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A STUDY OF VIRTUOUS AND VICIOUS ANGER
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Chapter Abstract: This chapter presents an account of an angrily virtuous, or patient, person informed by research on emotion in empirical and philosophical psychology. It is argued that virtue for anger is determined by excellence and deficiency with respect to all three of anger's psychological functions: appraisal, motivation, and communication. Many competing accounts of virtue for anger assess it by attention to just one function; it is argued that singular evaluations of a person's anger will ignore important dimensions of anger that bear on virtue and vice. Thus, possessing excellence with respect to only one function of anger is insufficient for virtue. The account is also extended to the characteristic vices of anger: wrath and meekness.

Chapter Keywords: anger, appraisal, aggression, Douglass, emotion, excellence, King, motivation, vice, virtue

> *Getting angry […] is easy and everyone can do it; but doing it to the right person, in the right amount, at the right time, for the right end, and in the right way is not easy, nor can everyone do it* (Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1109a27–29).

Introduction

In this chapter I defend an account of an angrily virtuous, or *patient*, person informed by recent research on emotion in empirical and philosophical psychology. I argue that virtue and vice with respect to anger is determined by excellence and deficiency with respect to all three of anger's functions: its involvement in (1) appraisal of wrongdoing, (2) its role as a motivating force, and (3) its communicative function. Many accounts of anger assess it only with respect to one of these functions. Most typically, anger is assessed instrumentally with regard to its role in motivation. As I show, any singular evaluation of a person's anger will ignore important dimensions of anger that bear on virtue and vice; possessing excellence with respect to only one of anger's functions is thus insufficient for virtue.[1] Further, lacking excellence with respect to all three functions corresponds to the two characteristic vices of anger: *wrath* and *meekness*. A person who is excellent at all three of anger's functions will have the virtue of patience. However, because my account implies that virtue

can require great anger, I largely avoid describing the angrily virtuous person as 'patient' to avoid the contemporary connotations of passivity and quietude associated with the term.

As an additional way of focusing discussion, I will examine examples of angry virtue set by two well-known Americans: Frederick Douglass and Martin Luther King, Jr. Douglass was incensed by slavery (in part due to his early life as a slave) and worked to destroy it through oratory and political/social action. Just over a century later, slavery had been eradicated nationwide but the civil and material welfare of black Americans still lagged substantially behind whites (and sadly, still does, on balance). King used massive nonviolent action and powerful speeches to fight against these injustices. I assume that both Douglass and King are widely thought to be exemplars of virtue, so their example of how to be properly angry will be a useful guide in my discussion.

Function I: Appraisal
Appraisal as Cause
There is no doubt that both Douglass and King experienced situations that would provoke anger in practically anyone. Contemporary psychological research on emotion validates this thought by individuating different emotions via antecedent appraisals that elicit the emotion. Appraisals are thought to be a person's interpretations and evaluations of a situation (often, but not always, evaluated specifically in reference to the person feeling the emotion). So, for example, Richard Lazarus holds that anger depends on someone's behavior being construed as a 'personal slight or demeaning offense.'[2] Philosophical commentators like Jesse Prinz and Shaun Nichols generally concur, holding that 'Anger arises when people violate *autonomy* norms, which are norms prohibiting harms against persons.'[3] While there is no question that anger has a close relation to the appraisals adduced here, these treatments make two errors about the relation of anger and appraisal.

First, the relevant appraisal is construed too narrowly. It is common for anger to be elicited not only by slights or harms against persons, but also by harms against nonhuman animals. Strangely, Prinz and Nichols themselves note this fact.[4] Anger occurs not just in response to the violation of norms prohibiting harms against persons and not only with respect to personal slights and offenses. We can better handle these phenomena if we treat anger's appraisal more broadly, as Shaver et al. do, holding that the eliciting appraisal is that 'the situation is illegitimate, wrong, unfair, contrary to what ought to be.'[5] James Averill also holds that 'the typical instigation to anger is a value judgment. More than anything else, anger is an attribution of blame.'[6] And what is it to attribute blame, other than to appraise someone as acting wrongfully?[7]

I believe, then, that an angry person appraises her situation as containing wrongful conduct. This construal of anger's appraisal is capacious enough to handle anger at violations that don't harm

persons, as well as the many situations in which we become incensed at the violations of autonomy norms, personals slights, and demeaning offenses.

Appraisal as Conceptually Connected

While my gloss on anger's appraisal more readily captures the voluminous situations in which we are likely to become angry, holding that anger is *caused* by an appraisal of a person's action as wrongful is the second mistake many theorists make about the relationship of anger and appraisal. There is no clear evidence that all episodes of anger are caused by a relevant appraisal and not all psychologists agree that appraisals always precede anger or are necessary for it.[8] So what, then, does appraisal have to do with anger? I think we better understand the relationship between anger and appraisal (and emotion and appraisal, more generally) if we hold that anger need not be *caused* by an appraisal; rather, anger *is* an appraisal.[9]

Consider hearing that a woman is angry with her boss because he doesn't respect her work. It would be quite natural, when hearing about such a case, to describe the woman as taking her boss to evaluate her work incorrectly. Or consider hearing that a man is angry at his doctor's indifferent attitude toward his medical problems. Again, it would be natural to describe the man as taking his doctor's bedside manner to be the wrong sort of model for practitioner-patient interaction. Or consider hearing that senior citizens are angry about the possibility that Medicare benefits will be curtailed. It would be natural to suppose that senior citizens think that curtailing Medicare is incorrect and negatively evaluate government actors who consider doing so. These cases exemplify a general truth: different emotion concepts are generally invoked in predictable patterns based on associated appraisals.[10] Talk of emotion is conceptually bound to talk of appraisal; invocation of emotion is generally an invocation (either explicitly or implicitly) of appraisal.[11]

Virtuous Anger as Fitting Anger

So being angry with someone is (in part, at least) to appraise her or his conduct as wrongful. Thus, the first dimension of virtue with respect to anger is determined by the accuracy of a person's angry appraisal, or, as I will say, following Justin D'Arms and Dan Jacobson's usage, the *fittingness* of anger.[12] D'Arms and Jacobson point out that we commonly dispute whether things are truly sad, enviable, shameful, or worthy of pride or resentment. This practice presupposes that we can make sense of a particular kind of emotional appropriateness that is determined only by the accuracy of an emotion's evaluative presentation; that is, whether the thing in question has the features the emotion presents it as having. This sense of appropriateness is the fittingness of an emotion. When we observe that both Douglass and King had ample reason to be angry, we are implicitly invoking considerations having to do with anger's fit.

Fittingness is analogous to the epistemic relation that holds between a true belief and the world. A fitting emotion presents the world as containing a particular set of features that the emotion correctly characterizes the world as having, just as a belief that is true presents the world as containing certain features or properties that the belief correctly represents the world as containing.[13] So anger is fitting for you to feel when, for example, it is directed toward a person who has wronged you out of ill will.

But it is not enough for a particular instance of anger to be a completely fitting response that the anger be directed toward a situation where someone did something wrong or unjust. For anger's 'size' can vary by degree,[14] and should be roughly proportionate to the seriousness of the wrong in question as well as the person's relation to the wrong. For example, if the wrong in question is relatively minor and the person did not intentionally bring it about, I should be less angry than if the wrong is quite significant and the person specifically aimed at harming me; other things being equal, a greater degree of anger is fitting to feel toward someone who tries to ruin your career than is fitting to feel toward someone who forgets to water your office plant while you're away on a trip.

Macalester Bell has recently argued that virtue with respect to anger is constituted by being fittingly angry—that is, being angry at the things befitting of anger's appraisal.[15] Drawing on Thomas Hurka and Robert Adams' characterization of the virtuous person as loving good and hating evil,[16] Bell argues that being fittingly angry is a way of excellently hating, or being against, evil. Her account is valuable in recognizing that anger is a particularly appropriate response to injustice because it more accurately appraises injustice than other emotions, like disappointment, do.[17] And, echoing the point made earlier about the size of anger, on her view, a person will be more virtuous if she is very angry at huge injustices than if she rages at minor affronts. Thus, an important component of virtue with respect to anger is feeling anger proportionally toward situations where anger is fitting.[18]

Bell's account of virtuous anger has important attractions. For one, her account helps to capture our sense of the excellence of someone who is incensed by serious wrongs or injustice. Indeed, Bell argues that the magnificence of Douglass' fury at slavery is best captured by her fitting-attitude account of virtue with respect to anger. She notes that 'Elizabeth Cady Stanton describes the first time she saw Douglass speak as follows: "He stood there like an African Prince, majestic in his wrath."'[19] One thing we find admirable in Douglass' vehement anger is that it correctly appraises, and is proportionate to, the great injustices to slaves that were a structural feature of American society in the 1800s.

Bell's account also helps us to understand important aspects in which someone's anger can be vicious. For the account also implies that we lack excellence if we fail to be angry with people

befitting of anger or we become angry in situations where it is unfitting. Thus, it helps us to understand as failing to be virtuous whites who angrily opposed Douglass and King's efforts. Even if the anger of some whites at Douglass and King was excellent with respect to motivation and communication (discussed below), they lacked a significant determinate of angry virtue by angrily being against good and for evil.

Function II: Anger's Effects on Action, Motivation, and Deliberation

For the above reasons, there is much to recommend Bell's account of virtuous anger. But the fitting attitude account of angry virtue is incomplete. To see this, suppose that Douglass had been incensed by slavery but instead had simply wallowed in his rage, never stirring to combat the system he so despised. While he would have been angrily against the evils of slavery in one way, he would have lacked another powerful way of angrily being against it: motivation and action.[20]

Excellence or virtue with respect to anger isn't exhausted by simply being fittingly angry at the proper objects; being for or against something—loving good and hating evil—in the sense tied to virtue is exemplified by engagement of the will.[21] As Adams notes, 'Being for or against goods in thought or attitude or feeling deserves less weight in the overall evaluation of character if it remains passive, involving no tendency or will to show itself in ethically important action or inaction. One who is not disposed to contribute causally to the realization, if that were possible, is less strongly for it.'[22] So one aspect of excellence with respect to anger is accurately appraising, through thoughts, attitudes, and feelings, the situations and conduct of other people who confront you. But you are less excellently angry if you have fitting thoughts, attitudes, and emotions that do not move you to action. Douglass and King both illustrate this. Their excellence consisted not only in the fact that they were incensed by the injustices they faced—they properly appraised them—but also that they were powerfully motivated to fight against injustice through oratory, action, and prose.

Interestingly, while Bell's fitting attitude account of angry virtue does correctly identify part of virtue with respect to anger, it constitutes a significant departure from the predominant way that virtue with respect to anger has been historically conceptualized, which is simply via anger's motivational effects on the person who feels it. Bell's account is, in part, motivated by a reaction to such views. This omission would be warranted if the fitting attitude account captured all of virtue and vice with respect to anger. But as the examples of Douglass and King suggest, another facet of angry virtue consists in being moved by anger to fight against, protest, or change the things with which one is angry. Since the fitting attitude view doesn't capture this, it is incomplete.

We thus need to consider the relationship of anger to action, motivation, and deliberation to determine the motivational and deliberative profile of an excellently angry person. One of the most

common approaches to anger in this realm holds that anger produces relatively stable motivational effects, which then relatively reliably lead to action. I term this view of anger the *hydraulic view*. Whether to feel angry on this view is thus a matter of whether the motivational effects of anger are, on balance, conceived as harmful or beneficial—but there is significant disagreement about which, on balance, is correct. In the next two sections I discuss both pessimistic and optimistic views about these motivational effects.

Hydraulic Pessimists
Pessimists who hold the standard hydraulic view believe that the normal motivational effects that are the result of anger are problematic. For example, Derk Pereboom has suggested that accepting his hard incompatibilist view of moral responsibility would be valuable in leading to diminished anger. Though Pereboom recognizes that anger's motivational effects may sometimes be beneficial, he argues that on balance anger is a harmful passion and that if we moderate or eliminate it, 'our lives might well be better for it.'[23] Robert Thurman is inspired by a strand of Buddhist thought to take a more extreme tack, claiming that '[A]nger can be totally eradicated. It absolutely is a deadly sin. It is completely destructive, unjustified in any circumstance. We must manage it out of existence….It is a fire and can only burn us.'[24] Pereboom and Thurman are giving modern expression to the view forcefully put forth by Seneca two millennia prior:

> If you choose to view [anger's] results and the harm of it, no plague has cost the human race more dear. You will see bloodshed and poisoning, the vile countercharges of criminals, the downfall of cities and whole nations given to destruction, princely persons sold at public auction, houses put to the torch, and conflagration that halts not within the city-walls, but makes great stretches of the country glow with hostile flame.[25]

If the pessimist view is correct, things look pretty grim. According to Thurman, '"War" is but the name for "organized anger",'[26] and Seneca clearly concurs. If they are right, then it would seem that virtue with respect to anger would demand feeling little, or no, anger. One can hear them urging that excellence would consist in making fitting appraisals *nonemotionally*, so that we will not be lead by our emotional responses to violence and aggression.

Some psychologists, most notably Leonard Berkowitz, have defended claims that offer some support for Pereboom, Thurman, and Seneca's pessimist hydraulic view of anger. Berkowitz holds that the experience of anger accompanies aggressive tendencies, that is, behavior aimed at injuring someone physically or psychologically, where that behavior is unwanted by the person aggressed toward.[27] Though he holds that angry feelings arise concurrently with the motivation to aggress, and

the feelings themselves only parallel the instigation to aggression rather than cause it, anger might appear to be negatively implicated by his view.

Further, pessimists may urge that anger's negative effects on us are not exhausted by effecting aggression, as Montaigne implies:

> Aristotle says that anger sometimes serves as a weapon for virtue and valor. That is quite likely; yet those who deny it answer humorously that it is a weapon whose use is novel. For we move other weapons, this one moves us; our hand does not guide it, it guides our hand; it holds us, we do not hold it.[28]

Montaigne's point is that anger bypasses calm deliberation and often leads to hasty, impulsive, and sometimes-irrational action—whether or not such action is aggressive. Psychological evidence suggests anger does have important effects on deliberation and social perception. For example, angry people are more likely to attribute harmful intent to others in ambiguous social situations.[29] Attributions of blame can, in turn, enter into an escalating feedback cycle with anger.[30] Angry people also tend to be optimistic about the success of chosen courses of action[31] due to a sense that they have significant control over their situation.[32] Further, 'they are eager to make decisions and are unlikely to stop and ponder or carefully analyze,'[33] causing them to simply ignore the probabilities of different courses of action and take risky actions that would lead to desirable results but have a low probability of succeeding.[34] When they do take action, angry people are more likely to be punitive toward those they blame.[35] Even worse, these effects are at least sometimes realized independently of the conscious awareness of people who are angry, which is especially problematic given anger's effects on deliberation and resultant action.

Hydraulic Optimists
Effects that look damning to some recommend anger to others; both historically and in contemporary philosophical scholarship there are quite a few hydraulic optimists about the motivational effects of anger. Interestingly, Aristotle was more of an optimist about the value of anger, though he shares with the pessimists the idea that anger motivates vengeful actions. On his view, 'Anger may be defined as an impulse, accompanied by pain, to a conspicuous revenge for a conspicuous slight directed without justification towards what concerns oneself or towards what concerns one's friends.'[36] Aristotle is more comfortable with the idea that revenge can be justified than most contemporary philosophers; he holds that sometimes the angry desire for revenge is the right desire to have because it virtuously motivates vengeful actions. Aquinas follows Aristotle in agreeing that anger involves a desire to punish in the service of revenge and that such retribution can be just if properly motivated and proportional to the offense.[37]

Without agreeing with Aristotle that anger involves a desire for revenge, several contemporary theorists have emphasized that anger may produce motivations that serve morally laudatory purposes. For example, Audre Lorde writes,

> Every woman has a well-stocked arsenal of anger potentially useful against those oppressions, personal and institutional, which brought the anger into being. Focused with precision it can become a powerful source of energy serving progress and change.[38]
>
> [A]nger between peers births change, not destruction, and the discomfort and sense of loss it causes is not fatal, but a sign of growth. My response to racism is anger.[39]

Marguerite La Caze argues in a similar vein that resentment can spur action that aims at protesting or removing injustice.[40] Lisa Tessman has recently argued that having a tendency to anger can be a virtue under oppression because of the possibility that anger will eventually lead to the greater flourishing of the angry person or other members of society.[41] And Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung notes that properly directed anger can even play a role in honoring promises and upholding the law.[42]

Psychological evidence suggests the optimists are on to something. While the pessimists are correct that anger is a common and powerful cause of aggression,[43] anger is neither necessary nor sufficient for aggression;[44] not all aggression is caused by anger[45]. Finally, the likelihood of aggression following an elicitor of anger is highly sensitive to contextual features like reputational consequences, the ability and willingness of victims to retaliate, and the likelihood of reprisals from third parties,[46] suggesting that the interaction between anger and aggression cannot be a simple causal mechanism. (It's not a coincidence that playground bullies select victims who can't or won't retaliate.) It thus appears unwarranted to impugn anger for *all* aggression and violence—at least some people can, and do, get angry without aggressing or being violent, and much unjust violence is not the result of anger.

To the extent that psychologists have uncovered motivations that are universally characteristic of angry people, they have found that anger arouses or energizes people when they feel it and motivates people feeling anger to approach the target of their anger to try to change their situation,[47] but need not involve aggression. In James Averill's seminal psychological study, anger led to physical aggression 10% of the time and to verbal aggression half of the time.[48] Individual differences (no doubt resulting from various sources) likely play a significant role. As Georges Steffgen and Jan Pfetsch put it, 'anger management may be useful training for some people lacking the awareness and

cognitive skills to cope with aggression, but it is not a magic bullet for all forms of aggression.'[49] Further, it's not even clear that anger that motives revenge or aggression will be irrational, unjust or fail to be virtuous, as Aristotle and Aquinas suggest. Whether or not angry revenge is vicious will depend quite a bit on the form that the revenge or aggression takes.[50] If you steal my bike and I become angry and respond by aggressively taking it back, it is not obvious that I have demonstrated a vice. Likewise, a particularly cutting reply to the insult you direct at me might be excellent in being just the thing to get you to reconsider your behavior.

Defending Angry Motivation
As the angry person appraises the one with whom she is angry as acting wrongfully and is typically moved to stop or call into question the wrongful conduct, it appears that a function of anger is motivating the angry to address disputes about proper conduct and justice.[51] In spite of its sometimes-negative uses, anger has value in dispute resolution. Of course, just as there is no guarantee that disputes will always be addressed in the best possible way when the disputants are not angry, there is no guarantee that anger's motivational effects will redound to the good. But expunging anger from our set of responses would, I argue, impoverish our moral repertoire. To see the motivational value of anger, it is worth contrasting it with two other emotions that could be felt in response to a dispute: sadness and fear. The characteristic motivational responses of sadness are to yield or submit; for fear they are to escape or avoid.[52] Certainly such responses to a dispute may sometimes be rational, but they do nothing to address or change the terms of the dispute. Both sadness and fear can mean giving in or giving up. Anger has more beneficial motivational effects in that it moves angry people to engage with perceived wrongdoers.
The potential benefit of angry motivation is evident in collective action problems such as resource disputes. One way of studying the dynamics of resource disputes has been in ultimatum games.[53] In such a game, one subject (the offerer) controls resources (say, $10). The offerer makes an offer to another subject (the respondant) to divide the resources ($7 offerer, $3 respondant). The respondant then accepts the offer or refuses it. Both subjects know the amount to be divided and the rules of negotiation: a rejection means both subjects get nothing; an acceptance means both subjects get the amounts offered. While game theory would suggest that all offers should involve splits that heavily favor the offerer and that all offers should be accepted, these predictions are consistently incorrect. In fact, offers to respondants tend to exceed 40% of the resources and only 15 to 20% of offers are rejected.[54] A plausible explanation of these findings is that respondants expect fairness; if they don't receive an offer they take to be fair, they angrily reject it (Pillutla and Murnighan 1996). While ensuring neither player receives any of the resources is a suboptimal result, it is likely that an offerer's knowledge of how angry respondents will act motivates him to offer a more equal split, leading to better results for all.

In another suggestive study, Fehr and Gächter studied what is known as 'altruistic punishment,' where people punish others in ways costly to the punishers and where the punishers receive no material benefit.[55] Such third party norm enforcement appears to be a paradigm feature of human morality.[56] Fehr and Gächter's study examined the prevalence of free-riding in a situation where there is a common good. Punishments of free-riders were common and were reported by punishers as expressions of anger. Free riders also perceived their punishers as angry and this led to positive behavior change—free-riders were less likely to free-ride in the future, even when they interacted with a totally new group of people. Fehr and Gächter go so far as to suggest that the mechanism of angry punishment may be a better explanation of human cooperation than kin selection, direct reciprocity, or reputation formation (2002, 137)[57].

What is especially important about these studies is that they show how the effects on motivation and deliberation the pessimists want to emphasize as problematic can have effects that redound to the good. People who are likely or known to become angry at perceived transgressions are less likely to be taken advantage of—that is part of the reason angry people are thought to be 'taking a stand' against the transgression in question.[58] It's true that angry confrontations may be individually costly in that instance, but they may ward off more serious future conflicts. It is important that angry people may discount costs and remain focused on their target if their anger is to effectively dissuade others from wrongful conduct and to encourage (though an implicit threat) beneficial actions. It might be that if other human beings could always be counted on to act beneficently and justly, we would have no need for anger.[59] But given that this is not true, anger is required for us to take the stands that need taking, rather than passively acquiesce in the face of wrongdoing. Finally, a person whose anger toward a wrongdoer leads her to confront the perpetrator of the wrong will often be happier, or at least less unhappy, than if she failed to act on her anger. By doing something, she will have taken a stand against what she regards as wrongful rather than passively standing by, a fact of which she should feel proud.

A Gesture at Excellence for Motivation and Action
It is extremely difficult to describe angrily excellent motivations in the abstract because so many different factors contribute to an action's moral desirability. However, it may be possible to extract some lessons about proper motivation from the work of Martin Luther King, Jr. and research describing assertiveness training.[60] Nonviolent resistance may be the most virtuous way to respond in the political realm and virtue in the interpersonal case bears some similarity.

As King puts it in his essay 'Showdown for Nonviolence':
> I think we have come to the point where there is no longer a choice now between
> nonviolence and riots. It must be militant, massive nonviolence, or riots. The

> discontent is so deep, the anger so ingrained, the despair, the restlessness so wide,
> that something has to be brought into being to serve as a channel through which
> these deep emotional feelings, these deep angry feelings, can be funneled. There has
> to be an outlet, and I see this campaign as a way to transmute the inchoate rage of
> the ghetto into a constructive and creative channel. It becomes an outlet for anger.[61]

King implies that anger is going to make the residents of the ghetto do *something*, but that their actions can either be excellent in being constructive and creative, or lack excellence by resulting in riots.

I want to suggest that the virtuously angry person is *assertively resistant*. This means she first confronts the target of her anger in an attempt to bring the target's attention to her cause for anger. She then asks after or demands an explanation or justification; if the justification is insufficient, she acts to change the situation. Of course, there will be situations in which this ordering should be inverted: if someone is attacking your child, it will be more excellent to try to stop the attack first, rather than demand an explanation of what is occurring. However, when something of immense moral significance does not hang on immediate action, the above characterization holds.

This pattern of angry motivation is hypothesized to generally lead to better results than either excessively passive or excessively aggressive patterns. In part, this is because this method has a different aim from aggressive action. Aggressive action aims to win at all costs, while assertive resistance 'does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent, but to win his friendship and understanding.'[62] The end is not simply to change the unjust or wrong situation, but to gain the other party's allegiance to the idea that the situation should be changed by convincing the other party to share the angry person's appraisal of the situation, rather than cow him into submitting to a request. Importantly, the benefits of this method do not all lie in the potential outcomes of this process, such as effectively changing the situation. Other important goods like personal control and personal respect, which may not be best captured instrumentally, are more likely to be achieved and maintained by the assertively resistant person.[63] This is partly in virtue of the assertively resistant person seeking to convince her interlocutor that her allegiance to her appraisal of the situation is correct and that her actions respect his moral capacities. Further, because assertive resistance is less likely to 'blow up' into a conflagration of insults or aggressive behavior because norms of respect are followed, the good of personal control is more likely to be achieved by this method. An excellently angry person rightly looks with pride toward disputes where she effectively communicates her complaint (she avoids meek capitulation) while not resorting to insult or injury (she avoids aggressive behavior), even when she fails to achieve what she aimed with the assertively resistant confrontation.

Function III: Angry Communication
I now want to highlight a point that was implicitly broached in the previous section. There I urged that part of being virtuously motivated by anger involves being assertively resistant, and that part of the assertively resistant person's excellence involves asking after or demanding justification from the target of her anger. This aspect of angry motivation invokes the communicative function of anger. While it would be possible to treat this as simply a minor complication of the previous section on motivation—as most communication involves some psychological structure that could be described as motivating or moving a person to behave in a particular way—it's worth discussing in its own right for two reasons. First, at least some of the features of angry behavior don't appear to be the result of anything like a conscious motivation, so these ways of behaving angrily don't appear to be easily construed as full-blooded actions, or perhaps even the result of actional motivation. Second, up until now I have been arguing that anger has motivational *and* appraisal functions. In doing so, I implied that we could judge the virtue or vice of a person by looking only at what she does in response to her circumstances. I now want to make clear that this focus is too narrow. Virtue with respect to anger is determined not just by what *you* do, but by what *you do together with others* in expressing and communicating your anger to them in an effort to influence their appraisals and behaviors.[64] Aristotle recognized these points, placing one sustained discussion of anger in the *Rhetoric*.

Communicative features
One of the most striking things about anger is that it is associated with characteristic facial expressions.[65] This is some evidence that prototypic emotional responses are not only appraisals of a situation that generate characteristic motivations, but that they are also communicative responses. In fact, the characteristic facial expressions associated with different emotions seem to be associated more with interpersonal interactions, rather than the peak of an emotional experience.[66] For example, you are more likely to smile broadly when bowling a strike after you turn to face the other bowlers than when you initially knock down all the pins.[67] Other evidence comes from the fact that specific speech patterns (including rate of articulation, intensity, and frequency of vocal fold vibrations) are associated with different emotions, including anger.[68] Emotions are also associated with bodily movements and postures that at least partially differentiate different emotions.[69]

These communications are then observed, responded to, or ignored by other people and the responses—or lack thereof—provide another opportunity for emotional engagement and transformation. For example, in conversation, people continually and automatically mimic and synchronize their movements with those of their interlocutors, including such reactions as changes in facial expression, posture, and movement.[70] Our subjective emotional experiences appear to be

affected by feedback from this mimicry, leading to the phenomenon where people may "catch" the emotions of others.[71] And people routinely interpret the facial expressions of others as conveying emotions the others are feeling, as well as the intentions and wishes of the person emoting. Relevantly, anger expressions are most likely to be interpreted as conveying intentions or requests.[72]

Angry people are thus typically engaging in communication which not only communicates to the target of their anger that the target has acted wrongfully, but also urges others to share their anger at the target and thereby, implicitly at least, share their appraisal of the target. Further, a person's anger also may urge others to adopt similar motivations, communicate relevant motivational tendencies and appraisal to the target, and demand that others change their behavior.[73] When a person's anger is fitting and her motivations are excellent, then her excellence is furthered on an additional axis if she can get her interlocutors to be angry at the same things. By doing so, she will lead them to feel fitting anger which may, in turn, lead them to have excellent motivations.

I Have a Dream
Martin Luther King Jr.'s most famous speech, the 'I Have a Dream' address to the 1963 March on Washington, D.C. for Civil Rights, is widely remembered for the eponymous portions of the speech where King enumerates the dreams he has for the United States, and for its triumphantly hopeful ending, 'Free at last, free at last; thank God Almighty, we are free at last.'[74] Less commonly remembered are the beginning and middle portions of the speech that lay the groundwork for the successful ending.[75] Here I rely on parts of King's 'I Have a Dream' speech to illustrate the argument that another dimension in which we should evaluate someone's anger is by how she communicates it. Part of the success of 'I Have a Dream' is that it communicates anger excellently.

Near the beginning of the speech, King notes that one hundred years after Emancipation
> [T]he Negro is still not free; one hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination; one hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity; one hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself in exile in his own land.[76]

In making these observations, King implicitly asks his audience to share his appraisal of the state of American society under segregation and to be angry about it. That he implicitly seeks to incite anger in his audience is supported not just by his listing injustices for which anger is fitting, but also by describing the situation of blacks using metaphors like 'defaulting on a promise' and 'being given a bad check,' more or less common social situations which his audience will have implicitly labeled as

fitting for anger.[77] But he not only urges his audience to share his appraisals, he urges them to be moved to correct these injustices by exhorting 'This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy.'[78] Until full rights are gained, 'We can never be satisfied' and so his listeners must 'go back to the slums and ghettos … knowing that somehow this situation can, and will be changed.'[79]

Part of the rhetorical success of the 'I Have a Dream' speech involves King subtly inciting anger in his audience, both to deepen their appraisal of the relevant injustices and to motivate them to act so as to eliminate those injustices.[80] Further, the 'I have a dream' passages and the triumphant last lines of the speech must be understood to rely on the previous sections for a significant part of their rhetorical force. It is only after anger has been induced in the audience that the promise of the future removal of the object of the audience's anger can render the speech's resolution so complete. Thus, King's speech is an exemplar of excellence with respect to the communication of anger.

Displaying Anger

There is one more way in which the communicative aspect of anger is relevant to angry excellence. In order to successfully fulfill its communicative function, anger must be seen by others as an appraisal of wrongness—not simply discounted. Because of this, successful anger must conform to unwritten 'display rules' that prescribe how to communicate anger to others.[81] Such rules vary across cultures and social groups, as well as between genders and families; we are socialized to attend to such rules from a very early age.[82] An angry person must attend to such rules if she is to be excellent with respect to communication. However, while nuanced attention to display rules is necessary for excellence, such attention does not guarantee successful angry communication. While an excellently angry person is sensitive to the fact that different groups implicitly subscribe to different norms or cultural differences for expression of anger, if her interlocutors are not sensitive to such possibilities, her anger may fail to be communicatively successful.[83]

As Jody Miller documents, such a situation besets young black women who are the victims of urban violence and harassment; they are in a double bind with respect to their ability to use anger to respond to their mistreatment.

> Girls' responses to harassment, when assertive or aggressive, often resulted in more
> vicious mistreatment, especially in the forms of gender harassment and violent
> overtures. Their attempts to defend themselves were read by young men as
> disrespect, and the incidents quickly escalated into hostile confrontations when
> young women challenged young men's sexual and gender entitlements. Thus, young

> women were in a lose lose situation. Every available avenue for responding to sexual harassment reproduced their disempowered positions vis-a-vis young men.[84]

Thus, even a communicatively excellent angry person's success is partially determined by the willingness of others to not simply dismiss her angry displays out of hand.[85] Effectively leading others to share the appraisal and motivations of anger requires their cooperation and their sensitivity to the fact that your way of angrily expressing yourself may not fit with their norms for emotional communication. Thus, a person's possession of communicative excellence with respect to anger is often not simply a matter of how she responds to the actions of others, but relates to how people respond together.[86] While an excellently angry person respects cultural and interpersonal norms for the assertive communication of anger, for her anger to be successful, she requires that her interlocutors are sensitive to the possibility that they misconstrue the nature of her angry response.

We surely want to say, however, that King's communication in 'I Have a Dream' is excellent even if the speech is heard by a group of committed white racists who are not moved by it. And part of what seems so terrible about the situation facing the young women Miller describes is that even if they respond excellently, their anger is discounted. We can't, then, say that a person is communicatively excellent just in case her angry display is actually received well by other. I propose, instead, that we should count a person as communicatively excellent when she displays her anger in a way that would be received well by suitably virtuous interlocutors. Saying exactly when someone's angry communication is excellent, excessive, or deficient will thus be a complicated matter in that it will depend on characterizations of how compassionate, humble, temperant, just, and prudent people would respond to a given bout of angry communication. Space doesn't permit more exhaustive examination of this proposal here; however, I would like to mention four additional advantages of this account.

First, as suggested above, the idea that excellent angry communication is what would be well-received by virtuous interlocutors allows us to capture the social nature of angry virtue without being forced to say that the response of someone's actual interlocutors determines whether she is excellent. Second, the account allows us to characterize cases where someone's formative circumstances or other factors make it difficult, or even impossible, for that person to be excellently angry. Perhaps this is true for some of the young men mentioned by Miller, who are unable to see a questioning of their perceived entitlements to women's bodies as anything other than an attack on their manhood. Third, the account helps us understand why disputes about whether someone has been excellently angry so often concern the manner in which someone has expressed their anger and why such disputes can appear so intractable. Disputing parties are engaged in arguing about what an idealized respondent would have done in response to the given expression of anger in a particular

social context, a topic that easily lends itself to vagueness and disagreement. Finally, because a virtuous interlocutor will be able to properly receive a variety of angry communications, the account allows for the possibility that a variety of types of angry communication are compatible with virtue.

The Account of Vice
Viciousness

So far I've presented an account of angry virtue composed of three distinct excellences. On this account, a person is angrily virtuous when her anger is excellent along three dimensions: her anger is fitting, it motivates her to take assertively resistant actions, and she communicates her anger to others with nuanced attention to appropriate social norms governing its display. We can also use this account to characterize the extremes of viciousness with respect to anger: the meek person and the wrathful one.

First, of course, one can lack excellence in failing to be angry at the things for which anger is fitting or by being angry at things for which anger isn't fitting. The first vice might be termed insensitivity to the wrong or unjust, while the latter seems describable as a sort of hypersensitivity. For example, a person can exhibit a failure of excellence if he becomes angrier about the failure of a bookstore to order a book than about the fact that a student was ruthlessly assaulted.

So the extent to which a person's anger proportionately fails to track wrongs and injustices is a significant aspect of vice. But even if anger is fittingly felt, there are still important ways in which someone might fail to be fully virtuous. For example, a person who feels fitting anger but who is not moved to act against or protest the situation is too passive; one whose fitting anger always leads her to aggressive and violent action also fails to demonstrate virtue. The viciousness of people who are too angrily passive or angrily aggressive depends first on the likelihood that both passivity and aggressiveness are less likely to bring about a morally desirable outcome than the motivations of the assertively resistant. Because the passive person is unlikely to confront those with whom he is angry, the likelihood that the wrong or injustice will continue is high. So the passive person stands very ineffectively against the wrongful, even if his anger correctly appraises it as such. On the other hand, the aggressive person is more likely than the passive person to change the situation her anger takes as its target—and in certain circumstances might even be more likely to do so than the assertively resistant person. However, the aggressive person's actions are more likely than the assertively resistant person's to be appraised as wrongful by the anger of those they confront; thus the actions of the aggressive person will often simply replace one conflict with another. One of the most common findings in research on aggression is that aggressive action tends to lead to aggressive retaliation.[87]

The viciousness of the passive and the aggressive extends also to the goods of personal control and personal respect, though in different ways. The passive person either fails to feel anger when it is fitting and so fails to be moved by anger to resist that which is wrongful, or he overly controls himself so as to remain nonconfrontational. I have discussed the first defect above, so I will not discuss it further here. The second defect is characterized by a failure to take moral claims, both one's own and the claims of others, seriously—a failure of disrespect to morality and oneself. The passive person also exercises too much self-control in her restraint. On the other hand, given her motives, the aggressive person shows too little self-restraint and thus fails to respect others in acting on her anger, whatever her intentions. Her actions are oriented toward success independently of gaining the assent of others, which disrespects their capacity to deliberate about and choose ends for themselves. She treats them as beings to be moved around, avoided, or destroyed, but not as persons to be convinced.

Deficient viciousness with respect to the communicative function is characterized by improperly communicating anger to others and failing to communicate the intensity of one's anger—and thus the seriousness of the wrong. Excessive viciousness is characterized by communicative behaviors that are disproportionately excessive to the amount of anger the subject feels. In both cases, what counts as deficient and excessive will be partly determined by implicit display rules that an angrily vicious person is either insensitive toward or uncaring about—though as discussed above the ultimate determinate of excellence will be the reactions of a properly virtuous interlocutor.

The Viciously Meek and Wrathful
Applying the above accounts of vice, we can characterize the viciously meek person as deficient with respect to all the functions of anger: he fails to feel anger in situations where it is fitting and feels less anger than is fitting for the situation. If and when he is angry, he is afraid of confrontation and is not motivated to change the situation. He doesn't express his anger and experiences the anger of others as an attack, not a protest. The danger of vicious meekness is not taking oneself seriously as a moral agent. The meek person fails to stand effectively for what is morally desirable.

On the other hand, the wrathful person is excessive with respect to all three functions of anger: he gets angry in situations where it is unfitting and is angrier than the situation warrants. He acts aggressively and impulsively toward others. He is quick to communicate his excessive anger. He experiences the anger of others as calling his authority into question, which tends to infuriate him further. The moral danger of wrath is moral overconfidence and moral insensitivity. The threat of the wrathful person's anger often discourages others from legitimately challenging his authority. This can lead to him growing in overconfidence and insensitivity—wrath can thus enter into an increasingly vicious cycle with pride.[88] Finally, a person I will call 'charismatically wrathful' extends,

through communication, this moral overconfidence and insensitivity to others. Such a person stands against the good and with the bad predominantly through his ability to lead others to do his dirty work for him.

Parting Notes
In this chapter, I've relied on the examples of virtuous anger presented by Frederick Douglass and Martin Luther King, Jr. to offer an account of excellence and vice with respect to anger that has a number of attractive features. First and perhaps foremost, the account is psychologically realistic as well as philosophically informed. Part of the value of the situationist critique of virtue theory—no matter what one thinks of the critique itself—is that it has forced philosophers to be more sensitive to empirical evidence about human psychology. But there is also something psychology can gain from philosophy: for one the understanding that the emotion-appraisal link is conceptual, rather than empirical. Further, rather than seeking to evaluate angry virtue merely along one function that anger serves, my account is valuable in offering a nuanced account of angry virtue and vice.

Finally, my account also gives us a ready way to understand the use of common vice terms as describing particular sorts of moral failings, rather than just being one more way of saying 'viciously bad.' So we can understand someone who is *furious* as someone whose anger is so off the charts with respect to its target that it appears unfitting. But if such a person restrains herself and is able to constrain her actions and motivation, she may well approximate virtue to some degree. My account also offers a way to understand the unique vice attendant in resentment. Someone who is *resentful* is someone whose anger tracks, to some degree, wrongs or injustices, but who is then deficient with respect to motivation and communication.[89] Because he is deficient in those respects, he fails to change the situation, which then leads to anger at those who fail to respond as he wishes. Thus, the resentful person is also subject to a vicious feedback loop—his inability to stand against the bad leads to him seeing injustices and wrongs where there are none, which in turn leads to motivations and communications that fail yet again, leading him to recurrent anger.[90] Such a person emphasizes the necessity of excellence in all three functions for achieving angry virtue and avoiding vice.[91]

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[1] The approach ends up being broadly Aristotelian in that there are several determinates of angry virtue and vice, but I am not engaged here in Aristotle exegesis. One more caveat: some virtue theorists hold that virtue requires persistence or unity in a person's ability to track and act on relevant considerations across a certain class of situations. Just how much persistence there must be for such activity to constitute virtue is a matter of significant recent dispute. Aristotle holds that an agent acts virtuously only if her choices of virtuous action proceed from 'a firm and unchangeable character' (Aristotle 1985, 1105a34–35) and some contemporary virtue theorists concur (Hursthouse 1999, 136). However, in part because of worries about situational effects on deliberation and behavior—see Merritt, Doris, and Harman (2010) for an excellent recent overview—some virtue theorists are willing to see the relevant dispositions as situationally dependent (Slingerland 2011) or 'frail and fragmentary in various ways' (Adams 2006, 119). In what follows, I sidestep this issue by focusing on the considerations that a person must track and act on in order to display *excellence* with respect to anger's discrete functions. Whether or not anyone has those excellences in a robust-enough way to constitute virtue is a topic for elsewhere.

[2] Lazarus (1991, 223).

[3] Prinz and Nichols (2010, 122).

[4] Prinz and Nichols (2010, 130). Anger can also be elicited by the destruction, desecration, or disrespect of nonliving things like ideas, religious symbols, or historical artifacts.

[5] Shaver et al. (1987, 1078).

[6] Averill (1983, 1150).

[7] While there has been much debate over whether or not the relevant appraisals are cognitions, beginning with (Zajonc 1980; Lazarus 1982) and continued in (Zajonc 1984; Lazarus 1984), that debate is orthogonal to my concerns. For an excellent recent discussion of this issue, see (Prinz 2004, 21–51).

[8] Berkowitz and Harmon-Jones (2004a), Berkowitz and Harmon-Jones (2004b), and Parkinson 1999.

[9] Parkinson (1997).

[10] Roseman (1991).

[11] While I hold that there is conceptual overlap between emotion and appraisal, I don't deny that you can appraise or evaluate a situation without becoming emotional about it. On my view, emotions are necessarily evaluations, but evaluations are not necessarily emotional.

[12] D'Arms and Jacobson (2000).

[13] Since part of virtue with respect to anger is determined by accurate perception, virtue with respect to anger relies on proper perception or judgment and thus requires other supporting virtues, like prudence.

[14] D'Arms and Jacobson (2000, 74).

[15] Bell (2009).

[16] Hurka (2003) and Adams (2006).

[17] Bell (2009, 178).

[18] Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung also argues that part of angry virtue concerns whether anger accurately characterizes its target (2009).

[19] Bell (2009, 166).

[20] Suggestively, Douglass describes his angry, violent resistance to a beating at the hands of the notorious slave-breaker, Edward Covey, as pivotal in committing himself to his own freedom (Douglass 1997, 79).

[21] Adams (2006, 17). Adams gives voice to Aquinas' view that we are most virtuous when each of our intellectual, sensitive, and bodily parts is oriented toward virtue. For discussion of Aquinas on this point, see Rota (2007, 412).

[22] Adams (2006, 44).

[23] Pereboom (2001, 213).

[24] Thurman (2005, 5).

[25] Seneca (1995, 111). For further discussion of Stoic, as well as Buddhist, views on anger, see Vernezze (2007).

[26] Thurman (2005, 11).

[27] Berkowitz (1993, 59) and (1999, 425).

[28] Montaigne (1958, 545).

[29] Keltner, Ellsworth, and Edwards (1993, 751).

[30] Quigley and Tedeschi (1996).

[31] Lerner and Keltner (2001).

[32] Lerner and Keltner (2000).

[33] Lerner and Tiedens (2006, 132).

[34] Leith and Baumeister (1996).

[35] Lerner, Goldberg, and Tetlock (1998). For an excellent overview of recent empirical study of anger's effects on judgment and decision-making, see Litvak et al. (2010).

[36] *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1378a–1378b.

[37] *ST* II-II.158.2.

[38] Lorde (1997, 280).

[39] Lorde (1997, 283).

[40] La Caze (2001, 41). La Caze follows James Mark Baldwin (1960) in taking resentment to be 'An emotion of displeasure arising from a sense of injury to oneself or another, and prompting to the resistance of such injury' (La Caze 2001, 33). Though she distinguishes resentment from anger, she does not indicate how they differ.

[41] Tessman (2005, 165).

[42] DeYoung (2009, 130).

[43] Baumeister and Bushman (2007, 66)

[44] Averill (1982); Tavris (1989).

[45] Buck (1999).

[46] Buss and Duntley (2006).

[47] See Harmon-Jones and Harmon-Jones (2007, 103–5) and Baumeister and Bushman (2007, 67).

[48] Averill (1982).

[49] Steffgen and Pfetsch (2007).

[50] French (2001).

[51] Tavris (1989, 54). James Averill also emphasizes anger's role as an 'informal judiciary' (1979).

[52] Fernandez (2010, 500).

[53] Experimental research on such games began with Güth, Schmittberger, and Schwarze (1982).

[54] Ochs and Roth (1989).

[55] Fehr and Gächter (2002).

[56] Haidt (2001, 826).

[57] Fehr and Gächter (2002, 137).

[58] Bell (2009, 178).

[59] Even if other humans always did act well, there might still be virtue in possessing the disposition to become angry *if* occasion arose.

[60] Duckworth and Mercer (2006).

[61] King, Jr. (1986a, 69). While King is justly lauded by moral theorists, some theorists (Stern 1974, 78; Watson 1993, 148) seem to think that King's method of nonviolent resistance involved a call to expunge anger from our lives. Such theorists appear to have not taken King at his own words.

[62] King, Jr. (1986b, 87). While not all friendship is worth having, I read King here as suggesting the aim is to win over the opponent in a way compatible with future friendship.

[63] Duckworth and Mercer (2006, 80).

[64] Parkinson (1996).

[65] Ekman (1999).

[66] Fernández-Dols and Ruiz-Belda (1995).

[67] Kraut and Johnston (1979).

[68] Scherer (1986) and Scherer et al. (1991).

[69] Wallbott (1998).

[70] Chartrand and Bargh (1999).

[71] Hatfield, Cacioppo, and Rapson (1993).

[72] Horstmann (2003).

[73] Horstmann (2003).

[74] King, Jr. (1986a, 220).

[75] See, for example, the many version of the speech on youtube.com that begin with the 'I have a dream' refrain.

[76] King, Jr. (1986c, 217).

[77] Haidt (2001, 823) argues that King's use of metaphor and visual imagery was more effective than logic would have been in communicating the injustices of racial segregation.

[78] King, Jr. (1986c, 218).

[79] King, Jr. (1986c, 218-9).

[80] See Haidt (2001, 819) for discussion of a theory of moral judgment that makes sense of this phenomenon. A helpful discussion of Haidt's and others views on moral judgment is Morrow (2009).

[81] Ekman, Sorenson, and Friesen (1969); Ekman and Friesen (2003).

[82] Malatesta and Haviland (1982). One example of how such rules can change is provided by Francesca Cancian and Steven Gordon, who argue that between 1900 and 1979, the social norms

governing women's expression of anger to their spouses loosened considerably. In the early part of the century, women were advised not to express their anger at home; that counsel eventually shifted to urging women to express their anger to their husbands. As they note, 'The normative shift toward encouraging women to express their dissatisfactions and anger supported more equal power between the sexes … advising wives to express dissatisfactions and anger made women more aware of their own interests and desires, and better able to defend them' (Cancian and Gordon 1988, 320).

[83] Elfenbein and Ambady (2002).

[84] Miller (2008, 111).

[85] Lorde (1997, 131) ans Campbell (1994, 48).

[86] For a discussion emphasizing another way in which character is interpersonal, see Merritt (2009).

[87] Berkowitz (1993).

[88] Taylor (2006, 84).

[89] This definition of resentment differs from La Caze's.

[90] Taylor (2006, 88–91).

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