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A Feminist Defense of the Value of Non-Expressed Anger

by

Rose Donnelly

Under the Direction of Christie Hartley, PhD

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

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## ABSTRACT

Macalester Bell offers a feminist account of the value of appropriate anger that does not rely on anger being used as a tool for combating injustice. Bell characterizes this value as loving the good and hating evil. I argue that Bell's account of anger's value does not clearly distinguish between the *experience* and *expression* of anger, leading to her account not equivocally showing that non-expressed anger is valuable. Moreover, I argue that when agents are not in a position to express their anger, their anger is still valuable as it is a form of internally resisting injustice. Through the use of prominent discussions in emotion theory, I show that anger can and should be distinguished between experience and expression. I claim that if an agent's anger is fitting, it has experiential value as it signals to the intrinsic value of self-respect. I call this view the Experiential Account.

INDEX WORDS: Anger, Feminist Theory, Emotion Theory, Value Theory, Non-Instrumental Value

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Rose Donnelly

Committee Chair: Christie Hartley

Committee: Andrew I. Cohen

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Services

College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my family, friends, furry companions, and especially my younger self, who would have never thought any of this to be possible.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>		<b>V</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>EMOTION THEORY AND THE VALUE OF ANGER</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>ACCOUNTS OF ANGER’S VALUE UNDER NON-IDEAL CONDITIONS</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Bell on Anger’s Value</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Anger as More Than Mere Expression</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>THE EXPERIENTIAL ACCOUNT</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Defining Fitting Anger</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Anger as a Form of Internally Resisting Injustice</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Clarifying EA Self-Respect From Bell’s View of Self-Respect</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>PRUDENTIAL APPROPRIATENESS OBJECTION</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>CONCLUDING REMARKS</b>	<b>30</b>
	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>31</b>

## 1 INTRODUCTION

It is commonly thought that certain emotions are valuable – either instrumentally or non-instrumentally.<sup>1</sup> Some emotions can have value for those who experience them, insofar as those who experience these emotions express them and, in doing so, make them a vehicle for protest. Alternatively, or instead, emotions might be valuable when others witness their expression. That can create or promote a sense of community and solidarity among the witnesses and with the expressing agents. When emotions have value as a means to some other end, they have instrumental value. Additionally, sometimes emotions have value whether or not they contribute to some other end, simply as expressed and/or experienced. When they do, emotions have non-instrumental value. Non-instrumental value is understood as a relational good, meaning it is valuable to the extent that it signals to other goods. This, however, is different from intrinsic value. Intrinsic value is understood as valuable in itself, which is to say that the location of the value matters and not the way the value is assessed.<sup>2</sup> Instead of focusing on instrumental or non-instrumental value, emotion theorists tend to assess emotions in terms of their fittingness and prudential appropriateness. Fittingness has to do with whether an emotion is a correct response to something in the world<sup>3</sup> and prudential appropriateness concerns whether an emotion is beneficial to an individual or the community.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See for instance: Campbell Brown, “Two Kinds of Holism About Values”, *Philosophical Quarterly*, 57 (2007): 456–463. Wlodek Rabinowicz and Toni Rønnow-Rasmussen, “The Strike of the Demon: On Fitting Pro-Attitudes and Value”, *Ethics*, 114, (2004): 391–423.

<sup>2</sup> This understanding of value is following Christine Korsgaard’s distinction between intrinsic and non-instrumental value. See Christine Korsgaard, “Two Distinctions in Goodness,” *The Philosophical Review* 92:2 (1983):169-195.

<sup>3</sup> Justin D’Arms and Daniel Jacobson, “The Moralistic Fallacy: On the ‘Appropriateness’ of Emotions,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 61, (2000): 65-90.

<sup>4</sup> Justin D’Arms and Daniel Jacobson, “The Moralistic Fallacy: On the ‘Appropriateness’ of Emotions,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 61, (2000): 68.

Some political theorists, such as James M. Jasper, claim that anger is sometimes an appropriate response to injustice insofar as it is valuable for fighting oppression.<sup>5</sup> Feminists Myisha Cherry and Amia Srinivasan, respectively, have also suggested that anger can be valuable insofar as it is a way of resisting racial injustice<sup>6</sup> or appreciating the world as it is.<sup>7</sup> On accounts such as Cherry's, Srinivasan's, and Jasper's, emotions have instrumental value: an agent's anger is useful as a tool for fighting oppression. The value of the emotion comes from the anger being expressed to either the agent's moral community or to their wrongdoer.<sup>8</sup> Macalester Bell presents a feminist account of the value of appropriate anger sustained by agents living under oppression that does not rely on anger being used as an instrumental tool for combating injustice. On her view, anger is valuable when an agent loves the good and stands against evil through expressively responding with anger.<sup>9</sup> She gives an account of virtuous, appropriate anger that does not rely on the instrumental value of anger. For Bell, what makes anger non-instrumentally valuable is that it points to the intrinsically valuable act of loving the good and

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<sup>5</sup> James M. Jasper, "Constructing Indignation: Anger Dynamics in Protest Movements," *Emotion Review* 6, no. 3 (2014): 208-213. Also see: Archer, Alfred., and Georgina Mills. "Anger, Affective Injustice, and Emotion Regulation." *Philosophical Topics* 47, no. 2 (2019): 75-94; Bommarito, Nicolas. "Virtuous and Vicious Anger." *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* 11, no. 3 (2017): 1-28; Agnes Callard, "The Reason to Be Angry Forever." In *The Moral Psychology of Anger*, edited by Myisha Cherry and Owen Flanagan. Rowman and Littlefield, 2017; Myisha Cherry, *The Case for Rage: Why Anger is Essential to Anti-Racist Struggle*, Oxford University Press, 2021; Zac Cogley, "A Study of Virtuous and Vicious Anger," In *Virtues and Their Vices*, edited by Kevin Timpe and Craig Boyd. Oxford University Press, 2013; Marilyn Frye, *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory*, The Crossing Press, 1983; Celine Leboeuf, "Anger as a Political Emotion: A Phenomenological Perspective," In *The Moral Psychology of Anger*, eds. Myisha Cherry and Owen Flanagan, Rowman & Littlefield, 2017; Veli Mitova, "A New Argument for the Non-instrumental Value of Truth," *Erkenntnis* 88, no. 5 (2021): 1911-1933; Uma Narayan, "Working Together Across Difference: some Considerations on Emotions and Political Practice," *Hypatia* 3, no. 2 (1988): 31-47; Laura Silva, "The Efficacy of Anger: Recognition and Retribution," In *The Politics of Emotional Shockwaves*, ed. by Ana Falcato. Palgrave Macmillan, 2021; Antti Kauppinen, "Valuing Anger," in *The Moral Psychology of Anger*, eds. Myisha Cherry and Owen Flanagan. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2018; Jennifer Kling, "Rage Against the Machine: The Virtues of Anger in Response to Oppression," In *The Ethics of Anger*, eds. by Court D. Lewis and Gregory L. Bock. Lexington Books, 2020; Sigrid Wallaert, "Reading Rage: Theorising the Epistemic value of Feminist Anger," *DiGeSt* 10, no. 1 (2023): 53-67.

<sup>6</sup> Myisha Cherry, *The Case for Rage*.

<sup>7</sup> Amia Srinivasan, "The Aptness of Anger," *The Journal of Political Philosophy* no. 2 (2018): 123.

<sup>8</sup> Macalester Bell, "Anger, Virtue, and Oppression," in *Feminist Ethics and Social and Political Philosophy: Theorizing the Non-Ideal*, ed. Lisa Tessman, (Springer, 2009): 169.

<sup>9</sup> Bell, "Anger, Virtue, and Oppression," 165.

being against evil. Bell discusses the non-instrumental value of expressed anger, which is consistent with thinking that the experience of non-expressed anger has non-instrumental value too, but she does not address this in her account of the value of anger in non-ideal conditions.

In this paper, I argue that Bell does not clearly distinguish between the experience and expression of anger. Any robust framework for understanding the value of anger must consider whether non-expressed anger has any value. This, however, is not made clear in Bell's framework. As a result, her view does not equivocally show that anger is valuable when it is not expressed. I aim to make an argument for the non-instrumental value of non-expressed anger that is an extension of the kind of picture Bell attempts to develop regarding anger's value under non-ideal conditions. To this end, I argue that, even when agents are not in a position to express their anger, experiencing anger can still be valuable. In particular, I claim that if an agent's anger is fitting, it has experiential value that signals self-respect. Under this framework, feeling fittingly angry *is* to have self-respect. Self-respect, as I understand it, is intrinsically valuable.<sup>10</sup> Thus, anger is non-instrumentally valuable in instances where an agent's anger is not expressed as it points to intrinsically valuable self-respect. I call this view the Experiential Account as it offers a distinct way of evaluating fitting anger that does not rely on the prudential appropriateness of expressing or experiencing anger.

This paper will proceed as follows: I give an overview of the current literature on anger in emotion theory (§2). Then, I contrast recent feminist views of anger's value and introduce the debate between instrumental and non-instrumental accounts of the value of anger (§3.1). I demonstrate that Bell's account, as it stands, does not have a clear enough definition of anger to

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<sup>10</sup> One might disagree with this assertion, but I lack the space to argue for this claim. I assume that manifesting and having self-respect is intrinsically valuable. And anger is non-instrumentally valuable as it signals this intrinsic good or self-respect.

include non-expressed anger as non-instrumentally value. (§3.2). I aim to make a clear case that anger can have non-instrumental value even when only experienced by an agent (§4). I argue anger that is merely experienced by the agent can be a form of internal resistance insofar as the agent is rejecting an offense or injustice by feeling angry. Finally, I address and refute possible objections inspired by Bell's conception of self-respect and concerns of prudential appropriateness (§5).

## 2 EMOTION THEORY AND THE VALUE OF ANGER

Emotion theorists tend to evaluate emotions in terms of fittingness and prudential appropriateness. With these assessments, they aim to evaluate whether an emotion is appropriate to feel and possibly express given the circumstances the agent is facing. Using such evaluations enables theorists to justify or deny the rationality of the agent's emotional episode. These justifications can aid in debates on epistemic appropriateness<sup>11</sup> and possible consequences of experiencing certain emotions;<sup>12</sup> in debates on reasons for (or against) emotional regulation;<sup>13</sup> <sup>14</sup> and, in this case, in debates on the value an emotion has for the agent and their community.

Fittingness concerns whether an emotion is appropriate. As Justin D'Arms puts it, "an emotion is *fitting* to have toward an object if and only if that object has some particular evaluative property with which that emotion is associated."<sup>15</sup> The evaluative property associated with anger is offensiveness.<sup>16</sup> For example, suppose someone at a dinner party says "Women belong in the home – it is an abomination for them to work outside of the household." An agent

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<sup>11</sup> The epistemic appropriateness of an emotion evaluates whether the emotion is rational for the agent to experience. For example, if an agent feels fear, an evaluation of epistemic appropriateness would explore whether the fear is rational (e.g., asking, "Did the agent actually see a spider?") or if the fear was irrational (such as cases where we say "their eyes played a trick on them"). Sometimes irrational emotions cause an agent to act in a way that does not support their overall goals. In the spider example, if the agent was frightened out of their mind and ran away from the supposed spider, but as a result they left mid-officiating a wedding, that would be an inappropriate emotional episode.

<sup>12</sup> Glen Pettigrove, "Meekness and 'moral' anger. *Ethics*, 122, no. 2 (2012): 341-370.

<sup>13</sup> Maya Tamir, "Why Do People Regulate Their Emotions? A Taxonomy of Motives in Emotion." *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 20, no. 3 (2016): 199-222.

<sup>14</sup> In a similar vein, emotional regulation is heavily influenced by concerns of fittingness and prudential appropriateness. Emotional regulation is the ability an agent has to control their experience and expression of an emotion. For example, an agent's ability to calm themselves after receiving devastating news of losing a loved one. It might be fitting for an agent to not allow themselves to cry because they must relay the information to their children or other family members. It could also be the case that the impulse to restrain their crying is not the appropriate response because they believe they ought not to express emotions given social norms (e.g., toxic masculinity).

<sup>15</sup> Justin D'Arms, "What Makes an Emotion Appropriate or Inappropriate to its Object?" in *Emotion Theory: The Routledge Comprehensive Guide Volume II: Theories of Specific Emotions and Major Theoretical Challenges*, ed. by Andrea Scarantino, (Routledge, 2024): 2. Emphasis in original.

<sup>16</sup> Ira Roseman, "Anger and Interpersonal Dislike," in *Emotion Theory: The Routledge Comprehensive Guide Volume II: Theories of Specific Emotions and Major Theoretical Challenges*, ed. by Andrea Scarantino, (Routledge, 2024): 4.

might be offended by the patriarchal comment and become angry. This would be a fitting response because the object of the agent's anger (the patriarchal comment) has the evaluative property of offensiveness.

Prudential appropriateness concerns whether an emotion is 1) beneficial to experience and 2) beneficial to express.<sup>17</sup> Prudential appropriateness of experiencing and expressing can be appropriate or inappropriate or these two can come apart (i.e., one is appropriate, and the other is not). For instance, feeling disappointment by one's performance can be prudentially appropriate to experience for an agent if it leads them to practice an important skill.<sup>18</sup> Or an agent's feeling disgusted by another's morally bad action can be prudentially appropriate to experience *and express* to the moral community if that reaffirms community standards.<sup>19</sup>

However, the assignment of value to an emotion is different from assessing the emotion's fittingness or prudential appropriateness. Emotion theorists consider the "*emotivational* outcome," also understood as the goal of an emotive episode, when assigning value to an agent's emotion.<sup>20</sup> Emotivational outcomes concern if the agent's emotion succeeded or failed with respect to the agent's desired goal. The expression of an agent's anger typically engages with and furthers certain goals an agent has. An agent's goals in expressing their anger tend to include the desire for removal of the obstruction or correcting of injustice.<sup>21</sup> To assess the appropriateness of an agent's anger, one must consider whether an agent's anger triggered obstacle-removing behavior, e.g., did the anger cause an agent to act in a way that removed the object of their anger

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<sup>17</sup> D'Arms and Jacobson, "The Moralistic Fallacy," 65-90.

<sup>18</sup> Took this example from (D'Arms, "What Makes an Emotion Appropriate," but also see Julien Deonna, Raffaele Rodogno and Fabrice Teroni, *In Defense of Shame*, (Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>19</sup> It is important to note that the Experiential Account I offer is not the same as anger that is prudentially appropriate to experience. When I say anger is experientially valuable, I am referring to the Experiential Account. I will indicate when I am referring to prudentially appropriate anger that is experienced.

<sup>20</sup> Maya Tamir, "Why Do People Regulate Their Emotions? A Taxonomy of Motives in Emotion," *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 20, no. 3 (2016): 199-222.

<sup>21</sup> Roseman, "Anger and Interpersonal Dislike," 9.

or did they withdraw themselves from the environment. Prototypically, anger is understood as valuable for an agent to have when it is used for achieving or reaching an end of withdrawal or removal of an object.

While prudential assessments are different from goal assessments, they can overlap. Such motivational goals are dependent in some regard to the prudential appropriateness of feeling and expressing anger. This overlapping is understood as the contrast between empirical views and value theory, where the prudential assessments are frequently tied to claims in value theory. For instance, if an agent's goal in expressing anger is to combat injustice, depending on the circumstances, expressing anger may not be prudentially appropriate for the agent to reach that goal, e.g., expressing anger leads to further hostilities and halting social progress.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, an agent's goal is inappropriate on prudential considerations of experiential appropriateness if the anger is painful or not conducive to their well-being, e.g., feeling angry about an injustice and completely withdrawing from society.

For the scope of this analysis, following predominant emotion theories, I hold that for an emotion there is *usually* a physiological component, a phenomenological component, an expressive component, a behavioral component, and a motivational component.<sup>23</sup> Such components for anger can include a physiological response of a flushed face or an increased heart rate; a phenomenological experience of a judgement that an agent has suffered an injustice; an expressive component of furrowed eyebrows or vocally expressing anger (e.g., yelling); a behavioral response of stomping away or attempting to make oneself look big or dominant; and a motivational response of either walking away or attempting to neutralize the source of one's

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<sup>22</sup> See Nussbaum, *Anger and Forgiveness*, and Roseman, "Anger and Interpersonal Dislike," 44.

<sup>23</sup> Roseman, "Anger and Interpersonal Dislike," 45. My emphasis added.

anger.<sup>24</sup> These categories are not strictly separated and easily overlap. It is important to note that agents will have different concerns or goals that govern their initial appraisal. One might have a goal of being respected or a goal of justice that makes them acutely aware of instances where these desires are violated. However, the goals of anger as an emotion are not as individualistic; they tend to be either the desire to remove an obstacle or to withdraw from the situation.<sup>25 26</sup>

In summation, I have surveyed current emotion literature on anger and the ways in which emotions are evaluated. Additionally, I discussed how judgments on fittingness and prudential appropriateness can come apart from accounts of value. In the next section, I will highlight the current feminist analyses on anger's value and role in resisting injustice.

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<sup>24</sup> It is important to note that the motivational component is directed tied to obstacle-removing behavior.

<sup>25</sup> Roseman, "Anger and Interpersonal Dislike," 17.

<sup>26</sup> Further, for any instance of anger, I assume that an appraisal is made leading to anger, an agent becomes aware of their anger (a form of expression or communication to themselves) and then possibly expresses it an audience and that their anger may or may not motivate obstacle removing behavior.

### 3 ACCOUNTS OF ANGER'S VALUE UNDER NON-IDEAL CONDITIONS

To situate Bell's argument in the current feminist discourse, I will discuss two prominent accounts of anger's value. As mentioned previously, on some feminist accounts, anger's value depends on whether the expression of anger is productive in fighting injustice and creating a sense of community. I will focus on two instrumental accounts of the value of anger, those by Cherry and Srinivasan. Cherry gives a robust case for anger's value insofar as it aids in resisting racial injustice, while Srinivasan most notably argues for the justification of feeling angry in the first place to avoid further injustice.

Cherry elucidates "a particular type of anger, what [Cherry] calls Lordean rage, has an important role to play in anti-racist struggle."<sup>27</sup> Elsewhere she has articulated this form of anger as "political anger."<sup>28</sup> She makes use of Audre Lorde's insights in "The Uses of Anger,"<sup>29</sup> and further develops questions "concern[ing] the nature of anger, its functionality, and its cultivation in the context of racial oppression."<sup>30</sup> Cherry calls this form of political anger "Lordean rage." Lordean rage targets racism and "it tends toward metabolization and aims for change."<sup>31</sup> Those who have this rage are those who have processed (metabolized) and learned to use their anger; thus, this rage is a valuable way of expressing anger to promote social justice.<sup>32</sup> For Cherry, "Lordean rage is fitting when it is in response to something racially unjust or insulting—and when something is indeed racially unjust or insulting – it correctly represents the world."<sup>33</sup> Cherry explains that Lordean rage stops being a morally fitting response "when I invest my full

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<sup>27</sup> Cherry, *The Case for Rage*, 5.

<sup>28</sup> Myisha Cherry, "Political Anger," *Philosophy Compass* 17 no.2e12811, (2021).

<sup>29</sup> Audre Lorde, "The Uses of Anger," CUNY Academic Works, *Women's Studies Quarterly: Archives and Special Collections* (1981): 7-10.

<sup>30</sup> Cherry, *The Case for Rage*, 7.

<sup>31</sup> Cherry, *The Case for Rage*, 5.

<sup>32</sup> Cherry, *The Case for Rage*, 29.

<sup>33</sup> Cherry, *The Case for Rage*, 38.

emotional life in responding to wrongdoers at the neglect of loving and being attentive to those with whom I am in solidarity.”<sup>34</sup> If the anger is all-consuming for the agent and they neglect themselves or their community, their anger is no longer morally fitting.

Taking a different approach, Srinivasan offers, what I take to be, an epistemic view of the value of anger. She is interested in articulating the nature of, as she calls it, “apt anger”<sup>35</sup> and the consequences that come from devaluing apt anger. She argues against claims that anger is counterproductive to resisting injustice. The view that anger is counterproductive states that being prudent, the notion of not feeling nor expressing one’s anger, is what ought to be emulated in instances of injustice. Srinivasan contends that being prudent and the aptness (the fittingness or appropriateness) of anger can come apart.<sup>36</sup> For instance, it might be prudent to not feel angry as it could be counterproductive to one’s end goals, but feeling anger might still be apt as it correctly identifies and validates the agent’s experience of injustice. In counterproductivity accounts such as those by Martha Nussbaum and Glen Pettigrove, anger is counterproductive when getting angry clouds an agent’s epistemic rationality<sup>37</sup> or “aggravates conflict and ultimately undermines the pursuit of just outcomes.”<sup>38</sup> <sup>39</sup> Srinivasan states that the counterproductivity view, if accepted, allows for another form of injustice for those already oppressed – affective injustice. Affective injustice “is the injustice of having to negotiate between one’s apt emotional response to the injustice of one’s situation and one’s desire to better one’s situation – a conflict of responsibilities.”<sup>40</sup> There is conflict between appreciating or

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<sup>34</sup> Cherry, *The Case for Rage*, 26.

<sup>35</sup> Srinivasan uses “apt” to be synonymous with appropriate or fitting anger as seen previously.

<sup>36</sup> Srinivasan, “The Aptness of Anger,” 1.

<sup>37</sup> Pettigrove, “Meekness and ‘moral’ anger,” 341-370

<sup>38</sup> Martha Nussbaum, *Anger and Forgiveness*, (Oxford University Press, 2016); Pettigrove, “meekness and ‘moral’ anger.”

<sup>39</sup> This quote is taken from Srinivasan’s exposition on Pettigrove, “meekness and ‘moral’ anger” and Nussbaum’s *Anger and Forgiveness*. See Srinivasan, “The Aptness of Anger,” 3.

<sup>40</sup> Srinivasan, “The Aptness of Anger,” 13.

*acknowledging* the injustices plainly faced and wanting to make the world as it should be (without injustice).<sup>41</sup> The latter seemingly requires an agent to restrain expressing and experiencing their anger as it might make their situation worse. An affective injustice is when an agent is forced to either only feel angry or to not feel angry and fix their current conditions. The injustice is that an agent must ignore or restrain their anger, and in doing so denying themselves the right to feel fittingly angry and feel a sense of true offense, in order to productively fix the problem.

Srinivasan holds that “anger by its nature calls for others to share in its negative appreciation of injustice.”<sup>42</sup> Following accounts such as those by Marilyn Frye and Uma Narayan, she maintains that anger’s value comes from the sharing of knowledge with an agent’s community.<sup>43</sup> To put it another way, she holds that expressing anger is a way of sharing the knowledge of experiencing oppression with other community members. As Srinivasan argues, the counterproductivity view rejects this communal sharing and appreciating of injustice which causes the agent to endure another form of injustice – affective injustice.

### **3.1 Bell on Anger’s Value**

Contrary to the views above, Bell sets out a framework for anger that focuses on non-ideal conditions. Instead of evaluating the value of anger felt episodically, Bell examines the value of anger felt for extended periods of time. Rather than having an account of anger where an agent’s anger ceases to be fitting if it is deemed as being experienced for too long or an account of anger where there must be a personal reason to feel angry (i.e., the agent must

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<sup>41</sup> Srinivasan, “The Aptness of Anger,” 11.

<sup>42</sup> Srinivasan, “The Aptness of Anger,” 11.

<sup>43</sup> Srinivasan, “The Aptness of Anger,” 4.

themselves be offended or slighted), Bell’s account shows that there is a form of lasting anger that is virtuous to have when opposing oppression.

In pursuit of defending how anger can be valuable in “grossly non-ideal conditions,”<sup>44</sup> Bell argues for a framework of virtuous, non-instrumentally valuable, appropriate anger in non-ideal conditions. To have “appropriate anger,” on her account, is for one’s anger to be fitting.<sup>45</sup> The virtuous aspect of anger “is a kind of excellence in being for (or loving) the good and being against (or hating) the evil,” or as Bell calls it, the Appropriate Attitude Account. On this account, the non-instrumental value of anger is grounded in the excellence of an agent’s character as it is exemplified through loving the good and hating the evil.<sup>46</sup> To put it simply, non-instrumentally valuable anger is anger that reflects upholding what is just (the good) and opposing what is unjust (the evil). Hence, if the anger is appropriate, it promotes the virtuous attitude given the circumstances. This account is developed contra “defenses of anger [that] stress the instrumental value of discrete episodes or bouts of anger.”<sup>47</sup> She aims to defend a view of anger that is not tied to instrumental concerns and emphasizes valuable anger that is experienced long-term, or as she calls it “enduring anger.” Enduring anger, in Bell’s view, is challenging to justify and deem appropriate, not to mention virtuous, as it is a state of character and not a singular instance of anger that subsides after a short period of time.

Bell distinguishes between instrumental accounts and “non-instrumental” accounts of anger’s value. Instrumental accounts focus on anger that is used, shared, or witnessed for some end. This “end” can be as simple as expressing an agent’s rejection of the offense to the offender and as complex as sharing and bearing witness to others’ anger embodying their lived

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<sup>44</sup> Bell, “Anger Virtue, and Oppression,” 165

<sup>45</sup> Bell, “Anger, Virtue, and Oppression,” 171.

<sup>46</sup> Bell, “Anger, Virtue, and Oppression,” 177.

<sup>47</sup> Bell, “Anger, Virtue, and Oppression,” 165.

experiences of enduring injustice. Additionally, anger could be used to motivate action, e.g., motivating protests, activism, or the sharing of knowledge. Bell points to proponents of instrumental accounts, such as Narayan, who posit that anger has instrumental value when it is expressed to an audience.<sup>48</sup> Narayan's view stresses the *direct* epistemic value of anger as expressing it can provide a *direct* way to share and make known this distinct form of knowledge about oppression experienced by members of a group.<sup>49</sup>

Similarly, Frye has argued for the *indirect* epistemic value of anger where "by paying attention to how their emotions are received by others, women can indirectly gain insight into their standing in the moral community."<sup>50</sup> For Frye, in expressing one's anger, the agent is able to *indirectly* gauge and better understand how they are viewed and understood within their moral community. Instrumental value is based on an agent expressing and *using* their anger for the betterment of themselves and their community. Bell's non-instrumental value account attempts to challenge this by not relying on the utilization of anger but, rather, by having the value come from merely standing against evil that is coupled with this notion of an "excellence of character."<sup>51</sup>

On the Appropriate Attitude Account, to have appropriate anger that is virtuous and has non-instrumental value, the agent must expressively respond to the wrongdoing.<sup>52</sup> An expressive response of anger "express[es] the victim's integrity, respect for the object of her anger,<sup>53</sup> and

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<sup>48</sup> Also See: Macalester Bell, "A Woman's Scorn: Toward a Feminist Defense of Contempt as a Moral Emotion." *Hypatia* 20, no. 4 Analytic Feminism (Autumn 2005): 80-93; Uma Narayan, "Working Together Across Difference: some Considerations on Emotions and Political Practice," *Hypatia* 3, no. 2 (1988): 31-47; and Spelman, *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought*, Beacon Press, 1988.

<sup>49</sup> Bell, "Anger, Virtue, and Oppression," 168.

<sup>50</sup> Bell, "Anger, Virtue, and Oppression," 168. Quoting where Bell is summarizing Frye. See Frye, *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory*, The Crossing Press, 1983.

<sup>51</sup> Bell, "Anger, Virtue, and Oppression," 170.

<sup>52</sup> Bell, "Anger, Virtue, and Oppression," 177.

<sup>53</sup> I take "respect for the object of her anger" to be referring to the angry individual recognizing and respecting the individual who has caused them anger as a moral agent.

commitment to the moral standards in question.”<sup>54</sup> If the agent correctly identifies wrongdoing and responds accordingly, then their anger is virtuous and appropriate. Bell uses Fredrick Douglass as her case study of someone with enduring, virtuous, anger.<sup>55</sup> Douglass, an enslaved man and abolitionist, was documented as having enduring anger about the slavery he and other Black people faced.<sup>56</sup> Bell argues that Douglass’ anger towards his enslaver Edward Covey is non-instrumentally valuable and virtuous as Douglass hated the evil Covey perpetuated and Douglass upheld the good through his expression of anger. If an agent’s anger prevents them from loving the good, then it ceases to be virtuous.<sup>57</sup> She describes this view of anger as non-instrumentally valuable in the sense that “what makes the character trait of appropriate anger a virtue is not its instrumental value in bringing about a state of eventual flourishing.”<sup>58</sup>

Unlike instrumental accounts of virtuous anger, where anger is valuable insofar as it promotes individual or communal flourishing, Bell argues that in “conditions of oppression, manifesting the virtue of appropriate anger threatens to systematically lead the bearer of this trait away from flourishing rather than towards it.”<sup>59</sup> Virtuous, appropriate anger must be valuable without the possibility of the agent experiencing any form of flourishing. As Bell sees it, appropriate anger is in itself non-instrumentally valuable because it expressively responds to the injustice and stands against it through expressing said anger. The appropriate anger need not be tied to a condition of bringing about flourishing for the agent or their community.

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<sup>54</sup> Bell, “Anger, Virtue, and Oppression,” 177.

<sup>55</sup> Bell, “Anger, Virtue, and Oppression,” 166.

<sup>56</sup> Bell, “Anger, Virtue, and Oppression,” 166-167.

<sup>57</sup> Bell, “Anger, Virtue, and Oppression,” 180.

<sup>58</sup> For Bell, the idea is that loving the good and hating the evil is *itself* non-instrumentally valuable. But this notion of non-instrumental value is making an error for conflating it to intrinsic value. Korsgaard states that this is a common error, but one that must be avoided. See Korsgaard, “Two Distinctions in Goodness,” 170.

<sup>59</sup> Bell, “Anger, Virtue, and Oppression,” 171. Flourishing here refers to an Aristotelian conception of flourishing (i.e., eudaimonia). Flourishing as an ultimate goal, a perfect harmony.

### 3.2 Anger as More Than Mere Expression

Bell's framework defends the value of anger under non-ideal conditions – specifically those who face oppression. Bell does show the non-instrumental value of anger as taking a stand against evil can be non-instrumentally valuable, even if not prudentially appropriate. Still, Bell fails to appropriately appreciate the difference between the *experience* and the *expression* of anger. And in some cases, the mere experience has value without being expressed.

Bell's definition does not align with her account of anger's value. She argues for a non-instrumental account of anger's value in conditions of injustice. Her definition of anger, however, is describing anger that is used for some end – an instrumental end – of having an agent's wrongdoer bear witness to<sup>60</sup> the expression of anger. Bell's scope of anger is the following: "I will be focusing on the kind of anger we experience when we judge that we have been blocked or constrained by being wronged by another... I will always have my sights focused on the subspecies of anger that is directed towards *a person* in response to an apparent *wrong done*."<sup>61</sup> The issue in Bell's definition of anger is this: it is unclear whether "anger that is directed towards *a person* in response to an apparent *wrong done*" refers to an emotion one expresses, or whether that anger is merely felt internally in response to and directed towards a wrong one suffers. Additionally, it is unclear if the anger expressed must be successfully witnessed and communicated to the wrongdoer for it to be non-instrumentally valuable. There are many times where an agent externally expresses anger (e.g., throws their hands up in the air or stomps around a room) without an audience. The lack of clarity in Bell's definition and

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<sup>60</sup> It is unclear under Bell's account if the wrongdoer actually acknowledges the anger or not. It remains unclear if there must be successful communication (i.e., the wronged express their anger and the wrongdoer acknowledges it) or if the communication can fail to reach or be acknowledged by the wrongdoer.

<sup>61</sup> Bell, "Anger, Virtue, and Oppression," 167. Bell's emphasis.

application of anger makes parsing these motives impossible; and thus, presently, Bell's view has omitted an account of anger that is not expressed.

So then, part of the value of anger in the Appropriate Attitude Account is missing from Bell's account. As her view stands, it is unclear if an agent must express their anger to their wrongdoer in order for it to be at least appropriate and possibly virtuous. Consider what Bell says about the nature of anger in agents who live under non-ideal conditions:

But in grossly non-ideal circumstances (such as the racial conditions of the United States in Douglass' time), the occasions for appropriate anger will be ever-present. Douglass made it clear in his speeches that he, even as a free man, felt slighted every day by the existence of slavery in the south. On top of this, he regularly endured the large and small insults and humiliations associated with being a member of a stigmatized group. In response to these slights and injustices, *Douglass was disposed to respond with anger*. As Douglass' case makes clear, hitting the target of appropriate anger under conditions of oppression may well require those who manifest this virtue to be in a near constant state of rage.<sup>62</sup>

In this case, it is ambiguous if to be angry is to express it; "Douglass was disposed to *respond* with anger." Here, I take "respond" to mean "express" as Bell does not make it evident that it means anything beyond express. Given his circumstances, Douglass might have been in a position to express his anger, but that does not mean he always did. Anger is not just an expression, but it is also an experience. As with any emotion, we can distinguish expressing from merely experiencing anger. Indeed, Bell's framework does appreciate the non-instrumental value of anger, but when the theory it still relies on anger being a response, seemingly an expression to an audience.<sup>63</sup> Under the Appropriate Attitude Account, standing against evil is an expression, an

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<sup>62</sup> Bell, "Anger, Virtue, and Oppression," 171. My emphasis added.

<sup>63</sup> Bell, "Anger, Virtue, and Oppression," 178. Bell even states that "in some circumstances, I think it would be appropriate to *respond to oppressors* with contempt."<sup>63</sup> Here, contempt is merely another emotion that can be expressed in non-ideal conditions. In her more recent work on emotions, specifically contempt, she argues that "as moral agents, we must confront all kinds of immorality, and in some circumstances, we *ought* to harbor (and show) contempt for persons." On her view, expression signals to the agent and the wrongdoer that a moral violation, has occurred.

outward expression. Bell's view, as it stands, cannot encompass cases where agents are standing against evil internally, without expressing their anger to an audience.

I have argued that while Bell attempts to explicate and justify the value of a distinct form of anger that is experienced in instances of injustice, she fails to distinguish between expressed and experienced anger. Her account ultimately warrants anger that is valuable non-instrumentally, but it is unclear if it must be expressed. This is only one way of understanding how anger functions and the potential value it has for the individual or their community. In the following section, in consonance with Bell's view, I give an account of the value of fitting anger that draws on the distinction between feeling and expressing anger.

#### 4 THE EXPERIENTIAL ACCOUNT

Moving forward, I will set aside the “non-instrumental value” language Bell has used. Instead, I speak of “experiential value.” I take experientially valuable anger to be non-instrumentally valuable as it signals an agent’s self-respect. In the context of resisting injustice, I understand self-respect as an intrinsic good manifested from appropriate anger. If there is not a manifestation of self-respect, the emotion the agent is experiencing is not anger.<sup>64</sup> I follow the predominant view that fitting anger is a response to an offense where the agent’s guiding appraisal comes from a place of wanting justice and upholding self-respect for themselves.<sup>65</sup> As seen previously, anger is a response to offensiveness, and that response is based on an appraisal that the agent has been slighted. The appraisal of offensiveness which leads to anger is governed by a desire to be respected or for justice to be upheld, both signifying a recognition of an agent’s self-worth. To tease out the central issue in Bell’s view – the lack of distinction between experience and expression – using “experiential value” will be crucial.

As shown in the previous section, Bell’s account of fitting anger is superficially rooted in *expression*; something that is expressed, used, and witnessed. In this section, aligned with Bell’s overall view, I offer an account of fitting anger that acknowledges the value of anger in instances where the agent does not express it. I call this account the Experiential Account (EA moving forward). EA recognizes the distinction between expressed and experienced anger. The EA will show there are times when anger cannot or should not be expressed because of situational concerns (e.g., the potential for physical or psychological harm), but nevertheless can still have experiential value. The EA appreciates internal forms of resistance through merely feeling angry.

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<sup>64</sup> I recognize that self-respect can manifest from other emotions, and it is not exclusively tied to anger. However, appropriate anger often stems from an appraisal of justice-seeking and a desire to be respected as a moral agent See Roseman, “Anger and Interpersonal Dislike,” 2024.

<sup>65</sup> Roseman, “Anger and Interpersonal Dislike,” 4.

This section will proceed as follows: I offer the criteria of EA, illustrating the value of non-expressed anger with two examples, I claim that this kind of anger can be a form of internal resistance to injustice, and finally, I reject Bell's view of self-respect.

#### 4.1 Defining Fitting Anger

Suppose an agent feels fittingly angry and they (i) have no expression to an audience,<sup>66</sup> (ii) have no obstacle-removing behavior, and (iii) have anger that is proportional in duration.

This kind of fitting anger can be valuable for an individual insofar as it is a way that an individual signals their own self-respect. In cases where an agent feels fitting anger about an injustice, their anger exhibits the belief that “I matter, and my rights have been violated, and I am *not* okay with that.” As a result, their anger is experientially valuable as a sign of self-respect.

Consider two examples:

##### Example (1)

Gillian, a Black woman, is crossing a busy street when a truck slows down. A White man sticks his head out of the window and shouts the n-word at her and drives off. Gillian becomes angry, but she does not show anger. She does not express it. She simply keeps walking because she is afraid that expressing anger would be dangerous for her.<sup>67</sup> In this case, Gillian's concerns that motivate her appraisal of the situation are governed by her desire for being respected. According to fittingness conditions, Gillian's anger is appropriate. Further Gillian's anger seems prudentially appropriate by means of experiencing her anger as it is promoting her values and interests.

##### Example (2)

Cassandra, an associate director to the CEO, is at her company's annual board meeting sitting next to her boss, the CEO, Jim. Unbeknownst to everyone around the table, Jim has placed his hand far up Cassandra's leg, close to her crotch. She is surrounded by peers and knows that if she spoke up there would be no threat to her job or to her physically. This consideration guides Cassandra to express her anger – she furrowed her eyebrows and becomes flushed. She stands up and exclaims to the rest of the board meeting that Jim has just inappropriately groped her under the table. She expresses her anger. In this case, Cassandra's concerns that motivate her appraisal of the situation are governed by her desire

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<sup>66</sup> For anger to have no expressive aspects to an audience it could entail having no outward, physical or verbal reaction to the offense.

<sup>67</sup> For Gillian, not expressing her anger does not lead to obstacle removing behavior.

for being respected. According to fittingness conditions, Cassandra's anger is appropriate. Further Cassandra's anger seems prudentially appropriate by means of expressing her anger as it is promoting her values and interests.

Why did Cassandra, unlike Gillian, express her anger? Cassandra was in a position to do so, while Gillian was not. Cassandra evaluated that her situation called for immediate and external expression of her anger. It could have also been the case that Cassandra had not expressed her anger if she feared for her safety or losing her job. Of course, there could be many more variations of how anger is felt and expressed, but these two are sufficient in showing two clear routes an agent can go when experiencing anger.

In example (1), I understand Gillian's anger to be experientially valuable as it is not expressed, nor does it lead to obstacle removing behavior. Example (2) can be understood as an instance of expressed valuable anger as it is externally expressed and witnessed by an audience. Gillian's anger is valuable even if it was not witnessed or expressed like Cassandra's. Gillian's anger was not restrained – it was still fully felt, but it simply was not physically<sup>68</sup> or verbally expressed. There is a difference between the two and it is important not to conflate them. It can also be the case that Gillian can have both experiential and expressed valuable anger. Cassandra's fitting anger can be understood as both valuable through experience and expression. It is experientially good for her to feel angry (given the injustice), and it is good for her community through her expression as she was motivated to seek change which was witnessed by a larger audience.

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<sup>68</sup> In emotion theory, there is a difference between physical and physiological expression. Physical expression can be understood as facial expressions or behavioral changes that can be witnessed by an audience. Physiological expression, on the other hand, is understood as bodily changes such as heart rate increasing or sweat formation. Physiological expression is not always witnessed by an audience, but in some cases it can be. See (Roseman "Anger and Interpersonal Dislike,") for more on how anger is prototypically expressed.

It could also be the case that Gillian or Cassandra's anger is not prudentially appropriate and yet still fitting.<sup>69</sup> Take Cassandra's example, it could have been the case that her anger would be prudentially inappropriate if expressed because it led to her losing her job. Her anger is still rightfully fitting, as she is correctly responding to the offense of Jim inappropriately touching her. Gillian could have had prudentially inappropriate anger, if, for instance, she expressed her anger in a way that caused her harm (e.g., if she had yelled back at the racist in the truck and they came back and attacked her).<sup>70</sup> Her anger would still be fitting as it correctly identifies the offense, but prudentially inappropriate to express as it would not be beneficial to her interests considering that she is facing potential bodily harm.

Looking to Bell's account, it is unclear if Gillian's anger is non-instrumentally or experientially valuable. It seems that Gillian's anger is valuable only if she expresses it to the wrongdoer and, potentially, to the community. Certainly, Gillian's anger is a sign of her rejecting the injustice, but she fails to expressively respond to the injustice. Thus, her anger does not fall under Bell's Appropriate Attitude Account. It is not the case that Gillian lacks the appropriate attitude Bell is concerned with, as Gillian meets the requirements of "expressing the victim's integrity, respect for the object of her anger, and commitment to the moral standards in question."<sup>71</sup> As stated previously, it is unclear if "expressing the victim's integrity" means the agent must express their anger to an audience. If Bell had clearly distinguished between the expression and experience of anger, Gillian's anger would be counted as valuable as it combats the injustice faced.

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<sup>69</sup> D'Arms and Jacobson, "The Moralistic Fallacy," 69.

<sup>70</sup> Of course, Gillian could be in a position to express her anger and if it is fitting, she should do so. But in the case I have given above, it is not fitting for her to express her anger.

<sup>71</sup> Bell, "Anger, Virtue, and Oppression," 177.

## 4.2 Anger as a Form of Internally Resisting Injustice

So far, I have made a basic case for the experiential value of anger. I take this case to be consistent with the kind of view Bell attempts to set out, but it better defines anger in non-ideal conditions. I have claimed that when anger is fitting but not expressed to an audience, it can have non-expressed value as a signal to a person's self-respect. Now, I will argue for an additional claim: non-expressed anger can be a kind of internal resistance to injustice. Through expanding EA, I can further show the value of simply feeling angry as it is a form of internal resistance to injustice.

Those who work in resistance theory, such as Carol Hay, have argued that *internal* resistance to injustice can be a valuable way for agents to oppose injustice even if they are not in a position to express those feelings.<sup>72</sup> How, then, is the EA any different? It is not. If an agent restrains their anger because they believe feeling angry is bad or inappropriate, they are dismissing their self-worth. Yet, it could be the case that an agent has learned how to be an extremely efficient emotional regulator, and they can prevent the appraisal of the offense from triggering anger.<sup>73</sup> To feel angry is a sign of rejection to the offense an agent has experienced. If the agent is not a stoic or, at least, very practiced in the skill of letting go,<sup>74</sup> they will more than likely feel angry if it is fitting given the circumstances. They promote their self-respect through feeling angry, through internally resisting. To show this, consider another example:

### Example (3)

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<sup>72</sup> Carol Hay, "The Obligation to Resisting Oppression," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 42, no. 1 (2011): 21-24. It should be noted that this is not her primary argument in the paper, but she does endorse this view of internal resistance.

<sup>73</sup> Tamir, "Why Do People Regulate Their Emotions?" 203.

<sup>74</sup> See Roger López, "Forgiveness out of control," *The Royal Institute of Philosophy* 96, (2021): 527-551; and Milam Per-Erik, "Forgiving and Ceasing to Blame," In *Conflict and Resolution: The Ethics of Forgiveness, Revenge, and Punishment*, eds. Paula Satne and Krisanna M. Scheiter. (2022):1-23.

Joey is a young queer man who is walking out of a gay bar with his partner. As they begin to walk down the sidewalk, holding hands, a woman passes them and whispers in Joey's direction the f-slur. Fittingly, Joey becomes angry. He is not in a position to show that anger as his partner did not hear the slur and does not want to ruin his partner's mood. Joey's anger is non-instrumentally valuable as it is a fitting response to the offensive language spoken about him and demonstrates the self-respect he has for himself. As he promotes that self-respect, he also is internally resisting homophobia he and his community faces. Being fittingly angry resists the injustice as he is not dismissing the comment and denying himself the dignity and respect he and fellow community members deserve. He resists through his fitting anger and does not make it known to anyone but himself.

I do not deny that Joey's anger may eventually be utilized or at least expressed to an audience; all my account is arguing for is that it does not necessarily need to be for it to be valuable or a form of resistance. It could also be the case, that anger's value can shift from experiential value to valuable through expression depending on if an agent is in a position to express their anger and if they engage in obstacle-removing behavior. EA posits is if the anger is fitting, it will always be at least experientially valuable.

### 4.3 Clarifying EA Self-Respect From Bell's View of Self-Respect

The view of self-respect I have suggested above superficially appears to be identical to Bell's use of self-respect. Particularly, Bell asserts that self-respect is "a mode of being against the bad... and it can directly motivate social change. But in addition, such a stance is a non-instrumentally valuable insofar as it is a mode of standing against evil."<sup>75</sup> However, my account goes a step further, better clarifying anger, allowing for self-respect to represent standing against evil without an agent *expressing* anger.

To illuminate the dissimilarity between Bell's and my view, I will refer back to the Joey example. On the Appropriate Attitude Account, Joey's signaling of self-respect is not valuable in and of itself, but rather it is instrumentally valuable for his community as his self-respect

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<sup>75</sup> Bell, "Anger, Virtue, and Oppression," 178.

manifests a motivation for social change. Bell states that “anger is defended as a valuable tool to develop in response to oppression because it can help bring about certain ends – either full recognition of one’s oppression, self-respect, or social change.”<sup>76</sup> This understanding of the value of anger bringing about self-respect is limited and misleading. It appears that she is committed to the notion that the self-respect signaled through anger must be expressed, not just experienced.

Self-respect can be valuable through expression to an agent’s community; however, Bell fails to consider instances where agents under non-ideal conditions should not express their anger to protect themselves. There are times when agents are not in a position to express that they are standing against evil through their anger out of fear of potential bodily harm or harm to their social standing (e.g., losing their job or getting arrested). The examples I gave of agents who are not able to express their anger, such as Joey or Gillian, show that their anger is still experientially valuable as it signals to their self-respect. Cases such as Gillian and Joey illustrate at least two different concerns that motivate them not to express their anger. Anger that manifests self-respect is, at the very least, experientially valuable and could potentially be valuable when expressed, but that is not required for an agent’s anger to be of value.

It could be the case that on Bell’s account, expressing anger is non-instrumentally valuable. Furthermore, part of what makes anger non-instrumentally valuable is that it signals standing against evil. Again, Bell neglects the agents who cannot express their anger by not making a clear distinction between the different forms of anger. It must be the case that experiencing anger is non-instrumentally valuable as it a sign of self-respect. Under the EA, self-respect is a form of standing against evil as it is a mode of internally resisting injustice. As I have

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<sup>76</sup> Bell, “Anger, Virtue, and Oppression,” 169.

shown previously, anger can be separated into experience and expression. Bell's account does not distinguish between these two aspects of anger, and thus, her view is only partially correct. An agent can stand against evil through signaling self-respect without *expressing* it.

To summarize, as an extension to Bell's original view, I have argued for the Experiential Account of anger's value according to which, if one's anger is fitting, it is experientially valuable as it manifests self-respect. I also argued that my account of anger supports the importance of internally resisting injustices when individuals are not in a position to express their anger. Fitting anger that is not expressed nor witnessed is another form of internally resisting injustices. Finally, I addressed issues with Bell's conception of self-respect manifested from anger. I showed that self-respect need not be expressed for it to be valuable. In the next section, I respond to an objection regarding the disconnect between prudential appropriateness and experiential value of value.

## 5 PRUDENTIAL APPROPRIATENESS OBJECTION

Both Bell's and my account will be subject to the following objection: if an agent's anger is prudentially inappropriate, does that not mean the anger is not valuable for an agent to have? Indeed, this seems contrary to an account of what is valuable anger for an agent to have. However, prudential appropriateness and experiential value are conceptually different things and need not rely on one another for justification.

There is a similar issue when attempting to evaluate emotions with moral claims and fittingness conditions. D'Arms and Jacobson call this error in differentiation between fittingness and moral claims the "Moralistic Fallacy."<sup>77</sup> Committing this fallacy would be "infer[ring], from the claim that it would be morally objectionable to feel F toward X, that therefore F is not a fitting response to X."<sup>78</sup> To put it simply, it is fallacious to say that if an emotion is morally inappropriate it is therefore not fitting. These are two conceptually different ways to evaluate emotions and cannot be dependent on one another. But the objection here is not asking about the fittingness, but rather the experiential value. Using a similar framework as D'Arms and Jacobson, I explore the idea that claims of prudential appropriateness and experiential value cannot rely on one another and should not influence each other's evaluative conclusions.

To illustrate the disconnect between experiential value and prudential appropriateness, consider again the examples of Gillian and Cassandra. Suppose that, in Gillian's case, her anger is still prudentially inappropriate to express as it could be harmful to her physically, but now it is also prudentially inappropriate to *experience*. Gillian's anger about the racist encounter may not be prudentially appropriate to experience if, for instance, it makes her avoid going outside of her home. Her anger makes her withdraw from going out socially for the next couple of weeks

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<sup>77</sup> D'Arms and Jacobson, "The Moralistic Fallacy," 66.

<sup>78</sup> D'Arms and Jacobson, "The Moralistic Fallacy," 75.

because she is too distracted to thoughtfully engage with her peers. Her anger would be prudentially inappropriate because it does not promote her interests, nor does it support her general well-being. And yet, her anger is still experientially valuable as it points to the self-respect she has for herself.<sup>79</sup>

Similarly, suppose that if Cassandra lashed out during the meeting and stabbed Jim's crotch with a letter opener, subsequently leading her to be arrested for assaulting Jim., that would be prudentially inappropriate. Physically assaulting Jim out of anger does not promote Cassandra's interests nor does it support her well-being.<sup>80</sup> She could be fired from her job or could go to jail for her actions; neither of these things are good prudentially. However, her anger is still experientially valuable because it exhibits her self-respect and desire to not have her rights infringed on.<sup>81</sup>

There are many emotions that are valuable and not beneficial or good for an agent's well-being. Take, for instance, grief. There is experiential value in grieving a loss even though grief can be extremely painful and not beneficial to an agent's well-being.<sup>82</sup> Grief could be prudentially inappropriate to express if it causes others pain or is not productive for an agent attempting to overcome their grief. It would not just be invalidating, but arguably offensive to say that an agent's grief is not valuable to express because it is painful to endure or not conducive to another's well-being.

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<sup>79</sup> Some philosophers might say that emotions like anger dissipate after a short burst, but as Bell (2009) mentioned, there are certain times when we understand agents as having enduring anger or at least anger that lingers for longer than a singular moment. There is much debate on what constitutes the duration of emotional episodes to be fitting or not. And yet, we do have a general idea of when it seems that someone did not feel for long enough or for too long.

<sup>80</sup> Her anger might have been productive in promoting object removing behavior (Jim Won't touch her again), but on prudential grounds, given the circumstances, it does not promote Cassandra's overall interests of not being arrested/losing her job.

<sup>81</sup> Examples such as this represent most concerns of feeling angry because of agent's who cannot control or do not use their anger wisely, e.g., those who lash out in violence or beratement.

<sup>82</sup> It could be said that grief helps the agent heal or let go. But further investigation into this is outside the scope of this paper.

Another example is moral disgust. Moral disgust can be a helpful emotion insofar as it is a way for agents to uphold moral standards and reject immoral principles. Sometimes, moral disgust can be prudentially inappropriate in both senses, as to express it might be uninviting to others or cause great displeasure to experience for an agent. However, it would not lack value. There is potential, if fitting, for disgust to be valuable through expression or experience for an agent regardless of if it is prudentially desirable.<sup>83</sup>

Bell anticipates a related concern with the desirability of anger in Douglass's case. She states that "appealing to the desirability of Douglass' anger in an attempt to justify it would be to *give the wrong kind of reason* in support of it."<sup>84</sup> Attempting to use desirability as a reason to be angry does not "warrant a particular token of resentment,"<sup>85</sup> and cannot justify "the character trait of appropriate anger."<sup>86</sup> On Bell's view, desirability does not accurately reflect the nature of anger and does not provide adequate justification for why a person should or should not feel angry. While Bell does anticipate a desirability concern, she does not distinguish between prudential concerns of experience and expression; she treats them as equivalent. This weakens her original account.

The mere act of feeling fitting anger is experientially valuable. It might be painful or might fail to promote interests, but the experience of anger in responding to injustice upholds one's self-respect. This form of internal resistance is valuable. Attempting to say that if an emotion lacks prudential appropriateness, it cannot have experiential value is, as D'Arms and Jacobson might say, a fallacious assertion of equivocation. Prudential and experiential concerns,

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<sup>83</sup> D'Arms, "What Makes an Emotion Appropriate," 6.

<sup>84</sup> Bell, "Anger, Virtue, and Oppression," 175. Bell's emphasis.

<sup>85</sup> Bell, "Anger, Virtue, and Oppression," 175.

<sup>86</sup> Bell, "Anger, Virtue, and Oppression," 175.

if intertwined, would cause for many forms of emotions or internal resistance to lack any value; thus, they must be two completely different ways of evaluating emotions.

I have argued that prudential appropriateness and experiential value are conceptually two different modes of assessing emotions. Further, with support from D'Arms and Jacobson, I showed that the objection made a fallacious assertion regarding the relationship between prudential and experiential value as to justify non-expressed value with prudential considerations would make fitting emotions such as grief or moral disgust rarely valuable.

## 6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

I have argued through my Experiential Account that if an agent's anger is fitting, it is experientially valuable, regardless of prudential concerns because it manifests self-respect. I give special attention to cases where anger is not expressed, witnessed, or used to externally combat injustice. Bell gives an account of virtuous appropriate anger that is non-instrumentally valuable as it represents loving the good and hating the evil. I argued that Bell does not give enough attention to the key distinction between experiencing and expressing anger. In align with Bell's account, I showed that these non-expressed forms of fitting anger illustrate alternative ways anger can be experienced and still valuable. The circumstance of the injustice matters when assessing the value of fitting anger as some agents are not in a position to express their anger. It is most often the case that agents are not in a position to express their anger, but nevertheless the anger is still valuable.

My discussion aims to widen the range of possible instances of valuable fitting anger that is not dependent on expressing it to an audience. What I have laid out here lends a hand to more nuanced discussions on anger's value in responding to injustice. Some questions might include: What does the transition from feeling to utilizing anger look like? To what extent must anger achieve goals for it to be valuable through expression? There is much more discussion to be had about understanding anger's value and anger's role in resisting injustice.

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