

How Is Vicarious Feeling Possible? In Defense of Reactive Attitudes

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Abstract: My aim in this paper is to illuminate the question of how vicarious feeling is possible, by advancing our understanding of vicarious emotions. I address this problem by classifying the reactive attitude into two categories: the vicarious, and the self-reactive. I argue that guilt is constitutively tied to personal responsibility and that the appropriateness of vicarious feeling of group harm derives from a reflection on the appropriateness of our own reactive attitude, that is, vicarious reactive attitude, e.g., indignation or outrage.


Keywords: Collective guilt; indignation; reactive attitude; responsibility; vicarious feeling.

1. Vicarious feeling

Vicarious feeling is a feeling that is experienced on behalf of someone else's action. In order to explore this emotion, let us first of all, compare some emotions, especially, pride and guilt. Both are obviously related to the self. Vicarious pride can be said to be the propensity to imagine oneself in the position of a loved one and thereby to feel, from that perspective, the pleasure that the qualities possessed by the loved one command. It seems

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possible to experience a feeling in relation to one's loved ones, as when we feel after seeing them as extensions of ourselves. For example, when my daughter achieves something, it is easy for me to feel proud given that she is a part of me, and thereby to feel proud on her behalf. The way that admiration or love can lead to pride is by assimilation or identification. It is difficult to imagine how I could come to attribute pride to you without recognizing in you pleasure at something you are related to. Hence, it seems that vicarious pride in a loved one's achievements requires genuine self-consciousness. We can call this view the cognitivist theory of emotion. It involves propositional attitudes which are complex and contentful.¹ If this kind of recognition is necessary, then what I am experiencing cannot be a primitive, pre-cognitive form of empathy or of the sentiment of pride. Then one might argue against such a purely cognitivist stance—they might argue that self-consciousness and recognition in others does not need simulation theories or content, but just some reflections of X. This type of empathy or sympathy in other circumstances seems to necessarily involve a kind of cognition.

In this respect, cognitivists say that when I am proud of my beautiful house it is because of my *belief* that the object is mine. In being proud of my beautiful house, I first of all must *believe* that it is valuable; secondly, in order for the feeling to play a role I must *believe* the house to be in some way connected with me. G. Taylor calls those two beliefs 'explanatory' and 'identificatory,' respectively (Taylor 1985, 27). The 'explanatory' belief just explains the relation between the valuable things and the person, whereas 'identificatory' belief refers to something 'closely' related to the person who feels pride. Thus, according to Taylor, "a person may hold the requisite explanatory beliefs and yet not feel proud." "She may regard her beautiful house as a most desirable possession but may not regard this as reflecting on her own worth" (Taylor 1985, 34). Thus, in order to feel pride, there must be identificatory belief that "the agent regards the desirable

¹ The question whether the theory of emotion should count emotion as cognitive or not is the question whether cognitive elements, such as belief and judgment, are conceptually necessary or not for having emotion. With regard to 'cognition,' there has been a lively debate within the 'cognitivist' camp whether the type of cognition in question is better thought of as belief, thought, judgment, or something else. For a more detailed discussion on the cognitivist theory of emotion, see (Yang 2016).

thing as something she herself has brought about.” That is, she must regard the information given by explanatory beliefs as contributing to her worth. This is, according to Taylor, a sufficient condition for pride. But if we accept this view we cannot explain the following case: in the case of the triumph of the team which I support, pride may involve ‘explanatory belief,’ but not involve ‘identificatory belief,’ since I cannot regard the team’s victory as one that I myself brought about. Thus, in this respect, some people say that the pride in the triumph of the team does not derive from belief but from my *thinking of* the team’s victory *as* mine (as argued in Yang 2016). Yet one might wonder how this is different from merely imagining the victory as his. He can, in some sense, imagine the Spanish football victory as his, but it does not make him proud of it.

Another difficulty faced by cognitivism in explaining vicarious feelings is related to the phenomenological features of such emotions. It seems to be possible to feel guilty, for example, by seeing someone as an extension of oneself. A mother can feel guilt for a wrong committed by her son. If it is a necessary feature of any emotional state of guilt that it has certain phenomenological features, such as feelings of discomfort and distress, then the question arises, whether someone can truly have a vicarious feeling when they do not affectively respond. In light of this, cognitivists might question the assumption that phenomenology is constitutive of the emotions. For example, Margaret Gilbert says:

When I say to you ‘I feel great remorse’ must I be saying something false unless there are pangs or the like in the background? On the face of it, I need not be saying something false. Note that some apparently equivalent expressions do not use the term ‘feel’ at all: ‘I am full of remorse’; ‘I am truly remorseful’ (Gilbert 2000, 135).

If this were right, we can say that a shared feeling of guilt is possible on the basis of cognitivism on emotion, for example, a judgmentalist view, according to which an emotion’s essential element is a judgment, while phenomenal feeling just accompanies it. There are variations on cognitive theory of emotion. In this paper I focus on Robert Solomon’s (1993) and Martha Nussbaum’s (2001) views, for the sake of criticizing Gilbert’s position on collective emotion. This is because Gilbert seems to endorse Nussbaum’s view in analysing collective guilt, although she does not specifically focus

on emotion theory itself. According to Solomon (1993) and Nussbaum (2001), an emotion can be analysed solely in terms of beliefs, or evaluative judgments. Furthermore, they argue that non-cognitive elements or bodily feelings are not necessary or sufficient elements of an emotion. Rather they take evaluative judgments to be the constituent parts of an emotion. Nussbaum seems to try to explain how emotions can be violent, stormy, fading, suffocating etc. in purely cognitive terms without reference to (bodily) feelings. Given this, the main objection is that it overlooks the affective aspect of emotion. It fails to do justice to a person's emotional state such as their being upset, perturbed, agitated or moved. The judgmentalists also acknowledge that most emotions are accompanied by physiological changes and their feelings. Moreover, they think that these physiological changes are caused by the combination of the appropriate belief and desire. Yet, they believe that physiological changes are just a *symptom* of a given emotion, but are not necessary for the concept of emotion.

Following cognitivist view on emotion, Gilbert argues that a shared feeling of guilt is a function of the joint commitment to form a unified subject that expresses guilt. But how could there be a unified subject that feels guilt? In order to understand this idea, let us look closely at Gilbert's cognitive view of collective guilt.

2. Gilbert's cognitivist view of collective guilt

Gilbert examines shared emotions through her pioneering view on collective emotions, and she presents an account of guilt in groups, specifically, in her article "Collective guilt and collective guilt feelings" (2002).

Now, one might say that only individuals have feelings, whereas groups do not have consciousness and therefore cannot feel anything either. Gilbert ignores this problem by adopting a strong cognitivist line on emotions. She argues that these emotions directed at collectives cannot be analyzed in terms of individual guilt. Thus, she argues that in order to feel guilt an individual person must have certain beliefs about his or her situation and perhaps some dispositions to act in certain ways. Gilbert's analysis of shared feelings of guilt appears to be an analysis of shared belief rather than an analysis of shared emotion. According to Gilbert, since it is difficult to

distinguish feeling guilt from judging that one is liable for a wrong, it is clear that feeling sensations are not supposed to account for the difference. If we accept this kind of cognitivism, the problem is how to explain the case in which we can see someone is having an irrational feeling: an anti-war protestor, for example, who does not jointly *agree* to the Iraq-war, but nevertheless feels guilty about it. As a citizen of the United States someone may feel she is party to a joint commitment, and in virtue of this she shares responsibility for—every harm her government commits. This might be the case even if she strongly objects to their actions. Although this is true, it seems odd to say that it would be appropriate for an anti-war protestor to feel guilt in response to the Iraqi war. Before discussing the appropriateness of irrational guilt, let us look at how Gilbert could explain irrational collective guilt.

Irrational collective guilt is possible, Gilbert might say, when a group adopts a collective belief and each individual member of the group may express or act on a belief that is not her own. In this respect, Gilbert stresses that one can even become part of a plural subject without entering into an explicit agreement to that effect. Moreover, she adds, “nor need they ever explicitly acknowledge that a certain view is the group’s view” (Gilbert 1989, 293). What then is the truth condition of the ascription of group belief? According to Gilbert, it is ‘letting a certain view stand as the view of the group’ in terms of a ‘joint commitment to accept as a body’ (Gilbert 1996, 7–15). Hence, Gilbert would say that collective feelings of guilt are a function of the ‘joint commitment’ to form a unified subject that expresses guilt. But how could there be a unified subject that feels guilt? Let’s consider Gilbert’s answer to this question.

According to Gilbert, in order to give a proper account of collective guilt, it is inadequate to take the model of individual guilt feelings (Gilbert 2000, 120). Instead, she suggests that the guilty feelings of a group are explained in terms of ‘feeling guilt as a body.’ How then does a collection of individual’s guilt become a collective guilt? On Gilbert’s account, it is possible in virtue of being ‘the plural subject of a feeling of guilt’ which can be defined as individuals being ‘jointly committed to feeling guilt as a body.’ Gilbert calls this type of joint commitment an ‘authority-producing’ joint commitment. It is a type of commitment made by the members of the

collective, as a body, through the means of a representative, by authorizing ‘some person or body to make decisions’ for the collective (Gilbert 2000, 127).

Given this, as Mikko Salmela points out, “it is one thing to make a commitment, either individual or joint, to feel an emotion and another to hope that the feeling emerges, for we cannot make ourselves feel at will” (Salmela 2012, 36). However, “there is no direct way to summon an emotion by committing oneself to feeling it,” while, “we indirectly commit ourselves to emotions by jointly committing ourselves to goals and other concerns” (Salmela 2012, 36). As Salmela clarifies, “such commitment rationally commits us to different feelings for goals depending on the outcome—joy if the goal is reached, fear if our progress toward the goal is threatened, disappointment if we fail to reach the goal, and so on” (Salmela 2012, 36).

Now let us consider how we indirectly commit ourselves to feeling emotions. Gilbert claims that in order for a member to participate in plural subjecthood, he or she should ‘participate in believing that *p* as a body’ (Gilbert 1994, 251). Hence, Gilbert argues that collective beliefs provide ‘individuals with a sense of unity or community with others’ (Gilbert 1994, 253).

Given Gilbert’s account, in order to explain the case in which a person feels collective guilt although they played no part in the harm committed by the group, we should make a distinction between ‘believing that *p*...’ and ‘accepting that *p*.’ This is because one can accept something even when they feel it to be false; whereas one cannot *believe* in such a falsity. As K. Brad Wray points out, the views as adopted by plural subjects are a means to realizing the group’s goals, however, belief that reflects truth or falsity (or accuracy) is not concerned with those goals (Wray 2001, 324). In order to understand this, let us consider Gilbert’s example. Consider when two parents decide that their child should be home at a certain time in the evening. It is the parents as a unit that believe this, despite the fact that neither parent may individually believe that this is when their child should be home (Gilbert 1994, 249–50). The normativity the parents could attach to the ‘should be home’ is: one must believe (truly or falsely) that the others in the group individually accept the collective item. The parents are jointly committed to raising their child properly. Hence, as a unit, the parents develop views with this goal in mind. It is their collective goal that determines what they claim to ‘collectively believe.’ Sometimes they will even

adopt views that conflict with their personal preferences and beliefs. If this is right, the relevant distinction Gilbert should make is a distinction between my believing that *p* and my accepting (and believing) that we collectively believe that *p*.

Even if we can clarify the case that a person feels collective guilt although they played no part in the harm committed by the group, by distinguishing between accepting that *p*... and believing that *p*..., another problem is how to explain the *appropriateness* of the case of irrational guilt. I shall try to answer this in section 5 of this paper. Before looking at this problem, let us consider the difference between guilt and shame.

One might say that we commonly treat the terms ‘shame’ and ‘guilt’ interchangeably. However, the difference between guilt and shame lies in their functions. Although guilt may feel similar phenomenologically to shame, it functions quite distinct from shame in that the latter is usually directed at one’s *self* rather than one’s *actions*. It is sometimes suggested that guilt is act-directed while shame is person-directed. In this respect, Jesse Prinz observes that “[A] guilty person can feel that her actions were wrong without feeling like a bad person” (Prinz 2007, 77). If you are a particularly shame-prone person, you can feel shame about not only the failure of your conduct but also the intention to do so (Adam Morton 2013, 180–82). This is because “shame essentially relates to our ‘social selves’ i.e., those properties related to the standing we have in the eyes of others” (Deonna and Teroni 2011, 195). But guilt is what you should feel about the actual failure.

If we agree with the view that guilt is act-directed whereas shame is person directed, we can say that the proper response to someone’s blames for your alleged failing you do not think you did is *anger* or *indignation* rather than *shame*. If this is true, it makes difficult to explain our case, i.e., anti-war protestor’s vicarious guilt. The reason is that if the guilt is not tied to *the self* but an emotion related to *the act*, the anti-war protestor does not need to feel guilty about the actions that she did not do. In order to solve this problem, I suggest a way to feel guilty on behalf of others even if I did not do the wrong action. I suggest that we should take feelings of guilt as a *reactive attitude*: one that we have in reaction to the actions of *ourselves* and *others*.

Given that guilt functions quite distinct from shame in that the one is usually directed at one's *action* rather than one's *self*, one might argue that feelings of guilt can never be felt vicariously because guilt is tied to what oneself *does*. Yet, one might argue against this argument: someone can have vicarious feelings of guilt by identifying with you as her (by assimilation or identification). If this is true, then why can't she feel just about anything you feel? The reason is that if we endorse the cognitivism of emotion, we cannot explain 'somatic feelings' when we have the emotions, because cognitivists deny that emotions are constituted both by judgment/belief and by somatic feelings.² Hence, I suggest that we should take reactive attitudes in order to explain vicarious feeling. As P. F. Strawson describes it, "reactive attitudes are essentially natural human reactions to the good will or ill will or indifference" people have towards each other (Strawson 1974, 10).

Emotions such as guilt, resentment, and indignation are what Strawson calls reactive attitudes. They provide the key to understanding moral responsibility and its conditions. To say that someone is responsible is to say that she is just prone to have these attitudes towards others and to be responsible is just to be the appropriate target of these attitudes. Strawson classifies reactive attitudes into three categories: personal, vicarious, and self-reactive, but he argues that moral reactive attitude should be an attitude that is felt in place of others, such as moral indignation or disapproval, rather than an individual attitude. Such attitudes are the criteria for actions and attitudes to be taken about others, not about oneself (Strawson 1974, 70–71). Given this, taking feelings of guilt as a reactive attitude will help us justify indirectly attributing responsibility by way of directly attributing the property to its members.

3. Irrational guilt and recalcitrant emotion

Having established that the proper response to group harms is a reactive attitude, let us distinguish, following Jesse Prinz (2007), 'reactive' from

² Among the cognitivists, Solomon (1993) and Nussbaum (2001) are proponents of this view. Gilbert seems to support this position.

'reflective' emotions. These correspond respectively to what Aron Ben-Ze'ev calls 'other-blaming' and 'self-blaming' emotions (Ben-Ze'ev 2000). We can classify the reactive attitudes into two categories: the vicarious, and the self-reactive. The vicarious reactive attitudes are those attitudes we feel in response to ill or good will shown to others (e.g. disapprobation and indignation or approval and support). The self-reactive attitudes are attitudes directed at ourselves in response to how we treat other and ourselves. Guilt, for example, is a response to our own actions. While these two kinds of moral emotions are negative emotions (i.e., indignation and guilt), as Prinz points out, there are also positive moral emotions, such as sympathy. Hence, Prinz suggests, there is a general asymmetry between positive and negative emotions in morality: "desirable behavior is more likely to be shaped through negative emotions than positive" (Prinz 2007, 79). This is because societies have a greater interest in eliminating bad behaviour than in promoting especially good behavior. In order to get rid of bad behavior, punishment can be more effective than praise. Assuming that punishment produces negative emotions, it can be said that we follow moral rules in order to avoid the emotional price of bad behavior. The emotional price of bad behavior would be guilt in the case of self-blame and anger in the case of other blame.

If we accept the idea that guilt is constitutively tied to personal responsibility, in the case of the anti-war protestor discussed the above (in section 2), she does not feel guilty about the actions of her government, but guilty about her own failure to prevent it. On the other hand, we can say that although the individual thinks that she is herself unlikely to participate in such collective acts or even to allow them, it might be enough just to feel outrage, or indignation in response to the actions of her government.

Given my suggestion that the proper response to group harms is 'anger' or 'indignation,' one might call into question where the normative dimension enters into those emotions.³ Before answering this question, let us consider Allan Gibbard's reactive emotion view.

³ In light of this, Gibbard's view has been criticized for failing to distinguish emotions such as anger from the normative dimension.

Gibbard is worried about the judgmentalist's accounts because he wishes to understand moral evaluations of wrongness and blameworthiness in terms of reactive emotions. According to him, to think and to act morally or blameworthily "is to accept norms that prescribe, in such a situation, guilt on the part of the agent and resentment on the part of others" (Gibbard 1990, 47). He argues that the judgmentalist cannot allow for inappropriate guilt and resentment (Gibbard 1990, 130, 147, 148–49). Although he does not address the problem of collective guilt, he would agree that the anti-war protestor's guilt in our example is irrational and cannot be explained in terms of judgmentalism. We may call this kind of irrational emotion 'recalcitrant emotion.'⁴ If I believe that a rabbit is not harmful, according to cognitivists, then I should not fear it. If I do, it follows that it is a mistake to fear the rabbit, and the fear should be abandoned. But it is possible that fear persists, even when I consciously believe that the rabbit is harmless. The recalcitrant emotions of groups, as Susan James points out, are even harder to dismiss. For example, as James puts it, a member of the American Republican party may fear Islamic fundamentalism, and hold the unchanging belief that fundamentalists are dangerous, despite evidence to the contrary (Susan James 2003, 228). If the strong cognitivist view were true, emotional recalcitrance would seem to predict that people can have inconsistent beliefs. Hence it follows that emotional recalcitrance gets strong cognitivism into trouble because they take the object of an emotion to be its propositional content. If an intentional object of emotion is one that has a propositional content, cognitivists might run into a contradictory state, because one cannot rationally assert both that p and that $\neg p$ at the same time: both cannot be true at the same time. In this respect, many contemporary emotion theorists suggest that emotions that are conflicting with judgment can be called 'recalcitrant emotion' and compare the recalcitrant mental state with optic illusions of the Müller-Lyer lines: the Müller-Lyer lines continue to appear to be of different lengths while they are known to be equal lengths.⁵

⁴ See (Yang 2009a) for a more detailed discussion of recalcitrant emotion.

⁵ For example, (D'Arms and Jacobson 2003; Susan James 2003). C. Tappolet in her recent work (2012) argues that recalcitrant emotions are a kind of perceptual illusion.

4. Appropriateness of reactive attitude

It would seem appropriate for an anti-war protestor to feel indignation at the War because that response is a manifestation of a sentiment as well as an endorsement of that person's judgment that the government has violated the demands of justice, a demand to which the protestor believes it ought to be held accountable. Indignation is a reaction of public outrage at social injustice, thereby producing resistance and insurrection. This emotion can be categorized as a collective emotion, along with guilt and shame.

This idea supports Gibbard's view, which assimilates reactive emotions closely to other emotional and adaptive states. On Gibbard's (1990) norm expressivism, moral judgments of right and wrong are connected to the rationality of what are identified as the moral emotions—guilt and impartial anger. The general strategy is to treat resentment or anger as identified by their characteristic causes and by the forms of expression and behavior to which they characteristically give rise, and to treat guilt as a refinement of a more basic biological adaptation in specific cultural circumstances.

As we have seen, Gilbert's judgmentalism does not allow us to ascribe those emotions to people who find the emotions uncalled for from their accepted perspective of moral demand. She follows strong cognitivism in rendering emotions as evaluative judgments and feelings as sensations that have only a contingent role in emotion. But in seeking an alternative to this kind of judgmentalist account, I endorse Gibbard's view, which goes to the opposite extreme, denying altogether the role of beliefs in explaining the reactive attitudes.

According to Gibbard, the adaptive function of guilt remains constant across the species, and its function can be explained only in terms of its promoting sensitivity to others' anger. Now, if our feelings can fall under moral evaluations, how can his theory handle questions about the rightness of feeling guilt? There are two questions here: one about the feeling of guilt, and another about its being warranted. Gibbard suggests that to call a feeling warranted is to express one's acceptance of norms that allow or require having that feeling.⁶ What then does 'norm' mean for this account? In order

⁶ See (Yang 2009b) for a more detailed treatment of this problem.

to answer this question, Gibbard presents a notion of wrongness or rightness as being to some degree culturally specific:

What a person does is morally wrong if and only if it is rational for him to feel guilty for doing it, and for others to resent him (Gibbard 1990, 42).

Gibbard uses what is rational and what makes sense interchangeably. It is important to note that *what is rational* and *what makes sense* are not meant to be understood in any technical sense. Instead, these terms should be understood as work-a-day normative terms. I follow him in this. Gibbard's sense of 'rational' implies that guilt involves endorsement of a norm requiring. He suggests that norms be understood in terms of the following question:

Are there situations in which, no matter what the agent does, it will make sense for him to feel guilty for having done it, and for others to be angry at him for having done it? (Gibbard 1990, 43)

So, in the case of guilt, it can be said that guilt is a mechanism that was an evolutionary adaptive response to anger. It makes groups of society reconcilable for mutual cooperation rather than conflict. Animals show a limited response to hostility, while humans need to be able to alleviate anger to bring about reconciliation. Guilt has evolved to regulate these responses. The problem with this explanation is that it is not clear why guilt and anger should be reciprocal. Gibbard seems to see that the standard of rightness or wrongness for feeling guilt is a response-dependent one. This is so because we feel guilty in situations where, in many cases, it is reasonably justified that others are angry with us. According to Gibbard, guilt and anger are supposed to be mutual feelings in that "guilt aims to placate anger, and it is governed by the same norms as govern anger" (Gibbard 1990, 139). Denying this reciprocity makes the Gibbard's adaptive syndrome theory difficult. I am endorsing it.

Gibbard, as we have seen, focuses on the reactive attitudes we have toward individuals and ourselves. But we also have reactive attitudes toward collectives. We can say,

A group *X* is morally blameworthy for doing action *F* in circumstance *C* just in case it is rational (it 'makes sense') for both

- (i) members of group *X* to feel guilt, and
- (ii) others to resent the group *X*.

There are normative standards that apply not to individuals but to groups, governments, and so on. Consider the case of the terrorist organization Islamic State (IS), for example.

At this point one might raise a question: in order for collectives to be appropriate targets of our moral sentiments, must collectives themselves be able to have reactive attitudes? Following Deborah Perron Tollefsen, I admit the possibility that there are collective reactive attitudes: “Collective guilt may involve an attitude in response to a collective action done by the group of which one is a member” (Tollefsen 2003, 220). I argue that if a group is responsible for an evil act, they are justifiably liable to the anger and resentment of others, and if such attitudes are present in our interactions with collectives, we can attribute moral responsibility to collectives. If we assume that our reactive attitudes toward collectives are tracking the same features as they track at the individual level, as Tollefsen points out, then a further question arises: how then could a collective itself have reactive attitudes?⁷ If these attitudes are emotions and emotions are constituted both by judgement/belief and by somatic feelings, one might ask: how could the collective itself *feel*?⁸

If we endorse the strong cognitivism on emotion, following Nussbaum (2001), it is difficult to explain the affective aspect of emotion. This is because, as we have seen in section 1, for Nussbaum an emotion can be analyzed solely in terms of beliefs, or evaluative judgments. Moreover,

⁷ This is because, for Strawson the reactive attitudes are reciprocal. Tollefsen mentions that this point made by M. Bratman. See (Tollefsen 2003, 231).

⁸ When I say that emotions are feelings, I mean ‘somatic feelings,’ following the William Jamesian, according to which emotions can be identified with bodily sensations that have a certain pattern. Yet if emotions were merely perceptions of the body, they would represent body as being in such and such a state. This theory also encounters difficulty in explaining the intentionality of emotion, for as many point out, feeling theorist cannot explain the fact that emotions have intentional content. William James sometimes highlighted the turbulence of emotion rather than their intentionality. Hence, for him to experience emotion is to be in some state of agitation, commotion, excitation, etc.

Nussbaum believes that physiological changes are just a *symptom* of a given emotion, but are not necessary for the concept of emotion. However, if this kind of cognitivism were correct, then the cognitivist account of emotion would render the component of feeling in constituting emotion superfluous. I reject this kind of cognitivism on the ground that it ignores a ‘feeling component.’ *Pace* Nussbaum, if affect is not contrasted with cognition, then the real problem of explaining emotion is how we can develop a thorough account of how emotions dissolve the distinction between thoughts and feelings, or cognition and affect.⁹

Gilbert seems to endorse the strong cognitive theory of emotion, following Nussbaum, when she addresses the collective remorse.

Consider Gilbert’s account of collective remorse again:

Group *G* feels remorse over an act *A* if and only if the members of *G* are jointly committed to feeling remorse as a body over act *A* (Gilbert 2000, 135).

According to Gilbert, group guilt is a function that is bound together to form an integrative subject that expresses guilt. Individuals who see themselves as members of a group will do what they can, through actions or utterances, to form such subjects.

Yet the difficulty that Gilbert faces is to explain the phenomenological features of such a feeling. Since the group lacks a natural body, it is difficult to say that it is the subject of phenomenological feelings such as ‘pangs’ or ‘twinges’ of guilt. Yet, it seems to me that this is not an insuperable problem. For it seems that to hold a corporation or other collective morally responsible is simply to be prone to having the appropriate reactive attitudes toward them and for a collective to be responsible is for them to be subject to the appropriate attitudes. This is because, as many point out, our reactive attitudes are emotional and adaptive states. Emotional and adaptive states, disgust and sadness for example, are the basic emotions that have the phenomenal features. “Indignation may be anger calibrated to injustice, and guilt may be sadness calibrated to self-caused harm” (Prinz 2007, 67).

⁹ A more detailed discussion on how emotions dissolve the distinction between thoughts and feelings, or cognition and affect is beyond the scope of this paper.

Anger, for example, is the basic emotion which has the phenomenal feature of being a reaction to and appraisal of a threat or offense. The reason why we can say that anger is an adaptive state is, as Prinz remarks, that “[W]hen we react emotionally to victimization, the anger response is natural because it is evolved to cope with threats, and it disposes us to aggression” (Prinz 2007, 70). Given this, we need to consider whether reactive attitudes are constitutive of the practice of moral responsibility for collectives.

If reactive attitudes are constitutive of moral responsibility, we can say that the proper response to group wrongdoing should be mutually expressed emotions—guilt and anger or indignation, which are self-reactive and vicarious reactive attitudes, respectively. In addition, following Tollefsen (2003), we express our indignation and resentment on collectives themselves.

5. Conclusion

Hence, in this paper, I classify the reactive attitudes into three categories: self-reactive, vicarious, and collective reactive. The self-reactive attitudes are attitudes directed at ourselves in response to how we treat others and ourselves. Guilt, for example, is a response to our own actions. Guilt is a self-reactive attitude directed at ourselves in response to how we treat others and ourselves. In the case of the anti-war protestor, we can say that she feels guilt over the actions of her government, which she does not support, because, being a member of the collective to which the government also belongs (e.g., the United States), she has indirectly accepted those actions by the government. Additionally, she might have a vicarious feeling, i.e., outrage or indignation. In this case, it is a vicarious reactive attitude, on behalf of those victims. As Tollefsen points out, “our indignation on behalf of the victims is directed not just at the individuals who committed and participated in the cover-up, but also at the institution which concerned it and, in certain cases, made it possible” (Tollefsen 2003, 224).

Let us consider how the vicarious reactive attitude, that is, indignation, is possible. In the case of the terrorist attack of 9/11, whether as a citizen of the U.S or from other country, someone might feel outrage or indignation

on behalf of the victims or their families. This is the vicarious reactive attitude. This is the attitude we feel in response to ill or good will shown to others. Indignation is anger calibrated to injustice. One might object that the vicarious reactive attitude of indignation is not linked to phenomenal feeling. Yet, we can say that it can be linked to phenomenal feeling by virtue of the fact that it derives from the basic form of anger, which is concerned with an appraisal of threat or offense. Although righteous anger and indignation have a common ground in that they derive from a more basic form, Prinz differentiates them in that the latter, but not necessarily the former, always involves violations of justice.¹⁰ To conclude, we can say that the appropriateness of the vicarious feeling of group harm derives from a reflection on the appropriateness of our own reactive attitude, that is, vicarious reactive attitude, e.g., indignation or outrage. Hence, in our case, i.e., the anti-war protestor case, it can be said that it would be rational for her to feel indignation for the Iraqi war because she believes her government has violated the demands of justice, a demand to which she believes it ought to be held.

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¹⁰ For a more detailed discussion on anger and indignation, see (Prinz 2007); see also (Yang 2009b).

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