

Vulnerabilities of Morality

Critical Notice

JONATHAN LEAR, *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2006.

MARGARET URBAN WALKER, *Moral Repair: Reconstructing Moral Relations after Wrongdoing*. New York: Cambridge University Press 2006.

The authors of these two books are concerned with morality understood as embedded in social relations, and with the vulnerability or fragility of morality that comes with that. They practice philosophy in very different genres, but both bring to the fore a slate of moral issues and questions that have not been as well developed by philosophers, as have principles, rules, and foundations for ethics. Jonathan Lear's examination of what he calls *Radical Hope* is exemplary: it tells one complex historical story — fascinating in itself — in order to display conceptual complexity and to bring deeper understanding of a type of moral phenomenon. His subtitle is exactly right: here is a real story of *Cultural Devastation* that bids fair to destroy all value within a specific historical society, and a story of how individual action may rise above it. Margaret Walker's title is equally accurate; *Moral Repair* directs us to a wider range of topics that are, today, much under discussion, namely Restorative Justice and such close relatives as Transitional Justice, Justice as Recognition, and Transformative Justice. Both books are concerned with wrongs that can be appalling. In the case of the second, think of the extreme real cases such as Apartheid to which Restorative Justice has been offered as an answer. Neither book is concerned with righting wrongs. Each examines, however, the possibilities of reconstructing a coherent moral fabric that has been horrendously torn — or even, as in

Lear's case, with constructing a new range of values to replace what is irrevocably damaged or lost.

Although the styles of the two books are very different, there are many overlapping themes, of which, perhaps, hope itself is dominant. Reconstruction, after all, is never guaranteed to work. It can take place only in an environment of potential trust and it demands not so much optimism as courage. Yet even that is too simple, for Lear's story involves a radical conceptual transformation of the virtue, courage, itself. He presents a real person in a situation which in one respect is classic, someone who raises the question of how to live a good life. But the possibility of such deliberation is far from Aristotelian, because in this story the virtues of the protagonist's society have lost their meaning.

Lear thus takes a new direction in searching for the psychological structures that would be required for such conceptual and moral transformation, and what cultural resources might make such psychological transformation possible. The story of *Radical Hope's* protagonist is specific and detailed, and partly for that reason, important for us. It is a philosophical account of the transformation of a central virtue, courage, and of the psychological traits and formation of the individual who manifested it. While Lear does not, at least explicitly, discuss the extent to which generalization is possible of his story, we need to raise very general questions regarding the moral education, and the psychological resources, that enable such transformations.

Walker's scope is not global destruction of a society but with the ways in which more local moral relationships between people are endangered and can even be destroyed. There is then the question of how, and if, they can be restored. Walker's book is part of, and in ways a response to, the current preoccupation with *repairing* wrongs. While reckoning with wrongs is a feature of human society, and philosophical questions about the justification of punishment are old, there is a specific cultural moment and moral agenda now, as Walker notes. Political projects try to do some kind of justice or offer some kinds of social or moral repair or both. Reparations movements for wrongful harms and losses have proliferated, seeking official apologies, restitution, material compensation for losses, public education and commemoration. There is a growing empirical literature on the effects of restorative justice practices both in dealing with ordinary crime and with the aftermath of political violence. Walker offers useful references to psychological research and includes numerous quotations from survivors of torture and concentration camps. Particular examples, however, are meant to serve her philosophical aim, to achieve an 'understanding of the main normative ideas — and ideals — at issue in responding to wrongs,' in order to identify the kinds of damage and to assess the possibilities and limits of repair (22).

Lear's book is, as I said, exemplary; a single case is studied in depth, and we are to learn from it. None of us, we hope, will ever be found in the devastating situation of the central figure in the narrative, but, in a way that reminds us of classic theatre, our own dilemmas and challenges are cast upon a larger scene so that we may learn from them. Walker, in contrast, examines a multitude of situations where each of us will recognize the vicissitudes of lives lived around us, and in our own more domestic worlds. Thus these two books are profoundly complementary.

Lear's Radical Hope

Lear offers us a case study of the death of a culture, of the nomadic hunting and warrior tribe of North American Crow, who were pressured by the forces of enemy tribes, disease, and the advance of the white man, onto a reservation. Lear argues that when their way of life was no longer possible, the very meaning of an excellent way for the Crow to live died. Philosophical inquiry starts with an account of how a culture and its values might die. At issue is how deliberation on an excellent way to live remains possible and how conceptions of the virtues may change. The central figure in the story is the Crow Chief, Plenty Coups. Lear argues that, despite the loss of the Crow's understandings of a worthwhile life, Plenty Coups reflected on how to live an excellent life; he transformed for his tribe, and instantiated, the excellence of courage.

In the 1880s the Crow moved onto a reservation. Plenty Coups witnessed the move and said that after that, 'nothing happened,' that is, nothing of significance could happen anymore. All of Crow life had been understood in terms of hunting or fighting or preparations for those activities. Hunting and fighting gave activities their significance and gave actors a sense of what could be excellence in living. On reservation, there was no hunting because all the beaver and buffalo had been killed and the people were now forbidden to pursue a nomadic life; and tribal warfare was forbidden. There was nothing to do or be as a Crow, and so in effect nothing to deliberate about, no excellence to aim at as a Crow.¹ A new field of possibilities, a new way for the Crow to live needed to be created.

1 The story: The Crow were a nomadic, hunting, warrior tribe. In terms of Crow life everything counted as hunting or fighting or preparing for it. Even cooking a meal had significance insofar as it was a way to prepare for hunting or fighting. The particular excellence of Crow culture was courage, its heroic exploits understood

Lear asks: how is it possible to deliberate about a worthwhile life without knowing what counts as courageous, as honorable? Is there an answer to how one, how we, *ought* to live in the face of cultural, conceptual, devastation or with the possibility of such a collapse? These questions invoke a range of philosophical issues. The most general ones are the following: How is a virtue, in this case, courage, transformed? What psychological changes make it possible for an individual whose character has been formed, who exemplifies traditional virtues, to be virtuous in a new way? Lear's particular responses are formulated within a Classical understanding of human excellence. He understands the aim and most general form of deliberation to be about the good, or excellent human life. Virtues are essential human excellences; living those virtues is living an excellent life. Lear uses an Aristotelian theory of virtue, and specifically, Aristotle's account of courage, to find a core notion or schema that will permit variations or transformation. He calls on a Platonic-Freudian understanding of human nature to argue for the objectivity of the excellence. Nonetheless, Lear's answers are specific to the circumstances of the Crow and to the cultural resources available to Plenty Coups. Lear does not answer the general questions listed above; undoubtedly readers will vary in the aspects of his account they find most suggestive. My candidate, as key to the possibility of the formulation of a new excellence, is the role played by imagination in Plenty Coups' 'rational' deliberation.

Courage was arguably the supreme excellence for the Crow, and was exemplified by the warrior or hunter facing death or serious injury. A new conception was required, if courage was to be possible both in moving to, and living on, the reservation. Lear looks for general marks and features that will allow for thinning out the conception

in terms of 'coups.' The robust culture recognized a number of ways an individual could count coups, but we can best understand why the Crow had this form of the excellence in Lear's account of the 'coup stick.' This was a stake a warrior planted in the ground, as sign to his foe of a boundary the Crow would defend to the death. The Crow needed to protect a claim to animals within their (shifting) boundaries. The tribe was once formidable but by the 1850s was surrounded by rival groups, particularly endangered by the Sioux, weakened by smallpox and cholera, and pressured by an inexorable white advance. The Crow decided to ally with the US government in common battle against the Sioux. Lear admits that the most familiar forms of practical reasoning are still possible. An individual could still aim at what is useful, finding food or shelter, and what might be pleasures available on the reservation, even whether it would be proper to send children to white man's schools. But the scope and resources of practical reason were radically limited insofar as there was no livable conception of the good life-which had consisted in hunting, fighting, and their preparatory activities.

of courage, so that if the world shifts, what counts as courageous can shift. He finds in Aristotle five criteria that set out the 'field' of courage (pp.109-113):

1. The courageous person has a proper orientation toward what is shameful and what is fearful.
2. Courage aims toward what is fine.
3. The courageous individual must grasp the situation he or she is in and, through experience, exercise good judgment.
4. Courage paradigmatically involves the risk of serious loss and of enduring certain pains.
5. Bold acts that derive merely from optimism are not themselves courageous.

This last is not, however, a feature like the others. It is in terms of a number of the other criteria that one determines whether or not an action is derived merely from optimism. Lear takes as his central challenge the task of showing that Plenty Coups' acts plausibly flowed from genuine courage rather than from optimism.²

The most obvious change from battlefield courage, while satisfying the general feature of Aristotelian courage, involves a change in the kinds of risks involved, and with it the kind of fears and pains involved. Plenty Coups risked neither death nor bodily injuries on the battlefield. His risks were, arguably, greater. Plenty Coups persuaded his tribe to ally with the U.S. government and urged them to listen and learn from the white man. Sitting Bull, chief of the Sioux, accused him of collaboration with the enemy and giving up his authority. From Sitting Bull's perspective, Plenty Coups was either a gullible sap or a collaborator with malign forces (and, presumably, cowardly). Although Sitting Bull was the Crow's enemy, the risks were real. The Crow could lose their land, their values — indeed could be destroyed as a people. Plenty Coups' strategy might not work, and he might have unwittingly done something shameful, not fine.

To satisfy himself as well as an observer that he exercised courageous leadership, Plenty Coups would need to find that he exercised excellent judgment. He could not know or be certain that he was right. But he could trust or hope. Lear terms this hope 'radical' because it was hope in a future that could not be grasped, and he argues that it is this hope that characterizes the transformed nature of courage. Lear starts with the assumption that hope can not only be something good (or bad) for a person, but that it can sometimes be 'fine' or admirable. To show that it is admirable, hope must be distinguished from a merely optimistic belief, that might serve to hide cowardice, or merely reflect gullibility.

2 Lear says 'false' optimism. I take him to mean an optimistic attitude, which would not have accurately reflected reality.

Lear's views on hope are contested³, so it is important to be clear about what Lear is doing, and why there are stringent requirements for what he calls hope. Whether or not it accords fully with ordinary usage, Lear believes we can speak of a *legitimate* hope, one that is not only useful or prudentially good, but is 'fine.' We admire a person who exhibits it. When hope is the basis of moral admiration, it is, arguably a virtue or part of a virtue. There is in this form of hope a mixture of an epistemic virtue, of good judgment in discerning the real, and a character virtue, in taking in, accepting what is difficult or dangerous or unpleasant.

Plenty Coups' hope is intricately tied to two dream visions he had between the ages of nine and ten. Following a Crow practice, he was sent to the wilderness to have visions that the tribe could use in decision making. His dreams were interpreted and accepted as revelatory by the elders of the tribe. On the basis of dream visions, Plenty Coups believed there would be an inevitable catastrophe or destruction. Other elements of the dream gave him hope that there would be a good, honorable life for the Crow after the devastation, although he did not yet know what that good life would consist in.

What Plenty Coups hoped was complex: it makes use of a virtue symbolized by the Chickadee in Crow mythology. The Chickadee-person is a Socratic bird-philosopher, who yearns for wisdom it knows it lacks and is led to seek wisdom from others. Plenty Coups dreamed that, in adopting the excellence typified by the virtue of the Chickadee, the Crow could again find a good life. But the Chickadee neither dictated allying with the white man, nor what should be learned, what aspects of another's culture should be adopted. The envisaged future is indeterminate, because the Chickadee is itself enigmatic. It represents the virtue of listening and learning from others, but only the Chickadee, or an individual capable of responding to that ideal, can judge what should be learned.

Lear claims that, unlike a shallow optimism, Plenty Coups' hopeful dream exhibited epistemic virtue, because it tracked reality. It was based on experience insofar as the boy picked up the real anxiety of the tribe and responded to it. Lear argues that the dream shows Plenty Coups' imaginative excellence in integrating what was being felt by the tribe and what was happening in the world. Plenty Coups responded to a menace in real life, and the uncertain future ahead. Most important, Lear argues, the hope generated by the dream enabled the tribe to face its future courageously-and *imaginatively*. Imaginative

3 Walker, in her exploration of hope, finds all hope to be good. She does not distinguish legitimate/illegitimate hope but only hope from wishful thinking.

excellence was manifested in Plenty Coups' response to a collapse of moral concepts.

Lear tells us that the capacity to hope, manifested in the dream, shows Plenty Coups to be courageous. He was able to face reality, the devastation of the Crow culture. He was courageous because he was steadfast in his hope for the future, as seen by his fidelity to the dream. Plenty Coups' radical hope, generated by the dream, is also said to manifest *imaginative excellence*. All three are central to the distinction Lear draws between mere optimism and legitimate hope. The first two are familiar, insofar as the mere optimist does not show the ability to take in harsh realities, nor remain steadfastly hopeful when encountering difficulties and uncertainties. But Lear's third claim essentially enlarges the basis by distinguishing (legitimate) hope and optimism.

One might argue that the positive attitude of the optimist is more than wishful thinking; that any positive attitude is important to moving on, to looking for ways to act. Lear makes a more substantial claim about the nature of hope. Lear thinks that Plenty Coups' construction of the ego-ideal of the Chickadee was his most important achievement (141). The Chickadee had been part of Crow culture, but it was a minor figure. Plenty Coups put it to new use. It became the central excellence of Crow life, and represented the new form of courage. Admittedly, Plenty Coups used the resources of his culture; he did not act alone, but was confirmed as an authority by the elders. We might nonetheless say that he constructed, in some measure, a new virtue. The Chickadee symbolized the new virtue, essentially marked by radical hope. This enigmatic ideal would help his tribe tolerate a period of conceptual devastation. While his hope was undoubtedly a helpful response, we need to see why it is recognizably courage, and how it could mark the excellence of Crow life.

Lear says (108) courage would be an essential virtue to a worthwhile or important human life even in the cultural devastation of the Crow, because courage is 'the capacity for living *well* with the risks that inevitably attend human existence.' Courage is a fundamental human virtue, because human nature is finite and *erotic*, in Plato's sense. It is an essential part of our nature that we take risks just by being in the world, where we are vulnerable to physical and emotional injury and also to mistakes and the collapse of concepts. We are not simply *forced* to act in uncertainty; we long for a goodness we may not yet understand, that exceeds our grasp. Radical hope's archaic prototype is a child's longing for a goodness she doesn't yet understand.

Two points need to be elaborated and supported. First, the new conception of courage exemplified by Plenty Coups is more than a change in paradigm, different specific ways of filling in the four features abstracted from Aristotelian courage. One might present the following ar-

gument: that facing the risk of losing one's culture or way of life requires fortitude or strength of character, just as does facing the risk of death in order to protect a community or to remain faithful to conscience. *What* is feared is different in these three cases, but what is retained is the same notion of persevering despite one's fears in attempting to secure what is fine. True enough. But Lear insists that Plenty Coups' risk-taking is different, insofar as the soldier in battle estimates the risks within a known framework. Part of Aristotelian courage is knowing what is to be feared, so fearing to the right extent, and this is the result of both the knowledge gained from experience and emotional responses formed by habituation. There is no framework for Plenty Coups; he cannot estimate the risks of an alliance with the U.S. government. But this is not only because he has no experience of negotiations with the white man. He does not know what determinate nature success would take, what a good life would be for the Crow who no longer lives a nomadic life of hunting and battle. Lear says Plenty Coups takes a risk on the framework.

Lear characterized the 'thinned out' notion of courage as living well with risks. The third general feature of courage is excellent judgment. But Plenty Coups cannot estimate the risks. Lear argues that Plenty Coups showed imaginative excellence: while his dreams and vision track reality in clearly seeing the menace to the Crow life, the cognitive excellence shown is not in estimating risks and going ahead to secure his goal, but in enabling the Crow to live with uncertainty. The capacity for radical hope is salient here as well as confidence in his own abilities, that he can see are those of the Chickadee. The dreams gave Plenty Coups confidence in his own abilities, in their content; the tribe's interpretation and confidence in Plenty Coups as dreaming their future confirmed this. Plenty Coups' confidence is seen as formed to a large extent by experience, and arguably responsible for his continued radical hope.

Lear's claim is that radical hope exhibits the general features or marks of courage. I would agree but draw attention to the fact that there has been a shift in what is central. Hope, rather than mastery of fear, marks the courageous individual. The individual who is courageous must be capable of living with and acting with a fundamentally uncertain future. It is the blankness, not the danger, of what lies ahead that requires courage. Even fear must be understood differently when what is feared is shame rather than death or pain, and the chief difficulty is uncertainty.

To maintain that courage is transformed, rather than supplanted by a new excellence, depends on prior acceptance that courage is essentially the excellence of living well with risks. Transformation is then a change in the nature of the risks involved. We are not, however, to think that

either an observer or an agent can see the common core of the human excellence we call courage and, recognizing a change in conditions, find its new conception. Thick concepts are embodied in a way of life and respond not only to changes in the world but to the values and resources of one's culture. The change to radical hope and to the virtue of the Chickadee is specific to the Crow. A culture faced with a less radical change than the Crow might continue to have and recognize the virtue of 'military' courage, but relegate it to the periphery, regard it as an excellence only of certain individuals, with specific social roles. Alternatively, the same cultural changes might mark the transition to a new conception. A historian of eighteenth century England notes that battlefield courage, once required and manifested in dueling, as well as wars, changed in the middle of the century. It became an excellence relevant only to politicians and soldiers, and then an excellence relevant only to soldiers. One might say a new conception, courage of conscience, took over, or we might think that courage became peripheral.⁴

There are undoubtedly difficulties in generalizing what conceptual changes might take place with respect to a particular virtue. Some indications, however, of what is important for such changes, emerge in the story of the Crow. These are found in answer to what seems initially to be a practical problem: How is it possible for an individual, whose character and psyche is formed within a given culture, to make the transition to a new virtue of character?⁵ Lear notes that it seems likely that the very traits of character that make for a courageous person would place such a person in an especially disadvantaged position to make a courageous transition *out* of traditional forms of courage. All Plenty Coups' training and encouragement from early youth was directed towards producing a certain character. The disposition's expected psychological flexibility of meeting different sorts of circumstances would not include the breakdown of a culture's sense of possibility itself. Yet whatever flexibility is required ought to be something that can be inculcated in the education and training of a culture if it is to become one's second nature. Ethics needs to be grounded in psychological reality (64).

Lear proposes that there is a certain plasticity deeply embedded in a culture's thick conception of courage; an individual can draw on his

4 Donna Andrew, in conversation.

5 A further qualification: the problem formulated in *Radical Hope* is how it is possible to respond courageously in a time when the traditional concept of courage makes no sense, and a new concept has yet to be formed. He is interested in the psychological formations that make that possible. His answers do not *preclude* finding individuals who seem to 'shed their skin,' jump into another culture, with its different values

own inner resources, and broaden his understanding of what courage might be (65). Crow culture plays an additional role. The ability of young boys to dream information important to the tribe was cultivated and encouraged. Plenty Coups, in particular, gained confidence in himself both by dreaming himself into the content of his dreams, and by receiving the confirmation of his tribe, that interpreted them. Crow culture made a place for imagination as an important resource in practical reasoning or thinking about what to do. It has been claimed that only a specific (religious) faith could sustain hope in situations as difficult as that of the Crow. We might however maintain that the ability to make use of what will sustain hope is itself part of virtue. Plenty Coups could call on his past dreams.

Lear explores the dream not just in terms of its prophetic content but from the perspective of developing psychological structure. The dream figures are internalized others. A voice and vision Plenty Coups respected taught him as a child to accept the destruction of his familiar world, and gave specific, though enigmatic, advice: listen to the Chickadee-person. In psychological terms, Plenty Coups was instructed to cultivate the development of a new, but crucial, ego-ideal. Lear's claim: Plenty Coups may be supposed to have dreamed himself into the new virtue of courage (learning from others in a new culture) using a traditional icon, the chickadee. His dreams not only furnish a new ego-ideal, but dreaming enables him to extend the range of practical reasoning and to think about what to do when he lacks adequate concepts in which to formulate his goal. This is not to be thought of as simply an individual accomplishment. It is the Crow culture that gave dream visions their role in psychological development. And it is Crow culture that furnished resources such as the Chickadee.

We might, however, not want to accept a full Aristotelian story of courage. Lear offers a historical vindication of Plenty Coups' radical hope. But it seems that we could find him courageous even envisaging a history that would not vindicate his judgment. Suppose that Plenty Coups aimed at an excellent life, called on the ideal of the Chickadee, and took the necessary practical steps to live a new life; but his judgment that the Crow would hold onto their land was mistaken. In this revised history deceitful governments of white men prevented it. We need not attribute 'wishful thinking' to him. The imagined Plenty Coups might have had good reason, the same good reason, to think that if tribe members continued to learn about the white men, they could hold onto their lands. We might well think he was still courageous, although his judgment was not historically vindicated. How different is this mistake in judgment from one we can attribute to Plenty Coups? He thought his tribe would do well as farmers. He became a farmer and encouraged them to do likewise. But he didn't succeed in turning his tribe

into farmers. We, including Lear, don't seem to regard this mistaken judgment to be of a sort to invalidate hope and courage. Can we formulate a concept of excellent judgment in the domain of courage that may admit of mistakes? There is a similar problem in stipulating the feature of 'aiming at what is fine.' Arguably, for Lear and for Aristotle, the courageous individual must aim at what is indeed fine. But we might think that, given certain restrictions, some people who misunderstood what was fine were, nonetheless, courageous. At the very least, one can see a difference here between courage and hope. While we are ambivalent about the subjectivity/objectivity of the 'fine' in courage (sometimes we do, and sometimes we don't see someone who sticks by and risks all for the sake of his ends as courageous), we are not ambivalent about hope in the same way.

Walker's Moral Repair

For the purposes of this book, the domain of morality is the mutually responsible relations between people. The vulnerabilities and rents in its fabric have to do with people's capacity to maintain moral relations. Walker's understanding of morality and the issues involved in our response to wrongdoing is deeply indebted to the account of participant reactive attitudes developed by Peter Strawson. The debt is made explicit in her discussion of resentment, but, more generally, they share a view of morality as 'embedded in the responses, feelings and attitudes, as well as the beliefs of human beings' (p. 23). Some feelings or attitudes, in particular, trust and hope, are easily recognized as necessary to support or maintain a moral relation. Moral relations, on Walker's view, are based on the (normative) expectations we have of others; we need to trust and hope that individuals share our values and standards. But those standards are not external to the relation: they express the expectations we have *of* others, in terms of which we hold them responsible. Hence equally important to a moral relation are the distinctive responses of resentment and indignation. These embody our demands for accountability; together with forgiveness, they manifest our response to violations of the standards or normative expectations that are part of moral relations. The key to understanding moral repair lies in these psychological attitudes. The book's organization reflects these ideas. The first chapter discusses the notion of moral repair. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 discuss the nature of and relations between trust hope and resentment. Chapters 5 and 6 explore two responses and forms of 'exit' from the damages of wrongdoing: forgiveness and making amends. Chapter 6 concludes with an examination of historic injustices and restorative justice. I will not attempt to summarize these

or comment on the many subtle analyses Walker offers. The focus of my remarks will be her understanding of the reactive attitudes, in particular, her accounts of resentment and forgiveness.

Moral Repair begins with an excerpt from Ariel Dorfman's play, *Death and the Maiden*. Paulina Salas is an imagined survivor of political violence by the former military government of her Latin American country. She is a fiction; her experience is not. Dorfman is a Chilean citizen who was in exile during Pinochet's rule and who knows the facts of Pinochet's brutal regime and the voices of its victims. In her case, because of the rules determining the mission of Chile's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which investigated only cases of victims killed or presumed dead, voice validation and vindication are officially denied her. We are confronted with the damages suffered by Paulina and what she seeks in response.⁶ An assessment of appropriate responses to wrongdoing begins with the victim, with her or his reactions and demands. Walker makes use of Peter Strawson's important discussion of what he called our 'participant attitudes,' and his claim that resentment is a way to attribute responsibility to another. She says that 'Reactive feelings and the reactions and responses that express them are the ways we concretely hold people to account... Resentment and indignation in particular express a finding of *fault* of others and a *demand* on them for an appropriate response' (25). Resentment sends a message, is a form of moral address, and, Walker adds, it invites a response (114).

Her account of resentment is best understood by first comparing it, as she does, with the older views of Joseph Butler and Adam Smith, and with what she terms the current standard reference, that of Jean Hampton. All three agree that resentment is a form of anger, a desire for retaliation for perceived injustice or wrong, although they may offer different accounts of the frequent irregularities, mistakes, or irrationalities in our feelings. Butler and Smith see proper resentment as serving justice by equipping us with enough 'severity' to levy deserved punishment and inspire fear in would-be wrongdoers, as indispensable for moral life (113).⁷ It is in effect a form of fellow-feeling. Walker agrees with Butler and Smith that resentment is useful for moral life — that it is a weapon to warn wrongdoers — but she develops these points in quite a different way. First, the extension of resentment is enlarged:

6 What has she endured, what kind of rupture in world and understandings of the victim. A commission in his play was charged to investigate and document only the cases of victims who were killed or are presumed dead. Real surviving victims of torture could not testify.

7 Joseph Butler, *Fifteen Sermons*, T.A. Roberts, ed. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge 1970, 77

the range of cases that *prompt* resentment goes beyond moral wrongs to offenses or perceived threats to norms of all kinds. Moreover, these are not only offenses to oneself and those with whom one feels a connection, but can inspire such a connection with those on whose part one is resentful. Second, while Butler and Smith see the natural object of resentment to be injury (to oneself and also to others), Walker views resentment as centrally a response to what one takes to be threats to norms. Thus, third, while she recognizes that resentful individuals may desire to retaliate, resentment's aim, or what it seeks, is reassurance that norms will be recognized.

Walker develops the differences between her own account and that of Jean Hampton at some length: resentment on Hampton's account is a personal response to wrongs done to oneself, perceived as attacks on what is variously called one's status or value or self-respect or self-esteem.⁸ It is anxious, fearful that the judgment of the offender might be right. Walker offers convincing counter-examples of resenters who are not anxious, and of resentment felt on behalf of others. Comparison is however difficult because the specificity of feelings of resentment described by Hampton, its self-referring character, and most of the differences with the classical tradition, arise from Hampton's attempt to separate resentment from indignation. As Walker herself notes, in ordinary use, terms for emotions are more fluid than in philosophical use. There are many ways we could label elements of the anger family and so distinguish between what we call indignation as opposed to resentment. Walker's aim is to achieve 'a characterization that usefully covers the *widest* class of common cases and sheds light on why contested examples cause disagreement' (117). This is not the place to consider what taxonomy of the anger family would ultimately be most illuminating, but I will discuss her claim to offer a more comprehensive account.

Walker's exploration of resentment is subtle and thorough. She is extremely insightful in the detailed stories told, and helpful in canvassing the historical antecedents of her analysis. My disagreement is with the theoretical or general analysis that follows, summarized by this series of quotations:

8 Walker cites 59-60 of Jeffrie Murphy and Jean Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1988. 'Resentment is an emotion whose object is the defiant reaffirmation of one's rank and value in the face of treatment calling them into question in one's own mind.'

Resentment is a response to perceived threats to expectations based on norms that are presumed to be shared in or justly authoritative for common life. In some cases it also responds to experienced threats to one's standing to assert or insist upon those norms (114).

Resentment registers anger at violations that might threaten the authority of norms, or that put in question one's standing as a competent judge of operative norms. Resentment targets others' intentional acts as the source of threat and tends to impugn the violator's motives and attitudes; resentment targets threats to norms (115).

resentment is centrally about threats to norms (116).

Resentment not only sends a message but invites a response: it seeks assurance from offenders or from others that they can be (or can again be) trusted to reaffirm and respect the boundaries norms define, boundaries that offer protection against harm or affront, as well as the security of membership and reliable expectations in a community of shared normative judgment (114-15).

On Walker's analysis, resentment is basically a response to a perceived threat to norms and seeks assurance or reassurance that these will be recognized in the future. This is a highly abstract understanding of the natural emotion of resentment, and seems at a great distance from the observations of earlier writers, with which she claims to agree. All the earlier writers emphasize that resentment is directed at other people and their faulty attitudes; that it is an angry, (potentially) aggressive response to perceived wrongful action, although one not always expressed; that it works by inducing fear, and sometimes demands the offender suffer or be punished. In Strawson's account, reactive attitudes are understood as essentially reactions to the quality of others' wills, to their good or ill will or indifference or lack of concern. As he noted, the pain may be as unpleasant, but it only gives rise to resentment when we take it to be caused by another out of contempt (or the like), rather than accidentally, reflecting 'the very great importance we attach to the attitudes and intentions toward us of other human beings.'⁹ Strawson makes it explicit that resentment is not only directed at individuals, triggered by what we take to be wrongful actions, but that it is essentially concerned with the quality of another's will toward

9 Strawson, *Freedom and Resentment*, 75; cited by Walker, 123

Strawson introduced the idea of reactive attitudes, phenomena whose focus was a commonplace philosophers seem to have neglected—as he put it, how much we actually mind, how much it matters to us, whether the actions of other people — and particularly of some other people—reflect attitudes towards us of goodwill, affection, or esteem on the one hand or contempt, indifference, or malevolence on the other.

us. Whether good will, respect, or a lack of indifference is expected of another depends on the nature of the relation.

Walker seems to be led to centre resentment on a threat to norms, in an attempt to achieve an adequately general account that can cover the range of cases that make us resentful. One of the many merits of Walker's analysis is its recognition and inclusion of resentment felt in those situations where social norms have been violated, including conventional social rules of courtesy, prescriptions regarding dress and language. She argues that philosophers should not moralize nor narrow the field of resentment. She takes seriously the importance to people of social norms in providing security and a sense of identity, and people's resentment at their being broken. While she is right to characterize the norms in question as social, it is another question whether underlying these isn't something that has moral force, namely, a regard for other people and what they value, aim for, or hold to be important. Walker seems to think that respect or regard for another cannot be a foundation here, since in most cases of violations of social norms no one is targeted. But while proper regard for, or respect for, another may sometimes require that one act for their good, or, more commonly, not act to harm them, it also requires that one be properly attentive. Indifference to others can be culpable. In social as well as moral matters, one need not target another, single out an individual, in order for an individual to be properly resentful. The student who does not return library books or reference material needed by a class need not intend to harm any one. The individuals who feel resentful when others speak too loud in public or litter the streets or do not tend their lawns may complain that the offenders have no regard for other people, without supposing they intend to annoy anyone. The idea underlying this response is that resentment is indeed connected to a perceived failure in the regard or respect due an individual.

Walker's discussion of forgiveness, like that of resentment, involves a serious appraisal of the accounts of other philosophers. Analysis is disputed, but people agree on what forgiving is *not*: it is not forgetting the wrong, condoning it, merely letting go of resentment at being wronged, or simply continuing, carrying on in a relation with the offender. She examines three features of forgiveness, one or more of which philosophers have thought essential to forgiveness. In the order of their popularity, these are forswearing resentment, restoration of damaged or broken relations between the offender and the victim, and fixing the offense, precisely as such, in the past (154). Walker, however, thinks no account has been complex enough, given the range of situations in which people forgive, (from cases of missed appointments to horrifying war crimes), the variation in psychological processes that enable different individuals to forgive, the costs of forgiving, and its cultural practices.

Walker proposes that we understand forgiving in terms of ‘passages a wronged person makes that have this character: from having a need and a right to grieve and to reproach the wrongdoer, the one forgiving achieves a morally reparative decision to release himself or herself from the position of grievance and reproach and to release the wrongdoer from open-ended (but not necessarily all other) demands for satisfaction’ (153). Walker takes the notion of moral repair to be central to forgiveness, to help us see how forgiveness can be morally significant and admirable.

Walker proposes counter-examples to each feature viewed as essential to forgiveness, but her descriptions and discussion are sufficiently rich that certain modifications of the feature are worth considering. For many, if not most, philosophers, the forgiver needs to forswear resentment, to have overcome resentment and other negative feelings. Walker, however, cites with approval the views of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who served as Chair of South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the philosopher Avishai Margalit: what is required for forgiving is to adopt a practical policy to forego revenge, to regard the injury as no longer a reason for hostile or cold behavior. People cannot let go of painful memories at will; not all forgivers are serene. An individual may adopt a policy but continue to suffer and on occasions be angry. Indeed, Walker suggests that it may not be morally best to unburden ourselves of all anger or suffering at acts of grave injustice or destructiveness. Without residual feelings of grief and sorrow, an individual comes too close to condoning; there is the threat of dishonoring or cheapening something or someone with profound value for us (158). At first sight this modified feature of overcoming resentment seems to be part of Walker’s understanding of forgiveness. But forswearing resentment is only part of what forgiveness has traditionally been thought to require — namely — ‘a change of heart.’ Archbishop Tutu added to the requirement of a practical policy, ‘in forgiveness we declare our faith in the future of a relationship and in the capacity of the wrongdoer to make a new beginning.’ Similarly, philosophers have suggested that we understand by a change of heart that the offender must be judged ‘good enough,’ even if there is not full approval of her or him.

While Walker agrees that the forgiver must humanize, not demonize the offender, that one can no longer view an offender as a monster or mere scum, she thinks it does not preclude viewing the individual forgiven as ‘a flawed, unreliable, or even a dangerous human being, one who is unlikely to do better’ (168). Walker gives us a sober and realistic example of a victim who has adopted the policy of foregoing reproach of the offender. In many cases this will have been a serious moral achievement. Nonetheless, we seem far from the common understanding of forgiveness. Walker’s forgiver need not have changed

her perception of the individual's character. There need be no reasons in the sense of 'grounds,' as opposed to aims or motives, for a decision to forgive. It seems that, given an important qualification noted below, forgiving someone for an injury is analogous to that of 'forgiving a debt.'¹⁰ But we want a term that distinguishes forgiveness from a decision to get beyond resentment, a state that could be achieved by managing one's emotions, by means of therapy, or by various forms of emotional distancing. Walker adds that the decision must be taken for morally reparative reasons, where moral repair is envisaged in terms of repair for the victim 'Forgiveness is reparative where it revives or stabilizes trust and hope in authoritative moral understandings, and in the viability of moral relations, for the one who forgives' (164). But a victim of wrongdoing might engage in therapy for reasons of moral repair, and therapy might achieve this, by providing a way for the victim to exclude the offender from the same moral universe. Walker's notion of repair is not adequate for understanding the moral content of forgiveness.

Walker rejects the second feature, a desire on the part of the victim for restoration of relations, because of the following sorts of cases: one may forgive someone who is dead, forgive an offender who is a stranger, with whom one has had no relation, forgive someone where painful or angry feelings are too intense to restore a decent relation, and forgive an intimate with whom a restored relation would be demeaning or dangerous. This is not the place for a minute examination of all the examples considered, although some qualifications would answer her objections to many of them.

We need to ask in what sense restoration or reconciliation is a key element. It is possible to maintain that the desire to restore some morally decent relation is essential, even if in some cases it is not present. If it is accepted that forgiveness requires a change of heart, the forgiver who comes to a renewed good-enough judgment of the offender will see the offender as someone with whom a relation is possible. In practice, the victim may both recognize the desirability of reconnection but not desire to renew a relation where memories of the injury are too painful and not subject to the victim's control. Reconciliation of victim and offender is essential, however, in a different way. It provides the framework for a discussion of forgiveness. Why would an individual aim at forgiveness rather than managing emotions that are painful and/or present an obstacle to decent relations in general? The desire for restoration of relationship brings us back to participant reactive attitudes and the

10 With Walker's qualification, that forgiving must have the aim of moral repair.

alternatives to them. We need not posit only one alternative, Strawson's objective attitude towards an individual that is like that of therapist or doctor, nor need we suppose that other alternatives bring with them non-accountability. There are various forms of distancing oneself from another in order to avoid the strains of involvement. It is common to speak of burying the past or forgetting or condoning as alternatives to forgiving. But people withdraw from relationships in numerous ways without forgetting or condoning. To forgive another is a participant reactive attitude on the part of a victim of injury or offense because the victim seeks a way to stay in moral relationship with the responsible offender. Walker views forgiveness through the lens of moral repair. This provides a number of insights. It also deflects the way in which I think forgiveness targets the offender. My criticism of her account of resentment centered on her claim that resentment was concerned with the threat to the authority of norms, rather than the offender's demonstrated lack of appropriate regard for the victim. Similarly, Walker's analysis of forgiveness is inadequate to deal with the attempt on the part of the forgiver to come to an understanding with the offender.

Walker's central achievement, I believe, is to display in her discussions a conception of Restorative Justice. By exploring the conditions of moral relations that must be repaired after wrongdoing, she invites us to reconceive what justice requires. One example can be found in her discussion of the value of hope, where she discusses the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. People have argued that justice was not served by the Commission, although it had a therapeutic effect on victims of injustice. Walker's illuminating term 'moral repair' is used to characterize the Commission's responses; it offers us a way to see them as moral, not as mere devices for psychological therapy. She urges us to see the rites, gestures, apologies, the ritualized recognition of civic status and political/moral worth of victims, not as forms of repayment or substitutes for retribution but as constitutive elements of moral relations.

Both Walker and Lear are interested in the possible responses of individuals whose moral life is endangered. Moral repair is relevant to both, but the vulnerabilities they explore are manifestly very different. Walker's individuals are victims of wrongdoing that make it difficult to trust and hope in others. Plenty Coups' world is deprived of values and significance. To some extent these differences reflect not only fundamentally different aspects of moral life, but what we take to be starting points for leading a good life. The discussion of hope in their two works illustrates the divergence. Hope in Lear can be legitimate or not. If legitimate, it expresses a virtue of character, a way to lead an excellent life. Walker's assessment of hope sees its role as energizing and helping to maintain human relations. Moral repair, in Walker, looks to rebuilding

or maintaining the trust and hope in others that are needed for people to have decent connections with one another. Lear asks how, in extreme situations, one can continue to take on the fundamental moral task of understanding what would be a worthwhile or excellent life to live.

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