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CONCEPTUAL ENCOUNTER: THE EXPERIENCE OF ANGER

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Dr. de Rivera's method of conceptual encounter can be used for a delimited study, such as a dissertation, or, as in his account in this chapter, in an ongoing dialogue with sought-out and encountered resources. Like other qualitative methods, conceptual encounter begins with actual instances of a phenomenon and seeks to develop a way of describing how the phenomenon is organized (its structure, a sort of map of how its aspects are interrelated and how the experiencing person contributes to the structure). Conceptual encounter, however, purposely moves quickly from the instances to developing abstract concepts that are continuously checked against further instances and against other authors' conceptualizations.

In the case of his continuing study of anger, Dr. de Rivera began with instances of his own anger, and then worked with a series of research partners—graduate students, colleagues, undergraduates. Their own examples of anger "encountered" the conceptualizations offered by Dr. de Rivera. They then gave their impressions of whether Dr. de Rivera's current conceptualization provided an accurate account or required revision.

Unlike many "single-study" research reports, this chapter's report on anger continues an engagement of scholarship from many disciplines and from across areas of scholarship. We note that these continuing encounters are respectful of reported accounts and of others' efforts to conceptualize, and that Dr. de Rivera's conceptualization broadens and becomes more replete with nuances with each encounter. His reports invite a similar attitude on the part of readers; I found myself taking notes to bring back to my own qualitative analyses of becoming angry. I experienced myself as a member of a community of scholars, rather than as someone concerned with being right. All the conceptual encounter studies I have read have been reported in this same spirit.

Many qualitative researchers note that we should be more aware of cultural differences. Dr. de Rivera goes further, both to find anthropological and other studies of anger across diverse cultures, and to explore how people do and do not experience and express anger to preserve culture.

In this chapter, rather than presenting a condensation of the current structure of anger, Dr. de Rivera takes us along his journey of encounters, showing us how he revised his conceptualizations as he encountered new instances of anger and other conceptualizations. I suggest that each reader take a preliminary moment to recall a specific instance of his or her own having become angry, and compare it with Dr. de Rivera's accounts throughout the chapter. I imagine that readers will find themselves recalling still more examples and discovering the richness of conceptual encounter.

Conceptual encounter is a qualitative method for exploring the structure of our experience, the different ways we have of being in the world. Conceptual encounter involves the creation of a conceptualization that may depart from particular accounts from respondents. As in the creation of a work of art or a piece of mathematics, it involves an abstraction that shapes experience and is designed to reveal what may not have been seen before the creation made it evident. For example, although people may experience "a round shape," we may abstract an ideal circle as a locus of points that are equidistant from a center. It may then be clear that a line that touches the circle at only one point (a tangent) must be perpendicular to the radius at that point.

The method has been used to investigate the experience of aloneness (Nisenbaum, 1984) and loneliness (Levin, 1986); anger (de Rivera, 1981); anxiety and panic (Goodman, 1981); closeness (Kreilkamp, 1984); depression (Kane, 1976); joy, elation, and gladness (Lindsay–Hartz, 1981); exaltation (Kahn, 1984); false memory syndrome (de Rivera, 1997); laughter (Funk, 1981); psychological distance (Kreilkamp, 1981); and shame and guilt (Lindsay–Hartz, 1984; Lindsay–Hartz, de Rivera, and Moscolo, 1995). It may be used to compare analogous experiences represented in different languages, as in the comparison of English shame and Japanese *haji* (de Rivera, 1989), and to explore emotions named in other languages, such as the Japanese emotions of *tanoshi, urashi,* and *yorokobi* (Ono and de Rivera, 2004).

In this chapter I begin by providing an overview of the method. Then I illustrate how the method was used to conceptualize the experience of anger, and show how the conceptualization can be tested by deliberately having it encounter exceptions. After a brief discussion of the method's limitations and advantages, I present a radical critique of the results of the conceptualization for anger, show how the conceptualization can encounter material from different cultures, and present the current state of the conceptualization.

OVERVIEW OF THE METHOD

Conceptual encounter refers to an encounter between the concept of the investigator and some aspect of human experience, such as getting

angry, falling in love, or making a decision. The investigator is trying to comprehend this experience fully—to understand, for example, the way in which our lives are structured when we are angry or in love, to grasp what alternatives are available, and to be able to articulate an abstract description of the general phenomenon that will illuminate our specific experiences and enrich our appreciation of life. But to achieve an abstract conceptualization that really comprehends experience and is not a mere intellectualization, the investigation must be solidly grounded in the concrete experience of actual events. Accordingly, the investigator must deal with specific, concrete examples of anger, love, or whatever is being studied. The investigator may be able to use written accounts and often, such as when he or she is dealing with experiences from other times or cultures, this is the only material available. Usually, however, the investigator will be dealing with the account of a person who has agreed to act as a research partner and who has been asked to describe faithfully an experience in as much detail as possible. Their account may be written, but is usually given in an interview, which may or may not be tape-recorded.

Carefully listening and skillfully questioning, the investigator allows the partner to recall, and to some extent to relive, a concrete experience. *After* this is achieved (perhaps 15 minutes, perhaps an hour or two may have lapsed), the investigator shares with the partner his or her abstract ideas about the essential characteristics of anger, love, or whatever is the general type of experience under discussion. Now the inquiry shifts its focus from the concrete experience of the other to the abstract ideas of the investigator. He or she attempts to get the partner to comprehend these general ideas and asks the partner to what extent they fit the specific reality of his or her concrete experience. Thus, the abstract conceptualization that has been created by the investigator encounters the concrete experience as comprehended by the partner. Is there an enlightening fit between ideas and experienced reality or is something wrong?

THE CONCRETE EXPERIENCE

The topic of inquiry may involve any experience, behavioral pattern, or psychological phenomenon. However, experiences should always be personal, in the sense of being the person's own experience, rather than hearsay, and should be a concrete instance (e.g., "Last night when I was angry at Sally I got hot" rather than "When I'm angry I get hot" or "People get hot when they're angry"). However, the experience may be the person's own experience of someone else's behavior (e.g., "He was so angry he turned red"). At first, the partner's awareness of the experience may be rather sketchy. However, if the investigator quietly listens to the experience and is sincerely interested in finding out exactly how the event was experienced, amazingly detailed accounts may unfold. After this

spontaneous account of the experience, the investigator may ask about important details.

Often, the investigator prepares a list of questions about general aspects of the experience and inquires into whatever aspects are not spontaneously mentioned. Thus, if the research partner has not mentioned how he or she experienced time or bodily sensations or psychological space, the investigator may ask how time, the body, or space was experienced, in whatever areas seem to warrant attention.

THE ABSTRACT CONCEPTUALIZATION

The concrete experience of the individual case provides the raw data of the investigation—the "facts" or "existence" or "reality" that the investigator's conceptualization must fit. Hence, the existential details of the individual case are extremely important. However, the investigation would soon be hopelessly mired down in detail were it not balanced by the abstract conceptualization provided by the investigator. This conceptualization is an attempt to capture the essence of the phenomenon by describing how the experience is organized, and explicating its structure and dynamics. Such a description attempts to provide a sort of map or plan of the experience of anger, laughter, distance, or whatever phenomena are under investigation. It describes how the person's experience must be organized if he or she is to become angry, to laugh, to be distant. It describes what changes in experience occur with the anger or laughter, what other organizations were possible, and how the "choice" of the particular configuration that constitutes anger, laughter, or whatever, functions in the overall context of the person's life. Needless to say, a conceptualization that accurately fits experience and that reveals a hitherto unexpected order is almost an artistic creation that can only occur after patient study of numerous instances of the phenomenon.

In this task, the investigator is guided by two quite different demands. First, the conceptualization must be true to experience; it must fit the various concrete experiences of the phenomenon. It must be broad enough to include all instances of the phenomenon, yet narrow enough to exclude related phenomena. Thus, a conceptualization of joy must include all examples of joy, but exclude cases of elation or gladness. Second, the conceptualization must be elegant. That is, it must be relatively simple rather than cumbersome, it must describe different aspects of the phenomenon, and, ideally, it should use concepts that are related to other investigations of interest to the psychologist. It is the tension between these two poles—the dialectical encounter between concrete instances of the phenomenon and abstract, elegant conceptualization—that leads the investigator to create an interesting nontrivial conceptualization. In one sense, to formulate a good conceptualization, the investigator must move away from the concrete data.

That is, he or she cannot simply select some concrete feature that seems important in many of the experiences, or abstract concrete features that different experiences have in common, or articulate some "family resemblance" shared by the experiences. Rather, the investigator must intuit an abstract symbolic form that succeeds in capturing the essential relationships involved in all the concrete individual experiences. Like Michelangelo sculpting, she or he must free the form that lies hidden in the rock.

ADEQUACY OF THE CONCEPTUALIZATION

An adequate conceptualization usually takes a long time to develop. At first the investigator may not be aware of any particular pattern in the different experiences that are examined. Then, a pattern may gradually emerge as he or she sifts through examples of the phenomenon and reads through the literature. Or there may be a sudden grasping of a pattern, such as when the report of a single experience leads to an insight into the essential structure of the phenomenon. An investigation may begin in a hit-or-miss style, with the researcher having a notion about the structure that is conceived in advance and only later checked with the literature, the observations of others, and examined through self-reflection. In such a case, repeated revisions will occur. Regardless of personal style, the formation of a good conceptualization is continually in the making as the researcher moves back and forth between interviews, observations, literature, and reflection, gradually becoming more alert to the nuances and patterns of the phenomenon.

The conceptualization develops through successive insights as it repeatedly encounters the experience of different persons. In one sense it can never be finished, for there is always room for development in science, mathematics, and art. But there is a point when it is finished enough to share with others, a point when a product has been completed and publication is desirable. There are at least three criteria for this point at which a conceptualization may be judged to be complete:

1. It is successful in explicating what has previously only been implicit in the phenomenon. Hence, it reveals the phenomenon in a new light so that a person examining his experience has a better understanding and appreciation of the experience. This is particularly evident when the conceptualization provokes an "ah-ha," such as when a person suddenly gains insight into his experience and realizes something of which he was not previously aware.

2. It replicates in the sense that it fits all the different experiences that different persons have related, and further encounters no longer add anything new or no longer challenge the investigation.

3. The conceptualization is elegant and parsimonious. It uses few but powerful concepts in a precise way, concepts that may be related to the work of other investigators so that the conceptualization becomes a part of a wider sphere of inquiry. Rather than detracting from the precision of the fit between conceptualization and concrete personal experience, this systematic requirement seems to enhance the power of the conceptualization so that it is more apt to capture the essence of an experience. The requirement seems to function in much the same way that requirements of rhyme or meter and a sense of the history of literature seem to stimulate a poet's creativity.

THE ENCOUNTER

Although the excellence of the investigator's work necessarily depends on his or her attaining a thorough acquaintance with the relevant literature and then struggling to achieve creative insights, the development and testing of the conceptualization are ultimately dependent on the nature of the encounter between investigator and research partners. In one sense, this is an intensely personal encounter. Its fruitfulness depends on both persons feeling comfortable with each other *and* the situation so that they can try to be completely open and honest with each other. However, the encounter is clearly structured with a *research* goal. Hence, it is not personal in the sense of two friends sharing an experience, nor is it personal in the sense of a therapeutic encounter. From the very beginning of the investigation, when the investigator asks the other if he or she would be willing to be a research partner, there is an atmosphere of partnership within the structure of objective inquiry. Open communications about very personal experiences have a meaning that is controlled (and often made possible) because of this research context.

After the research partner has shared an experience and the investigator has offered a conceptualization, the two must work together to determine whether the conceptualization fits the experience. Of course, it may be immediately apparent that there is an excellent fit, or that there has been miscommunication and that the conceptualization and experience have little to do with each other. Often, however—and these are the most interesting encounters—some parts of the conceptualization fit but others do not. When these cases are pursued, something new is learned. Either the conceptualization will help the research partner attain a new insight into the nature of the experience so that he or she becomes aware of hitherto ignored aspects of the experience, or the concrete experience will convince the investigator that the conceptualization is in error and must be modified.

AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE METHOD AT WORK:
THE EXPERIENCE OF ANGER

When I began my work on anger I was interested in discovering the essence of anger. What made anger, anger? What was true of all instances of anger and could distinguish these instances from emotions such as fear or depression? We might say that I was primarily interested in the *structure* of anger, and that only later did I become interested in its dynamics, in what preceded its development, and how it could be transformed. A literature review had revealed an interesting distinction between the relationships of anger and fear (Tolman, 1923), and a very interesting early study distinguished between the anger of frustration and the anger of humiliation (Richardson, 1918). I wondered whether I could articulate what was essential to the anger experience.

I began with some facts that were apparent to me (although obviously not apparent to everyone). First, although anger is in some sense "negative," it is not always unpleasant. Although it often felt awful and upsetting, there were times when I enjoyed being angry. It felt good and powerful, and it enabled me to clear the air. Hence, the unpleasant quality often associated with anger could not be an essential aspect of the experience. Second, and regardless of whether the anger is unpleasant or pleasant, it is not always bad in the sense of negatively valued. Although anger is often unproductive, and Fischer's (1998) study of angry outbursts shows how some instances of anger may be regarded as self-deceptive and disempowering, there are times when anger appears to be a good thing to have. Therefore, I could not say that anger was essentially a negative experience.

Yet there was something clearly negative about all anger. What was it? I, or whoever was angry, was directing the anger at something that was negatively evaluated, something that was "bad" or "wrong," and this was an essential aspect of the emotion. At first, I thought it was the destructive character of anger. I have often sworn at people with whom I am angry; others I have wanted to hit, choke, bang their heads against a wall, and so on. I have wished that people would die or fantasized shooting them, and it was clear to me that the "urge to kill" was often present in the anger of many people. Hence, I postulated that anger must evoke a wish to hurt the object of anger. I began with this conceptualization and found that it often fit the experiences of my research partner. To test whether it was always true, I began asking my research partners if any had experiences that contradicted this conceptualization.

One responded with an experience that was a clear exception: She had become angry when her puppy wet the rug, yet did not want to hurt the puppy. She said that she was simply mad that the incident had happened and wished that her rug was not wet. Now an exception to a conceptualization may only be an apparent exception. The person in question may

not have really been angry or may have had the desire to hurt the puppy but not let herself experience the desire because she felt such a desire would be wrong. But these alternative explanations did not seem to be valid. The woman had acted angrily in other respects, and she seemed to be capable of admitting her aggressive impulses. Thus, I concluded that my conceptualization needed modification. This particular encounter with a person's experience forced an important revision of the conceptualization.

There is little in common between a wish to kill and a wish that a puppy not wet a rug, at least if we think in terms of common features. However, if we move to a higher level of abstraction, we may see that there is a similar relationship between the person and the object of anger. The angry person wants to change the object of anger, to make it other than it is. There is no Rogerian acceptance here. Rather, the person wants to remove or alter the other, and this seems inherent in all instances of anger. Furthermore, this wish makes an interesting contrast to the wish inherent in fear that seems to involve escape from something that is dangerous, rather than an attempt to change something that might be alterable.

To advance the conceptualization, we may want to relate the wish of anger to the conditions that occasion anger. What are the essential conditions, those that are invariably present, when anger occurs? It is often postulated that frustration is such a condition. For example, Izard (1977) states that anger occurs when one "is either physically or psychologically restrained from doing what one intensely desires to do" (p. 329). However, frustration can, and often does, occur without a person becoming angry. Sometimes people find another way to their goal, change the goal, or become resigned not to get what they want. One can feel frustrated, yet not become angry.

As I listened to accounts of anger and examined my own experiences, I began to realize that all angry persons feel the other *ought* to behave differently. Although the person who is frustrated feels that he or she would *like* things to be different, the angry person acts as though things *should* be different. Sometimes these "oughts," "shoulds," or "rights" are explicitly stated. Thus, one research partner, who realized that an acquaintance was listening through a door to a private conversation, said, "I demanded that she explain to me what gave her the right to do what she did." At other times, oughts are implicit, as in a statement such as, "I was angry at the professor for not taking my study seriously." When a person making such a statement is asked if they simply want the other to behave differently or if they feel the other should behave differently, they respond in terms of shoulds or oughts, rather than desires. One of the characteristics of conceptual encounter is that it aspires to build a system of interconnecting concepts. Therefore, as soon as it became apparent that the concept of ought was implicated in anger, I immediately made a search for what had been written about the concept. Note that this temporarily involves

going *away* from the immediate, concrete experience of anger and toward abstract conceptualization.

THE CONCEPT OF OUGHT

I knew that the concept had been explicated by Heider (1958), thus I turned to his analysis for ideas. He points out that the concept of ought implies a force that is suprapersonal. That is, what ought to exist is not just what some person desires, but what is perceived as required by some objective order of affairs. This corresponds to the experience of the angry person who does not simply feel that his or her wishes are being frustrated, but that the other ought to behave differently, that something is wrong with the basic order of existence and needs to be set right. For Heider (1958), what a person desires at a particular moment may be related to what the person likes. What a person believes ought to be in any particular instance is related to what the person values. That is, if a person holds a given value, he or she believes that under certain conditions persons ought to behave in certain ways. Note that this way of construing value (as the basis of what is required to be) is different from conceiving value as determined simply by what a person desires or fears (positive or negative valence) and oughts as simply stemming from the desires of some authority.

Heider (1958) explicated a number of important properties that oughts and values have. First, the concept is related to the concept of *can* (of ability), in that we cannot hold a person responsible, say that he or she ought to do something, if it is impossible for the person to do it. If *p* ought to do *x*, then it is implied that *p can* do *x*. Second, because what ought to be is perceived as stemming from an objective order, oughts (and values) have the same status as beliefs about the nature of reality. Thus, although it is perfectly permissible for another person to have likes and desires that are quite different from our own, sometimes it is as upsetting as if the other person saw red when we saw green. If the person is close to us (and we are not protected by the distance of seeing them as foreign), the mere fact of a value disagreement creates tension in our relationship.

Having noted these characteristics of oughts, we add this to our conceptualization and return to concrete instances of anger. Do we always find that objects of anger are held responsible? That they can (have the ability to) act differently?

I witnessed the angry explosion of a seven-year-old girl at a sled that kept falling down no matter how it was propped up against a wall. Talking with her afterward, I asked why she was angry and she patiently explained that the "darned old thing" would not stay up. As she was talking, a grin flitted across her face. I asked her why she had smiled and (after some "do tell me") she stated, "Well, I *told* it to stay up. I know it can't really *do* things

but I haven't had a thing I wanted all day long, so I told it to and it should have"—and here she smiled again.

THE CONCEPTS OF UNIT AND RESPONSIBILITY

We may extend Heider's (1958) analysis of ought by noting that oughts imply some form of unity. Thus, a given set of oughts does not apply to everybody, but only to members of one's community. No one feels that a dog ought to be charitable with its bones or that foreigners ought to be loyal Americans. It is precisely the fact that they do not obey our own oughts that makes them foreigners. To the extent that we do feel that others ought to do certain things, we are including them in the community to which we see ourselves as belonging. Of course, such "communities" may include various subsets of humanity. Thus, "property rights," with their related set of oughts and duties, only apply within a national community. Membership in a private club may require the acceptance of a specific set of oughts pertinent only to club members. And the rights of a husband or of a wife (or any couple who are committed to each other) include the right to expect a response to personal needs and, hence, involve values and oughts that only pertain to that particular couple. For this reason I shall call any group whose members recognize a common set of values a *unit*. Thus, a unit may be as small as two persons or as large as the community of human beings.

When others belong in a unit with us, when they recognize the same oughts that we do—share common values—then we may appeal to these oughts if we are in conflict with them. If our analysis is correct, the person who is angry feels that he or she has some influence over the other because the person is experienced in his or her unit, sharing some common values. Otherwise, the other could not be held responsible and could not be perceived as one who ought to act otherwise. One cannot be angry at a person who is not perceived to be responsible for his or her actions—who either *cannot* behave differently (and hence is not subject to the force of ought) or who is in a different unit (is not subject to the same oughts).

It is important to note that as persons develop, they have the *choice* of whether to join a unit—of whether *to belong*. Fingarette (1967) has pointed out that one cannot force a person to be "responsible" (that is, to obey oughts) and that many persons living in our society (e.g., sociopaths) have never really decided to be responsible—to join a community. Although we may act as though the person belongs and our anger presumes this, in fact, only that person can decide whether he or she belongs.

Conversely, as I witnessed other examples of anger it became apparent how often what ought to be is negotiated by the parties in the unit. For example, I observed a one-year-old become angry when his mother began to take him away from a place where he wanted to continue playing. Note that, although we might say that he "wanted" to stay, I believe that the

child's anger shows that *he* felt he ought to be allowed to stay. However, the mother had important things to do and was a "no nonsense" mom who simply scooped the child up and refused to grant the legitimacy of his demand to stay. It was fascinating to observe how quickly the anger was aborted.

THE CONCEPTS OF CHALLENGE AND DISTANCE

Having examined the abstract concepts of oughts, units, and responsibility, I returned to specific instances of anger. Although every instance of anger implied that the other ought to change his or her behavior, it seemed clear that this condition was necessary but not sufficient. I now focused on instances when a person did *not* become angry in spite of the fact that an ought was violated, and I asked research partners to find examples. I found that research partners were able to report instances in which they believed the other ought to change his or her behavior and yet no anger occurred.

In some of these instances the persons did not permit themselves to be involved or it became clear that the other was not intentionally violating the ought. In others, the person had enough control over the situation simply to state a request, a reminder, or command that brought the other's behavior in conformity to what ought to be. For example, when a professor (known for her assertive ability) attempted to register at a hotel for which she had reservations, the clerk informed her that he was sorry but that there were no rooms available at the specified price. Rather than becoming angry she simply stated (in a firm voice), "I'm sure you can find one for me" (which the clerk proceeded to do).

Note that when I say she did not become angry, I imply that her *body* was not changed. I do not simply mean that there was no objective physiological response (no increased heart rate, skin temperature, or muscle tension), but that the body was not experienced as transformed. Clearly, an important aspect of anger is that it is embodied, that we are aware of a change in our body. In fact, it is easy to overemphasize the body's arousal. The angry body may be experienced as expanding with aggressive energy, as tense, as on the verge of exploding. However, and this often seems the case in instances of deep anger, the person may simply report being "a little sore." Thus, we must not simply think of the body as a physical object that is separate from its environment. Rather, we must conceive of the body as lived in the time and space we experience, and anger as embodied in the motive structures that relate us to the world. The angered body is experienced as strengthened.

When anger occurred, it was clear that the person always felt *challenged*—that is, the other was perceived as intentionally violating the ought and the angered person was involved yet lacked control. The person was involved in a situation in which the other's behavior defined a reality that contradicted the reality of the angered person. There was a real contest

over what ought to be; the contenders occupy the same "reality space" and one must leave.

For example, consider this instance. Two class friends (Dorothy and Peter) were active in a youth organization and both decided to run for regional offices. They talked with each other and agreed that because Dorothy had been more active in the organization and cared about it a lot, she should run for vice-president (the more responsible and prestigious position) and Peter should run for treasurer. However, during the regional convention, Peter stated that people had made him realize that he should run for vice-president and he told Dorothy that if she wanted to run against him that was her decision. He then abruptly walked away. Dorothy stated,

> For a moment I was paralyzed ... fighting tears ... I was deeply hurt .... Soon after Peter came over ... I looked out at him. I told him. I couldn't believe what he did, that our friendship must mean very little to him. ... I very seldom became angry, mainly because anger frightens me. Usually I back down ... this instance I was incapable of backing down when Peter challenged me. I wanted that office and Peter knew how much it meant to me. I knew I was right ... he should never have challenged me.

The concept of challenge implies that the other is a serious contender for the space, and this suggests that an alternative to anger is to perceive the other in such a way that he or she is not a real contender. This may be done in a number of different ways.

The other may be perceived as "not responsible" for his or her action (e.g., drunk, insane, only a child). Because the other *cannot* really control his or her behavior, the behavior does not challenge the ought.

The other way may be regarded as unqualified to be a challenger because of the person's status (e.g., a foreigner, a woman, a member of a different caste). The other does not challenge the ought because his or her position as an outsider does not permit a challenge.

The other may be seen as having a character structure that works against his or her being an adequate member of the group (e.g., as "phony," "disagreeable," or "basically weak"). In this case the other is usually *disliked*, and this sentiment takes the place of anger.

Notice that all these ways of perceiving the other involve increasing a distance between oneself and the other. Instead of a person getting angry, he or she sees the other as different from oneself so that the other cannot present a real challenge. Instead of the emotional force of anger, we have a *structural* change—in effect, a change in psychological space so that a person who may have been close is now distant.

THE FUNCTION OF ANGER

At first, our analysis simply suggested that anger instructed a person to change the object of anger. Then it became clear what this object was—a

challenge to what the person believed ought to exist. But implicit in this idea of removing a challenge is the notion that the person *can* remove the challenge; in other words, that the person not only has a belief about what ought to exist but also that he or she has the power to *assert* that belief and to maintain his or her position about what ought to exist. This is not always easy to do. Although both the angry person and the other belong to an identical unit, and hence recognize the same values, the two persons do not necessarily agree on what ought to exist. Just as liking only becomes desiring when the person who likes something also has a need, values become oughts only when a person recognizes that objective conditions require the value to be expressed.

In most contests there is a disagreement over what is recognized as the situation. To one person the salient features of the situation indicate that *x* ought to be done, and to the other person the situation calls for *y*. The contest itself is over what the situation actually requires (and this depends on the meaning of the situation). It is a contest over what reality is like and, hence, what ought to be done. The presence of anger implies that, in this contest, the person continues to assert his or her own position, to *will* what he or she recognizes as existent and, therefore, to determine what ought to be in the face of the other's will to define reality differently. Thus, anger supports a person's position; if it is not present, the person may "fold" and give in to the other's position.

At first, I presumed that anger gave persons the power to assert their position publicly, and often I found that this was so. For example, a woman in public relations work was given a contract to change the image of a firm that was expanding its business. After doing some work on the contract, she had lunch with a member of the firm and happened to express her political views. She noted that the conversation grew strained and realized that she had made a mistake in speaking so openly about her beliefs. The job called for further contacts with the firm, but the other did not call and "could not be reached." This placed the woman in conflict. Clearly a contract had been signed, some work had been done, and she should attempt to collect her fee. On the other hand, her client was in a position from which he could injure her reputation with other clients if he promulgated his judgment of her and, consequently, she hesitated to press him for payment. Because she was angry about the client's condemning her professional ability on account of her politics, and his failing to cancel the contract in a responsible way, she had her lawyer write a letter threatening court action. (She collected half the fee called for by the contract.)

However, I have since found other instances in which persons experienced anger but did not publicly assert their position because they believed it would be ineffectual, inappropriate, or dangerous to do so. For example, a college student received a Valentine's Day card from her father. Enclosed were a check and a note that asked her not to mention the gift

to her stepmother. The student was angry because she believed that her father ought not to have her stepmother's permission to send his daughter a check. Although she expressed her feelings to several friends, she did not assert her position with her father. In this, and other similar instances, anger only appeared to maintain a person's private sense of what ought to be. It appeared to give persons the power to maintain their own position, but not to assert their position to the person who challenged this reality. It may be observed that although this created a type of distance between themselves and the challenger, the other was not "distanced" in the sense of being regarded as irresponsible. The difference between these and other types of psychological distance has been delineated by Kreilkamp (1981).

Does the anger really serve to maintain the person's position? It certainly appears that way. Consider what occurs when an ought is violated and the person does not become angry.

A student wrote a paper for a course and felt that she had done a good job. It was returned with a mark of D+. She later reported that rather than becoming angry she had two thoughts in quick succession: "She [the grader] obviously doesn't know what I am talking about" and "The course has a pass/no record option anyway, so nuts to grades." The first thought created distance by considering the reader unintelligent whereas the second thought removed the student from any involvement in doing well in the course and asserting herself. If she had become angry, she might have confronted her professor with the assertion that she ought to get the grade her paper deserved. Without the anger, she did not risk an actual confrontation about the grade. Of course, we do not know whether the student was maturely reacting to an obtuse reader with false grading standards or whether she was avoiding a confrontation out of an insecurity about what the paper was really worth. In either case, in the absence of anger and an actual confrontation, the student was able to maintain her private belief that the paper was good, but the grader's judgment determined social reality.

If we postulate that anger serves to strengthen the will to maintain one's position, how can we account for the fact that the student with the D+ could maintain her private belief that the paper was good without experiencing anger, whereas the student with the note from her father apparently needed the support of her anger to maintain her private belief that her father ought not to have to ask her stepmother for permission? I believe this is because the first student was able to distance herself from her professor and from her commitment to the course. This option was not available to the second student because she wanted to maintain her closeness with her father. If this conjecture is correct, anger may, paradoxically, maintain closeness. This occurs when the unit of shared oughts is maintained by the presence of anger.

TESTING THE CONCEPTUALIZATION WITH FURTHER ENCOUNTERS: HURT AND DEPRESSION

At this point in the exploration, research partners were given the following conceptualization:

> Anger is a way of being in which the angry person's will is strengthened so that he or she can remove a challenge to what he or she asserts ought to exist, thereby preserving the unit between the angry person and the object of anger and the shared values of this unit.

Students in a class on emotions were asked to write short (three- to five-page) papers based on an encounter between this conceptualization and their own personal experience. I pointed out the difference between a sort of mild meeting, during which one sticks to generalities and is satisfied with an easy fit between idea and experience, and an exciting encounter, during which the power of the conceptualization reveals aspects of the experience that were previously unnoticed, or the details of the experience force a modification of the conceptualization. I made it clear that I valued exciting encounters more than mild meetings and that the former occurred when one went into the concrete details of some specific experience and pitted them against the specific terms of the conceptualization.

In one paper, a student gave an experience in which the conditions for anger were met, but she had experienced hurt rather than anger. A close friend should have phoned at a mutually agreed-upon time. When he did not call, he was held responsible, and his not calling was a challenge to the value of responsive friendship, yet she did not experience anger nor create distance. Instead, she felt very hurt.

THE EXPERIENCE OF HURT

The report of such an experience forces us to expand the conceptualization of anger so that we may discriminate the conditions underlying hurt from those underlying anger and show the relationship between these conditions. Clearly there is some sort of close relationship between anger and hurt. Often when a person is subjected to a sudden physical hurt, the person reacts with an outburst of anger. Furthermore, the etymology of the term suggests a connection. Anger stems from the Icelandic *angr* (grief) and is related to the Latin *angro* (anguish). If we were simply to speculate about the relationship, we might conclude that anger was simply an expression of hurt or that hurt was simply a form of inner-directed anger. However, it is clear that anger and hurt *feel* differently; the experiences are quite distinct, and our existential perspective leads us to consider them to be alternative ways of structuring our experience to meet a violation of

what ought to be. Rather than speculate, we must carefully describe the experience of hurt and attempt to articulate a conceptualization for the experience that will allow us to relate it systematically to the conceptualization of anger.

How, then, can we describe the structure of hurt? From the examples I have examined, it appears that the person retains a sense of what ought to have happened and a sense that the other is responsible, but the person does not really assert his or her will in an attempt to remove a challenge. Rather, the will collapses and the person *suffers* the hurt. This seems to occur along with a loss of confidence or trust in the other's regard for the self, and a realization that one cannot will the other to love the self. The reaction to the suffering is often to close off, pull in, or tighten up, to deaden the hurt or prevent its future occurrence. The alternative is either to share the hurt or to "choose" to experience anger, with the emotions often shifting back and forth.

During the experience of hurt, the other's response seems to have challenged the very existence of the personal unit and the closeness that would sustain anger. Rather than the person distancing the other, the other seems to have distanced the self—so there is no longer a common ground for anger to occur.

Although we can begin to relate hurt to anger on the basis of this crude sketch, a more accurate analysis of hurt would require a complete conceptual encounter, testing the sketch against the details of a number of concrete experiences. Such an analysis would have to take into account the fact that the experience of hurt must be related to the somewhat different experience of psychological pain. The latter appears to occur when self-boundaries are broken—such as when a person has to separate from a union, or has to recognize some new aspects of the self, or even, at times, when a person must break open the self to experience love. In fact, the intimate connection between pain and the realization of love is shown clearly in the works of writers such as William Blake and D. H. Lawrence. See, for example, Blake's (1991) poem, "The Little Black Boy," or Lawrence's (1979) short story, *Daughters of the Vicar*. Such pain appears to have a somewhat different structure from the "hurt" of rejection that we have been considering.

In any case, for our current purpose of illustrating the method of conceptual encounter, we note how a personal experience provoked by the conceptualization forces a modification in the conceptualization. Examples show that a violation of what ought to exist may result in hurt rather than anger, may remind us that there is an intimate connection between the two, and may challenge us to define hurt and specify when it will exist rather than anger. Tentatively, we propose that as an alternative either to structuring a situation so that there is a challenge to what ought to exist, or to distancing the other, the person may suffer being distanced.

"OBJECTIVE" VIOLATIONS

Let us look at a student's paper with a different sort of challenge to the conceptualization.

> At the beginning of this last module I decided to do well in my organic chemistry lab. ... I accepted it as a challenge, as a task. ... Implied in this task was the assertion: *I do not fail at what I really try to do.* ... I completed four tests moderately successfully. ... The following week I did the next four tests with little trouble. The last test, however, was marred by a minor disaster. This test consisted of slowly adding nitrous acid to a test tube containing an organic compound that was cooled in an ice bath. There were three different compounds in separate test tubes. Two of them behaved nicely. The third (quite comically in retrospect) started foaming madly and started to come out of the top of the test tube. Obviously I had either added the acid too fast or had not cooled it down enough. I tried to cool the test tube down some more by moving it around in the ice bath, but only managed to knock one of the other test tubes over, losing its contents to the ice bath. Then I impulsively removed the troublesome test tube from the ice bath, propping it up against my lab towel. But it managed to fall over and spill its contents on the lab table. At that moment I was feeling my anger. I felt an incredible tension which seemed directed at holding back from shouting innumerable obscenities. I felt that what was happening shouldn't have been happening. I felt a strong desire to smash all of my glassware. I decided not to finish the experiment and started to clean up. While cleaning up I managed to break, unintentionally, two beakers. This didn't relieve my anger, though, because they had merely broken, they didn't shatter. It didn't add to my anger either because I didn't care that I broke them.
>
> It is important to note that my anger was not directed at anyone or anything specific. While in the lab it wasn't at myself, not the lab assistants, not the professor, not the students around me, and certainly not at N, N-dimethylaniline (the nasty organic compound that started the whole mess). My desire to smash the glassware wasn't because I was angry with the glassware, but because I desired to destroy something. And against whom or what would have shouting obscenities been directed?
>
> I propose that the statement that anger is felt, "when there is a challenge to what we assert ought to exist," is a specific case of a more general statement, "when there is a violation of what we assert should (or does) exist." ... Should refers to what one sees as the structure of the world and the violation is the interpretation of an act. This act could be caused by an intentional being (who may have a different view of the world) or by the encountering of the view of the world and the real world.

This example poses a different sort of problem for the conceptualization: What happens when the challenge to what the person asserts ought to exist is not issued by an opposing will? In the previous example, it is an impersonal reality that challenges the person's will (although the tendency to personify may be noted in the statement that the test tube "managed to fall over"). There is only an impersonal violation of the reality that should be. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the angered person responds as if he or she were challenged. The person responds with the same disbelief that occurs in examples of personal anger. And although the person realizes the irrationality of the anger, that he or

she "should" not really feel anger, and even though he or she controls its expression in various ways, there is still the impulse to deal with a sort of challenge. The person wants to see some other as responsible, to smash something, to somehow restore his or her power to act in the world, and to regain confidence in the world as it should be.

THE EXPERIENCE OF DEPRESSION

We may inquire what happens when a person who is challenged fails either to become angry or to distance. I postulate that when this occurs a person abandons his or her position and becomes *depressed*. This will occur when there are forces that prevent the challenge from being removed and when there are reasons not to exercise the alternative of distancing the challenger. The depression may be seen as analogous to the surrender mechanism that some species use to signal the acceptance of defeat and, hence, to end the fight.

From my perspective depression is not simply a passive reaction to a situation of loss. On the contrary, a conceptual encounter by Kane (1976) has shown that depression may be regarded, like anger, as transforming the person's situation. In fact, we may understand depression as an emotion whose structure is the reverse of the emotion of anger. Whereas anger instructs the person to remove the challenge, the instructional transformation of depression is "remove the self." Just as anger works to strengthen the person's will so that he or she can remove the challenge, depression works against the person's will so he or she *can't* fight against the challenge. Thus, part of the experience of depression is that one cannot do anything about one's situation. The instruction "remove the self" is not necessarily dysfunctional. It prevents distancing from the other. Although the person's position is abandoned, the person's values are preserved. Ordinarily, if a person failed to assert his or her position, the person would be abandoning his or her values. But in depression one *cannot* act; therefore, oughts cannot apply and the failure to act does not mean that the person no longer subscribes to the group's values. Kane (1976) has shown that in many cases of situational depression, the person is caught in a situation in which his or her values require an action that would have unfortunate consequences. When the depression occurs, the person cannot perform the required action, thus preventing the consequences while still preserving the person's commitment to values and group membership.

For example, in one instance a teenager became pregnant and was caught in a situation in which her value for human life required her to have the child in spite of the fact that her young boyfriend could not marry her and that she believed she could not confide in her mother because of her mother's opposition to premarital sex. Although there were moments of anger at the mother—when she was perceived as one who ought to accept

sex—the predominant emotion was a mild depression that lasted for about a month as the young woman decided that she *had* to have an abortion. (Note how the depression structured the situation so that she did not really *act* against her values—she experienced *having* to get the abortion rather than wanting to get it.) Thus, her values were maintained in spite of the fact that she acted in a way that seemed to contradict them.

Returning to the emotion of anger, we now see that in both anger and depression there is a challenge to the person's belief in what ought to exist but that in the former the person continues to assert his or her position whereas in depression the person no longer can assert what ought to exist.

Note that our evolving conceptualization rejects the idea that under some objectively determined stimulus conditions a person will necessarily react with anger. There is no situation that is independent of the person. The conceptualization asserts that anger is one structure, one way, that a person may be in the world. It asserts that when a person is in the world in an angry way, the person is necessarily experiencing a challenge to what he or she is asserting ought to exist. There are other ways in which the person could structure the situation. Thus, as we have seen, the person could create a distance between the self and the other, rather than experience a challenge, or could become depressed and fail to assert what ought to exist. But in such other cases, the person would not be angry. The person has a number of degrees of freedom, but there are definite consequences to whatever alternative is selected (or comes into being). If one perceives the other as belonging to one's unit but does not get angry, then one must increase distance (or become depressed). Our freedom involves the recognition of these psychological necessities. Implicit in this way of experiencing one's situation is the "response" of anger, the "instruction" to the person to remove the challenge.

LIMITATIONS AND ADVANTAGES

LIMITATIONS OF THE METHOD

Although conceptual encounter is extremely flexible, it has a number of inherent limitations. First, because the investigation begins with a concept, the method is initially dependent on the existence of a term that names the experience to be studied. Thus, it is unlikely that an American investigator would discover and explicate the experience of sweet dependency denoted by the Japanese term *amae*. Second, the method's emphasis on the search for what is essential to an experience leads it to ignore situational factors that are important to study and understand. For example, anger appears much more likely to occur when a person is overworked, fatigued, tense, or "overstretched," and it often involves aggressive behavior. Interviews may reveal such facts, but the method does not encourage

such observations or note how they may be conceptualized. Third, the focus on experiential structures does not lend itself to the description of emotional processes or developmental dynamics. Thus, the investigator is apt to overlook how anger may be replaced by the process of resignation or gradually developed as one person begins to feel dominated by another. These limitations require conceptual encounter to be supplemented with other methods.

ADVANTAGES OVER TRADITIONAL APPROACHES

Because it is focused on both concrete human experience and systematic conceptualization, the method lends itself to rapid hypothesis testing. Although it is primarily designed to contribute to our understanding of the choices that underlie our emotional experience, the results of conceptual encounters provide important suggestions and correctives to the understanding of more traditional psychology. Thus, the analysis of anger has implications for clinical psychology, social psychology, and emotion theory. Clinical psychology tends to focus on the defensive uses of anger and on anger management programs designed to help those who become violently aggressive. However, our conceptualization reveals anger to be an aspect of interpersonal relationships. This makes it possible to distinguish between a healthy anger that asserts what ought to be in the context of a unit with shared values, and a defensive anger that operates to protect egoistic needs. Thus, it supports Roffman's (2004) contention that anger may be understood as a resource rather than as simply something to be managed. It suggests that anger and aggression should be separated, that there are different reasons for dysfunctional anger, and that anger management programs should focus on different aspects of anger. Narcissism is often treated as a uniform entity (Rhodewalt and Morf, 1998). However, our analysis suggests a distinction between the defensive rage expressed by people with low self-esteem (who frequently mistake the behavior of others to be a challenge to the assertion that they ought to be treated with respect) and the aggression of people with an inflated self-esteem (who lack a concern with the perspective of others and confuse what they want with what ought to be). The conceptualization may also help us understand why cognitive therapies seem more effective for problems with trait anger (which are probably more apt to involve disturbances of the perception of what ought to be), and behavioral relaxation approaches seem more effective with state anger (which is more apt to involve the assertive component of anger [Del Vecchio and O'Leary, 2004]). In general, the analysis suggests that it may be helpful to distinguish between the anger of people who are bound by what ought to be, and those who are attempting to maintain closeness and reluctant to grant the distance of separation. It also suggests that at times it may be helpful to understand depression

as stemming from a situation in which a person cannot allow anger yet must maintain closeness.

Social psychology usually conceives anger to be an emotion with specifiable physiological, expressive, and subjective aspects—a discrete entity caused by a situational appraisal and leading to predictable consequences. Although our conceptualization views anger as a "choice" of how to relate to others, it is possible to use the conceptualization heuristically to create a social psychological model that can be examined experimentally. On the causal end, such a model would predict that anger would be more likely to occur when norms were violated than when a person was simply frustrated, when circumstances discouraged a person from creating distance, and when a person had the power to assert his or her position. On the consequence end, because anger involves the assertion of a position about what ought to be, the model suggests that anger may confer power and status in cultures that value assertiveness (such as our own). Thus, van Kleef, De Dreu, and Manstead (2004) show that people are apt to make concessions to an angry negotiator, and Tiedens (2001) shows that people confer more status to angry than sad political targets. The model suggests that anger will persist until a challenge is removed. We know that anger may have aftereffects, and it has been shown experimentally that people who have been angered are more apt to attribute responsibility in subsequent tort cases.

However, Goldberg, Lerner, and Tetlock (1999) show that this carryover only occurs when a perpetrator is not punished. Our analysis suggests that this is because the unfulfilled desire to remove the challenge to what ought to exist is influencing the subsequent judgments of responsibility. It is important to note that our conceptualization places anger in the context of interpersonal responsibility and suggests the importance of distinguishing the attribution of responsibility that is involved in angrily *blaming* someone for an undesirable outcome, and the angry assertion that one expects the others to accept responsibility for their behavior. The former involves an individualistic expression of what one thinks ought to be (if the other did what he or she ought to have done, things would be better), whereas the latter sees the other as a responsible member of a common unit.

With regard to our understanding of emotions in general, a number of studies have begun to contrast central nervous system differences between anger and other emotions. It has been postulated that there is an approach system that involves activation of the left frontal lobe (with activation lowered in depression), and a withdrawal system that involves activation of the right frontal lobe (and is active in fear). In congruence with our conceptualization of anger as involving a strengthening of will and the assertive removal of a challenge (in contrast to either a depressive submission or a fearful withdrawal), evidence reported by Harmon–Jones and Sigelman (2001) suggests that anger involves activation of the approach

system. In a related vein, Lerner and Keltner (2001) have shown that angry people are optimistic and are risk seeking, in contrast to fearful people who are more pessimistic in their risk estimates and are risk aversive in their choices. The advantage of the conceptualization provided by conceptual encounter is that it reveals the relationship between different options so that we may understand how basic processes may be reflected quite differently in different personal and cultural choices.

A CRITIQUE AND ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTUALIZATIONS

Although it is possible to test the usefulness of a conceptualization by using the traditional methods of clinical or social psychology, it may be more fruitful to expose it to philosophical, theoretical, or cultural critiques. As an example, consider the following critique and alternatives. The conceptualization presented earlier treated anger as a universal emotion with invariant properties. However, Lau (1990) has argued that the conceptualization is actually a narrative paradigm that Western culture uses to socialize aggressive impulses.

ANGER AS A NARRATIVE FORM

Lau (1990) argues that children have a variety of preverbal *angriform* reactions such as biting and hitting that are responses to pain, discomfort, and frustration. Societies must control these aggressive responses, and in our culture this is done by socializing children so that the impulses are organized into the emotion we call anger, an emotion that we only permit when there is a challenge to shared values. In this view, what provokes *angriform* reaction is frustration, pain, or discomfort (rather than a challenge to what ought to exist). However, we are socialized so as to not allow ourselves to experience anger unless we can perceive a challenge to an ought.

On the one hand, Lau (1990) grants that our anger at impersonal objects is a strong argument for the ought–challenge structure. As he states (1990), "The components he specifies as necessary to the experience of anger are projected where reflection does not recognize their existence and is a little embarrassed by the projection" (p. 4). However, Lau (1990) takes this ought–challenge form to be a narrative template. For him, assertions, challenges, and oughts are elements of discursive consciousness rather than perception. Experiences of anger do not belong to a naturalistic class as apples or eclipses do, but to a dramatic–historical class such as wars of liberation or championship games. Their form is a narrative form that is created by our culture and is used to manage conflict and aggression between the members of our society. Aggression that does not fit the ought–challenge paradigm is not allowed as anger and appears

contranarrative or, at least, not to be emotionally motivated. That is, we feel *we* should not get angry unless there has been a challenge to what ought to exist. Lau (1990) shows that in our accounts of the anger of *other* persons, we often do not use the ought–challenge paradigm. We often describe others as becoming angry because they do not get what they want or are in discomfort. It is only our own anger that is invariably described in terms of challenge to oughts.

Of course, although the observer may only perceive a frustrated wish, the person who is becoming angry may perceive a challenged ought, and even extremely aggressive, poorly socialized men experience their own anger as a response to oughts being challenged. For example, Toch's (1993) accounts of violent men reveal that these explosions are often occasioned by the perceived slights to which the insecure are liable. Yet Lau (1990) points out that when we are frustrated or tense, we may rein in aggressive impulses. Lacking a challenge to oughts, we may inhibit our anger, yet allow gestures, tones of voice, and fantasies that reveal "anger," although they fall short of the fully developed anger experience. It is interesting that in such cases the observer may see "anger" (the rising voice, clenched fist, sharp remark) that the putatively angry persons denies. ("I'm not *really* angry.") In any case, we do not see a fully developed anger response in the sense of an attempt to change the person who is challenging what ought to exist.

Attempting to integrate the positions, Lau (1990) suggests that there may be a prefiguring of ought–challenge anger at a preverbal perceptual–motor level. At this level there would be no discursive oughts or challenges, but there would be a sense of narcissistic entitlement. Given adequate mothering, the infant would have a sense of self as entitled to adequate nurturance and would imagine a world that ought to facilitate its autonomy. However, such an analysis seems based on an essentially Freudian conception of the self as an autonomous being with aggressive impulses. By contrast, we could regard narcissistic entitlements as primitive oughts that are embedded in the early personal relationship between mother and child.

As a result of this dialogue, I now realize that the conceptualization I advanced is a view of anger as essentially interpersonal rather than either intrinsically biological or cultural. Lau's (1990) interesting exposition, together with the fact that feelings of hurt are an alternative to anger, and the fact that anger may be expressed at impersonal reality, suggest that the conceptualization needs to be related to a more comprehensive view of the interpersonal. Hence, I was delighted when I discovered the personalistic philosophy expounded by John Macmurray.

ANGER AS AN EXPRESSION OF DEPENDENCY

Macmurray (1961) suggests that persons qua persons only exist in the context of interpersonal relations. We are born into a dependency

relationship with our mothers or mother substitutes and, even as adults, can only survive if others care for us. Every one of these personal relationships is characterized by two motivational strands: a genuine caring for the other and an anxious concern for the self. At any moment in time, and to some extent in our habitual attitudes, one of these motivations is dominant while the other is constrained in a necessary but subordinate position. We begin life with an outward, heterocentric focus, but when it appears that we are betrayed, abandoned, uncared for, our self-concern becomes dominant. As long as our caring for the other is dominant, the ideal outcome we imagine and our perception of actuality form a unitary whole. There is an inevitable discrepancy and tension between the ideal and the actual. However, the two are kept in relationship and the person works for what is ideal while staying in touch with the actual. The mind and body, reason and emotion, are united. What is presented to the world is in harmony with what is felt within; behavior is both spontaneous and rational. By contrast, when we believe we cannot depend on the other, our self-concern becomes dominant and a splitting occurs. Because of our fear for ourselves, we either believe we must primarily look out for ourselves, becoming independent of the untrustworthy other, and searching for control and power, or we believe we must become "good," conforming to what the other wants so that he or she will (in the future) care for us. In the former mode we are pragmatic "realists," using our imaginations to gain power and pay only lip service to "unrealistic" ideals. In the latter mode we are sentimental idealists, and use our imaginations to create a sentimental substitute that serves as an opiate for the pain of reality. It is only when our faith in the other is restored that our unity is regained and we can use our imaginations to make the actual ideal.

What has this to do with anger? When Macmurray (1961) analyzes the development of the child, he points out that the child initially expects the mother to satisfy all his or her needs. The child imagines that this will occur and develops this ideal. It is what the mother ought to do, and if the child has adequate mothering, this ideal will be largely met. However, in order for the child to grow, weaning must occur and the child must learn to do things that had been done for him. Hence, there will be a conflict of wills and, in my own terms, the child's ought will be challenged by the mother's behavior, and anger will occur. However, Macmurray's (1961) analysis goes deeper because he sees that anger is a defense against the threat of personal annihilation. Speaking of the child, he states, "He is refused what experience has given him the right to expect, and his cosmos has returned to chaos" (p. 98). In this particular struggle of wills, the child must lose and do what the mother requires. However, the child may eventually do this out of self-concern—by being either rebelliously independent or conformingly good, or out of a genuine cooperation made possible by faith that the mother really does care for him or her.

Macmurray (1961) can account for certain cultural differences by specifying different defenses that may be used when fear for oneself begins to dominate one's relationships. For example, people who decide they are not really loved will elect to take care of themselves and develop an individualistic culture that will stress the rights of individuals to pursue their own happiness, whereas people who elect to be good so that they will be loved will develop a collectivist culture that will emphasize conformity and the welfare of the group. Although both types of cultures will also have times when people generally care for one another and may experience anger when oughts are challenged, they will handle the anger of children in different ways. More individualistic cultures will allow the experience of anger but defend against its potential violence by insisting that the challenged ought be socially agreed-upon values in the manner suggested by Lau (1990), or by developing ways in which people may be reconciled. Collectivist cultures may deny the experience of anger or only allow its expression in fantasy or in displaced aggression.

Bearing these considerations in mind, I continue the conceptual encounter by examining accounts of anger in "primitive" cultures. Fortunately, there are a number of interesting accounts available. I have included all those with which I am familiar. My question is whether the conceptualization of anger as a response to a challenge to what ought to exist allows us to understand "anger" in other cultures. I begin with cultures that appear most similar.

ENCOUNTERS WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF OTHER CULTURES

First, let us consider the Ifaluk of the South Pacific. In her investigation of the Ifaluk on their Micronesian atoll, Lutz (1988) contrasts a number of types of anger that are named and that correspond roughly to our terms for irritability, annoyance, and helpless frustration. She points out that these are all distinguished from *song* or "justifiable anger." Although the former types are devalued, *song* is taken seriously as a moral assertion. For the Ifaluk there is an explicit rule violation that is pointed at, along with condemnation and a call for the violator to mend his ways. A woman may become *song* if her husband drinks too much and fails to meet his obligations; a man may become *song* when he is hungry and the women of his household have not prepared food. However, the *song* is not accompanied by any physical violence. It is expressed by a refusal to speak to or eat with the offender, speaking impolitely, pouting, or throwing objects (but *not* at the person). A fine may be levied or gossip begun and the object of the *song* is expected to show repentance. Although what ought to be is construed somewhat differently, and although the Ifaluk are clearly less

violent, one has the impression that both *song* and anger deal with challenges to oughts. Thus, although American anger is more apt to involve the ought of individual rights and even a sense of narcissistic entitlement, Ifaluk *song* is almost a perfect example of Lau's (1990) ideal ought–challenge anger, without much of a component of preverbal passion. It is anger with a minimum of aggressive energy.

Turning to how anger is experienced by the Taita of Kenya, we note that anger occurs when one person transgresses another's rights (Harris, 1978). This is in accord with our conceptualization. However, the anger itself is not encouraged as a way to remove this challenge to what ought to exist. Rather, it is regarded as a mystical source of inherently dangerous wishes that will cause the illness, or even death, of the transgressor or his livestock. To avoid such disastrous consequences, one of the Taita's central religious acts involves the casting out of anger from the heart so that peace and general well-being can be restored. Harris (1978) notes that rights could not be transgressed without endangering the wrong-doer because the anger that was caused would mystically result in later suffering of the transgressor. Note, however, that although the angry Taita may attempt to remove their anger rather than to use it to assert what ought to be, the anger functions within the society in a way that removes challenges to what ought to exist.

The ought–challenge conceptualization is not as easy to apply when we turn to Briggs' (1970) classic description of the Utku Eskimos in northwestern Canada. She records five terms that refer to aspects of anger and records many instances of the angry behavior of children. However, the Utku culture values warmth, protection, nurturance, and even-tempered persons. They devalue unkindness, bad temper, and aggressiveness, and their devaluation is to the extent that adults do not express anger and deny experiencing it. She cites an Eskimo informant recorded in 1931: "It is generally believed that white men have quite the same minds as small children. Therefore one shall always give way to them. They are easily angered, and when they cannot get their will they are moody and, like children, have the strangest ideas and fancies" (p. 329).

What makes Utku children angry and how do adults manage to avoid anger? Briggs' (1970) descriptions of childhood anger clearly support Macmurray's (1961) description of the emotional turmoil surrounding weaning. It is clear that when small children do not get what they want, they scream. Their will is frustrated and it appears that they experience a violation of what ought to be. Among adults, the major way in which anger is averted appears to have to do with the development of *ayuqnaq*, an attitude/feeling of resignation to the inevitable, to what cannot be helped or is impossible to change, a rational, pragmatic recognition that an unpleasant situation is unavoidable. When whites or children violate oughts, they are viewed as lacking reason. In my terms, they are "distanced" so there is no challenge to what ought to be. In the 17 months Briggs lived

with the Inuit, she did not observe a single instance of expression of adult anger.

Of course, this does not mean that no anger was present. Briggs (1970) clearly believes that hostility was experienced in displaced aggression in the form of fantasies, fears, and nightmares. She points out that the Ulku beat their dogs unmercifully with the excuse that it makes them behave, and her Eskimo "father" had extremely violent fantasies that were full of stabbings, whippings, and murders. He usually spoke of these when he felt hopeless in his dealings with whites. Furthermore, Eskimos particularly feared people who *never* lost their temper because such a man could kill if he ever did become angry. And it was believed that "strong thoughts" could kill or cause illness, so that people took care to satisfy the wishes of others so that resentment would not accumulate in the mind.

What may we conclude from our encounter with Briggs' (1970) account of Utku anger? On the one hand, it would seem that Lau (1990) is correct. We do not find instances in which anger is manifested as the removal of challenge to what ought to exist, and the Utku do not appear to manage their aggressive impulses by creating a "justice" narrative in which angry assertions are used to remove their challenges. On the other hand, it does not seem that Utku anger is simply a response to frustration. On the contrary, they are adept at resignation, and the anger that is present appears to occur when oughts are challenged (even if these may be construed as "narcissistic entitlements"). Furthermore, the fits of sullenness, the violent fantasies, and the displaced aggression do not appear as "angriform" responses that have not been organized into what we would call *angry*. Rather, they seem to be aspects of the embodied anger with which we are all too familiar. Hence, it seems to me that it is more parsimonious to say that the conceptualization of ought–challenge anger fits the experience of the Utku, but that the society does not utilize anger as we do. Rather than using anger to assert what ought to be, they cultivate acceptance so that they are not challenged.

An even more unusual way of experiencing transgressions to what ought to be is found in Malaysia. Although all societies appear to have angry children, and at least some outbursts of adult aggression, there are cultures that clearly do not use anger as a means of redressing violated oughts. Just as an individual in our own culture may feel hurt rather than angry, a society may encourage its members to feel hurt and afraid rather than angry when oughts are violated. This appears to be the case among the Chewong and Semoi of peninsular Malaysia. Both peoples strongly value sharing, and the refusal to share or grant a request is a clear violation of what ought to occur. However, rather than perceiving a challenge that leads to anger and an assertive attack or a supernatural infliction of pain, the violated person is afflicted with fear. The wronged person is believed to be in danger of attack by animals, illness, or supernatural beings. Although such a person

may seek compensation for this wound and ask the offender to apologize and pay a fine, the emotional response to the violation of the ought is clearly one of unhappiness and fear rather than anger. Although one who is afraid is regarded with approval rather than contempt, how may we explain the fact that the injured party experiences fear rather than anger? Different explanations seem possible. Heelas (1989) suggests that, although it is not just, the moral order may be *justified* by the anticipation of punishment. As Lerner (1980) suggests, we may believe that we live in a fundamentally just world and if something bad happens to someone that person must *be* bad and can expect more bad things to happen. Alternatively, Roseman (1990) suggests that the failure of sharing rends the cosmic network of mutual dependency so that one experiences that something has gone wrong with the world and so one is justifiably afraid. Or it may be that the person may simply be hurt as we may be when we feel unloved. In any case, as in the case of someone who experiences hurt rather than anger, the violation of what ought to be is not perceived as a challenge to one's will and is not experienced as anger.

Rosaldo (1980) suggests that in hunter–gatherer groups (such as the Utku, the Ilongot, and the Chewong and the Semoi), people think of anger as something that will destroy social relations if it is experienced. They fear that anger will lead to killing, so they "forget" anger—set it aside—rather than allow it within the group. It is not safe to hold on to the anger and use it to remove the challenge to what ought to exist, to use it as a motive to restore justice. An example of the "setting aside" of anger is provided in Rosaldo's (1980) account of the Ilongot headhunters in the Philippines. A 19-year-old, evidently angry at the failure of his kinsmen to hold an important ceremony for him, slashed a footbridge that his aunt had to cross so that it would give way under her weight. She noticed the damage in time and was enraged. However, there was nothing the aunt could do to restore justice. The youth was not yet at a stage in life where he was held responsible for such actions and could not understand the indemnatory payments sometimes used between adults. If she asked for an indemnity, would she kill him, her own nephew, if he refused? So an uncle took the youth aside and lectured him on kinship and the aunt had to set her anger aside. By contrast, in more complex tribal groups (such as the Ifaluk or Taita), in which there is a hierarchical command structure or jural system that can check anger and modulate its expression, it is safe to experience anger and publicly express it. In these societies, if anger is not expressed it may work to harm people in hidden witchlike ways.

In reading Rosaldo's (1980) account of the Ilongot, one has the impression that there is a lot of anger, as well as a lot of joy, in these passionate people. (Unlike the Utku, resignation is not cultivated.) Rosaldo (1980) appears to be correct in asserting that often there is no way for the anger to be expressed short of violence. (There are no authorities to mediate

disputes or teach "assertiveness training!") My impression is that the anger is a response to a challenge as to what ought to exist. However, there is no way for the anger to be expressed as an assertion about what ought to be. Hence, when it is expressed, it leads to a direct confrontation with a high probability of violent consequences and, consequently, is usually set aside. Just as the Utku appear to display a certain amount of displaced aggression when they beat their dogs, one cannot help wondering if the Ilongot's headhunting may be partially grounded in unexpressed anger. Although traditional headhunting expeditions are organized by older men and give young men prestige and the ability to marry, the violence occurs outside the tribe (whereas the celebrations of victory involve women and children within the tribe). The Ilongot say that they organize a headhunting expedition when their hearts are heavy with envy and greed, and often the expedition follows the deaths of leaders or close kin. The violence is accompanied with a sense of vital energy and joy, and one senses that deep challenges have been removed and what ought to be has been restored.

CURRENT STATE OF THE CONCEPTUALIZATION

Societies organize personal relationships and make sense of the misfortunes and tragedies of life in very different ways. Does it really make sense to take a conceptualization of anger that is based on the experiences of educated adults socialized in the United States and apply it to the experiences of persons in completely different societies? I believe it does, because in spite of vast societal differences, in spite of the fact that the narratives of different cultures create different realities for different peoples, there is an underlying reality that we hold in common. This reality is that all humans are dependent on others. We all have wishes that may be fulfilled or frustrated and wills that may be asserted or resigned. We all imagine what ought to be and distinguish this from what actually is. We all suffer when there is a discrepancy between what ought to be and what is. We must all must cope with that discrepancy in some way, and often that discrepancy involves the will of an other who could reduce the discrepancy between what ought to be and what is.

I suggest that anger is one way in which we humans attempt to cope with the discrepancy between what is and what ought to be. In my view, anger itself is not a narrative. Rather, anger is an embodied organic whole that involves a perception of a challenge to what ought to exist and an impulse to remove that challenge. Rather than a narrative, it is the stuff of which narratives are made. If our perception changes, if the other apologizes, or if we discover we were mistaken, or we abandon our project, then our anger may completely vanish. Conversely, although we may become resigned, or

we may "distance" the other, our anger may be expressed in sulkiness, aggressive fantasy, and "displaced" violence.

Thus, after encountering different cultures, the experience of anger still appears, at least to me, to be a universal aspect of human nature rather than a human invention to manage aggressive impulses (such as the invention of political campaigns to replace civil war). However, it would also appear that anger is not as humanizing as I initially portrayed it. Although it presupposes common values, the oughts asserted by the angry person are often imposed rather than shared. Hence, although to be angry is to be human, the management of anger by the nonviolent assertion of what ought to be is a cultural achievement that we have only begun to realize.

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BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

JOSEPH H. DE RIVERA, PhD, is Professor of Psychology at Clark University and Director of its Peace Studies program. As an undergraduate at Yale he began an investigation into the differences between fear and anxiety. Going to graduate school at Stanford, he studied chemistry and physiological psychology with the hope that it would help him distinguish different emotions, but he soon realized that the emotional experience he loved was so rich and varied that the techniques of physiological psychology would not be that helpful. After doing some research on happiness at the Naval School of Aviation Medicine, he returned to Stanford and completed a dissertation on a way to distinguish different emotions as perceptual choices (the latter is published as *A Structural Theory of the Emotions* [Psychological Issues Monograph 40, International Universities Press, 1977]).

Beginning teaching at Dartmouth, his interest in emotional experience was augmented by a desire to understand the nuclear arms race and, with the encouragement of Charles Osgood, he wrote *The Psychological Dimension of Foreign Policy* (Charles E. Merrill, 1968). Moving to NYU, his insistence on the importance of feelings came into dialogue with the behavioristic psychology of Isidor Chein. He became impressed with the early experimental phenomenology of Kurt Lewin and edited *Field Theory as Human Science: Studies of Lewin's Berlin Group* (Eardver Press, 1974).

Accepting a position at Clark University, where he particularly enjoyed talking with Tamara Dembo, he encouraged the qualitative analysis of emotions, working with a number of students and colleagues to develop the method presented in this volume and published as *Conceptual Encounter: A Method for the Exploration of Human Experience* (University Press of America, 1981).

Later, his enthusiasm for emotional experience was dampened when he discovered that patients and therapists could be completely misled by the intensity of the emotional experiences that were involved in the production of false memory syndrome, and, together with Ted Sarbin, he edited *Believed-in Imaginings: The Narrative Construction of Reality* (American Psychological Association, 1998).

He is currently engaged in trying to weave all these threads together, investigating collective emotional climates and political behavior; hoping that the qualitative methods presented in this book may help us understand the emotional experience of our friends, allies, opponents, and enemies; and that we may use our imagination to construct a culture of peace.