the agent. Wrongdoing gives us a pro tanto reason to reject and resist it. Some agents have other emotional and behavioural resources besides anger that equip them to reject the kind of wrongful treatment to which they have been subjected and resist similar wrongs in future. Other agents will lack these resources. For agents of the former type, wrongdoing might not even provide a pro tanto reason for anger. But agents of the latter type might very well have a pro tanto reason for anger that is derived from the pro tanto reason to reject wrongdoing.

6. Conclusion

I have argued that the attempt to motivate views like those outlined in section 1 by appealing to the distinction between right and wrong kinds of reasons does not work. Most moral theorists working out the norms that apply in the aftermath of wrongdoing will have cause to appeal to reasons of both kinds. And the attempt to use a fitting attitude theory of value to justify the claim that anger is the appropriate response to being wronged likewise runs into difficulties. Not only does this recommend a wider range of acceptable reasons to forgive, but it also undermines many of the assumptions that made forgiveness look so questionable in the first place. Along the way the discussion has highlighted some of the

⁷² John McDowell, ‘The Role of *Eudaimonia* in Aristotle’s Ethics,’ *Mind, Value, and Reality* (Harvard 1998) 17.

challenges facing anyone who wishes to move from a modest fitting-attitude account to a more encompassing moral account of what one should do.

It is worth adding one final observation. Murphy's, Butler's, and Hieronymi's discussion of threats draws attention to another attitude besides anger that fits many cases in which one has been the victim of wrongdoing, namely, fear. Understanding this fear is crucial for understanding the anger that many transgressions provoke. The fear that I could be treated like this and might be again plays an enormous emotional role in a person's readiness to forgive. We can see this most clearly in cases where that fear is quickly eliminated because the threat of future harm is completely neutralised. Often in such cases the accompanying anger also rapidly dissipates. And those cases in which overcoming anger – whether through forgiveness or by some other means – is most difficult are often those in which the fear and vulnerability are still most salient. So if one were really interested in providing a complete fitting attitude account of the aftermath of wrongdoing, one would need to give considerable attention to fear. It is interesting that philosophers have not given fear anything like the same attention they have given anger in such situations.⁷³ No one has argued that one ought to persist in being fearful and perhaps even nurture one's fear until the wrongdoer repents and makes amends. And while we might acknowledge both fear's accuracy and its utility in many conflict situations, this does not pose an objection to those who seek to develop a virtue (namely, courage) that might lead to a reduction in their fear. Furthermore, it is widely assumed to be a characteristic of courage that it can help a person overcome his fear without blinding him to the dangers he faces. If these assumptions are correct, then it recommends the possibility of a comparable virtue with respect to anger that

⁷³ My discussion of vulnerability in 'Forgiveness without God?' *Journal of Religious Ethics* 40 (2012): 518-544 and Nussbaum's of helplessness in *Anger and Forgiveness* (Oxford 2016) invite readers to consider the relevance of fear to forgiveness, but we only scratch the surface.

enables one to overcome one's anger a) even when anger remains fitting and b) without blinding one to the qualities of the person, action, or situation such anger might fit.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ I am grateful to Marinus Ferreira, Dana Nelkin, Christine Swanton, and Brandon Warmke for helpful feedback on earlier drafts of this chapter.