

Evil, Political Violence, and Forgiveness

Essays in Honor of Claudia Card

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Chapter Eight

Moral Powers and Forgivable Evils

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Moral philosophers following Immanuel Kant have often described ethics as answering the question, "What ought I to do?" This seems to imply a set of choices on a fresh page. One of our recurrent ethical tasks, however, is better suggested by the question, "What ought I – or, better, we – to do now?"

– Margaret Urban Walker¹

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2006, Kay Leigh Harriott, a young Boston girl who was shot and paralyzed at the age of three, made a public victim's statement in a Boston courtroom to the effect that while her attacker was wrong to fire the bullet, she forgave him.² Nelson Mandela forgave his white jailors for twenty-seven years of brutal treatment while incarcerated, even inviting one to his presidential inauguration.³ Luis Perez Aguirre, a Jesuit priest in Uruguay who was repeatedly imprisoned and tortured for his human rights work, later met his torturer on the street and forgave him, even offering assistance.⁴ Laura Blumenfeld recounts the fascinating story of her efforts to find the man, Omar Khatib, who had shot her father, David Blumenfeld. While her original intention was to hold Khatib personally accountable, she eventually formed a relationship with Khatib and his family, and found herself standing up to speak at his trial *on his behalf*, much to their surprise and her own.⁵

It is difficult to know what to make of these stories—or how to speak of them at all. The protagonists seem remarkable, even heroic. Like Gandhi or Martin Luther King, they appear exemplars of a generous and compassionate humanity. We find their resilience "staggering, sometimes scarcely credible."⁶ But at

the same time, we may be unwilling to hold up their example as a normative standard—not only because it appears impossibly high, for many of us, but equally, for what it suggests about those who do *not* forgive: that remaining defiant, even angry, about the wrongful infliction of unspeakable horrors is somehow morally second-best.⁷ How can we simultaneously value forgiveness and its absence?

Claudia Card recommends that we do so by considering both as potentially, though not necessarily, valuable exercises of a victim's *moral* powers. In Chapter Eight of *The Atrocity Paradigm*, she turns from the identification and analysis of evil to the question how we might cope with its aftermath. Our ability to live well, she concludes, will depend largely upon our attempts to rectify the harms of evil, and to face with courage and integrity those 'remainders' that cannot be rectified.⁸ Following a brief discussion of punishment and demands for reparation (also described as victim's moral powers), Card focuses her attention on the nature of forgiveness.

An extended discussion of forgiveness in a book on evil is jarring, and even appears misplaced; surely evil is exactly what is *unforgivable*. In fact, commentators on *The Atrocity Paradigm* have remarked on the discrepancy between positive talk of forgiveness and the 'fantasies' of forced castration for rapists expressed earlier in the book.⁹ Card appears uneasy with her own approach, remarking, "I did not mean to *advocate* forgiveness for atrocities. I have never been a fan of forgiveness for survivors of domestic battering."¹⁰ The problem she faces is the seemingly impossible task of acknowledging the strength and praiseworthiness of the examples above without thereby demanding—or even encouraging—forgiveness from victims of similar atrocities. While few philosophers are prepared to argue that *all* extraordinary or 'undeserved' forgiveness indicates that the forgiver is at fault in the same way she would be if she failed in a duty, it does seem we can be *too* forgiving, offering it too easily or too quickly. Many are prepared to argue that this is a moral, and not merely a prudential, failing.¹¹ An excess of forgiveness may indicate a lack of self-respect as often as it does magnanimity. At the same time, there are times where—despite our concern for the victim's feelings and experiences—we recognize a victim as worthy of censure for being *too* *unforgiving*.

This paper is an extended meditation on Card's notion of a moral power, specifically, those that emerge in the aftermath of evil and culpable wrongdoing. It is not immediately evident what 'moral powers' are, or how we should understand either their scope or their grounding. Card never makes this explicit, but her discussion reveals that moral powers are something akin to capacities for morally significant responses to harm. Moral powers are forms of moral address, ways of "reaching out, taking risks, making explicit the complexities

in one's heart."¹² Clarifying just what we mean by moral powers both extends and limits their scope in ways not always acknowledged by Card: those other than primary victims may exercise moral powers, and victims unable to articulate their wrongs find themselves morally *disempowered*. Finally, the particular focus of my discussion is the capacity to grant or refuse forgiveness. Card's suggestion that forgiveness is most fruitfully understood as a 'moral power' is particularly intriguing; I conclude that the concept of a 'moral power' reveals insights into the moral dynamics of forgiveness that are distorted or left undressed when forgiveness is described as a duty or virtue. These include the moral value of *refusals* to forgive, and the issue of 'forgivable' evils.

II. WHAT IS A MORAL POWER?

What does it mean for forgiveness to be a moral power? Given the intensely disempowering effects of violence, oppression and other serious harms, any talk of victim's 'powers' may appear disingenuous. Victims are often powerless, in most plausible senses of the word. But moral powers are not political or legal powers—like the ability to pardon or punish, or to exact reparations or compensation, for example,—nor should they be confused with what Card calls "the psychology of empowerment."¹³ Some psychologists advocate the therapeutic benefits of forgiveness for personal healing and psychological wholeness. Psychological wellness is not Card's primary concern, and she is explicitly skeptical of *these* purported powers. Instead, she treats forgiveness, *qua* moral power, as a particular normative position held by victims of wrongdoing, presumably in virtue of their status as victims.

If forgiveness is a *moral* rather than a legal or psychological power, it is grounded in authority—either bestowed, or naturally belonging to, the victim. John Dryden's quotation, "Forgiveness to the victim doth belong . . ." suggests as much (despite its rather pessimistic conclusion about the possibilities of forgiveness) and philosophers writing on the topic have tended, in one way or another, to sustain Dryden's intuition.¹⁴ According to Beret Lang, "only the person who suffers the harm . . . is in a position to grant or refuse" forgiveness.¹⁵ Govier refers to the victim's *prerogative*.¹⁶ Piers Benn comes closest to Card's own description, describing the ability to forgive as an 'entitlement,' analogous to waiving a debt.¹⁷ Prerogative, entitlement, position: these carry much the same implication as moral power does; a potential forgiver is able to *achieve* something—on recognizable and legitimate grounds—and her achievement holds moral significance and potentially, moral value. Exercising a moral power does not, however, guarantee the latter result. There can be hasty, unscrupulous and manipulative uses of any powers, even moral powers.

Moral powers are not necessarily moral authority, at least not in its ordinary connotation. When we speak of 'moral authority,' we often mean a kind of practical wisdom, analogous to the epistemic authority of an expert, or a reliable source. Someone who has moral authority, in this everyday sense of the word, has it in virtue of a spotless record or a history of wise choices and good behavior. Mother Theresa had moral authority. So does Romeo Dallaire, the UN commander who drew the world's attention to the Rwandan genocide.¹⁸ So might a beloved great aunt, famed for her kindness and patience. Her track record indicates she is likely to know, and to do, the good. Our recognition of this fact about her leads us to pay special attention to her advice, or to grant her opinion certain priority. But this does not license her to make particular (morally significant) decisions as a moral power might, just as the possessor of a moral power might not be someone with the wisdom to exercise it well.

Not all victims of wrongdoing and evil are extraordinarily wise or heroic; some are not particularly admirable people. So, if there are 'moral powers' that belong to victims of wrong, then we need an account of moral powers that explains them in terms besides an individual's insight and wisdom; in other words, a different framework is required. Without an appropriate framework, announcing sudden new 'powers' may appear vague, even *ad hoc*. According to Carl Wellman, a moral power is "the ability to effect some moral consequence," through one's intentional actions.¹⁹ Wellman is interested in moral powers more generally, as a moral position that, alongside moral obligations, liberties and immunities, creates a framework for moral rights. He puts it this way: X has the moral power to effect some *morally* significant consequence C (a particular liberty or duty) if and only if, some specific act of X's implicates C, given background facts about X and the circumstances of X's act.²⁰ Examples he gives include our ability to impose obligations on ourselves by promising, or to release others from their promises to us by 'extinguishing' their obligation. We also have moral powers of permission and obligation; we can confer a liberty on someone or, in some cases, impose a duty. The examples he gives of the latter are drawn from the relationship between parents and children. Parents can impose duties on children, Wellman argues, backed by nothing but their own, prior, moral duty to care for the child. They also have the moral power to delegate such authority to others, including teachers, babysitters and other caregivers.²¹

In Wellman's account, moral powers, as a kind of basic moral position for moral rights, are partly grounded in our competency to exercise them (presumably a moral quality), but also in the stories we tell about them; certain non-moral facts about the power-holder that render her qualified to possess the power. "The right *kind* of stories [reveal] the grounds of power" in each

case, that is, the contingent nature of our relationships to other people, and the duties and obligations we incur within them.²² We must be minimally competent to continue to exercise moral powers, he concludes—a parent can forfeit her moral power by losing custody of her child, for example—but they also come and go for non-moral reasons, as when a child is born, or when she grows up and leaves home. Our moral powers are not proportionate to our moral goodness or wisdom, and we cannot increase or acquire them by becoming better. For Wellman, moral powers are determined more by where I happen to find myself, then who I am, or the quality of my character.

Thus we have two very different pictures of moral powers: one is our pre-theoretical notion of moral authority, analogous to the epistemic authority of a wise and reliable source. The other is Wellman's account of moral powers as abilities to alter moral reality (creating or releasing the obligations of others) exercised in light of our background situation and our particular competences—but not necessarily our excellences. Which does Card have in mind? It seems unlikely that she intends the former, given her cautions regarding the presumption of innocence in victims of atrocity: "innocence is neither necessary nor sufficient for suffering to count as evil."²³ She notes, given the fragility of human goodness, survivors of evil are less likely to emerge morally unscathed.²⁴ Indeed, *The Atrocity Paradigm* concludes with a discussion of victims and perpetrators caught in morally ambiguous 'gray zones.' If there are certain moral powers that belong to all victims of wrongdoing, as such, then these moral powers cannot depend on exemplary moral character alone.

Is Card speaking of moral powers in Wellman's sense of the word? She suggests that victim's moral powers emerge because "evils change moral relationships" between perpetrators, bystanders, beneficiaries and victims.²⁵ If perpetrators have certain specific obligations to victims in light of the former's wrongful actions, and if these range from apology and atonement to financial and material reparation, then victims have the corresponding power to exact or waive those obligations. At the least, we can say that victims deserve that these obligations be fulfilled. But, Card continues, victims have powers beyond these specific debts and obligations: "perpetrators can do little to change their own ethical status in relation to victims but remain morally dependent on them . . . for release."²⁶ In other words, victims have some degree of control over the wrongdoer's actual ethical standing, at least insofar as it concerns this particular act.

On Wellman's analysis, Card's claim would read that victims have the power to exact obligations from perpetrators, given the background circumstances of the wrong *and* the ability of some action by the victim (to communicate blame verbally, for example) to effect this obligation. Here, Wellman's

analysis doesn't yet seem to fit: surely the offender has incurred obligations against the victim by her wrongful acts alone; no further action—or capacity for action, even—on the part of the victim is required to enact this state of affairs. But Card is not just referring to the existence of obligations, the bare fact of a 'moral debt' incurred by the wrongdoer—but their intersubjective recognition and acknowledgment of that debt. The victim's powers include the power to *hold this debt against the wrongdoer*: that is, to blame or resent her, to carry a legitimate grievance forward. If victims do so, the perpetrator may experience this stance as a further burden of guilt. Furthermore, victims have the power to release perpetrators from burdens of guilt and moral obligations, by uttering words of forgiveness.

The relevant story grounding a victim's moral powers includes the culpable harm itself, coupled (presumably) with the victim's capacities for moral address and communication: that is, her capacity to hold the wrong against the wrongdoer as a grievance, or her capacity to release the wrongdoer from the same. Particularly unscrupulous or abusive victims can forfeit their moral powers, just as a neglectful parent can lose custody of her child or an exacting benefactor cease to deserve gratitude. An example of such a victim is someone who continues to hold a grudge for a minor offence (a missed date, perhaps) well past the wrongdoer's reasonable efforts to atone (a sincere and contrite apology, flowers, renewed commitment).²⁷ Nevertheless, the moral powers of victims do not exclusively depend on the victims' pre-existing moral properties. A dishonest or unkind victim of random violence remains a victim of random violence, as does an unsympathetic survivor of rape, torture or trauma. Moral powers neither depend on external, third-party moral judgment of the victim, nor render her immune to it.

III. WHO IS MORALLY EMPOWERED?

I have presented a rather stark choice: moral powers as authority analogous to the epistemic authority of an expert, or as a brute fact about the moral position in which we find ourselves. But perhaps the choice is not so stark. We might describe the victim's moral powers in terms of standpoint epistemology; the victim's unique subject-position in relation to the wrongdoing affords her certain insights unavailable to even the most perceptive and empathetic of third parties. Such an analysis brings moral powers closer to the pre-theoretical, everyday notion of moral authority I discussed above: the victim is a reliable moral source, in this particular case—if not in general—because she has gained firsthand evidence unavailable to the rest of us. She knows something we do not: what it is to be the victim of this particular evil. After all, many

acts of forgiveness involve a complicated second-order reassessment of our equally complicated initial reactions to wrongdoing, whereby we take a new, more open stance to the wrongdoer, without invalidating our original reaction.²⁸ When we forgive, we do not decide that the original act was not wrong, or the wrongdoer was not responsible. We may even continue to believe that her behavior is characteristic of her basic moral character. Forgiveness does not remove the 'sting' of offense, in the same way that exculpatory accounts like excuse or justification do. In fact, while philosophers are quite comfortable outlining what forgiveness does *not* do, there is significant controversy over what, in fact, we accomplish when we forgive—forgiveness appears connected, though not reducible, to the acceptance of apology, renewed compassion and trust in the wrongdoer, and a commitment to future reconciliation (I discuss this further in the section titled *The Powers of Forgiveness*). Certainly, we *do* sometimes forgive, undergoing an effort to 'loosen' the hold these judgments have on our attitude and behavior toward the wrongdoer. The complicated moral reassessment of forgiveness, to use Uma Narayan's term, may only be comprehensible from the 'inside,' so to speak; the crucial connection to the actual, brute fact of having been harmed does not in itself constitute a moral power, but it does initiate a particular trajectory, and the resulting insight cannot be substituted.

I believe this is often the case, but not always. Under ordinary circumstances, we tend to pay careful attention to our own slights and harms. We can recount our own injuries in more detail, and may draw deeper or more extensive conclusions about their consequences. But a correlation does not entail philosophical necessity. It would be a mistake to assume the victim will always have the most comprehensive, or even insightful, understanding of her injury. Card herself notes symmetrical, if opposing, tendencies among victims and perpetrators to distort the extent and importance of wrongdoings—what Roy Baumeister calls "the magnitude gap" in assessments of harm. Victims were just as likely to overestimate harm as perpetrators were to underestimate it.²⁹

Moreover, Card has raised the question of moral powers in the aftermath of *evil*, not everyday wrongs. Serious victimization is a brutal and damaging process; as noted above, among other harmful consequences, it can damage our characters, that is, our dispositions to react appropriately to the world around us. Long-standing reasons to be angry, more generally, can exaggerate—or numb—our reactions to individual, discrete harms, and serious injuries can complicate and even compromise our epistemological resources of assessment. It can be painful—indeed, wrenching—to acknowledge one has been the victim of evil. Many victims of evil will (understandably) go to extraordinary lengths to deny or minimize what they have suffered: engaging

in patterns of self-blame, excusing perpetrators, or blocking the wrong from consciousness altogether. This is not to deny that victims have 'special' epistemological relationships to their wrongs, but only to note that such special relationships may be as epistemologically problematic as they are advantageous.

Furthermore, others besides the primary victim may possess the appropriate epistemological insight, or a rough approximation of it: someone who has suffered a similar wrong in the past, or another member of the same persecuted group. Card takes up the case of Simon Wiesenthal, for example: a Jew suffering in a concentration camp, brought before a dying Nazi (Karl) and asked to forgive him. Wiesenthal did not. Refusing to forgive, as I suggest below, is also an exercise of moral powers. Does Wiesenthal possess the appropriate powers? Wiesenthal both was, and was not, a victim of Karl's particular crimes, but there is no question of his epistemological insight into the nature of Karl's evil-doing.³⁰ Card questions whether Wiesenthal's choices were wise, but she appears to accept them as examples of moral powers.

Thus, the relationship among (i) victimization (ii) moral insight and (iii) moral powers is somewhat convoluted. Certainly, victims (who possess moral powers) have a unique perspective on the wrong; often, but not always, this will result in an epistemological advantage. But even in those cases where it does not, it seems that, as victims, they retain the ability to exercise moral powers (unless these are forfeited through their subsequent behavior). If only victims who possess the requisite epistemological insight are granted moral powers, then Card's account is closer to those who dismiss hasty or unwise forgiveness as 'pseudo-forgiveness,' or a failure to forgive.

Taken to the extreme, a 'moral authority' condition would suggest that only victims who get it right, so to speak, succeed in exercising moral powers. Given Card's desire to focus on victims and her unwillingness to equate 'victimization' with 'innocence,' I suspect this is not her intention. As Martha Minnow notes, "restoring dignity to victims . . . should at a minimum involve respecting their own responses."³¹ Card also appears open to the possibility that *certain* moral powers may, in certain circumstances, extend to others besides the primary victim of wrongdoing: "one need not be a victim to blame or condemn," she notes, and one person's forgiveness or blame does not preclude others from making similar or different choices. In complicated scenarios of wide-scale evil, exemplified in the example of Wiesenthal, it appears "the facts are not so simple."³² In other words, Card's understanding of moral powers is both more extensive and more complicated than her initial description reveals. Many or most primary victims can claim moral powers, and in certain circumstances, so can others.³³

On the other hand, moral powers may be more delimited than Card allows. She describes moral powers as grounded in the sheer fact of victimization, or at least the victim's personal connection to the wrongdoing and the moral relationship between victim and wrongdoer it creates.³⁴ Assuming, for the time being, that victimization is a necessary condition for the moral powers of blame, resentment, forgiveness, and so forth, the corollary—that victimization is *sufficient* for such powers—does not appear to follow. Most obviously, victims who are dead or permanently incapacitated cannot blame or forgive.³⁵ But Card overestimates the range of moral powers even further. Wellman analyzes the grounds for moral powers in terms of relevant background facts and our ability to tell the 'right kind of stories' about them. The right kind of stories, in the case of forgiveness, will presumably be stories about the wrongdoing—stories that explain it, that analyze or critique or respond to it and, certainly, stories that *identify* it. As Glen Pettigrove says, forgiveness thematizes wrongdoing as such.³⁶ In forgiving an act, we simultaneously name it as wrong, bad, harmful, and so forth. This is why it can be deeply frustrating and even insulting when a self-righteous acquaintance 'forgives' you when you do not believe yourself to be wrong, and why saying 'I forgive you, although I don't think you did anything wrong' sounds confused and contradictory.

What happens to a victim's moral powers when her wrong is incapable of being appropriately thematized? If a wrong cannot be appropriately named, then our powers to respond to it may be sacrificed. Furthermore, this may affect those wrongs and victims on the frontiers of justice, to borrow Martha Nussbaum's phrase: individuals and situations whose moral significance has only just entered our cultural consciousness. In our current moral climate, this may include stateless (i.e., trafficked) or disabled persons. Until recently, it included wrongs of racism, sexism and homophobia. For someone to recognize wrongful harm to herself, she must see it as a departure from what she is owed and what she deserves; unless she has an accurate sense of the latter, she cannot articulate the former, perhaps even to herself. Cheshire Calhoun has written of tragic 'moral failures' faced by moral revolutionaries: those who persevere in acts of resistance, even when their behavior remains morally 'illegible' to the wider moral community.³⁷ Sue Campbell notes that expressions of anger may depend on their social uptake as such; in the absence of such uptake, such emotions may be unrecognizable even to the victim herself.³⁸ My *power* to blame or forgive may depend, in part, on a context in which I can understand my harm as something blameworthy or forgivable. If moral powers are capacities for morally significant responses, my responses must be comprehensible as morally significant for me to exercise my powers.

If we accept that morality is, among other things, expressed in social practices, then it follows that moral powers may be intersubjectively grounded in the kinds of mutual recognition bestowed by wrongdoers and victims on one another, or bestowed by the wider moral communities to which they belong. Being victimized in the sense required for moral powers requires a background horizon of moral possibilities that recognizes one's particular form of victimization. When Card contrasts moral with political powers, she suggests that to exercise the latter, we must be politically empowered and that sadly, not all victims receive this empowerment. But, if moral powers are anything more than a counterfactual, theoretical assessment of what we would like to ascribe to victims, that is, if they represent meaningful forms of moral address, then it seems victims must be morally empowered, too. We cannot completely control which of our actions are taken up as morally significant, or, continuing Calhoun's metaphor, how our morally significant actions are 'read' by others. The range of offenses to which we can respond with blame and resentment, forgiveness and acceptance is certainly wider than that to which we may be empowered to punish or pardon, retaliate or exact reparations. But the former range, while admittedly wide, is not infinite. Some victims may experience moral disempowerment as a non-culpable moral failure: the unfortunate consequence of suffering the wrong kind of evil at the wrong time.³⁹

IV. THE POWERS OF FORGIVENESS

When we exercise moral powers, we effect something of moral significance. What do morally empowered victims accomplish, when they exercise the moral power of granting or withholding forgiveness, in particular? Card tells us several things:

- (i) Forgiveness aims to rectify, or at least redress, those burdens and 'moral remainders' that cannot be satisfied by punishment or material reparation.⁴⁰
- (ii) Forgiveness is a liberal response to wrongdoers, just as mercy is a liberal response to those whom we have the authority to make suffer.⁴¹
- (iii) *Refusal* to forgive is equally an exercise of moral power.⁴²

The targets of forgiveness are 'remainders,' our emotional and attitudinal responses to unexpiated wrongs and disrupted moral relationships. Moral remainders often manifest themselves as guilt, shame, remorse and regret in perpetrators, which can linger long after any punishment or alienation in-

flicted by others.⁴³ Forgiveness can 'release' wrongdoers from the most damaging remainders, either by initiating reciprocal goodwill or by tacitly giving the wrongdoer permission to 'reframe' her self-conception, so that the wrong does not loom so large.⁴⁴ Even if forgiveness does not ease the wrongdoer's own guilt, she may experience relief at not having her crimes 'held against' her, by others: "this relief seems to be [forgiveness's] major point."⁴⁵

Card describes five characteristic features of forgiveness, which together form a 'paradigm' of interpersonal forgiveness.⁴⁶ These include:

- (1) The renunciation of hostility, for reasons of
- (2) Charitable or compassionate concern for the offender, and
- (3) The acceptance of the offender's apology and contrition,
- (4) A remission of whatever punishment the forgiver controls, and
- (5) An offer to 'start over' or renew the relationship.

Forgiveness can sometimes seem as mystifying as time did to St. Augustine: we all know what it is, until we are asked to give an account of it. Assessing a particular *philosophical* definition of forgiveness is therefore far from straightforward. One promising approach to understanding Card's account, however, is to set it in its philosophical context: that is, the recent debate over the nature of forgiveness.

For some time, philosophers had treated forgiveness as synonymous with 'overcoming resentment,' thereby failing to acknowledge dimensions to forgiveness beyond a change in reactive attitudes, or cases in which legitimate forgivers did not experience resentment in the first place or forgave without entirely renouncing it.⁴⁷ Describing forgiveness solely in terms of the forgiver's attitudes also underestimated the significance of *rituals* of forgiveness, for example, or the role of forgiveness in restoring relationships and changing the victim's *behavior* toward the wrongdoer. More recent philosophical treatments of forgiveness have, like Card, acknowledged its multifaceted nature: Kathryn Norlock, Glen Pettigrove and Paul Newberry describe forgiveness as having both emotional and performative dimensions.⁴⁸ Walker speaks of three aspects to forgiveness (overcoming resentment, restoring moral relations, and setting the wrong in the past), none of which is necessarily crucial to any particular case.⁴⁹ In other words, Card belongs to a new generation of philosophers writing on forgiveness, who have begun to acknowledge what R.J. O'Shaughnessy wrote several decades before Murphy's influential book cannot entirely cash out the meaning of forgiveness in advance, but must—in each case—determine what it means to the forgiver and forgiven, by paying attention to how the concept is used by those *in situ*.⁵⁰

Card's account stands out from other multifaceted approaches, in that she articulates forgiveness in terms of moral powers. Her framework of a moral power demonstrates a flexible understanding of what forgiveness might *mean* to those involved. Thus, while Jeffrie Murphy insists "forgiveness is primarily a matter of how I *feel* about you (not how I treat you),"⁵¹ Card rightly notes that the more "pragmatic element" of forgiveness described in conditions (3) through (5) is often far more important to perpetrators than how victims succeed in experiencing a "change of heart."⁵² The third condition—acceptance of an apology—highlights the ritualistic or performative aspect of forgiveness. Such performances may be significant to the participants in and of themselves, and may furthermore cement commitments to change attitudes and behavior, and to reaffirm moral values.

Perhaps most importantly, however, Card does not treat her paradigm as normative: representing both the typical and the ideal. The five characteristic features are meant to represent "not an *ethical* ideal but only a conceptually unproblematic case."⁵³ Here she departs from a recent treatment of forgiveness by Charles Griswold, in which the virtuous character trait of 'forgiveness' is manifested most clearly in the paradigmatic situation of "forgiveness at its best." Other, non-paradigmatic instances of forgiveness are, according to Griswold, imperfect—as they lack some element found in the paradigmatic case.⁵⁴ In Card's paradigm, each feature can be understood and evaluated separately from the others: there are cases where the remission of punishment is appropriate, however, but not the renewal of a relationship, or cases where the victim is able sincerely to accept an apology but not (yet) experience compassion. Cases that display one or two features are not necessarily *less* forgiving, or even less admirable, than those that display three or four or all of them. Some features are possible in many or most cases of forgiveness, while others are not. Non-paradigmatic forgiveness is not imperfect forgiveness. One useful consequence of a non-normative paradigm is that Card can talk meaningfully of forgivable evils; in the aftermath of most evils, many paradigmatic elements of forgiveness are quite evidently *not* appropriate—the renewal of a meaningful relation, for instance—yet these may be exactly those situations when victims and perpetrators find the remaining elements of forgiveness most meaningful. Labeling these cases 'imperfect' from the outset seems premature.

The remission of punishment may be irrelevant to many situations of forgiveness. In fact, Card has since amended (4) to state, "release of the perpetrator from obligations and liabilities incurred as a result of committing offense"—though she presumably still means only to the extent that these liabilities are within the victim's legal and political control.⁵⁵ Her revised formulation is more in keeping with the idea of moral powers as capacities

for morally significant responses, and also better describes the relationship between forgiveness and punishment. It is generally acknowledged that forgiveness is compatible not only with state-inflicted punishment but with the victim's ongoing *desire* that the wrongdoer be punished and held accountable. A victim's forgiveness need not have—and indeed, perhaps should not have—any bearing on subsequent judicial processes.

Exceptions to the division between the judicial processes and the realm of forgiveness exist, of course: in the role of 'forgiving' victim-impact statements like Kay Leigh Harriott's or Laura Blumenfeld's, for example. Stephen Darwall also notes that in ancient Greece, Drakon's homicide code included a provision that reduced a sentence of death to exile, if all the males of the victim's immediate family forgave the offender.⁵⁶ But a more recent, and far more disturbing, example reminds us of the dangers of this overlap. Jill Seward is a young woman from the United Kingdom who was gang-raped during the burglary of her father's vicarage. She publicly forgave her rapist, and the judge later cited her forgiveness as evidence that her suffering was "not so great" in his sentencing.⁵⁷

This gross misunderstanding of forgiveness treated Seward's response as an excuse, or implicit condonation, of what her rapists had done. Her forgiveness was misread as an attempt to minimize or diminish her wrongdoing, rather than what it was: the exercise of her power to *respond* to it, in all its horror. Indeed, the judge inadvertently demonstrated one reason why evils are so often described as unforgivable: forgiving them may imply that they are *not* evil, after all—whether or not that is the forgiver's intent. While Card is correct that there is no "logical incoherence in the idea of forgiving extremely heinous offenses,"⁵⁸ others may nevertheless impute logical—or at least ethical—incoherence to those who attempt to do so. Because it is so difficult to imagine that someone could simultaneously appreciate the full magnitude of what has happened to her and *nonetheless forgive it*, others assume expressions of forgiveness are really excuses or exculpatory accounts, that is, reasons *not* to punish or hold accountable. In fact, forgiveness may be incompatible with revenge and individual reprisal—indicated in (1) the renunciation of hostility—and certainly, a particularly voracious or bloodthirsty longing for harsh sentencing might cause a perpetrator to *doubt* the authenticity of her forgiver's expressions. But it is perfectly reasonable that I would both forgive you, and remain committed to the necessity of an appropriate punishment, for reasons of fairness, rehabilitation or deterrence. My remaining reasons for wishing you held accountable have nothing to do with the moral relationship between us. Card is right to describe forgiveness as a "supplement" to punishment,⁵⁹ rather than—as Hannah Arendt does—an "alternative."⁶⁰

V. REFUSING TO FORGIVE

Powers, including moral powers, can be exercised with wisdom or folly, too frequently or too little. Card notes that forgiveness is a *liberal* response to wrongdoing, in the sense that it is generous-spirited, open-minded, and likely to err on the side of trust, hope and leniency, rather than the alternative. Clearly, there are times where a liberal response appears unwise, even morally risky. For victims who possess few other powers, the exercise of a conciliatory moral power may be an overwhelming temptation, particularly for individuals who are socialized to be gentle, understanding, yielding or soft—as women often are.⁶¹ Hasty forgiveness can leave already vulnerable victims open to manipulation or further abuse.

One of the attractive consequences of treating forgiveness as the exercise of a pre-existing capacity (a moral power), rather than a duty or virtue, is that it allows us equally to speak of virtuous and wise decisions *not* to forgive. As Card notes, when reflecting on her original discussion, “refusal to forgive is equally an exercise of power.”⁶² Refusal to forgive can create two morally significant consequences: first, it can hold a recalcitrant wrongdoer to her obligations and liabilities and second, it can release the *victim* from the remainders of wrongdoing. In other words, in the appropriate circumstances, refusals to forgive can achieve the aims of rectification and cope with the consequences of remainders.

How do we distinguish *refusals* to forgive from *failures* to forgive? By the latter, I mean situations in which the victim is held hostage by her remaining sense of grievance, where she experiences it as an intolerable remainder. Card suggests we can understand *not*-forgiving as a moral power if it is exercised as such, that is, if the question of whether to forgive is taken seriously, and the decision to refuse is made from a position of strength.⁶³ The distinction between these two situations is not always obvious; victims may struggle with forgiveness and resentment for some time. Moral empowerment is not psychological empowerment but extreme psychological disempowerment may alter the phenomenology of moral powers: they may not *feel* very powerful, to the bearer. Eventually, however, refusals to forgive should release victims from the “burden of unforgiveness”⁶⁴ just as decisions to forgive should, ideally. Presumably refusing to forgive puts the question of forgiveness to rest (in the victim’s mind and—if communicated—the wrongdoer’s and relevant third parties) in the same way that succeeding in forgiveness does, while failing to forgive describes an ongoing, open process that has not yet resolved itself.

Refusals to forgive may also manifest themselves as the exercise of a different moral power. Card concludes her discussion of Wicenthal by acknowledging that his refusal was as much about “silence and witnessing” as it was about

forgiveness.⁶⁵ When the moral power to forgive or not forgive is the only power remaining to a disenfranchised victim, steadfastly holding the perpetrator to (moral) obligation in the face of pressure to ‘let it go’ or ‘leave it in the past’ demonstrates courage and integrity. “Forgiveness breaks silence when it is offered to another,” Card notes but so “does the refusal of forgiveness *when that is given voice*.”⁶⁶ Not forgiving becomes a moral power when it is exercised as a form of moral address. The unforgiving victim, in these cases, is better understood as a moral witness. The need for such a witness can—in and of itself—create a reason *not* to forgive, especially when others are likely to read forgiveness as condonation or acquiescence, as did the judge in Jill Seward’s case.

Above, I suggested that our moral powers depend on the existence of moral frameworks in which they are seen as such. This frailty is particularly apparent in the distinguishing between refusals and failures to forgive. When an unforgiving victim is consistently ‘read’ as embittered, grudging, resentful and poisonous by others, or seen to be making a fuss over ‘nothing,’ it may be difficult to retain the position of strength from which *not*-forgiving becomes powerful. The kinds of circumstances that make a victim’s forgiveness incoherent (to others, and even to herself) may have a similar effect on her refusals.

VI. FORGIVENESS AND GRATITUDE

My intention in this paper is to reconstruct Card’s notion of moral powers, at least insofar as they arise in the aftermath of evil and wrongful harm. But Card herself has described these particular powers in terms of another kind of moral power, arising in very different kinds of personal relationships: at several points in her discussion of forgiveness, she remarks that victims of wrongful harm are like benefactors, “who can call upon the gratitude or indebtedness of beneficiaries.”⁶⁷ Benefactors, it appears, also hold moral powers, and these have structural similarities to the moral powers of victims. Benefactors may have other powers *not* available to victims, of course; the ability to give suggests the possession of something *to be given*, just as the exercise of mercy and not forgiveness suggests the possession of legal or political power. But both victims and benefactors may well possess moral powers.

Certainly, the relationship between forgiveness and gratitude, as Card describes it, is convoluted. Not only are the ability to forgive and the ability to call upon another’s gratitude analogous moral powers, in her eyes, but forgiveness itself may inspire further gratitude in the wrongdoer; indeed, Card lists gratitude as a potential moral remainder to wrongdoing. Just as gratitude can lead to gratitude, so too can an unforgiving and resentful victim make the original perpetrator resentful . . . and so on. They are both morally significant

responses in themselves, and capable of provoking similar morally significant responses in return. What insight can we gain about moral powers from the example of gratitude?

The moral powers of victims include blame, resentment, forgiveness, its refusal, and—insofar as they are politically empowered—punishment, pardon, and demands for reparation. The moral powers of benefactors include the ability to “call upon” or release their beneficiaries from obligations and debts of gratitude.⁶⁸ In the first case, forgiveness is the moral power: its results are the “relief” felt by both victim and perpetrator and presumably, the value of their subsequent relationship, if any.⁶⁹ In the second case, gratitude is the morally significant effect enacted by the (unnamed) moral power of benefactors. It is not itself a moral power (except insofar as we may be grateful for another’s gratitude, and continue the cycle).

There are definite points of similarity between gratitude and forgiveness. Both arise in an asymmetrical moral relationship, and both have their basis in the personal histories of their subject and object. When we speak of gratitude or forgiveness, we most often refer to their interpersonal manifestations, but we can experience gratitude without an immediate object: gratitude directed at the universe, or God, or karmic laws, for good fortune. Gratitude can be existential as well as interpersonal. Interestingly, several philosophers have described an existential counterpart to forgiveness, as well. Griswold describes *metaphysical* forgiveness as “the effort to give up *ressentiment* caused by the manifold imperfections of the world”—the natural counterpart to the existential resentment Nietzsche immortalized.⁷⁰ If we can be angry at the universe, their logic goes, so too can we forgive it.

Furthermore, we are often reluctant to describe either forgiveness or gratitude in terms of an obligation or something that can be compelled; it seems strange to demand or insist that someone forgive, or that she feel grateful. Christopher Wellman suggests that the moral phenomenology of gratitude (which he understands primarily as a virtue of character, and not an obligation) is analogous to that of forgiveness.⁷¹ As Card notes, even if we deserve another’s gratitude—or her forgiveness—we do not thereby have a right to it.⁷² Furthermore, gratitude and forgiveness are both forms of moral address; that is, they both appeal to and depend upon the presupposition of rational agency in the addressee. P.F. Strawson lists both among his canonical “participant reactive attitudes.”⁷³ In a recent discussion of Strawson, Stephen Darwall takes the comparison further, remarking that even among exemplary reactive attitudes, “gratitude is like forgiveness in being parasitic on legitimate claims or expectations.”⁷⁴

Ultimately, though, I believe this is not an illuminating comparison. The moral dynamics of forgiveness and gratitude may share certain surface similarities, but there are several obvious ways in which the relationship between

victims and perpetrators is *not* like that between benefactors and beneficiaries—and these affect the nature of forgiveness and gratitude. Forgiveness arises in relationships thus far characterized by ill will and disrespect: that is, between former perpetrators and their victims, while gratitude responds to a moment of kindness or goodwill beyond expectation. Second, a benefactor deserving of gratitude presumably *intended* the original act of generosity or honor, for her to be deserving of gratitude, and thus she wills—at least minimally—the relationship that follows. Few, if any, victims of wrong choose their situation. They find themselves possessing certain moral powers as a result of someone else’s unwelcome actions.

Although Card refers to ‘debts’ of gratitude in *The Atrocity Paradigm*, she has argued elsewhere that many of our obligations of gratitude are better understood in terms of a ‘trustee paradigm’ rather than a debtor-creditor relationship.⁷⁵ Yet this model sits uncomfortably in a victim-perpetrator relationship. As mentioned above, victims do not *intend* their relationship in the same way benefactors do. Forced trusteeship through sudden vulnerability and victimization is not a power (moral or otherwise). Is the victim of a wrong thereby entrusted with the wrongdoer’s moral status? If she were, that would explain Card’s comment that “perpetrators can do little to change their own ethical status . . . but remain morally dependent on [victims] . . . for release.”⁷⁶ But when unscrupulous, hard-hearted or manipulative victims lose this power, perpetrators may still be held to account by others. This is not the case for benefactors; the power to call upon gratitude is not similarly transferred. In fact, the contrast between the two cases suggests that Card’s claim here is overstated; perpetrators *can* change their ethical status, in many situations: they can express contrition and remorse, they can engage in atonement and reparation, and they can work for positive change. These efforts cannot, in themselves, turn the tables on victims (creating an obligation to forgive) but they can release wrongdoers when victims will not. A grateful beneficiary who returns the favor—or gives her benefactor no reason to regret the original generosity—is not similarly released. The victim-perpetrator relationship really *does* resemble a creditor-debtor model, more than that of benefactor and beneficiary. The moral power to forgive is, among other things, discretion regarding how we discharge the debts and obligations incurred against us by those who harm us.

VII. CONCLUSIONS: MORAL POWERS AND FORGIVABLE EVILS

Card’s discussion of forgiveness introduces two important innovations to the current philosophical debate. First of all, she sets her discussion of

forgiveness in the context of evil—understood as the culpable infliction of *intolerable* harm—from the very beginning. While other philosophers have tackled the question of forgiveness and evil, or the ‘unforgivable,’ almost none have taken it as a conceptual starting point. Card’s effort to describe forgiveness as something potentially capable of confronting the worst atrocities of which we are capable is reflected in the paradigm she develops. Forgiveness, she claims, has characteristic features, but these are not normatively defined. Individual occasions of forgiveness may present one, two or all of these features, depending on the situation, the individuals involved, and the relationship between them. The flexibility of Card’s model prevents us from ruling out the possibility of meaningfully forgiving evil, from the outset—as a more stringent paradigm might do. Second, Card describes the value of forgiveness in terms of the exercise of a moral power, not the fulfillment of a duty or the expression of a virtue. Forgiveness is something we are *empowered* rather than obligated to do. We can forgive wisely or foolishly, too easily or too little—and yet, insofar as we exercise this power, we nevertheless forgive.

Despite her innovative approach, Card never makes clear just what she intends by moral power. In this paper, I have attempted to reconstruct the account implicit in her discussion. Moral powers are individual capacities for morally meaningful responses to others; in exercising a moral power, we effect some morally significant consequence. These should not be confused with moral authority as the outcome of an exceptional moral track record or with venues for political or psychological empowerment. Since the *power* of a moral power depends upon the exercise of our capacity, moral powers will rely first upon the kind of grounding we give them (the background facts about the empowered individual that explain the ‘power’) and the recognition of this *kind* of power by others. If no institution of promising exists, for example, then my ‘power’ to bind myself through a promise made is equally non-existent.

What does thinking about forgiveness as a moral power achieve? First, it appropriately recognizes the discretionary nature of forgiveness; we can admire or censure individual acts of forgiveness, without it being appropriate for us to compel or obligate recalcitrant or hasty would-be forgivers. Second, the model of a moral power draws us away from valuing *forgiveness* itself, and toward the value of our *capacity* to choose forgiveness (or not). It frees us to value refusals to forgive along with forgiveness itself, in ways that a duty-based or virtue-based approach does not.⁷⁷ According to Card, the key to the exercising forgiveness as a moral power is the *relief* it brings from crippling anger, guilt, shame or wounding trauma. Just as political power can be exercised as restraint as easily as action, moral powers are exercised in refusal as much as release. Both represent ways in which we cope with the

remainders of wrongdoing, those negative consequences that exist after our best efforts to rectify them.

Finally, and perhaps most interestingly, the moral powers framework circumscribes the sphere of forgiveness in ways that both extend and delimit our everyday intuitions—suggests that those other than the primary victim of wrong may be appropriately *empowered*, and similarly, that victims unable to express or articulate their harm as such may find themselves *disempowered*. The latter consequence is a form of non-culpable moral failure, and a tragic consequence of narrow moral frameworks, which fail to recognize genuine forms of intolerable, culpable harm. We are capable of meaningfully granting or refusing forgiveness in virtue of our relationship to the wrong, the kind of *story* we can tell about it (i.e., one that recognizes it as wrong) and our capacity for moral address. Victims who lack any one of these supports may find themselves morally incapacitated. In other words, describing forgiveness as one of a set of moral powers implies that our capacity to grant or refuse forgiveness depends as much—indeed, perhaps more—upon the moral context in which we find ourselves as the nature of the wrong (and wrongdoer) we face. If forgiveness is a moral power, exercised equally by the extraordinary forgivers I described above and by moral witnesses who courageously refuse to forgive, then whether or not a particular atrocity or evil is forgivable may depend as much on the context that precedes and follows it, as it does the nature of the crime itself.⁷⁸

NOTES

1. Margaret Urban Walker, *Moral Repair: Reconstructing Moral Relations after Wrongdoing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 6.
2. Jonathan Saltzman, “I Still Forgive Him,” *The Boston Globe* (14 April 2006).
3. Trudy Govier, *Forgiveness and Revenge* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 111.
4. Lawrence Weschler, *A Miracle, A Universe: Settling Accounts with Torturers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), quoted in Walker, *Moral Repair*, 175.
5. Laura Blumenfeld, *Revenge: A Story of Hope* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).
6. Walker, *Moral Repair*, 175.
7. Thomas Brudholm, *Resentment’s Virtue: Jean Améry and the Refusal to Forgive* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008).
8. Claudia Card, *The Atrocity Paradigm: A Theory of Evil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 166.
9. Schott, Robin May, “The Atrocity Paradigm and the Concept of Forgiveness,” *Hypatia* 19, no. 4 (2004): 202–209, p. 204.

10. Claudia Card, "The Atrocity Paradigm Revisited," *Hypatia* 19, no. 4 (2004): 212–222, p. 213.
11. Some philosophers do believe all undeserved forgiveness is morally objectionable. Roy Brooks remarks, "Indeed, in the absence of atonement, I am prepared to argue that forgiveness is *morally objectionable*" (Brooks, *Atonement and Forgiveness: A New Model for Black Reparations* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004], 168). For further examples of those who hold this position, see Rhonda Anderson, "Non-obligatory forgiveness: Supererogatory or Impermissible?" *Auslegung* 22, no. 1 (1997): 39–47 and Joram Graf Haber, *Forgiveness: A Philosophical Study* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1991). I do not actually address their claim here; for a succinct and compelling critique, see Glen Allan Pettigrove, "The Forgiveness We Speak: The Illocutionary Force of Forgiving," *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 42, no. 3 (2004): 371–392.
12. Card, *Atrocity Paradigm*, 187.
13. Card, "The Atrocity Paradigm Revisited," 213.
14. The full line of poetry reads: "Forgiveness to the injured does belong/But they ne'er pardon who have done the wrong" (John Dryden, *The Conquest of Granada*, Part ii, Act i, Sc. 2).
15. Berel Lang, "Forgiveness," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (1994): 105–115, p. 107.
16. Trudy Govier and Wilhelm Verwoerd, "Forgiveness: The Victim's Prerogative," *South African Journal of Philosophy* 21, no. 2 (2002): 97–111, p. 97.
17. Piers Benn, "Forgiveness and Loyalty," *Philosophy* 71 (1996): 369–383.
18. Dallaire himself has offered a full account of his experience and insights; see Roméo Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2003).
19. Carl Wellman, *Real Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 65.
20. Wellman, *Real Rights*, 66.
21. I mention parents and children because this is Wellman's primary example of moral powers, always keeping in mind that Card herself would be wary of attributing a prior 'moral power' to biological—or even social—parents of children in this way, without further analysis. See Chapter 7 of *The Atrocity Paradigm*, "Terrorism in the Home," for more details. It must also be said that Wellman has a controversial and limited view of who can bear moral rights. I discuss him here because his particular account of moral powers resonates with Card's.
22. Wellman, *Real Rights*, 75.
23. Card, *Atrocity Paradigm*, 13.
24. Card, *Atrocity Paradigm*, 218.
25. Card, *Atrocity Paradigm*, 167.
26. Card, *Atrocity Paradigm*, 168.
27. Card suggests that this "involuntarily [releases] perpetrators from obligation" (*Atrocity Paradigm*, 168). A more accurate conclusion would be that it involuntarily releases perpetrators from specific obligations to the victim. Other obligations, and other burdens, may still remain—leaving open the possibility that other relevantly connected individuals may receive moral powers to hold perpetrators accountable, once the victim has forfeited them. Indeed, similarly affected individuals may find it

- particularly important to insist on holding the wrongdoer accountable, once the victim can no longer do so. If I am right, then this conclusion demonstrates an asymmetry between situations of forgiveness and those of gratitude, as a beneficiary released from gratitude to her benefactor does not therefore owe gratitude to someone else.
28. Uma Narayan, "Forgiveness, Moral Reassessment and Reconciliation," in *Explorations of Value*, ed. T. Magnell (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997).
29. Baumeister quoted in Card, *Atrocity Paradigm*, 18–19. See also Roy Baumeister, *Evil: Inside Human Cruelty and Violence* (New York: Freeman, 1997).
30. Wiesenthal was *not* a victim of Karl's crimes in that he was not present at the atrocity Karl confesses; he was not burned alive and shot at by Nazi soldiers. On the other hand, Wiesenthal—like Karl's victims—was Jewish. He was a prisoner in a concentration camp. He had been brought to Karl as nothing more than 'a Jew.' As Card notes, "... apparently any Jew would do. The atrocity in which Karl participated was inflicted on its victims simply because they were Jews" (Card, *Atrocity Paradigm*, 184).
31. Martha Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History after Genocide and Mass Violence* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 8.
32. Card, *Atrocity Paradigm*, 184.
33. It is interesting to consider this secondary extension of moral powers as a symmetrical analogue to the secondary obligations of beneficiaries (rather than perpetrators) of evil. I do not have space to explore this symmetry in depth here.
34. Wiesenthal's ability to forgive Karl can still be grounded in his victimization. Wiesenthal is a plausible secondary or tertiary victim of Karl's crimes, given the horrific and genocidal context of the Nazi Holocaust. For a discussion of secondary and tertiary victims, see Govier and Verwoerd, "Forgiveness: The Victim's Prerogative." I have argued elsewhere that it is not victimization itself that grounds the moral power of forgiveness, but victimization is a good reason to take the wrongdoer *personally*. Other such reasons can be grounded in the appropriate efforts and attitudes of relevantly connected third parties, who engage attentively and sympathetically with the victim's own experience. Thus the 'standpoint' analysis of moral powers is potentially a plausible explanation. While Card acknowledges that third parties like Wiesenthal are capable of exercising moral powers *of a kind*, it's not clear whether she is comfortable arguing for full-fledged third-party forgiveness. I do not discuss third-party forgiveness in depth here, but I do address third-party forgiveness in "Forgiveness and Moral Solidarity," presented at Forgiveness: Probing the Boundaries (First Global Conference), available at Inter-disciplinary.net, www.inter-disciplinary.net/ptb/Forgiveness/f1/maclachlan%20paper.pdf (last accessed January 27, 2009).
35. Thanks to Kathryn Nortlock for drawing my attention to the significance of this point.
36. Pettigrove, "The Forgiveness We Speak," 198.
37. Cheshire Calhoun, "Moral Failure," in *On Feminist Ethics and Politics*, ed. C. Card (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999), 89.
38. Sue Campbell, "Being Dismissed: The Politics of Emotional Expression," *Hypatia* 9, no. 3 (1994): 46–65.

39. These extreme situations of un-thematized wrongdoing should not be confused with straightforward moral disagreement. In situations of moral disagreement, it seems to me that the exercise of moral powers is certainly possible, if controversial. Indeed, many or most intergenerational family relationships are characterized by forgiveness and blame in the context of disagreement over moral values, life choices and so on. Both parties in this situation are capable of recognizing the other's point of view as a moral position (albeit an invalid or misguided or downright awful one). I am interested in situations where the victim's position may not even be comprehensible as 'moral.' The choice of a woman to kill her child rather than raise her in slavery, drawn from Tom Morrison's *Beloved*, comes to mind.

40. Card, *Atrocity Paradigm*, 173.

41. Card, *Atrocity Paradigm*, 173.

42. The third point is taken from Card's response to a symposium on *The Atrocity Paradigm*, rather than the text itself. In her response, however, Card expresses a wish that she had made this explicit in the original volume (Card, "*The Atrocity Paradigm Revisited*," 173).

43. For a fascinating discussion of how these moral remainders, or self-directed reactive attitudes, ground our retributive intuitions and theories of punishment, see Christopher Bennett, "The Varieties of Retributive Experience," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 52, no. 207 (2002): 145–163.

44. Jean Harvey refers to this as a 'fresh start.' The forgiving victim lets the wrongdoer know she will no longer take the wrong into consideration, in her assessments of the wrongdoer, and gives the latter permission to do the same. (Jean Harvey, "Forgiveness as an Obligation of the Moral Life," *International Journal of Moral and Social Science* 8, no. 3 [1993]: 211–221.)

45. Card, *Atrocity Paradigm*, 174.

46. Card, *Atrocity Paradigm*, 174.

47. Jeffrie Murphy, Joanna North, Howard McGary, Margaret Holmgren, Judith Boss, Piers Benn and Pamela Hieronymi all treat forgiveness as the disavowal or moderation of resentment. For the most part, their accounts are based on Murphy's interpretation of Bishop Joseph Butler's influential analysis of forgiveness.

48. See Kathryn J. Norlock, "A Feminist Ethic of Forgiveness," Doctoral Dissertation, Philosophy, University of Wisconsin-Madison (2001); Pettigrove, "The Forgiveness We Speak"; and Paul A. Newberry, "The Three Dimensions of Forgiveness," *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* 11, no. 2: 73–81.

49. Walker, *Moral Repair*, 154.

50. R.J. O'Shaughnessy, "Forgiveness," *Philosophy* 42 (1967): 336–352.

51. Jeffrie G. Murphy and Jean Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 21.

52. Card, "*The Atrocity Paradigm Revisited*," 213.

53. Card, "*The Atrocity Paradigm Revisited*."

54. Charles L. Griswold, *Forgiveness: A Philosophical Exploration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

55. Card, "*The Atrocity Paradigm Revisited*," 213.

56. Stephen Darwall, *The Second-Person Standpoint: Morality, Respect and Accountability* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

57. Elizabeth Grice, "It's not whether you can or can't forgive; it's whether you will or won't," *The Daily Telegraph* (8 March 2006).

58. Card, *Atrocity Paradigm*, 180.

59. Card, *Atrocity Paradigm*, 173.

60. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958). When the concept of forgiveness is taken up and adapted for systems of restorative justice, it may well become an alternative to punishment. The issue of forgiveness as part of institutional rather than *personal* responses to wrongdoing (individual or collective) is a larger question than I can address here.

61. Card, *Atrocity Paradigm*, 174.

62. Card, "*The Atrocity Paradigm Revisited*," 213.

63. Card, "*The Atrocity Paradigm Revisited*," 213.

64. Trudy Govier, "Forgiveness and the Unforgivable," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (1999): 59–74, p. 66.

65. Card, *Atrocity Paradigm*, 186.

66. Card, *Atrocity Paradigm*, 186, italics added.

67. Card, *Atrocity Paradigm*, 167, 168, 174, and 207.

68. Card, *Atrocity Paradigm*, 167.

69. Card, *Atrocity Paradigm*, 174.

70. Griswold, *Forgiveness*, xx.

71. Christopher Heath Wellman, "Gratitude as a Virtue," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 80 (1999): 284–300, p. 298.

72. Claudia Card, "Gratitude and Obligation," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 25, no.2 (1988): 115–129.

73. Peter Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment," In *Perspectives on Moral Responsibility*, eds. J. M. Fischer and M. Ravizza (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 48.

74. Darwall, *Second-Person Standpoint*, 73.

75. Card, "Gratitude as a Virtue."

76. Card, *Atrocity Paradigm*, 168.

77. A virtue-based account of forgiveness can acknowledge occasions in which the virtuous agent would *not* forgive, but it becomes difficult to explain an independent virtue of 'refusals to forgive' in the same way the exercise of power does. Furthermore, a virtue-based account suggests that forgiving well is a matter of forgiving 'in the right way, at the right time' etc., and thus lends itself to normative paradigms of the sort Card eschews, precluding the possibility of meaningfully forgiving atrocities.

78. I am very grateful to Andrea Velman and Kathryn Norlock for their thoughtful comments on previous drafts of this essay. I offer my thanks also to Orla Richardson, who pushed me to clarify the concept of a moral power.