

### Anger Anxiety

by David Webster

- 1 In the misanthropic fug of early morning, I woke to the radio reporting news that getting angry makes people five times more likely to have a heart attack.
- 2 Great. Just what I needed to hear. Not only am I subject to endless media provocation to be angry about immigration, corruption, dredging etc., but this very danger is putting my life at risk.
- 3 However, we need to be wary here. Anger is in danger of being demonised, and that's troubling. Outrage seems an entirely appropriate response to injustice and needless infliction of pain and suffering on sentient beings.
- 4 As the middle-aged among us descend into a yearning for tranquillity, followed by a sit-down with a nice cup of tea and a biscuit, we need younger generations to emerge shocked at the world we've left them. In a context where young people could sit in endless refresh-cycles on social media, we need them to be shocked into action.
- 5 And for those of us resisting a connection between ageing and lack of interest, anger can be the fire that keeps us alight. If we see hard-won rights under threat, our indignation is what keeps us engaged and concerned.
- 6 Perhaps what we need here is some subtlety. We need to avoid the blunt and clumsy condemnation of outrage, recognising its value as a seed of social change, while seeing the futility of pointless shouting at pedestrians from our cars. Perhaps taking a slight lead from many forms of Buddhist thought, we don't need to prevent our rage but improve the quality of our outrage. 6

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