ANGER, INTENTIONALITY AND THE VIEW FROM WITHIN

I consider a debate between two of my Chicago colleagues, Martha Nussbaum and Agnes Callard, about the justifiability of anger as a response to perceived mistreatment: Nussbaum argues that anger involves a desire for “Payback” that is fundamentally irrational, whereas Callard, while admitting that anger involves a desire for payback, defends this response as rational in its context. I argue that, rather than taking sides in this dispute, we should recognize the positions taken by Callard and Nussbaum as giving reflective expressions to two standpoints on anger that are necessarily available to anyone capable of experiencing anger. I go on to suggest—drawing on some thoughts from Sartre—that standpoints analogous to those of Callard and Nussbaum are possible for a range of human emotions, and that recognizing the possibility of this double standpoint can teach us important lessons about the validity that emotional responses and the limits of such validity.

If you have any questions or need assistance logging in, please contact Eugene Chislenko at chislenko@temple.edu.