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The Cycle of Violence

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"We see the cycle of hatred at work at every level of violence. It is a factor in intergroup violence. It stokes bias crimes. Perpetrators of domestic violence and sexual abuse were often victims themselves, who experienced as children the dehumanization they inflict in turn. Crimes of hate have a past; sadly, they have a future, too, as each contributes to the climate of demonization and the desire for revenge. Perpetrators become victims, victims avengers. The cycle extends across generations. It can appear to be almost a force of nature. There is a seemingly implacable logic to anger and vengeance that is barely interrupted by revulsion at violent death, by attempts at forgiveness, or by sheer exhaustion."

Nancy Rosenblum, "Introduction" to *Memory, Law, and Repair*¹

Cycles of violence are a reality in some situations and a threat in others. The "cycle of violence" (or of hatred, or vengeance) is also a powerful image invoked frequently in talking about the possible consequences of serious, especially violent, wrongdoing. It is a charged and frightening image but also an entirely familiar one that is a convention of popular entertainment from ancient tragedy to American Westerns, and to contemporary films like "In the Bedroom," and "Mystic River." It also emerges commonly as a looming threat in discussions of wrongdoing, resentment, vengeance, forgiveness, and reconciliation: wrongdoing begets resentment, rage, or hatred; feelings drive violent reprisal; reprisal in turn begets retaliation; and so on, driving the inexorable "cycle." Conciliatory approaches to wrongdoing look desirable by comparison to the horrible prospect of retaliatory violence cycling out of control. It is because this can indeed happen that the threat must be taken seriously.

Many discussions of child abuse, domestic battery, and school or gang violence use the idea of a cycle of violence.² My primary concern, however, is the recurrence of this idea in contexts of political violence, where the cycle in question is one of successive rounds of retaliation

between two parties. I do not wish to deny the reality or the threat of cyclical violence in many actual situations, but I want to examine problematic and disturbing features of the use of the image of "the cycle of violence" in social and political connections. I believe that this image is misleading in suggesting that retaliatory violence - and so a self-propelling cycle or spiral of vengeance - is the natural or predictable outcome of serious or violent wrongdoing. I believe that this picture rests on a number of presuppositions about people's responses to wrongful injury, including assumptions about what people are likely to feel when wronged, which feelings are likely to dominate their responses, and what those feelings are likely to spur them to seek and do. Some of these presuppositions do not seem descriptively accurate; they seem to overgeneralize or to neglect the significance of social and political context, as well as differences in moral and political conviction and personality, among individuals.

Research and experience with restorative justice practice, for example, suggests that wrongfully harmed individuals are often willing to entertain forms of amends and satisfaction that are not violently retaliatory, and not always punitive, in nature. The upsurge of interest in reparations for mass violence or oppression also suggests the varied forms of satisfaction victims of injustice may seek, as well as deep differences in what those wronged will find acceptable as a response. Richer philosophical and practical understanding of negative reactive emotions like resentment and indignation, along with the study of victims' reactions and responses in actual cases, reveals that those offended or injured may, individually or collectively, value explanation, reassurance, validation, apology, and amends from wrongdoers and communities, rather than seeking to inflict damage on perpetrators in retaliation.

In addition to questionable assumptions about individual reactions, the presumed psychology of angry reprisal obscures the mediating roles of social and political environments in determining whether people receive instruction and incentive to engage in vengeful rather than peacemaking responses. People will seek satisfaction and vindication when they are wronged, or they will do so at least if they are not crushed into submission or paralyzed by terror. Yet what forms of satisfaction or vindication injured parties or successors will see as available and meaningful are significantly affected by the social and

political environment into which wrongdoing intrudes, or by the social and political climate that comes into being under the impact of oppression or political violence.³ Furthermore, assuming that retaliatory behavior is the default reaction to injustice or violence may also have the distorting effect of introducing a fictive moral equivalence between victims and perpetrators of violence or injustice in actual cases, implying that victims should be seen as capable of violence and ready to use violence or unjust measures to settle scores. The same assumption might in turn fortify a common and repugnant form of offender or oppressor denial based on the idea that those harmed want to get even, would like to repay their violators with something like the violence inflicted on them, and are waiting for their opportunity to turn the tables. In other words, they, the victims, are no better than we, the offenders, are in their willingness to act violently or inhumanely.

Finally, the rhetoric of cycles of violence may have the power by means of its questionable presumptions to shift an unfair burden onto victims. To victims, it seems, falls the opportunity and the necessity of "stopping the cycle of violence" by adopting conciliatory rather than punitive, retributive, or unpleasantly demanding measures. One does not need to deny the importance of the possibility of igniting cycles of violence to see that those who have been wronged should not be faced with the dilemma: conciliation or spiraling violence, as if this were their only choice and solely their responsibility. This shifts to victims a burden of responsibility that is manifestly unfair if the assumptions underlying the "naturalness" of cyclical violence are questionable. Since one feature of serious wrongdoing is that victims incur "costs" - material, psychological, and moral - that can never be completely repaid by perpetrators or others (no wrong is ever truly undone), it is especially unjust to pressure victims to take a less demanding path than one that might get them some measures of redress and satisfaction.

My point, then, is not to deny that there are cycles of violence. Nor am I arguing against the importance of retributive justice as one clear and indispensable form of vindication for victims and of the communal reiteration of standards. I want instead to make sure that the space is preserved in which we can ask questions about how cycles of violence are stoked or avoided, and what alternative responses,

retributive and non-retributive, satisfy victims' needs for and rights to acknowledgment and vindication. My concern is that this space not be diminished or closed up by assumptions of the naturalness or inevitability of retaliatory violence, or the necessity or sufficiency of retribution as its surrogate. These assumptions can limit our view of what kinds of interventions are possible and necessary. I begin with a lurid, moving, frightening, and exciting story that activates the image of the cycle of violence in which the victim attempts revenge on someone who terribly and violently harmed her. I use this as an opening to ask what we think we see in the drama of vengeance, and what is less likely to attract our attention. This might help us to understand why we are so inclined to think that meeting violence with violence is the natural sequence, and that retaliation in kind has its own inexorable logic.

I. Death and the Maiden

A woman is at home in an isolated house by the sea. It is night, and she sits on the terrace. When a car turns in toward the house, the woman gets a gun. When she hears her husband's voice, she puts the gun away - until later. This is the opening of Ariel Dorfman's play about Paulina Salas, an imagined survivor of political violence by the former military government of her Latin American country. Under that regime she was kidnapped, secretly detained, repeatedly raped, and otherwise tortured.⁴ Paulina's husband Gerardo Escobar is a distinguished lawyer; Paulina surmises correctly that her husband has agreed to head a truth commission that will investigate those - and only those - human rights violations that ended in death; those that are, as the play says "beyond repair." Because Paulina survived her torture, her story will not be heard and her case will not be investigated.

Gerardo, who had a flat tire on the highway returning home in a rainstorm, invites the stranger who drove him home to stay the night. Paulina believes this "good Samaritan" is the physician who presided over her torture and who raped her when she was kidnapped and held in detention by the state. Paulina believes she recognizes his voice and phrases, and when she gets closer, his scent. While Gerardo sleeps, Paulina takes Dr. Roberto Miranda captive, knocks him unconscious, binds him to a chair, mocks and humiliates him with sexual taunts, and proceeds to interrogate and terrorize him with threats of death if

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he does not confess. Gerardo is horrified and terrified when he awakes to find Paulina holding Miranda at gunpoint. He cajoles, pleads, and remonstrates with her that her behavior is "crazy," but she is not moved. In the middle of the play, Paulina tells Gerardo "what she wants." She begins with the thought of doing to Miranda, in exact detail, everything that was done to her; she says that she wants to have him raped. But she concludes that what she really wants is for him to confess, in his own handwriting with his own signature, to everything he has done, so that she could keep the copy for her own protection and satisfaction. When Gerardo reminds her she might be making a mistaken identification, and so might be holding and tormenting an innocent man, Paulina replies at the end of the scene, "If he's innocent? Then he's really screwed."⁵

Gerardo tries to conspire with Miranda to produce a plausible enough confession to win his freedom; he feeds Roberto details of Paulina's torture that he has wrested from her for this purpose. But Paulina is one step ahead. She has fed Gerardo small inaccuracies in order to see if Miranda will correct them; he does, and thus reveals himself as in fact her torturer. The penultimate scene ends in ambiguity, with an increasingly agitated Paulina threatening to kill an unrepentant and evasive Roberto. In a concluding scene Paulina and Gerardo are attending a concert of Shubert's *Death and the Maiden* when Roberto appears to enter the theater. The Commission has done its work. For the first time, Paulina is again able to listen to Shubert's piece, her favorite, that Dr. Miranda had played while he raped her. It is unclear whether Roberto is real or is an apparition of Paulina's. She turns to look at him, then turns back to face the stage.

Paulina Salas is a fiction, but her experience of violation and its political context is not. Dorfman, a Chilean citizen in exile during Pinochet's rule, knows the facts of Pinochet's brutal regime and the voices of its victims. Investigations of Pinochet's rule by Chile's National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation and its successor Reparation and Reconciliation Corporation found 3,197 cases of disappearance leading to extrajudicial execution or deaths under torture.⁶ Like the commission in Dorfman's play, the Commission on Truth and Reconciliation was charged to investigate and document only the cases of victims who were killed or are presumed dead. So like the imagined Paulina Salas, the real surviving victims of torture in

Pinochet's Chile had no opportunity to testify about their violation or to have their cases investigated, and numbers of those surviving torture were uncertain. The Chilean government recently commissioned a new investigation, and a report issued in 2004 reflected, at last, testimony of 35,000 torture survivors.⁷

Since opening in Chile in 1991, *Death and the Maiden* has been performed in at least thirty countries in many productions; it has been made into a major motion picture starring Sigourney Weaver and Ben Kingsley.⁸ The play is morally disturbing and dramatically gripping. But what does the play depict as the reaction and reality of the victim? Dorfman's Paulina is unstable, wounded, crazed, and vengeful, and it is her aggressive, threatening, and violent acts that drive the story. She has been confined, tormented, and violated; she in turn confines, torments, and violates her torturer, threatening him with death and shrugging off the possibility that he is an innocent man wrongly under suspicion. Paulina enacts the cycle of violence in its precise form; she not only needs and desires to inflict in return what she suffered at the hands of Dr. Miranda, but she seizes the first opportunity to act out her vengeful desires with startling ferocity. The scenario of *Death and the Maiden* embodies, up to a point, a stock plot and a popular genre: righteous retaliation turned on wrongdoers. "From the ancient Greeks to the evening news, every age has been transfixed by the spectacle of people driven to exact blood for blood," says Jeremiah Creedon.⁹ Does this familiar and mesmerizing plot and favored motif of journalism capture some truth about the ways violence begets violence, and what victims need and want?

Dorfman has said of the victims, "I am not their voice: I make a space for those voices, a bridge."¹⁰ Some people who have suffered detention and torture like Paulina's, however, do not see the reality of "the victim" or hear her voice in Dorfman's play. Poet and human rights activist Alicia Partnoy, author of *The Little School*, stories based on months of secret detention and torture in Argentina in the 1970s, objects to the "thriller's devices" in Dorfman's play by which the victim of political torture becomes "a victimizer and a mad woman." "[W]e hear a victim that is out of her mind and committing an act of violence totally out of context... Where is the acknowledgment to the stories and lives of all the women who did not need to resort to a gun and did not appear as - however justifiable - crazy as Paulina[?]"¹¹ Partnoy

also notes the presence of disturbingly titillating details: Paulina, who has been raped and sexually tortured, is portrayed in both the play and the film versions as gagging Roberto by removing her underpants and stuffing them in Roberto's mouth. Ana Roca, in an essay on the movie *Death and the Maiden*, observes as well that "the film manipulates viewers' allegiances, making us doubt the victim herself to make the evening's entertainment more suspenseful and exciting."¹² No doubt *Death and the Maiden* is performed widely because its dramatic excitement draws attention to political realities from which people otherwise would rather turn away. Yet the depiction of the victim of disappearance and torture in the play and the film follows too well a stylized generic formula: the victim wants "payback," and that means visiting on the offender equivalent violence or suffering, or vengeance compounded with interest.

This tried and "true" - not to mention exciting - formula threatens to overwhelm the other important details that are worked into Dorfman's drama. Paulina's racing for a gun at the sound of a car reveals terror, not rage. Paulina has just learned that her "case" will not be investigated and her story will not be told as part of the official truth the new commission seeks. Paulina is suspended between the power Gerardo believes inheres in the legal system's standards of proof and due process, a system that remains powerless to deliver justice to her, and the power to demand some satisfaction that Paulina has learned belongs to the person with the gun. Once Roberto is captive, Paulina first makes him *listen to her story*, before she insists on exacting a confession from him. Paulina recites a litany of violent reprisals that she has, to her own horror, imagined turning back on Roberto. Yet, in the end it is Roberto's accountability, in a full and signed confession that admits everything he has done and so the confirms everything she and others have suffered and endured, that Paulina ultimately seeks. In the final moments of the penultimate scene, Paulina asks only for Roberto's repentance as the price to spare his life; and she asks why it is always "people like me" - victims of violence - who are forced to make concessions in seeking a resolution to an episode or era of violence.¹³

Paulina's needs for validation, voice, and vindication go unanswered. The character of Paulina is not only a victim of horrible violence; she is a victim who is abandoned and isolated. Dorfman's

play troubles us with the tension between a fantasy of vengeance that is dramatically exciting and the reality of victims who deserve and need some kind of justice in a world that typically offers them little or none. If Paulina is driven to a crazed vengeful rage, is this solely because of the terrible violence done to her by Roberto and others? Or is it also because, given that brutal, terrorizing, and humiliating violence, no other way has been available to reclaim her equilibrium, her safety, her dignity, and the recognition of her loss, pain, and blamelessness? Would Paulina be driven to act out that rage violently if there were other ways to claim what she needs, if her membership in a community entitled her to make these claims, and if it assured her that she would be respected and supported in pursuing them? There is no simple answer here, for there is no one thing victims of serious wrongdoing feel and want. Yet there is suggestive evidence that many victims face similar terrors, affronts, threats, and losses, and that victims are deeply sensitive to the ways provided or denied them in coming to terms with the wrongful harm others have done them.

II. What do victims seek? Restorative Justice & Responses to Crime and Political Violence

"In contrast to revenge, which is the natural, automatic reaction to transgression and which because of the irreversibility of the action process can be expected and even calculated, the act of forgiving can never be predicted..."¹⁴

"If one person or group has wronged another, it is common for the victim, the injured party, to feel rage and resentment, leading to a desire to 'get one's own back,' or 'get even.'"¹⁵

"Vengeance can thus set in motion a downward spiral of violence, or an unquenchable desire that traps people in cycles of revenge, recrimination, and escalation."¹⁶

"The victim then becomes the active perpetrator, often enjoying some of the destructiveness of the hatred. A cycle of retaliatory violence is set in motion. The victims and their friends take the shame and humiliation they have endured and turn it back on their 'prey.'"¹⁷

The image of the cycle of violence or vengeance implies that victims are strongly and perhaps naturally inclined to seek vengeance or retaliation in kind. How well grounded is this assumption in detailed

study of the responses of victims?¹⁸ What do we know about what victims in fact desire and seek? Several literatures give us insight into common, although by no means universal, patterns of feeling, need, and desire in those who suffer violence, humiliation, and indignity. Literatures exploring restorative justice practices, transitional justice and reparations, and trauma find common concerns and experiences of victims, while revealing the complexity we should expect in victims' responses to being wronged and harmed.

Restorative justice is a concept and a movement informing both alternatives to standard court processing and the "presumption of prison" for criminal offenders, and alternatives and adjuncts to criminal tribunals in cases of political violence and oppression.¹⁹ Restorative justice embodies a view of crime or violence as a violation of people and relationships that entails an obligation to set things right; the emphasis is on acknowledging the needs of victims and requiring accountability, including truth-telling, apology, and restitution or compensation, from offenders. In the ordinary criminal context, restorative justice offers forms of conferencing and community involvement that allow participation by those most directly involved in a criminal offense; on the national and international plane, truth commissions and programs of reparation can be seen as embodying restorative justice principles. Restorative justice practices within criminal justice systems in several countries have now provided the basis for empirical studies. More impressionistic but intriguing evidence is available from projects of national transitions to peace and democracy.

John Braithwaite, in his recent book *Restorative Justice and Responsive Regulation*, provides a concise overview of numerous recent empirical studies of perceptions and responses of crime victims and offenders in several countries to restorative justice programs that provide alternatives to criminal court proceedings.²⁰ While many studies involve small samples and self-selection of participants, some more recent studies involve randomized assignments. To the extent that findings are comparable, significant convergence appears: victims with access to restorative programs (of varying design) appear to achieve greater satisfaction than with conventional criminal justice procedures by measures victims themselves identify as important, such as perceived procedural fairness, participation, and material and

emotional restoration. Braithwaite notes especially the work of Heather Strang, who overviewed empirical literatures to match what victims in Canberra, Australia, said they wanted with how well their desires were realized in either restorative justice or conventional criminal processes to which they were randomly assigned. In addition to diminishing feelings of anger, fear, and anxiety towards offenders, and enhancing feelings of dignity, self-respect, and self-confidence in victims, Strang found, in Braithwaite's words, that "more than half of court-assigned violence victims said they would harm their offender if they had the chance, compared with only 7 percent of those assigned to restorative justice."²¹ While these results are hardly decisive, they are suggestive in the context of a larger body of evidence. Almost all victims desire some forms of resolution and satisfaction, but victims may both be and feel well-served ("done justice") by a process that is less punitive or vindictive but that offers participation, control, and a direct response from their offender.²²

Demands and responses of victims of mass violence and oppression in national and international contexts also suggests that victims seek and value forms of acknowledgment, reassurance, and reparation that are not exclusively or primarily retaliatory or punitive. Lyle Rexer, covering the *gacaca* proceedings in Rwanda for the *New York Times*, paints a striking picture of Rwandans participating in a customary system of local tribunals as a way to resolve the situations of tens of thousands of persons incarcerated for the 1994 genocide of Tutsi by Hutu in which an estimated 800,000 people died in a few months. The *gacacas*, local open-air hearings presided over by elders and community representatives, allow accusations, confessions, and defenses to be made and answered, and a communally endorsed resolution to be achieved. Rexer notes that "as the line of hundreds of villagers and prisoners snakes through the hills, leaving the trial site, there is a sense of orderliness despite the presence of only a handful of armed guards."²³ As they move into full operation, the *gacaca* courts continue to be controversial for questions of due process, for claims that witnesses are not secure from reprisal, for allegations that significant numbers of elected judges were themselves involved in the genocide, and for failure to address adequately the rapes estimated to have victimized as many as 250,000 women.²⁴ Even amid the controversies, the unfolding of tens thousands of these traditional adjudications dramatizes how capable of restraint and decorum are

human beings who have suffered, and whose families and communities have been ravaged by, almost unimaginable violence. Rwandan *gacacas*, like Western-style court proceedings, restorative justice programs, or other traditional methods of community justice and peacemaking rely on victims' willingness to forgo direct retaliation and to seek resolution through an orderly procedure that may avert, rather than insure, the chance to pay back the perpetrator in kind.²⁵

Leaders in national transitional movements for "truth and reconciliation" repeatedly express some wonder at the willingness of many victims and survivors of extreme violence and oppression to be moderate in their responses and demands. Jose Zalaquett, a member of Chile's influential National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation, reported after interviewing thousands of relatives of people killed or disappeared under the Pinochet regime, "Certainly, many of them asked for justice. Hardly anyone, however, showed a desire for vengeance. Most of them stressed that in the end, what really mattered to them was to know the truth, that the memory of their loved ones would not be denigrated or forgotten, and that such terrible things would never happen again."²⁶ South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission provoked legal challenges, ultimately unsuccessful, to its right to grant amnesty in return for full disclosure to those responsible for murders. No doubt, many South Africans wanted retributive justice for killers and torturers. Yet both those people and many others who accepted and participated in the Commission's proceeding were actors in a peaceful political transition that avoided a "bloodbath," in the term very commonly used, that many people thought inevitable just some years earlier. Participants in the TRC process that was a centerpiece of that peaceful transition echo Zalaquett's remarks of some years earlier. Ellis Cose quotes deputy Chairperson of the TRC Alex Boraine who speaks of "the generosity of spirit of so many people who have been hurt so badly."²⁷ James Gibson's recent impressive survey study of the aftermath of the TRC, found that while individual amnesty for truth is very widely perceived as unfair for terrible crimes, perceptions of unfairness are mitigated when *other forms of justice* - compensatory, procedural, and restorative justice, provided in some forms by the TRC - are offered to victims.²⁸ Cose also says of his own impressionistic and moving study of victims of crime, political violence, and injustice, "I have repeatedly

found myself amazed at the capacity of and willingness of otherwise ordinary human beings to return injury with compassion."²⁹

It is true that victims of violence sometimes crave vengeance. It is true that many victims desire and expect that wrongdoers will be made to "pay" through socially organized retributive responses.³⁰ Yet, a substantial body of evidence, some controlled and some anecdotal or historical, shows that many victims seek forms of satisfaction, vindication, or resolution that are not vengeful even where they are retributive, or that are not only or necessarily retributive. Victims seeking retribution are willing to see an impersonal, measured, and socially sanctioned act of retribution as appropriate vindication in part because it represents a public and communally shared response rather than a private act of reprisal. Furthermore, retributive responses are not the only way to achieve a public and socially shared vindication. Victims do not typically seek, it seems, to visit back on their offenders what they have suffered themselves. For many victims of violence, this is more than an emotional fact; it is a moral position. In a stark statement of this position, Susan Brison, a survivor of sexual violence and attempted murder, says, "I have seen the face of a killer set on exterminating a fellow human being. It is not a face I want to see when I look in the mirror."³¹ Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, a psychologist on the staff of the South African TRC, goes so far as to speak of the victim's resolve that "I cannot and will not return the evil you inflicted on me" not only as "the victim's triumph," but as "a kind of revenge."³² Yet the victim who forswears violent retaliation does not do so to inflict suffering on her wrongdoer, but to assert her own power to define herself as a worthy person, and as one who is not controlled or entrapped in reactive feelings propelled by another person's deplorable behavior.

It seems that victims of violence and wrongdoing have more complex needs and desires than the portrait of the enraged avenger can encompass. Many of these needs and desires have less to do with what the victim can do to the offender than what the victim wants the offender to do for him (explain, accept responsibility, show sorrow or shame, apologize, make amends), or what the victim wants to be able to do for herself (regain self-respect or moral equilibrium, or to trust, or to forgive). Martha Minow, who herself often refers to the potential cycle of violence, notes that in political contexts "Survivors differ

remarkably in their desires for revenge, for granting forgiveness, for remembering, and for moving on."³³ This is not surprising if we look more closely at the complexity of emotional reactions in play for those who suffer serious or violent wrong.

III. What Do Victims Feel?

Jeffrie Murphy, who has written extensively on vengeance, resentment, vindictiveness, and forgiveness, says that the "vindictive passions" of anger, resentment, and even hatred "are often occasioned when one has been deeply wronged by another." He continues, "These are the passions that often prompt acts of vengeance or revenge, but one can have the passions without acting on them, just as one can feel sexual lust without acting on it."³⁴ Murphy does not imply that all victims are seized by the "vindictive passions" or that victims must, or are likely to, act on these feelings. What, then, are the links between suffering serious wrongdoing and angry feelings? Is anger the predictable or dominant response? How should we understand the nature of angry feelings prompted by wrongdoing? In particular, when victims of wrongdoing feel anger, at whom is it directed, and what forms of expression does it take?

Those involved with assisting victims know that the range of emotions victims commonly experience includes "anger, fear, terror, frustration, confusion, guilt, self-blame, shame, humiliation, grief, and sorrow."³⁵ Ronnie Janoff-Bulman and Judith Herman in their studies of trauma, including the trauma of criminal and political victimization, concur. Janoff-Bulman says: "[O]ne might expect anger to be a primary response to human-induced victimizations. Anger is not wholly absent; many crime victims experience anger, rage, and an intense desire for revenge. Yet this response is complicated and often compromised by the victim's self-questioning, which, perhaps surprisingly, may be particularly apt to follow human-induced victimizations."³⁶ Indeed, Janoff-Bulman cites research showing that the emotional responses of those who have been wrongfully harmed by others are more complex than are the responses of those who have encountered natural disasters. Howard Zehr offers us a window into this world of "the intense and contradictory feelings of victims" in his remarkable book of interviews, *Transcending*, in which Zehr asks victims of violent crime and families of those murdered to discuss their experiences.³⁷ The sample is hardly representative, as Zehr's interview

candidates were referred by victim services agencies and restorative justice programs. But the feelings described by those interviewed vividly illustrate the general picture given by psychologists of victimization and trauma.

The thirty-nine victim statements include repeated references to "anger," "anger and frustration," "enormous anger," "horrible anger," "rage," and "hatred." Reported alongside the anger in many of the interviews are also shame, grief, distrust, humiliation, depression, self-blame, shock, fear, and, in some unforgettable phrases, "shattering, howling pain," and "visceral, animal anguish."³⁸ Victims repeatedly say "in the beginning..." when they describe what they feel; more than a narrative convention, this signals how important to victims is the succession and course of emotions that victims traverse in reacting to their experience, riding out the complex synergy and interaction of feelings, being ashamed of one's fear, or frightened of one's anger, or even, in a pattern too common to be dismissed, finding that grief or sadness over their own loss gives way to compassion for the offender.³⁹ Many respondents describe intensely vengeful feelings, and only some of them repudiate those feelings; some report a psychological passage or a moral conviction that has caused them to overcome or leave behind vengeful feelings.⁴⁰

Given this complex and multi-hued tableau of victim reactions, it is remarkable how much philosophers and others have fixed on anger, resentment, and indignation as the paradigmatic response to being wronged. To be sure, there is plenty of anger in the responses of victims. Yet, too little has been said, in discussing the moral psychology of wrongdoing, about pain, anguish, grief, despair, fear, mistrust, shame, and humiliation. Neglect of the importance of "negative" emotions other than angry ones may limit our understanding of why, how, and when victimization prompts retaliatory violence, or does not do so. The frequency of these other emotional responses predicts that victims will value and seek reassurance, safety, recognition of suffering, and appropriate placing of blame, and are likely to want this from both offenders and others, whether or not victims desire or seek to retaliate or visit penalties on offenders. Securing these responses from others helps victims to restore trust and to nurture and sustain hope that their futures need not be endlessly and pointlessly blighted by the wrongs they have

suffered and the tormenting or exhausting feelings they now must endure.

Since angry reactions to victimization are very common ones, however, let us examine the ways angry reactions to wrongdoing have been understood. It is these emotional reactions that are thought naturally to prompt retaliatory action, or so the picture of a cycle of vengeance or violence has it. Common to many views in a long philosophical history is the idea that anger at wrongdoing (called either resentment or indignation or both indifferently) usefully prompts us to defend ourselves when we are treated ill and suffer injury, disregard, disrespect, or insult.⁴¹ I share the view that anger at wrongdoing is defensive. Yet, I believe we need a more capacious and complex account of what this distinctive kind of anger tries to defend, as well as what it is likely to dispose people to do, especially in a variety of circumstances and in the presence of other feelings.

One fact we need to accommodate in understanding resentful and indignant feelings is how often human beings feel this way in response to behavior seen as simply "out of bounds," as transgressing any of diverse kinds of social norms where the behavior neither harms nor appears directed at specific persons. While philosophers have focused on cruelty, injury, insult, wickedness, injustice, or moral offense as both the actual and proper occasions for these feelings, it is not hard to see that resentment or indignation *actually* occurs very widely, and in response to quite varied matters.⁴² Human beings can and do resent not only being wrongfully harmed, cheated, or treated with contemptuous disregard, but also behavior that simply offends a sense of propriety or good order. People often can and do resent what they believe is improper dress, undue familiarity, overconfidence, or behavior or treatment out of line with someone's apparent social role or station; styles of dress, hair, or music they find alien or distracting; people's standing too close or laughing too loud; and anything else about which there are thought to be normative boundaries, rules, or guidelines, things "to be done" and "not to be done."⁴³

Resentment (and I would argue indignation as well, if these are distinct), while by no means necessarily a moral emotion, is necessarily a profoundly social one. It requires a sensibility that is attuned to norms that human beings jointly create and sustain as guides to shared life, and includes an inclination to take "personally"

the observance and transgression of the norms assumed in play. One takes them personally in being aroused by their violation, being ready to insist on their recognition if not their satisfaction, and being mobilized toward hostile, reproving, or rebuking expressions, including in some cases punitive behavior, when the importance or authority of norms is placed in question. Whether one is in a position to express anger, and to rebuke or punish, however, depends on a variety of features of context and social position, including how one stands with respect to norm violators and to others to whom one might look to share one's perception and support one's assumption of normative authority. People who smoulder with resentment or indignation may be afraid to express this directly to norm violators who are powerful or feared, or may wonder "who am I to make demands or raise a fuss?" when uncertain that others will share their perceptions or acknowledge their standing to challenge norm violators.

A sensibility attuned to norms is a basic part of human social functioning.⁴⁴ We navigate the human world around us by forming and acting on *normative expectations* of others and of ourselves. Our normative expectations embody what we expect *of* people, whether or not we expect that they are likely to behave compliantly (although in many instances we do expect that people will behave as they are supposed to behave). A normative expectation anticipates compliance more or less (and sometimes scarcely at all), but always implicitly embodies a *demand* for that form of behavior we think we've a right to. A simple explanation of that "right," is the presumed authority of a norm of some kind; the expression of our sense of entitlement is our readiness to be aroused angrily at one whose noncompliant behavior threatens the authority of a norm we believe matters, by defying or rejecting it.⁴⁵

Resentment and indignation are this distinctive *accusing* and *rebuking* anger. This anger does not arise only when we ourselves are injured, nor only when the norms violated or the order threatened are moral in nature, however one defines 'moral'.⁴⁶ Even when we ourselves or others are injured or ill treated in morally wrongful ways, it is not the fact of harm or suffering in itself but the sense of *wrongfulness* of that harm or suffering that is embodied in these kinds of anger; resentment and indignation in these cases predicate shared moral rules, norms, or boundaries that define some actions as morally

unacceptable. These angry feelings are not only upsets or frustrations - as when one "blows up" over a persistent irritant, impediment, or discomfort; these feelings embody imputations of responsibility and fault assigned to other actors in virtue of their having transgressed normative - and in the most important cases, moral - boundaries. The essentially normative reference of these feelings explains certain of their important features. These feelings belong to that family of "reactive" attitudes which embody a "participant" stance toward other people.⁴⁷ In that stance, we hold others responsible for their intentional actions, absent disqualifying or excusing circumstances, and see ourselves in a form of relationship to others that entails mutual accountability and the right to demand it. The occurrence of resentment or indignation signals that behavior is found faulty; the expression of these feelings constitutes a challenge to others and a demand on them. Because resentment and indignation express a finding of *fault* and a *demand* for some response it makes sense that they are not displayed in all instances, or not always visited directly upon the offending party. The fact that this anger accuses and rebukes someone means that to display it toward the offending person can be risky or is itself out of bounds in certain circumstances. Nor do these feelings, even when overtly displayed, characteristically lead to direct aggression against offenders, although they certainly can lead to that in some cases.

I can resent something insulting you have said to me and take a poke at you. But I can also say, for example, "I resent that!" or "How dare you!" and thereby put you on notice that I have found fault with your behavior and hold you to account with a demand for some appropriate response. Appropriate responses from offenders include at the very least acknowledgment of fault and responsibility (when justification and excuse do not apply), and beyond that, some attempt at repair, including apology or amends. My resentful and indignant responses can also seek an audience in others who I assume will share my judgment of faulty action and will join me in or support my demand for an accounting. We might say, "Who do they think they are?" or "Are we going to let them get away with that?" These expressions verbally present the invitation to pursue an accounting that is demanded by anger focused on normatively banned behavior. So, one need not always or only demand this accounting directly of offenders; one can just as well turn its demands to an audience or

community, seeking shared or communal action. And whether individual or shared, an action that embodies anger at unacceptable behavior need not be violent, vengeful, or retaliatory, although it will be in some way confrontational or demanding. There are varied ways of pursuing a settling of accounts from offenders. Some involve doing something unpleasant to offending parties, but others involve trying to secure corrective responses from them. These courses of action do not exclude each other. One may seek both to penalize and to extract repentance or amends.

Resentment and indignation arise as responses to behavior that contravenes normative expectations. Our central normative expectations include expectations of others with whom we think we are playing by rules not only to play by them, but also to rise to the reiteration and enforcement of those rules when some go out of bounds. *Normative confirmation* and enforcement is something we usually feel we have a right to expect of each other, alongside the behavior that specific rules require. When we express and direct our resentment or indignation at a norm violator, we demand some rectifying response from the one who is perceived as out of bounds; when we express our resentment to others, we invite confirmation from others that we have competently judged a normative violation and that others share our interest in affirming the norms we hold, in disapproving conduct out of bounds, and even perhaps in seeking redress of violations. All the more so when the violation is a serious one, a cause of harm, indignity, or insult that is apt to be seen as moral matter.

If this analysis of the normative reference of resentment and indignation is plausible, it makes sense of the fact that the expression and aim of these angry feelings is not necessarily and perhaps is not typically violent, vengeful, or retaliatory. But victims of serious wrongdoing may indeed experience feelings of rage and frustration at hurt or loss, and these feelings can drive one possessed by them to lash out directly and strike back. One needs only to read victims' accounts to hear reports of that rage and fury. Victims may also suffer humiliation that feeds not only anger but shame. Feelings of humiliation in particular deserve special attention, and have received it in some studies. Humiliation, an "enforced lowering of a person or group...that damages or strips away their pride, honor, or dignity,"

can be a potent and volatile source of rage that may seek to satisfy itself by achieving a kind of crushing triumph over those who have hurt and humiliated one.⁴⁸ Thomas Scheff, for example, argues that case studies of warfare, duel, and feud illustrate that the relevant cycle of vengeance is "insult, humiliation, and revenge," where anger is really a defense against shame, and "unacknowledged shame" drives retaliation and escalation.⁴⁹ Scheff sees resentment as a "shame-anger variant," but given the normative analysis of resentment I have suggested, it might make better sense to see resentment as *disposing* one to feeling devalued and shamed, *if* one's angry reaction to injury is not met with confirmation and support by others, and also, perhaps, if one finds oneself feeling powerless to demand a corrective response. Actions can be humiliating even when they are not intended to be, but whether or not a victim of wrong suffers humiliation in being wronged, and whether the humiliating effect is intended by the wrongdoer or is not intended, there remains the possibility that the victim may yet be humiliated (or humiliated yet again) if the community or authority to whom the victim looks for normative confirmation fails to provide that validation. If the community or authority ignores the victim, challenges the victim's credibility, treats the victim's complaint as of little import, shelters or sides with the perpetrator of wrong, or worse, overtly or by implication blames the victim, the victim will feel abandoned and isolated. That abandonment is a "second injury" that can itself be humiliating.⁵⁰

Finally, whether or not that second wound is humiliating, it can precipitate anger, grief, fear, terror, or despair, the same commonplace feelings that victims are liable to experience due to the original injury or wrong. That is because to fail to confirm the victim's sense of wrong is itself *another wrong* that violates the trust embodied in normative expectations, the trust that one can rely on a recognition of the shared "rules" by which we live. This complex dynamic of rage, resentment, indignation, and humiliation and the centrality of normative expectations to human social life sheds light on a phenomenon too common to be ignored. Whatever the particular emotional reactions and needs of victims, what seems especially painful and can feel disastrous for victims is *normative abandonment*. Victims of wrongful harm often experience as much or more rage, resentment, indignation, or humiliation in response to the *failure of other people and institutions* to come to their aid, acknowledge their

injury, reaffirm standards, place blame appropriately on wrongdoers, and offer some forms of solace, safety, and relief, as victims experience toward the original wrongdoer.⁵¹ It is bad enough to have normative expectations of minimal respect and decent treatment violated, to feel one has lost control of one's life, or to be injured and rendered vulnerable to a storm of painful feelings. It can be unendurable then to be ignored, to be denied credibility, or to run up against the fact that others, including those institutionally empowered to deal with crime and violence, do not seem to care about one's experience of violation and its consequences.⁵²

Given the need for normative confirmation, it is not surprising that retaliatory or vengeful responses by or on behalf of victims are not the only natural and appropriate responses to serious wrongdoing. Neither are these responses necessarily the most satisfying or effective ones in giving victims what they need and deserve. After decades of work with victims and criminal offenders Howard Zehr, a founding theorist and practitioner of restorative justice, believes that a "need for vindication is more basic and instinctual than the need for revenge," and that revenge is "one among a number of ways that one can seek vindication."⁵³ Vindication includes others' confirming the reality and the wrong of what has happened to the victim, acknowledging the victim's loss, anger, and suffering in its usually complex and multiple forms, placing responsibility clearly upon the perpetrator and other responsible parties, and joining the victim in negative judgment, demands for accountability, and the search for corrective responses. It may be particularly satisfying to receive this vindication from the individual (or individuals) actually responsible for the harm, but what is *essential* is to receive this confirmation and vindication from others. What is corrosive for the victim, and it can be disastrous, is to be isolated or abandoned in one's injury or sense of affront.

Vengeful retaliatory action is one way victims may seek to achieve a sense of vindication, at least by placing responsibility on the perpetrator and demonstrating the victim's anger in no uncertain terms. Socially sanctioned retribution may be preferred to private vengeance by some because it joins the victim with others and makes vindication a social and public fact, rather than a private satisfaction. Yet retributive actions are not the only ones that express solidarity

with victims, forcefully reiterate boundaries, and testify to the victim's dignity, blamelessness, and membership in a community. Indeed, purely punitive actions might seem incomplete, or beside the point, for some victims. The vindication they seek might require the perpetrator or the community to *respond to the crime and to them*, rather than primarily to make the wrongdoer suffer.

Art and science may be used to abet views that the anger of victims naturally or inevitably desires and seeks revenge. It might seem that the emotional appeal of revenge dramas, as old as literature, reveals the delight human beings can take in seeing a wrong "righted" by vengeful, and often by violent, means. The enjoyment of the dramatic formula, though, does not mean that vengeful comeuppance is usually sought by victims, nor that the satisfactions of the spectator to a drama of vengeance are a simulacrum of the enjoyment that awaits the victim who gets vengeance. The satisfactions of vengeance are often said to be shown by human beings' fascination with fictional vengeance, but people are also mesmerized and thrilled by slasher and serial killer movies, excitement they would hardly feel were they to encounter a homicidal maniac.⁵⁴ It may be enthralling to many people to follow a plot of perfect and conclusive repayment of ill with ill, but this enjoyment takes place for most from the safe position of spectators who are not for the most part coping with their own violation in the real world. Many victim testimonies suggest that the fantasy of vengeance is at some points powerfully satisfying for them. Even so, we have seen that many victims neither desire nor pursue retaliation or vengeance, and some will find even organized punishment hollow.

Little is actually known about the satisfactions of vengeance, although some scientific research suggests that there are such satisfactions. Some breathless headlines in the press reporting these studies, however, turn out to be rather misleading. In "Payback Time: Why Revenge Tastes So Sweet," the *New York Times* writer Benedict Carey reports evidence of "a biologically rooted sense of justice...that functions in the brain something like appetite." "Retaliation," "revenge," and "punishing" are said to be functional and linked to brain activity indicating pleasure. But it seems that in fact quite varied vindicatory action can fulfill the "sense of justice" activated by others' bad or nonreciprocal behavior: refusing to cooperate in a game,

putting someone in a shaming situation of accountability, signing a petition to protest a perceived injustice, or making a wisecrack.⁵⁵ In "Revenge: The Evidence Mounts," game players' brains light up in a scan that reveals activity in a reward-processing area of the brain when players "punished" those who didn't reciprocate their generosity in a money game.⁵⁶ In "The Urge to Punish Cheats: It Isn't Merely Vengeance," Natalie Angier reports a study that shows participants eager to punish someone who "cheated" by not contributing fairly to a shared project.⁵⁷ Aside from a curious eagerness to use these results in a general-interest publication to justify "vengeance" and "revenge," these reports generalize from contexts of cooperative play where the "punishment" is usually refusal to make benefits available to someone who has not reciprocated. It is not so clear what they imply for responses to violence and serious threat, where there may be extensive and traumatic consequences of the violence suffered, severe differences in power and vulnerability between victims and perpetrators, as well as awareness of exposure to real risk in taking retaliatory (or perhaps even vindictive) action.⁵⁸ Nonetheless these studies are suggestive when one notices the *expressive* dimension of the tame maneuvers dramatically redescribed as "revenge": human beings find it very important, even in a game, *to express disapproval*, to make known to free-riders and others who do not contribute to the maintenance of an order that they are under the *disapproving, even angry* eyes of others. These "punishments" and "retaliations," however, are almost entirely symbolic.

Human beings do feel pleasure, and relief, in making sure that they *let others know* that they are out of bounds, and human beings are often very sensitive to this kind of expressive correction. This is norm confirmation and enforcement at a very rudimentary but socially indispensable level. Confirmation and enforcement of more weighty and forceful kinds are needed in more serious cases, but the need to communicate forcefully that conduct is unacceptable is a constant. This is always a part of vindication, and resentment and indignation are in their very expression messages of disapproval that are confrontational, demanding, and at least mildly threatening. Some vindictive value may be found by victims in the very display of their just anger, and in finding that others are willing to amplify its force by adding their own expressions of anger or outrage, and this might indeed be a source of pleasure and relief. None of this seems to suggest, however, that

"revenge" or "vengeance" in the usual, grander senses, are in our circuitry or our genes.⁵⁹

In sum, experts on criminal victimization, political violence, and trauma have explored the extensive network of fractures to a person's basic assumptions and attitudes that occur when they encounter violent, threatening, and profoundly disrespectful behavior at others' hands. These fractures result in the intricate and changing patterns of feeling to which victims of serious wrongdoing are subject. Vindication and satisfaction will be sought by victims who are not utterly crushed by powerlessness or despair. There are many levels and forms of vindication, and only some may be available for, and preferred or valued by, victims. Aside from roles played by variations of personality, disposition, and history of victims in shaping their attraction to or need for certain vindictory responses, there is the crucial issue of what forms of vindication are available and are socially supported. One safe generalization that can be made about what victims want and seek is that they want and seek vindication in some form, and that abandonment and isolation in their injury is one fate that victims deeply need to avoid and deserve to be spared. Vindication involves confirming the fact of wrong and injury, identifying responsible parties, and responding to the needs of victims to recover or stabilize their sense of dignity and to receive recognition of their loss and suffering. This much is predictable. Vengeful or violent responses to wrongdoing are not.

IV. Opportunism or Responsibility

"Revolution! All masters, no slaves!" Graffito,
Vondelpark entrance, Amsterdam, summer 2003.

"As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master."
Abraham Lincoln

Readers might now be impatient that I have dwelt at such length on the variety and complexity of responses of individual victims. After all, is not the "cycle of violence" most characteristic of rounds of retaliation between *groups* inflamed by a sense of grievance and victimization? I agree that it is, and it is precisely for this reason that I have focused attention on the individual victim's predictably complex responses to victimization, especially victimization by violence. Victims individually do crave vindication, but may not always see an opening

to seek or demand it. There are many forms and aspects of vindication, not all equally available or relevant to individuals in very different circumstances. Social environments play decisive roles in attributing lesser or greater significance to the offense any victim has suffered, encouraging or discouraging specific interpretations of injury and expectations of responses to injury, and opening or closing avenues of socially supported and legitimated response for victims.

Most significant for initiating or sustaining cycles of violence and vengeance is the socially supported idea that violence is both a necessary and justified response to a prior wrong, and sometimes even to a supposedly imminent one. The clearest examples of this are cultures that formally structure a pattern of "vendetta" or "feud," and require members to enact vengeance on behalf of their families or clans, or to pay the price of social disgrace. Today, perhaps, the greater worry is a kind of "freelance" politics of vengeance that is open to opportunistic political leaders. While victims of individual violence and insult often find they are ignored, neglected, or blamed for what they have suffered, there are contexts where it is politically opportune for some who seek power to encourage others to understand their individual losses or suffering as a shared cause for violent reprisal, or to join in that shared cause even when they have not individually experienced harm. Retaliatory violence by individuals is in fact uncommon; it is very largely an orchestrated *group* phenomenon, and that is the most important feature of it to focus on for moral and political understanding. Groups can be mobilized around the elevation of an individual injury or affront to representative status (what "they" do to "us"), or by appeal to a history of violation or insult - real, exaggerated, or mythologized - that has gone unredressed, and has become a continuing humiliation that cries out for response.

Of course, there are in fact many terrible wrongs to people and to peoples that have gone unanswered, and even unacknowledged. But whether the offense is real and accurately represented, or whether it is exaggerated, fantasized, or mythologized - or some of both - the common desire of victims for normative validation provides the switchpoint for socially shaped responses. Instead of talking about a cycle of violence as a force of nature or a law of human psychology, we should talk about the *social reception* and the *political management* of resentment, outrage, humiliation, shame, defeat or despair, which

involves both the power to frame events in ways that acknowledge or encourage these responses, and the power to direct these responses toward some kinds of expression and satisfaction rather than others. It is true that many in communities who experience protracted political violence, bombardment, siege, terrorist attacks, and persecution, in which individuals experience the injury, death, torture, rape, or humiliation of themselves or those around them, are likely to develop intense hatred, rage, and vengeful feelings.⁶⁰ Yet these are precisely the circumstances of sustained group violence, and both the violence experienced and violent responses in retaliation occur through politically mobilized groups.

The entrenchment of the idea of a cycle of violence can actually function, intentionally or unintentionally, as a part of the framing of wrongs and conflicts in ways that encourage retaliatory violence. First, and most obviously, to naturalize cycles of violence can mean mitigating, if not legitimating, the actions of those who respond to violence with retaliatory violence. There are also subtler possibilities. The assumption that violence and other serious abuses of human beings "cycles" reassures those who have in fact inflicted violence and visited oppressive or humiliating conditions on others that we really are all capable of this, or at least prone to it. This allows perpetrators to evade the significance and shamefulness of what they have done by imagining a fictive moral equivalence between perpetrators and actual victims. The available thought is: were they able to now (or perhaps had they been able to then), the victims would behave as brutally as we have; we are now being demonized, hounded, stigmatized, and the victims are opportunistically lording it over us.⁶¹ Since perpetrators of harm to others characteristically engage in some degree of denial and often in outright evasion, it is helpful to perpetrators to be able to level the moral playing field with the thought that "they are no better." In fact, a classic study of perpetrator evasion in juvenile delinquents remains eerily accurate in application to today's war criminals, masters of state terror, or participants in genocide: perpetrators predictably and repetitively use a few utterly common lines of evasion when faced with responsibility, and one of them is "condemning the condemners" – "they're crooked too," "they were asking for it," "they started it," "they would have done it to us if we hadn't done it first."⁶²

The ugly falsehood of this moral leveling is further brought home when victims expressly decide that they *will not* engage in retaliation precisely because this *is* to be "like them," like the ones who were capable of grossly harming others. The presumption that we are all capable of similar brutality can be used by perpetrators to distance or diminish responsibility. It can become a practical rationale for refusing to accept responsibility or even concede fault: to do so is to invite the inevitable bloody reprisal. Denial then appears as prudent or reasonable self-defense against an imminent turn of the wheel of retaliatory violence. At the same time, denial aggravates the due resentments of those already harmed, and can ignite more resentment or outrage in victims when the insult of denial is added to the original injury. Anticipation of retaliatory violence may even play a role in reasoning that it is necessary to escalate continuing violence, to insure that there is no one left standing to deliver the inevitable payback. It's close kin to a way of thinking that Jonathan Glover has described as the "Hobbesian trap," in which opposed groups each see a reason for striking the other first; fear of immanent attack is the tension in the spring.⁶³

At the same time as the picture of cycling violence allows perpetrators to deflect responsibility or can drive them to insure against reprisal, the same picture can pressure victims to go in the opposite direction. If the possibilities for addressing conflict are represented as "vengeance or forgiveness," victims may feel, or may actually be, pressed to take an undemanding, or even a forgiving stance, even where this frustrates their needs for vindication or forecloses any of the varieties of vindication that might satisfy their needs to have their dignity restored, their suffering acknowledged, or their losses compensated. The pursuit of vindication will involve confronting wrongdoers with the task of taking responsibility or it will at any rate involve seeking social support for placing responsibility upon them; and vindication will usually require some other efforts to satisfy victims as well. The other efforts need not, however, involve seeking the satisfactions of retaliation or reprisal in kind or proportion. There is always the possibility, finally, that victims may feel pressed to forgo the vindication they need and deserve if satisfaction is mistakenly reduced to reprisal or revenge. They might drive their own resentment and right to satisfaction underground, adding the humiliation of knuckling under without vindication to demands that

they not irresponsibly make demands for justice that could trigger the cycle of violence.⁶⁴ This is a prescription for frustration or unresolved anger, and either of these might later be mobilized politically in a quest to settle old scores. The century past has seen waves of "humiliation entrepreneurship" where the violence and indignity of past warfare and colonialism are deliberately recycled, leading to mass violence and genocide.⁶⁵

It is unimaginable, given the amount of violence there already is in the world, provoked and unprovoked, how much worse the world would be if in fact human beings were spontaneously and routinely prompted to counter-violence. Very often they are not. We do well to evade the dramatic pull of the image of the cycle of violence as a spontaneous, natural, or inevitable phenomenon. It misrepresents both the emotional realities of victims' complex responses to violence and the importance of communal support and recognition of victims' needs and rights. It is to the politics of vengeance and the politics of peacemaking that we should look in understanding and avoiding cycles of violent and vengeful retaliation. It is the social reception and the political management of resentment, outrage, humiliation, shame, defeat or despair in the wake of violence that will repay very careful study.⁶⁶

Notes

1. Nancy L. Rosenblum, "Introduction: Memory, Law, and Repair," in Martha Minow, *Breaking Cycles of Hatred: Memory, Law, and Repair* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 3.
2. It should be noted that in discussions of child abuse and domestic violence, the "cycle" typically refers to one generation's abusive behavior causing the next generation who were victims of abuse to become abusers. Aside from the important fact that most abused individuals do not themselves go on to become abusive, this application of the image of the cycle seems to suggest questions of modeling, learned behavior, and the formation of self-concept. These features do not have obvious application to cases of other interpersonal criminal and political violence.
3. Susanne Karstedt, "Emotions and criminal justice," *Theoretical Criminology* 6 (2002): 299-317 discusses the "specific institutional and cultural

pattern" in which emotional reactions to crime are embedded and by which these reactions are shaped.

4. Ariel Dorfman, *Death and the Maiden* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991).
5. Dorfman, *Death and the Maiden*, Act 2, Scene 1, page 42.
6. "Transition at the Crossroads: Human Rights Violations under Pinochet Rules Remain the Crux," *Amnesty International Report*, March 1996, AI Index: AMR 22/01/96, reports the summary figure.
7. Larry Rohter, "A Torture Report Compels Chile to Reassess Its Past," *New York Times*, 11/28/04, describes the impact of the 1200-page report to President Ricardo Lagos. A common but conservative estimate had been 40,000 torture survivors. See Priscilla Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths: Confronting State Terror and Atrocity* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 36.
8. See Dorfman's website <http://www.adorfman.duke.edu/>, accessed 5/21/05, for information on the play and movie. The movie version resolves the final ambiguity that lingers in Dorfman's play; in the movie Miranda finally admits his guilt and Paulina does not follow through on her threats.
9. Jeremiah Creedon, "To Hell and Back: To Break the Cycle of Revenge Countries Must Look Beyond the Law," *Utne Reader* 99 (March-April): 56.
10. "Ariel Dorfman on Memory and Truth," Interview by Carlos Reyes, Maggie Paterson, http://www.amnesty.org.uk/journal_july97/carlos.html, accessed 4/27/2004
11. Alicia Partnoy, correspondence, quoted with permission. See Alicia Partnoy, *The Little School: Tales of Disappearance and Survival* (San Francisco: Midnight Editions, 1998). There is also an intriguing interlude in Antje Krog's *Country of My Skull: Guilt, Sorrow, and the Limits of Forgiveness in the New South Africa* (New York: Times Books, 1999), 312-313, in which she recounts a conversation with Dorfman, not her own, in which he defends his work as "a sort of mixture - some of it is what he's heard, and some he makes up" (313).
12. Ana Roca, "Madness or Divine Sense? Revisiting Ariel Dorfman's Death and the Maiden," *Hemisphere* 12 (2003): 7-9.
13. Tracy Godwin Phelps's recent book, *Shattered Voices: Language, Violence, and the Work of Truth Commissions* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), uses Dorfman's play to illustrate her view that "the need to take revenge is a deeply rooted human need

that cannot be moralized away; it is an inevitable and indestructible part of the human psyche" (6). Yet in the next paragraph Phelps acknowledges that what Paulina wants once she has her former torturer solely within her power is *not* "comparable violence" but "words." I thank Alicia Partnoy for first drawing my attention to the dangers in Dorfman's depiction, and Thomas Brudholm for urging me to recognize the tension between the revenge motif and the other features of the presentation of Paulina.

14. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1958), 241. Compare with this a reference to the cycle that is still more simplistic: "In physics, for every action there exists an equal and opposite reaction; therefore, it logically follows that for every act of aggression there must necessarily be a type of retaliation, whether that vengeance assumes a sublimated or direct form." In Victor L. Kelly, "The Cycle of Loss, Grief, and Violence as Exhibited in the Lives of Inner-City Youth," *Illness, Crisis, and Loss* (2001): 284-297, 294.
15. Trudy Govier, *Forgiveness and Revenge* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 2.
16. Martha Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 10.
17. Bruce Sklarew, Janice Krupnick, Dottie Ward-Wimmer, and Carol Napoli, "The School-Based Mourning Project: A Preventive Intervention in the Cycle of Inner-City Violence," *Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies* 4 (2002): 317-330, 321.
18. The question is important, because it asks us to start with the reality and experience of victims, rather than seeking an explanation of violence that focuses on and centers perpetrators. Obviously, even if in certain contexts of violence or abuse perpetrators often have histories of victimization, this does not show that victims (even in those contexts) are always or often disposed to respond with retaliatory violence.
19. The phrase "presumption of prison" is found in Howard Zehr's influential *Changing Lenses: A New Focus for Crime and Justice* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1990), 34. Zehr's *The Little Book of Restorative Justice* (Intercourse, Pa.: Good Books, 2002) provides a view of restorative justice in a nutshell. Gordon Bazemore and Mara Schiff, eds., *Restorative Community Justice: Repairing Harm and Transforming Communities* (Cincinnati: Anderson Publishing, 2001) and Gerry Johnstone, ed., *A Restorative Justice Reader: Texts, Sources, Context* (Portland, Oregon: Willan Publishing, 2003) provide good coverage of empirical, conceptual, and critical issues in restorative justice practice. Dennis Sullivan and Larry Tifft, *Restorative Justice: Healing the*

Foundations of Our Everyday Lives (Monsey, N. Y.: Willow Tree Press, 2001) situates restorative practice in a larger "needs-based" picture of social justice. John Braithwaite, *Restorative Justice and Responsive Regulation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) combines empirical results and theoretical analyses to support "responsive" approaches as a first resort in criminal justice, business and environmental regulation, and peacemaking. South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission officially donned the mantle of restorative justice as the rationale for their proceedings. Essays in Robert I. Rotberg and Dennis Thompson, *Truth v. Justice: The Morality of Truth Commissions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000) provide discussion of restorative justice and its application in the South African case. Martha Minow's *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998) integrates restorative justice ideas into a broader view of approaches to mass violence and historic injustice.

20. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 45-71.
21. See Braithwaite, *Restorative Justice and Responsive Regulation*, 45-71, for the survey of empirical results, and for Strang's findings, 47. The reference is to Heather Strang, "Victim Participation in a Restorative Justice Process: The Canberra Reintegrative Shaming Experiments," Ph.D. Dissertation, Australian National University. Significantly, Strang also found that victims whose restorative justice conferences did not happen as promised were left more aggrieved than those who experienced an ordinary court process. See also Heather Strang, "Justice for Victims of young offenders: the centrality of emotional harm and restoration," in *A Restorative Justice Reader*, ed. Gerry Johnstone.
22. See Daniel W. Van Ness and Mara F. Schiff, "Satisfaction Guaranteed? The Meaning of Satisfaction in Restorative Justice," in Bazemore and Schiff, eds., *Restorative Community Justice*. Findings of greater satisfaction with restorative justice practices might also, of course, reflect failures of our bureaucratic administration of criminal justice rather than simply the superiority of restorative justice in principle. Yet there are functions that criminal prosecutions simply cannot, and do not try to, perform. See Martha Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness*, 26.
23. Lyle Rexer, "My Nightmare, My Neighbor: Documenting Rwanda's Struggle to Make Sense of the Incomprehensible," *New York Times*, AR33, 5/23/2004.
24. See the Human Rights Watch Report at <http://hrw.org/reports/2004/rwanda0904/2.htm>, accessed 10/25/2004. The very uncertain figure of 250,000 rapes comes from

Journal of Human Rights, Vol. 5, (2006): pg. 81-105. DOI. This article is © Taylor & Francis (Routledge) and permission has been granted for this version to appear in e-Publications@Marquette. Taylor & Francis (Routledge) does not grant permission for this article to be further copied/distributed or hosted elsewhere without the express permission from Taylor & Francis (Routledge).

the United Nations as reported by Peter Landesman, "A Woman's Work," *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, 9/15/2002, 85. Hirondelle News Agency reported "770 Gacaca Judges Accused of Taking Part in the Genocide," at <http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200503210395.html>, accessed 4/2/2005.

25. An informative discussion of the structure and roles, and the potential and limitations, of both criminal tribunals and gacacas in delivering punishment to offenders or reparation to victims is Stef Vandeginste, "Victims of Genocide, Crimes Against Humanity, and War Crimes in Rwanda: The Legal and Institutional Framework of Their Right to Reparation," in *Politics and the Past: On Repairing Historical Injustices*, ed. John Torpey (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003).
26. "Introduction to the English Edition," xxxiii, *Report of the Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation*, trans. By Phillip E. Berryman (Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame University Press, 1993), xxxiii.
27. Ellis Cose, *Bone to Pick* (New York: Atria Books, 2004), 12.
28. James Gibson, *Overcoming Apartheid: Can Truth Reconcile a Divided Nation?* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2004), especially 284-288. Gibson's study, filled with noteworthy and provocative results, involved 3700 participants selected to mirror the four principal racial groups that remain socially and politically salient in the aftermath of apartheid.
29. Ellis Cose, *Bone to Pick*, 24.
30. John Braithwaite points out that even restorative justice practices can lead to retributive outcomes in John Braithwaite and Declan Roche, "Responsibility and Restorative Justice," in Gordon Bazemore and Mara Schiff, *Restorative Community Justice*.
31. Susan Brison, A Letter to the Editor, @ Boston Review, <http://bostonreview.net/BR28.1/letters.html>. Accessed 3/1/2004. Thanks to Susan Brison for directing me to her eloquent letter.
32. Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, *A Human Being Died that Night: A South African Story of Forgiveness* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2003), 117.
33. Martha Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998) 135.
34. Jeffrie Murphy, *Getting Even: Forgiveness and Its Limits* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 16. A fuller picture of Murphy's view is found in his influential book co-authored with Jean Hampton,

Forgiveness and Mercy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

35. Mary Achilles and Howard Zehr, "Restorative Justice for Crime Victims," in Gordon Bazemore and Mara Schiff, *Restorative Community Justice*, 88, summarize findings of Marlene Young of the National Organization for Victim Assistance.
36. Ronnie Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 79. Judith Herman also discusses humiliation and grief that result from exposure to "the extremities of helplessness and terror," in *Trauma and Recovery: the aftermath of violence B from domestic abuse to political terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 33. See also Susan Brison, *Aftermath* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002) on massively altered senses of self and self-control of victims of violence.
37. Howard Zehr, *Transcending: Reflections of Crime Victims* (Intercourse, Penn.: Good Books, 2001).
38. Howard Zehr, *Transcending*, on anger, rage, resentment, and hatred, 15, 48, 82, 86, 96, 97, 102, 112, 115, 134, 136, 138, 162, 168, 170, 177; on grief, hurt, pain, anguish, and depression, 10, 15, 26, 48, 56, 60, 115, 118, 162, 177; on shame, humiliation, self-blame, and mistrust, 34, 36, 136, 168, 170, 180; on shock and fear, 56, 130, 136, 168, 170, 180. "Shattering howling pain" is described by Debra Franke, 26; "a visceral, animal anguish" by Kim Muzyka, 48.
39. John Conroy's study of torture and torturers recounts several startling cases of later friendship between torturer or good will by the tortured person toward the torturer. In a particularly poignant one, a former victim of torture during the Greek civil war in the 1940s is approached 25 years later by the man who tortured him; the man seeks employment for his son. The two drink and dance together, but do not discuss the torture. The victim reports, "We were both ashamed." See *Unspeakable Acts, Ordinary People* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 2000): 172-177, quotation 176. While these cases are clearly unusual, there are also reports of astounding magnanimity, and even compassion, by torture victims toward those who perpetrated obscene and violent acts upon them. Lawrence Wechsler describes Luis Perez Aguirre, a young Jesuit priest repeatedly imprisoned and tortured in Uruguay, in 1981, who actively approached the man who tortured him with forgiveness. See Lawrence Wechsler, *A Miracle, A Universe: Coming to Terms With Torturers* 154-155.

40. An astonishing story of years of rage and bitterness resolved into compassion by a meeting between torturer and victim is Eric Lomax, *The Railway Man: A POW's Searing Account of War, Brutality and Forgiveness* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995), reprised in Aaron Lazare's *On Apology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 242-48.
41. The idea that a person responds, not only naturally but properly, with anger, resentment, or indignation to another's violence or disregard toward him or her, and perhaps toward others, has a long history in philosophy. One of the circumstances that makes anger appropriate, on Aristotle's account of the virtue of "good temper," is that in which oneself or one's friends are insulted, and in which without anger one who suffers insult is "unlikely to defend himself." Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Sir David Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 97, 1125b. The more modern views of Joseph Butler and Adam Smith see resentment or indignation (anger that rises toward a wrongdoer upon the perception of a wrong) as natural human responses that are proper to the extent that they prompt proportionate rebuke or punishment, and are objectionable only when excessive and vengeful. Joseph Butler, "Upon Resentment," *Butler's Fifteen Sermons*, edited and with an introduction by T. A. Roberts (London: SPCK, 1970), 79; Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* [1817] (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 1997), 86. The most widely cited recent accounts of resentment are those of Jeffrie Murphy and Jean Hampton in their joint *Forgiveness and Mercy* (New York: Cambridge, 1988); Murphy explains resentment as defending self-respect and Hampton as defending "one's rank and value" in instances where one has been injured, exploited, or insulted. Although many contemporary philosophers make a distinction between resentment and indignation, I here treat "anger at wrongdoing" as encompassing both, if they are indeed distinct. Butler, Smith, and later John Stuart Mill, for example, treated the terms as interchangeable, and it goes too far afield into questions about the ontology of emotion and about emotion concepts to take up the issue here of whether 'resentment' and 'indignation' pick out two distinct emotions.
42. See the accounts of Butler, Smith, Murphy, and Hampton; also John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), 88. Others distinguish between resentment and indignation as the nonmoral and moral versions of anger respectively, or as anger at wrong to self and anger at wrong to others, respectively. P. F. Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment," took the first position. R. J. Wallace argues against conceiving resentment as

necessarily a moral sentiment, in *Responsibility and the Moral Sentiments* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1996), 248-249. For my own argument that resentment can be premised upon norms of any type, and for the analysis of resentment upon which I draw here, see Margaret Urban Walker, "Resentment and Assurance," in *Setting the Moral Compass: Essays by Women Philosophers*, ed. Cheshire Calhoun (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

43. It is also true that the assumed rules, boundaries, or proprieties that resentment rises to defend need not be morally acceptable ones. Members of a racially exclusive white club are apt to resent the suggestion that nonwhites should be admitted; many men in stereotypically masculine occupations, such as the military, can react with great hostility to women's "invasion" of their male and masculine spaces and roles. See my "Resentment and Assurance," in Calhoun, *Setting the Moral Compass* for more on these morally objectionable resentments.
44. It is not exclusively human, however, and this should not be surprising. See Frans De Waal on the "sense of social regularity" in primates, in *Good Natured: the Origins of Right and Wrong in Humans and Other Animals* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 89-97.
45. For a fuller account of reliance, trust, and normative expectations, see my "Damages to Trust," forthcoming.
46. In a famous discussion, P. F. Strawson saw reactive attitudes as reactions to "the quality of others' wills," and as expressing our demands for "a certain degree of goodwill or regard on the part of other human beings" toward ourselves or others; see Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment" in P. F. Strawson, ed., *Studies in the Philosophy of Thought and Action* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 85. This view, however, is dominated by cases of resentment or indignation at injury; it fails to explain how widely resentment (and even indignation) occurs with respect to nonconforming behavior that harms no individuals and is directed at no individuals. What seems true, rather, is that behavior outside of normative boundaries can easily lead to suspicions or imputations of faulty attitude, that is, of contempt, hostility, or negligence, just as certain injuring or insulting actions are seen as immediate expressions of it. Again, see my "Resentment and Assurance," in Calhoun, *Setting the Moral Compass*.
47. The vocabulary is Strawson's in "Freedom and Resentment," see note 38 preceding. Strawson distinguished reactive attitudes that address others' behavior and self-reactive attitudes that are our responses to

our own. For my purposes here, I speak only about those other-directed reactions.

48. Evelin Lindner, "Healing the Cycles of Humiliation: How to Attend to the 'Humiliation Entrepreneurship'," *Peace and Conflict* 8 (2002): 125-139, offers this description.
49. Thomas J. Scheff, *Bloody Revenge: Emotions, Nationalism and War* (Lincoln, Nebraska: iUniverse.com, Inc., 2000), page 3-4. Janoff-Bulman notes research that human-induced victimization is apt to be humiliating, having made one helpless or overwhelmed before another person, challenging the victim's "competence and independence," Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions*, 80. James Gilligan, *Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997) argues more broadly that "The emotion of shame is the primary or ultimate cause of all violence, whether toward others or toward the self. Shame is a necessary but not a sufficient cause of violence..." ,110.
50. Janoff-Bulman cites Martin Symonds on the "second injury," *Shattered Assumptions*, 147. See also Yael Danieli, "Introduction," *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma* (New York: Plenum Press,1998), 7, on the "second wound" and the "conspiracy of silence."
51. A blistering and unnervingly intense presentation of the sense of abandonment is Jean Amery's expression of "Resentments" in his *At the Mind's Limits: Contemplations By a Survivor on Auschwitz and Its Realities*, trans. Sidney Rosenfeld and Stella P. Rosenfeld (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1980).
52. Thomas Brudholm explores three layers of violation involved in pressuring victims of political violence to take up a forgiving attitude to unpunished perpetrators, as he and others argue happened in the atmosphere of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission: there is the original violation, an amnesty policy that precludes legal redress for victims, and then a celebration of forgiveness that discouraged or implicitly criticized victims' continuing resentment. See Thomas Brudholm, " 'An ugly intrusion': Resentment in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa," unpublished ms.
53. Howard Zehr, *Transcending*, 191.
54. Thomas Scheff, for example, mentions "the revenge genre in world literature" alongside literature describing actual vengeance and conflict as testifying to the importance of the revenge motive, in *Bloody Revenge*. Peter French begins his philosophical defense of the

necessity for vengeance with a lengthy discussion of the revenge plot in American Western movies in *The Virtues of Vengeance* (Lawrence, Kansas: The University Press of Kansas, 2001).

55. Benedict Carey, "Payback Time: Why Revenge Tastes So Sweet", *New York Times*, 7/27/04.
56. *New York Times*, 8/31/04.
57. *New York Times*, 01/22/02.
58. Unless we disregard half the human population in discussing what reactions are "natural" to human beings, the extraordinary worldwide incidence of domestic and socially sanctioned violence against women constitutes a massive challenge to the idea the retaliation is a natural and predictable response to violent treatment. Although cases of women who kill their batterers are grist for sensational newspaper coverage and TV movies, the fact is that the great majority of women who experience domestic violence suffer under it or seek escape if they can no longer placate or endure their batterers.
59. Robert Axelrod introduces the idea of "negative indirect reciprocity," a metanorm that requires nonpunishers themselves to be punished in Axelrod, "An evolutionary approach to norms," *American Political Science Review* 80 (1986): 1095-1111. This makes sense because we do look to each other and trust each other to accept the shared task of iterating and enforcing norms. But again, what we demand of each other is clear normative confirmation or vindication; this may or may not take the form of punishment in the usual sense.
60. See Jodi Halpern and Harvey M. Weinstein, "Rehumanizing the Other: Empathy and Reconciliation," *Human Rights Quarterly* 2 (2004): 561-583, on the abilities needed to overcome this kind of entrenched hatred, and some sobering results of research into the aftermath of conflict in the Balkans. There are enormous social pressures felt by individuals, for example, not to interact and empathize with others of the enemy group.
61. Antje Krog reports that a white woman comments during South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings that she doesn't watch "because all you see there is a sea of hatred," although in fact the hearings are almost eerily free of violent or aggressive outbursts. Krog also quotes this observation from clinical psychologist Nomfundo Walaza: " 'That is pure projection,' says Walaza. 'Firstly, she knows instinctively that if apartheid had been done to her, she would have hated. And secondly, whites prefer to think they are being hated; then

they don't need to change.' " Antje Krog, *Country of My Skull: Guilt, Sorrow, and the Limits of Forgiveness in the New South Africa* (New York: Times Books, 1999), 212.

62. The study is G. Sykes and D. Matza, "Techniques in Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency," *American Sociological Review* 22 (1957): 664-70, cited in John Braithwaite's *Restorative Justice and Responsive Regulation*. The other forms are denial of the victim, denial of the injury, denial of responsibility, and appeal to higher loyalties.
63. Jonathan Glover, *Humanity: A Moral History of the 20th Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 131.
64. Brandon Hamber notes that politicians sometimes urge accommodations in situations of conflict by pointing to the frightening possibility of a looming or continuing cycle of violence, when in fact those politicians have some degree of control over the violence that looms. Brandon Hamber, "Flying flags of fear: The role of fear in the process of political transition," Working Paper of 13 September 2003, presented at the Risk, Complex Crises and Social Futures Conference, Amman, Jordan, 11-13 October 2003.
65. The phrase is from Evelin Lindner, "Healing the Cycles of Humiliation." Lindner uses Adolph Hitler and the Hutu leadership in the 1994 Rwandan genocide as examples. Ervin Staub, in "The Psychology of Bystanders, Perpetrators, and Heroic Helpers," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 17 (1993): 315-341, includes ideological formations that cast some groups in the role of the enemy and a "shaky self-concept that requires self-defense"(320) among factors that dispose a group toward mass killing. Real histories of unredressed or unacknowledged victimization can contribute to both, as can mythic reconstructions, but either requires political orchestration to precipitate violence (or, for that matter, to pursue justice through nonviolent means).
66. Special thanks to Hilde Lindemann and Alicia Partnoy, and to the editors of this issue, Thomas Cushman and Thomas Brudholm, for useful feedback in shaping the final form of this essay.