

Introduction

The proceedings of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), from 1996 to 1998, were a spectacle worthy of the world's attention. Day after day, individuals took the stand to speak about the violence they had experienced during apartheid. They were mothers, freedom fighters, and policemen, but all had experienced devastation and loss. The goal of "reconciliation" was embedded in the name of the commission, and for many watching the proceedings, the language of forgiveness evoked by Desmond Tutu, the chair of the commission, was striking. Even more of interest were the moments of anger. For the commissioners, the anger expressed by witnesses was both understandable and perpetually surprising, but they seemed uncertain of its value within the process. The anger was too volatile and too violent to celebrate, but it could not be excised.

The words of Godfrey Xolile Yona, who appeared before the TRC in October 1996, exemplify the type of testimony that is the catalyst for my thinking about the significance of anger in testimony after mass violence and its relationship to restorative justice. Detained for his involvement with the anti-apartheid organization the African National Congress (ANC), Yona gave testimony that focused on his experiences while in prison:

You must remember how it feels if a warder comes to you every time and says you are going to hang and you see those people being hanged and they legitimately hang. I mean how can I trust anybody, I have to trust them, I have to believe in what they say when they say you are going to hang. . . . What I want to tell you there is nobody who has returned from death row who is normal because that thing in death row, even when I sleep at home I dream. I dream

that I am still on death row. . . . We also fought for this country but there is no future for us. We have also fought for this country. We are unemployed. The government, when you look for work, you need qualifications, you must have certain knowledge, you must be trained for that job but my question, my only question is, when we threw stones and petrol bombs, they didn't look for qualifications. They didn't look for knowledge. When I can refer to our President's statement that while he was incarcerated he said keep the country ungovernable and that is exactly what we did but today we, who did those things, we remained behind. There is nothing left for us. If you can see from all the political prisoners, all of those who fought in the liberation struggle, they have been left behind. All the people who sit there and who have food to eat, they have never been part of the liberation struggle.¹

I define anger as bitter (and potentially violent) feelings that are in reaction to a slight and are directed toward someone or something, and the anger in Yona's testimony is evident when he says, "We also fought for this country." He is upset at being exploited for his labor during the anti-apartheid struggle and then becoming irrelevant within political life. Similarly, the sarcasm of his formulation, "When we threw stones and petrol bombs, they didn't look for qualifications," is a moment that reveals an intensely negative response to ANC leadership and marks an important shift between past and present in his testimony. One of the challenges of listening to anger in the context of victim testimony is such chronological reverberation. Yona's testimony begins with a specific experience but then reveals anger at economic conditions and at what he perceives as the emptiness of citizenship and participation. I suggest that Yona's testimony has value for political life not in spite of its anger but, in part, because of it. He articulated concerns that are central to a society as it rebuilds after mass violence. Prison altered his understanding of interpersonal trust and his ability to feel safe from violence, even after he was released. On one level, his testimony reflected his extreme psychological distress. On another level, however, his testimony had *political*, not just psychological, significance, and the anger he expressed should be seen as necessary for the process of restoring relations of citizenship. His anger is not only connected to the conditions that led to his arrest and his treatment in detention but also to his loss of identity in the present. In the latter part of his testimony, Yona makes a direct appeal for improved socioeconomic opportunities and the recognition of the sacrifices of individuals who were part of the movement to end apart-

heid. The interaction between anger as expressing a desire for reparations and anger for recognition is part of the complexity of its role in the context of truth commissions.

When Yona says that he had to trust the prison warden who told him he would be hanged, Yona evinces the difficulty of trusting others under extreme circumstances. The fact that his life was spared was a gift, but he continues to live in constant fear. This distorted relationship with authority seems to have also continued after he was released, even if he does not articulate it. For him to be able to participate as a citizen, there must be the opportunity to alter this relationship with authority and with fellow citizens. The language of *trust* in his testimony is not incidental; it is one of the important ways that the emotions of victim testimony take on a political dimension. The way trust is tested, strained, and destroyed during mass violence is the backdrop to its cultivation between speaker and listener during the process of a truth commission.

In light of this, my book has three goals: the first is to examine the history of victim testimony and the particular case of the TRC; the second is to analyze the most powerful arguments against the inclusion of anger in the political sphere; and the third is to offer a model for understanding its significance. The period of transitional justice may include war crimes trials, truth commissions, reparations, lustration, and memorials, among other initiatives, and it is a unique moment in political life because the social contract is in the process of being redrawn (and because political obligation is reconsidered); as part of this process the community must respond to the most serious crimes on a large scale, a task more overwhelming than the work of everyday politics. Truth commissions carry the potential for rebuilding political life during this singular period both by defining what justice should mean as well as by fostering interpersonal trust.² An engagement with anger is critical to achieving these ends, and the benefits of anger during the transitional period after mass violence require looking at three different dimensions of interpretation: cognitive, confrontational, and kinetic. First, the cognitive-evaluative dimension leads to insights (difficult to obtain through surveys or other mechanisms) into what citizens fear and what they need to restore trust (or to experience it for the first time) in political institutions and each other.³ The fears help explain why individuals are unwilling or unable to participate in political life, while the needs expressed reveal desires for material reparations, recognition, or reform. Often the witness expressing anger does not see the relationship between the emotion and

larger issues at stake in the process of politics, but a truth commission is the best tool available to make these connections evident. Second, with the confrontational dimension of interpretation, the expression of anger is about the limits of what it is possible to repair in the aftermath of violence. This type of anger is not asking for uptake or recognition but is a way to confront the limitations of the political sphere, including the inadequacy of punishment or repair. Because of its existence on the margins of what is considered political, listening to confrontational anger facilitates the redrawing of the boundaries between the public and private spheres. This reconsideration is necessary because old distinctions no longer hold and new ones can emerge through the agonistic encounter of multiple perspectives at a truth commission. Third, the kinetic significance of anger exists in the sound of the voice and the claim that it makes on the listener to acknowledge the specificity of individual experience and the visceral grasping at survival that is often communicated through anger.

To achieve this engagement with anger, I emphasize the political practice of listening and its relation to judgment. Listening is the praxis which connects anger and justice: without it, anger can only be catharsis or monologue, not constitutive of the process of justice. Listening to anger requires openness to difficult content conveyed in an unsettling tone, and since anger can be quickly dismissed or met with defensiveness about one's culpability, it is one of the most challenging types of communication in political life. To achieve the goal of trust through an acknowledgment of shared risk in the context of a truth commission, citizens and commissioners must develop the skills to listen, respond, and judge. In addition to these two groups of listeners (citizens in the audience and the commissioners), the victims themselves are a third group who are developing new skills as listeners, both in response to what they hear at their own testimonies and those of others. This experience of listening should contribute to the transition from victim to citizen that is one of the primary goals of an engagement with anger.

While informed by an analysis of the transcripts of the TRC, the project is grounded in the history of political thought and debate about the relationship between reason and emotion. The wealth of scholarship on the topic suggests that the argument for divorcing reason from emotion does not have enough life in it even to be a straw man. From Plato to John Rawls, it has been convincingly argued that our ability to reason is, to varying degrees, intrinsically linked to the affective components

of the self, including through motivation, cognition, and phenomenological experience. My exploration of the role of anger builds upon the significant work in recent years on these questions in such varied fields as neuroscientific research on the role of emotion, Aristotelian accounts of *thumos*, the impact of shame and disgust on the demos, and the signaling role of the emotions in political psychology.⁴ Taken together, these disciplines have much to say about what emotions can be said to reveal and how the capacity to feel and express emotion is critical to the practice of judgment.⁵ Within political theory, it is not only Aristotle but also Jean-Jacques Rousseau, David Hume, and Adam Smith whose writings have prompted scholars to suggest that the communication of pain and the response of sympathy is not tangential to the process of politics, but rather at its center.⁶ The ability to communicate with fellow citizens in an affective way must necessarily, following this line of thinking, be taught and fostered; it cannot be replaced by the individualistic act of voting or the hostile ambivalence of privacy-seeking strangers.

I make two primary contributions to this literature.⁷ First, I am taking on the difficult case of anger while others have often focused on less controversial emotions such as compassion or empathy. Anger is usually seen as a runaway train, impossible to control and likely to wreak havoc, and this, along with the difficulty of distinguishing “helpful” anger from senseless rage, appears to have curtailed work on the topic.⁸ I have been influenced by the writings of Jean Hampton and Margaret Urban Walker where they have made the distinction between anger and resentment salient.⁹ For example, Hampton has suggested that resentment includes a fear that the offensive action is somehow justified because of a type of inferiority, and Walker ties resentment to particular blameworthy actions. I appreciate the additional content that these definitions of resentment offer, but I want to maintain a broader understanding of anger. A related trend has been the application of rational standards to anger in order to validate its merit in certain situations.¹⁰ If anger is justifiable only when the injustice is easy to confirm, such as the case of righteous anger at racial segregation before the civil rights movement is one example, then rationality becomes the critical filter for legitimacy. An independent determination of the severity of the injustice and not the significance of anger itself becomes the focus. This approach thus parallels the reason/emotion binary it is trying to avoid.¹¹ My argument about the relationship between the emotions of victim testimony, particularly anger, and the work of justice and democratic inclusion in the aftermath of mass

violence brings back a strong normative framework, an ideal vision beyond what has been realized politically, and it provides a necessary critical distance.¹² By articulating a vision of transitional justice as an exceptional moment in political life with possibilities for the development of trust not found at other times, I suggest that truth commissions and victim testimony are important institutions for political theorists, not just for those who work on comparative politics or international law.¹³

Although anger has been defined more recently by its biological function or in relation to aggression, Aristotle's formulation of anger in *Rhetoric* still remains influential in political thought and is, in spite of its limitations, the tradition that grounds this project: "Let anger be desire, accompanied by distress, for conspicuous retaliation because of an apparent slight that was directed, without justification, against oneself or those near to one."¹⁴ Anger is thus consistent with the value of emotions for praxis within Aristotle's broader theory and it has a place in the process of judgment. Emotional responses, including anger, should aid in the determination of *phronesis* and the practical wisdom required in a given situation.¹⁵ To put it another way, the virtuous man will experience anger at the right time, in the right way, for the right reasons. The concept of the slight is particularly important to Aristotle because it indicates that legitimate anger is grounded in the social and political norms of the time and can be a legitimate response to an infraction.¹⁶ However, if the slight is based on false belief (imagined injuries, false expectations, misunderstandings) on the part of the victim, the anger is no longer legitimate. Aristotle's formulation also attests to the potential that emerges from anger to remedy the infraction.¹⁷ This concept of anger as a defensible signal of a challenge to one's status has been the foundation for all attempts to defend the value of anger since then. Lastly, Aristotle's definition captures the pleasure that comes from wanting to see another person in pain, a complex instinct that many political theorists find difficult to reconcile with either impartial conceptions of procedural justice or the cultivation of virtue.¹⁸

Known for his fiery sermons, Joseph Butler fashioned writings on anger that continue to be influential, particularly in the distinction he draws between amoral and moral anger (similar to righteous anger) and between slow and fast anger. Moral anger, marked by the occurrence of an injustice, can be fast or slow, but is notable because it is not seeking immediate and violent revenge. Moral anger takes a considered response to injustice and pursues accountability. With these distinctions, Butler's

theological voice joins those of Aristotle, Adam Smith, P. F. Strawson, and others who simultaneously warn about the excesses of anger and carve out a space for its singular power in personal and political life.¹⁹

Anger and Justice in Liberal Democratic Models

Despite the fact that Aristotle's definition of anger has long been part of the debate, the relationship between anger and justice is a tenuous one within the tradition of liberal democracy.²⁰ This tradition, with its emphasis on deliberation and neutrality, has developed as the best way to ensure retributive justice, and this is an orientation primarily concerned with the punishment of a wrongdoer. In this view, to ensure a fair assessment of the violation of a crime, it is important that anger not be a pervasive sentiment, either in the form of victim involvement or state procedure.²¹ Even in the proto-liberalism of Thomas Hobbes, one of the salient points regarding the civil law is that it should not become a conduit for torture or cruelty on the part of the state.²² Anger embodied by the sovereign cannot be the legitimate basis for punishment. Similarly, for theorists for whom justice is best understood as a procedure with embedded values, particularly John Rawls, the anger of victims does not play a central role.²³ It is epiphenomenal to the process, at times affirming the content and orientation of the procedure and at other moments distorting desirable civility.²⁴ For those interested in deliberation as central to the formulations of justice, when anger is thought to be useful it may be seen as part of the process of opinion formation, rather than will formation, because of similar concerns about reciprocity and public reason.²⁵ In Habermasian terms, attending to anger in the process of will formation privileges the volitional basis of validity at the expense of a cognitive one.²⁶ In this situation, the anger of the victim is justifiably part of the wider societal discussion about justice in the context of civil society, the arts, and other forms of communication. However, with will formation—the process by which decisions (and inevitable tradeoffs between possibilities) are confirmed—anger is not seen to be beneficial. Statements giving public reasons, which can be amended or refuted by others, make up the basis for this stage of conversation.

The legacy of anger's uncertain role in the history of liberal democratic theory can be traced to several recurring concerns. The first, as mentioned above, is the relationship between anger and violence. The

most vivid examples of anger in politics, from revolution to assassination, are often those connected to violent and disruptive outcomes. Anger is part of the motivation, it is argued, that leads to a disregard for the law and a willingness to harm other people. Philip Fisher captures the ominous quality of anger in relation to violence when he says, “Anger imagines a future made up of escalating acts that might have taken place if this one had not been protested.”²⁷ Anger, for him, represents a temporary thwarting of the will, which can still later be harnessed with even greater force.²⁸

A second concern is the closing of deliberative possibility and the surrender of impartiality. A statement made in anger is feared to be impervious to modification or adjustment, even in the face of conflicting evidence. On this account, anger does not count as an expression of public reason as it ignores universalism and impedes communication. Furthermore, it is not interested in reaching agreement or consensus, but rather looks for validation of its own position, regardless of its legitimacy or accuracy. This concern is related to the idea that when one is angry, holding onto anger and being able to act in an angry way (the authenticity of expression) may be equally as important to the speaker as communicating the emotion verbally (the opportunity for recognition). Another way to express this is the sense that the ultimate value of anger may be expression for its own sake. Anger, as a manifestation of narcissism and self-regard, hears only itself. My exploration of anger in the work of Adam Smith in chapter 4 emerges from these liberal democratic critiques. He shares the two major concerns mentioned above, but he also sees resentment as an important indicator of injustice. Yet, examining his perspective on the legitimate place of resentment reveals the myriad ways in which the liberal democratic tradition reinforces skepticism about anger from many different angles. Thus a full engagement with anger in politics cannot be a mere adjustment to the liberal democratic model but requires a different goal, and it is through Adam Smith that I see the need for a shift to listening rather than seeing in models of judgment.

In contrast to anxieties surrounding anger in liberal democratic thought, it is interesting to consider anger and justice in the Marxist tradition: when justice is defined as a universalization of the ownership of the means of production and the possibility for human emancipation entailed therein, one can imagine anger as providing a necessary spark for revolution.²⁹ This would be consistent with the intellectual tradition defending righteous anger described below, but there is also a way in which

an emphasis on anger can deflect from the action demanded by conditions of injustice. In other words, anger can become a deceptive exercise that appears to heighten consciousness for the purpose of Marxist revolution, but instead siphons collective energy that can then be co-opted by the state. Anger thus only validates the status quo. The angry victim who expresses such intensity of emotion at the injustices she is experiencing may feel momentary satisfaction through recognition, but it is a poor substitute for the change in material conditions necessary for justice.

Within theories of justice that attempt to bulwark vengeance and anger, there is a type of anger that is given a different reception. This is the tradition of “righteous” anger that makes an exception for anger when it is a catalyst for social movements or civil actions against injustice.³⁰ It is seen to be the communication of the oppressed, often conceived in terms of race or gender. The carefully restrained anger of Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela are the paradigmatic cases; the intensity of their anger is a testament to the structural injustices with which they were concerned, but it did not pervade the political practices they advocated. While I do not deny that the inclusion of this type of anger in political life is valuable, it is the easy case. The value of righteous anger at racism, sexism, or authoritarian rule is often either understood only in retrospect or dependent on association with the most blatant forms of injustice. The more incisive question is, “What if the anger shows no signs of being directed to a socially sanctioned movement or a commonly identified type of injustice?” This book begins where theories of righteous anger leave off. During periods of transitional justice after mass violence, the anger that is expressed will not always conform to the sanitized cases in history of righteous anger.³¹ It will outlast its welcome as the spark for social movements. Witnesses who express anger may not recognize that substantial efforts are underway to combat injustice and they may be motivated by logistically impossible goals, but there must still be a way to understand the value of anger in political life.³²

Distinct from liberal assumptions about the value of criminal punishment and retribution, the restorative justice model offers one way of understanding the value of anger. Early experiments in restorative justice began with youth offenders in Canada; these have been taken up in a vigorous way by Mennonite scholars who focus on the repairing of the harm caused to victims and the community by the offender.³³ Restorative justice posits itself as an alternative to a narrow focus on retribution, and it is inherently more open to the possibility of anger within the

discussion of justice because at its center is a focus on the relationships affected by the crime and the possibility of the reintegration of the offender into the community.³⁴ With the youth offender cases for which it is best known, the restorative justice approach arranges for the offender to meet all those who were affected by his actions.³⁵ The purpose of the conversation is to make clear the varieties of damage that were done and to encourage affective communication but also to provide a path for the offender to become reintegrated into the community. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission embraced a similar orientation and self-consciously used the term *restorative justice* in conjunction with *ubuntu*, a word from Bantu meaning individual-community interdependence as the foundation for thinking about justice for an entire society rather than just in terms of individual crimes and rights.

Scholarly interest in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has been substantial, particularly in anthropology, literature, and comparative politics. This book complements the work of authors who have investigated the content of the testimonies and their relationship to previous forms of conflict resolution. The first two chapters elucidate the TRC as the inspiration for the project and a potent manifestation of the biggest challenges to confronting anger.³⁶ The work of Richard Wilson, Fiona Ross, and Catherine Cole has been particularly influential, and all three have looked to the breaks in the narratives of forgiveness to examine how revenge, gender, and performance, respectively, have been overlooked in analyses of the TRC.³⁷ I find many affinities with Thomas Brudholm's writing about resentment in the context of the TRC and with his lucid reading of Jean Améry and the psychological and moral tensions present in the subject who feels resentment. Reflecting on the moral stature often awarded to victims, Améry writes, "It goes without saying, I believe, that in Auschwitz we did not become better, more human, more humane, and more mature ethically. You do not observe dehumanized man committing his deeds and misdeeds without having your notions of inherent human dignity placed in doubt."³⁸ Despite his conflicted feelings about victimhood, Améry's writing suggests that the refusal to forgive is a morally demanding position, but it is not without cost. In this interpretation of Améry, Brudholm calls attention, as Lisa Tessman does, to the fact that arguments in support of the expression of resentment or anger must also be cognizant of the moral remainders of regret, remorse, anxiety, and guilt that accompany its expression.³⁹

Améry's writing and Brudholm's interpretation of it also point to the simmering hostility that can exist behind the victim's plea to the audience to listen. Améry writes, "You don't want to listen, listen anyhow. You don't want to know where your indifference can lead you and me at any time. I'll tell you."⁴⁰ The provocative tone of these lines suggests that listening is far more than a passive activity and does not seamlessly occur because the listening audience, in some vague way, acknowledges that others have suffered. Listening to testimony is a much more demanding task that mandates a consideration of one's own indifference. Yet, feelings of guilt and self-flagellation by audience members are not the desirable responses to this type of listening. How to listen and what to listen for are the themes that guide the normative aspects of this book.

The Limits of Control

Thus far I have provided an overview of the relationship between anger and justice; I now turn to two authors who are explicitly concerned with this question and reveal the secondary issues that underlie this volume. The first is Danielle Allen on the question of anger in ancient Athens, and the other is Seneca, the stoic philosopher, on his deep distrust of anger. Together these two set up the poles of the debate about the political import of anger.⁴¹ Allen argues that in ancient Athens the anger of the victim was a crucial part of the process of justice because victims often served as prosecutors in their own cases, with other citizens participating as jurors and audience members. Using metaphors of illness and disease to discuss anger provided a way for Athenian society to see how entire communities were implicated in crimes and how anger was transmitted between a community's members.⁴² The goal in this situation was not to erase anger completely but to understand how it could function as both poison and remedy within a community. Yearly rituals provided opportunities to clarify the conditions that gave rise to crime and to restore the relationships that were affected.⁴³ My approach to valuing anger is similar to Allen's. For Allen, anger aids in the analytical aspects of understanding justice after mass violence but is also experientially meaningful for the community that must consider its own guilt, acquiescence, and even bloodlust.⁴⁴

Through ritual and the formal prosecutorial role of anger, the Athenian system of justice cultivated the tools for a complex assessment of

the validity of anger, and it serves as a model of what could be possible in the context of a truth commission. As in Athens, the validity of anger in this context will not depend on a hard distinction between factual and emotional or ethical assessment. Rather, it should be tied to a more variegated set of factors including *nomos*, “the audience’s customary memories and the laws written by the people,” and the wider set of cultural and political references that give context to anger in a particular situation.⁴⁵ However, the case of Athens also makes salient two aspects of truth commissions that challenge the model: the transitional aspect of society (the fact of new laws and cultural referents) and the shattering of the old status hierarchy that was so central to the circumscription of Athenian anger. Allen shows that anger was controlled in part by limiting who possessed the privilege of expressing it in public. This exclusion, and all that it implies about citizenship and worthiness of dignity, was a necessary part of taming anger so that it could have a place in public life but not be seen as a threat. Without these two critical aspects of constraint, one may doubt that a truth commission would be able to find the appropriate balance between too much and not enough anger, but it is precisely because of its significance as a transitional institution that it is well poised to construct the new ethical and discursive guidelines for anger.

In contrast, Seneca examines the arguments for the efficacy of anger—Aristotle’s theory always near in his thoughts—and finds them wanting. Anger, for Seneca, is a burning desire to avenge a wrong. But unlike those who see the benefits of righteous anger or the carefully monitored anger of ancient Athens, Seneca insists the gains are never worth the ancillary costs. It is not that he denies that anger can be directed and perhaps even contained to a certain degree, but this is beside the larger point, which is that anger is always a negative influence on the process of judgment, even when the decision is one about punishment or justice. He does not deny that there are examples where anger has helped lead to a beneficial outcome, and he considers the metaphor of a medically beneficial fever:

Failings should not be pressed into service on the grounds that they sometimes achieve something. Fevers, too, alleviate some kinds of ill health. But that does not mean that it would not be better to be without them altogether—it is a hateful sort of remedy that leaves one owing one’s health to disease. In the same way, anger may sometimes have proved unexpectedly beneficial—like

poison, a fall, or a shipwreck. But that does not make it wholesome. Lives, after all, have often been saved by deadly objects.⁴⁶

Here, in a vivid way, Seneca acknowledges and then decimates any attempt to weigh the benefits of anger against the costs, which can never be accurately assessed. Similarly, in contrast to the militaristic reading of *thumos* in Aristotle and Plato, Seneca denies that anger is a useful impetus for warriors.⁴⁷ Those who are brave should be so without anger, and those who are not brave will not benefit from it.⁴⁸ All anger can do is lead to a torrent of intense but unsustainable emotion that will not be directed to a narrow or productive task.⁴⁹ Even when it is a proportionate and legitimate response (by an agreed-upon standard), it is still vulnerable to being directed by the agent to the wrong ends. The example of anger that is caused by a certain stimulus but is then forcefully directed toward a different one is not the exception but an inevitable quality of anger. Seneca's writing warns that anyone who wants to build a framework for anger in political life will be thwarted by its irrepressible will to inaccuracy and misinterpretation.

Even in the case of an attack on one's family or friends, Seneca is forceful in his prohibition on anger. By engaging with this extreme case, but one that is conceptually close to war crimes, Seneca is exploring what I see as the best-established case for the expression of anger—one connected to the long history of public mourning, potently depicted in *Antigone* and the plethora of scholarship inspired by it.⁵⁰ Even in this case, Seneca resolutely maintains that the considerations of duty and judgment should be paramount and are the more refined response. Anyone can become outraged at an attack on a loved one, but "the motivation of such anger is not devotion, but weakness, just as it is with children who bewail the loss of their parents—exactly as they bewail the loss of their toys."⁵¹ Yet with the equivalence he establishes between a child crying for parents and one crying for lost toys, Seneca loses some of the force of the counterargument. The anger expressed in victim testimonies should not be seen as interchangeable with much less serious violations. The fact that some people respond to small and large injustices in similar ways is not significant justification to dismiss the expression of anger altogether. It seems difficult for Seneca to imagine the experience of a violation of the most brutal sort, particularly from the position of a citizen who seeks dignity and recognition that has been withheld; the need

for disengagement with anger is much more salient. Still, Seneca's acute perception of the dynamics of anger remains a critical voice. His forceful dismissal of the potential benefits of anger serves as a warning that the benefits of its expression are easily overstated and anger can never be the goal in itself.

My argument about the value of engaging with anger is not a call to reconsider the procedures for testimony at criminal trials, nor do I intend to suggest that war crimes tribunals are unnecessary. Retributive justice, with its expectations of a courtroom free of vengeance and based on neutral and unbiased judgment, has its place. My focus is on the role played by truth commissions during the process of transitional justice. This approach to truth commissions is focused on the political implications of anger in victim testimonies and is located between the skeptical and the therapeutic.⁵² I place more emphasis on the political and existential questions present in victim testimony than do scholars (including many political scientists) who are skeptical of the ability of truth commissions to offer anything more than historical documentation.⁵³ They maintain that the challenge of documentation is difficult and meaningful enough, without asking the state to engage with the psychological experiences of war and conflict.⁵⁴ Also, given the sensitivities surrounding emotions such as anger and despair, a skeptic may claim that truth commissions, because of their scale and reliance on state support, are unlikely to be able to respond to the complex needs of witnesses and the audience.⁵⁵ I do not agree with this skeptical position; the task of truth commissions is complex, but I maintain that the process of confronting anger should be incorporated and developed in a sophisticated way within political life.

At the same time, I am not arguing for a therapeutic interpretation of victim testimony as the salve that has the ability to ease suffering, prompt reconciliation, or offer catharsis.⁵⁶ This volume does not make claims about whether testifying in public is part of the most beneficial course of psychological treatment; I cannot judge this. Rather, my interest is directed toward the political implications of the anger expressed in these testimonies and how it may be incorporated into the strengthening of bonds of trust among citizens. Somewhere between the skeptical and the therapeutic approaches there exists a space where societies, through a politics of listening, can respond to the anger expressed in testimony in ways that are connected to justice and politics but have been overlooked when the focus is solely on criminal guilt and accountability or

catharsis and healing. These questions and their potential answers require a willingness to develop new skills of listening and possibilities for the sharing of risk that may lead to trust and greater cooperation among citizens.

From Seeing to Listening

Greek thought, it has been argued, privileges the sensory experience of vision over hearing and listening, particularly as pertains to the communication of the emotions.⁵⁷ Grotesque descriptions of eyes dripping with blood and the toxic power of the gaze are manifestations of anger's great power and its ability to undermine the social order. While Greek epics and tragedies were initially heard, Charles Segal argues that their impact is primarily visual, in part to explore (and exploit) the tensions between "surface and depth, between word and deed, between seeming and being," all concepts that lend themselves readily to visual depiction.⁵⁸ The value of impartiality gained by appropriate distance from the emotions, as espoused by Adam Smith in his description of the impartial spectator, succinctly captures some of the fears held by thinkers in the liberal tradition.⁵⁹ These fears are tentatively resolved—and anxiety about anger temporarily put to rest—through the promise of the right type of vision. I suggest that the metaphor of seeing and the value of distance are obstacles to thinking about the value of anger; a focus on listening better captures the challenges of responding to anger. With listening one cannot be (physically) too far away because the goal is not to prioritize the value of the larger context over the particular emotions but rather to attend to the complexity contained in vocal expression and to respond in a way that clarifies its significance to political life. The idea of listening is also helpful because it allows for a distinction between listening and hearing, that is, the possibility of willful or unconscious refusal to engage with what has been said. Jean-Luc Nancy favors the mandate to listen over hearing because "to listen is to be straining toward a possible meaning, and consequently one that is not immediately accessible."⁶⁰ In the case of anger, one can see how the split between merely hearing and the challenge of listening can emerge as a concern. The tone, pitch, and intensity of anger may make it difficult for the audience member to truly listen to what is being said, but this should not negate its distinctive value in political life.⁶¹

The writings on agonism by Chantal Mouffe, Bonnie Honig, and William Connolly, among others, put forth a critique of liberal democratic approaches because of the constraints, implicit and explicit, on what should be considered political; they advocate both for the creation of new political spaces and new understandings of identity as contingent, relational, and open to upheaval and change.⁶² My argument has strong affinities with this tradition, but it also seeks to build a more explicit connection between upheaval and the work of transitional justice. Connolly writes, “Critical responsiveness is critical in that it does not always accede to everything that a new constituency or movement demands. But the catch is this: The criticism is not securely guided by established codes of criteria of interpretive judgment. For some of them turn out to be part of the problem.”⁶³ Critical responsiveness gives a formulation to the process of loosening standards of rationality and consensus but does not abandon the process of evaluation and exchange altogether. The listening skills developed as part of critical responsiveness shift greater responsibility to the listener from the speaker and demand more sustained engagement. I agree with Connolly that the standards by which to evaluate claims that emerge from agonistic encounters require cultivation and negotiation. Truth commissions can serve to encourage this process in the types of questions that may be asked in response to anger, questions that indicate that it is not peripheral to the function of the institution and that the insights of testimony will inform the political practices that emerge after the work of transitional justice has been completed. The patterns that emerge through anger, as well as the significance of engaging with the testimonies, should be the subject of negotiation.

The connection between upheaval and the work of justice also depends on the transformation that occurs on two levels during a political exchange: the first level is a change in the conception of self as citizen, and the second is in the way the possibilities of political practice are envisioned, what James Tully calls “the rules of the game.”⁶⁴ Tully emphasizes that during the practice of the “game,” citizens reevaluate and change their actions in light of the dynamic process transpiring around them. Something similar is possible with anger: as the commission is able to see the various meanings of anger and as witnesses come to trust that the commissioners and audience are not made anxious by such expression, the political community itself undergoes a transformation. It has enacted a new type of citizenship and set a precedent for future relations based on dignity and shared concern.

Ressentiment and Victimization

A critic may say that conceding that anger is prone to misjudgment is an understatement; it is a force so hungry for expression that it is uniquely vulnerable to being directed at the wrong target, for the wrong reasons and to the wrong degree. A related concern is that anger is indelibly tarnished by its identity as a weapon of the weak. Friedrich Nietzsche famously argued in the morality tale of the lambs and the birds of prey that anger stemming from one's inferiority is never a sign of strength but a desperate measure to assert a hollow moral superiority.⁶⁵ Frustration stemming from weakness can easily be transformed into *ressentiment*, a particular variant of resentment that blames others for one's own failings and uses the language of justice or goodness to do so. Nietzsche's searing insight is that anger, in the form of *ressentiment*, is a poor substitute for the agonistic contestation of politics. More broadly, the point is that anger emerging from one's own status as a victim will never allow one to achieve either power or dignity. Instead, it merely highlights how little one is able to participate in the agonistic struggle of the political sphere as an equal among equals.⁶⁶ Arendt shares this concern; it is evident in her description of the distortionary influence of suffering on action in the public sphere and the threat of intimate concerns masquerading as political ones in the rise of the Social.⁶⁷ This fear about the glorification of victimhood and the pathetic clinging to "wounded attachments" is the critique that haunts my argument and I grapple with it in chapter 3.⁶⁸ While I do not agree with the bright line she draws between public and private, Arendt's fears prompt me to foreground the forward-looking aspects of testimony and its implications for citizenship. I maintain that through responding to the expression of anger, both the victim and the listener will be agents in the construction of restorative justice, and it is this dynamic model of listening and responsiveness that will resist the reification of prior roles.⁶⁹

Debates over the interpretation of Antigone parallel the issues that arise when thinking about how to respond to victim testimony at a truth commission as they turn on the value of mourning as political action in itself. Can we see her desire to mourn her brother (despite an order from King Creon) as a political act in itself or only as a precursor to one? While Judith Butler has argued that the politics of mourning reveal the exclusionary practices of the demos, Honig points out that expand-

ing the scope of “grievability” cannot become a substitute for the recognition of new types of sovereignty or political practice.⁷⁰ This perspective illuminates my desire to engage with the political claims and desires found in the testimonies beyond the acts of grief and mourning. While mourning is a component of truth commissions, and the frequency of witnesses asking for a proper burial for loved ones testifies to this, the engagement with anger I am suggesting is distinct from the politicization of mourning.

Chapter Overview

Chapter 1 traces the use of testimony at three key moments of transitional justice, the Nuremberg trials, the Eichmann trial, and the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, to show the recent genealogy of the relationship between testimony and justice. Robert Jackson, the American Supreme Court justice who was the chief prosecutor at Nuremberg, considered using oral testimony to make the case against the Nazi officers but decided against this strategy because of his sensitivity to being charged with offering victors’ justice, a show trial that was meant to humiliate the losing side in the war. The Eichmann trial, in contrast, invited to the stand witnesses who had been detained in the concentration camps in order to demonstrate Eichmann’s guilt and render legitimacy to the Israeli state. The Eichmann trial can be seen as a pivotal moment challenging the relationship between testimony and justice and a precursor to the work of truth commissions. This approach was met with criticism about the miscarriage of justice and the instrumental use of the suffering of others, perspectives that continue into the present. Hannah Arendt and Judith Shklar act as interlocutors for thinking about the experiences of the Nuremberg trials and the Eichmann trial, and their reactions to the trials reveal why liberal political theorists may be inclined to underestimate the potential significance of victim testimony.⁷¹ The third historical moment in the chapter, the South African TRC, did not include criminal trials and was thus free to consider the value of testimony apart from expectations of legal procedure. Over two thousand people testified in public, and twenty thousand submitted written testimonies; the stated goals of these testimonies included catharsis, national “healing,” and greater historical accuracy.⁷² Yet the role

of anger in testimony and its impact on the collective process of transitional justice and future political life was ill-defined and misunderstood.

In chapter 2 I engage in a discourse analysis of the transcripts of the TRC and find moments where witnesses at the Human Rights Violations Committee hearings expressed anger. These instances were some of the most compelling moments of the testimonies, but they were often stifled. I analyze how the commissioners *failed to engage* with anger and the obstacles and tensions that accompanied the presence of anger as part of the process of transitional justice. The transcripts reveal that the commissioners had certain types of response to anger that kept recurring, and these included an emphasis on forgiveness, the prioritization of material evidence, and a tendency to see certain emotions solely as indicators of mental health issues. The chapter concludes that although there were many aspects of the TRC that allowed for a confrontation with anger, the failure to listen and respond stymied the possibility of connecting anger to justice.

In the second part of the book, I use the questions that arise from the transcripts of the TRC to direct my excavation of the works of Hannah Arendt and Adam Smith, the theorists who represent the most powerful skeptics of the argument. In chapter 3 I adjudicate the tension between the value Hannah Arendt places on narrative in public life and her disdain for expressions of pain and suffering in the same sphere. Were she to have written on the subject, I suggest that Arendt would initially have considered institutions of transitional justice to be full of political possibility.⁷³ The very act of gathering so many people together in a public space could encourage action, not just reflection on the pain and suffering of the past. Yet her response to victim testimony in the Eichmann trial showed that she was uncomfortable with the level of emotional expression that was displayed by the witnesses in a criminal trial, and this would likely carry over to institutions like truth commissions. Instead of celebrating the potential for new action in victim testimony, Arendt would have found victim testimony in the context of truth commissions to be a *near miss*: a gesture that came close to initiating a new process in politics but was thwarted by the content of the testimonies and the behavior of the witnesses. Examining her reasons for the “near miss” exposes what is at stake in the project and what I consider to be the most important counterargument to the engagement with anger in public life.

Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* is valuable for my

project in two ways: first because his attention to the affective bonds between strangers connects emotional expression to the work of citizenship.⁷⁴ The second reason is for the value he attributes to the expression of resentment as an important marker of injustice. Both reasons are addressed in chapter 4. In Smith's view resentment can be a legitimate and valuable part of political life and should not be excised for the sake of creating liberal judicial institutions. Resentment is, however, prone to be exaggerated, distorted, and directed to the wrong ends. While Smith sees resentment as only helpful for initiating an investigation of the injustice and then distancing oneself from the emotion, the argument here is for a sustained engagement with anger. It can be the impetus for an investigation, but it can also provide insights that other approaches would miss. Thus, unlike in Smith's writings, the argument for citizens to engage with anger is both instrumental and intrinsic. Anger is important for what it tells us in addition to what it "does" when it is vocalized in front of others.

Smith's critique about the volatility of anger, reminiscent of Seneca's concern about anger, is best mitigated, he says, through the judgment of an impartial spectator who can be called upon to arbitrate the merit of the injustice. The concept of the impartial spectator is held as the ideal of ethical virtue and is manifested in an individual who is able to respond in a proportional and rational way to the sufferings of others. Moreover, the person who embodies the essence of the impartial spectator is able to distance himself from his *own* experiences of suffering and act in an emotionally detached way. Thus the centrality given to the impartial spectator overrides both the need for sympathy in response to the pain of others and openness to the value of resentment when it does not fit narrow expectations. Yet, the moments that do not fit Smith's model of impartiality, when the intensity of resentment appears to disrupt communication, are fruitful places to develop a new model of listening to anger.

In the fifth chapter, I build on work in political philosophy that has been sympathetic to anger in order to develop a three-part normative model for understanding its political value. Each of the three dimensions, the cognitive-evaluative, confrontational, and kinetic, can contribute to justice and the cultivation of trust. The cognitive-evaluative dimension builds upon the Stoic and Aristotelian traditions that have taken a more integrated approach to the relationship between reason and emotion, as well as second-wave feminist critiques. They have built on the con-

cept that emotions contain evaluative judgments about what individuals consider to be most important; anger, in particular, can provide insights about what citizens need and fear in the aftermath of mass violence that would not be revealed through other political mechanisms. These are insights about how individuals' perceptions of the state have changed over the course of mass violence, how they understand their role in the political community, and what may be preventing them from fully participating as citizens. The cognitive-evaluative dimension of interpretation also allows for the sharing of risk, including the risk of being ignored, rejected, and forgotten, as well as the risk that one will always be disadvantaged in political negotiation.⁷⁵ The way this risk is shared by the commissioners and the listeners becomes a basis for future trust.⁷⁶

However, it is limiting to think about anger only through a cognitive-evaluative lens, and I see this as conceding too much to a rationalist language of what should be valuable in the public sphere; the confrontational and kinetic dimensions of anger do not fall neatly into the language of instrumentally valuable knowledge. The confrontational dimension of anger exists even when anger does not demand uptake or recognition, oft-cited outcomes of the cognitive-evaluative approach.⁷⁷ Anger should be interpreted along the confrontational dimension when it expresses the contradictions and limitations at what the public sphere and institutions such as truth commissions can provide. Acknowledging the confrontational significance of anger reveals the ways in which previous hierarchies continue to exist and the burden of having anger as one of the few tools of social impact for marginalized groups. Listening for the confrontational dimension also allows the audience to experience, in a mimetic way, what it means to distance oneself (through anger), while also being drawn to public life through a desire to be recognized and included in the community. The final value of anger comes from the experience of its expression and is not dependent on content or recognition. Buddhist thought offers a way to think about it as an incandescent, raw energy that has no correlate, and I import this as a useful political concept.⁷⁸ In addition, Adriana Cavarero's work on voice and the Greek idea of *phônê* testifies to the uniquely human act of speaking.⁷⁹ It is through the act of vocalizing that we assert our identity in the public sphere, and such a focus corresponds to the praxis of listening rather than seeing.

Understanding the ways in which anger is beneficial for public life provides a critical link between its expression and the development of

trust, the ultimate goal of this work and the theme I take up in chapter 6. Intuitively, the expression of anger seems to go against any audience predisposition to trust the witness. Precisely for this reason, the decision to trust the witness at the outset of testimony establishes a different affective landscape for the communication that makes up testimony. An attitude of trusting the witness is only the beginning, however, of a process that is grounded in the expression of anger and the response to it as a model for the work of citizenship. Ultimately, the goal of an engagement with anger is to facilitate the expectations of shared risk and recognized sacrifice that I take to be the basis for civic trust. Responding to each of the dimensions of anger described above expands the array of communicative possibilities open to citizens that indicate shared risk. Engaging in responsive listening is a difficult task, one that potentially prompts unease in the listener but should be seen as a transferable skill to political life after transitional institutions have ended. The confrontational interpretation of anger reveals the limitations of politics and thus suggests a type of recognition that is usually not included in formal democratic practices. Lastly, attention to the kinetic dimension of anger is, in part, a countering of the pain and viscerality of violence with the viscerality of voice.

For the witness to express each of the dimensions of anger is a risk and a way of placing something that is of value to the individual in the hands of the commission and the collective. Returning to the testimony at the beginning, when Yona spoke about his experiences of torture, he was angry, in part, because of the way the experiences constrained his life in the present. The commissioners had the opportunity to engage with his anger and his references to a type of citizenship denied, but they were uncertain about how to proceed. The practice of holding the anger of another in one's care is a skill unto itself, one that must be consistently nurtured in a political institution if it is to take hold in the democratic polity. Engaging with anger presents a risk for the listener in that it demands energy and the possibility of rebuke, yet this risk is shared with others through the process in a way that can be productive. The difficult nature of an engagement with anger in the process of victim testimony is what makes it a singular case for the cultivation of trust; the process of expressed anger, active listening, and a response allows for a transformation for all involved. Setting aside the defensiveness that is often a response to anger, listeners can see themselves and their interests in the background with attention to the testimony as the point of interest

in the foreground. Their task then becomes not to pity or offer sympathy to the victim, but rather to discover and acknowledge the causes of anger and the humanity it conveys. Most importantly, listening to anger ushers in a transformation from victim to citizen. A victim is seen to be stuck in the past, condemned to suffer and able to make claims only based on that suffering. A citizen is one who is an equal participant in political life and not always asked to be the bearer of sacrifice. A citizen can expect to influence and experience the rewards of political negotiation, at least some of the time. The communication of anger provides an opportunity for citizen relationships to emerge and set a precedent that will outlast the truth commission.

The energy and experience of anger in the public sphere is undeniable. It finds a way to influence politics whether or not it is sanctioned, and it is the consistent remainder of liberal democratic action. A political life continually beset by angry exchanges would be paralyzed, but in the period after mass violence, the expression of anger provides a path from the reality of violence to the renegotiation of citizenship roles, now marked by greater dignity and interpersonal trust. Truth commissions provide the rare opportunity to engage with anger politically. What is required now is a willingness to take it up.