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"THERE IS A PRESENCE IN ANGER": AN ANALYSIS OF TRADITIONAL CRITIQUES OF RACIAL ANGER PROTEST

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Abstract

The article examines a traditional pattern of criticism of racial protests involving what I will call anti-racist rage. These critiques revolve around two basic points: they characterize angry racial protests as gratuitous displays of aggression and emotional lack of control that illustrate irrational, authoritarian, and violent political activism, and as unproductive political strategies. Against this approach, I argue, first, that there are normative reasons for anti-racist anger and that the traditional critique is wrong to ignore these reasons. Second, in light of the objections of irrationality and unproductiveness of the expression of anger, and following Amia Srinivasan's approach, I argue that even if it does not lead to desired outcomes, even if it is unproductive, the anger present in anti-racist protests is morally justified, and delegitimizing it on instrumental grounds implies acceptance of a kind of affective injustice.

Keywords: anger, anti-racist protests, racism, morality.

1 INTRODUCTION

> In Morrison's first novel, The Bluest Eye, her narrator says of the dehumanized colonized little black girl Pecola that there would be hope for her if only she could express her rage, telling readers "anger is better, there is a presence in anger". Perhaps then it is that "presence", the assertion of subjectivity colonizers do not want to see, that surfaces when the colonized express rage (hooks, 1995, p. 12).

In recent years, angry anti-racist actions have taken place in Brazilian universities and public spaces. One of them was carried out by black students at the Martin Gonçalves Theater of the UFBA (Federal University of Bahia) in Salvador. The protest consisted of shouting at the stage with clenched fists, interrupting the performance of the play "Sob as Tetas da Loba". The organizers and supporters of the protest felt that the play was racist in nature, since it included derogatory representations and subjugation of black characters; at the same time, they saw the interruption as a way to criticize institutional racism at the UFBA Theatre School (Lyrio, 2019; IG Gente, 2019).

Political protests related to racism are rare in Brazil. Even rarer is a public debate about its nature and legitimacy. The invasion of the theater, however, caught the attention of two influential public intellectuals who have dedicated themselves to analyzing Brazilian racial issues: Bahian anthropologist and poet Antônio Risério and Rio de Janeiro anthropologist Yvonne Maggie (Maggie, 2019; Risério, 2019). On July 7, 2019, the day after the invasion, Maggie wrote an article on her blog on the G1 portal in which she describes the invasion in dramatic tones. She characterizes the activists as angry people who, with their hateful faces, created a climate of terror at the site:

> A group from the black movement Dandara Gusmão, led by a university student, invaded the venue and created a climate of fear and anger. With the pretense of hatred, the participants of the "collective" installed terror to express, as they claimed, their rejection of what they called the "institutional and structural racism of the UFBA Theatre School". They denounced the invisibility of blacks in Bahian theater (Maggie, 2019).

Maggie also noted that the security apparatus at the School of Theatre "was not enough to prevent the scene of cruelty, anger and intolerance". And she ends her text by lamenting the dark times of violence, "the lack of dialogue and the search for the universal" on university campuses.

Antônio Risério's characterization goes a bit further, describing the militants in an animalized and dehumanizing way, using expressions that refer to dogs. The group invaded the theater, he says, "barking and foaming with hate" to create a climate of terror and fear (Risério, 2019, p. 16).

Risério and Maggie's analysis of the protest illustrates a general strategy of criticism (which I will call traditional) of angry black activism. Traditional criticism associates anti-racist activism with ideas of brutality, animality and authoritarianism. In other words, anti-racist activists would be uncontrolled, aggressive, furious beings, a kind of savage whose actions are a threat to the democratic and egalitarian values that should guide actions in universities and society. What's more, acts with this profile would show the end of humanist and egalitarian aspirations in academic circles. The angry protests at universities would show that a new image of black activism is being put into operation, an image that has violence and intolerance at its core and whose central objective is to attack whites (Risério, 2019, 2020, 2022). The appropriate response to such actions, according to the authors, should be denunciation and forceful political and moral repudiation.

Contrary to this approach, I intend to show that political protest, even when angry, can be defended as a form of moral protest born of legitimate demands, and that its primary appropriation as a violent and authoritarian practice, as a social and affective pathology, is largely due to a reductive and uncharitable reading of the demands and social pressure strategies adopted by groups defending the rights of minorities, particularly the black population. Before elaborating on these points, however, it is important to make two points.

The first caveat is that I don't intend to defend the protest that took place in Salvador as an ideal type of anti-racist act, because I don't know the particular circumstances surrounding the act. I will refer to some general characteristics of this act, since it has been approached and rejected by progressive intellectuals (and not right-wing extremists) as a symbol of deplorable anti-racist activism. Secondly, and more importantly, I'm interested in discussing the reduction of this type of act to an emotional pathology, to a type of uncontrolled savagery. I will suggest that this kind of evaluation of angry protest illustrates a common prejudice about anger. This prejudice is that the expression or manifestation of anger in the public sphere is always dangerous and reprehensible, especially when such actions are carried out by black people. More broadly, I intend to show that the case illustrates the unreceptive way and distorted intellectual perspective that many progressive intellectuals use to analyze the claims and methods of black activism. The aim is to show that, contrary to appearances, protests that involve anger and tension in institutional and interpersonal relations in contexts of racial injustice have strong moral grounds in their favor because they raise legitimate demands for justice that need to be heard, responded to, and attended to. Using the famous letter written by Martin Luther King Jr. during his imprisonment in

Birmingham, I show that critics of angry political protest can often be characterized as accomplices to injustice.

The article consists of five parts. In the next section, I characterize the traditional critique of angry protest, a critique that fails to assess the conditions that give rise to anger and promotes a psychological-causal approach that dehumanizes angry activists and conceives of them as brutalized, aggressive, and intolerant beings. In section 3, I analyze anti-racist anger as a form of justified, non-vengeful anger that is narratively articulated on the basis of moral grounds related to racial evils, while at the same time calling for racial solidarity, especially from dominant groups (in this case, whites). In section 4, I present and respond to the objection that anti-racist anger is irrational. Finally, in section 5, I articulate the objection that anti-racist anger is unproductive and, drawing on the work of Amia Srinivasan and Bernard Boxill, argue that anger, while politically unproductive, has personal and moral value.

2 Problems with the Traditional Critique of Angry Protest

The first step in developing the long argument to be defended in this article is to confront the thesis of the humanitarian and liberal character of the traditional critique of angry anti-racist protests. The traditional critique, which calls for a rejection of angry anti-racist activism, claims to be based on building a society based on tolerance, non-violence, freedom of expression, pluralism of ideas, and openness to public discourse. An important component of the traditional critique is the assessment of the untimeliness of the protests: there are no good reasons for the radicalization of public space and racial tensions. Antônio Risério, in particular, has argued that racist and angry activism lacks legitimate reasons. Brazil's racial constitution is characterized by diffuse processes of a syncretic nature and not, as activists claim, by structural racial oppression (Risério, 2007). Risério has also argued that activism of this kind represents a threat to the construction of a democratic public sphere, since, devoid of underlying reasons, the activists' motivations can only be based on unfounded resentments, interests in political power and dark desires for revenge and violence (Risério, 2019) or even anti-white racism (see Bosco's reconstruction, 2023, of the book published by Risério in 2023). In contrast to rabid activism, Risério has urged black activists to adopt a kind of conciliatory perspective, "convivial polarization" rather than "exclusionary polarization", suggesting that the idea of cohabitation has been abandoned by black activism in the name of the desire to "expel" and "destroy" the other; the other, in this case, being

the white portion of the Brazilian population (Risério, 2020). As he said in his speech at the Brazilian Academy of Letters:

> We have always had polarizations and conflicts among us, but to a large extent convivial polarizations, so to speak. Yes, we have to distinguish between convivial polarizations and exclusionary polarizations. That is, between polarizations that can coexist in the space of the country and polarizations that have as their goal the expulsion of the other - and, ultimately, its destruction (Risério, 2020).

Taking this reconstruction into account, the traditional critique is a democratic, liberal, well-intentioned critique that aims to combat a misguided activism, an activism that seems to be driven by unconfessed desires for revenge and the destruction of whites. I hope to be able to show below that there are insurmountable difficulties in this pattern of analysis.

The first criticism that can be leveled at the traditional approach is that it presents a false image of black activism as merely oppositional and anti-white. This point can be understood from the perception of the diversity of black activism. Political identities (in this case, the identity of black activists) are not unambiguous. Among the members of a political cause, there can be people who are ready to do anything, as well as advocates of peace. The fact that there is a pluralism of political goals and methods in Brazilian black activism in itself undermines the idea of a movement focused on attacks and violence against whites. And this pluralism is confirmed empirically. Sociological studies on the profile of black activism developed by the sociologist Flavio Rios refute the thesis of anti-white revanchism. The main practices of Brazilian black activism take place in the realm of legal and political institutions. Contemporary black protest, from the late 1970s to 2010, involved marches and public actions aimed at attracting the attention of the authorities. In parallel with demonstrations, the movements followed institutional paths, such as internal coordination within political institutions and legal activism (Rios, 2012). In the period under study, black activism adopted institutional strategies and not practices of political confrontation or fascist violence, as some authors have claimed.

Critics of contemporary anti-racist activism could object to this description that radicalism, violence and adherence to "authoritarian" forms of protest have become more common in the last 10 years, in an interval not covered in Rios' study, precisely after the approval of racial policies and the intensification of identity politics struggles in universities. Although there are no systematic studies on what could be called a "new profile" of black activism, we can admit the existence of changes in the most recent tactics of black activism. These changes, however, do not seem to indicate the adoption of hegemonic, anti-white violent strategies. To cite an emblematic example, the recent brutal murder of Beto Freitas

in the parking lot of Porto Alegre's Carrefour by white security guards on Black Awareness Day was responded to with a peaceful protest, albeit permeated with sadness and anger (Hartmann, Rosa, Becker, Pinzon, 2020). With regard to universities, although some students rely on radical rhetoric, it should be remembered that a large part of black activism on campus is organized in institutional spaces, aiming to improve student support and the presence and respect of black people in institutions, a type of activism that we also find reproduced in civil society, where different black groups seek articulation between corporations, the state and citizenship, such as the Movimento Negro Unificado, CUFA, the Central Única das Favelas and the Coalização Negra por Direitos (Black Coalition for Rights).

The exceptionality of violent protests strongly suggests that, contrary to what has been proclaimed, the dominant focus of black activism is not antagonism and conflict, but the guarantee of autonomy, emancipation and independence for the black population, especially the poorest section of students who need assistance and benefits to stay in university and continue their studies. These considerations do not exclude, as I said, the existence of activists who advocate aggressive tactics in universities and beyond, fueled by a rhetoric of confrontation between blacks and whites. But they at least show that the image of young left-wing radicals dividing the campus between blacks and whites is largely an exaggeration. Far from promoting violent revolution, the great black project at the university seems to be one of seeking reform. Black students fundamentally demand the right to belong to the university; they seek, as the historian Robin Kelley said in the context of black student protests at American universities, "love from an institution incapable of loving them" (Kelley, 2016).

The second point worth discussing is the lack of analysis of the reasons for the protests. Critics of anti-racism rarely pay attention to the underlying frameworks that fuel activists' anger and angry protests. This point was made in a largely positive review of a book published by António Risério (2019). Nogueira notes that Risério's critique of black activists as fascists "leaves no room for thinking about the question of identities in a democratic way. It proceeds as if it were not an issue" (Nogueira, 2020, my emphasis). In other words, it is assumed from the outset that there can be no justifiable reason for protest, for example. Treating the demands and denunciations of black activists as "non-issues", or in other words, as fascist fantasy and paranoia, hinders an unbiased reading of the meaning of black political activism, since more contextualized analyses may reveal, contrary to what is usually claimed, actions motivated by a lack of dialogue or other ways of meeting demands that are considered fair and urgent. There is at least room to think of the protest that arises from anger as a moral

protest, that is, as a dialogue on a different basis. It is not dialogue in the proper sense, though it may lead to dialogue. As Blustein noted when he spoke of moral protest, it is:

> a defiant announcement of one's refusal to remain passive in the face of continuing or unacknowledged wrongdoing, and typically one is defiant because argument and persuasion have not proven or are thought unlikely to be effective in securing relief or admission of responsibility (Blustein, 2014, p. 56).

The logic that feeds and drives angry protest is not rudeness or the simple unmotivated expression of aggression or the creation of conflict. Angry protest is a limited form of communication and signaling of harm suffered, and at the same time an affirmation of integrity and an invitation or motivation for others to reflect and ultimately resist and cooperate in correcting such moral and political errors. The traditional strategy for evaluating angry protest therefore errs when it condemns the substantive protest of angry speech by interpreting it as a lack of emotional control, as cruelty and a potential prelude to violence (Lyman, 2004, p. 133-134). According to Peter Lyman,

> Whatever its merits, the problem with this critique is that it is often used to blame the victim by ignoring the social relationships – perhaps the injustices – that caused an angry response. The psychological critique of anger is an ideology that justifies domination by silencing the voices of the oppressed, labeling anger as "loss of control", as "emotionalism", or as "neurotic" (Lyman, 2004, p. 134).

This kind of critique fails, as Lyman observed, because it focuses attention on the speaker, the one expressing the anger, while forgetting to consider the listener, the one at whom the protest is directed, and the relations of power, subjugation, and oppression between them. In this way, the moral denunciation present in anger is silenced.

This last point allows us to raise a third fundamental philosophical and political-moral problem with the traditional approach. This is the problem of white people's political engagement in the struggle against racial injustice, especially their responsibility to denounce and confront institutional racism. I illustrate this problem with an excerpt from a letter Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote from Birmingham jail to eight white religious leaders in Alabama who asked him to be patient and wait to demonstrate in the civil rights movement in that state. In the letter, Martin Luther King recalls that the ministers were concerned about the tensions that the protests might create, but that this concern and care did not extend to the brutal injustices experienced by the black population:

> You deplore the demonstrations taking place in Birmingham. But your statement, I am sorry to say, fails to express a similar concern for the conditions that brought about the demonstrations. I am sure that none of

> you would want to rest content with the superficial kind of social analysis that deals merely with effects and does not grapple with underlying causes. It is unfortunate that demonstrations are taking place in Birmingham, but it is even more unfortunate that the city's white power structure left the Negro community with no alternative (King Jr. 1964 [2011], p. 56)[1].

Although there are significant differences between the political and social context of contemporary anti-racist protests in Brazil and the American civil rights struggle of the late 1960s, it is possible to draw a parallel between the attitudes of white clergy and Brazilian critics of anti-racist protest: in both cases, it is the black protest that is of concern, not the injustices that motivated it. As Martin Luther King aptly pointed out, there is a moral inversion in this attitude. After all, it wasn't the activists who created the perceived tension; the tension was already there: "Actually, we who engage in nonviolent direct action are not the creators of tension. We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive. We bring it out in the open, where it can be seen and dealt with. Like a boil that can never be cured so long as it is covered up but must be opened with all its ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must be exposed, with all the tension its exposure creates, to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured" (King Jr, 2011, p. 62).

In this sense, there is no denying the existence here in Brazil of what King called a "white power structure", that is, a well-known racial hierarchy that must be confronted: there are few black students and professors in Brazilian universities; there is little positive representation of blacks in society; and, above all, there is a great deal of indifference on the part of whites to these racial asymmetries. Despite a historiography that emphasizes our social formation centered on the idea of mestizaje and racial democracy, inferiority, aggression and contempt have always been directed at blacks. Exclusion and racial tension have not been created by historical black Brazilian activism or by the "new" anti-racist activism. In this sense, the emphasis on civility, anger management, and reducing anger to a mental pathology is biased and wrong. It's biased because it leaves out the secular reasons that motivate anger, and it's wrong because it means turning a blind eye to serious injustices that all people of some racial consciousness should help to combat. Such a lack of moral commitment can again be explained with the help of Martin Luther King. He argued that the main obstacle to a more racially equal world is not bigoted racists, but progressive whites

[1] The quotations from the Letter have been translated by me from the Luther King, Jr, Martin edition. Why we can't wait (King Legacy Book). Boston: Beacon Press, 2011. p. 56. An English version of the letter written on April 16, 1963, can be found on the website of the African Studies Center – University of Pennsylvania. Available at: https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html.

who are more committed to order than to justice, thus drawing attention to the links between morality and politics, between moral commitment to confronting injustice and political openness to protest aimed at destroying it:

> I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizens' Counciler or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice (King JR, 2011, p. 62).

I emphasize the words used by King: "I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion [...]". He doesn't claim to have come to the conclusion that racists are better than moderate whites, but he does maintain that the defense of negative peace, the absence of protest, a kind of fixed idea of the critics of Brazilian black activism, can be an obstacle to the conquest of justice and true freedom. Thus, even if he does not defend angry protest, it is clear that King Jr. maintains that the values of "negative peace", which are order and the absence of tension, are hierarchically subordinate to the values of "positive peace" and justice. In other words, it is a mistake to assume that tension or escalation in the public sphere is *per se* something to be condemned. Political protest and the heightening of social tensions can be a path to a just and peaceful society, not merely an instrument of political and social instability or cruelty. In this sense, King argues that protest is not only permissible but morally required in the pursuit of justice and positive peace[2]. On the other hand, the idea of a non-conflictual public space can often mean the defense of white tyranny, oppression and injustice.

None of this, it should be emphasized, is to say that King was an advocate of anger, aggression, or violent mechanisms of social change. What I'm trying to show here is that

[2] The reader may find it incongruous to look to Martin Luther King for a defense of angry protest. My choice is intentional. There is a contemporary tendency to sterilize the radical legacy of Martin Luther King's movement of resistance and protest against racism. King was a radical and confrontational leader who, as Cornel West writes, is now celebrated every January by his "fans" with "sanitized versions of his life": "a radical man deeply hated and held in contempt is recast as if he was a universally loved moderate" (West, 2018). King's radical legacy is particularly associated with Letter from a Birmingham Jail. On this point, see the detailed analysis in (Rieder, 2019). Rieder shows that "King's Christian faith in his Savior's love for all God's children suffuses the 'Letter', but its driving force is black pain and anger" (p. XVI). He further explains the phrase by noting: "As we move through the 'Letter', we witness a striking transformation. In the first half, we are mainly in the presence of a patient and gracious man, who crafts little moments of brotherhood and tries to win over his critics through appeals to their reason, sympathy and conscience. But around the midpoint, there's a distinct shift, really a second act. King drops the mask. He begins to speak more bluntly. Instead of explaining himself, he chides and criticizes. He shows himself to be not just a black man but an angry black man. The diplomat gives way to the prophet" (p. XVII-XVIII). For a broader discussion of King Jr's legacy see (Krishnamurthy, 2015 and 2022). For a debate on civil disobedience and violence as a mechanism for social transformation beyond the legacy of Martin Luther King, see (Dos Santos, 2023).

even pacifist leaders, deeply committed to egalitarian ideals, freedom and tolerance, did not make the kind of false association that is made in our countries between the expression of anger and a lack of mental control or a pure desire for revenge and aggression. King rejected anger because it represented the wrong political path, but King himself felt a great deal of anger, distrust, and perhaps even hatred toward whites (Rieder, 2019; Krishnamurty, 2015). In short, even if one can object to the public expression of anger, which, as we shall see, can take more or less defensible forms, it is clear that anger is a response to injustice; it articulates beliefs and feelings of injustice and a normative perspective on how things should be. It is a fundamental error to assume that angry protest is merely an emotional outburst. Recognizing the positive uses and virtues of anger is an important first step toward a proper debate about its moral, social, and political significance.

3 What is anti-racist rage?

Peter Lyman, in his analysis of anger in public life, notes that it was often be criticized for involve a "self-righteous world-view" that "seeks to resolve conflict by assigning blame and exacting revenge" (2004, 134). Indeed, this is the most common way of understanding anger in political and racial protests. As bell hooks said, "In these times most folks associate black rage with the *underclass*, with desperate and despairing black youth who in their hopelessness feel no need to silence unwanted passions" (hooks, 1995, p. 12).

However, as I will show, there are different kinds of anger, and not all anger takes the form of an unwanted and dangerous passion. There are less explosive and sentimental forms of anger; there is an anger that demands practical engagement, dialogue, and attention. Anger can thus be thought of as a morally grounded emotion of important political, epistemic, and personal significance. Consistent defenses of an anger purged of vengeful feelings, sometimes called "righteous anger", can be found in the literature (Gamson, 1996; Cherry, 2020, 2022; Srinivasan, 2018). I'll call this type of anger anti-racist anger. It seems to me to be the dominant type of anger in Brazilian racial protests, and it is mainly experienced by black people who are reasonably aware of the dynamics of racism. I want to argue that this anger, if properly understood, is a powerful tool for social emancipation. Such an understanding, however, depends on recognizing that anti-racist anger is directed against racism and racists, but not as a vengeful or destructive force, but as a kind of moral outcry for the construction of a humane world, a world of racial justice, precisely the opposite of what is often claimed by Brazilian critics of anti-racism.

A first step towards understanding this type of anger is to recognize that emotions have a focus and an object. The object of anger is its target, which can be people or social institutions such as universities. The focus of anger is the intentional content it articulates. Since Aristotle, it has been accepted that we feel anger when we evaluate something that has been said or done to us as a "wrongdoing" or "offense" to ourselves or someone we love (Aristotle, 2013, 1378b1, Nussbaum, 2005). Extending the classical definition, Srinivasan (2018) asserts that anger can focus not only on offenses against oneself, relatives, or friends, but also on perceived "injustices" related to racism and its structures. In addition to the cognitive component of tracking offenses and injustices, anger, like other emotions, also has physiological aspects, internal feelings, expressions, and behaviors. These multiple components are articulated in a narrative structure (Goldie, 2000, p. 14). To understand anti-racist anger, we must understand how it is narratively articulated in the lives of Black people. A rich and vivid example of this anger was provided by the American writer James Baldwin in *Notes of a Native Son*. In this text, written in 1955, Baldwin recounts how, after graduating from high school, he left New York to work on a military installation in New Jersey, where he came to live closely with white Southerners. When he interacted with Southerners and went to bars, cafeterias, or even walked through the city's segregated neighborhoods, he experienced a constant kind of hostility:

> I did not know what I had done, and I shortly began to wonder what *anyone* could possibly do, to bring about such unanimous, active, and unbearably vocal hostility (Baldwin, 1955/2220, p. 120).

At one point in his nightmare in New Jersey, he reports that he lost his mind after hearing the waiter at a diner say mechanically: "We don't serve black people here" (1955/2020, p. 122).

> And I felt, like a physical sensation, a *click* at the nape of my neck as though some interior string connecting my head to my body had been cut.

The click in the back of the head that Baldwin is talking about here is actually anger, which he describes as "blind fever, a pounding in the skull and fire in the bowels" that those who contract it "can never be really carefree again" (Baldwin, 1955/2020, p. 121). Anger led him to walk without direction. "I started walking. [...] I don't know what was going on in my mind, either; I certainly had no conscious plan", but he says he was seized by an urge to "to crush these white faces, which were crushing me" (Baldwin, 1955/2020, p. 122). He then decided to go to a fancy restaurant where he was served by a white waitress who was frightened by his angry face...

> I hated her for her white face, and for her great, astounded, frightened eyes. I felt that if she found a black man so frightening I would make her fright worth-while. She did not ask me what I wanted, but repeated, as though she had learned it somewhere, "We don't serve Negroes here" (p. 123).

What bothered Baldwin was that he heard in the waitress's voice that she knew she was treating him unfairly. His anger led him to throw a glass of water at the waitress and then run away. He was caught, struggled to free himself, and narrowly missed being killed.

As is clear from the context of Baldwin's description, the anger is a reaction to the constant experience of contempt and mistreatment, not only from his fellow workers in the factory, but also on the streets wherever he went. The anger thus articulated, which I will call anti-racist, is directed at the people and the social and institutional structures that perpetuate racism. Its focus is injustice. There is nothing gratuitous or merely sentimental about this anger. It arises in response to a variety of racially-based violations; anger is specific to what it is responding to and reacts, as Baldwin emphasizes, not only to individual mistreatment. It is also a response to the ongoing mistreatment of other blacks: "Part of anger is this: it's not just what's happening to you, it's what's happening around you all the time" (Baldwin, 1961, 205). The use of "all the time" is telling. In the case of the attendant, anger was triggered by white indifference to racial injustice. Because emotions are narrative structures tied to individual character, they can also turn into a harsher or more defensive personal affective pattern, the result of experienced hostilities: a sweet and affable personality like Baldwin can become more irritable and less willing to tolerate mistakes and apologies for ignorance or racial insensitivity. Baldwin speaks in this regard of the automatic toughness he began to express everywhere. In short, as Miysha Cherry summarizes, commenting on the same text, Black rage (which I call anti-racist) in Baldwin's view,

> is an affective and cognitive response felt by Blacks who experience and witness the continual mistreatment as well as indifference to and ignorance of their suffering. This is not to say, though, that Black rage is an emotion experienced just by individual Blacks. Although it is an individual rather than a collective emotion, it arises due to a sense of collectivity and can lead to collective action—as historical and present-day social movements highlight. Recall, it comes about due to witnessing the experiences of others. […] it is useful in part, according to Baldwin, because of the positive things it communicates to Black folk, and for how it leads to collective action with other outraged citizens (Cherry, 2022, p. 6).

Antiracist anger, which was certainly present in the experience of the students who protested in Salvador, is not simply an unfocused feeling or a collective emotional outburst. Despite its transformation in public discourse into a reaction of emotional imbalance and

hysteria, anti-racist anger is the public communication of disapproval of certain practices to the moral community and a cry for more serious engagement with the injustices denounced, usually in the form of protest and collective action. As a political protest or as an individually experienced painful emotion, it performs a function of self-protection, of subjective, political, and social value. One way to characterize this aspect is to think of anger as a kind of energy and vitality, a tonic capable of energizing its bearers for political struggles aimed at ending situations of oppression. bell hooks articulates the self-protective dimension of anger in her critique of psychiatrists William Grier and Price Cobbs, authors of the book Black Rage. According to hooks,

> they used their Freudian standpoint to convince readers that rage was merely a sign of powerlessness. They named it pathological, explained it away. They did not urge the larger culture to see black rage as something other than sickness, to see it as a potentially healthy, potentially healing response to oppression and exploitation (hooks, 1995, p. 12).

What hooks is suggesting here is that resistance to oppression can be enhanced by an angry and unsympathetic attitude like Baldwin's. King Jr. refused to develop a militancy that could encourage the development of character traits and behaviors incompatible with a vision of activist moral integrity. King Jr. refused to develop a militancy that could encourage the development of character traits and behaviors inconsistent with a vision of the moral integrity of activists, especially those that could be perceived as vile or unacceptable by their opponents[3]. For the purposes of the civil rights movement, no potentially degrading attitude should be encouraged in the eyes of the groups being confronted, which led him to advocate an activism free of any sign of aggression or retaliation, even in self-defense. bell hooks, on the other hand, argues that placing oneself in the world and acting politically with an angry emotional attitude allows one to protect oneself from the aggressions that result from living from the dominant white perspective. Thus, the degrading emotions condemned by dominant groups create space for not internalizing or directing degrading attitudes and feelings toward oneself and others close to one. By stimulating anger that is effectively directed at the sources of racism, it is no longer repressed or directed at one's peers, opening the way for an enlightening understanding of the roots of oppression that can lead to political activism.

It is important to note, however, that both Baldwin and hooks place limits on anger. Questions about the intensity of anger and the actions it motivates are relevant to assessing

[3] I would like to thank Eraldo Sousa dos Santos for drawing my attention to an aspect of Martin Luther King's political strategy.

its moral correctness. Anger can take the form of bloodthirsty behavior, it can turn into hatred. To better understand this point, it is useful to return to Baldwin's description.

Shortly after the restaurant episode, Baldwin decided to leave the United States for Paris. Recalling his attempts to grab the waitress by the neck and the entire event that followed, he concluded:

> I could not get over two facts, both equally difficult for the imagination to grasp, and one was that I could have been murdered. But the other was that I had been ready to commit murder. I saw nothing very clearly but I did see this: that my life, my *real* life, was in danger, and not from anything other people might do but from the hatred I carried in my own heart (Baldwin, 2020, p. 124).

Not only did he realize that he could have been murdered that night, but perhaps more disturbingly, he saw that anger, if left unchecked, can become destructive. He makes this point by pointing out two different ways of dealing with anger: "It can wreck more important things than race relations. There is not a Negro alive who does not have this rage in his blood – one has the choice, merely, of living with it consciously or surrendering to it" (Baldwin, 1955/2020, p. 121). Baldwin rejects the option of giving in to anger: "The first problem is how to control that rage so that it won't destroy you" (Baldwin, 1961, p. 205). As he says, referring to Richard Wright's novel, we can all have a "private Bigger Thomas living in the skulls" that is, someone with the impulse to redeem through violence the anger and humiliation experienced under racism (Baldwin, 2020, p. 65). But anger doesn't necessarily have to have this outcome. The destruction caused by anger is not an effect of the anger itself, but of the way it is directed. As Cherry (2022, p. 9) puts it, quoting Maurice Charney: "[He] believed that the real psychological situation of blacks is that they are always faced with a choice".

Note that Baldwin, like Martin Luther King, does not criticize the state of anger as if it were guilty of taking away your power to act otherwise. Instead, Baldwin criticizes the possibility of surrendering to anger and the attitudes that come with feeling angry. The anger that is reprehensible, then, is not the anger that exposes and responds to racism, but the anger that turns into self-destructive and destructive hatred of others. As Cherry explains,

> Baldwin's concern not to be with the overwhelming power of anger but instead with one's capacity to hate others and oneself through anger. Baldwin acknowledges that the hate that Blacks have for whites is different from the hate whites have for Blacks. The former is not born out of superiority but the need to get the white man off his back. Nevertheless, for Baldwin, this hate can have a murderous power over you. He calls this a "self-destroying limbo"; a limbo from which he could not write. It is the self-destroying state that he had witnessed his father succumb to and one

> he strove to resist. Anger is useless for Baldwin not when it prevents one from being heard, is less digestible to whites, or doesn't lead to reform. It is useless when the anger contains hate. Such a hate can lead to physical *and* existential death (2022, p. 11-12).

Anti-racist anger is precisely anger free of hatred. It is, as Cherry puts it, a kind of love, a love of justice. Its danger is not the fear it incites, because that fear is born of a just cause: the need to get rid of racism and its evils. Even when mistakenly absorbed by opponents as pure emotional expression, with no cognitive content, anger has emancipatory value. It only loses its liberating moral significance when it is converted into hatred within oneself and against others. So we shouldn't confuse the expressive or communicative component that comes through in the defiant and firm way of walking, the fixed gaze, the clenched eyebrows and the face closed in indignation with some emotional illness. The assertive, intense, slightly rapid speech in a high and firm tone that is noticeable in Baldwin's debates and interviews is not a lack of emotional control, but a symptom of weariness and exhaustion with white racism, with the ignorance and insensitivity of the uninformed, and with false opinions that are endlessly repeated. Of course, in the protests, anger takes the form of shouted speech, with slogans that denote revolt, and sometimes swearing and aggression. These components help us see that the language of anti-racist rage can induce darker attitudes that can lead to episodes of violence, but as Baldwin's personal experience shows, this is not a necessary effect. There is no constitutive or necessary relationship between the physiological responses stimulated by anger and the actual expression of violent behavior. Anger can therefore be, and often is, a constructive emotion insofar as it functions as a denunciation of injustice. It does this through angry facial expressions, bodily signals, shouting, and the release of tension. This, of course, is what Jaggar called an "outlaw emotion" (Jaggar, 1989b). Marginal emotions are the emotions of oppressed groups. They fulfill an emancipatory role, in that they enable their holders to protect themselves and, at the same time, to develop relevant affective potentialities to seek social justice. Gay pride, for example, is a type of marginal emotion. By assuming and affirming, through pride, their gay identity, they reverse a situation of sexual oppression and begin to serve the emancipation of socially marginalized groups. Anger becomes anti-racist when it ceases to be hatred of oneself or components of one's group (as self-rejection) and hatred of the other, as revolt resulting from the actions and categories and concepts culturally present in the distorted racial thinking of dominant social groups. When freed from destructive impulses against oneself and others, as beautifully illustrated in Myisha Cherry's passage, anger turns to the individual or structural sources of racial oppression and helps to understand the harms of

racism. To borrow a phrase from Slavoj Zizek (2013) in *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology*, it could be said that the anti-racist rage expressed in protests is "an enactment of a certain symbolic impasse". This symbolic impasse is related to the expectations and blockages that contemporary societies have placed on the existential, affective, and social experience of the black population. And this impasse will not be resolved by calling for greater civility in the public sphere. The way out of the symbolic impasse is through racial solidarity, an acknowledgement of mutual responsibility, and a commitment to correcting racial deviations and asymmetries. It is important at this point to examine two objections to the positive approach to anti-racist anger that I have offered.

4 The objection of the irrationality of anti-racist rage

I have tried to offer a characterization of anti-racist anger as a communicative emotion, psychologically protective, and with normative contours insofar as it articulates a form of moral protest against racial injustice. Feeling angry signals a context of injustice. What makes this anger just is that it evaluates a situation as offensive and unacceptable and calls for solidarity and change. There is an immediate objection to this approach. It consists in saying that the anger present in racial protests, especially in mixed-race societies like Brazil, is an irrational anger that has no good reasons in its favor, because here there is no visible or formally supported anti-black racism widely shared by whites, as there is in other countries. Whites and blacks live together in rich and relevant social and interpersonal exchanges, creating a very particular kind of racial syncretism. In such a context of fluid and dynamic racial exchange, with no major historical obstacles to interracial marriage or the presence of blacks in relevant positions in the social structure, anger has no place, it is not a justified emotion, and the reasons behind it could be interpreted as a type of motivated reasoning, in other words, what appears as normative reasons for feeling angry are nothing more than a particular bias of black activists, usually associated with political interests. Take, for example, the assertion by the organizers of the protest in El Salvador that black people are always, or almost always, portrayed in subordinate or degrading roles in the media and in cultural performances. Critics might argue that the protest in question is misplaced. It is art. And in art and fiction, relations of subjection can be used not only as a signifier of degradation, but also as a mechanism to elicit sympathy and gain partners in the anti-racist struggle, and there is nothing disreputable about their use. The representation of black people in lower social status or degrading roles need not be seen in a negative light. After all, representations of suffering can be, and often are, effective mechanisms for arousing sympathy. In this sense,

there is no good reason to protest or express anger. It is part of the role of art not to serve any particular agenda, but to expose human dramas and vicissitudes, regardless of their political or social implications.

Against this argument, it can be said that while it doesn't seem justified to expect all art to conform to a certain social purpose or value that we admire, it does make sense to criticize, at key moments, the social and political dissonance of certain artistic representations. In this sense, it is reasonable to vehemently criticize the continued performance of plays that portray black people in conditions of subjugation at a time when the country is attempting to adjust to the passive and subjective representations of black people. Revising the roles of social inferiority and promoting a revival of black agency, exploring themes of autonomy, resistance to oppression, and black protagonism in recent and distant history is a perfectly defensible ideal for Brazilian art and culture. If not as a dominant leitmotif, at least as an objective capable of counterbalancing the dominant representations of subjection in dramaturgy, media, and other cultural and artistic contexts (Araújo, 2019). In this sense, angry protest could be seen as legitimate because it is a response to a racial bias present in high and mass culture, a response from a community tired of seeing representations that inferiorize black people. Although they can be questioned and debated (I don't expect a consensus here), there are reasons why protests can help broaden the public debate about art in general and art that addresses racial issues, with positive results.

But the critique of the irrationality of anti-racist rage is not limited to the question of the inferiority of black people in art. It can and has been reframed in broader and more difficult terms. This point can be understood by examining the second focus of many anti-racist protests: structural and institutional racism. It is a fact that there are glaring racial asymmetries in Brazilian universities. Even after 10 years of quota policies, the number of black professors in universities is very low (Romão, 2022). There is also an abundance of racist statements and attacks in Brazilian universities (Klaudat, Williges, 2022). It doesn't seem that we live in a climate of harmony and racial equality. Even in the face of cases of heinous racism on campus, the absence of significant changes in the racial profile in classrooms and in important positions in universities, critics of anti-racist activism insist that the low number of black professors in Brazilian universities or the overrepresentation of blacks in lower-paid positions is not directly related to racism. Racial asymmetries could be explained by broader historical injustices linked to the slave regime and access to education. The end of slavery came without any kind of project to reintegrate the enslaved and resulted in high levels of poverty and social exclusion among the black population. As a result, the

number of blacks with higher education remained low. The absence of black people on school benches, in legislatures and on the bench is not the direct effect of insidious racism, but the result of structural problems that can only be solved in the long term, which requires, in large part, an increase in higher education within the black community itself. Instead of anti-racist protest, critics recommend more study as a solution (Risério, 2007). The argument presented here therefore suggests that anti-racist anger is irrational because it makes no sense to protest structural asymmetries by focusing on one institution (the university) or on certain social representations of blacks in the media or other social spaces, because the problem to be addressed is much larger and difficult to solve in the short term.

There is a well-known way of responding to this argument. It consists of stating that there is no way to defend the existence of some kind of racism in interpersonal relationships (individual racism) and not recognize it in the social structure. After all, as Schucman and Mantovani (2023) state, "subjects are constituted through the appropriation of meanings constructed in society". In other words, the argument here consists of saying that no school or university will be able to provide full social inclusion and citizenship as long as society remains structurally trapped in the derogatory and inferiorizing feelings and representations of black people. It is not, however, this strategy that I will try to articulate here. My strategy will follow a different path, one that is linked to the radical social tradition and the sociology of affection. For this kind of reading, the recourse to the historical origins of racial inequality, the thesis that education can work wonders in undoing racial asymmetries, and the insistence that blacks must have "patience" with the processes of social transformation, valuing conciliation and negotiation, is nothing more than a stealth move in the game of political and social power. Returning to the theme of progressive whites' commitment to anti-racism invoked by Martin Luther King at the beginning of this essay, it could be said that brutal racial inequalities such as those seen in Brazil are objects that demand full engagement in projects of social transformation; they are not objects that demand phlegmatic individual and collective understanding. They demand that we take responsibility for transforming unjust realities. In other words, it is not a concern for rationality and justice that underlies the critique of angry racial protest, but certain unacknowledged feelings, especially the fear of the social ascent of subaltern groups and the loss of social power. For radical social critics, the praise of civility as opposed to anger and revolt is essentially an attempt at social control. The accusation of irrationality thus has an inverted meaning: it is presented as an "appeal to reason" when it is itself nothing more than a dark feeling, a kind of fear of being "demoted or left behind". Given this defensive, sentimental perspective, any movement by subaltern

groups tends to be perceived as a threat to the fundamental values of tolerance and conviviality; as a civilizational step backward. This fear is all the more exacerbated through angry protest, because anti-racist anger is expressed through gestures and a black and peripheral language, through degraded bodies, from which activism and concern for social justice are not expected, but simply subjection and inferiorization. The mere sight of black bodies in motion perverts the white imagination, triggering affective structures ranging from irritation and impatience to fear, horror and disgust. This partly explains why the black protester is easily transformed into an abused person, a thug, or an animal (as Risério suggests in his analysis), words that clearly refer to the idea of violating social norms and partly reveal a kind of self-attributed moral superiority. The subversion of confrontational language, with its screams and materiality, tends to be captured in the light of prejudice and fear, through expressions of astonishment and horror: "What savagery! Why this? There's no reason for it!" The conclusion "there's no reason for it, they're troublemakers, not activists" results, from the perspective of radical criticism, from the discomfort and emotional rejection of characters who escape their desired political and social place. It is an attempt to rationalize a feeling of hostility toward subjugated social groups. The American anthropologist Arlie Hochschild in *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*, explores the emergence of these deep-seated feelings on the white American far right through submerged narratives called "deep stories", *i.e.*, subterranean discursive flows and hidden accounts that channel emotions, gather and organize dispersed anxieties and residual fears into feelings of injustice and aggression, sometimes erupting into mass rage or outbreaks of fighting and aggression. The suggestion here is that accusations of irrationality may in fact be a perverse form of political affection directed at minorities. What is seen as irrationality can be a sentimental reaction to the slightest attempt to change traditional hierarchical structures.

5 The Counterproductive Objection to Antiracist Anger and Affective Injustice

A second relevant objection to anti-racist anger is the objection of counter-productivity. It states that, even if one accepts the justice of the demands of black activism, shouting, scaring people (as in the protest in Salvador) does nothing to broaden the prospects of justice for thousands of excluded blacks, especially in a country where poverty and misery affects both whites and blacks. The argument could be put like this: there is a basic error in the strategy of transforming a riot with angry shouts into transformative action against the

system of structural and institutional racism. In fact, the movement in the political space is the opposite of what is expected: it only succeeds in attracting hostility and generating divisions. Anger alienates people, creates opposition, and does not generate any kind of positive engagement, especially from people who are not convinced of the existence of "racial hierarchies" in the university and other institutions.

This is a well-known argument in the political tradition of analyzing anger. It does not attack anger for its irrational tendency, as the previous argument does. This analysis admits that militants may have good reasons for their protests and, in this sense, anger cognitively articulates injustices of various kinds. Black people have been exploited, subjugated; universities are unhappy with their presence. All this is accepted. The problem with anger is not that it has no underlying reasons. The problem with anger is something else: its unproductivity in the public space. As Srinivasan said with reference to the work of Glen Pettigrove and Martha Nussbaum, the critique here insists that anger should be avoided "should be avoided even in circumstances of political injustice because of its tendency to alienate would-be allies, aggravate conflict, and ultimately undermine the pursuit of just outcomes" (Srinivasan, 2018, p. 125 and 2016). Even when the claim is just, the tendency is for angry acts to be ill-received by opponents and the general public and result in violent retaliation, worsening the situation of the already oppressed. The recommended trend would be to overcome the anger that motivated the protests and design ways to achieve better results in the future. I examine this argument in more detail below, showing that it implies unacceptable paradoxes and the admission of a new form of injustice that Srinivasan called *affective injustice*.

The objection that angry protests are unproductive is essentially that anger and angry protests tend to alienate allies and generate more violence and rejection for already oppressed groups. Martha Nussbaum has defended a form of this argument, arguing in *Anger and Forgiveness* (2013) that anger is only acceptable when it is transitive, that is, when it arises and then disappears, giving way to nobler emotions. Nussbaum's transitory anger focuses on processes that promote social well-being and advocates extending a generous kind of love and hope for future cooperation and constructive work to the perpetrator of the offensive act (Nussbaum, 2016). Srinivasan responded to this objection by pointing out that by shifting the focus away from the normative reasons for anger and toward its practical effects, this critique puts those who struggle against racial oppression in a dilemma: they must choose between expressing an apt, appropriate anger that responds to a moral wrong, or controlling or suppressing that anger for prudential reasons. The critique of the unproductiveness of

anger prioritizes prudential over intrinsic reasons. But this alternative, as Srinivasan rightly points out, implies an affective injustice. It demands sacrifice: "victims of injustice must choose between making the world as it should be, and appreciating and marking the world as it is" (Srinivasan, 2018, p. 133). In other words, the critique that seeks to maintain that anger is unproductive intends to force the victims of oppression to make a choice between expressing righteous anger and controlling it for the greater good. As Srinivasan puts it tellingly, this kind of objection to anger represents a form of "blaming the victim":

> But there is something morally insensitive in their rallying cry: 'don't get angry, it only makes things worse!' It suggests that the moral violation is not so bad, just a practical problem to be solved, rather than a wrongdoing to which its victim must bear witness. It suggests that the primary locus of responsibility for fixing the problem lies with the victim rather than the perpetrator (Srinivasan, 2018, p. 133).

Srinivasan responds to this criticism by defending counterproductive anger. There are two fundamental aspects of this defense that deserve to be highlighted: the first concerns the quality of the apprehension of injustice in anger. Anger registers or apprehends injustice according to a form of apprehension that has a unique value. Like a botanist who, after receiving instructions from an artist about colors and tones or the movement of leaves, notices something entirely new in a flower he has always worked with, anger helps its bearers to see the moral insult in a particular way, a way that is vivid, energetic, that sets the body on fire, something very different from a faint intellectual apprehension of a moral insult. The change wrought by anger is qualitative. The affective change alters the contours of and relationship to moral wrongdoing. Drawing on the accounts of American abolitionist activist Fredrick Douglas, Srinivasan shows the importance of anger in empowering victims of oppression.

> Frederick Douglass, who wrote of the moment when he finally resisted the violent attack of a slave breaker that it "rekindled the few expiring embers of freedom, and revived within me a sense of my own manhood. It recalled the departed self-confidence, and inspired me again with a determination to be free" (Srinivasan, 2016).

Critics of anti-racist anger like Martha Nussbaum fail to mention that anger has bodily and affective contours that can be an essential part of our moral repertoire of resistance to injustice, that it affects people who are the object of oppression in a very particular way, that it paves the way and gives courage for affirmative and less passive stances in the face of oppression. The corporeality of anger, the energy it spreads through the body, is part of its value and a value it enjoys regardless of whether it has good practical

consequences. Even if nothing is gained by expressing anger, it does something for those who feel it: it shows injustice in a vivid and motivating way, a way that fosters belief in the possibility of overcoming the unjust situations one faces.

The second aspect of the importance of unproductive anger has to do with issues of agency. Srinivasan says that feeding anger can often be a way to "help restore the victim's sense of self-worth". As she puts it, "anger is sometimes and for some people the only way of recovering a lost sense of agency. And sometimes, and for some people, it can be the only way of registering the full injustice of the world" (Srinivasan, 2016). This sense is also defended by Bernard Boxill in relation to protest in the face of injustice. He notes that the degrading treatment and belittlement that marginalized people receive in certain circumstances can destabilize and destroy even a person's deepest conviction of his or her own worth. They may come to fear that "because of what they are doing or living, they will become servile" (Boxill, 1976, p. 67). In this kind of situation, protest can have a moral function even when the protester realizes that he has little chance of convincing others of his perspective. It has the important function of convincing themselves and giving evidence to others that their commitment to their own value remains intact.

6 Final considerations

In this article I have tried to characterize a particular kind of anger that appears in the context of anti-racist protests. It is a moral anger that responds by signaling and affirming the principles of justice and social transformation. This type of anger does not exclude the possibility of naturalized aggression between opponents in political struggles. The persistence of situations of injustice can lead to attacks on the wrong targets, or to a type of anger that responds too intensely or with a desire for revenge. Victims of oppression and oppressors can become adversaries filled with vengeful anger and enter into a cycle of violence and retaliation. As William Gamson observed,

> In concretizing the targets of an injustice frame, there is a danger that people will miss the underlying structural conditions that produce hardship and inequality. They may exaggerate the role of human actors, failing to understand broader structural constraints, and misdirect their anger at easy and inappropriate targets (Gamson, 1996, p. 33).

This kind of anger, expressed in physical aggression and violence, does not open a positive path to social change. However, as I have tried to qualify the nature of this anger by analyzing some of James Baldwin's essays, this is not the type of anger present in contemporary racial protests. The dominant type of anger in Brazilian racial protests is a

morally justified and assertive anger that calls for dialogue, not destruction. Antiracist anger is a demand for recognition of current violations and injustices, a demand for racial solidarity. It registers and invites others to contribute to ending the injustices it identifies. In this sense, anti-racist anger seeks an inclusive and liberating perspective, it seeks social and racial change. The appropriate response to this kind of anger is to recognize, as Martin Luther King pointed out, that it is not racial protest that creates tension and conflict. Tension is the result of past injustices that must be addressed and confronted. Anger in this sense is not an act of revenge or retaliation, but a kind of love for justice. As Myisha Cherry said, "when a protester marches in the streets, their anger is expressing compassion for the downtrodden and love for justice" (2021, p. 5). In this sense, anti-racist rage need not and should not be suppressed from the social space. What it does is essentially a call for shared responsibility, a call for those who are not targets of racial oppression to broaden their engagement and not, as is often the case, be shocked and offended when exposed to angry protest. The focus on anger management needs to be redirected to a mutual effort to correct the initial circumstances that triggered the anger: the focus should be putted in addressing "*causes* instead of mere *symptoms*" (Cherry, 2020, p. 52-53). In this sense, anti-racist anger is not free from the risks of psychological and ethical compromise. It can turn into misguided revenge or some forms of hatred, but the fundamental moral flaw here is not on the side of those who rise up in protest and express their anger, usually at the risk of suffering further aggression and retaliation. There is a tendency to ask too much of oppressed groups[4]. The fundamental moral flaw lies with racist whites and moderate whites who criticize this kind of anger without paying attention to the world of injustice that activated it in the first place.

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[4] As mentioned by the political science professor Desmond Jagmohan in a comment to Agnes Callard: "I agree with Callard when she says victims can be morally *compromised* by the anger they feel in response to their oppression or by their acquiescence to such conditions. But I part ways with her when she says enduring oppression leaves victims morally *damaged*. It is difficult for me to imagine the black men and women who faced down Bull Connor and his henchmen at the Edmund Pettus Bridge as morally diminished; it is also difficult for me to imagine the black men and woman who did not march that day as ethically broken. But it is not difficult for me to imagine racist and moderate whites that sustained that world as morally shattered souls" (Jagmohan, 2020, p. 41-42).

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