Resentment, Sympathy, and Indignation

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ABSTRACT

The paper offers an account of justified resentment and its importance in preserving human dignity. I situate the argument in the context of Martha Nussbaum's recent work against anger and resentment. Drawing on Enlightenment thinkers, I show the importance of resentment in deterring injury, in creating greater solidarity and humanity, and in preserving human dignity. The paper also offers a preliminary analysis of the norms that help to ensure appropriately expressed resentment.

1. Introduction

In her recent book, *Anger and Forgiveness*, Martha Nussbaum argues that anger is a problematic emotion that deforms both our personal and political lives (Nussbaum, 2016, pp. 5-7). Her position puts her, to some extent, in good company: in the western philosophical tradition, from Aristotle, the Stoics and other ancients, to Hobbes and other social contract theorists, anger has been seen as a destructive force. For Spinoza, anger is among those emotions that enervate us, leaving us weak and passive rather than active. In the 19th century, Nietzsche and Scheler identify one form of resentment, namely, *ressentiment*, as a form of impotent hatred. Nevertheless, other philosophers, particularly the Enlightenment thinkers Adam Smith and David Hume, and before them, Joseph Butler, along with the contemporary philosopher P. F. Strawson, who all serve as my inspiration here, view resentment as a specific form of anger at injury or injustice, and as a potentially constructive force that can equip us to seek not simply vengeance, but recognition of and redress for wrongs done. In this article, I defend resentment under certain circumstances and argue that our

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sympathetic indignation, felt in concord with another's resentment, can play a crucial role in arbitrating or rectifying injustices and other moral wrongs.[1]

The paper has five parts. I begin with a closer look at Nussbaum's analysis of emotion and her case against anger. My main aim here is to examine her analysis of anger as a problematic emotion. I will then give a general sketch of emotion that looks beyond belief and appraisal to include the bodily features that explain the persistence of emotions, as well as the phenomenology of emotions that make our felt experience of them meaningful for us. It will be important for my account to describe those elements of emotion that make it possible for us to sympathize with one another. I shall set out an account of emotions as intentional evaluative judgments, with a particular affective feel, and often with a bodily dimension that helps to explain the intensity and persistence of emotion. In the third part, I introduce resentment as a particular form of anger that is a response to harm or injury, understood under a particular description and with specific meaning for the resentful person. In the fourth part of the paper, drawing particularly on Adam Smith, I attempt to get at the affective feel of the process of sympathizing with others' resentment; those who sympathize with resentful persons tend to feel indignation aimed at the cause of injury. Finally, after pointing to the moral importance of resentment for us, I will survey some ways in which we might set the bounds for appropriate resentment.

2. Nussbaum on Anger: From Destructive to Constructive Conceptions

Let us turn now to Nussbaum's characterization of emotion, and in particular, of anger. She begins with the claim that little philosophical attention has been paid to anger, other than in connection with blame. I agree but qualify her claim by saying that, in particular, we have not paid enough philosophical attention to the phenomenology of anger, something to which I return when I discuss empathy with resentment. Nussbaum includes but also goes beyond the intentional and cognitive elements of anger. Drawing on Aristotle, she lists as the elements of anger: 1) recognition that one has been injured, slighted or down ranked by another; 2) that the injury or slighting has been wrongfully done by the other; 3) a feeling of pain; and 4) a desire for payback or retribution (Nussbaum, 2016,

[1] Following Hume and Smith, I use the term *sympathy* to refer to our capacity to experience some form of, and respond to the emotions of others; I agree with Hume and Smith that we also sympathize with others' opinions and are able to reconstruct imaginatively the situations of others.

pp. 16-17). This account includes both intentionality and an evaluative judgment: one is angry with another person or persons for wrongfully slighting one. The desire for retribution suggests a motivational role of anger. Presumably, the painfulness of anger comprises its affective feel, although Nussbaum explicitly excludes what she calls *subjective feelings* from her account. She suggests that both subjective feelings and bodily changes vary between individuals, or from one episode of anger to the next, in ways that lack the constancy to be included as necessary conditions in a definition of anger (Nussbaum, 2016, p. 16). Yet she does later introduce other affective elements (and it is not clear what these are if not subjective feelings) which I suggest contribute to the affective feel and phenomenology of anger, such as the injured person's feelings of personal insecurity and vulnerability, and a felt lack of control because of the down ranking by another.

Nussbaum also identifies three instrumental roles of anger: 1) anger signals that something is amiss and that the angry person, her loved ones or her values have been made vulnerable; 2) anger is motivational insofar as it involves a desire for payback; and 3) anger has utility as a deterrent. According to Nussbaum, the desire for payback or retribution is a conceptual part of anger, making anger a forward-looking "retaliatory project." Acting on the desire for payback and the imagining or planning of the payback are pleasant, and show the sense in which anger is connected to hope. The motivation anger gives an agent also implicitly contains a remedy for the painfulness of anger. Yet for Nussbaum, the desire for payback makes anger a problematic emotion for two reasons. First, anger at another is often anger at what we perceive as the other's slights or down ranking of us, thus anger is often about a perceived injury to our status (she concedes that injury can take other forms, but her main focus is on status injury). This gives our anger a narcissistic aspect, and signals an immature and excessive concern with self and our own ego. Second, the desire for payback involves a wish that things go badly for the perpetrator, for example, by deliberately diminishing the offender's status. But merely bringing the offender down, damaging his dignity in turn, does not really do any good. When retaliation takes this tit-for-tat form, it does not undo the damage done by the offender. To have two individuals with damaged dignity does not somehow right the balance, as Nussbaum puts it, and betrays "magical thinking" on the part of the retaliator rather than focusing on constructive restoration to a pre-damaged state (Nussbaum, 2016, pp. 24-7). Nussbaum's solution to the problem of anger in response to status injury suggests that we become more mature and Stoical.

Instead of giving in to anger's desire for retribution, we should transition to more constructive thinking, looking to achieve future good in terms of actually restoring the damage done or punishing in a way that does some good for the offender. The focus of what Nussbaum terms transitional or quasi-anger falls on doing something in terms of improving a situation rather than payback (Nussbaum's exemplars here are Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi). She argues that transitional anger is well grounded and rational, and allows the victim to preserve an equal respect for dignity, even for the dignity of the offender. Rather than acting on the anger, we come closer to acting on principle. We should note that Nussbaum herself does not think it makes sense to differentiate the varieties of anger since we cannot do so with sufficient precision (Nussbaum, 2016, pp. 261-4). She contends that philosophers tend, without argument, to name resentment and indignation as first- and third-person moral emotions that involve a judgment of moral wrongfulness. Nussbaum prefers to use the generic term "anger," and to get at moral elements of cases through further description rather than specific terminology. I will argue that resentment and indignation have traditionally been associated with moral injury and wrongdoing, and that this supports a role for resentment in moral experience.

3. A Non-reductive Analysis of Emotion

In terms of philosophically understanding anger, I shall begin by joining with those, including Nussbaum, who think of anger and (most of) its varieties as intentional and, typically, as having an important cognitive-appraisive component, although I shall add to this the importance of the phenomenology and "affective taste" of the emotion as well as bodily feelings and changes. The intentionality of the emotion concerns what the emotion is about, the object to which it is a response, and so will involve our having beliefs about the object, particularly with regard to whatever it is about the object, that is, the object under some particular description, that has elicited the emotion in us. The object under some particular description is, as Robert Solomon points out, determined by the emotion itself (Solomon, 1973/2003). The emotion also involves an appraisal or evaluation, a belief or some sense that the object of our emotion is good or bad for us in some particular way; for example, I am afraid because I believe the animal before me is dangerous, or I am grateful to someone because I judge that I am the intended beneficiary of her generosity. So far, then, an emotion is an evaluative judgment about the object to which it is directed,

considered under some particular description (that contributing to the emotion's being what it is).[2]

Many emotions have or are also partly constituted by bodily feelings. We may have different kinds of bodily experiences of an emotion such as anger, from the clenching of teeth when merely irritated, to the racing heart and reddened face when enraged. The bodily feelings help to explain the persistence of emotions; my anger may dissipate slowly because the racing heart takes time to slow down and I need time to draw breath normally even as I realize the person I am angry with acted unintentionally and in all innocence. These behavioral or physiological elements can also lend an intensity and persistence to the evaluative aspect of an emotion-laden judgment in comparison with the dispassionate non-emotional judgments that we make. Nussbaum argues for the necessary and sufficient conditions for particular emotions, and focuses on an emotion having "the requisite eudaimonistic evaluative content"; she concludes that bodily processes and feelings lack a constant correlation with particular emotions (Nussbaum, 2001, pp. 57-8). In contrast, I suggest that establishing necessary and sufficient conditions for an emotion will neglect the complex constituents of emotions that are important both to those experiencing them and to observers who may sympathize with another's emotion or situation. As we shall see, facial expressions and other bodily manifestations of emotion are also important signs or cues for those who empathize with someone's emotion; both Hume and Adam Smith point out that we often, if not always, rely on the bodily, behavioral and verbal signs of other's emotions in the process of sympathizing with the person. It is important to note that we learn to read one another's culturally conditioned behavior, including polite manners and norms for the expression of emotion, so that we might, for example, perceive and understand that someone exercising self-control or polite restraint is nevertheless angry, pleased or proud.

In addition to the evaluative judgment and the bodily feeling, emotions also have an affective feel for us, distinct from any physical or bodily manifestations. The affective feel of emotion will be a range of pleasures or pains experienced in particular ways, more as mental perceptions than physical sensations. While the emotion has the cognitive content mentioned above, the

[2] In Solomon's cognitivist account judgments (including pre-reflective judgments) are constitutive of emotion, although he emphasizes that emotions are holistic phenomena that include other aspects such as behavior, physiology, phenomenology and social context (Solomon, 2003, p. 131).

affective feel includes, in addition to some feeling of pain or pleasure, an awareness of ourselves as in a certain state, for example, as diminished, or confident or content. Sandra Bartky links what she calls the "affective taste" of emotions to their phenomenology, so that the way in which we experience a particular emotion can disclose to us our standing in the world, our sense of ourselves particularly in relation to others (Bartky, 1990, p. 83). [3] We experience in particular ways the mental affect, which influences our awareness of ourselves. The pain of shame or humiliation, for example, differs from that of grief, dejection, anger or other negative or painful emotions. Shame gives one a sense of one's smallness or a feeling of worthlessness, while some experiences of anger might prompt confidence in expressing resentment or disappointment. Just what this affective feel discloses to us about our situation and our experience of it can give rise to other beliefs or judgments, affective feelings, and new bodily manifestations. If I am ashamed of some wrong I have committed, the particular painfulness of shame makes me feel small and not worthy of being in the company of others. The particular pain of shame, including my sense of feeling small and unworthy, can give rise to new evaluative judgments (and perhaps new bodily feelings): my initial shame may be expressed as something like, "how can I have said that," focusing on my wrong action; but as the painfulness of shame lingers, I may arrive at new evaluative judgments about myself and now I might think something like, "I have let him down," where this may point to the production of a new emotion such as remorse. Feeling remorse may in turn motivate me to apologize and attempt to make amends for my wrongdoing, as well as to resolve to do better. Inclusion of the affective feel or phenomenology of the emotions is also important for explaining what happens when we empathize with others. If we empathize and feel the pain of the person ashamed of having acted badly, it is not merely her judgment that she was wrong, but the painfulness of her shame, what that feels like for her, with which we empathize. In reflecting on our emotional experiences, we often find all three of these elements – evaluative judgment, bodily disturbance, and affective feel – present. One element or another may stand out more in its importance for us, but the links between the elements are important. For example, intense mental unease from anger and an inability to calm down the bodily manifestations of anger after judging that someone deliberately injured me may fuel other (possibly unfair) negative judgments about the wrongdoer.

[3] See also Stocker (1983).

4. The Case for Resentment as a Moral Emotion

I will focus on a particular form that anger can take, namely, resentment. I disagree with Nussbaum's claim that we cannot differentiate between varieties of anger in sufficiently precise ways. I think resentment, while certainly broad in terms of its causes and remedies, does have an acknowledged specificity considered as a response to injury (think of the differences between resentment and other varieties of anger such as irritation or annoyance, fury or rage).[4] I further disagree with Nussbaum that resentment's concern with slights to one's status or dignity always involves an immature narcissism. Dignity is a fragile human good, and ascribing dignity to our fellow persons (without a historically based regard for socioeconomic status or race or gender) is usually a collective moral accomplishment, and we are right to resent intentional affronts to it. I shall also disagree with the claim that the desire for retribution is a conceptual part of anger or resentment. The desire for retribution or to punish may sometimes be an element of resentment, but it need not be. When resentment is an attitude characterizing those engaged in social or political struggle, it often has the aim of constructively establishing, restoring or maintaining dignity, rights or some other good.

Of course, philosophers have also viewed resentment, particularly the characterization of it as *ressentiment*, by for example, Friedrich Nietzsche and Max Scheler, as a problematic emotion, for reasons similar to Nussbaum's concern with psychic damage or immaturity. In Scheler's systematic treatment, *ressentiment* is "an incurable, persistent feeling of hating and despising which occurs in certain individuals and groups," and has its roots "in equally incurable *impotencie*s or weaknesses that those subjects constantly suffer from," and that generate "negative emotive attitudes" and "false moral judgments" (Scheler, 1994, p. 6). Scheler describes *ressentiment* as:

[4] See the *Oxford English Dictionary*, where the main definition for "resentment" concerns a sense of grievance or indignation for a perceived injury or insult. The usage of the English *resentment* is similar to that for French *ressentiment*, Italian, *risentimento*, Spanish, *resentimento*, and Portugese, *ressentimento*.

> a self-poisoning of the mind which has quite definite causes and consequences. It is a lasting mental attitude, caused by the systematic repression of certain emotions and affects which, as such, are normal components of human nature. Their repression leads to the constant tendency to indulge in certain kinds of value delusions and corresponding value judgments. The emotions and affects primarily concerned are revenge, hatred, malice, envy, the impulse to detract, and spite (Scheler, 1994, p. 29).

The desire for revenge exists, but the subject cannot act on it, typically because she is subordinated or marginalized in her society; it thus produces her feelings of impotence and the negative emotions Scheler lists. As with Nussbaum's characterization of anger, Scheler's *ressentiment* has especially negative consequences for the person experiencing the emotion.

But resentment has important champions. Early in the 18th century, Joseph Butler devoted one of the Sermons he delivered at the Rolls Chapel to resentment, making the case for it as a natural passion, one allied with the indignation of others. For Butler, the natural object of deliberate resentment and indignation is "vice and wickedness"; he writes, "it is one of the common bonds, by which society is held together: a fellow feeling, which each individual has in behalf of the whole species, as well as of himself" (Butler, 1726/1967, pp. 125-6). While Nussbaum acknowledges the value of Butler's appeal to social solidarity, she reads him as making the desire for "payback" a *normative* part of resentment (Nussbaum, 2016, p. 34). But this reading of Butler's argument is mistaken. According to Butler, resentment's object is vice or intentional injury, and its "end" is to prevent or remedy "injury or moral wrong"; the solidarity we show in our indignation for injury resented by a victim aims at signaling that we will not passively accept moral wrongdoing (Butler, 1967, p. 127-8). While Nussbaum thinks Butler thus argues for inflicting pain for received pain, Butler makes it clear that "pain or harm ... inflicted merely in consequence of, and to gratify," resentment is itself a wrongful abuse of resentment (Butler, 1967, p. 129)

Both Hume and Adam Smith follow Butler in relating resentment to justice. For David Hume, resentment comprises one of the circumstances that widens the scope of justice to include those who, in making felt by others the effects of their resentment, would otherwise remain marginalized or oppressed. Smith views it as an unsocial affection but one that can both have "propriety," and serve as the grounds for punishment. More recently, P. F. Strawson

characterizes it as one of our central reactive attitudes. For these philosophers, *indignation*, as a response on the part of others who sympathize with the resentful person, serves to emphasize the wrongfulness of what has been done to her, and to express a collective condemnation of the wrongdoer. While Nussbaum thinks that *indignation*, like *resentment*, just does not consistently have a linguistic usage that reflects a sense of moral wrongdoing, we should take account of evidence to the contrary from the *Oxford English Dictionary*: *Indignation* is defined as "Anger at what is regarded as unworthy or wrongful; wrath excited by *a sense of wrong to oneself or, especially, to others*, or by meanness, injustice, wickedness, or misconduct; righteous or dignified anger..." (my emphasis). The OED also cites Joseph Butler from his sermon "On Resentment": "The indignation raised by cruelty and injustice, and the desire of having it punished, which persons unconcerned would feel, is by no means malice" (Butler, 1967, p. 125). Like Butler, both Hume and Smith regard resentment as a natural passion, one capable of eliciting others' sympathetic indignation at the offending party.

Annette Baier's reconstruction of Humean resentment shows the moral point of this attitude, while an extension of Strawson's analysis of resentment and vicarious attitudes helps us to see how we might set the bounds on, or norms, for appropriate resentment. I also draw on Adam Smith's careful and profound discussion of how we can and why we should sympathize with the resentment of others. Let us first look at Hume's description of resentment in his *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*. This is an important change from Hume's *Treatise* account of justice; his later *Enquiry* account of justice adds the attitude of resentment as a third circumstance of justice, after scarce resources and limited benevolence. Resentment has important implications for political participation and inclusion under the protections that justice affords members of society. Annette Baier argues that Humean resentment "contains the seeds of the moral sentiment." Resentment is not simply anger but anger in response to wrongdoing by someone capable of regarding herself as susceptible to an unjust or otherwise harmful injury by another, with resentment giving her "an active proto-moral role" (Baier, 2010, p. 153). Human beings are the kind of beings who resent wrongful injury and who can make felt the effects of their resentment. I have also interpreted the passage in which Hume introduces resentment as making the case for resentment as a quasi-juridical notion, expressed by rational human beings in ways that assert a claim to some right, protection, or for respect (Taylor, 2015, Ch. 6; see also Baier, 2010). Only

rational beings capable of understanding injury as a violation and who have a sense of their entitlement to protection or standing can make the effects of their resentment felt.

For Baier, resentment need not be impotence as Nietzsche and Scheler thought, but rather, in rational creatures of a strength equal to one another, resentment takes the form of a *power* they can wield by making others feel the effects of anger for injury and other wrongful harms. It is thus potentially a good that, among other things, motivates avenging oneself against wrongdoers. But avenging oneself is not the main aim of resentment in Hume's account of justice. The proper objects of resentment, according to Baier, include dispossession, expropriation, oppression, and humiliation; among other harms they inflict, these threaten an important psychological good, namely, the pride of those who are the victims of injustice and other wrongdoing (Baier, 2010, p. 155). A sense of pride proportionate to one's merit due to one's accomplishments, qualities or possessions, gives one confidence in who one is, what one stands for and can effect in the world. I agree with Baier and Hume that both pride and dignity, typically reinforced and sustained through the esteem of others, are important human goods, preserved in a political context through a commitment to both the just and the humane treatment of one another. Where Nussbaum views the angry response to status injury as grounded in narcissism, Hume in the *Enquiry* gives a more positive cast to the social usefulness of resentment by emphasizing the real harms of injuries that undermine pride and damage dignity. Far from being an expression of narcissistic wounding, resentment also has personal utility insofar as it can be an assertion of our sense of self-worth and of the value of those qualities we possess that others should value as well. For Baier, we should thus regard resentment as the "watchdog" of pride, a response signaling both our sense of being wronged and the value we place on having a pride or dignity that reflects a sense of our own worth.

Let me briefly develop the importance of Humean resentment for ameliorating social or political oppression. In Hume's example of an inferior species who cannot make the effects of their resentment felt, he claims we owe them humane treatment but not justice (although we may establish some protections of justice on their behalf). Those inhumanely oppressing other human beings often attempt to characterize them as *naturally* inferior, or as subhuman. Such stigmatization requires first that oppressors neglect the social and psychological mechanisms by means of which social categories are *constructed*, for example, through institutions that establish someone's legal

status, and the stereotypical beliefs that pertain to the character or ability of those in that role, and normative expectations for their conduct. Such socially constructed roles and categories can lead to *naturalizing* the perceived inferiority of those falling into stigmatized categories (Hume points to the case of women, rendered by law as lesser without rights to property or civic participation, and who shoulder a disproportionate burden of the regulations of sexual behavior). Resentment by those oppressed can take both direct and indirect forms (Hume suggests that through their charms (18th century) women indirectly keep their place and standing as rational participants in the social confederacy). Direct forms include outright disobedience, resentment and rebellion, while indirect strategies can take multiple forms, including acting out role reversals, theft or destruction of oppressors' property, or at the extreme, suicide. Direct and indirect expressions of resentment can allow those who are oppressed not only to assert their agency, but also to have a sense of themselves that stands at odds with how they are regarded by their oppressors. While the claim to a sense of dignity or entitlement to justice and fair treatment may go unanswered, the oppressed may nonetheless form in solidarity a collective sense of dignity. The anthropologist James Scott, discussing American slavery, points to the importance of "a social site apart from domination" that allowed slaves to create a "hidden transcript" asserting these claims within the oppressed group. Scott writes: "Suffering from the same humiliations, or, worse, subject to the same terms of subordination, they have a shared interest in jointly creating a discourse of dignity, of negation, and of justice" (Scott, 1990, p. 114). Of course, the joint creation of a discourse of dignity can also lead to real change. Social theoretical studies by Edwin Schur on gay AIDS patients, particularly when both homosexuals and AIDS sufferers were perceived as deviant and in need of social control, show that collectively expressed resentment can drive social and political change. Historically, making the effects of resentment felt has been an essential ingredient in the expansion of the protections of justice and of assigning rights to persons from whom they were previously withheld.

In both my examples and Hume's abstract example of it as a circumstance of justice, collective resentment can create greater awareness of what is really useful for mankind, and to improve the social, political and legal standing of the oppressed. While these cases do not *require* the empathy of oppressors or other observers to elicit a more just response to the resentful and injured, for Hume our moral approval of justice, including the expansion of the scope of justice, has its source in the principle or sentiment of humanity. Hume

repeats in the *Enquiry* that the principle of humanity leads us to favor what is useful to our fellow persons and to blame what is pernicious. The moral sentiments that have their source in humanity can become more "delicate" and discerning. Hume also recognizes a virtue of humanity (evident particularly in his *Essays*) that disposes us towards the decent treatment of one another, while the moral sentiment of humanity leads us to abhor inhumane conduct and societies. The relation between the sense and virtues of justice and the sense and virtue of humanity is often complementary, so resentment can have a crucial role both in achieving greater justice and making people more humane. Both resentment and humanity lie at the core of justice, considered as a set of virtues. Notably, with respect to Nussbaum's argument against anger, the kinds of cases of resentment I have considered inspired by Hume and Baier do not aim at retribution or payback, but rather at social and political improvement.

5. Sympathy and Indignation

While Hume certainly recognizes the importance of our sympathy with others' resentment,[5] Adam Smith introduces resentment as one of the central passions with which we sympathize. Despite our supposed selfishness, Smith thinks it evident that sympathy, as a principle in our nature, interests us in others, and allows us to imagine ourselves in the situation of another so that we experience, to a lower degree, what we would feel were we him in those circumstances. Moreover, it is pleasing to us when others experience and communicate "a fellow-feeling with all the emotions of our own breast" (Smith, 1976, p. 13). That another shares in my joy not only enlivens my joy, but his sympathy with me provides me with an additional source of satisfaction (Smith, 1976, p. 14). His vicarious joy reveals to me my connection with others, and their recognition and acceptance of my emotion.

It is important to note that both Hume and Smith emphasize the importance of facial expression and the bodily manifestations of emotions in those with whom we would sympathize. Such signs or expressions of emotion are often sufficient to arouse sympathy, and often elicit similar expressions of emotion in the sympathizers. Hume notes an immediate sympathetic contagion and, echoed by Smith, cites Horace, writing, "The human countenance ... borrows smiles or tears from the human countenance." The "natural symptoms" of someone feeling grief, including his "tears and cries and groans, never fail to

[5] See Hume (1998), §5.21.

infuse compassion and uneasiness" in an observer (Hume, 1998, 5.18). At the theater, the passions communicated by the actors as the drama unfolds cause the assembled audience to "weep, tremble, resent, rejoice" in turn as they sympathize with the characters on stage (Hume, 1998, 5.26). Adam Smith's first example of sympathy, with a brother being tortured on the rack, focuses on the sensations of the tortured person, his painful "agonies," while the sympathizer uses her imagination to copy from her own sense impressions so that what he feels is "brought home" to her and makes her "tremble and shudder" (Smith, 1982, p. 9). Smith observes that our sympathy with someone grieving allows the grieving person to renew her grief, her tears flowing as she abandons herself to sorrow; yet the renewed physical symptoms and sorrow are now accompanied with pleasure from the relief of communicating her grief to a compassionate other (Smith, 1982, p. 15). Smith's examples here corroborate my earlier claim that bodily manifestations of emotion in part account for the persistence of emotion, and point to how an emotion such as grief is something that must be lived through since it only dissipates slowly and over time.

Significantly for our topic here, Smith observes "that we are still more anxious to communicate to our friends our disagreeable than our agreeable passions, that we derive still more satisfaction from their sympathy with the former than from that with the latter, and that we are still more shocked by the want of it" Smith, 1976, p. 15). Smith calls a passion such as grief disagreeable since it is painful for the person experiencing it. When others sympathetically take up my grief, they help to alleviate my pain, in part by allowing me to feel less alone with it. As Smith writes of someone sympathizing with the unfortunate, "He not only feels a sorrow of the same kind with that which they feel, but as if he had derived a part of it to himself, what he feels seems to alleviate the weight of what they feel" (ibid.); the "sweetness of sympathy" as Smith puts it, "compensates for the bitterness" of the disagreeable emotion. The importance of others' regard for what we are feeling is reflected in Smith's claim that while it is certainly polite to sympathize with others' joy, it is inhumane not to sympathize with their sorrow.

Resentment differs from other disagreeable emotions, such as grief, in that the former is also an *unsocial* passion and one to which potential sympathizers have some aversion. For Smith, resentment is, on the one hand, a necessary part of human nature, so that we expect people to stand up for themselves by resenting the injuries done to them. On the other hand, although we have a strong sense of the injuries to which human beings are subject at the

hands of others, and so are capable of indignation on their behalf, the unsociability of resentment makes the process of sympathetic communication more difficult. First, observers initially find their sympathy divided between the opposite interests of the resentful person and the person to whom she directs her resentment; we initially feel concern also for the person who has become the object of anger and resentment, in light of the potential for violence and abuse. Second, those who might sympathize with the resentful person, aware of the potentially destructive effects of resentment, require that the resentful person modulate her resentment, lowering it a pitch, as Smith puts it. Potential sympathizers must also know the *cause* of the resentment, not wanting to be swept up in indignation, and contribute to the social division and discordance that resentment naturally fosters. In contrast to the grieving person who abandons herself to her sorrow, and thereby elicits our compassion, the symptoms of the unsocial passion of resentment are disagreeable to the resentful person and discomfit those who might sympathize with her. The physical symptoms of resentment, according to Smith, include "the hoarse, boisterous, and discordant voice of anger," suggesting that "Nature" intends "the more unamiable emotions" that drive us "from one another" to be less easily communicated (Smith, 1982, pp. 36-7). For the resentful person, it is not only the particular harm inflicted on her, but the other's ill will towards her and her subsequent loss of composure that comprise "the chief part of the injury" (Smith, 1982, p. 38). Especially, then, in cases of resentment or anger, we must find out more about the situation and assess the resentful person's judgment in order to tell whether our sympathetic indignation is appropriate.

Smith urges that we do expect resentment from someone who has been injured, and consider her resentment an important sign of her sense of self-worth, just as we expect of ourselves that we will sympathize with her. Butler argues that resentment is a necessary part of our nature that provides some balance with our compassion. Expressing resentment shows that we will not stand for unjust abuse, and history and experience demonstrate to us the deterrent effects that resentment has. Butler's claim here no doubt influences Smith's view that neither hatred nor malice are sufficient to ground a justification of punishment; only resentment requires the repentance of the wrongdoer for his unjust harm. This expectation of the other's resentment and the requirement on us to sympathize with it leads to Smith's account of the propriety of resentment, which places conditions, if the resentful person is to call on the sympathetic indignation of others, on how resentment gets expressed

to others. Before concluding with Smith's account of a virtuous resentment, I will look at both Butler and Strawson on establishing what we might think of as norms for appropriate resentment.

For Butler, the "chief instances of the abuse" of resentment include imagined injuries, exaggeration of a real injury, as well as disproportionate resentment, resenting the innocent, and inflicting pain merely to gratify revenge rather than from a sense of just desert. These abuses also tend to stem from a sense of injured pride, making the person unwilling to listen to reason. And yet, it is the reasons offered by those who find themselves unable to sympathize with unjustified resentment that help to set the bounds for what counts as appropriate resentment. In his famous essay, "Freedom and Resentment," P. F. Strawson's point about misplaced ascriptions of responsibility shows how in our ordinary practices and language we set bounds for resenting appropriately.[6] Strawson's notion of vicarious attitudes refers to our capacity to empathize with others and take up their attitudes or respond in some way to them. If resentment concerns injury or a lack of good will towards the resentful, the corresponding vicarious attitude will be indignation. The indignant person does not herself encounter the ill will or injury, but it is important to her to express her concern for the other by her indignation, essentially, resentment on the other's behalf. Yet the vicarious attitudes can have degrees such that we may not go along entirely, in terms of our feeling or attitude, with the person empathized with. Suppose there are mitigating conditions, such as when someone acts unintentionally or out of character, that elicit in empathizing onlookers a sense of fairness that moves them to defend the unintentional agent and requires the resentful person to abandon her resentment. Strawson's own focus is on the circumstances that determine whether we should hold someone responsible for what they did, but such cases show how we might set bounds for appropriate resentment. In addition to whether the agent who is the object of resentment intended the harm, or acted out of character, we can add such factors as a collective understanding (subject to variable social norms[7]) of what is properly a cause of resentment, what kind of provocation or injury is sufficient to make resentment an appropriate response. The attitudes of others also serve to call out the narcissism that worries Nussbaum, or the poisonous hatred of which Scheler was

[6] Strawson's main concern is with what he calls the *reactive attitudes* that we have in response to another's good will, ill will or indifference, when it is directed towards us, and the importance of these attitudes in setting the bounds of responsibility regardless of whether determinism is true.
[7] Much more needs to be said about the variability of these norms than can be discussed here.

contemptuous; we do not, or should not accept as grounds for resentment imagined affronts or insults, or an inability to accept a just criticism.

6. Noble Resentment and Shared Humanity

For Smith, the person who resents with magnanimity maintains a sense of her own dignity as well as a sense of humanity that includes the offender. She expresses a "generous and noble resentment" that might be both a virtue and a guide to our own indignation at the offender. Smith here invokes the judicious spectator, and the resentful person's testing the justness of his own resentment before expressing it to others. The requirement to modulate expressed resentment not only gains a hearing from others, but also recognizes a shared humanity even with the wrongdoer. Our attitudes of resentment and sympathetic indignation reflect our common humanity, and the ways in which we participate in one another's emotional lives. Our sense of ourselves, of who we are and of our merit or demerit, arises, is sustained or challenged through these affectively-laden attitudinal interactions with one another. One aim here has been to argue for the importance of resentment's physical and psychic pain and the expression of it. I also focused on the sympathetic communication of resentment, and how that can elicit others' indignation on behalf of, or in concord with as Smith puts it, the resentful person. I also began to connect resentment with a cluster of closely related attitudes, including indignation and shame or repentance. Another aim has been to argue, in opposition to Nussbaum, that resentment under certain circumstances can be justified, and for the importance of sympathy with resentment, and the role of resentment in establishing or preserving human dignity.

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