Śāntideva and Marcius Aurelius on the Irrationality of Anger

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Index

1. Introduction

The concept of irrational anger suggests that rationality is crucial, and anger is detrimental as it impairs reasoning. However, this viewpoint is not widely accepted among philosophers today. Some thinkers argue that anger is necessary for justice, protection of loved ones, and proper self-expression. On the other hand, some philosophical traditions view anger as harmful and irrational, with philosophers such as Śāntideva and Marcus Aurelius building arguments to support this perspective.

This thesis considers whether the arguments presented by the philosophers Śāntideva and Marcus Aurelius can withstand scrutiny when compared. Additionally, I am curious whether one philosopher's arguments are more robust than the other's and if the arguments are ultimately compatible. The thesis asserts that while both philosophers agree on the irrationality of anger, they arrive at this conclusion using distinct and divergent arguments that reflect their differing beliefs. At first glance, they seem to be similar; Peter Vernezze, in his article "Moderation or the Middle Way: Two Approaches to Anger"*,* seems to think so, he suggested five lines of augmentation that seemingly coincide in both authors*.* Vernezze briefly touches upon several important topics, including self-interest, causation, obligation, culpability, and death. The arguments presented serve as an intriguing starting point for further exploration.

This text uses an intercultural approach comparing Śāntideva's *The Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life* (*Bodhicaryāvatāra*, Hereafter *BCA*) to Marcus Aurelius *Meditations*, comparing and contrasting their notions of irrational anger, the harm it causes both on a personal level and to their intended projects. To this end, I use the work of multiple philosophers of both traditions to supplement the primary works, combining their ideas of different parts of the problem into a coherent whole. To this end, a historical overview will be provided on both philosophers, as well as a short introduction to the five arguments put forward by Vernezze; after that an overview of what irrational anger means for both of them regarding their philosophical projects. Before delving deeper into four of the

provided arguments, it is essential to note that this thesis posits that while all these arguments lead to the conclusion of irrational anger through rational means, the differing underlying beliefs about human nature held by both philosophers result in fundamentally different approaches.

This thesis argues that, indeed, all these arguments conclude through rational means that anger is irrational. However, their deeper commitments and their conception of human nature make it so that even if they consider anger irrational and seemingly use similar arguments, both use fundamentally different approaches. Looking at the arguments used by Marcus Aurelius, there is a singular thread that connects them all, society. Marcus considers all four arguments through the social role of an emperor and philosopher within society. His idea of the cosmic city exemplifies this perspective. In contrast, Śāntideva focuses on the concept of emptiness, using the ideas of no-self, and dependent origination to convince us of anger's irrationality. Which ultimately is one of the things they seek to achieve with their texts.

The second contrast is also related to the idea of no-self or, more specifically, the differences in what they consider human nature and especially the continuity of a person. Śāntideva believes in the doctrine of no-self, the idea that there is no unifying enduring soul. At the same time, Marcus Aurelius believed the opposite. Belief in a soul, according to Śāntideva, leads to clinging to illusions, which generates anger, but since there is no unifying self to do so, we are only deceiving ourselves. This deception is thus the reason for our anger, showing how irrational it is. In contrast, Marcus holds firmly to the idea of the soul. For Marcus, the soul, especially the rational soul, is our self; it is what struggles to survive and that which is harmed by anger. Anger for Marcus comes into play when we consider the soul's connection to the idea of a cosmic city, where a disturbance in the connection caused by things such as ignorance causes anger to arise. However, despite these differences, both approaches agree that because of ignorance, humans end up deluding themselves into being the sole cause of their own anger. As anger causes damage to the soul/mind, and the only thing that can cause injury or distress to the soul/mind is the soul/mind itself. Ultimately, this provides a broader

perspective on how anger can be seen as irrational by offering more context instead of just superficial agreement.

2. Historical Overview

2.1 Historical Overview: Śāntideva

We have limited information about the life of Śāntideva as reliable historical sources are scarce. Butön and Taranātha, Tibetan historians, claim that he was a prince from Saurāṣṭra, a region located on the western coast of modern-day Gujarat, India. However, the accuracy of this claim is uncertain and often viewed with skepticism. This is due to the fact that Indian Buddhist hagiographies frequently link royal lineage with the original Buddha, who was also said to be of royal descent.[1]

Determining the exact dates of Śāntideva's life is challenging and uncertain. The only available clue is a quote from one of Śāntideva's verses in a text written by another Indian author, Śāntarakṣita, around 763 CE. Therefore, it is assumed that Śāntideva lived between the late seventh and mid-eighth centuries CE.[2] During this period, Buddhism was slowly starting to decline in North India, still creating new and original developments in the Buddhist tradition.

The Mahayana movement introduced many new sutras that were not previously known, as well as a new spiritual ideal. This new ideal, that of the bodhisattva, is considered a superior aspiration compared to the quest for *arhatship*.[3] To comprehend the works of Śāntideva, one must understand that the Madhyamaka school of thought is a part of the Mahayana tradition. The Mahayana tradition consists of two different ideologies, the Madhyamaka and the Yogacara. Śāntideva himself belonged to the Madhyamaka school. This school evolved from commentaries based on the writings of Nāgārjuna from the second century, which is a common practice in the scholastic tradition of Indian philosophy. The fundamental concept of the Madhyamaka school is

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[1] Charles Goodman, "Śāntideva," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.). https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2016/entries/shantideva/

[2] Goodman, "Śāntideva,"

[3] Jan Westerhoff, *The golden age of Indian Buddhist Philosophy*. (Oxford University Press, 2018), 85.

"emptiness" (*śūnyatā*). The understanding that everything is ultimately empty of intrinsic nature. According to the Mādhyamikas, all things are dependent on other things for their existence (*pratītyasamutpanna*). They use this concept to explain why the self does not truly exist. We cannot have a self because anything we consider part of ourselves can be traced back to countless causes that do not define our true nature.[4] Dependent origination does not have a foundation in something ultimately existent, unlike using atoms in the modern Western world. Everything, including the so-called lowest level, is dependent on its origin, making it impossible to determine the ultimate source of anything.

When talking about the works Śāntideva wrote, we usually speak of two major works that are universally attributed to him. The most well-known and most relevant for this work is the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (Hereafter, *BCA*). The *BCA,* otherwise translated as *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life,* has as the central connecting goal of the text to train an individual to become a bodhisattva, one who dedicates themselves to becoming a fully enlightened Buddha and eliminate the suffering of all beings.[5] The *BCA* contains nine chapters, each building upon those before them, granting us higher truths with each chapter. These chapters contain mediations and arguments to teach you how to be a bodhisattva; one such chapter is chapter VI, the patience chapter, corresponding with the perfection of patience, in which anger and its irrationality are discussed. The perfections within Madhyamaka Buddhism are virtues that have been fully developed by a bodhisattva. The six are (1) generosity (*dāna*), (2) morality (*śīla*), (3) patience (*kṣānti*), (4) vigor (*vīrya*), (5) concentration (*dhyāna*), and (6) wisdom (*prajñā*).

In the view of Śāntideva, these perfections are meant to address and eliminate the root cause of suffering, which he identifies as mental afflictions (*Kleśas*). According to him, the primary mental afflictions are delusion, craving, and anger. Anger arises when we misunderstand the nature of reality and believe in the existence of permanence, unity, and intrinsic existence. This is futile and

[4] Westerhoff, *The golden age of Indian Buddhist Philosophy, 84.*
[5] Westerhoff, *The golden age of Indian Buddhist Philosophy,* 100.

irrational, as reality contradicts these beliefs. When we lose or lack something, becoming angry serves no purpose. For this purpose, each perfection acts as an antidote that destroys one or more mental afflictions.[6]

The *BCA* has been translated into multiple languages over the years.[7] Two major versions of the BCA were known in Tibet: a short and an extended version. The version regarded as canon is the longer version of about a thousand or so verses. Some scholars argue that the shorter version was chronologically written first, with the larger version being added to later either by Śāntideva himself or another scholar. However, there is no conclusive evidence either way.

It is important to note that the *BCA* targets male monastics as its intended audience. This is evident from the meditations that focus on the unattractiveness of female bodies to combat male lust, as seen in verses 8:41-8:63 of the *BCA*. Therefore, the theories presented in the book are not intended for the general public, and the ethical standards and ultimate goal outlined in the book cannot be expected to be adhered to by everyone. Although the meditations and theories concerning anger and its irrationality may be considered the truth, they may not be convincing or applicable to everyone.

[6] Stephen E. Harris," Śāntideva's Introduction to the Practices of Awakening (Bodhicaryāvatāra)," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion* Accessed June 3, 2023, 2. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.013.727.
[7] Goodman, "Śāntideva,"

2.2 Historical Overview Marcus Aurelius

Marcus Aurelius, born in 121 CE, was adopted by Antoninus Pius. He succeeded Pius as the emperor of Rome in 161 CE and reigned until he died in 180. Aurelius received an extensive education in rhetoric and philosophy and became known as a Stoic philosopher. However, there is debate on whether he can be genuinely called a philosopher or Stoic. His primary influence was Stoicism, which can be seen in book one of the *Meditations*. In book one, he recorded gratitude for a large variety of people, personal, philosophical, and political in nature, showing clearly that most people he is grateful are of Stoic inclination. However, this does not prevent him from using other philosophical traditions, such as Epicurus. This has led to some discussion on whether he can be called a Stoic.

Added to this was that his reign as an emperor was not without trouble, experiencing attacks from Germany, rebellions in northern Italy and Egypt, and an outburst of the plague.[8] It stands to reason that these occurrences shaped his work known as the *Meditations*, primarily written during the last years of his military campaigns. The *Meditations* is his main surviving work, other than that, some correspondence survived.

A noteworthy aspect of the *Meditations* is that it was not intended for publication or as a gift for others. Instead, it was written solely for the himself, as a means of meditative practice and to record his philosophical thoughts on current events. As a result, the work lacks the depth and structure found in the works of other philosophers of that era. In fact, the title *Meditations* is a label given by us as a fabrication, as a personal piece written for private reflection does not require a title.[9] In fact, aside from book one, which acknowledges his various relatives and teachers whom Marcus seeks to live up to being exemplars of some virtue or bearers of valuable lessons, it is difficult, if not

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[8] Rachana Kamtekar, "Marcus Aurelius," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.). https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2018/entries/marcus-aurelius/

[9] Peter a. Brunt, "Marcus Aurelius in His Meditations," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 64, (1974): 1. https://doi.org/10.2307/299256

impossible to see how the work is structured. The text, as it is now published, contains books and chapters, but this is something put in after the fact, "The first clear mention of the *Meditations* within antiquity is by Themistius in the 4th c. CE, where it is called Marcus 'precepts'; in 900 Suidas' dictionary calls it a leading or directing, and the 10th-century bishop Arethas calls it 'the writings to himself."[10] Given that we know so little about the *Meditations* other than that Marcus wrote it for himself and that its survival was lucky, we have no reason to believe that it has survived in a complete state. Thus we have no way of knowing whether the book as we have it now is in the correct order.

Scholars generally accept it that Marcus wrote for his moral improvement so as to remind himself of the Stoic doctrines he wished to live by, ones such as the world being governed by providence, happiness lying in virtue, which one is responsible for by himself; as well as that one should never get angry at one's associates, to see them as siblings from the same God (Zeus). The *Meditations* being written to equip himself to deal with what comes his way is the cause for the often aphoristic style of writing, these aphorisms and saying work as a reminder to himself of freedom from pain and fear. This also explains why he uses technical Stoic terminology without explaining it, while also allowing him to use a variety of philosophical systems and philosophers without trying to make it consistent with Stoicism itself. [11] Interestingly if it is the case that Marcus Aurelius wrote it for personal use, that means that the *Meditations* provide evidence unique in antiquity and perhaps any era of the thoughts going through the mind of an emperor. As such it is natural to see that his main concern was with the divine order of Nature and the place of men within that order.[12]

Marcus seeks moral improvement by freeing his mind from passions and keeping it pure, which is the appropriate service to his inner deity. He achieves this by correcting the falsehoods that

[10] Kamtekar "Marcus Aurelius."
[11] Kamtekar "Marcus Aurelius."
[12] Brunt," M.A in His Meditations," 1.

give rise to these passions. Therefore, Marcus often corrects his false views about what is truly good, bad, or indifferent. [13]

[13] Georgia Mouroutsou, "Moral Philosophy in Imperial Roman Stoicism." In *The Routledge Handbook of Hellenistic Philosophy (1st ed.)*, ed. Kelly Arenson (Routledge, 2019), 327.

3. Vernezze's Five Shared Claims for the Irrationality of Anger in the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* and the *Meditations*

In his article "Moderation or the Middle Way: Two Approaches to Anger," Peter J. Vernezze compares Śāntideva's method of eliminating anger by "binding the mind alone" with the Stoic approach of Marcus Aurelius, who directs anger through precepts. Vernezze aims to demonstrate that these two authors and their works share similar philosophical assumptions, leading to parallel reasoning in confronting and overcoming troublesome emotions such as anger. The central argument is that anger is irrational.[14] Vernezze identified five parallel lines of reasoning that both Śāntideva and Marcus Aurelius use. These are self-interest, causation, obligation towards others, general culpability, and death.[15] Anger is such a seemingly natural part of human life, at least for most people, with both good and bad aspects. We have seen it cause irreparable damage to people and cultures, but at the same time, we have seen it be the driving force behind innumerable good things. This means that the teachings of Śāntideva and Marcus Aurelius of doing away with anger will struggle to find hold in most people, both of them seek to overcome anger because it fundamentally hinders their goal. For Śāntideva, this would be becoming a bodhisattva and getting rid of suffering, anger being a mental affliction and thus being a cause of suffering.[16] For Marcus, anger goes against Nature, against the divine will, and is harmful only to oneself. As such, both seek to show and convince people of the inherent irrationality of anger.[17]

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[14] Peter J. Vernezze, "Moderation or the Middle Way: Two Approaches to Anger." *Philosophy East & West* 58, no. 1 (2008): 8, https://doi.org/10.1353/pew.2008.0003.
[15] Vernezze, "Moderation or the Middle Way," 11.
[16] Harris, "Bodhicaryāvatāra." 11.
[17] Harris, "Bodhicaryāvatāra." 11.

Vernezze shows that how they try to do this in the case of anger follows similar arguments, the first through which he tries to show this is self-interest. Both philosophers appeal to what, in broad terms, can be called self-interest. This is seemingly odd for those aware of Buddhist philosophy, with there being no-self and all that entails. Why would a tradition that believes that there is no inherent self, no true uniting enduring entity tying a person together, use an argument based on self-interest? Vernezze argues that even the Buddha considered the effects of certain actions on our well-being. He urged his disciples to let go of what did not belong to them, as it would lead to their welfare and happiness.[18]

Vernezze explains that Śāntideva believes that anger is harmful to one's well-being and prevents the attainment of a peaceful state of mind.[19] In comparison, Marcus believes that our anger and annoyance can be more harmful to us than the things that cause those emotions.[20] While Vernezze did not give any attention to it, Śāntideva mirrors Marcus in the idea that our anger is more harmful to us than the things that cause those emotions, just as Marcus agrees that anger clouds the mind. That Marcus Aurelius uses self-interest is natural given that he was both an emperor and something of a Stoic, which has a commitment to *eudaimonism*, the belief that "the rational end of all action ought to be the achievement of one's happiness."[21] Both philosophers strongly rely on rationality as a basis for their argumentation. Both of these seemingly provide an argument for undercutting anger.

The second parallel reason provided by Vernezze is causation. It is opposed to the self-interest argument, which is focused on the circumstances of others compared to the self. The causation argument appeals to the doctrine of cause and effect to do away with the blame of others, thus removing it as a reason for anger. Vernezze references a quote from Śāntideva, in which he compares the causation of anger with bodily fluids like bile to the causation of anger with other living

[18] Vernezze, "Moderation or the Middle Way," 8.
[19] Vernezze, "Moderation or the Middle Way," 8.
[20] Vernezze, "Moderation or the Middle Way," 8.
[21] Vernezze, "Moderation or the Middle Way," 8.

beings. Neither the bodily fluids nor the living beings have control over what will happen. This argument is presented in the chapter on patience:

> (*BCA* VI.22) I am not angry with bile and other humors--
> Fertile sources of pain and suffering!
> So why should I resent my fellow creatures,
> Victims, too, of like conditions.[22]

The argument is based on treating similar cases equally. The rationalist tradition believes that reason recognizes how the sense of sight perceives physical objects.[23] This argument for Śāntideva is based on the ground that everything is dependently originated. While it is true that we seem to react differently when our body causes us pain compared to when my neighbor does, this ultimately means nothing because, just like my body the actions done by another are a result of physical processes, that must be understood as the product of causes since we do not get angry at these processes with bile, we should not get angry when someone else does it.

Similarly, Marcus does the same thing on a more societal level. He asks us not to get angry when someone offends us but to retain our equanimity by reflecting on said person. What is their character? In public, in private? Therefore, we need to consider the influence of their culture and thought processes on their behavior and the resulting confidence with which they carry out their actions. He argues that getting moral praise or blame requires the person to be able to act differently. And since they have offended us as a direct result of the causal pressure their belief structure puts off, there is no condition for anger present. Thus, upon meeting someone, we should inquire into their lives and beliefs. We will not be surprised once we know them, no matter how they act. [24]

Another reason for obligation towards others is the third parallel. Marcus believes that we are born for each other, creating a close bond. Humans cannot exist independently, proving the existence of this interconnectedness. It is easier to forgive family than strangers; realizing a bond

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[22] Śāntideva, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life*, trans Vesna Wallace and Alan Wallace (Snow Lion Press, 1997)*, 64*.
[23] Vernezze, "Moderation or the Middle Way," 9.
[24] Vernezze, "Moderation or the Middle Way," 9.

with all will lead to similar reactions. We are all fellow citizens of the city that is Nature. [25]

For Śāntideva, the argument appeals to the bodhisattva's obligation to work for the salvation of others. This is central to the entire bodhisattva path, it is the reason for the path, it stands to reason that upon taking upon oneself the duty of walking this path we should refrain from anger because, if we repay anger for anger, we do not save them but instead harm them which is the opposite of what they desire. [26] For both, it is the case that anger will only spur more actions that create anger that will spiral in a negative way. We have obligations, for Marcus, it is to society, and for Śāntideva, it is to all sentient beings.

The fourth parallel reason is general culpability. Aurelius claims that we offend others in a variety of ways or that we previously have and that we, thus are no different from those who offend us. Therefore, because he has done similar before and has offended someone, he should not be offended if it happens to himself. It is not the case of an eye for an eye, but more generally, I have done wrong to others; thus, I should not look surprised if it happens to me. [27]

In comparison, Śāntideva follows a similar approach by pardoning all actions based on past deeds. However, he takes it a step further in accordance with his tradition and extends this pardon to previous lives as well. He believes that if we harmed someone in a past life, it is a result of karma that something happens to him now.

The fifth parallel reason is death. Both philosophers call upon death to trivialize anger, what does anger matter when it is such an insignificant part, such a short moment that in the face of imminent death, regardless of how long our lives lasted, it will all be gone. According to Vernezze, they use death to put things into perspective for us, there is no rational reason to get angry at what is utterly insignificant, and everything is insignificant in the face of death. [28]

[25] Vernezze, "Moderation or the Middle Way," 10.
[26] Vernezze, "Moderation or the Middle Way," 10.
[27] Vernezze, "Moderation or the Middle Way," 10.
[28] Vernezze, "Moderation or the Middle Way," 10.

Vernezze proposes five parallel lines of reasoning regarding why anger is irrational: self-interest, causation, general culpability, obligation towards others, and death. Both philosophers approach these arguments from a highly rational perspective, and they overlap in their views. As presented by Vernezze, all five of these arguments seem to coincide on why anger is irrational. It is harmful to yourself. Causal with no real agency to be angry at. We are obliged to help others, and anger will only harm society or all sentient beings. Or are likely to offend others, making it irrational to become angry at another for doing the same as you. And lastly, that death serves to trivialize all sources of anger. Although both philosophers seem to agree on the purpose of these arguments, it is worth considering whether their differing fundamental goals and understanding of human nature invalidate this view.

4. Self-Interest

The topic of anger, its irrationality, and the harm it causes are extensively discussed by Marcus Aurelius and Śāntideva in their respective texts. They both provide a variety of arguments and reasons regarding why anger is problematic and what can be done to address it. This chapter will examine how these philosophers view anger from the perspective of self-interest. Vernezze explained that the philosophers Śāntideva and Marcus Aurelius shared a similar viewpoint regarding anger and its impact on our well-being. They believed that harboring this emotion could be detrimental. According to Śāntideva, anger disrupts our mental tranquillity, leading to suffering. Similarly, Marcus Aurelius believed that anger hinders a person's ability to attain happiness. Both philosophers thought that anger is irrational and harmful to us. They, therefore, urged individuals to avoid it, citing self-interest as the reason. [29]

In this chapter, we will explore the argument of self-interest in greater detail by examining it on a deeper level. Additionally, we will consider the role of human nature in the theories of anger presented by both authors. We will analyze the two groups of argumentation used by Śāntideva and the social perspective on self-interest presented by Marcus Aurelius.

4.1 Karmic and Material Self-Interest

In his teachings, Śāntideva aims to demonstrate that anger is both irrational because of the harm it causes from a self-interest perspective. When considering the bodhisattva path, there are three stages. The first stage is when a person has not yet considered the path. This could be due to a lack of exposure to Buddhism, guidance towards becoming a bodhisattva, or simply not finding it

[29] Vernezze, “Moderation or the Middle Way,” 8.

appealing. The following two stages are centered around the concept of *bodhicitta*.[30] *Bodhicitta* is the mind (*citta*) aimed at awakening (*bodhi*) with wisdom and compassion for the benefit of all sentient beings. It is not an easy state to attain, as there are two kinds of *bodhicitta* - aspirational and engaged. [31]

Śāntideva's argument against anger can be divided into two aspects. The first group includes individuals who are not yet on the path of a bodhisattva and those who have just achieved aspirational *bodhicitta* which is a material argument. On the other hand, the second group involves individuals who have attained engaged *bodhicitta* or are at least making significant progress with aspirational *bodhicitta,* and is a karmic argument. [32] Aspirational *bodhicitta* fits both groups because it refers to someone at the beginning of their journey with a vague idea of the destination. Their mind is not yet strong or clear enough to fully comprehend the principles of selflessness and emptiness. While they may have heard of these truths, they have not yet fully accepted or understood them. [33] One who has cultivated aspirational *bodhicitta* knows conceptually what kinds of perceptual states she aims to achieve; one who has thoroughly cultivated engaged *bodhicitta* perceives the world directly through emptiness and its ethical corollaries.[34]

To fully understand Śāntideva's perspective, it is essential to consider one of the core tenets of Buddhism: the four noble truths. These truths state that there is suffering, it has a cause, it can be ended, and there is a way to bring about its end. Essentially, it is a plan to address suffering. This is particularly important for Śāntideva because he aims to eliminate suffering not only for himself but for everyone, as it is the responsibility of the bodhisattva. Suffering is caused by mental afflictions (*Kleśas*), in Mahayana Buddhism, the three primary mental afflictions are ignorance, desire, and aversion, they lie at the root of all suffering. It is from these three mental afflictions that all other afflictions arise. Aversion refers to an aversion to things we do not like or the things that prevent us

[30] Jay L. Garfield, "Śāntideva's Moral Phenomenology," in *Readings of Śāntideva's Guide to Bodhisattva Practice,* ed. Jonathan C. Gold & Douglas S. Duckworth (Colombia University Press, 2019), 196-197.
[31] Garfield, "Śāntideva's Moral Phenomenology,", 196-197.
[32] Garfield, "Śāntideva's Moral Phenomenology," 196-197.
[33] Garfield, "Śāntideva's Moral Phenomenology," 196-197.
[34] Garfield, "Śāntideva's Moral Phenomenology," 197.

from getting them and often refer to anger or hatred. This is where anger starts to come into the equation. If the mind is left undeveloped, one cannot grasp the true nature of things, causing us to fall prey to these poisons (mental afflictions). Thus, Buddha has located the cause of suffering to exist within the bounds of 'our' minds.[35] This is important because it shows that anger is one of the central issues for the ultimate goal of Śāntideva. Furthermore, anger is a product of our actions. Marcus Aurelius agrees with this notion but believes that the soul, not the mind, is at risk. [36]

Mental conditions like anger can harm the individual who possesses them in four ways. The first way is by destabilizing the mind and causing a lack of control, often leading to harmful actions. This, in turn, leads to negative karmic effects, such as rebirth in hell, which is the second source of harm. The third is a psychological feeling such as a painful feeling of the mind filled with anger. Fourthly, the effect it has on one's social relationships, specifically the affliction of anger, is the most damaging in this case. [37]

Śāntideva presents the first line of argumentation in a manner that aligns with his teachings yet is more for a broader audience to comprehend and agree with, this is the material argument. To examine why anger is irrational and harmful, we must look at verses seven and eight of the *BCA.* According to Śāntideva anger originates and finds its fuel in the discontent that arises from either negative events or things blocking said desired events. And has no other function than to harm oneself. [38] This is made more evident by looking at chapter VI, verse three of the *BCA*; we get told that "the mind does not get peace, nor enjoy pleasure and happiness, nor find sleep or satisfaction, when the dart of anger rests in the heart."(*BCA* VI.3) [39] This verse argues that anger denies one pleasure and happiness and causes distress at its very foundation. The argument presents difficult-to-dispute points that many people would likely agree with. It is common for someone to recall when their anger made it difficult to sleep, caused them to lose a friend, or negatively impacted their peace

[35] Wallace, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life, 61*.
[36] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations, trans* Maxwell Staniforth, (Penguin Classics, 2004), Book 2, verse 16, 19.
[37] Amod Lele, "Śāntideva," *Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy,*https://iep.utm.edu/santideva/
[38] Wallace, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life, 62*.
[39] Wallace, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life, 61*.

of mind.[40] This argument is relatively simple and calls upon common sense and is thus suitable to start convincing people on the first and second stages of the bodhisattva path. In the situation set forward by Śāntideva, anger is shown to be harmful. The irrational aspect is not yet truly touched upon because it is primarily based on Śāntideva's larger metaphysics, which is either unsuitable or unbelievable for those not yet far enough along the path. These arguments can thus be used in two ways, the first is the one discussed above, as a straightforward way to show that anger is harmful. The second takes into account the knowledge of suffering and the four noble truths and thus is able to prove the irrationality of anger and the harm it causes. [41]

Śāntideva continues to elaborate on how anger is harmful to us by taking a look at a social situation. Even if you become a great person and do great things, if you display anger, that would cause people to see you as unbearable or make your friends fear you. So, it stands to reason that if one did not feel anger, he would be a happier, more content person, sleep is no longer being interrupted, and people are no longer afraid of you. To show why Śāntideva considers anger irrational and harmful, we must turn to later verses. In verses 53, 92, 93, and 94 of chapter VI of the *BCA,* we are told:

> *(BCA* VI.53) Slander, insults and defamation, all this does not hurt the body. Why then, oh mind, are you angry? [42]
>
> *(BCA* VI. 92) For the sake of glory, they sacrifice their wealth; they even bring death upon themselves. Are syllables [of praise] perhaps edible? And when dead, who enjoys this pleasure?[43]
>
> *(BCA* VI. 93) When praise and glory have passed, my mind appears to me like a child unhappily crying over a ruined sand castle. [44]
>
> *(BCA* VI. 94) As for sound, since it is not sentient, it is not possible that it praises me. That Someone else is pleased with me that is the reason for my pleasure.[45]

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[40] Lele, "Śāntideva,"
[41] Emily McRae, *"*Suffering and the Six Perfections: Using Adversity to Attain Wisdom in Mahāyāna Buddhist Ethics," *J Value Inquiry* 52 (2018), 346.
[42] Śāntideva. *Bodhicaryavatara*, Translated by Ernst Steinkellner and Cynthia Peck-Kubaczeck (Leuven – Paris – Bristol, CT: Peeters 2019)*,*47.
[43] Steinkellner, Bodhicaryāvatāra*,*50.
[44] Steinkellner, Bodhicaryāvatāra*,*50.
[45] Steinkellner, Bodhicaryāvatāra*,*50.

At first glance, it may not be immediately apparent how these verses demonstrate the irrationality of anger and its impact on our well-being and self-interest. Verse 53 calls upon us to notice that things such as slander and insults cannot hurt our body or even our mind as long as we do not take it as a cause to harm ourselves, for that is what happens when we become angry. These things only harm us when we become too focused on our discontent and allow anger to arise. Verses 92-94 highlight a similar issue with our desire for glory. We may become angry when it disappears, but this isn't rational behavior. As the verse points out, praise is not edible and has no true value. To become angry because of this only brings harm to ourselves.

Śāntideva's second argument is a karmic argument concerning self-interest, which is meant for late stage two and stage three or those that have awakened either kind of *bodhicitta.* For those that have achieved this state, all of the previous arguments also count but have a stronger starting position as these practitioners believe/understand the truths regarding suffering, samsara, and mental afflictions. During the last section, a social argument was given, where anger might estrange you from your friends, this argument changes but becomes even more important when considering the goal of a bodhisattva, though not relevant to personal well-being and will thus be revisited in the chapter on obligation towards others. Important in the case of self-interest is the effect of anger on karma, the afterlife, and our ability for introspection.

Above, we discussed four ways in which anger can cause harm, of special interest is the second source, negative karmic effects. These are the case for all forms of mental afflictions but are particularly strong in the case of anger. According to Śāntideva, there is no bad karma equal to anger. Anger causes far greater suffering than that which caused the anger in the first place, the suffering one experiences in the hell realms is far greater than the cause of one's anger:[46]

> *(BCA* VI.73-74) If suffering merely here and now cannot be endured, why is anger, the cause of distress in hell not restrained? In the same way, for the sake of anger I have been placed in hells thousands of times; I have done this neither for my own sake nor for anyone else's.[47]

[46] Amod Lele, "Śāntideva," *Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy,*https://iep.utm.edu/santideva/
[47] Wallace, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life,* 70.

All things that cause us anger in this life are short-lasting temporary things, why then is it that we react towards them with anger, if that reaction would cause far longer and harsher suffering than what provoked it in the first place? We suffer that is a fact for Buddhists, but there is no reason to bring more grievous suffering upon ourselves, instead, we should rid ourselves of suffering. Why, then is it that we do the opposite? By reacting with anger to our current suffering, one guarantees even more suffering in the afterlife, both because of the anger itself and the actions one takes while angry. All this as such anger causes negative karmic effects in the shape of hell, and more suffering. Would it then not be better to endure, to hold back our anger to ensure less suffering? He further mentions this argument in verses 55[48] and 89[49] of chapter VI in the *BCA.* To a person trying to become a bodhisattva going to hell to suffer, because one acted out in anger in the living world causes one to take longer on their path. And thus, the one who destroys anger is happy in this world and the next.[50]

Secondly, anger is also detrimental to introspection, meditation, and understanding. Whether you are on the path to becoming a bodhisattva or whether you are one, meditation, introspection, and understanding are important for your well-being. They are the key to escaping suffering, escaping samsara as such anger harms your well-being, or at least your future well-being, by preventing or prolonging your journey. It exists as a disruptive force:

> *(BCA* VIII.1) Having thus increased one's efforts,
> One should place one's mind in meditation.
> For if one's mind is distracted
> One lies in the fangs of mental afflictions.[51]

An example connected to karma and the afterlife would be anger disrupting your process of introspection, causing you to generate negative karma, resulting in you either ending up in hell or

[48] Steinkellner, Bodhicaryāvatāra 47.
[49] Steinkellner, Bodhicaryāvatāra*,*49.
[50] Lele, "Śāntideva,"
[51] Wallace, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life, 90*.

reincarnating as something other than human. And since only humans can progress on the path to becoming a bodhisattva, this is thus harming your well-being. It also prevents one from

To properly achieve engaged *Bodhicitta* or even to use the mind for something useful it should not be distracted, anger must thus be dealt with. Anger would prevent the right attitude from arising. And the right attitude is necessary to achieve engaged *bodhicitta.* Having the right attitude can help you transform your consciousness from egocentric to decentred and free from self-grasping. This change in perspective allows you to view others as equals, rather than mere objects with interests that pale in comparison to your own. When you reach this stage, you can be impartial and show beneficence, care, and rejoice in the success and virtues of others. Only then can we leave aspirational *bodhicitta* and achieve engaged *bodhicitta*.[52]

Śāntideva approaches the argument of self-interest in two distinct ways. A material one and a karmic one. The first targets those in the first and second stages of the bodhisattva path. While the second targets those that are part of the second and third stages of the bodhisattva path. In the case of the first argument, anger has direct negative consequences for one's well-being, it disrupts one's mind, disrupts sleep, and separates you from your friends. It prevents you from living a happy life. And most importantly, these feelings are not rational, the reasons that cause anger are irrational. In the case of the second argument, it has far-reaching consequences that target future well-being. By being angry now, I disrupt my mind and halt one's progress to gaining *bodhicitta,* attaining bodhisattvahood, and bringing awakening to everyone. Secondly, it will most likely cause negative karmic consequences leading to one either ending up in one of the hells receiving more suffering than that which caused one's anger, or one is reincarnated as anything but a human lacking the capability to even try and achieve awakening, for only humans, those with human nature, can engage in conscious acts of self-improvement.

[52] Garfield, "Śāntideva's Moral Phenomenology," 196-197.

4.2 Human Nature and the Cosmic City

Self-interest for Marcus Aurelius, with his commitment to *eudaimonism*, is a slightly different topic to discuss in comparison to Śāntideva. In the section on Śāntideva, we saw two groups of arguments in which anger causes harm to our well-being, also referred to as the material and the karmic arguments. We shall see a superficial similarity in how social relations are in danger for the material argument with how Marcus treats social interactions and anger.

To understand the ideas that Marcus contemplates, one must understand that *Eudaimonism* is the belief that "the rational end of all action ought to be the achievement of one's happiness."[53] That means that any rational action you do, which for Marcus Aurelius should be all, leads towards happiness, meaning that going against your supposed nature, which is not rational, does not result in happiness and is thus against your self-interest. And according to Marcus, for a rational adult human, reason discerns what is good for a person and what is bad for them. Rationality thus is the self of a rational being and thus is what one seeks to preserve above all. However, we are also social creatures, seek interpersonal relationships, and are only complete in conjunction with a society, a city. As social beings, we naturally form relationships with others, whether they be friends, family, or enemies, in order to participate in society. [54]

Stoicism holds that virtue is the only good for oneself and is the sole contributor to our happiness and, thus our well-being, and that vice is the only evil, the only contributor to our unhappiness, everything else is indifferent as far as *eudaimonia* is concerned. Things such as poverty, sickness, and bad reputation, do not count as a vice, as possessing them does not make us unhappy, and the same works for fame and wealth, having them does not make us happy.[55] For Marcus, things such as poverty and sickness have no grounds to make us angry. For Marcus, this is human nature, the only problem, however, is that being human also means making mistakes.

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[53] Vernezze, "Moderation or the Middle Way," 8.
[54] MacCormick, John Anderson Murray. "The Philosophy of Moral Response in the Imperial Stoa." (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2016), 102.
[55] Kamtekar "Marcus Aurelius."

It is in our nature to follow this, but to flourish we must calibrate our beliefs to that of Nature. To do this, we must modify our beliefs about good and bad because if we keep pleasure as good and pain as bad, we will resent pleasures enjoyed by the vicious and vice versa as these inform one's impulses and actions. And being resentful, what this leads to, is finding fault with Nature, and that is harmful. Thus, false beliefs about good and bad hinder us from following our nature and acting virtuously and cause us to get angry. Once my ignorance is removed, I will be able to follow my nature, and no longer have any reason to become angry.[56] This is what it means to live virtuously.[57] anger, and rage, are often seen as a sign of manliness, but for the Stoics, this could not be less true, for them, there is more virility and natural humanity in one who is gentle and peaceful. "For anger is as much a mark of weakness as is grief; in both of them men receive a wound and submit to a defeat."[58] According to Marcus, allowing ourselves to succumb to anger results in a wound to our soul. This emotion disrupts our connection to nature and our ability to fulfill our responsibilities, ultimately causing harm to ourselves. It is important to recognize that anger is irrational and that we are the only ones capable of genuinely harming our souls. Therefore, it is not the cause of our anger that wounds us but rather the anger itself.

Most people seem to hold the idea of reputation in high esteem, finding it an integral part of their perceived happiness, but reputation exists in both positive and negative ways, being ultimately indifferent to your happiness. One must understand that anger derived from reputation, whether the loss of one, or having one of ill-repute, is weak. Think about how insignificant it is; hear how hollow the echo of applause is, how fickle their judgment is. Marcus recommends withdrawing within the little field of self. To cease any struggle or strain, to master oneself, to look upon life as a but a simple man, as a citizen. And then, once one contemplates frequently, one comes to learn that things can never touch the soul, they are thus incapable of harming the soul, and no matter who or what

[56] Kamtekar "Marcus Aurelius."
[57] John M. Cooper, *Knowledge, Nature, and the Good: Essays on Ancient Philosophy (*Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 340.
[58] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations,* Book 11, verse 20, 120-121.

happens outside no harm can come to it from it. Except for the fact that we do experience harm to our souls, this disquiet arises from within. And it is thus from within by changing what we hold to be good and bad that we can protect ourselves. [59] Or as Marcus puts it: "4.7 Put from you the belief that 'I have been wronged,' and with it will go the feeling. Reject your sense of injury, and the injury itself disappears." [60] Any actual harm comes to us because we choose to experience anger rather than anything else. And whatever we got angry at was only because of a mistaken understanding of the connection between the self and nature, as Marcus explains here.

> 16. For a human soul, the greatest of self-inflicted wrongs is to make itself a kind of tumour or abscess on the universe; for to quarrel with circumstances is always a rebellion against Nature – and Nature includes the nature of each individual part. Another wrong, again, is to reject a fellow-creature or oppose him with malicious intent, as men do when they are angry.[61]

If we were to stay within this state of ignorance, we would get angry at things based on our mistaken notions of what Is good and what is bad for us. And anger is the worst of the passions, for it disturbs the desired calm the most. [62] Anger, in all of its forms, overt or covert, poisons the mind, depriving one of the passionless calm that a good man, a Stoic sage, would enjoy.[63] Marcus clarifies it a bit in passage 28:

> Book 8.28. Pain must be an evil either to the body—in which case let the body speak for itself—or if not, to the soul. But the soul can always refuse to consider it an evil, and so keep its skies unclouded and its calm unruffled. For there is no decision, no impulse, no movement of approach or recoil, but must proceed from within the self; and into this self no evil can force its way. [64]

In other words, it is important to avoid getting angry due to external events. Reacting this way results from ignorance and false beliefs that hinder one's ability to be part of society. However, Marcus is not abandoning anger solely for the serenity that it would grant, instead, he understands that eliminating anger is necessary for the cultivation of interpersonal relationships as naturally ordained. We are only complete in conjunction with a society, a city, this is part of our very nature.

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[59] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, Book 4, verse 3, 30- 31.
[60] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations,* Book 4, verse 7, 32.
[61] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations, trans* Maxwell Staniforth, (Penguin Classics, 2004), Book 2, verse 16, 19.
[62] Brunt," M.A in His Meditations," 11.
[63] Brunt," M.A in His Meditations," 11.
[64] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations,* Book 8, verse 28, 81.

As social beings, we naturally form relationships with others, whether they be friends, family, or enemies, in order to participate in society. According to the Stoics, it is through recognizing our shared human nature and experiencing a sense of affinity for all human beings that we can establish justice as the foundation for harmonious living in society. Humans were meant to live in communities connected to others in a city, like the limbs of a body. Thus, Working against one another goes against our natural social inclinations, and emotions such as anger are examples.[65] We do this wrong out of ignorance, we have a mistaken assessment of what is good and bad, it is then a fact that others cannot do harm only you can harm your soul.[66] As he is fond of saying, we are all kin and citizens of the same cosmic city. [67]

> Book 5.22. What is not harmful to the city cannot harm the citizen. In every fancied case of harm, apply the rule, If the city is not harmed, I am not harmed.' But if the city should indeed be harmed, never rage at the culprit rather, find out at what point his vision failed him.[68]

Marcus uses this bond between the citizen and the cosmic city to explain that if something does not take away from the Whole, from Nature, or from Zeus's design then it is not evil, it is instead indifferent. Whereas if it does affect the 'city', it also affects you because it means that you deviated from your nature, however, he faithfully points out that does not mean that you should get angry at the culprit for that would have the wrong effect. Getting angry would only cause you to harm both the city and oneself because of the connection.

Lastly, in connection with humans being social animals, Marcus gives us a rather interesting analogy of a branch and a tree in comparison to humans and society.

> 8. A branch severed from an adjoining branch necessarily becomes severed from the whole tree. A man, likewise, who has been divided from any of his fellows has thereby fallen away from the whole community. But whereas the branch is lopped by some other hand, the man, by his feelings of hatred or aversion, brings about his own estrangement from his neighbour, and does not see that at the same time he has cut himself off from the whole framework of society. Nevertheless, it is in our power, by the grace of Zeus the author of all fellowship, to grow back and become one with our neighbour again, so playing our part once more in the integration of the whole. Yet if such acts of secession are repeated frequently, they make it difficult for the recusant to achieve this reunion and restitution. A branch which has been partner of the tree's growth since the beginning, and has never ceased to

[65] MacCormick, John Anderson Murray. "The Philosophy of Moral Response in the Imperial Stoa." (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2016), 102.
[66] MacCormick, Murray, "The Philosophy of Moral Response in the Imperial Stoa," 103-104.
[67] MacCormick, Murray, "The Philosophy of Moral Response in the Imperial Stoa," 104.
[68] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations,* Book 5, verse 22, 48.

> share its life, is a different thing from one that has been grafted in again after a severance. As the gardeners say, it is of the same tree, but not of the same mind.[69]

Marcus draws a parallel here to society, if a man were to be divided from any of his fellows, he would thereby separate from the entire community. For a branch to be separated, it needs outside action, for the man, it is only by his feelings of anger that he is estranged from his fellow man. At the same time, he is also unaware that this act has estranged him from his entire society, he is acting against his nature, obstructing the workings of the city. That does not mean that it is now irreparable; however, just as a branch may grow back or be reattached, so may man once again grow close to their neighbor and become a part of the Whole. Yet if such things were to keep occurring in frequent repeats, it would become progressively challenging to join society again. There is, after all, a difference between a branch that has been part of the tree since the beginning and one that has been grafted on again and again, it is of the same tree but not the same mind. [70]

Vernezze calls upon self-interest as the first parallel argument in the discussion on irrational anger, claiming that both philosophers seem to provide an argument for undercutting anger based on self-interest. Vernezze states that both writers are trying to demonstrate that anger and professed concern for one's well-being cannot coexist rationally.

I have shown that both sides use some form of self-interest in their argumentation. Still, the similarities are rather superficial, calling largely upon a peaceful mind disturbed by anger. Having a calm mind is essential for both traditions, for Śāntideva to have a mind undisturbed by the afflictions means that your journey on the bodhisattva path will be easier. And for Marcus, it is only when the soul and mind are calm that we can truly be part of society as friends family, or rivals, and thus fulfill an important part of our very nature. Anger can prevent you from achieving all of these, which goes against your self-interest. However, it is possible to attain a peaceful mind even in a world where

[69] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, Book 11, 114.
[70] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations,* Book 11, verse 8, 114.

there are triggers for anger. This is because anger is a response of the mind or soul, not the outside world.

Both philosophers use an argument calling upon society as a part of the self-interest argument, and this grants us an interesting insight into how they see anger as irrational. Marcus' theory is heavily society-based, Stoic in nature, and written by an Emperor, a man well entrenched in society seeking happiness in a society-based system. It thus stands to reason that most of his arguments concerning anger are posited in relation to society. This is made even more important because, for Marcus, the idea of society or city is not limited to the physical idea but is instead a reference to reality as a whole. This allows him to put anger as an aggressor, as a disturbance to how nature is supposed to work and to claim that anger goes against our very nature. In contrast, Śāntideva is a monk who wrote for a male monk audience, as can be derived from various passages decrying women as lust objects. Still, every monk started out as a learner or uninitiated, so Śāntideva wrote his *guide* in a way that entices the uninitiated to walk it. This made it so that Śāntideva does use the example of anger causing distance from people in a negative fashion. Anger can create a disturbance in your relationship between either your subjects or your friends. At some point, he even points out that anger unnecessarily makes a boddhisatva's job more difficult because angry people will resist being guided.

While the decrying of ignorance follows a similar train of thought to that of Śāntideva, it diverges rather drastically with regard to what one is ignorant about. Whereas Marcus is ignorant of what is good, what is bad, and what is indifferent, as well as the will of Nature, Śāntideva is instead ignorant of the emptiness of reality, unaware of existence and its co-dependent nature.

Secondly, living in accordance with Nature means living in accordance with reason. The perfection of reason is a virtue which is only good because it is necessary to create happiness. In return, the only evil is the corruption of reason. All other things are indifferent. [71] The Stoic sage is aware that living in agreement with our human nature means living in agreement with the entire

[71] Stephens, ” The Stoics and Their Philosophical System,” 32.

cosmos. The sage is a microcosm existing in harmony with the providential macrocosm, embracing all events and affirming their meaning and necessity. He is free from all disturbing passions. Among these passions are the mental illnesses of fear, anger, hatred, pity, greed, lust, envy, and jealousy. These result from false judgments about what is good, bad, or indifferent. [72] This anger thus arises from ignorance about the true nature of good and evil.[73] It can, therefore be said that anger arises irrationally.

One of the differences found is that of the idea of karma and the afterlife. According to Śāntideva, the idea of karma and the cycle of reincarnation is important as can be seen by the repeated mentions that anger creates bad karma that leads to more suffering in hell, which more suffering is instead the opposite of what Śāntideva wants. In contrast, arguments concerning death are mentioned a few times by Marcus, largely as an endless abyss that is more along the lines of nothing mattering because, in the end, it is so short in the face of endless death, which will be referred to later.

The goal (in terms of self-interest) for Śāntideva, functionally speaking, is that the arguments concerning self-interest mean little to proficient Buddhist practitioners because they already seek to understand no-self and all that follows. Whereas for Marcus, self-interest, even for a highly skilled practitioner is something of the highest order, for the greatest good is happiness, your happiness as you are an enduring soul. Now this happiness is not something that can occur in an isolated instance It requires one to be part of society, and to be part of such society, especially in a way that promotes happiness requires one to be an active member. Thus, they seem to end up at the same conclusion with vastly different questions and answers. For Śāntideva, at every level of his theory, from the very lowest to the very highest, anger creates problems. It is one of the greatest if not the greatest sources of suffering, and as such there is no rational possibility for anger and well-being to coincide. For Marcus human nature and society play a big role in his notion of well-being and how anger

[72] Stephens, ” The Stoics and Their Philosophical System,” 33.
[73] Kamtekar “Marcus Aurelius,"

disrupts and harms our well-being, compared to the far more solitary Buddhist approach. regardless both of them strongly rely on rationality to show why anger is irrational considering our well-being.

5. Causation

The second line of argumentation is that of cause and effect. This argument seeks to invalidate anger by putting it against the backdrop of causation, as why would one get angry at someone who had no choice in acting the way he does? Both believe that by understanding the cause of the offense, anger will lose its hold over you. However, Marcus situates his causation in the backdrop of a society. In comparison, Śāntideva considers it one of the fundamental building blocks of the world and theory.

5.1 Dependent-Origination

Śāntideva's argument of causation holds that the emotion of anger comes from an incorrect belief, one of ignorance, the belief that the other person can be blamed for their actions. To counter this erroneous belief, according to Śāntideva, the causation argument is founded on the principle that similar situations should be handled in a similar manner. The argument goes as follows:

> *(BCA* VI.6.22) I am not angered at bile and the like even though they cause great suffering. Why be angry at sentient beings, who are also provoked to anger by conditions?[74]

In his argument, Śāntideva relies on dependent origination, which suggests that although we may react differently when experiencing pain caused by our body versus pain caused by another sentient being, this distinction is ultimately insignificant. Both types of pain arise from physical processes, which are the result of various causes.[75] Since we do not get angry at these processes with bile, we accept that we, for example, have a stomachache because we understand its causes. We should not get angry when these processes occur through someone else, we simply have to

[74] Wallace, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life, 64*.
[75] Amod Lele, "The Metaphysical Basis of Śāntideva's Ethics," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 22, (2015): 261.

understand their causes. As such we are asked to treat another person's bad behaviour in a similar vein to that of a stomach-ache, without anger. [76]

This argument relies on the principle of cause and effect to absolve others of blame, thereby eliminating anger as a justification for it. The causes of anger, whether mine or someone else's, can be traced back to specific factors. It is not a deliberate choice to feel anger but rather a natural outcome of the universe's dependent origination, being a link in the chain of causes.[77]

In verses 27-33 of VI, Śāntideva establishes that there is no-self, and thus no self capable of being the agent of anger. Therefore, it is impossible to consciously decide to become angry or to place blame on becoming angry. There is also nothing to direct the anger towards or any object to be angry at.[78] It is not common for someone to deliberately choose to become angry. Anger does not start with the thought, "I'm going to get angry now." [79] As explained in *BCA* VI.31, everything is interconnected and dependent on something else. Even the things that something depends on are not independent. [80] Therefore, there's no reason to get angry at something that is not active, such as apparitions, as stated in *BCA* VI.33. So, when you see a friend or an enemy doing something wrong, it is best to reflect on their situation and be at peace with it. [81]

Through this metaphysical reasoning, one reaches an ethical conclusion. [82] All things are caused, there is no one, nor anything, that can act as a causal agent, so do not blame and do not get angry, for that would be irrational. Anger, or the causes of anger being causally dependent, means that even if something happens that should arouse feelings of anger, upon considering the concept of dependent origination, we can see the irrationality within those feelings and let go of them, for they are truly foolish:

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[76] Lele, "The Metaphysical Basis," 262.
[77] Lele, "The Metaphysical Basis," 262-263.
[78] Lele, "The Metaphysical Basis," 264.
[79] Wallace, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life, 64*.
[80] Wallace, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life, 65*.
[81] Wallace, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life, 65*.
[82] Lele, "The Metaphysical Basis," 264.

> *(BCA* VI.46.) Just as the forest of razor-leaves and the birds of hell are brought into existence by my actions, so is this.[83]

This passage presents a different perspective on the cause-and-effect debate. It suggests that every effect has a cause, and sometimes, that cause can be the individual, leading to their suffering and anger. To overcome anger, it is crucial to identify the root cause within oneself and address it. In this particular case, mental pain is the root cause of anger. Therefore, individuals should aim to eliminate mental pain by keeping their minds happy to eliminate anger. By doing so, they can avoid experiencing anger altogether.[84] We must cut off its fuel so that it burns out, and according to verses seven and eight of chapter six, mental pain is a prominent cause.[85]

Mental pain is the term used to describe the negative emotions that we experience when faced with difficult situations such as verbal bullying, harassment, shocking news, and other stressors. Physical pain can often be a trigger for mental pain since our five senses - touch, smell, taste, hearing, and sight - are all directly connected to physical pain. This means that any negative physical experience can lead to negative mental feelings and mental pain. For instance, being hit would cause touch-related physical pain, while encountering a foul smell would be related to smell.[86] By breaking the connection between physical and mental pain and mental pain and anger, it is possible to prevent anger from arising altogether. This is because anger stems from inner turmoil rather than external factors. Śāntideva aims to achieve this by positively portraying physical pain.[87] For one, it can be used to train in resisting suffering, strengthening the mind, making practicing the perfections easier, and making our propensity for compassion greater.[88] As such, encountering enemies and opposition is even desired, for it helps with practicing the perfection of patience, as can be seen in these verses:

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[83] Wallace, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life,* 67.
[84] Harris, "Bodhicaryāvatāra," 10.
[85] Wallace, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life,* 62.
[86] Harris, "Bodhicaryāvatāra," 10.
[87] Harris, "Bodhicaryāvatāra," 10.
[88] Wallace, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life,* 64.

> (*BCA* VI.106.) It is very easy to find beggars in this world, but very difficult to find wrongdoers. For no one will harm me if I do not harm. [89]
>
> *(BCA* VI.110.) If one does not honour an enemy because his intention is to do harm, how else can my patience arise? As with a doctor who takes care of my health? [90]
>
> *(BCA* VI.111.) Thus, patience arises verily depending on his evil intentions. He certainly is therefore, a cause of patience, whom I must worship like the True Teaching.
> Love for all sentient beings. [91]

The aim of each scenario is to eliminate any negative emotional response triggered by pain. However, it is not always possible to avoid physical pain; thus, it is crucial for the bodhisattva to avoid reacting negatively to it. By doing so, they can prevent getting angry. The objective is to change the bodhisattva's outlook on unpleasant circumstances so that they can avoid any mental reactions that may lead to anger. [92] These situations are helpful because, through dependent origination or causation, people seeking to cause us harm and other instances of suffering can aid us in developing patience.

5.2 By the Grace of Zeus (God, Nature)

In his writings, Marcus Aurelius discusses causation from two perspectives: one involving other individuals and the other with a broader scope. His theory is rooted in the social nature of humans, as we are beings who rely on one another. Therefore, it is no surprise that Marcus places the most emphasis on how we interact with others. He encourages us to reflect when someone wrongs us and consider the ethical framework they used to justify their actions - whether it was based on good, evil, or indifference.[93] Did the person doing this hold as an extreme example violence to be the only good? We must make it a habit to discover the "essential character of every

[89] Steinkellner, Bodhicaryāvatāra*,* 51.
[90] Steinkellner, Bodhicaryāvatāra*,* 51.
[91] Steinkellner, Bodhicaryāvatāra*,* 51.
[92] Harris, "Bodhicaryāvatāra," 10.
[93] Mouroutsou, "Moral Philosophy," 327.

impression, Its effect on the self, and its response to a logical analysis. "[94] To do this, Marcus asks us to:

> Think of their characters, at board and in bed and so forth; and in particular, of the pressure which their own ways of thinking exert upon them, and the consequent self-assurance with which they commit these acts of theirs.[95]

Once one is aware of the underlying reasoning anger will slowly disappear, and instead, pity will arise. For at this moment, there are but a few options, either the ideas you hold of what is good are of a similar level to his, they are better, or they are worse. In these cases, you either have a duty to pardon him if you are worse or on the same level or be able to tolerate his blindness if you are far more advanced.[96] If they are in the right, you have no claim to be angry, if what they are doing is wrong, then it must be unintentional on their end because no soul ever wilfully forgoes the truth they can thus only be unaware.[97]

> 27. How barbarous, to deny men the privilege of pursuing what they imagine to be their proper concerns and interests! Yet, in a sense, this is just what you are doing when you allow your indignation to rise at their wrongdoing; for after all, they are only following their own apparent concerns and interests. You say they are mistaken? Why then, tell them so, and explain it to them, instead of being indignant. [98]

This verse teaches us that instead of being angry, we should strive to positively influence others and help them correct their mistakes. Once we understand this, we should not be shocked or outraged if someone acts on their beliefs. We should accept that they have no other option and make peace with it, as holding onto anger only harms ourselves.[99] Anger can be caused by various factors, but there are ways to address it. Stoic epistemology states that the world creates images of itself in our souls. It is up to us to choose whether to accept or reject these impressions. While we cannot prevent these impressions, we can control our response to them. Therefore, we should only give our approval to those impressions that accurately depict their cause. By doing so, we can

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[94] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations,* Book 8, verse 13, 79.
[95] Brunt, "M.A in His Meditations," 11.
[96] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations,* Book 7, verse 26, 68-69.
[97] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations,* Book 11, verse 26, 118.
[98] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations,* Book 6, verse 27, 58.
[99] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations,* Book 8, verse 14, 79.

eliminate any biased judgments.[100] And it is precisely this that anger is based on, that we wrongly ascribe a certain value to something that causes us either anger once we come across it, or when we lose it. By changing this, we can deny anger.

According to the will of Nature, a person can only experience what is intended for them. Therefore, there is no reason to complain or feel anger about what happened. Everything that occurs is bearable and part of one's intended path.[101] Whatever happens in life, it is either within our nature to handle it or not. If we are able to endure it, we should not feel anger but instead appreciate that nature has granted us the ability to bear it. If we cannot handle it, we must remind ourselves that we can bear anything that our judgments deem endurable and view it as our duty to do so.[102] You will inevitably come across insolent people, and it can be difficult to deal with them. However, it is important to remember that the world needs all types of people, including insolent people. Instead of letting them anger you, try to remind yourself that they are not essential and can be ignored. Nature has given us a way to deal with such people, antidotes. Such as gentleness for brutality, etc. And as such, you to hold the potential to show the insolent one the error of his ways. And in the end, they could not have caused you any harm as all damage comes from within. There is nothing strange about an animal behaving as his nature decries, so there is nothing wrong with an insolent person behaving insolently. When you are offended, is it not you who is to blame? Should you not have realized this is how he would act?[103] All things are as Zeus distributed them, and as such, they are distributed in the best way possible. If you encounter anything regrettable, know it was the best possible outcome.[104]

Both traditions deal with causation, but they have different approaches to it. Śāntideva believes causality, as in dependent origination, is fundamental to Madhyamaka Buddhism. It explains why there is no self, how the concept of 'emptiness' exists, why we suffer, and how that suffering can

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[100] Kamtekar, “Marcus Aurelius,"
[101] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations,* Book 8, verse 46, 85.
[102] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations,* Book 10, verse 3, 101-102.
[103] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations,* Book 9, verse 42, 98-100.
[104] Cooper, *Knowledge, Nature, and the Good,* 362.

come to an end. Additionally, he suggests treating similar cases similarly, which means that the emotion of anger, being causally dependent, is closely linked to other reasons why anger is irrational. By comparing one's anger with that of others, he shows that even more distant feelings of anger are also irrational. For instance, we may feel angry when someone hits us but not when we see someone else getting hit. Despite all causes arising dependent on each other, this gives us a reason to try and eliminate the causes of anger.

According to Śāntideva, mental pain is a significant cause of anger. To address this, he suggests focusing on physical pain as a way to sever the connection between the two. Throughout chapter VI, all of his arguments are interconnected and based on the idea that suffering arises from a mistaken belief in permanence, unity, and a self that can act. Instead, he proposes that causality is the truth that we should focus on. By understanding causality, we can see that anger is irrational and based on false beliefs. These arguments can be helpful for those already on the path to enlightenment. Still, someone who is not familiar with these concepts may struggle with the idea of having no agency or self for their anger to come from or be directed towards.

Marcus views anger as irrational because he believes that understanding the framework of another person's life is vital to comprehending the causality of their actions. He also believes that Zeus works within the limitations of the resources available to him and is perfect in his virtue, resulting in the best possible outcome. In contrast to Śāntideva's perspective, Marcus takes a more societal approach, emphasizing the importance of understanding the societal framework that shapes an individual's actions, enabling us to judge whether they are right or wrong. By doing so, we can avoid being surprised, regardless of whether our judgment is accurate. In the case of events ordained by the will of God, we have no reason to complain and get angry because everything fits to the best extent possible within the larger framework, where everything is perfectly distributed, the cause in this case being God, upon understanding that feeling anger at an occurrence ordained by God is futile and is most likely the best possible outcome anyhow. As such, one can let go of their anger.

Both philosophers discuss causation in distinct domains: one at a fundamental level that serves as the foundation for all else and the other at a societal level, differentiating between the cosmic and social cities. In the cosmic city, God is the cause of our difficulties, but it is the optimal choice. On the other hand, in society, we must comprehend one another's perspectives to overcome anger.

6. Obligation Toward Others

This chapter will discuss how anger from the perspective of obligations toward others proves that anger is irrational for both Marcus and Śāntideva. Vernezze explained how Marcus and Śāntideva are similar we have an obligation toward others, for Marcus this is the case because we are all interconnected, we cannot exist independently, nor can we live a good and happy life being at odds with others part of the greater city. For Śāntideva, helping others is a fundamental part of being a bodhisattva, you sacrifice yourself remaining within the circle of reincarnation to help others escape suffering. In both cases, anger would cause harm to us and to others.

6.1 A Guide to the Bodhisattva Path

The argument Vernezze calls the obligation towards others is one that is connected deeply with the project Śāntideva has embarked on. But how should one envision obligation towards others as an argument for why anger is irrational instead of something useful? In the chapter on self-interest, the irrationality of anger was looked at through harm, this meant that at what was called the first aspect, damaged social relationships did cause harm, but at the second level, it no longer caused harm to oneself, and thus no longer functioned as part of the self-interest argument. However, the impact of damaged social relationships can hinder a Boddhisatva from guiding others toward salvation. When you express anger towards the people you are trying to assist, they may become hostile and reject your aid. This would obstruct you from your goal, while this does not seem to affect your well-being at first sight, one must remember that we are talking about a bodhisattva here, who sees it as his purpose to help others achieve nirvana. This means thus propagates suffering for all beings as well as anger.

The argument consists of two sides: the meaning and goal of being a bodhisattva and the effect of anger. A bodhisattva, or an aspiring one, vows to work towards dispelling suffering in all sentient beings. This can be seen from (*BCA* X.49.): "May the bodhisattvas' wishes for the welfare of the world be fulfilled; and whatever the Protectors intend for sentient beings, may that be accomplished."[105] This is also where one finds the difference between a Buddha and a bodhisattva because while a Buddha is still altruistic in nature, he only seeks the cessation of suffering (*nirvana*) for himself. In contrast, a bodhisattva aims to reach the cessation of suffering for all sentient beings.[106] A bodhisattva can do so because he does not leave samsara (the cycle of reincarnation) upon reaching nirvana, instead staying behind to help others in the hope of guiding them towards nirvana, whether that be as a Buddha or as another bodhisattva. So, to either a person walking on the path of being a bodhisattva or one already doing something to cause harm, to cause more suffering to another sentient being, is to go against everything they stand for.

> (*BCA*. VI.51.) "They will not be saved if I were to wrong them in return. But my course as a bodhisattva will be forsaken. Then the pitiable are lost."[107]

As can be seen from this verse, if we were to wrong (harm, anger) those we seek to save, we will lose both our path, for we have broken our vows, but also those sentient beings we seek to help to the mental afflictions. For this reason, to prevent our vows from being broken, at least when they are still starting out, Śāntideva provided us with verses to scare us to provide a self-interest in helping others, for if we fail, we become a preta, a wandering ghost that is eternally hungry.[108] Later on, this is no longer necessary, for we no longer need selfish motivation to keep our vows. For if we act with anger or arouse anger within the minds of those we seek to help, all our work will be undone. Acting in anger will result in others becoming angry as well; that anger causes more

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[105] Wallace, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life,* 143.
[106] Stephen E. Harris, "The Skillful Handling of Poison: Bodhicitta and the Kleśas in Śāntideva's Bodhicaryāvatāra," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 45, no. 2 (2017): 342.
[107] Wallace, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life,* 76.
[108] Harris, "The Skillful Handling of Poison, 342.

suffering. Because we angered them, they might act in such a way that causes other mental afflictions to arise in themselves and others, thus working against the goal of the bodhisattva to work for the salvation of others. [109] In verse 47 below, we can see an argument that fuses parts from both self-interest and causation with obligation toward others.

> (*BCA*. VI.47.) Those who hurt me are impelled by my actions, as a result of which they will go to the infernal realms. Surely, it is I alone who has ruined them.[110]

This verse has to do with causal karma, because of harmful, angry actions made by me in the past, whether that be this life or a past one, I am the cause of them visiting hell, it is thus my mistake, both of them landing in hell and harming me. And it is thus through my mistake, my anger, that I cause them suffering, that I inflict anger upon them. It is thus my fault that they are suffering. And any feeling of anger in this situation is irrational, my feelings of anger serve no purpose other than causing harm toward others, and theirs only cause them suffering. Ultimately for the sake of others, it is best that we avoid anger, both for its negative qualities towards ourselves (the mental afflictions and suffering, as well as causing people to seek us harm), which in turn causes harm to others or because of the negative qualities towards others, whom we send to hell because of it. But this harm that is caused matters only in so far as that it causes suffering, not a disconnect from society. Thus, we must rid the world of anger to allow the bodhisattva path to come to a conclusion. As a bodhisattva, one seeks to help others achieve awakening, this is made infinitely more difficult by the emotion of anger. Whether that be anger that you yourself experience, or anger that you cause others to feel. It only creates a vicious circle of suffering; the emotion is thus inherently irrational.

[109] Vernezze, "Moderation or the Middle Way," 10.
[110] Wallace, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life, 67*

6.2 The Tree of Society

For Marcus, the third reason, obligation towards others, relies entirely on his conception of interconnectedness. In his *Meditations*, we are told that a human has three relationships: one to his body, one to God(Zeus, Nature, and Whole), and one to our fellow humans.[111] Marcus believes that all humans are interconnected, kin, or siblings based not on the fact that we share blood, seed, or anything physical as such, but rather that we share rationality, a portion of divinity given to us by god.[112] At the highest level, everything is distributed by Zeus(God).[113] Our rationality flows from the nature of the Whole(Zeus) connecting all of us. [114] Anger is problematic because humans should work together rather than oppose one another. [115] Marcus tries to clarify this by comparing natural cooperation among people to that of equally natural body parts working together. According to Marcus, humans are born for each other, born for cooperation, and feelings of anger count as working against people; feelings such as anger are unnatural and counterproductive.[116] As Marcus puts it, "Another wrong, again, is to reject a fellow-creature or oppose him with malicious intent, as men do when they are angry."[117] Instead, it is in our nature to build relationships with each other, make friends, make a family, and create a society.[118] For Marcus, tolerating others who disagree with us is an obligation towards our fellow rational beings. [119] This idea of being kin, of building a society, is encapsulated in the belief that for Marcus, we are all citizens of the same city, the same cosmic city. In verse 22 of book five, he claims, "What is not harmful to the city cannot harm the citizen. In every fancied case of harm, apply the rule, if the city is not harmed, I am not harmed. But if

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[111] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, Book 8, verse 27, 81.
[112] John Lombardini, "Stoicism and the Virtue of Toleration," *History of Political Thought* 36, no. 4 (Winter 2015): 657. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26228611.
[113] Lombardini, Stoicism and the Virtue of Toleration," 657.
[114] Cooper, *Knowledge, Nature, and the Good,* 361-362.
[115] MacCormick, Murray, " The Philosophy of Moral Response in the Imperial Stoa," 103-104.
[116] MacCormick, Murray, " The Philosophy of Moral Response in the Imperial Stoa," 104.
[117] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, Book 2 verse 16, 19.
[118] Stephens, " The Stoics and Their Philosophical System," 32.
[119] Lombardini, Stoicism and the Virtue of Toleration," 644.

the city should indeed be harmed, never rage at the culprit. Rather, find out at what point his vision failed him." [120]

Indeed, humans being such social animals, being and needing to be connected on such a level means that unless something is harmful to the overarching purpose of reaching happiness through society, it is not harmful and is instead just like anger, something you cause to your soul. Another verse that builds up this concept further is one that is used in the chapter on self-interest, namely that of the comparison between the tree and society. If, as in the example, we let anger cause a rift between us and our neighbor, we cause harm to the society (the city), going against our nature and preventing us from gaining happiness, the goal of Stoicism.[121]

Instead of anger, we should act differently, Marcus gives us an example of a dirty man whose armpits stink and whose breath is disgusting usually, these can cause anger, dissatisfaction, or just distaste to arise when forced to be near such a person. Whether that is because you look down on their ability to care for themselves or because the smell sours your mood is irrelevant. What is relevant, however, is the fact that there is no reason to be angry about this. Looking at the man, his armpits, his mouth it is natural that these odors are produced. Instead, one should seek to implore his rationality, that which binds us together, using our own to convince him to change to do something about it. [122] The conclusion is that the elimination of anger is necessary to cultivate interpersonal relationships as is according to Nature.[123] And as such "it is a social end, prescribed as it is by nature, that motivates Marcus' Stoic rejection of anger."[124] This social end is required to reach Stoicism's overarching goal, namely happiness.

Both arguments suggest that anger is irrational and harmful when it comes to our obligation towards others. However, there are some differences between the two. According to Śāntideva, anger is always bad for everyone, no matter what stage of life they are in. The argument against

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[120] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, Book 5, verse 22, 48.
[121] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, Book 11, verse 8, 114.
[122] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, Book 6, verse 28, 49-50.
[123] MacCormick, Murray, " The Philosophy of Moral Response in the Imperial Stoa," 104.
[124] MacCormick, Murray, " The Philosophy of Moral Response in the Imperial Stoa," 103-104.

anger is particularly relevant for those already deeply invested in becoming a bodhisattva. The only convincing aspect for someone who is not involved would be the fact that reacting to someone with anger will only lead to anger being directed back at you, which is not desirable for anyone. For those who are invested in becoming a bodhisattva, the argument focuses on how anger takes away from the goal of helping others.

On the other hand, Marcus believes that our obligation towards each other is based on the fact that we all share rationality and belong to the same cosmic city. Anger disrupts our connection with each other, leading to separation from the city and ultimately harming it. This prevents us from achieving happiness as desired by nature. According to Śāntideva, anger is irrational because it prevents us from helping others as they may be too stubborn to accept it or be blinded by hate. It can also cause harm to others. For Marcus, the irrationality lies in anger preventing us from reaching happiness within society.

7. Death

The Argument about death given by Vernezze is one not often seen in the discussion on anger, as it is rather challenging to look at death as having something to do with the rationality of emotions. According to Vernezze, both philosophers call upon the idea of death to trivialize anger, to put it all into perspective for us. What rational reason do we have to get angry when it is all so utterly insignificant in the face of death?

7.1 All is Insignificant Before Death

Before presenting the passages and arguments that relate death to anger management, it is important to note that Marcus acknowledges death as a natural component of his philosophy, not something to be feared or avoided. If an individual who lives a virtuous life encounters a situation where a challenge cannot be overcome despite one's best efforts, it is not the individual's fault. Rather, it is simply a part of Nature's plan. If this obstacle means life is no longer worth living, bid life a good-humored farewell; accept the frustrations gracefully and breathe your last breath like any other uninhibited man.[125] But while he is seemingly blasé about death here, phrasing it as something to be accepted as normal if nature gives no way out, he also uses it as a way to show how small your concerns really are, when anger and the things causing said anger are considered. There are two ways in which death is called upon in this endeavor. The first is death as the never-ending abyss, the endless death, the second is as change. Death as the never-ending abyss, as the endless death, calls upon the seeming immenseness and its looming quality to trivialize anger. In passage 23 of book five, we see this at work:

> Reflect often upon the rapidity with which all existing things, or things coming into existence, sweep past us and are carried away. The great river of Being flows on without a pause; its actions for ever-

[125] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations,* Book 8, verse 47, 86.

> changing, its causes shifting endlessly, hardly a single thing standing still, while ever at hand looms infinity stretching behind and before—the abyss in which all things are lost to sight. In such conditions, surely a man were foolish to gasp and fume and fret, as though the time of his troubling could ever be of long continuance.[126]

Here we see the abyss stretching in infinity, in which all things are lost, he calls upon this image to show how worrying, raging, and all these passions are foolish, infantile, and short-lasting in the face of infinity. This takes essentially all of the power out of whatever argument one makes with regard to anger, it shows how irrelevant it is at the end of the day and, thus how irrational it is to entertain anger in the first place.

Another example calls upon a causal argument from earlier, where all their wrongdoing arises from ignorance and can thus be called involuntary. In fact, it might even be me who is wrong in his conduct. In the end, I do not know enough of the other, but in the end, life is short; we shall all be dead soon, a forgotten page in history. Why be angry over what is necessarily a petty matter? [127] This argument is connected; firstly, we have Ignorance of true Nature, being accepted as being causally created based on his social environment and life. Admitting that in the face of things, one is ultimately unsure if he is the correct one or not in the situation, but facing death is but a petty matter. Death as change is seen in this passage:

> That all visible objects change in a moment and will be no more. Think of the countless changes in which you yourself have had a part. The whole universe is change, and life is but what you deem it.[128]

While death is not mentioned explicitly as such it highlights the momentary nature of it all, one might be angry in one moment, but happy in the next, something that makes you angry might make you happy tomorrow. Death itself is but a change of scenery, “After all, what is it that frets you? The vices of humanity? Remember the doctrine that all rational beings are created for one another, that toleration is a part of justice, and those men are not intentional evildoers. Think of the

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[126] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations,* Book 5, verse 23, 47-48.
[127] Brunt, ”M.A in His Meditations,” 11.
[128] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations,* Book 4, verse 3, 30-31 .

myriad enmities, suspicions, animosities, and conflicts that are now vanished with the dust and ashes of the men who knew them; and fret no more."[129] In the end, all will be blown away by change.

7.2 Samsara

Compared to the looming death of Marcus Aurelius, death in the *BCA* has a different function. While death is used rather frequently in the *BCA,* there are only a few mentions of death that can be used in a similar way as Marcus does. There are two ways in which death appears: one is in the mentions of hell, in relation to the karmic retribution that anger causes, while the second is the inevitability of death, which Vernezze clutches onto to create a parallel line of reasoning. The first was hell/karma, which has been touched upon before in the section on self-interest because it fits better as an argument for the irrationality of anger using these categories. For Śāntideva, we live a *samsaric* cycle: we live, we die, and we live going on and on (though saying 'we' is slightly misleading here, considering Buddhism holds the belief of there being no enduring self); our karma decides our next destination after death. Using the karma resulting from anger, especially excessive anger, results in a person entering the hell realm after death, where there is even more suffering. The suffering there is greater to such an extent that Śāntideva seems to find losing a limb less problematic:

> (*BCA* VI.72.) If a man condemned to death is released after his hand has been cut off, is this misfortune? If one is spared hells through human sufferings, is this misfortune?[130]

Rehashing the argument given previously, anger causes bad karma, bad karma causes suffering in the hell realm, one does this for neither their sake nor for that of anyone else, so why do you keep returning there? The same is argued in these two verses:

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[129] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, Book 4 30- 31.
[130] Steinkellner, *Bodhicaryāvatāra,*48.

> (*BCA* VI.55.) If it is repulsive to me because it prevents my success: my success will already pass in this life, but sin will tenaciously persist.[131]
>
> (*BCA* VI.89.) Because this is a terrible hook that those fishermen, the defilements, have been handed out. The guards of the hells will buy you from them and boil you in their cauldrons.[132]

Going to hell serves no one; it prevents one from serving others.

The second more relevant for Vernezze's comparison with Marcus is that of death in the function of a trivializer. The verse Vernezze calls upon is:

> (*BCA* VI.56.) It is better that I die today
> than have a long, corrupt life.
> For even after living a long time,
> I shall have the suffering of death. [133]

Śāntideva is giving a similar argument to the one given by Marcus: no matter how long I live, death will come and not much will change. A difference, however, can be found in the fact that death equals suffering because one will enter a hell realm. So, while death still performs some of its functions as a trivializer as seen here:

> (*BCA*. VI.92.) For the sake of glory, they sacrifice their wealth; they even bring death upon themselves. Are syllables [of praise] perhaps edible? And when dead, who enjoys this pleasure? [134]

Compared to Marcus, Śāntideva has a more limited use of death in debates about anger. While Vernezze agrees that death is rarely used in such debates, it plays a different and smaller role in Śāntideva's philosophy. In fact, the karmic example used in this section may not fit well and belongs more in the self-interest section. While anger is deemed irrelevant in both philosophies, Marcus approaches it differently from Śāntideva. The latter does not give much consideration to death as a means of illustrating the consequences of acting on anger. This is not surprising since death is not a looming threat; reincarnation based on one's actions in life follows after death.

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[131] Steinkellner, *Bodhicaryāvatāra,*47.
[132] Steinkellner, *Bodhicaryāvatāra,*49.
[133] Wallace, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life,* 86.
[134] Steinkellner, *Bodhicaryāvatāra,*50.

Therefore, while death can serve as a warning and demonstrate the folly of acting on anger, it is not trivialized in the same way.

8. Conclusion

Using The groundwork that Vernezze laid down, we can further research why anger is irrational for Marcus and Śāntideva. In this thesis, I further research four of the five kinds of arguments used in the works of both Śāntideva in the *BCA* and Marcus Aurelius in *Meditations*. Despite their similar-looking arguments and concurring conclusions, a closer examination reveals that the two philosophers have different goals and audiences, resulting in vastly different approaches, containing superficially similar arguments that nevertheless result in similar outcomes. Śāntideva, a Buddhist monk, wrote for a male audience that is already aware of Buddhism at a surface level at a minimum. Because of this, we can find different layers of the arguments used to convince someone of the truths espoused in his text, this allows him to show superficially similarities to the arguments given by Marcus. In comparison, Marcus's writings are personal and never meant to be published or read by a larger audience. Through this, we can glimpse at the way he shaped his philosophy around his background. Being the emperor, being a philosopher. All of these shaped the way he wrote. His position as emperor and his background with his Stoic education caused him to focus more on society and the idea of happiness. Anger, then for Marcus, obstructs happiness and destroys one's place in society.

As a result, anger holds a different place for both. In the case of self-interest, Śāntideva focused on two types of harm caused by anger: karmic harm and material harm. The argument of Karmic harm shows us how feeling anger can cause negative karmic effects that can lead to negative consequences in the afterlife, such as going to hell or being reincarnated as an animal, leading to delays on your bodhisattva path. Material harm refers to physical discomfort, loss of friends, and psychological pain caused by anger. On the other hand, Marcus emphasized social and ethical aspects of human nature. He believed that rational souls are connected to other rational beings through relationships with friends, family, and society. According to Marcus, harm occurs when a person makes a mistaken judgment in their connection with nature and society, leading to conflicts or erroneous concepts of good and evil, ultimately leading to anger.

While these two philosophers provide valuable insights into the irrationality of anger, further research is needed to explore modern perspectives and theories on this topic. However, both agree that harm caused by anger is ultimately self-inflicted, reinforcing the notion that anger is indeed irrational and harmful. Regarding causation, both philosophers refer to different realms- one encompasses everything on a fundamental level, while the other focuses on society. The term society contains both the city level and the cosmic city level. For obligation, while a bodhisattva's purpose is to help others reach salvation and thus rid themselves and others of anger, Marcus believes anger hinders happiness within society and hinders being part of society. Besides Marcus' focus on society, the most significant difference is that of death. Both mention death; they, however, have different views on its role in escaping pain and suffering. For Marcus, death is something inescapable, something so utterly vast that it makes all other problems insignificant in the face of it. Whereas for Śāntideva, death is but another part of the cycle, it can be negative certainly, and it does fulfill a role in his arguments on the irrationality of anger it, however, is not one that trivializes.

Anger is irrational, and this has become clear throughout this paper. We have shown how their methods differ and coincide as arguments for irrationality. But do they consider the same thing when looking at irrationality? For Śāntideva, arguing for the irrationality of anger is essential because if the opposite were true, if it were rational to feel anger, the coherency of a bodhisattva's path would be thrown into disarray as there would be rational inconsistencies. Marcus, however, would be able to maintain the coherency of his theory even if he were to change his approach to anger. His opposition to anger stems from his stoic leanings and dealings as an emperor, believing that anger and acting in anger would cause him to become unhappy and live an unsuccessful life.

This thesis is limited to two specific philosophers, Śāntideva and Marcus Aurelius, both of whom are part of a far larger tradition with various differences. Because of this, the result is somewhat limited in scope. One more limitation is that the texts used were translated into English as anger, but a few authors tried to claim that the texts were not referring to light anger but instate apocalyptic rage, I did not take this view into account. It can be further followed up by diving deeper

into modern conceptions of anger regarding current theories on the irrationality of anger and different conceptions of what counts as anger. Further future approaches might look more into the idea that either or both intended the term translated as anger to mean hatred instead or take a closer look at more modern conceptions of anger and irrationality. Both agree, however, that this so-called harm can only be self-inflicted, strengthening the position of irrational anger.

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