

Introduction

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Moral philosophy focuses on questions concerning how we ought to treat each other and what we owe one another. But what happens when someone knowingly and willingly harms us? How should we respond? What are our moral obligations to those who have wronged us? What are our obligations to ourselves? The chapters in this volume discuss the merits and pitfalls of common reactive attitudes to wrongdoing, such as anger, hatred, resentment, forgiveness and considers what sorts of actions we ought to take against those who have wronged us (e.g. punishment, revenge, forgiveness). The chapters in this volume develop both historical perspectives as well as contemporary ones. Conflict and resolution is a part of the human experience and how we think about our response to wrongdoing is as important as any other moral obligation. How we respond to wrongdoing affects our ability to grow and move forward whether we are talking about interpersonal or political conflict.

The volume includes several thought provoking pieces that push us beyond the current conversations and encourage us to rethink some of our most basic assumptions. Carissa Phillips-Garrett, for example, argues that forgiveness would have been a vice for Aristotle. Corinne Gartner claims that Seneca thinks the virtuous person cannot be harmed and therefore has no reason to get angry. Oliver Hallich claims that there is a dark side to forgiveness and Thaddeus Metz asks us to consider other responses to wrongdoing other than retributive punishment. These are just some of the controversial and thought-provoking theses that arise in the volume. In this introduction, we will look at some of the themes that arise in the various chapters and how they interact with one another and with the literature.

i. Anger, Resentment, and Hate

In “Freedom and Resentment,” P. F. Strawson describes anger, resentment, hatred, forgiveness, gratitude, and love as reactive attitudes (1974, p. 6). They are reactions or attitudes that we have in response to those who either benefit or harm us. He points out resentment, forgiveness, and other reactive attitudes, grow out of our beliefs about other people’s attitudes and intentions, not just their

actions. If someone treads on my hand accidentally, while trying to help me, I most likely will not feel anger or resentment, even though the pain I experience is no less intense than if the person had stepped on my hand intentionally and out of malice (Strawson, 1974, p. 5). Thus, how we respond to others depends, in part, on how we interpret their actions. Moreover, while philosophers tend to agree that anger, hatred, and resentment are reactive attitudes, there is still disagreement about how exactly to conceptualize these attitudes and whether or not they are morally appropriate responses to wrongdoing.

In her chapter, “Seneca on Anger, Revenge and Punishment” Corinne Gartner discusses the Stoic account of anger. According to Seneca, an ancient Roman Stoic philosopher and playwright, the Stoic sage, who is wise and virtuous, will never act out of anger. On Seneca’s account, anger arises when we believe that we have been harmed. But the Sage cannot be harmed by external slights or harms. The only thing that is truly harmful is to have a bad character, but the Stoic sage does not have a bad character and no one can cause her to have a bad character, according to Seneca. Therefore, even when people intentionally wrong us they cannot actually harm us. When we do become angry, according to Seneca, it is because of how we interpret other people’s actions. We get angry when we interpret them as having harmed us, but we are mistaken. Another person, therefore, cannot *make* you angry on Seneca’s account, according to Gartner (3.7).

In “Kant on Punishment, Pardon and Forgiveness”, Kate Moran and Jens Timmermann claim that for Kant anger is an affect, pertaining to the faculty of feeling. As such, it comes to a person quickly and involuntarily, but it is also easy to overcome, often by merely changing one’s physical circumstances. Unlike affects, a passion like hate, which pertains to the faculty of desire, takes longer to develop and is much more difficult to overcome. Moreover, hatred is a passion that involves a deliberately cultivated malevolent desire, and as such, it is incompatible with the love of mankind and morality more generally (5.4.2). Although anger is still consistent with the love of mankind, to the extent that we have the capacity to cultivate our disposition to anger, our duty of apathy commands that we attempt to eradicate anger as much as we can.

Aristotle’s views on anger stand in stark contrast with that of Seneca and Kant. In “Honor, Worth, and Justified Revenge” Krisanna Scheiter claims that on Aristotle’s account the virtuous person can be harmed by wrongdoing and therefore should, at times, get angry. According to Scheiter, Aristotle has a very narrow conception of anger. On his account, anger is a desire for revenge in return for a slight (*oligoria*). He claims that we slight those we think have little or no worth. There are two ways in which we may assign worth to others, according to Aristotle. On the one hand, we may think someone has what

Scheiter calls “instrumental worth,” meaning that we value the person because we think they can either harm or benefit us. On the other hand, we may think some has “intrinsic worth,” which means that they have value independently of whether or not they can harm or benefit us (2.2). We slight those we think have no instrumental worth, according to Aristotle, which Scheiter argues can be harmful even to the virtuous person. Scheiter claims that for Aristotle some slights can harm even the virtuous person because they undermine her ability to carry out her virtuous pursuits (2.7). If those in her community do not think she has any worth and constantly undermine her, the virtuous person will have a hard time engaging in and completing her virtuous activities. In these cases, the virtuous person is justified in getting angry.

Whether or not anger and resentment are morally appropriate responses to perceived wrongdoing is something that is still debated today. In his chapter, “Does Forgiveness Require Forswearing Resentment?” Brendon Warmke notes that there is considerable disagreement among philosophers about how to understand the nature of resentment. In general, philosophers agree that resentment is a morally reactive second-personal emotion that possesses affective, conative and cognitive elements. Accounts of the cognitive content of resentment “generally converge on at least two judgments: (i) that someone has treated or regarded me wrongly; and (ii) that someone is morally responsible and blameworthy for so treating or regarding me” (9.2.1). However, matters are more complicated when we turn to analyze the affective and conative aspects of resentment. Philosophers characterize the “feel” of resentment in a wide range of ways: “from feelings of mild righteous anger or insult all the way to feelings of hostility, ill-will, and righteous hatred” (9.2.1). Moreover, while some philosophers see the conative aspect of resentment to be aspirational and morally benign, and tend to see resentment as a form of moral protest, others see resentment as motivating punishment, ill-will, and revenge.¹

ii. Free Will and Moral Blame

Anger, resentment, vengeance, and forgiveness all presuppose blame. But some philosophers, including those in this volume, have questioned the extent to which we ought to blame others for their actions. Revenge and forgiveness are in response to what we take to be a wrong or an injury, not just a pain or harm. If someone accidentally bumps into us and spills hot coffee on us we are unlikely to blame them for scalding us with coffee (assuming they could not have done otherwise). And so blame involves

¹ For more on this debate see Myisha Cherry (2018), Maxime Lepoutre (2018), Audre Lorde (1981/1984), Martha Nussbaum (2015).

more than just identifying the cause of our pain. We blame those we think have intentionally and deliberately wronged us. In his seminal work on forgiveness and resentment, Bishop Butler warns that we should be careful when blaming others for wrongdoing. He claims that because of self-love we have a tendency to misjudge other's intentions and we often think the injury we suffer is much greater than it actually is (Sermon VIII, pp. 144-145).

In his chapter, "Spinoza on Hatred and Power and the Challenge of Reconciliation," Keith Green claims Spinoza does not think we should ever blame others for wrongdoing because doing so presupposes that the presumed wrongdoer acted from free will. However, according to Green, Spinoza denies that we possess such freedom (4.1). Spinoza defines blame (*vituperium*) as "disliking or sorrow of an action one takes to have been done freely, or sorrow with an idea of human weakness as its cause" (4.1). Green claims that for Spinoza blame is never virtuous. For one, it involves a kind of hatred, which is never good on his account. For another it entails the individual acting as judge (4.1).

Spinoza's views about free will and punishment share some similarities to what Whitley Kaufman calls Free Will Skepticism in "Free Will Skepticism and Retributive Punishment." Free Will Skeptics, he claims, argue that retributive punishment is justified only if we have ultimate control over our actions (13.2). Somewhat similar to Spinoza, Free Will Skeptics claim that we do not have ultimate control over our actions and therefore we are not morally responsible for our actions. If we are not morally responsible for our actions, then they think we could never *deserve* to be punished. Thus the Free Will Skeptics argue that we ought to do away with retributive punishment in our criminal justice system. Kaufman pushes back against the Free Will Skeptics, pointing out, first of all, that there is very little agreement amongst philosophers concerning the Free Will/Determinism debate. In fact, he claims that most philosophers would reject Free Will Skepticism (13.3). Furthermore, he claims that we should not change our social practices based on a philosophical theory, particularly one that has so little support amongst the philosophical community anyway. Finally, he claims that the Free Will Skeptic is too extreme when it comes to what they require for moral responsibility. On their view, we would have to be completely in control of our actions, what he calls "ultimate responsibility", but he claims that the law and our ordinary understanding of moral responsibility requires only that we have "local control", which he describes as the ability to act based on deliberations about moral reasons (13.4). One important question these chapters raise concerns what sort of control we must have over our actions in order to be considered morally responsible for them.

iii. Forgiveness and Forswearing Negative Emotions

Perhaps the most persistent area of disagreement that runs through the different contributions in the volume is an implicit (and at times explicit) disagreement about how to understand and conceptualize forgiveness. Most contemporary philosophers agree that forgiveness differs from excusing or justifying wrongdoing since forgiveness does not necessarily change our initial judgment concerning the wrongness of the offense or the culpability of the offender. However, there is considerable disagreement about exactly what sort of response forgiveness is supposed to be. According to one influential account, forgiveness is essentially an emotional phenomenon, which requires a change in emotion towards the wrongdoer. In the well-known words of Jeffrie Murphy “forgiveness is primarily a matter of how I *feel* about you (not how I treat you)” (Murphy, 1988, p. 21). As noted in the previous sections, harm and injuries, when deliberately caused, usually give rise to negative emotions in us. Forgiveness is often seen as involving either moderating, overcoming, or forswearing of these negative emotions.

One way the accounts of forgiveness differ is with regard to exactly which negative emotions forgiveness is supposed to overcome. Minimalist accounts, for example, focus on hostile retributive emotions such as malice and ill will whose aim is to inflict suffering on the wrongdoer. Moderate accounts claim that forgiveness also entails overcoming retributive emotions, such as resentment and moral anger, which are not necessarily hostile. Recently, more expansive proposals also include overcoming non-retributive emotions which are sometimes felt in response to wrongdoing, such as disappointment, sadness, hurt, and grief as well as fear, shame, guilt, and hopelessness, among other possible emotional responses. Some of these views are endorsed in some of the contributions to this volume. Thaddeus Metz, for examples, endorses a version of the emotional model. On his account, forgiveness consists in “letting go of negative emotions about someone insofar as she is perceived to have done you (or your associates) wrong, particularly those in which you wish her ill-will” (12.2).

The view that forgiveness necessarily involves overcoming or forswearing resentment and other related negative emotions is a popular view, but it has been challenged in the contemporary literature. For instance, Warmke challenges the idea that there is an inextricable link between forgiving and resentment. Warmke examines several ways of understanding the claim that forgiving requires forswearing of resentment and argues that the only plausible version of the claim is so weak that it is not an illuminating claim about the nature of forgiveness.

Some authors in the volume agree with Warmke, at least to a certain extent. Paula Satne, in her chapter “Remembrance beyond Forgiveness,” argues that overcoming or forswearing resentment is neither necessary nor sufficient for forgiveness (15.3), but she allows that there are some central cases of forgiveness in which the forgiver would want to commit to overcome negative emotions towards the wrongdoer (15.3). Satne endorses a multidimensional account of forgiveness that has at its core the victim’s commitment to stop holding the wrongdoing against the perpetrator. Such a commitment may be combined with a variety of practices, including a change of action and/ or emotion, depending on the circumstances. Where Satne and Warmke disagree is on whether or not forgiveness and punishment are compatible. While Warmke suggests that the two can be compatible (9.3.2)², Satne maintains that forgiving and continuing to punish are sometimes, but not always, compatible (15.3)³. According to Satne, continuing to punish a wrongdoer who does not accept to be punished is a form of holding the wrong against him, and thus incompatible with forgiving him (15.3).

Warmke also seems to assume that persons of good will should always be implicitly committed to doing without vengeful attitudes. A view that, according to Moran’s and Timmerman’s interpretation is shared by Kant. In their chapter, Moran and Timmermann claim that for Kant the maxim of unforgiveness cannot be consistently willed and so on their reading of Kant we have an imperfect duty to adopt a maxim of forgiveness. However, because the duty is imperfect, the wrongdoer has no right to be forgiven, not even after repentance and penance. Also, as an imperfect duty it admits of what Kant calls ‘latitude’ or ‘playroom’: “it is, in a way not always easy to spell out, a matter of choice for the victim”⁴ (5.1). For the authors, self-respect provides a limiting condition on forgiveness: while apology or reform on the part of the wrongdoer do not provide the grounds for forgiveness; they serve to provide some assurance that forgiveness will not undermine self-respect” (5.5.2). Ultimately, if the victim “is not persuaded that the wrongdoer will not wrong her again, forgiveness would be in violation of a duty to her

² See also Warmke, 2013.

³ See also Russell, 2016.

⁴ It is interesting that here the authors state that the sense in which Kant’s imperfect duty to forgive allows choice is difficult to spell out. They recommend to consult Timmermann (2018) for a very restrictive account of the latitude imperfect duty allows. The specific issue of how to interpret the latitude allowed by the Kantian duty to forgive has been recently debated by Claudia Blöser and Paula Satne. According to Blöser (2019), the fact that the Kantian duty to forgive is imperfect means that Kantian forgiveness is *elective* in the sense that forgiveness is good in general (i.e. an attitude that we have moral reason to adopt) but without being obligatory in each particular case. In contrast, Satne (2020) has argued that although Kant’s duty to be forgiving is elective in one sense of the term, it is not elective in another important sense of the term, and that it is in fact better not to interpret Kantian imperfect duties as being elective. See also Satne (2016).

own self” (5.5.2). Forgiveness for Kant cannot be the cessation of resentment or anger as, to the extent that we are able to control these attitudes, we have a duty to eradicate them as much as we can. On the contrary, Moran and Timmermann argue that Kantian forgiveness involves a change of action, not emotion. Thus for Kant forgiveness consists of the deliberate cessation of moral punishments, such as reminding the offender of the wrong done or cutting him out of one’s life.

iv. Third Party Forgiveness

Another issue that has been widely discussed in the literature and is addressed in the volume concerns who has the moral authority to forgive. In “Who is entitled to forgive? A study of ‘Third-party’ and ‘Proxy’ Forgiveness”, Geoffrey Scarre explores the question of whether it is ever admissible for a ‘third party’ to grant forgiveness to an offender for an injury inflicted on another person. Scarre notes that the question of whether a person can legitimately offer her own forgiveness to an offender for a hurt done to another and the question of whether she can properly grant forgiveness on behalf of the victim are often labelled “third party forgiveness” without distinguishing between the two. The issue of whether third-party forgiveness is ever morally appropriate (and for some authors indeed even possible) has been debated in the contemporary literature, with many influential authors arguing that only primary victims have the prerogative to forgive (e.g. Todorov, 1998; Holmgren, 2012; Walker, 2013). However, the view has been challenged, most notably by Glen Pettigrove (2009), who has argued that third-parties, particularly when they have emotional ties with the victim, can resent wrongdoing done to them.⁵ This means that they can decide to relinquish their resentment, thus in effect forgiving the offender for the victim’s wrong.

Scarre examines whether or not third-party forgiveness in any of its forms are possible or morally desirable. He argues that forgiveness on behalf of another should be rejected because it fails to respect the victim’s genuine prerogative to decide for herself if and when she ought to forgive her offender. Granting forgiveness on the victim’s behalf when the victim is capable of forgiving herself could amount to an infringement of her autonomy as a moral agent. Even cases in which the victim is unable to forgive because she is too young, comatose, incapacitated, or even dead, do not give us the moral authority to forgive on the victim’s behalf, according to Scarre. Thus, even though, on his account, forgiveness is a

⁵ See also Govier (2002, Ch. 5).

'plastic concept' with no essence (7.1), Scarre nevertheless maintains that one of the few fixed points about forgiveness is that it cannot be granted by another on behalf of the victim (7.2). Still Scarre claims that it is not unusual for third-parties that are emotionally close to a victim (friends, family, and associates) to feel strong moral resentment in response to an offense inflicted on the victim. If this is right, then there does seem to be some sense in which third parties can forgive the wrongdoer for the pain the wrongdoer caused them by harming the primary victim. However, no matter how loving, sympathetic or close a third party may happen to be, this type of third party forgiveness will always remain at best a 'second fiddle' or subordinate form of forgiveness (7.3).

v. Reasons to Forgive

Another source of disagreement that runs across some of the contributions in this volume relates to debates about the normativity of forgiveness. What sorts of reasons do we have to forgive? In "An African Feminist Approach to Forgiveness: Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela Considered" Louise du Toit draws on proposals by Derrida (2002) and Jankélévitch (2005). These authors have argued that forgiveness is not something which is done for a reason: "It is thus only when there is *no reason and thus no duty* to forgive or excuse, that true forgiveness becomes a possibility" (6.1.2). Gobodo-Madikizela follows this line when she claims that forgiveness is 'impossible', 'a madness', and 'a miracle' and that there are no duties to forgive or refuse to forgive because in the end it is only up to the victim to decide. Yet, despite the paradoxical aspects of forgiveness, Gobodo-Madikizela also believes that forgiveness remains a human possibility "even in the context of irreparable trauma" (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2008), which is why at other times Gobodo-Madikizela seems to endorse an 'ethic of forgiveness', linking forgiveness for politically motivated crimes with the greater good of reconciliation (6.1.2).

The paradoxical nature of forgiveness discussed by du Toit contrasts sharply with another proposal defended in the book. In "Forgiving and Ceasing to Blame" Per Milam argues not only that we forgive for reasons, but that actually forgiving requires the *right kinds of reasons*. Milam's starting point is to provide another definition of forgiveness, which involves ceasing to blame. However, an act of forgiveness must cease to blame for the right kind of reasons. The right kind of reasons allows us to distinguish between forgiveness and other ways we may cease to blame others for wrongdoing. For example, we may stop blaming an offender because we come to believe that she is not responsible for the offense after all (excusing) or because we now think that the offense was not actually a wrong

(justifying). Moreover, according to Milam, we can also cease to blame offenders without excusing, justifying, or forgiving them (8.1). But of course, not all reasons in favor of forgiving are reasons to forgive, according to Milam. The right kind of reasons to forgive has to bear on factors relevant to forgiveness. For example, the fact that ceasing to blame someone who has wronged you will lower your blood pressure is a reason for you to think that ceasing to blame them would be good, but not a reason to believe that their offense no longer warrants blame. Ultimately, for Milam, all reasons to forgive are instances of a more general reason, namely, an apparent change of heart on the part of the offender. The offender's change of heart is a reason to forgive because it relates directly to one's reasons for blaming in the first place.

In his chapter, 'The Dark Side of Forgiveness' Oliver Hallich describes forgiveness as a way of bringing about "a change in the normative landscape." Here Hallich draws on the often called "alteration thesis" of forgiveness, which has been defended by Owen (2012), Warmke (2016) and Bennett (2018). Unlike more traditional accounts of forgiveness, such as those put forth by Butler, Strawson, and Murphy, which claim that forgiveness involves forswearing resentment, the alteration thesis claims that forgiveness is a normative rather than a psychological phenomenon. Forgiveness is not just changing one's mental state, on the alternative thesis, but is a change in the normative landscape. Forgiveness involves cancelling some of the wrongdoer's obligations that result from the act of wrongdoing, such as apologizing, making amends, repenting and accepting responsibility for the act of wrongdoing. Moreover, forgiveness involves a commitment of the forgiver to no longer treat the wrongdoer as someone who stands under these obligations (section 10.2). Hallich argues that the alteration thesis is to be preferred to emotional accounts in virtue of its explanatory power.

Thus, we can see that the understanding of forgiveness as involving primarily the overcoming or forswearing of resentment has been challenged in a variety of ways. On the one hand, some authors argue that forgiveness should be interpreted as a change of action rather than a change of emotion. If Timmermann's and Moran's interpretation is correct, then Kant would be an important precursor of this idea in the history of philosophy. Satne's multidimensional account also allows for the claim that forgiveness involves a change of practice, but the flexibility of her model means that sometimes forgiveness can also involve a commitment of the victim to stop endorsing some emotional states that are usually felt in response to having been wronged. On the other hand, the emotional model has also been challenged by normative power accounts of forgiveness, which conceptualize forgiveness as involving a change of normative landscape as is shown by Hallich's contribution.

Not all philosophers agree that forgiveness is always a morally appropriate reaction to moral wrongs, however. Hallich argues in his chapter that despite the many virtues of forgiveness, there may

also be a dark side of forgiveness. Taken as a speech act, forgiveness may presuppose the truth of propositions that enter the discourse without being addressed explicitly. Hallich shows that often the forgiver presupposes that (i) the addressee of forgiveness is guilty of an offence, (ii) that he himself has the standing to forgive and, (iii) that what he purports to forgive is forgivable. All of these presuppositions may turn out to be highly questionable, ultimately shading a critical light on what might appear as a virtuous act of forgiveness. However, laying bare these presuppositions will sometimes lead us to see forgiveness as a way of cloaking one's own interests under the guise of exercising a virtue rather than as the real exercise of a virtue.

In her chapter, "Why Aristotle's Virtuous Agent Won't Forgive: Aristotle on *Sungnōmē*, *Praotēs*, and *Megalopsychia*," Carissa Phillips-Garrett argues that our contemporary notion of forgiveness would actually be a vice, on Aristotle's account (1.8). The ancient Greek word, *sungnōmē*, is often translated as "forgiveness" in Aristotle. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle says that the virtuous person will not be vicious, but tend towards *sungnōmē* (*NE* IV.5, 1126a2-3). If we translate *sungnōmē* as forgiveness then it sounds like Aristotle thinks that a virtuous person will be more forgiving. But Phillips-Garrett argues that is not the case at all. She claims that for Aristotle a wrongdoer deserves *sungnōmē* when there are extenuating circumstances that make blaming the individual inappropriate (1.8). An agent is not blameworthy, on Aristotle's account, if the action is due to something external to the wrongdoer. If the agent is forced to do the action, then she is not blameworthy. If the wind blows someone over, causing that person to spill coffee on another person the one who spilled the coffee is not morally responsible for the other person being burned by coffee. Phillips-Garrett goes on to show that there are several conditions under which the offender should not be blamed. These include ignorance of particulars in a given situation, and the claim that the agent cannot be culpable for her own ignorance. The third condition is that the agent must feel regret.

Phillips-Garrett argues that Aristotle's account of why and under what conditions we shouldn't blame agents of wrongdoing does not seem to fit with the contemporary notion of forgiveness. Excusing, which is just judging that *sungnōmē* is warranted and blame is not, presumes that the agent is not blameworthy for what she has done. Even though the action is wrong, the circumstances excuse what she did. What *sungnōmē* does not do is relinquish blaming attitudes or feelings of resentment when the agent is blameworthy. Forgiveness assumes that the wrongdoer is blameworthy, which is why it is up to the wronged agent to decide whether or not to forgive. Phillips-Garrett, therefore, argues that "[l]etting go of blame in cases where full restoration of the harm has not been accomplished would be unjust, since Aristotle's account of justice is deeply concerned with each individual getting what he or she deserves"

(1.10). Phillips-Garrett concludes that it is not just that forgiveness is a practice left out of Aristotle's ethical account, but his account of blame is incompatible with forgiveness.

Aristotle is not the only philosopher who seems to think that forgiveness is not an appropriate response to wrongdoing. Spinoza also does not think forgiveness is virtuous, but for different reasons. Since Spinoza thinks there is no case in which it would be appropriate to blame the wrongdoer, then there would never be a time when forgiveness is virtuous since forgiveness is possible only if we blame someone else for wrongdoing. According to Green, on Spinoza's account we cannot ever legitimately forgive another person because we do not have the authority to judge whether or not what they did is deserving of punishment. Only the state has the authority to do so. And so even the "one who has been wronged has no 'standing' to forgive, because she never has 'standing' to 'judge', and so never has warrant to place blame" (4.3).

vi. Difference between Revenge and Punishment

The volume also discusses an issue that has occupied philosophers for some time, that is, the difference between revenge and punishment. Plato and Aristotle both claim that the two are different, stating that punishment is for the sake of the person being punished, whereas revenge is for the sake of the person who is seeking revenge (e.g. Plato's *Protagoras* 324a3–b5; Aristotle's *Rhetoric* 1369b12-15). Seneca, according to Gartner, also differentiates between revenge and punishment, claiming that vengeance is done out of anger, whereas punishment or retribution can be enacted without anger. Unlike others who seem to differentiate the two by appealing to what is done by a third party (punishment) and what is done by an avenger, Seneca does not seem to make such a distinction. Rather for him, punishment is done for the sake of the person being punished, much like administering medicine to the wrongdoer: "what justifies punishment, first and foremost, is the need to rehabilitate—to cure—the offender." (3.4). The important difference between punishment and revenge is that punishment is not done out of anger, but due to reason and for the sake of making the offender better. For Seneca the reason we should not seek revenge is because it is backward-looking and aims to cause the other person pain for the sake of pain (3.5).

Seneca feels so strongly that punishment is for the sake of the wrongdoer, as well as for the community as a whole, that according to Gartner, "In keeping with this curative conception of punishment, Seneca urges those in legislative positions to tailor the punishment not to the crime, but to

the criminal, sometimes awarding the softer sentence to the greater crime” (3.5). Even though Seneca thinks that we ought to do everything possible to rehabilitate a wrongdoer, if it turns out that the wrongdoer is so corrupt there is no possibility of rehabilitation, then the wrongdoer must be put to death. But unlike in the medical analogy where the doctor would end the life of the terminally ill quickly and as painlessly as possible, Seneca thinks that the wrongdoer ought to be put “to death with disgrace and public humiliation” according to Gartner, in order to make an example of him and prevent others from going down the vicious path. (3.5).

Like Seneca, Spinoza also differentiates between punishment and revenge. For Spinoza the difference between the two is precisely the role of blame. Blame, “on the part of individuals, can motivate only vengeance or revenge” whereas punishment has nothing to do with blame, but plays a restorative or rehabilitative role (4.3). According to Green, for Spinoza punishment is something that only the state can enact and so almost by definition an individual cannot punish another person. Therefore, when we blame another person the only response to blaming the person is to seek vengeance. Green claims Spinoza focuses more on the fact that *who* does the action makes the difference, whether it is the state or an individual. Revenge is a form of hatred and as such is always vicious.

While Aristotle agrees with Seneca and Spinoza that revenge is different from punishment, he disagrees that revenge is always vicious. On his view revenge can be virtuous. In her chapter, Scheiter argues that for Aristotle, revenge, when taken in the right way and for the right reasons, can demonstrate to the wrongdoer that his assessment of the avenger is mistaken. Aristotle claims that we slight those we think can neither harm nor benefit us (2.2). When we get revenge we cause the wrongdoer to suffer, thus demonstrating that we can, at the very least, cause him pain. Revenge is a way of dissuading the wrongdoer (and perhaps others) from slighting the avenger in the future. For Aristotle, a good human life is one that involves virtuous actions. If the virtuous person is prohibited from carrying out her virtuous activities, she is justified in striking back on Aristotle’s account.

More recently philosophers have been split on whether or not the two are different. Robert Nozick (1981), for example, has argued that revenge and punishment are different, arguing that revenge is never moral whereas punishment can be moral. Others have argued that revenge is a kind of punishment (e.g. Kaufman 2012). In this volume, Kaufman claims that the purpose of punishment is to “vindicate the victim” and defend one’s honor (13.5). Kaufman thinks revenge, “[f]ar from being an irrational or animal impulse...is an expression of one’s self-assertion as a being of moral value deserving of respect” (13.5).

In his chapter, “Punishment, Revenge, and the Nature of Moral Philosophy,” Leo Zaibert argues that punishment and revenge are not as distinct as many philosophers think. But he does think there is a way to differentiate between punishment and revenge. His approach, however, is different from what we commonly find in the literature.⁶ Zaibert claims that there is an aesthetic difference “related to a particular kind of narrative that the avenger necessarily has in mind as she plots her revenge, and that the punisher need not (and frequently does not) have in mind as he inflicts his punishment” (11.2). Zaibert claims that the distinction between revenge and punishment, relying on narrative, is not entirely successful, since punishment too “seeks to construct a plot” (11.2). Zaibert points out that punishers can have plot in mind as well as avengers, but the plot avengers have in mind is “much more important” (11.2). What matters to the punisher has more to do with what the wrongdoer deserves rather than the “actual manner in which this punishment is inflicted” (11.2).

Zaibert claims that another difference is that the punisher can be conflicted about what she is doing whereas the avenger cannot be conflicted. Zaibert claims that we want a punisher to be conflicted and feel panged at inflicting suffering on the person who deserves to suffer. “In other words, punishment, when deserved, presents us with a formidable moral dilemma: we bring about the good of justice (of just punishment) by means of making someone suffer” (11.2). In contrast, the avenger is not able to appreciate the moral complexity of inflicting deserved suffering upon a wrongdoer. Thus, on Zaibert’s view, the difference between the avenger and the punisher is that the avenger does not feel conflicted when she takes revenge. She does not feel bad about causing the wrongdoer suffering, whereas the punisher may.

vii. The Purpose of Punishment

Some of the contributions to the volume explore the purpose of punishment. In his chapter, Kaufman defends retributive punishment against the criticism that retributive punishment is unjustified because it is “backward-looking.”⁷ Kaufman argues that “to say retribution is ‘backward-looking’ is not a *justification* for punishment but rather a *restriction* on punishment” (13.5). In other words, the fact that retributive punishment focuses on past actions is not a justification for punishment, but rather aims at limiting the scope of punishment, particularly in contrast to consequentialist considerations. Kaufman

⁶ E.g. Peter French 2001, Jeffrie Murphy 2003

⁷ See, for example, Nussbaum (2015), who criticizes anger and retribution for being backward-looking.

argues that retributive punishment does have a forward-looking purpose. Particularly, he claims that retributive punishment responds to the disrespect shown to the victim. Retributivism is a desire to respond to the wrongdoer and stick up for oneself rather than passively submit to him. He argues that “...the most effective way to do that is to demonstrate one’s willingness to inflict equivalent harm on the offender’ (13.5).

Moran and Timmermann claim that for Kant there are important differences between ethical and legal punishment. In the case of ethical punishment the incentive to punish is internal, and cannot be achieved by publicizing the punishments that correspond to different illegal activities, and punishing criminals who are convicted of those crimes in a court of law. Similar to Spinoza, Kant does not think that individuals have authority to pass judgment on others (5.4.1). Kant is much more concerned that agents appeal to the moral law in order to assess their own actions, and inquire into their own motives (even if these can never be known) rather than appealing to the moral law to judge others. Thus, Kantian moral punishment cannot be grounded in a duty to pass moral judgment on others and sanction them accordingly. Instead, Kant understands moral punishment as a form of active protest and grounds it in a duty of self-respect and a duty to respect the dignity of humanity in general (5.4.1).

For Spinoza, there is no natural state of right or wrong. Good and bad, right and wrong, are conventions of the state. Therefore, he thinks individuals should never have the power of judgment (4.3). Such an act divides and weakens political authority (4.3). When the state punishes a wrongdoer they do not do so out of hate. Nor does the judge side with one party over the other when she punishes a wrongdoer. Rather Green claims “Spinoza argues that when a judge punishes a wrongdoer, he is not siding with the injured party but aiming to “help and to improve the one as much as the other” (4.3). Here Spinoza sounds similar to Seneca, who claims that we ought to treat wrongdoers as those who are sick and need to be cured. The difference between the two is that Seneca’s naturalism leads him to believe that virtue and vice are grounded in nature. Specifically, he thinks that virtue is holding only true beliefs and vice is holding false beliefs, but Spinoza thinks that virtue and vice are social constructions. Still, when someone in a particular community acts against the moral norms of society, Spinoza thinks that the judge should issue a judgment that would improve both parties of a dispute (4.3). What is important is the flourishing and sustainability of the community, more so than casting blame on a wrongdoer or causing her pain and suffering in return for her wrong. The reason the judge will punish or even sentence to death a wrongdoer is not because of any feelings anger or hatred, but “from a love of the general welfare” (4.3). He claims that for Seneca “[s]uch a judge is ‘guided only by reason’” (4.3).

viii. The Role of Forgiveness and Punishment in Reconciliation

Another important theme that is addressed in this volume is the role of political forgiveness in reconciliation as well as its relationship to punishment and apologies. According to what is perhaps the more widespread and dominant philosophical view, reconciliation requires forgiveness or at least proscribes punishment.⁸ This common view, however, is challenged (in different ways) by various contributors to the book.

In “Why Reconciliation Requires Punishment but Not Forgiveness”, Thaddeus Metz argues that social or political reconciliation characteristically require punishment but does not require forgiveness. Mainstream conceptions of reconciliation in South Africa, and more broadly in the Anglo-American tradition, tend to conceptualize reconciliation as building peace and trust without referring to burdening offenders because of their offenses. In contrast, Metz argues that in addition to the more familiar forward-looking aims of reconciliation such as integration and trust, a desirable form of reconciliation should also involve backward looking elements. In particular, it would require the disavowal of the offenses committed by perpetrators, the victims’ social circle and the public (12.3). Proper reconciliation should thus include certain types of punishment.

However, Metz does not conceptualize punishment in the traditional way by appealing to either its retributive or deterrent functions. Instead, “reconciliatory penalties would consist of *burdensome labor* that is likely to foster moral reform on the part of wrongdoers and to compensate their victims” (12.1-3). The aims of these forms of labor are to foster moral reform and provide compensation. However, they still count as punishment because they are supposed to be burdensome and can include forms of hard treatment in cases in which the wrongdoing is very serious. Metz’s examples cover a variety of wrongs, ranging from cheating at University to burglary and rape. These forms of punishment would not only be more productive than traditional retributive and deterrence punishments, he argues, but would also be constitutive of social (and in some cases even political) reconciliation insofar as they would be expressing the genuine disavowal of wrongdoing required for the victim to be willing to trust and reintegrate the wrongdoer into their community.

Metz offers what he calls a “dignity-based” approach to punishment and reconciliation, which draws from sub-Saharan ideas of cohesion, communion, and harmony in order to argue that what confers dignity to human beings is precisely our relational capacities to help others and be helped by them (12.4). This in turn explains why forms of productive punishment that lead to compensation and moral reform

⁸ For a brief overview of some influential views, see Metz, section 12.2.

are likely to foster reconciliation understood as reintegration into the community. A consequence of Metz's analysis is that rather than understanding South Africa's *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (TRC) as sacrificing justice for the sake of reconciliation, the real problem was "an inability to promote a fully desirable form of reconciliation" (12.5) since the TRC failed to impose the burdensome labor on perpetrators that would have been required to publically disavow the crimes they had committed.

In a similar spirit, Bill Wringe, in "Political Apologies, Punishment, and Reconciliation without Forgiveness", explores the role that political apologies might play in political reconciliation. In his previous work (2016), Wringe argues that the punishment of those who have committed atrocities on behalf of the state, or in ways that are explicitly or implicitly condoned by the state, might play a role in promoting reconciliation. The state's willingness to punish wrongdoers, according to Wringe, can be a vehicle for the expression of political regret, which in turn, is a necessary aspect of political reconciliation. In his contribution to this volume, Wringe considers cases in which paradigmatic forms of punishment are either unavailable or inappropriate as a vehicle for the expression of political regret. These include cases in which perpetrators of wrongdoing are either dead or unidentifiable or when the requirements of the rule of law cannot be fulfilled because perpetrators are also victims of wrongdoing or cases where the resolution of a conflict requires amnesties. In such situations, public apologies made on behalf of the state for wrongdoing performed or condoned by state agents might be an appropriate alternative vehicle for the expression of political regret (14.7).

Wringe understands political reconciliation as accepting one another as a participant in a common political life (14.4). He argues that such acceptance requires not only that the individuals involved see each other as equals, but also others need to see them as equals. On his account, political regret is necessary for political reconciliation because "it involves the public acknowledgment of wrongdoing as wrongdoing and as something to be taken seriously" (14.6). One objection, Wringe considers to his view is that apologies might not work as well as expressions of regret as punishment. Apologies might fail to fully recognize the seriousness of abuses committed in the past: "words are cheap, after all, and it might be thought that a merely verbal acknowledgment of public wrongdoing cannot involve the kinds of cost to those on whose behalf the apology is issued" (14.7). Interestingly, this is precisely one of Metz's main considerations in support of the claim that burdensome, but productive, forms of punishment are a necessary part of a reconciliatory response to crime as he argues that there must be some hardship for the disavowal of a crime to be meaningfully expressed (12.3). In his response to this type of objection, Wringe clarifies that apologies will often merely be a 'second-best' vehicle for the expression of political regret, that is, only when punishment is not possible for one of the reasons given above. Replacing

punishment by apologies (or indeed reparations) when punishment is available would be “entirely inadequate” (14.7). In the end, there is a great deal of agreement between Metz’s and Wringer’s views. They might disagree as to whether or not political apologies can be an effective way to express political regret, but both of them are committed to the claim that punishment, as public expression of repudiation of wrongdoing, should play an important role in political reconciliation and that, when available, it should be preferred to other possible expressions of regret.

Interestingly, Spinoza’s view seems to contrast here. According to Green, he thinks that getting someone to behave correctly through “‘negative’ reflexive affects” such as humility, shame, abjection, is never virtuous even if it gets people to behave the way we want because these attitudes diminish the agency of the other person. The other person is not acting from reason, or the power of their own mind or nature, but because of these external forces (3.2).

Metz also argues that political forgiveness, understood as forswearing feelings of resentment, is not necessary for political reconciliation. He reasons that political reconciliation requires integration and trust, which can be compatible with victims of wrongdoing retaining some of their negative attitudes towards perpetrators of abuses (12.3). Wringer’s analysis goes a step further because he is not only skeptical about the desirability of political forgiveness but also its very possibility. Indeed his account of political apology rejects what is often referred to as the ‘natural’ model, which claims that apologies are requests for forgiveness.⁹ He argues that the natural account has some negative implications. One problem is that those apologizing might not have the standing to ask for forgiveness (because they are not properly connected to wrongdoers). Moreover, given that victims of wrongdoing are the only ones who have the requisite standing to forgive in the sense that they always retain “the standing to refuse forgiveness” (14.2), the natural model places the onus of the success of the project of reconciliation on the willingness of victims to forgive. This is problematic because not only it is burdensome but also because, by being required to give up angry resentment, victims are asked to renounce an important psychological resource that can help them advance demands within the political arena (14.2).

Wringer argues that political forgiveness is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for political reconciliation. It is not a necessary condition because “justified anger at serious moral wrongdoing...is compatible with treating others as equal partners in the political community” (14.5) and is not a sufficient condition for political reconciliation because forgiveness can be a private matter between citizens without actually meeting the publicity condition on political reconciliation (14.5). In

⁹ This view is defended by Hallich (2016).

order to meet the publicity condition, political forgiveness should have a public dimension, which goes beyond private forgiveness between individual or even collective agents. However, Wringer worries that victims of atrocities are often members of unstructured groups, such as ethnic and cultural groups, which do not meet the conditions for collective agency, and thus he argues that groups of this sort cannot be subjects of forgiveness (14.5). In short, political forgiveness is not only not necessary for political reconciliation but it might also be undesirable or indeed impossible.

In her paper, Satne endorses a multidimensional account of forgiveness, which can be extended to cases of political forgiveness. On her account, personal and political forgiveness share a core element, which she describes as “a commitment to stop holding the wrongdoing against the offender” (15.4). Forgiveness is political when this commitment takes place between groups or collectives that are politically constituted or organized (or their representatives) and/or between individuals or groups in response to wrongdoing that was politically motivated and charged (15.4). Satne argues that the core element of forgiveness can usually be combined with other attitudes and practices, which are appropriate depending on the circumstances. This is because there are different ways of holding an offender accountable. Sometimes the simple performative act of saying ‘I forgive you’ might count as forgiving in the sense that the forgiver commits to stop holding the wrong against the offender. However, this form of forgiveness would be thin. A thicker, substantive, form of forgiveness might also involve the suspension or overcoming of hostility and other types of feelings and emotions usually held towards wrongdoers in response to having been wronged, the restoration of relationships, the forgoing of punishment, and the decision to stop reminding the offender of her misdeed. For Satne, none of these conditions are necessary or sufficient for forgiveness. However, continuing to punish, refusing to reconcile, and actively commemorating the wrongful past can be compatible with forgiveness but only if the wrongdoer acknowledges the wrong, accepts the punishment and the importance of commemorate the past and/ or the victim’s refusal to reconcile.

Like Wringer and Metz, Satne also maintains that political forgiveness is neither necessary nor sufficient for political reconciliation. However, Satne claims that we should separate the issue of the possibility of political forgiveness from the issue of its desirability. The language of forgiveness, and indeed, refusals to forgive are often used in political contexts, so to deny the possibility of political forgiveness (and unforgiveness) would be at odds with common usage and practice. In contrast to Wringer, Satne claims that not all forms of political forgiveness amount to group forgiveness and, when political forgiveness does require group forgiveness, this is not always a problem as groups can sometimes be the

subject of forgiveness and indeed refusals to forgive (provided that they have the required internal organisation and structure).

While Satne does not think political forgiveness is necessary for reconciliation, she does not deny that political forgiveness can be valuable in some conflicts, particularly when it is desired by the victims themselves, and not imposed vertically by a political leadership wishing to push a 'reconciliatory' agenda from above, and when perpetrators are willing to accept their punishment and the importance of commemorating and acknowledging the past. However, ultimately Satne's contribution is more interested in showing how some forms of political unforgiveness can be morally legitimate and effective ways for victims to uphold demands to punish perpetrators, commemorate atrocities and respect victims. She illustrates this point by briefly analysing the case of Argentine victims' longstanding refusal to 'neither forget nor forgive.'

Louise du Toit argues that political forgiveness plays a more prominent role in political reconciliation than many of the other authors in the volume. Du Toit focuses on Gobodo-Madikizela's work on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of South Africa in order to sketch the contours of an African feminist approach to forgiveness. Gobodo-Madikizela is a former commissioner of the TRC, and according to du Toit also the most important African woman's voice in South Africa, quite possibly in Sub-Saharan Africa, on the topic of political forgiveness. In response to skeptical doubts about political forgiveness, Gobodo-Madikizela argues that in post-conflict societies, where former enemies have to learn to live together after systematic human rights abuses, it is imperative that prosecutorial, retributive processes be *supplemented* by the kind of restorative process forged by the TRC. Although originally the focus of the TRC was reconciliation rather than forgiveness, Gobodo-Madikizela came to see the instances of personal forgiveness for politically motivated violent acts that occurred through the individual encounters that the TRC facilitated, as a crucial *aspect* of the broader reconciliation process (6.1.1). There are various reasons in support of this assertion. Gobodo-Madikizela claims former enemies confronting the apartheid past together helped the nation to reconcile opposing narratives of the past and opened the possibility for the creation of a new moral order. In addition, the TRC gave central stage to victims, allowing them to be heard and validated. The opportunity to confront perpetrators with these narratives, together with the rules of conditional amnesty, meant that perpetrators were held to higher standards of accountability than in a courtroom.

Du Toit argues that although Gobodo-Madikizela's sources are drawn mainly from mainstream Western tradition, "it is indeed possible to show her main concepts and ideas to be firmly rooted in African ethics and ontologies" (6.2). This is demonstrated by Gobodo-Madikizela's use of the African notion of

Ubuntu with its emphasis on interconnectedness and human community. She claims, “the underlying values of Ubuntu are clearly noticeable in Gobodo-Madikizela’s understanding of political forgiveness as an interpersonal, dialogical, empathetic process unfolding before witnesses” (6.2). Du Toit also examines how Gobodo-Madikizela’s more recent work puts forward what du Toit calls a ‘woman-centered view’ of forgiveness (6.2.2), connecting the instances of political forgiveness that she has witnessed by mothers, wives and grandmothers to the maternal body, particularly the womb (*inimba*) as the source of empathy, which its possibility of giving birth, and thus providing a new beginning. However, du Toit also notes that Gobodo-Madikizela’s work “lacks a feminist dimension” (6.3). In particular, du Toit claims that Gobodo-Madikizela has not yet sufficiently confronted the gendered history of forgiveness, nor the gendered dimension of the burdens and tasks associated with Ubuntu.

To the extent that du Toit endorses Gobodo-Madikizela’s position, she seems to leave open the possibility that political forgiveness might be conducive to a valuable form of political reconciliation. Moreover, Gobodo-Madikizela’s approach, contrasts with Wringer’s and Metz’s proposals insofar as “Gobodo-Madikizela argues that retributive justice is insufficient for social reconciliation by emphasizing Ubuntu’s insight into the power of intersubjective relations to make and break individuals. It is precisely because all selves are constitutively dependent on others for having and maintaining a sense of self that processes of forgiveness and reconciliation are indispensable in restoring a deeply divided society” (6.3). However, du Toit and Satne seems to agree to a certain degree, insofar as they both claim that although political forgiveness is possible, it is not always desirable, particularly when it imposes unfair burdens on victims.

Conclusion

Here we have summarized some of the key themes and threads that run through the volume, explaining their relation to contemporary debates and philosophical traditions. We believe that the volume offers cutting-edge scholarship of forgiveness, punishment, and revenge (among other key notions) and a new way to interpret and understand these concepts by key figures in the history of philosophy. We hope that the different contributions will help the reader to understand the philosophical issues that are at stake when we try to conceptualize our possible responses to both interpersonal and political forms of wrongdoing as well as the considerations that underpin conflicts and our attempts to solve them.

The current COVID 19 pandemic erupted when we were finalizing the edition of this volume. Krisanna was working in New York (US) while Paula was working in the North West of England. Both areas, as well as many other parts of the world, were seriously and deeply affected by this pandemic. Our thoughts are with the victims of COVID 19 and our hopes with the citizens and leaders of the world. We hope that we have the intelligence and find the strength to devise strategies to help us to overcome this crisis while fostering justice and equality among all of us.

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