

1. Record Nr.	UNIORUON00510577
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Titolo	Anger, gratitude, and the enlightenment writer / Patrick Coleman
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Oxford, : Oxford University Press, 2011
ISBN	978-01-995893-4-0
Descrizione fisica	XI, 249 p. ; 23 cm.
Soggetti	ILLUMINISMO - Aspetti filosofici ILLUMINISMO - Studi
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Sommario/riassunto	<p>This book offers a new perspective on Enlightenment conceptions of sociability by exploring the ways eighteenth-century French writers define, express, and critique the two emotions of anger and gratitude. When is anger condemned as a failure of self-control, and when is it praised as a vindication of human dignity? Who is entitled to get angry, and at whom? Who is expected to be grateful, and is it always right to think of gratitude as a kind of obligation? Answers to such questions tell us much about how feelings are socialized and how social expectations shape emotional dispositions. They also provide a path to understanding a fundamental tension in modern culture: how the aspiration to personal independence may be reconciled—or not—with the recognition that the benevolence or hostility of other people, indeed, of the world itself, plays an essential role in the constitution of the self.</p> <p>Conflicting judgments about the appropriateness of anger and gratitude also reveal a fundamental ambivalence in Enlightenment thinking about the kind of norms that should regulate human interaction. Should social life be based solely on legal rights and duties, applicable impersonally to all? Or should it be shaped by informal and more flexible rules of personal acknowledgment, backed by the pressure of opinion rather than the power of law? By eliminating</p>

occasions for personal slight or favor, the first of these schemes would provide welcome relief from the burdens of anger and gratitude. According to the second view, some readiness to give and take offense, and to grant and return a favor, is assumed to be a crucial dimension of human dignity, of what one owes to oneself or to others, and should be cultivated rather than curtailed. This dilemma is no less acute in contemporary thinking about managing human interactions in a globalized culture than it was to writers of the French Enlightenment.
