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MEN'S EXPERIENCE OF ANGER:

A Study on Anger and Pluralistic Qualitative Methods

Volume I of II

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Key of Symbols

Throughout the text, quotes from the interviews appear the way they were transcribed. These include the following symbols:

(.)   = Pause of less than a second

(..)   = Pause between one and two seconds

(x sec) = Pause of X seconds

//   = Overlapping speech

*   = Emphasis (volume goes up)

-          = Word cut short (false start)

:   = Phoneme is prolonged

::   = Phoneme is prolonged further

[…]   = Omission from the quote

Acknowledgements

This study could not be completed without my participants and their bravery to explore the stigmatized emotion in front of a stranger with a recording device. For that, I cannot thank them enough.

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Abstract

The present study is a phenomenological exploration of the way men in London make sense of their experiences of anger. Data were collected from British online resources as well as individual interviews; and were analysed using Thematic Analysis, Discursive Psychology and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

The aim was to explore how the emotional state of anger is comprehended by adult males living in London. In order to inform the exploration, the social and biological dimensions were taken into consideration, framing the discursive construction of their understanding of the emotional experience.

The results reveal individual tensions but also agreement on the main dimensions of anger experience, detection, understanding and expression. These are then applied to a critical evaluation of how the U.K.'s social constructs around anger and the angry person are presented in the participants' accounts and how the participants address these constructs; as well as to a theorizing of what a person is and how the emotional experience makes one think about themselves after the experience is over.

The study contributes to ongoing debates about how emotions are experienced and understood by the person; how they are used to explain and justify his/her way-of-seeing and way-of-being in the world; and how discourse and experience interact with one-another. Moreover, it is an exercise in the combination of qualitative methods of analysis.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Anger has a long tradition in the Western imagination. The ancient Greeks considered it important enough to attribute its advent to one of their twelve gods – Ares, the god of war. At the same time, however, Ares is painted in a negative light in ancient Greek mythology, often appearing like a fool in tales and being on the losing side at the Trojan War. "All his fellow-immortals hate him, from Zeus and Hera downwards, except Eris, and Aphrodite who nurses a perverse passion for him, and Hades who welcomes the bold fighting-men slain in cruel wars" (Graves, 1960:73). Ares is resented because he is linked to blind fury and is often juxtaposed to his sister, Athena, who personified wisdom and military strategy. Ares was later on elevated in status as he was adopted by the Romans who considered him (under the new name Mars) to be their father.

Anger then became one of the seven deadly sins, according to Catholic catechism. Rather, it is its excessive version, *wrath*, that is included in the list of these sins, alongside pride, envy, gluttony, greed, lust, and sloth. In his 2011 book "Dante's Deadly Sins: Moral Philosophy in Hell", Raymond A. Belliotti argues (p.124-125) that Pope Gregory I, who compiled the definitive list of the seven deadly sins, "made clear that the dispositions were deadly because they generated serious sin and injuries; they served as necessary and final causes of the worst human excesses". So, even though in Christian thought the wrath of God is a necessary part of the Armageddon (and thus an inseparable part of God's plan), in the sphere of humans it is reproachable - and this might prove to be of great relevance to this study.

The present study explores the way anger is experienced by a non-clinical population in everyday life. I take a phenomenological approach, coupled with a discourse-analytic perspective and an eye on cognitive approaches, because cognition and emotion have been described as very tightly knit processes, influencing one-another (e.g. Eatough and Smith, 2006:486). This all is done with a view on the human as an organism, a collection of systems responding to emotional stimuli and situations in its totality, as suggested by Averill (1983). James (1890:15) also brought this up as a "general law that *no mental modification* ever occurs which is *not accompanied or followed by a bodily change*".

"Like any complex human behaviour, the emotions can be analysed at social, psychological, and/or biological levels" (Averill, 2012:28). This introductory chapter presents an overview on emotions from several fields of psychology before narrowing it down to some of the most prominent cognitive models of emotion. This is done in an attempt to map out how emotions have been traditionally understood in psychology; and to identify the different systems and modules that are activated and in operation during an emotional reaction, essentially outlining how emotions manifest in humans. Then the focus shifts to a brief discussion of phenomenology and the implications this choice of methodology has for the study of emotions. By doing so I focus on the assumptions and presuppositions about experience, ontologies and the relationship between the two that this school of inquiry brings with it. The focus then turns to the social construction of emotions (and, by extension, those experiencing these emotions). This is done in order to pave the way for the discourse-analytic part of the study; and to make the link between social constructionism and phenomenology clearer. Finally, I present some relevant research about humans as experiencers of anger.

1.1 Anger, Emotions, and The Person

Anger has been classified (e.g. Ekman, 1972) as one of the six core emotions, alongside happiness, sadness, fear, disgust and surprise. Each of the core (or basic) emotions can be defined through what started as nine (Ekman, 1992) and developed into 13 qualities (Ekman & Cordaro, 2011:365):

1. Distinctive universal signals
2. Distinctive physiology
3. Automatic appraisal
4. Distinctive universals in antecedent events
5. Presence in other primates
6. Capable of quick onset
7. Can be of brief duration
8. Unbidden occurrence
9. Distinctive thoughts, memories, and images

10. Distinctive subjective experience

11. Refractive period filters information available to what supports the emotion[1]

12. Target of emotion unconstrained[2]

13. The emotion can be enacted in either a constructive or a destructive fashion.

Summing up, the authors stress that "the basic emotions are discrete physiological responses to fundamental life situations that have been useful in our ancestral environment. These responses are universally shared within our species and some are also found in other primates. The basic emotions are not learned from our culture or environment, but rather they are prewired responses to a set of stimuli that have affected our species for tens of thousands of generations" (Ekman & Cordaro; 2011:369). Their approach is one that focuses on the evolution of our biology and thus treats emotions as another tool for survival, retained throughout evolution for its adaptive value and honed in the process through millennia of natural selection.

From an evolutionary perspective, there is growing agreement that emotions are "adaptive responses that serve to organize cognitive, judgment, experiential, behavioral, and physiological reactions to changes in the environment." (Lench, Flores and Bench; 2011:849). In other words, emotional experiences attune the person (as a system of neurons, glands and organs, supported by a skeleton and contained within a body delineated by the skin – the "body subject" according to Merleau-Ponti) to the specifics of each situation they find themselves in. Through this automatic process they think, behave, and feel differently, which prepares them accordingly for maximum attendance to, and engagement with, the situation or each particular item (creature, thing or action) in it. Or, as Tooby and Cosmides put it, emotions are "the structured functioning together of mechanisms" that have arisen as ways of the organism to respond to situations the species encountered numerous times in the past, which require "that a certain subset of the psyche's behaviour regulating algorithms function together in a particular way to guide

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[1] I understand this to refer to the following process: the emotion is triggered pre-attentively or unconsciously (more on those terms later on in the chapter); then the person becomes aware of that trigger and looks for evidence that would support their justification for this trigger.

[2] I take this to mean that there are multiple targets that produce similar emotions in us. Not one thing makes us angry, happy, sad, etc., but many.

behaviour adaptively through that type of situation" (Tooby and Cosmides, 1990:408). In other words, the individual stands at the forefront of the species' evolution. His/her DNA carries in it everything advantageous the species has learnt in the past and it is through this endowment that the individual is capable of detecting, and responding to, potentially dangerous, nutritious, etc. stimuli instinctively.

The James-Lange theory of emotion (best promoted by James in 1884) brings these aspects together. The theory states that the perception of a stimulus produces a mental effect which in turn leads to a bodily expression with complex physiological manifestations. The perception of changes in one's being, according to James, *is* the emotion. (see Strongman, 1996:8-10 passim) This is the difference between mere sense-impressions that lies in judgment, as the author himself put it (James, 1890:228).

This brings up the two levels of experience of emotion that are crucial to this study: what Harré and Secord called first-order monitoring (or prereflective experience) and second-order monitoring (in Averill; 2012:30), or conscious experience. The prereflective experience maps onto what appears in James' work as the bodily changes without the awareness that follows them; so first-order monitoring is essentially the individual realizing that they are in the midst of a bodily reaction to some stimulus. The second-order monitoring involves the individual's interpretation of the original experience, where awareness is "reflected back upon itself" (Averill, 2012:30), and it is at that point that the emotion is recognized as such.

Charles Darwin (1872) who argued for a categorization of emotions with a focus on the defining traits that distinguish between them also makes special reference to anger when he used anger, fear, disgust and so forth to specify distinct emotions (Ekman, 2016:31). Interestingly, Darwin's aim with his 1872 book *The Expression of Emotion in Man and Animals* was to show that emotional expressions are "either simply dependent on the way in which the nervous system is wired or possibly the remnants of old habits" (Strongman, 1996:7), thus placing humans alongside other animals, rejecting the idea of humanity as the image of God and promoting his idea of evolution instead of a Garden of Eden. However, there seems to be something unique about human processing of emotion – and that is language and its role in

getting the person in touch with him/herself and with his/her social surroundings. "The capacity for reflective experience evolved concomitantly with the capacity for symbolization, and hence is closely related to language" (Averill, 2012:30)

In my view, Darwin claimed that there was nothing special about emotion *activation* (and expressive reactions) in humans. What about experience, an act which is based on interpretation, though? Activation can be defined as the person's (unconscious or semi-conscious) reaction to the events that preceded the trigger of the emotion. Experience, on the other hand, is the period during and after the initial emotional reaction. Like James, I believe there is an initial stage in each emotional reaction, when one is not aware of his/her emotions.

So, the body starts feeling a way due to automatic, or instinctive, reactions and the mind tries to comprehend what this is. For this study I take emotional reactions to be addressing intentional objects: you cannot be angry unless you are angry at something and unless you have an interpretation for that. Given that my main data collection is through interviews, I would also like to propose that the language one uses to address the experience silently (i.e. the internal monologue) is very different from the language s/he uses to communicate this experience to someone else. The former may be grammatically and syntactically incoherent, as long as it makes meaning to the speaker; the latter will have to be structured and designed to address the interlocutor (see, e.g., Potter and Wetherell, 1987:106).

This, of course, brings up the rare (or not so rare) cases of people who, for example, shout incoherent abuse when they are angry. This can be interpreted in two ways, in my opinion: either they *are* addressing the other with the intent of making them aware of their anger and/or scaring them away (anger is high in approach motivation and directed to the harm of its object, as we shall see later in this chapter), or they are *not* addressing the other but rather themselves only instead of doing so silently they express it loudly.

There is no one or definitive way of defining emotions (Cromby, 2015:4-5 passim). For this study though, emotions can be theorized as a change in the individual, in response to a stimulus, which can be felt and expressed. The stimulus might be external (e.g. seeing a loved one that makes someone happy) or internal (e.g. a pain which makes one anxious); referring to the past (e.g. a memory that makes one sad), present (e.g. a slamming door that surprises someone) or the future (e.g. the

prospect of eating live bugs which evokes disgust); addressed to the self (e.g. the relief that one didn't leave the stove on, as one feared all day) or to others (e.g. the contempt that one holds towards another over their lack of etiquette in the congregation). The stimulus brings about changes in the person's physiology and cognition which are automatic and initially unconscious (points 3 and 8 in Ekman and Cordaro's list). The person then feels the change and recognizes the emotion (like the James-Lange theory proposes). This recognition consequently brings with it a barrage of meanings, thoughts and images that the individual has associated with the detected emotion as well as a set of learned behaviours that follow it (as the Somatic Marker Hypothesis, which will be explored later on in this chapter, suggests).

The view that a relationship exists between cognition and emotion is now a dominant one among emotion theorists (Eatough and Smith, 2006:115). According to that view, the core part of emotion evocation is caused by cognitive workings between the person and the stimulus of the emotion. "From a phenomenological perspective, emotions and cognitions are closely related as aspects of our engagement with the world" (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009:199). The way one attends to the world shapes (and is shaped by) his/her emotions and thoughts. Both are at the disposal of humans for maximally attending to a situation and optimally responding to it. A combination of the two can lead to a view that cognitions and emotions are interconnected and one drives the other: a person senses something, which then brings about a change in their physiology as an automatic and involuntary effect; this change is then interpreted as an emotion, which prompts the person into further engagement with the stimulus of that response (trying to find out why it happened, trying to predict what consequences it will have); and that in turn produces further emotional experiences. For example, I might see a fire which will make me scared. I will try to see where that fire comes from and what I can do to extinguish it. While I'm doing that I'm also thinking that I might be unsuccessful and that the fire might consume the entire house, which makes me anxious. This anxiety then propels me to try harder and faster to extinguish the fire, etc.

Studies have revealed changes in the person across systems (behavioural, cognitive etc.) that are brought about by emotional experience (e.g. Ekman, 1992; Frijda, 1986; Lench, Flores and Bench, 2011). These are crystalized into various

theories (or schools of theories) of emotion, each of which attempts to explain the emotional response as primarily produced by one of those systems. This fits well with Averill's understanding of emotions as "syndromes": a cluster of reactions which can take many forms but habitually reveal consistent patterns in their triggers and unfolding over time. "Any specific emotion, such as anger, refers to the way such elements are organized and the functions which they serve in relation to broader systems of behaviour" (Averill, 2012:13).

   Provided the link between cognition and emotion as stressed above, some of the most prominent cognitive theories (and relevant to the present study's theoretical lens) are discussed below.

1.1.1: Emotions, Attention and Memory

  Studies have shown time and again that the emotional reaction a stimulus causes to the individual has a direct effect on how the person attends to the stimulus and how they remember it. "Findings from both real-life studies and experimental studies suggest that certain characteristics of negative emotional events are perceived and retained in an automatic fashion. In particular, experimental research reveals that there is a superior advantage for the detection and recognition of stimuli indicative of threatening situations" (Christianson, Freij and Vogelsang, 2007:13).

  A classic psychological test to explore that is the utilization of *masked stimuli*. These are images presented while the participant engages in a visual task. The masked stimulus is presented at rates that the human eye cannot consciously grasp so the participant never understands that the image was presented. Stimuli that relate to fear (e.g. spiders or blood) habitually result in greater skin-conductance than fear-irrelevant stimuli (Dolan, 2018:1191). This shows that, even though the person has not consciously grasped the stimulus, his/her brain's circuits have picked up on it and have prepared the body to act accordingly. Baldwin, Carell and Lopez (1990) showed that the same holds true for even less dire/urgent situations. They tested students who were instructed to think of a research idea. Half of them were presented with a masked stimulus showing the approving face of one of their fellow-students, while the other half were presented with the disapproving face of

their department chair. The self-ratings of the idea for the second half were significantly lower than those of the first half.

A different line of research has shown that when exposed to stressful events, critical information can be extracted automatically and evoke a response if evaluated as emotionally significant. "Due to attention-demanding stimulus characteristics and personal involvement, controlled conceptual resources are subsequently allocated for further analysis of the stimulus. In short, critical details will be extracted by pre-attentive mechanisms and controlled processes will subsequently be allocated to the emotionally relevant information" (Christianson, Freij and Vogelsang, 2007:14). In other words, human attention seems to operate in two modes: a fast and automatic one, and a slower and voluntary one. This means that one's way of attending to a situation will split into two: the important and the unimportant details. It is interesting to note that this time-lapse between the two phases corresponds to Ekman and Cordaro's 11th point on the (2011) list (i.e. the "refractive period").

How emotionally-laden events are retained in memory is not a fixed process, however. Some studies (e.g. Peace and Porter, 2004; Berntsen, 2001) show that for negative, or traumatizing events, recall of central details is much better than central details for positive events, whereas peripheral information is more distorted. So, according to this view, a negative event persists in memory much longer and much more clearly than a positive one. Contrary to this, other studies show that traumatic events tend to be repressed and the individual forgets about the central details, or even that the event transpired. Interestingly, this holds true whether the person was the perpetrator or the victim of the traumatic event. Victims of rape and torture are very likely not to remember details of the surroundings or the figures that were present during the events (see, e.g. Christianson and Nilsson, 1989), while murderers often find it difficult to recall details of what else was going on during their act of murder (e.g. Christianson and Merckelbach, 2004). The results of these studies show that there is something special about emotional events. Whether they are retained more vividly than non-emotional events, or suppressed in memory, the brain processes memories differently when emotions are present.

The results of studies like these are very relevant to the present thesis, despite the latter focusing on how people make sense of their experiences and the former

on how the organism interacts with the world. In anger, detection of a stimulus leads to a) attempts to contain or repel it; and b) attempts to eliminate it, to prevent its reoccurrence in the future. There seems to be a reason why studying memories of anger can be very different from studying induced (or otherwise occurring) anger in real time. That is, the participant has to try and put the whole physiological, behavioural, judgmental and cognitive alteration brought about by anger, as well as the high activation this brings about, into words. The present study's data are autobiographical memories, and it is important to bear in mind that the reconstruction of these memories may lead to a very different understanding of anger than what would arise were we to study real-time, induced in a laboratory setting or naturally occurring.

1.1.2: Attribution and Appraisal in Emotions

Following on from the cognitive approach, appraisal and attribution (e.g. Schachter, 1964; Weiner, 1985) has been a dominant theme in emotion research. This focuses on how the person interprets the stimulus that gives rise to an emotion: what the person *reads* in that stimulus and how, for the person, that reading is related to his/her emotional arousal.

Attributions relate to where a person locates the source of his/her emotion. This has been described by Weiner (1985) as a temporal process which follows three steps: It all starts with the individual locating a stimulus and envisioning the interaction s/he would like to have with it. As this interaction unfolds, or slightly after it is over, the attempt for a desired outcome is judged as success or failure. Then, if the outcome is evaluated negatively, a reason for this failure is sought. Finally, the person classifies the cause along three attributional dimensions: causal locus (is the cause brought about by a person or by a situation?), stability (is the cause likely to disappear or not?), and controllability (is the cause the result of voluntary action?) (see Eatough and Smith, 2006:116). This framework provided a promise for a straight explanation of emotional arousal as a result of these three steps. However, Eatough and Smith (2006:116) describe causal attribution models as "normative" because what they present are ideal positions of what people ought to do, instead of what people actually do when they attend to their emotions and try to put them into words.

The authors claim that "undoubtedly, emotional reactions have an evaluative component, but to reduce this to simply a function of cognitive processing is to ignore the experiencing inter-subjective person. The meaning-making activity of the individual sometimes involves rational appraisal, but it also entails being imaginative, intuiting, and intentional." (Eatough and Smith, 2006:129). Consequently, the claim that attributions exert a causal effect on emotions has more recently been challenged by appraisal theorists (e.g. Smith, Haynes, Lazarus, & Pope, 1993; Lazarus and Smith, 1988), who "argue that attribution is a particular form of knowledge, which assists the appraisal process by making inferences about the perceived causes of an event." (Eatough and Smith, 2006: 116).

As such, to bring an emotion into being, more than causal attributions is needed. The person must engage with what s/he considers to be the 'facts' of the events, to appraise and evaluate them, and bring them together in a coherent whole (i.e. in the form of a narrative) in order for an emotional response to arise. This process is termed *appraisal*. It is important to note, however, that reaching that point of convergence is not the end of the story: Emotions do not arise as a direct result of appraisal; rather, both emotion and appraisal are processes (instead of on/off states with standard manifestations and fixed points of onset and completion), which influence one another in a dynamic fashion (Eatough and Smith, 2006: 115-117). In other words, the way something makes one feel will have influence (or even change in the long or in the short term) the way this person attends to the stimulus and vice-versa, thus forming a self-feeding loop.

Along this line, emotions appear to also be necessary in humans for their decision-making abilities. Some situations call for an emotional response which will "attune" the individual to his/her surroundings and lead to an (evolutionary and socially) appropriate response. To explain this, the neuroscientist Antonio Damasio offered his "Somatic Marker Hypothesis" in 1994. What he proposed is that the brain takes information from previous encounters with a stimulus/situation and stores them as memories which include the reaction (behavioural as well as emotional) of the person to that stimulus and the results (behavioural and emotional) of that reaction: how did the person react to the event and what consequences did that have for him/her? Upon subsequent encounters with similar stimuli/situations, the brain retrieves that emotional memory, which helps the person decide how to respond to the newly-encountered but similar-to-past situation.

Damasio argues that this formation and storage of memory happens in the ventromedial prefrontal cortex – the area of the brain where the somatosensory system is represented; i.e. the area which projects to the person an image of what their body (including the skin, muscles, skeleton, glands and organs) feels and looks like during a given event. After all, what prompted him to that theory is the observation that patients with damage to that area had difficulty in experiencing and expressing emotion, and that led them to abnormal decisions (e.g., believing people to be their friends when they weren't, or having unreasonable bursts of anger). This correlation between abnormal emotional experience and abnormal decision-making illustrates the link between the two and highlights the importance of emotions in successfully going through life, both biologically and socially:

> "certain classes of situation, namely those that concern personal and social matters, are frequently linked to punishment and reward and thus to pain, pleasure, and the regulation of homeostatic states, including the part of the regulation that is expressed by emotion and feeling. The inevitability of somatic participation comes from the fact that all of these bioregulatory phenomena, including emotion, are represented via the somatosensory system" (Damasio, 1996:1416)

Emotions, then, can be best seen as having arisen as part of humans' evolutionary adaptation to their environment, and it may be said that the correct identification and expression of these emotions is a vital factor in the survival of the species and the prosperity of the individual. Given that the species homo sapiens has developed to be largely walled off from the "animal kingdom", one could assume that the environment these emotions are generated from is by-and-large the communal (or social) environment. Our everyday lives, for many centuries now, have revolved around communication with other humans so, even though the basic emotions are not learned (as the authors above stress), their identification and appropriate expression are.

1.2 DISCOURSE AND EXPERIENCE

In this section I will attempt to sketch out the relationship between discourse and experience, the point of intersection which grounds the rationale for this inquiry. How does discourse shape experience and how does experience guide discourse?

Discourse and *Experience* are fairly abstract terms and the discussion will get quite labyrinthine; so prior to the examination of the in-between them interaction, a definition of each of the two terms will be presented.

<u>1.2.1: Discourse</u>

In very general terms, "discourse" can be described as strategic macro-alignment of signs. Tied explicitly to language, "discourse is the umbrella term for either spoken or written communication beyond the sentence. Text is the basic means of this communication, be it spoken or written, a monologue or an interaction. Discourse is thus a more embracing term that calls attention to the situated uses of text: it comprises both text and context" (Georgakopoulou and Goutsos, 1997:13). What is important about this quote is the inclusion of context in the effort to define discourse. Regardless of the audience (or absence of it), discourse foregrounds and underlines properties of the text that would otherwise (for example, if one is to study only the grammar of the text, or the ethnic origin of the vocabulary that compose it) not find a suitable place in our effort to understand it. Context can be understood as internal and external relations of the text (Fairclough, 2003:36). *Internal* is the way each component of the text ties-in with previous components of the same text; *external* is the way the text relates to other aspects of the world, like the social setting (e.g. a wedding, a court of law or a football game), the identity of the speaker (e.g. female, mother, doctor or blind), and other texts (e.g. the Quran, BBC's coverage of Trump's election, or a McDonald's advert).

Georgakopoulou and Goutsos continue by saying that "however, text is not just a product of discourse, as customarily assumed (cf. Brown and Yule, 1983) that is, the actual (written or spoken) record of the language produced in an interaction. Text is the means of discourse, without which discourse would not be a linguistic activity" (1997:13). This presupposes and implies that discourse is inextricably bound to text and that it is a linguistic activity exclusively. However, several

theorists disagree. For example, the research provided by the anthropologist John Gumperz (1982) has shown that even gestures or mere sounds can count as discourse, provided they transverse the realm of mere communicative instances and bring to the table a greater level of social meaning with their instantiation. Or Parker (1999:3) argues that anything that can be formed into a text (e.g. an action, a painting etc.) counts as discourse. Indeed, other theorists have argued that several different fields of social practice (where 'signs' are a necessary condition for the practice to be successfully communicated) can count as discursive domains. And indeed, discourse can be seen as a link between language and society: "Discourses are durable entities which take us to the more abstract level of social practices" (Fairclough, 2003:42). Therefore, although the main focus is on discourse as a property of the social dimension of language, the society that constitutes this social dimension is of equal importance to the text itself.

From a Marxist perspective, society is organized in hierarchies, with the ruling classes controlling the means of production (and communication). Of course, society is not a stable entity; on the contrary it is perennially in a state of flux – hence the Marxist doctrine that "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles". It therefore should come as no surprise that, in its effort to maintain dominance, the ruling class offers an *ideology* to the society over which it rules in order to keep them in place. This 'ideology' is designed to provide justification for the society's status quo (and, by extension, the need to maintain in at any cost) in ways that, when not brute force, are very much discursive. "Ideology, then, becomes the category of illusions and false consciousness by which the ruling class maintains its dominance over the working class" (Fiske, 2011:158). This is achieved in a top-down fashion, because of and through the use of communicative media that, as Fiske notes, "include the educational, political, and legal systems, and the mass media and publishing" (idem).

This dominance through communication is rarely achieved through mere projection, assertion and re-assertion of the ruling class's beliefs and attitudes. Slogans and maxims are effective for keeping the main ideological lines in the minds of people and for making them part of the everyday communication, but they fall short in providing people with an actual reason for trusting these slogans (or the ruling class in general). More often than not, "the meanings generated by any one

text are determined partly by the meanings of other texts to which it appears similar. This is called "intertextuality"" (idem).

"Intertextuality" can be seen as a form of dialogicality (in Bakhtin's terms). "Undialogical language is authoritative or absolute" (in Holquist, 1981:427) and therefore may draw attention to the very fact that difference is excluded. False dialogicality, however, can take the place of authoritarianism and absolutism to make the communicative end product seem like it is "relativized, de-privileged, aware of competing definitions for the same things" (idem.) whereas in fact it is simply an assertion of the one-sided viewpoint of the text producer. This is because, as Fairclough points out, "a significant initial question is: which texts and voices are included, which are excluded and what significant absences are there?" (Fairclough, 2003:47) In other words, the producer of a text can shape it to look like it incorporates different voices and different points-of-view when in fact they only bring in voices and viewpoints that are very similar to their own.

This links to Fairclough's 'external relations' of texts. "Texts inevitably make assumptions. What is 'said' in a text is 'said' against a background of what is 'unsaid but taken as given" (Fairclough, 2003:40) and this is what can be termed "*assumption*": "something which has been said or written elsewhere, and that the readers have heard or read elsewhere" (idem). Perhaps it is better to use the term *audiences* instead of *readers* to allow for other forms of communication receivers, like *hearers* to come into the story. But the meaning remains that, because of the dominant culture's (that is, the culture that is established, promoted and sustained by the ruling class) all-encompassing and far-reaching nature, some ways of understanding texts can be taken for granted within a society at a given point in time. By extension, these taken-for-granted meanings create assumptions within a society. "The capacity to exercise social power, domination and hegemony includes the capacity to shape to some significant degree the nature and content of this 'common ground', which makes implicitness and assumptions an important issue with respect to ideology" (Fairclough, 2003:56).

It is important to note, however, that the Dominant Culture is not the only one available in any society (at least any free society where the expression of a different opinion is a right of the citizens). There are different ways to relate to the world; ways that shape the way one acts, speaks and sees. Nevertheless, one could claim

that these, too, are tied-in to the dominant discourses of the culture, at least from an analytical perspective. That is because they can be examined as standing in relation to these dominant ways-of-being and ways-of-seeing. Nevertheless, I would argue that even those dissenting viewpoints (often termed counter-cultures or subcultures) are organized in very much an hierarchical way themselves, where the established ways-of-seeing and ways-of-being are passed on to newcomers by the subculture's safeguards (that is, people of enterprises that aim to ensure the continuity of the prevailing meanings found within the subculture's practices), again in a top-down fashion. These too, then, provide the member of the culture with a way-of-being in, and a way-of-seeing the world. Of course, this does not mean that every person is helplessly caught up within one discursive system or the other. In fact, one rarely wholly and exclusively subscribes to just one discursive system. Instead, discourse(s) provide their appropriators with ways of thinking about, and ways of relating to, the world.

"Discourse constitutes part of the resources which people deploy in relating to one another – keeping separate from one another, cooperating, competing, dominating – and in seeking to change the ways in which they relate to one another" (Fairclough, 2003:124). Discourse and discourses, therefore, provide the common ground for people to investigate their identities, experiences and overall ways-of-being and ways-of-seeing. As seen earlier, this common-ground comes with assumptions. Fairclough presents 3 types of assumptions:

Existential assumptions, about what exists; propositional assumptions, about what is or what can be or what will be the case; and value assumptions, about what is good and desirable and what is not (Fairclough, 2003:55).

The concept of assumptions leads Fiske to state that "ideology is determined by society, not by the individual's possibly unique set of attitudes and experiences" (Fiske, 2011:157). Similarly, Goffman states that "although evaluation may ultimately be subjective, whatever judgments are made must be relative to explicit meritocratic and demonstrably objective standards of ability and achievement" (1986:9) and in a similar vein Harré states that "the public conversation of the cultural group and the private thoughts of the members of the group form a continuous conversational web" (Harré, 1998:13).

Based on all this, Adrian Bennett's assumption "that discourse is composed of more or less reasonable and reasoned acts which actors perform on their way towards achieving particular goals" (1983:97) gains significant value. Indeed, this assumption brings together the elements of cultural common-ground, personal intentions, linguistic determinism and action orientation that cover most of what discourse is in practical terms: a strategic means to achieving one's end. The term discourse "signals the particular view of language in use (…) as an element of social life which is closely interconnected with other elements" (Fairclough, 2003:3). Closer to a phenomenological approach, a discourse may be defined as "a system of statements which construct an object" (Parker, 1992:5). Parker (1992:6-19 passim) proposes seven criteria for what a discourse is. According to these, a discourse is realized in texts; it is about objects; it contains subjects; it is a coherent system of meanings; it refers to other discourses; it reflects on its own way of speaking; and it is historically located. Going further on how these above criteria find place within the social, political and economic realm of today's world, Parker also offers that discourses support institutions (by perpetuating the social relationships that allow these institutions a dominating presence in society); that discourses reproduce power relations (by treating the current state of affair in each society and at each point in time as a natural and unchallenged status-quo); and that discourses have ideological effects (in the sense of giving a sense of identity and being to the persons who are brought up within these discourses).

Discourse and discourses, in other words, guide one in his/her exploration of him/herself within, and in relation to, the world. These guides provide the tools for one to understand the self and the world, but they also limit one in this endeavour.

1.2.2: Experience

To begin with, experience is always experience of *something* (even if that *something* is termed "nothingness" by the individual). This brings to the fore two main concepts to be discussed: the *thing* and the *individual*.

"The thing itself" is what Husserl famously urged researchers to turn their attention to. This is not as straightforward as it might at first appear. Harré gives a famous example of "a chair". This chair can be investigated in many different ways,

from its atomic composition to the place it occupies in the room and what Feng Shui would say about that. When it comes to the way the chair is experienced by someone, we are entering the domain of *phenomenology*. Phenomenology is central to this study and will be discussed later on in this chapter, but for now some core points will be presented to help the unfolding of the argument.

The first major point to make here is that it is not the chair itself that is the object of investigation, but one's experience of it. When one sees a chair, a complicated process is happening in the eye, which involves, among other mental process, inversion and re-inversion of the object in order to be perceived in its actual position by the person. The person then may enter a wide range of other mental processes, like remembering what chairs there were in their parents' house or thinking of that one time they were enjoying a nice ice-tea while lying on a couch.

"Experience", therefore, can be defined as a situation *and one's subjective involvement in it*. Simply being near events that happen is not enough for one to experience them; there has to be some cognitive reaction by the person that links them to the event. This contrasts with the concept of prehension as presented by Whitehead – a form of uncognitive apprehension, often non-conscious. Regarding this, the founder of the idea has claimed that "consciousness is the crown of experience, only occasionally attained, not its necessary base". However, Whitehead employed the term "experience" to refer to every kind of activity between every kind of entity and, even though it might be a useful concept in exploring the instantiation and development of some bodily activities (e.g. why do animals stay away from fire?), its orientation can hardly be made relevant to the present study. Langer, on the other hand, also writing about prehension, reserves "experience" for instances of awareness (in Cromby and Willis, 2016:488) and this is compatible with the eloquent way William James addressed the issue in his 1890 "The Principles of Psychology": "My experience is what I agree to attend to". Kelly echoes James' sentiment. "Only when man attunes his ear to recurrent themes in the monotonous flow does his universe begin to make sense to him" (Kelly, 1963:52).

All these link the individual experience to the object, but the *phenomenon* belongs neither to the body that perceives the object, nor to the object itself. Experience is always experience of something external (e.g. objects, events) or

internal (e.g. memories, fantasies). Husserl (1983) employs the term "intuition" to underline its presence in the person's mind. This type of presence presupposes a level of perception and consciousness which would be impossible without language (Giorgi and Giorgi, 2008b:31-32 passim). Whereas other animals can be said to be (almost) purely motivated by a stimulus-response process, the human mind (almost) forces one to engage in more ways with the internal and the external world; and that is done largely through language.

I side more with Langer and Husserl and for me therefore, experience is the most personal level of sentient existence. I see it as combining a vast multitude of the person's characteristics, some more-or-less stable, like the Personality Big-5 (extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience), and some not-so stable, like how hungry or tired someone was during the experience.

Experience involves one losing oneself in it and finding oneself being lost in it before losing oneself in it again. In a sense, the experience of something is the moment[3] one encounters an item (object, event, process) which generates a psychological[4] reaction in him/her. The presence of the psychological reaction becomes apparent, even fleetingly, to the individual. At that moment, *parts of one's life*[5] come into play to colour the encounter and imprint it in memory.

> "Phenomenologists use the term 'phenomenon' as a general term, to refer to the actual grasp that one has of the real things and events that exist in the world transcendent to that grasp or apprehension… When one begins to specify 'phenomena', one begins to articulate objects such as percepts, memories, images, cognitions etc., but to understand these terms correctly from a psychological viewpoint, for phenomenologists, is to understand them as experienced referents and not as referents that exist in themselves independently of the specific grasp of a specific consciousness" (Giorgi, 1995:30).

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[3] This term works best to describe how the level of engagement with the stimulus one presents; in a sense, a moment is an encounter.

[4] This term encompasses aspects of cognition, judgment, behaviour and physiology.

[5] This involves one's memories, attitudes, beliefs as well as unconscious drives, repressed wishes, etc.

Therefore, it is the thing as experienced and understood that forms the phenomenon – and this process entails thought which in turn entails language and a certain orientation to the world.

<u>*1.2.3: The Relationship Between Discourse and Experience*</u>

It would be fair to say, then, that both language and feeling[6] are at the same time constructed and constructive. The same phenomenon can be described in a variety of different ways (Potter and Wetherell, 1987:35) and, regardless of their differences, "Langer and Whitehead converge upon a view of feeling as the most basic constitutive element of experience, the very stuff from which (what we call) cognition and (what we call) emotion get subsequently differentiated. Felt prehensions— how the world is for us, right here, right now, within these activities—constitute us, at the same time as they constitute our world." (Cromby and Wills, 2016:489).

At the same time, however, discourse shapes the way this experience is understood by the individual. One of the most prominent thinkers to link experience and discourse, and probably the most popular of them all, is the French philosopher Michel Foucault (1926-1984). According to his thinking "discursive constructions and practices are implicated in the ways in which we experience ourselves (such as 'sick' or 'healthy', 'normal' or 'abnormal', 'disabled' or 'able-bodied', and so on). As a result, an exploration of the availability of subject positions in discourse has implications for the possibilities of selfhood and subjective experience" (Willig, 2003:182-183).

In other words, the way one has been raised (and conditioned) to think about the world and all its aspects (at least the ones one is aware of) has a profound influence on the way one will experience his/her encounters with these items (this is the subjective experience; more on the possibilities of selfhood later in this chapter). The reason for that is simple: being taught (through family, friends, mass media, school etc.) how to think about certain items of the world creates expectations about how one should and will react to these items upon their encounter.

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[6] See pages 42-44 for a more extensive description of feeling and the affective turn.

When the encounter happens, however, there is a whole different story unfolding: The person will react (emotionally, judgmentally, behaviourally) to these items a certain way. These will either conform to or contrast with the way the person was brought up to think about these items by his/her surroundings; most probably it will be a mixture of conformity and contrast. This is also very likely to stem from different ways-of-seeing and ways-of-being in the world that one has gathered and appropriated from different sources. It is important to note at this point that, even though the signs are fixed within a specific community *and* at a certain point in time, there are different ways of arranging these signs in relation to one-another in order to reach original, new and *counter-hegemonic* ways of cutting up the world. As the Foucauldian school stresses:

> "Dominant discourses privilege those versions of social reality that legitimate existing power relations and social structures. Some discourses are so entrenched that it is very difficult to see how we may challenge them. They have become 'common sense'. At the same time, it is in the nature of language that alternative constructions are always possible and that counter-discourses can, and do, emerge eventually" (Willig, 2008:113)[7].

For example, one may have heard bad things about anarchists from his/her school and a certain sector of the media, but good things about them from his friends' brothers and a different sector of the media.

The person will then have to form a narrative in his/her head about his/her encounter with the item, what the experience was like, what impact it had on them as a person, and what impact it may have (had) in their life from then on[8]. This narrative is generated in the language one speaks. Therefore, in order for one to put their experience into words (thus giving it a form that they can narrate to themselves and, more importantly, to others and be understood), one has to reach out to a well of lexical items that the speech community in which one belongs uses. This lexicon was there before the person's encounter with the experience, most

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[7] It is because of this interplay of dynamics that linguistic signs do actually change within societies and a signifier that 200 years ago meant something "bad" can now come to mean something "good".

[8] This, incidentally, fits Labov's main points of orientation (what things were like before the encounter); complicating action (the encounter); resolution (the impact of the encounter); and coda/evaluation (what changes this encounter brought about, or not, in the person's perception).

probably before the person was even born. Therefore, one has to use words (signifiers) that others have endowed with meaning (signified) as tools for the understanding and transmission of one's experience to self and others.

As a result of this, the person has come to have expectations about the events s/he will encounter. To use George Kelly's fundamental postulate: "A person's processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which he anticipates events" (1963:46). In other words, the person already has some conceptions and expectations of the events (the encounter with the item) before the event itself occurs. These conceptions and expectations are there before one's first encounter with the item, but are not rigid and fixed- they fluctuate and can be revised.

For example, one probably has an expectation of what "employment" (i.e., paid labour) will be like before they become employed for the first time. These expectations will be in place before his/her first day at work based on what he hears about work from his surroundings, how work is portrayed in the society one grew up in, the nature of the job one has in mind etc. These expectations will be in place before his first day at work and thus, his first day at work will be compared and contrasted to these expectations (things tend to not be exactly the way one imagines them to be). In other words, he anticipated the event like X but it turned out to be like Z (Z=X-E+R). The next day he goes to work, his expectations will be Z; by the end of his 10th year at the same job, his expectations for the next day at work will probably be Y [Y=Z+W+F-(D+1)+S] and so on. Each new encounter with "employment" will broaden some aspects of the person's expectations about work; some will be solidified and some will be weakened; and eventually it will create in the person new expectations about their next encounter with the item "work".

Kelly discusses the implications of this constant flux and expectation in depth. To begin with, he draws our attention to how the events are phrased. "Like a musician, he must phrase his experience in order to make sense out of it" (1963:52). The very act of phrasing (and its end product – the phrase) are of paramount importance in Kelly's thinking.

"The phrases are distinguished events. The separation of events is what man produces for himself when he decides to chop up time into manageable lengths" (idem). Therefore, what one will call "an event" is not something fixed. For example, "joining the protest" for someone may begin from the moment he left his

house; for another it might start from the moment she stepped outside the bus and merged with the protesting crowds; whereas for a third it might start from the moment police became visible. Similarly, one may call the start of police violence the *end* of the event; another may call his goodnight greeting and renewal of participation to the union with his colleagues as the end of the event; and a third may call the event to be over only when she returns home.

At this point it is important to make a distinction between *experience* and *an experience*. As the founders of IPA point out, people tend to be immersed in their experience and only momentarily become aware of their selves within the unfolding events. "At the most elemental level, we are constantly caught up, unselfconsciously, in the everyday flow of experience. As soon as we become aware of what is happening we have the beginnings of what can be described as 'an experience' as opposed to just experience" (Smith, Flowers and Larking, 2009:2). As the authors point out, *an experience* is a comprehensive unit of understanding, an encounter with an item that may unfold over several parts, often separated in time, but "linked with a common meaning" (idem), in a way that the person can pick up the segments, examine them as a united event and speculate upon them meaningfully.

"Within these limited segments, which are based on recurrent themes, man begins to discover the bases for likenesses and differences" (Kelly, 1963:52) Therefore, the way one chops-up events a) divides or unites them; and b) draws up similarities and differences between them. Kelly continues:

> "We point to each of a series of things and count: one, two, three… The counting makes sense if the things are distinguishable from one-another, and it makes sense only in the respect that they are alike. Before we can count them we must construe their concrete difference from each other, their abstract likeness to each other, and their abstract difference from other things which are not to be counted. We must be able to construe where one thing leaves off and another begins, which one is similar enough to the others to be counted, and what is extraneous. What we count depends on what abstract to be counted" (ibid, p.54)

To go back to the example of "working life": If a person who has been in employment for a week is asked what it is like to be employed, they will have to

give an answer. She will then have to consider what each day of her employment was like, what made them similar and what made them different, and provide an answer that summarizes these. Before doing that, however, the person will have to decide where the notion of "employment" starts and where it finishes. Does it start the moment she gets out of bed? Does it start the moment she jumps on the bus? Does it start the moment she enters his workplace? Similarly, where does it end? Does it end the moment she leaves her workplace; the moment she takes the bus home; or the moment she gets back home? More importantly, how similar and how different has each day been to the rest in regards to these events? The fact that different people will take different starting and ending points in their conception of an event leads to Kelly's *Individuality Corollary* (ibid, p.55) ("Persons differ from each other in their construction of events"); and this, in turn, leads to how one relates events to one-another, the *Organization Corollary*: "Each person characteristically evolves, for his convenience in anticipating events, a construction system embracing ordinal relationships between constructs" (ibid, p.56).

This all leads to Kelly's *Experience Corollary*: "A person's construction system varies as he successively construes the replication of events" (ibid, p.72)

"Since our Fundamental Postulate establishes the anticipation of events as the objective of psychological processes, it follows that the successive revelation of events invites the person to place new constructions upon them whenever something unexpected happens. Otherwise, one's anticipations would become less and less realistic. The succession of events in the course of time continually subjects a person's construction system to a validation process. The constructions one places upon events are working hypotheses, which are about to be put to the test of experience. As one's anticipations or hypotheses are successively revised in the light of unfolding sequence of events, the construction system undergoes a progressive evolution. The person reconstrues. This is experience. The reconstruction of one's life is based upon this kind of experience" (ibid, p. 72).

What is important in this quote is the distinction between experience that has already been lived ('knowledge' of an experience) and experience which still awaits to be lived ('anticipation' of an experience). Of course, the same action (e.g. cooking pasta) is never exactly the same across its numbers of repetitions and, thus,

knowledge and anticipation occupy two different spaces which nevertheless do have some shared space.

And in all this, the person's *sense of self* also comes into play. As Harré points out, "in recollection and in anticipation one's sense of self is involved in different ways" (Harré, 1998:12). Regarding the formation of that sense, the author states: "The biological endowment of a human being with an active brain and nervous system is manifested at first in relatively undifferentiated and unordered mental activities that are then shaped and modulated by the acquisition of discursive and practical skills which facilitate display of the centred organization we recognize in our own experience" (Harré, 1998:12). Harré's quote foregrounds the notion of one's already acquired experience in establishing a sense of how one reacted towards that experience, and how one expects s/he would react to that experience again. It is also important to underline his use of words "acquisition of discursive and practical skills". Harré invokes Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development for the accomplishment of this acquisition, which presupposes that one will have to be taught by someone else how to say or do things.

It may appear overly simplistic, but the fact that these signs pre-exist the person tie one inextricably to one's society. This has profound effect on the way a person understands his/her experiences and his/her self, as at any given point one is anchored to a symbolic system which permits and forces him/her to be understood in terms that were passed down to him/her. "People produce a flow of action, some public and some private, some symbolic and some practical. In one sense people are forever producing and reproducing their own minds and the societies they live in" (Harré, 1998:15)

Therefore, since reconstruing is carried out using the discursive tools provided by one's society, we are brought back to the point of language and social practices.

What Kelly describes is how one defines the events and, in turn, what impact this definition and his encounter(s) with the events has for the person's expectations; how these expectations are altered over the course of time; and what leads to these alterations. These definitions of events, however, then has to be compared (and contrasted) to "the principles of organization which govern events –at least social ones- and our subjective involvement in them" (Goffman, 1986:8). Goffman called these principles of organization "Frames". "Since frame incorporates both the

participant's response and the world he is responding to, a reflexive element must necessarily be present in any participant's clear-headed view of events" (Goffman, 1986:5). This takes us back to the notion of one's involvement with the events, one's attendance to events, but brings in the individual factor as well. When one reflects on one's experience and presents it to an audience (or even to himself), one needs to take into account his/her own position towards the unfolding events (what Goffman calls "strips of activities"), and the level of his/her engagement with them.

Here, an important distinction needs to be made. As Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) pointed out, individuals are usually engrossed in their activities and thus not aware of their selves in those activities. Goffman believes the same and even claims that in order to be *engrossed* in an experience, one has to leave language and thinking behind (Goffman, 1986:345-347 passim). However, once one decides to transmit the experience, one has to resort to language – and by doing so, one uses his/her own unique combination of socially pre-defined symbols to assign meaning (personal and social) to the experience.

However, linking to Kelly's notion of expectation, the way a person (in a society) frames an experience also affects the way this experience actually unfolds. "When we deal with an incompetent person and find it difficult not to smile, or with a mad one and find it difficult not to show fear, or deal with the police and find it difficult not to show guilt, what we are tending to give away is not a person, ourselves, but a frame, one that we had been maintaining" (Goffman, 1986:487). So one's expectations about the experience they engage in directs how one reacts during that experience.

Therefore, language/discourse has to be absent (to the best possible extent) in order for one to be immersed/engrossed in an experience. When one reflects on that experience, language is a tool one will unavoidably use – and the default (within a certain space and a certain time) social shapes, linguistic restrains and mental forms this brings along with it will come into play as well. Peter Ashworth takes us back to the work of William James at that point, stressing that "James builds up a general case for the importance of what he calls the 'fringe' of the focal object of which we are conscious. An object of awareness gains its meaning in large

measure from the 'halo of relations'[9] with which it is connected – its 'psychic overtone'" (Ashworth, 2008:7).

The whole idea of similarity and difference, and the construction of an experience by the participant, as brought forth by James and Goffman, is further advanced in Ashworth's thinking by a reference to Edmund Husserl. "Husserl later on pointed to a similar idea: the 'horizon' of a phenomenon. That is, an object of awareness is affected intrinsically by the whole web of its meaningful connections within the world of experience" (Ashworth, 2008:7)

It is important to note, however, that an experience can be reconstrued in many different ways by the same person. "Franz Bentano (1838-1917)… viewed conscious experience as a process; experiencing was an act, so that different kinds of experience are to be distinguished by the particular ways in which we gain consciousness of the object of experience. In particular, the 'kind' of conscious act involved in relating ourselves to something so as to form a judgment about it is different from the conscious act by which we achieve a perception of something. So judgment and perception and other mods of conscious experience involve different orientations to the object" (Ashworth, 2008:6). Or, as Kelly notes, "Not only do men differ in their construction of events, but they also differ in the ways they organize their construction of events. One man may resolve the conflicts between his anticipations by means of an ethical system. Another may resolve them in terms of self-preservation. The same man may resolve in one way at one time and in the other way at another. It all depends on how he backs off to get perspective" (Kelly, 1963:56). And this links directly to the Foucauldian notion of one's subjective positioning towards the experience.

So a person encounters an item ("experience") and then they have to present this experience, both to themselves and to others, in a way that can be understood. "The pressure to be accountable and intelligible to others sustains and gives power to certain communal organization of self-experience" (Potter and Wetherell,

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[9] This seems to be sitting somewhere in the middle between semantic associations in the speech community's lexicon, and a person's own mental/free associations (as Psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud would put it).

1987:106). If we assume that one's identity is the summation of one's interpretation and reconstruction of one's stance towards their own experiences, we can see how this has affects how one views him or herself as a person. The way one responded to one's encounter with an item will then have to be examined by the person, who will have to give an honest answer to him/herself about what it is that they took away from that experience. "The third dimension of self-consciousness and self-monitoring is none other than the capacity we have to give discursive accounts of and commentaries upon what we perceive, how we act and what we remember" (Harré, 1998:12)

These accounts will then be compared and contrasted to the way the experience is socially constructed in the community they operate in and, eventually, this will lead to some form of evaluative judgment of the person himself along the lines of *good–bad* or, in Fairclough's terms, *desirable-undesirable*. "Children learn to see themselves as others see them (Mead, 1934)" (in Potter and Wetherell, 1987:98) This means that one will have to compare his/her evaluation of the experience to the social norm; but also that they will find themselves reacting to the experience along the evaluative lines laid down for them by their family, school, friends and society. "Since discourse is primarily public and only secondarily private, so cognition, the use of various devices for mental tasks, is primarily public and social, and only secondarily private and individual" (Harré, 1995:144)

This may prove to be problematic, as people sometimes may not want to enter this evaluative judgment and comparison – but language leads them there anyway. It could be this that sets defence mechanisms (like avoiding the experience, lying about their judgment to an interviewer, repressing the experience etc.) in motion.

The discourses of the groups one subscribes to, therefore, shape one's encounter with an item of this world. Social narratives provide the tools to examine the experience but they also limit what can be seen as part of this experience (and in turn what this experience can be seen as part of).

All these take us back to the Foucauldian notions of subjectivity and discourse. "Discourses offer subject positions, which, when taken up, have implications for subjectivity and experience…" (Willig, 2008:113). These discourses are socially constructed and this means that one's way-of-seeing and way-of-being in the world

is one's alone, but at the same time it is firmly anchored to the society's values, attitudes, beliefs, as well as their way of expressing and transmitting those.

Of course, all this begs the question "about the extent to which we can theorize subjectivity on the basis of discourse alone" (Willig, 2008:123). Personally, I believe that discourse covers the vast majority of one's conception of his/her own subjectivity (and those of others). Certainly, there are things beyond words; items of the world that humanity has not yet noticed, attended to, or deciphered. It is perfectly possible that one does not accept that even "the unconscious is structured like a language" (as the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan famously put it) or even that humans think in language (the "mentalese"). However, whatever it is that humans think in, there comes a time when they will have to examine their experience if they wish to achieve some notion of sense about their selves.

As Socrates famously put it, "the unexamined life is not worth living". Given that "man is by nature a social animal" (as Aristotle famously put it), I believe one naturally turns to his/her surrounding culture, the one established, maintained and debated by the community in which s/he operates to look for meaning. Besides the fact that they are going to use the lexicon that has been passed down to them by their surroundings (family, school, friends, media), a large part of children rearing in humans involves their parents, guardians or teachers teaching them the "right" ways to behave and talk within their community. These then become internalized and they become the tools for the person to view oneself – a living creature (animal) within a culture. So, by default, in order for one to gain a sense of self, a perspective on their own existence, they have to compare their experiences (and their evaluations of them) to those of the society they are in. Or, as Potter and Wetherell (1987:106), with reference to Harré (1985) put it, "self-experience is formed as the child learns the grammar of our language and perfects communication".

1.3 The Social Side of Emotions

Emotions are something that can be felt and expressed. In other words, the individual can detect them in him or herself; his/her body (e.g. accelerated heart-beat and shortened breathing), thinking (e.g. memories or thought patterns), behaviour (e.g. shouting or crying), and judgment (e.g. thinking that one is useless, the world is an ugly place and the future is bleak). Then the person will have to recognize them; identify them; and express them to themselves or to someone else.

This takes the enquiry into emotions to social dimension, as the emotion's recognition is something that is learnt in each culture and family (see Morgan and Averill, 2008:163) and this recognition brings with it a story that follows the emotion (a narrative that justifies and illuminates the experience and the expression it assumes); whereas the communication will have to transpire not only in a language the other understands (although nonverbal prosodic cues have been shown to be of special interest – see Sauter et al., 2010) but also delivered in a manner the other can relate to and accept as socially appropriate.

Besides the personal side of emotion arousal (where one's behaviour, cognition, judgment and physiology are altered purely on the basis of the excitation brought about by the stimulus), there is a social side to it. Humans operate in societies and societies come with rules. Stressing the difference between nature and nurture, Jean Piaget writes: "Social rules, as Durkheim has so powerfully shown, whether they be linguistic, moral, religious, or legal etc., cannot be constituted, transmitted, or preserved by means of an internal biological heredity, but only through the external pressure exercised by individuals upon each other" (1932:183).

Emotions, in this study's perspective, are interpretations and interpretations cannot exist outside a context; in our case, a cultural and interactional one. Culture can be defined as the structuring of social life and the wider cultural context in which one is brought up and the influence this has on his/her emotional responses has been the subject of much debate. Central lines of that debate navigate around the issues of how each culture defines emotions and, consequently, how one is to recognize them in his/her person and how to appropriately express them. Averill's view of emotion, which resonates strongly with me, "is that although biologically based it is largely socially constructed in humans" (Strongman, 1996:113). Averill

(2012:13) defines emotions as "socially constructed syndromes (transitory social roles) which include a person's appraisal of the situation, and which are interpreted as passions (things that happen to us) rather than as actions (things we do)". This definition has two crucial components: the socially transmitted side of emotions, and the perception of them by the person experiencing them.

The view of emotions as transitory social roles underlines the expressive and experiential component of the emotional reaction as learnt: the person communicates his/her state to the surroundings. At the same time, the person has learnt how to interpret his/her inner state (what s/he calls emotion) by interacting with others and picking up clues about these inner states from their attendance to ones s/he considers relevant to the ones s/he experiences at present. "By the time we can turn around and reflect upon them, feelings are already shaped by the discourses we use to fix and render them available for inspection" (Cromby and Harper, 2009:344).

Varieties of research on emotion treat them as culturally and socially constructed. Within that framework, it is seen that different cultural meaning systems play a central role in the shaping (or, sometimes, constituting) of the emotional experience itself. The emphasis here is therefore on "the cultural variation, mediated by cognitive categories of ethno-psychological understanding (such as that of the culturally constituted 'self') by the social structural correlates of such understandings, and/or by verbal communication" (Greco and Stenner; 2008:59). Essentially, what is emphasized here is a view on emotion as a reaction that is seen as socially validated (i.e. taught, recognized and consequently applauded or condemned).

When it comes to the influence of culture on the communication and understanding of emotion, evidence has been found both for the *culture equivalence model* and for the *cultural advantage model* (Soto and Levenson, 2009:882). These two models map onto how well one can recognize emotions in others. The culture equivalence model posits that people from different cultures (and races, according to the study) can recognize equally well emotions in people of their own culture and in people of other cultures. By contrast, the cultural advantage model posits that people can recognize emotions in others more easily if the others are from a similar origin as them.

Despite the conflicting nature of these two models, their existence points at the crucial understanding of emotions as a dual concept: both a universal phenomenon in humans (and other primates) but also (and in contrast to other primates) largely shaped according to each society's norms, traditions and linguistic resources.

Not only that, but emotions are also historically shaped. Like with any discourse (and language in general), meanings and patterns change with time, as the socio-political climate changes and new relations, terms and items enter the people's everyday realities, new necessities and comforts are formed and new life aspirations are considered desirable in each society – see for example Stearns and Stearns' (2008:51-54 passim) discussion of how new sanitary procedures in 1800s France led to a different understanding of urine: from a tolerable (or even welcome) substance, to a disgusting one. This, in turn, led to different emotional reactions to it, as well as "a real shift in the evaluation of the physical senses" (2008:52). As a consequence of that, new ways of looking at people and their social class came into being, with the poor (who had no access to the new sanitary procedures) considered disgusting and the rich considered clean. This, in turn, created new ways of looking a cleanliness, not only as a desirable trait but also as a sign of nobility in itself, and thus a ticket to higher strata of society.

When it comes to expressing emotions, the way each culture paints them has a major effect on how one will attend to them, or even acknowledge their existence. The reason for that is that when one claims experience of an emotional state, others also see him/her under the prism of that state and this has consequences for how they will judge or act towards him/her. Therefore, the way one will understand him/herself during the emotional reaction will impact how they will perceive themselves; how they will behave in order to express that emotion; and consequently how they will be seen by others.

> "Western discourse on emotions constitutes them as paradoxical entities that are both a sign of weakness and a powerful force. On the one hand, emotion weakens the person who experiences it. It does this both by serving as a sign of a sort of character defect and by being a sign of at least temporary intrapsychic disorganization. On the other hand, emotions are literally physical forces that push us into vigorous actions." (Lutz, 2008:63).

Hence, a desirable trait in the Western world is to experience as little emotion as possible; or, at the very least, to express and display as little as possible of that emotion in order to prevent the suspension of logic, composure, agency over one's acts and self-control. This lack of self-control is accentuated by the motivation brought forth by emotions: even though one may not be sure what it is s/he is doing when in an emotional state, s/he will go on and do it nonetheless. This may lead one to lose face – to act or speak in ways that are deemed socially unacceptable and then having to apologize for it (or otherwise manage his/her relationships with the people who were present during his/her expression of emotion).

So, for example, "where aggression is viewed as a breakdown of internal control and/or normal cooperative interaction we would expect the audience to assume a more condemnatory stance toward the scenario being related." (Campbell and Muncer, 1987:491). This is exemplified well in the British culture, I think, with the overt and exaggerated *negative politeness* (Brown and Levinson, 1987): the assumption that the other person wishes to be left alone, and the way of approaching them that this brings along, usually followed by discursive approaches that emphasize hedges (e.g. "would it be too rude to ask…") and an exaggerated expression of apology and gratitude. But more of that in the Methodology section.

On the other hand, the Western discourse cannot ignore the evolutionary advantage of emotions as discussed above: they stay with the human race precisely because they attune the individual to respond to the environment with full force. Thus, a mid-way balance can be theorized, where the individual accurately perceives their emotions as s/he has seen them in others, restrains him/herself enough to suppress the automatic expression that emotions call for, and expresses him/herself with appropriateness to the social surroundings.

When one is to communicate his/her emotions in ways more voluntary than facial expressions or body postures, one's culture has usually created a framework (or even ritual) according to which the expression is to take place. The time and place we express ourselves, as well as the way we do so, is subject to social norms, taught in childhood and perpetuating throughout one's life (Silberman, 2003:2). These rules are sometimes spelled out clearly, but sometimes they are implicit, floating in the social norms as part of everyday interactions. "These unstated rules are often not apparent until someone has broken them" (Tavris, 2003:3). In each culture,

therefore, we find distinct ways of presenting not only the emotion, but also the significance this emotion has had for the person experiencing it: why did this emotion arise, how did it influence their behaviour, and how do they relate to their previous actions now? These ways of speaking about emotions and the emotional side of humans have been termed "emotion narratives" and their primary function

> "is the repair of a person's status as a responsible member of society (Shotter, 1984), and more specifically of his or her threatened identity. People generally do not like to be seen as a coward, a hothead, or a childish person. When experiencing or expressing emotions, people are concerned about how they will be evaluated, and whether their behaviour had good or bad consequences for their identity" (Fischer and Jansz, 2008:168)

The concept of being *taught* what an emotion is takes on a special significance when it comes to how one experiences that emotion: how does s/he think about him/herself and the others; how is the source of emotion evaluated; what other emotions does this particular one neighbour with; and what line of action/expression does this emotion call for? These are all taught and, arguably, cannot replace the innate cognitive, behavioural and physiological effects of an emotion, which are universal and hardwired according to Ekman's view: Like all bodily urges, one can learn how to properly express or temporarily suppress them, but the internal mechanisms are still operating. You can only choose to suppress the expression of a yawn (because you've learnt that it is inappropriate to yawn in some social situations) after it has been physiologically triggered in the body. Simply thinking that "I must not yawn" is not enough to prevent the yawn. It is similar with emotion expression in my opinion: only once the emotion has been triggered can the person recognize it and express it (or not) accordingly. Or, like Husserl, I believe that we can get direct knowledge of the world through our senses, but what and how we think about the world can *distort* this reality (in Strongman, 1996:15) in order to match the way we have learnt to think.

However, the socially taught ways of attending to emotions do shape up the emotional experience in ways that demand a special rationale from the person to understand their experience. And although the "power to shape is a very different

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matter from the capacity to create from nothing" (Ready, 2008:78), there is extensive power in what these shapes bring with them for the person experiencing the emotion. Morgan and Averill (2008) put it best in the following quote:

> "From infancy we are taught the meanings of our emotions, at first by parents and siblings and later by teachers, television and friends. We are taught the general cultural forms of interpreting our feelings, as well as more idiosyncratic, familial forms. And we enlarge and refine these meanings within the context of subsequent experiences and relationships. Yet, however refined, our every emotion bears with it an imperative cultural history, a history which guides and governs the choice and expression of our feelings. […] If we ultimately feel anger, it's not only a judgment about precipitating occurrences, it's a commitment to a way of understanding the present: for example, by seeing one's self as the injured party, by condemning a particular person or action, by asserting one's boundaries in the face of shifting relationships. All "true feelings"[10], from self-love and pride to anger and loss, establish the meaning of past and present events and create a context for future conduct. By establishing meaning they ameliorate confusion, by creating new context they enable commitment" (Morgan and Averill, 2008:163)

When considered together as components of the same process, these views on emotion bring the focus of the study close to what in recent years has been termed the "affective turn" among social scientists: "The increasing significance of affect as a focus of analysis across a number of disciplinary and interdisciplinary discourses… registering a change in the cofunctioning of the political, economic, and cultural" (Clough, 2007:1). The affective turn presents "an emergent interest in emotion, affect and feeling, understood as experiences and phenomena neither wholly reducible to biology nor simply capable of being captured by language" (Cromby, 2012:90). For scholars of this field affect refers generally to the capacity of bodies

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[10] Averill defines "true feelings" as what society (and, by extension, the person) sees as 1) deep, 2) intense) and 3) passionate. The notion of the "true feeling" is assumed to reveal something original about the person's inner workings.

to respond to situations in the margins of consciousness: "the self-feeling of being alive – that is, aliveness or vitality" (Clough, 2007:2).

Yet, this field does not treat affect as a uni-dimensional attribute of matter. Rather, the perspective exhibits "a concern for re-thinking the relationship between what have traditionally been considered as separate psychological realms: feeling, emotion, or the affective and thought, cognition, or the mental" (Cromby and Willis, 2016:477). Researchers theorize "a reflux back from conscious experience to affect, which is registered, however, as affect, such that "past action and contexts are conserved and repeated, autonomically reactivated but not accomplished, begun but not completed". Affect constitutes a nonlinear complexity, out of which the narration of conscious states such as emotions are subtracted, but always with a "never-to-be conscious autonomic remainder"" (Clough, 2007:2). In other words, the affective turn works as a bridge between biological states, everyday experience, what Freud termed the "unconscious", and what Damasio referred to as the Somatic Marker Hypothesis.

One of the great enterprises of that school in recent years is to challenge the view of core (or basic) emotions as presented in this study's introduction. Personally I don't see the two as incompatible, but it is not this study's intent to discuss this. I would like to point out however that even within the field of emotions as understood within the "affective turn", a notion similar to the two-stage monitoring of emotion (Harré and Secord) is also found.

> "Massumi (1995) defines affect as "unqualified intensity," and distinguishes it sharply from emotion, which he describes as both a "subjective content" and a "sociolinguistic fixing" of experience. For Massumi emotion is personal whereas affect is pre-personal, coming before experience and consisting purely of "intensity": energy, force, motivation, given propensities toward salience. Emotion is the residue of affect once its effects are tamed, captured, or normalised by the sociolinguistic. So rather than being directly experienced, affect precedes experience, providing its motive force or conditions of possibility. Hence, affect necessarily eludes signification, representation, and semantic capture, since it is the very power which makes these—and indeed all other activities—possible." (Cromby and Willis, 2016:480)

Language and sensations, in that view, work together in order to reveal one's experience to that person. The "affective turn" has generated much excitement with its prospects of capturing human experience as a unifying process and has been taken up by social scientists to explore fields as divergent as the effects of political power on the person (Clough, 2008), technologies that work as an extension of the body (Clough and Halley, 2007), the influence of one's culture on their everyday experience (Smith and Campbell, 2016), and second language acquisition (Prior, 2019). It has also attracted a lot of criticism precisely because of the separation between the bodily and the mental that is inherent in it. Theorists have attempted to tackle this issue; Cromby and Willis (2016) most notably, discuss the notion of 'feeling': a looming sensation that is always present and factors into the experience of the person by uniting the mental and the bodily. "Feeling is the primordial texture of being" the authors argue, "the continuous and most fundamental stuff of which all experience is woven" (Cromby and Willis, 2016:485). The authors proceed to stress, carrying forward the concept of a reflux from conscious experience back to affect as presented by Clough in the previous page, that "feelings are already intentional, already meaningful—albeit that their complete meaning only gets realised in their lived, contingent conjunctions with the signs, symbols, words, events, and activities that interpellate them and which they continuously suffuse (Ruthrof, 1997)" (Cromby and Willis, 2016:489).

Margaret Wetherell (2012) has also done an astonishing job in presenting the affective turn within the broader context of psychological research, albeit one that is impossible to summarize within the constrains of this study. It is worth noting however that, in her view:

> "affect is of a highly dynamic, interacting composite or assemblage of autonomic bodily responses (e.g. sweating, trembling, blushing), other body actions (approaching or avoiding), subjective feelings and other qualia, cognitive processing (e.g. perception, attention, memory, decision-making), the firing and projecting of neural circuits (e.g. from the thalamus to the cortex and the amygdala), verbal reports (from exclamations to narratives) and communicative signals such as facial expressions. An emotional episode, such as a burst of affect like rage or grief, integrates and brings together all of these things in the same general moment." (Wetherell, 2012:61)

In other words, according to this version, body and mind are always in interaction and one casts the responses and actions of the other in a different light. One's culture also becomes particularly important for the interpretation of the experience however, since the way the language and its signs have been shaped in each society guides the way people think (and therefore feel), as the section on *Discourse and Experience* shows.

Let's turn to anger now, to see how the above general frameworks apply there.

1.4 Anger and the Person

This section explores how the rules and principles about emotions in general discussed so far apply to anger. The focus is both on automatic changes it produces (e.g. in physiology and behaviour), as well as the socially constructed way of attending to it. The social constructionist view is largely indebted to the writings of Averill (2012).

Within the discipline of psychology, anger has been explored from a variety of different perspectives. First and foremost, as stated earlier, anger was included in the seminal list of core emotions (alongside happiness, sadness, fear, disgust and surprise - Other emotions include contempt, shame, guilt, embarrassment, and awe – Ekman, 1992:170.) as compiled by Ekman in 1972 and has since constantly been included in such lists (e.g. Johnson-Laird and Oatley's 1989).

In his 2016 paper "What Theorists Who Study Emotion Agree About", Paul Ekman references the results of a questionnaire that was sent out to a large number of psychology, medicine and other professionals. 91% of the 74% of participants "who had chosen only the discrete choice"[11] said that anger "should be considered to have been empirically established" (p.32). In other words, the theorists who insist that the main defining trait of each emotion is that it is distinguishable from others believe that anger is the most distinguishable of all emotions.

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[11] The "discrete" choice links to Darwin's theorizing of discrete emotions. The other choice harks back to Wundt's theorizing, which sees emotions as discrete from one-another, but primarily as intra-discernible, "via dimensions of pleasant-unpleasant and low-high intensity […] For example, the anger module differs from the fear module, but anger varies in how unpleasant it feels and in its strength" (Ekman, 2016:31)

Anger has been identified as the most easily and universally recognized emotion along with happiness according to Elfenbein and Ambady (2002). This tells us that the experience of anger is something that people from very different countries and cultures can relate to: having had that experience themselves, they can read clear signs of its expression in other people; this relates to the first criterion for core emotions by Ekman as shown in the list above.

Charles Spielberger distinguished between State Anger and Trait Anger in 1982. Like with Trait and State Anxiety, Trait and State Anger map onto two separate modes of anger: State Anger is a fluctuating emotional state, largely dependent on one's surroundings and what is going on in these surroundings at a given point in time. Trait Anger, on the other hand, is one's tendency to respond angrily to a situation.

Even though anger has been said to be neighbouring other emotions, particularly negative ones (e.g. Aldrich and Tenenbaum, 2006), as well as destructive and self-harming behaviours, Izard (1991) argues that from an evolutionary perspective anger has "the obvious function of energizing one for defence" (Strongman, 1996:112). Consequently, anger has been described as nature's response to the obstruction or otherwise interference with one's pursuit of a goal that is significant for him/her; or as nature's reaction to an attempt at harm to the individual – and thus related to a negative affect because it follows the detection of threat which brings about discomfort (e.g. Gable, Poole & Harmon-Jones, 2015:165). "In addition to removing the obstacle or stopping the harm, anger often involves the wish to hurt the target" (Ekman & Cordaro; 2011:365).

This last note that links anger to a desire to cause harm sustains the dialogue on whether anger is a positive or a negative emotion. "Averill characterizes anger as a conflictive emotion which is biologically related to aggressive systems and to social living, symbolization and self-awareness. Psychologically, it is aimed at the correction of a perceived wrong and socioculturally at upholding accepted standards of conduct" (Strongman, 1996:112). Averill (1983) stresses that anger persists with humanity because of, not in spite of, its affective and expressive symptoms – and thus it is still an evolutionary viable response, a way of safeguarding the community and to advance the security and prosperity of the individual. On the other hand, anger has also been described as a "brief madness",

where one loses control over oneself and acts in unusual, often incomprehensible ways – "the match is psychological as well as linguistic, because in many cultures an enraged individual and an insane one are both regarded as being out of control, unable to take responsibility for their actions" (Tavris, 2003:8).

Anger, then, is seen as destructive and harmful but this description can take two shapes: the negative one, where anger leads to the breakdown of agency and control in the individual; and the positive one where anger works as a shield for the individual and his/her close ones. (see point 13 in Ekman and Cordaro's list).

1.4.1. The Social Side of Anger

From a social perspective, anger is the sign that someone has broken the (explicit or implicit) rules of a society; that they are not behaving as (one would think) they ought. "This "ought" quality suggests that a major role of anger is its policing function" (Tavris, 2003:3). In this view, anger is one's way to restore order and normality. In that view, anger arises out of one's disapproval of another's conduct. However, it may also arise from the way one believes s/he is perceived by others.

Both men and women have been found to report experiencing shame (and its derivatives, humiliation and guilt) after an anger episode (Kring, 2000:221). T.J. Scheff (1995, 2003, 2004) has also identified shame as a neighbouring emotion to anger. According to Scheff's thinking, shame and pride both result from the self's perception of the evaluation of the self by others. These perceptions create a type of mood which accompanies the individual through most of his/her waking hours as a kind of background noise[12]. The individual is usually unaware of that background noise, but it still shapes his/her thoughts and feelings.

Shame for Scheff is 'exterior' and 'constraining' in the sense that they rest upon the way the individual has come to understand society's (and by extension micro-societies'/subcultures') expectations of him/her. Like Goffman, Scheff acknowledges the social side of shame in the sense that it emerges between individuals – one feels ashamed because someone else is looking down on them. Scheff complements this with Lewis's (1971) notion of 'feeling trap'. A feeling trap

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[12] Scheff refers to this as the *Cooley-Scheff conjecture*: "Adults are virtually always in a state of either pride or shame, usually of a quite unostentatious kind" (Scheff, 2004:399).

can be best understood as a feeling the origins of which remain a mystery to the person experiencing it, the "continuing control of one's thoughts and behaviours by hidden emotions" (Scheff and Retzinger, 2000:9).

Scheff discusses these feeling traps in particular regarding shame and describes how they can lead to what he terms a "spiral". Starting from what he terms a "shame-shame spiral", the author describes a spiral that consists of feeling ashamed, and then feeling ashamed that one feels ashamed which leads to further shame. Scheff uses the example of how blushers blush even more when they realize that others see them blush to illustrate this. The work of Lewis (1971) lends support to this view, especially as it foregrounds the non-conscious, lurking nature of the trap. She describes shame as a wordless state, largely revealed to the individual through imagery; which manifests involuntarily in one's stance (e.g. lowered head); and which activates autonomic bodily reactions such as blushing and sweating. These "make shame a primitive, irrational reaction, to which there is difficulty applying a rational solution. One is often ashamed of being or having been ashamed. Shame thus compounds itself out of an intrinsic difficulty in finding a "rational" place for it in the adult's psychic life" (Lewis, 1971:428). Lewis bring forth the concept of the feeling trap, stating that "these difficulties which the person experiences in identifying his psychological state may result in his being "caught" in shame reactions without being aware of his shame state" (Lewis, 1971:428-429).

According to Scheff, a similar spiral which traps the individual may arise out of shame's relation with anger: the "shame-anger spiral" consists of being made to feel ashamed, then feeling angry that one (is made to) feel ashamed. He discusses them as a 'loop' "which is usually experienced as though it were a single affect, "helpless anger", or, in a more intense form, "humiliated fury"" (Scheff, 2004:396). These are terms that Scheff borrowed from Lewis (1971), who also stressed the relationship between shame and anger, claiming that a current of aggression against the self and the other follows an episode of shame (Lewis, 1971:427).

Scheff's thinking extends to include what he terms triple shame-anger spirals. When one feels accepted and a sense of belonging, the author claims, the background noise that person hears is that of pride. "However, when there is a real and/or imagined rejection on one or both sides (withdrawal, criticism, insult, defeat, etc.) the deference-emotion system may show a malign form, a chain

reaction of shame and anger between and within the interactants […] I refer to such explosions as triple spirals of shame and anger (one spiral within each party and one between them) […] The unlimited fury of shame/rage in a triple spiral may explain why social influence can be experienced as absolutely compelling" (Scheff, 2004:397). This process, the authors argue, shows that one's past experiences leave an emotional residue in one which surfaces whenever a similar experience in encountered, albeit in a non-conscious and often non-traceable form (like Clough's 'affect' and Cromby and Willis' 'feeling').

Given that triple spirals involve a spiral within each of the two parties along with one between them, I posit that it is difficult to explore and flesh them out when interviewing only one of the two parties. The interviewee will present their version of the events and this only reflects their own, personal understanding. Nevertheless, there are three instances in the data which come very close to presenting a fully-formed triple spiral and these will be addressed accordingly (however it is worth remembering that even in these instances it is my own interpretation of what a participant says about the other person that leads me to envision this triple spiral).

The vignette that opens Burkitt's 2014 book "Emotions and Social Relations" can be seen as a case of shame-anger spiral. A working-class man boards the train to find an upper-class woman sitting on the seat that was assigned to his wife. After the woman's initial refusal to give up the seat he broke into a fit of rage, physically and verbally assaulting her. According to his interpretation of the event, what infuriated him was not primarily what the woman had done, but her social status that accompanied that action: in his head he had been put down by the upper class all his life and this was just another incident in this process of humiliating him. Therefore, his reaction was targeted to all the upper-class people who had made him feel ashamed for his social standing throughout the years, not this woman in particular.

Shame therefore seems to be strongly linked to anger and for this reason it will be addressed in this study as the intrapersonal 'feeling trap' and the internal 'chain-reaction' between anger and shame as it is presented in the participants' accounts of their own experience.

Anger, then, can be described as an emotion the roots of which are found in the survival and prosperity of the individual, but the branches of which are informed by the social fabric one operates in. One's perception of the relation between oneself and others within a social network can give rise to anger, both when one feels that others break the accepted social norms and conventions; and when one feels that others feel that s/he break these norms and conventions.

1.4.2: The Physiological Changes During Anger

As a discrete emotion, anger produces changes in cognitive, judgment, experiential, behavioural and physiological outcomes. (Lench, Flores, & Bench, 2011:passim). The cognitive, judgment, behavioural and physiological changes associated with anger have been explored in depth. Here I will present basic findings from research on changes in Physiology, since it is very relevant to the present study's scope: By locating the physiological, automatic changes anger brings about, the phenomenon can be more rigorously grounded and framed, thus providing a backdrop against which the individual experience of the emotion can be tested. As Smith writes:

> "For IPA, the body and its perception may provide an excellent crucible for research. While recognising the gap which can exist between an object and the individual's perception of it, a phenomenological researcher may indeed be interested in elucidating the nature of that gap. Therefore, the existence of real entities such as bodies and illnesses provides a useful background against which to compare different accounts of physical processes. So a phenomenologist may choose to focus on the way two people may speak very differently about what is ostensibly, and medically categorized as, the equivalent illness precisely because of the light that may shed on the subjective perceptual processes which are operating in the person's interpretation of their health status […] While IPA may perceive the nature of the links in a particular way, it shares with the social-cognitive paradigm a belief in and concern with, the chain of connection between account, cognition and physical state." (Smith, 1996:265)

The evidence so far discusses how the person responds to the stimulus that has brought about the emotion. However, "in addition to feelings towards are feelings of bodily changes, that sense of 'what it is like' bodily to experience an emotion" (Eatough and Smith, 2006a:485). When experiencing anger, blood flow to the arms and hands increases (in Ekman & Cordaro, 2011:368), while the facial expressions that accompany the emotion are perceived as similar to other approach-motivated states such as determination (in Gable, Poole & Harmon-Jones, 2015:165).

More importantly, the shift from parasympathetic Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) to sympathetic ANS during anger episodes has been extensively documented (e.g. Guyton & Hall, p.706). This maps onto the shift from a calm and undistracted mode of existence to an aroused and alert one. Therefore the sympathetic ANS is often termed the 'flight or fight' mechanism of human physiology: it pushes persons to a state where they have to hunt down a prey; or a state they either have to confront a danger or flee from it; it orients the person towards a threatening stimulus. Psychophysiological studies have demonstrated that the evocation of anger coincides with excitation of the sympathetic nervous system, and that there is a direct relationship between the intensity of anger and the propensity to act out aggression. (Averill, 1982; Zillmann, 1988, in Eatough & Smith, 2006:495). Interestingly therefore, changes in physiology have been shown to significantly correlate with changes in cognition, behaviour, and self-reported experience (Lench, Flores & Bench, 2011:844). So it is very hard to have any one of these isolated.

Not much is known about the *experience* of anger in humans, however; about the phenomenology of anger. This issue has been raised in recent years (e.g. Fischer and Jansz, 2008: 166; Genuchi and Valdez, 2015:150[13]; Barber, 2018:332); and the study of the experience of anger seems to be welcome as a complementary factor to anger theorizing in general.

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[13] "Additional research in this area focusing on the relationships between masculine role norms, the internal experience of anger, expressed anger, and depressive symptoms in men will likely provide further clarification regarding the nature of anger as a component of atypical depression in men." (Genuchi and Valdez, 2015:150)

1.5 PHENOMENOLOGY

When a person attempts to understand what it is that made him/her feel that way, they do not investigate the emotion but their experience of the emotion: how the emotion appeared to them. This appearance is what can be termed "phenomenon". "Modern phenomenological psychology… is the study of consciousness and experience, an individual's perception of the world being the crucial aspect of psychological investigation" (Strongman, 1996:15). 'Phenomenology' is a complex word, brought about by the combination of "logos" (i.e. to *understand* and to *put into words*) and phenomenon (i.e. how something *appears* to someone). In other words, it is concerned with how one makes sense of the world as the world appears to one; but also with how one communicates this understanding.[14]

For this study Phenomenology is at the same time a philosophical worldview, a method of inquiry, and a way of understanding emotion.

The scope of phenomenological psychology is *empirical*; this word, however, in contrast to the way it is used by behaviourists and positivists of all kinds, here stands for "of experience". In other words, phenomenology seeks to make sense of how one understands his or her own experiences. According to the phenomenological viewpoint, "self and world are inseparable components of meaning" (Moustakas, 1994:28). This is termed *intentionality* within the phenomenological paradigm, and means that "the appearance of an object as a perceptual phenomenon varies depending on the perceiver's location and context, angle of perception and, importantly, the perceiver's mental orientation (e.g. desires, wishes, judgements, emotions, aims and purposes)" (Willig, 2008:52).

Moustakas follows up on this, writing that "thus the act of consciousness and the object of consciousness are intentionally related" (Moustakas, 1994:28). In other words, what the person brings into their perception of the world is as important as what the world puts in front of the person for them to perceive. This relation is also captured in the framework of intentionality by the terms *noema* and *noesis*. Noema is the way the object appears to the individual; not the object itself, but its

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[14] In a completely different field of knowledge, vision science, phenomenology (or rather, phenomenological experience) is considered "the defining characteristic, the necessary and sufficient condition, for attributing consciousness to something" (Palmer, 1999:627).

phenomenon. Noesis is the act of perceiving, of endowing with meaning and of revealing further layers of meaning as a result of this.

Much of the understanding gained in phenomenological research in psychology comes from *introspection* (see Strongman's description of James' methods, p.14-16). Husserl distinguished between 3 discrete stages in one's attempt to gain understanding with this method, and later theorists have honoured them: *epoche* (one's suspension of presuppositions and presumptions, judgments and interpretations in order to become fully aware of what is actually before him/her), *phenomenological reduction* (the presentation of the phenomenon in its totality, including the obvious and 'objective' facts as well as the resonance it has with us and the experience it generates), and *imaginative variation* (the attempt to understand how the phenomenon, and our approach to it, came into being). (see Willig, 2008:53; also Moustakas, 1994 ch. 5).

What this process describes is a movement away from the excitement of the moment into a calmer and more focused approach to the relationship between the person and the stimulus that brought about the experience. The common, everyday perception of the stimulus does not vanish, but through these stages the individual takes steps back to 'bracket' the emotion and "try and establish what is at the core of the subjective experience" (Smith, Flowers and Larkin; 2009:14)

Emotions in phenomenological research, then, are the interpretations people give to their lived experiences of physiological arousal and cognitive activation towards a stimulus which has special meaning within the context of their personal history. The emotional reaction/activation is closer to what Husserl termed "essence", while the phenomenon is the interpretation brought about by intentionality and bracketing.

Consequently, from the present study's phenomenological perspective (and combined with the cognitive theories discussed above), emotions are changes that someone detects when comparing his/her calm (baseline) way of being to the excitation of the moment. Then s/he gives them a name s/he has learnt from his/her environment. In the process, actions like locating the source of that emotion; attributing the change to that source; and appraising the situation to make it fit one's life-story, to understand its significance and to decide his/her future (immediate or not) course of action all come together to colour the

construction (or reconstruction) of that emotional experience in his/her head. As such, it calls for a research paradigm that does not look for objective scores (e.g. absolute values in skin conductance or an inter-researcher reliability in classifying facial expressions) but rather aims to explore the subjective value this experience has for someone: how is it that someone understands and presents this experience and are the factors that lead to that?

Based on what I have written above, I need to reiterate that emotions can be defined in a number of different ways. For the present study I follow a definition of emotion informed by Wetherell: "[…] a relation to others, a response to the situation and to the world. An emotion is above all a relational pattern and as such is automatically distributed and located across the psychological field" (Wetherell, 2012:24). This is very similar to that proposed by Ian Burkitt in his 2014 text "Emotions and Social Relations": embodied patterns of relation that take on special significance when represented in language. Burkitt's definition of emotion unfolds based on what the Oxford English Dictionary defines as a "strong feeling deriving from one's circumstances, mood, or relationships with others". As Burkitt stresses, there are four different components in this definition.

First, "emotion" is a process that is triggered in the body based on automatic detection of internal or external stimuli. However, it is important to stress here that when I am referring to an automatic detection in the body I am thinking of an all-encompassing version of the body, including skin, bones, glands, organs, arteries as well as neural circuits beyond awareness (not limited to what Freud called the unconscious), highly indebted to Wetherell's 2012 (pp.54-64) description.

After this initial pre-reflective stage (which nevertheless includes body *and* brain) has been accomplished, the individual reflects on his/her bodily reaction and names it with the socially appropriate term[15]; what his/her culture has defined as a term for this reaction. In order to accomplish this second stage, the individual needs to draw on the other three components of the OED definition. What were the circumstances that led to that reaction? What was the mood of the person during that reaction – and how has it changed since? And finally, what is his/her relationship with the persons who instigated the emotion – and with others

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[15] Or someone else who is present will name it for them, e.g. "You shouldn't get this angry".

present? The first addresses the question of "what happened?" – what was the change in circumstances that brought about this feeling? The second relates to the interpretation the person gives to the feeling. Their mood prior to the event that gave rise to the feeling will colour their interpretation of the feeling. For example, if someone is in a bad mood and someone bumps on them in the street they might interpret it as one instance in a long story of people's indifference towards them, whereas if they are in a good mood they might interpret it as an instance where the other person was careless. Additionally, one's monitoring of mood change before and after the event orients him/her to an identification of the feeling towards something that could explain this shift in mood. Finally, the relationship one has with those involved in the event comes into the discussion. What had they come to expect from these others, and how do they feel their reaction is received by the other?

CHAPTER 2: PREVIOUS STUDIES ON THE EXPLORATION OF THE EXPERIENCE OF ANGER

Few studies throughout the years have focused on the phenomenological understanding of the experience of anger. E.L. Stevick's seminal study came in 1971, followed by Averill's collection of 1982 studies (published as a tome titled "Anger and Aggression: an essay on emotion") and his 1983 paper "Studies on Anger and Aggression". After that, it took twenty years for the first study of anger's experience *in men* to surface – S. P. Thomas' "Men's Anger: a phenomenological exploration of its meaning in a middle-class sample of American men", to be followed by 15 years of silence on that front. As the present study was drawing to a close, a new paper (Barber, 2018) appeared. Besides these, the way anger is experienced in men's everyday life remains largely unexplored in psychology. In this section I discuss how the above studies relate to the present one, while also discussing three papers by Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis researchers (Eatough, Smith and Shaw, 2008; Eatough and Smith, 2006a; Eatough and Smith, 2006b) although they study the experience of anger in *women*, as they provide the main analytical method I use for the exploration of this topic.

I will start the examination of previous literature with the studies of Eatough and Smith and Eatough, Smith and Shaw, as their method of phenomenological analysis is the same one I use in my study and closer to the interpretative (in contrast to descriptive) phenomenology. In their two 2006 papers, Eatough & Smith take an Interpretative phenomenological approach to analysing a woman's (code name Marilyn) interview about her anger. The interview is led by the female author of the papers (Eatough), and together they then engage in hermeneutic circle of what anger means for Marilyn, how it makes her feel about herself and what impact it has on her life and relationships (e.g. with her mother and son). Expanding on that case-study, Eatough and Smith teamed up with Rachel Shaw in 2008 to carry out an IPA study on a larger sample. Five women participated in that study, exploring their experiences of anger, which the authors then present through the prism of the hermeneutic circle employed in IPA.

Eatough and Smith's (and Shaw's) studies are fine-tuned IPA explorations. However, these authors studied women and that in itself sets up a very different context of understanding and expressing the experience, as we shall see a few pages further down. Moreover, my study complements the IPA analysis with a Discourse Analysis of the same data, making more pronounced the symbolic-interactionist dimension of the narratives as produced and understood.

E.L. Stevick presents a phenomenological study of anger, albeit much closer to descriptive phenomenology. She focuses on "how anger is experienced and distinguished, the types of situations out of which it arises, its distinguishing behavioral and experiential constituents" (1971:135). So, essentially, she follows a phenomenological method to use people's everyday experience of anger as a route to defining what the emotion itself is. This is in contrast to what I pursue in the present study and somewhat clashes with the ontological orientation of the present study. The clash arises from the fact that Stevick's study views anger as something fixed, a passion that attacks different people in the same way. I use previous findings of psychological research to construct what anger is and to use it as a background against which individual experiences of it can be understood. The main symptoms might be the same, because there *is* such a 'thing' called anger that people can recognize in themselves and in others with high accuracy. However, the way each person relates to his/her experience of that emotional state can be very different to how every other person relates to it. Besides that, her sample is composed of women exclusively, which creates very different implications for the expression of the emotion as we shall see in the next chapter. Moreover, the participants were teenagers (and therefore with a much different outlook on the world than adults) and people the researcher was already acquainted with – former pupils or friends of hers. Therefore, the way they answered the questions and the amount of detail they revealed about that stigmatized emotional state might be affected by their relationship with the researcher.

The above studies' samples were women and that alone creates a much different set of understandings of anger, aggression and their expression than men. Even though the present study can be compared to these in an effort to gain an understanding of anger as a pan-human phenomenon (and indeed, the results they brought up are similar to the ones here), studying the way men make sense of, and present, their experiences comes with a different set of behavioural and mental

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patterns, largely shaped by the social dimension of anger judgments and expressions (see the section on "Why Men?" in the next chapter "The Present Study" for more details on the gendered dimensions of anger).

Moving on to explorations of *men's* anger, Thomas (2003) embarks on an eidetic phenomenological study. Her methods of data collection and analysis are very close to IPA, although she does not acknowledge the methodology (presumably, IPA was not something she had heard of in 2003). The difference between analytic methods in her study and mine brings forth a great advantage of IPA. By engaging in the hermeneutic circle, the researcher has the opportunity attend to the phenomena mentioned by the participant by moving between the researcher's and the participant's point of view on several turns, and thus get to a deeper level of understanding what the participant presented but also how the researcher interpreted it. The richness of the analysis increases, therefore, as does the analytical rigor. Relevant to the point made about IPA in contrast to eidetic phenomenology, we shall see in the following chapters that despite Thomas' study having almost twice the participants (19) the present study employed, the themes produced do not address the social and mutual construction of meaning – rather, they stay on a surface level of 'photographing' the phenomenon offered in the participants' accounts. Thomas places great emphasis on the metaphors and other linguistic devices employed by the participants to describe their experiences of anger, thus hinting at the importance of discourse analysis. She does not, however, carry out a full analysis of this sort. When discussing her results, Thomas compares and contrasts the way men produce their accounts to the way women do; thus she uses her study to shed light on gender differences in the expression of anger, rather than studying the experience of the emotion by men in depth.

Barber's 2018 study is very close to the current one in design and scope. He focuses on six men living in London and the way they experience anger. Barber's study utilizes a context very similar to mine (London-based male adults). His approach however, although phenomenological is somewhat brief, not different from what Guest, McQueen and Namey (2014) term a 'brief and focused analysis': a short analysis that produces results useful for an immediate improvement of services, but does not offer a rich and detailed exploration of the phenomenon. Barber's questions are informed by his engagement with theoretical perspectives, and it is these questions that guide his phenomenological exploration of the

emotion. These questions, as they are formulated, are much closer to what a therapist seeks for the betterment of his/her patients – he stresses that in order to be eligible for participation, people had to present their anger as "'problematic' and impacting on their world" (p.335). He therefore has a fairly narrow focus on what the experience might be like. Accordingly, his main focus is therapeutic: how can men control their anger better? My focus, on the other hand, is one of exploration of the effects this emotional experience has on the way we see ourselves. By extension, my questions were designed so as to allow participants to bring what they considered important in the discussion – not what previous literature has designated as important. Moreover, my approach to the study hails the discourses drawn upon by the participants to address their experience as of equal importance to their exploration of that experience: in fact, I claim that without these discourses, that exploration (if not the experience itself) would be very different. Barber's theoretical background which informs his questions is informed by the discourses developed by previous studies to address the emotion – but he does not acknowledge it or work with it in his paper.

The present study takes an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis perspective which is however coupled with methods from Discourse Analysis and Thematic Analysis, in order to explore the phenomenology of anger and how it is expressed. The main focus is on the way anger is experienced and understood by people; what it links to; and how it can be talked about. The focus of the analysis lies primarily on the feelings and thoughts during the experiences themselves and the consequences these had for the participant. The linguistic and discursive resources one draws on to express these emotions are also of vital importance for the study, however; anger is often expressed as a story which involve the person and his/her respective ingroups and outgroups (along with the stereotypes that go with them) (see Beck, 1999:20-40 passim), which provides the grounds for exploration of how these entities are constructed in the accounts.

Furthering the social constructionist ties of IPA, my study brings a discourse analysis perspective to the table – and that largely differentiates it from previous studies in the field. Barber's paper emphasizes the societal manifestations of anger

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by exploring the rates of violent crimes, and Eatough & Smith emphasize the cultural "appropriateness" of anger as addressed by their participant. However, my approach is quite different. Given that the definition, identification, and appropriate expression of anger are largely social constructs within each culture I see how the participants utilize these constructs as discourses that allow a way-of-seeing and a way-of-being that permits for a uniquely individual description within the socially acceptable framework. Furthermore, I look at how they address this description to me within the interactional setting; what techniques do they use to flesh out the experience and to accomplish a self-presentation they are happy with?

Averill's studies and thinking have influenced me greatly – and methodologically I by-and-large follow his steps. Working within a constructionist framework to the theory of emotions, I (like he) look at how emotions can be conceptualized before tackling the issue of how they are experienced. However, our methods of approaching the topic are different. For example, in his 1983 paper, he did not interview participants; instead, he gave them surveys to fill-out and asked them to write about one instance that made them angry. This creates very different implications than my face-to-face, one-on-one interviewing strategy. By being in a room with the participant, I immediately present them someone to address their experiences to. In Averill's study, on the other hand, the participants were in a position where they could much more easily imagine they are addressing their narrative to whoever they liked – the experimenter, their loved ones, themselves, etc. Also, Averill asked them to *write* about *one* event that made them angry. This imposes a restriction that in my oral interviews was intentionally avoided: participants were encouraged to explore each event in depth, but also to branch out to other events in a fashion not dissimilar to psychoanalysts' free-association technique. Finally, interviews were audio-recorded in real-time, so if the participants wished to change something they earlier said, they had to manoeuvre explicitly around that; Averill's participants, on the contrary, had the option to scrap as many versions of the events as they wished before keeping a final one and presenting it to the experimenter. So our different methods of choice constrained and liberated the participants' accounts in different ways, thus shaping the accounts themselves and the way the participants attended to the investigation.

In his 1982 book, Averill takes a social constructionist[16] position much like my own and, even though not explicitly referring to IPA, the author does cover most of the grounds IPA research would cover. What I do differently is that I explicitly acknowledge the different ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions IPA and Discourse Analysis bring with them and then I work with these assumptions to see how core approaches can be combined to illuminate different aspects of a phenomenon and to complement each-other (Frost, 2011).

Averill defines emotions as being interpreted as passions from the person experiencing them – something happening to the self, instead of something the self does. I think there is great truth in this, because of the unexpected nature of emotional reactions. It may not be the whole story since I can, potentially if I want to, start bringing back memories that are bound to make me feel sad, angry, jealous, happy etc. – or, at least, more sad, angry etc. than I was before bringing back these memories. I understand Averill's position as referring to his concept of "true feelings", ignoring the voluntary side of it mentioned in the previous sentence.

This interpretation of emotions as passions is based on what Averill (2012) presented as five general principles: First, the Physiological, Social and Psychological Imperatives, each of which corresponds to a way of reacting to the emotion (and hence to an automatic interpretation of the bodily reaction to the emotional stimulus). The first is close to what Darwin (and Ekman) wrote about. The second is the ways society and culture has instilled in us and are now operating as taken-for-granted knowledge. The third is close to the attention-attribution-appraisal theories as discussed earlier. Then Averill presents two more principles: Systemic Conflict and Cognitive Disorganization, which address the person's subsequent reaction to the emotional response (much like what is termed second-order monitoring). Systemic Conflict refers to the uncomfortable condition of two or more of the above imperatives clashing with each other, or with the demands of

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[16] Averill uses the term "social constructivism" instead. This brings up a tension by today's standards, as constructivism and constructionism refer to two different processes: the former illustrates how people construct concepts as thoughts in their heads, whereas the latter refers to how people are immersed in concepts that have been constructed by social processes (see Burr 2015:21 for more details). The term "constructionism" does not appear in Averill's texts so one cannot blame him for confusing the two – it seems more likely that the two were used interchangeably when he was conducting his studies. (This brings up an interesting point for the Foucauldian notion of genealogy of language which unfortunately falls outside the scope of the present study).

reality. An example of this might be when one feels jealousy in a situation where they are expected to feel pride or happiness (if, say, one's sibling got engaged the same week they themselves were abandoned by their loved one), or in a situation where one's body reacts with disgust but the person wants to carry on engaging in the activity (maybe because they see that it brings pleasure to someone they care about). "The conflict may then be resolved through a compromise reaction. Moreover, if the compromise presents some threat to the integrity of the individual, as is frequently the case, the compromise reaction may be "disclaimed" (Schafer, 1979), for example, by interpreting it as a passion rather than as an action" (Averill, 2012:25). Cognitive disorganization refers to the limitations and breakdown of an individual's self-monitoring. Upon finding oneself unable to discern whether the experience of emotion is an action or a passion, one "is engulfed in an undifferentiated flood of experience" (Averill, 1998:116). So, for example, when one gets angry at someone and they start crying and shouting, they further the initial emotion. At the end of that episode, when they reflect back on the experience, they will have trouble differentiating where the involuntary reaction ended and where the voluntary behaviour began. Averill stresses that this is not an all-or-nothing affair, but also underlined that this tends to happen in extreme occasions only.

Averill's "Anger and Aggression: an essay on emotion" was published in 1982 (reprinted in 2012) and is a collection of the author's papers, covering an extensive if not exhaustive area of anger research. Through its 14 chapters (each a different paper), Averill takes us through a journey of how anger can be conceptualized (Part A) and experienced (Part B). This journey consists of the following steps. First, he gives an overview of what he defines as emotion, drawing attention to the difference between how emotions are experienced and how they are expressed. He summarily touches on the difference between anger and aggression to illustrate this.

Then he presents the biology behind anger and aggression – how do different systems of one's body come together to form what the individual then experiences and understands as anger? How do central neural mechanisms contribute to this emotional reaction, and what is the role of expressive reactions?

Following this, the author presents an example of the variation anger and its expression can take across cultures. He discusses the cases of "Wild Man Behavior" (New Guinea), "Running Amok" (Malaysia), "To Nu" (Brazil) and "Ikari" (Japan). These four states represent different reasons why anger rises in individuals and different ways it is manifested. Each of the cultures where these appear addresses the issue of the emotion itself, its expression, as well as the person feeling and expressing it in different ways and with different consequences for the person and the community. These range from the elimination of the person (Amok) to his/her full re-integration in the community. That chapter highlights the cultural framework as an indispensable context for understanding one's experience and expression of an emotion, as well as the community's response to its (proper or improper) expression.

Next, Averill presents the way six different philosophers across the centuries have attended to the topic of emotion and emotional experience: Plato, Aristotle, Seneca, Lactanius, Acquinas and Descartes. Each of them presents a different account for where emotions come from, the role of the individual experiencing them, and the consequences this has for the understanding of the self. Before returning to a synthesis of the above topics in Chapter 6, Averill presents the legal side of anger in Chapter 5: how does justice respond to instances of anger, and what implications does this have for the understanding of the individual and the emotion? In Chapter 6 the author presents different sources that may bring about anger, and the way they interact with the individual.

The book then turns into Part B. Whereas Part A provided a theoretical framework for understanding anger as an evolutionary phenomenon within a cultural context, Part B focuses on the experience of anger by the individual. In chapters 7-11 Averill touches on issues of anger and its expression from the side of the angry person (Targets, Instigations and Motives; Responses and Consequences) as well as from the side of the person receiving the angry response. Then he proceeds to highlight the differences between anger and annoyance, the temporal dimension of anger (how anger surfaces, manifests and dies out) and the differences between men and women in the experience and expression of anger.

In Part B, Averill explores the subjective experience of anger, much like I do in the present study. Even though I am massively influenced by his work and attempt at

an all-encompassing scope, there are several differences in our methods, and here I will present the main three: First, in his exploration of subjective experience, Averill uses self-report methods from a large number of participants who are asked to fill-in a questionnaire and self-report scales. This already comes into sharp contrast with my methodology, since these questionnaires and scales are already designed by the experimenter. The way I opt for the collection of data is one of semi-structured interviews, where participants are called to address their experiences in their own terms. An immediate consequence of this is that Averill aims at a general/broad/panhuman understanding of anger's manifestations (as seen also by the numbers of his participants), whereas I aim at an in-depth exploration of how anger meshes with the individual's self-perception. In other words, Averill's primary focus is the emotion itself, whereas my primary focus is the participant.

Second, Averill's subjects are both men and women – and indeed a large part of his papers revolves around the differences between the two sexes in the experience and expression of the emotion. Instead of researching the way anger manifests in the two sexes, I instead focus on one, aiming to offer an in-depth analysis of how physiological and social imperatives weave into men's understanding and presentation of their experiences.

Third, spurred on by Averill's stress on cultural and historical contexts, I limit my research to individuals living in London at the time of the study – and this foregrounds the importance of the situational context in the study: how do participants choose to present their experience to a stranger, with whom they only share the context of the city and its culture?

CHAPTER 3: THE PRESENT STUDY

One half of the analysis is focused on the emotional experience of anger itself and how it is comprehended by the participant; whereas the other half looks at how the participant chooses to talk about the experience. Therefore, I aim to provide an interpretative exploration of how anger is experienced while taking into account the different ways one can employ to talk about it. I am interested in the similarities as much as the differences between the accounts collected, since "qualitative methodology was designed expressly to explore the subjective dimension of any issue towards which different points-of-view can be expressed" (Sterner, Watts and Worrell; 2008:215).

3.1 Methodology

The design of this study is one of pluralistic qualitative research methods. There are three main axis of analysis: Thematic Analysis, Discursive Psychology and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Each of these is approached in separate parts of the analysis. They all come together in the discussion, however, to complement each other and thus lead to what Frost (2011) calls complementarity and triangulation (which is a very different form of triangulation than that posited by quantitative research).

> "Triangulation can offer a more in-depth, multidimensional insight to the complexity of the social world. It can generate 'complementarity' (Moran-Ellis, 2006:48) instead of highlighting flaws in measurements. It can 'reflect different aspects of a phenomenon' (idem), and inform researchers about both the phenomenon under study and the research process" (Frost, 2011b:8)

By employing this design, I hope to address both the macro- and the micro-level of experience that participants bring to the table. The macro-level "acknowledges the constructive power of language but sees this as derived from, or at least related to, material or social structures, social relations and institutionalized practices", whereas on the micro-level "multiple versions of the world are potentially available

through this discursive, constructive work, and there is no sense in which one can be said to be more real or true that others" (Burr, 2015:24).

3.1.1: Cultural Data: Collection and Methods of Analysis

First, to establish a comprehensible framework of how anger is presented, understood and talked about in the English culture, I followed a simple but effective procedure: Google-search.

Google is an online search-engine that generates results based on a *search item*. This is a word, phrase or any other linguistic item (e.g. acronym, affix etc.) the searcher wishes to learn about. When one searches on Google for an item, they are presented with a list of choices – the screen displays a handful of items at any given time. The search-engine provides links to websites that contain some feature that makes them relevant to the search-item – this would often be the search item itself found in the website's text, but it may also be that the website's designers have "tagged" the item in the website's description without it appearing on the text itself. Each website is displayed in the Google-list with a broad title picked by its designers to summarize the website (in big blue letters), the electronic address where the text was sourced from (in small green letters) and a 2-line peek into what the result is about.

The results generated are the result of two main processes: the relevance of the website to the search-item; and the popularity of the website. In other words, the more a website is visited by people who want to find out about a specific search-item, the higher that website will appear on the Google-list when someone searches for that specific item. This creates a number of implications for the way information is distributed on the internet and, by extension, about the way the internet shapes the population's exposure to information. Most relevant to this study is the following: the more people visit a particular website to find out about a search item, the more probable it is that someone searching for that item for the first time will visit that particular website, too: of course, the individual will be presented with a variety of options, but the more popular websites will appear higher on the list and feature more frequently in the list, too. Therefore, once a

website has reached a threshold of Google-popularity[17] it enters a self-feeding loop according to which its information becomes more and more likely to be read by people with every search for that particular item. Therefore, although the list is initially formed by the users, it then proceeds to form the users' opinions on what is the best source of information. In that way, Google can shape the face of knowledge and norms in a society by directing people to a specific source (and therefore discursive construction) of information.

The process is not as straightforward as this paragraph might make it look; instead, Google is guided by a complex algorithm which distinguishes among fine details (like, for example, whether the search is performed on a computer or a mobile phone) and is also guided by the "filter bubble effect" which ensures that the websites one previously-visited will show again, probably higher in the list, with each new search by this person; that websites containing similar approaches will also appear in the search; and therefore eventually leads to a recycling of information of similar political, social etc. orientations.[18] This algorithm's structure, function, extent and scope lie far outside my field of knowledge or this thesis' scope. I do posit, however, that this is the most likely way one would try to find out about anger (in general or his/her particular anger) and thus, although Google cannot be blindly trusted as a methodological tool, it is one of the best indicators we have about how anger is represented in this culture.

The Google-search was carried out in two steps. For the first one, my search item was "anger" and I filtered the results to "Location: UK only" to ensure that the results which were generated are the ones that have been shaped by the searches in the United Kingdom alone, excluding any and every other place in the world. The procedure was straightforward: I collected the first 100 items that the search brought up. This was done to flesh out what people in the UK "google[19]" about

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[17] Google-popularity here is defined as the number of times website X is visited when people search on Google for item A.

[18] In order to control for this factor, I collected the items in a single search, early in my research, from a pc that had not been used for research purposes yet. Given Google's links to other platforms of communication and self-presentation (such as social media and phone applications) perhaps this was a futile attempt at objectivity, but I deemed it as a methodologically necessary one.

[19] "Google" is the search-engine, whereas "google" is the verb that stands for "using the Google search-engine".

anger, as this seems to be a driving factor in the algorithms that guide the search-engine's list of results.

The results of the Google-search were subjected to Thematic Analysis in order to illuminate the topics people look for; the approaches and angles the results offer; and how these come together to construct a web of references to guide one's understanding.

Then, partly because of my knowledge of the British culture and partly driven by the results the Google-search brought up, I turned my focus to Anger Management Centres (AMCs). Again, I searched online using the Google engine for these centres. My search item was "Anger Management Centre London" and the first 100 results were collected, which were from 9 different AMCs based in London.

This two-step initial study was designed to illustrate what people in London are exposed to when they go online to find answers about (their) anger. Following that, the way people themselves talk about, and make sense of the emotion is presented.

3.1.2: Interview Data: Collection and Methods of Analysis

The participants' data were extracted through interviews; semi-structured, one-to-one interviews conducted face-to-face in a space between the private and the public (e.g. a quiet room in a university library). An interview schedule can be found in Appendix B. Participants were invited to be interviewed on their experiences of anger, revolving around the emotional, cognitive and bodily fluctuations in the individual; the individual's perception of oneself when angry; the role of the other; and the participants' understanding of anger itself. The guiding questions were formulated based on the principles of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: open-ended and exploratory questions that allow the interviewees to bring what they consider important to the discussion; and open-ended prompts for further discussion of points that look like they could be key to the exploration but (or perhaps and so) remain relatively untouched by the participants. Spelling out the experience in its full detail and/or impact is never an easy thing, especially when talking to a stranger, so a gentle push from the interviewer and a reminder that the interviewee's experience is of utmost importance during the interview are designed to invite the interviewees to be more open about their experiences.

The interviews were then transcribed according to the principles and conventions of conversational analysis (e.g. Gumperz, 1982) for maximum elaboration on the way participants brought out the words and other utterances, although not the full range of conversation analytic notations was used, in order to ensure readability and to keep the focus firmly on the content of the accounts. This manner of uttering words is key for bringing the important parts for the participant to focus, and thus guide the subsequent analysis towards the bits where richness of experience is plenty. Each word, utterance (e.g. "um", "eh"), false-start (e.g. "the in-, the initial…"), repetition (e.g. "it's… it's… it's a way") and pause were noted as they all contribute to my search for the story-as-formulated during the interview: where does the participant feel confident about what they say, and where not? Where do they feel they need to rework in their minds the narrative before uttering it? When the volume of the voice went up, this was noted with a "*" sign, to indicate where the participant placed emphasis. Instances where the participants laughed were also recorded, as laughter more often than not colours what is being said (as, e.g., ironic) and sheds light on further emotional investment and self-reflection of the speaker (e.g. they might be laughing at what they just said because they recognize it is not true). Gestures and acts of leaning towards the microphone were also recorded, as they are non-verbal signs which carry a lot of interactive meaning, either underlying what is being said or standing in place of an utterance. Overlaps between the interviewer's and the interviewee's utterances were kept to a minimal, as I waited until they had fully finished their utterances and then gave a further pause of a few seconds before continuing to the next question or prompt. When they do occur, though, they are noted with a "/". These were usually instances where the interviewee jumped in while I was still formulating a question or prompt, and were thus retained in the transcription to display the urgency and passion which shone through at parts of the interview, and thus also works as a hint for the emotional investment of the participants. The interviewer's prompting utterances (e.g. "mhm", "hm") were also noted in the transcriptions to allow for clarity and transparency in the interviewing technique, but were left out of quotes that appear in-text for the sake of tidiness.

For the first part of my analysis I employed Discursive Psychology to explore how the participants orient their talk during the interaction. The second part shifts to IPA to see how the experience is understood.

3.2 METHODS

Three approaches (Thematic Analysis, DP and IPA) come together in the discussion to complement each other pluralistically: Thematic Analysis provides a framework of how anger is culturally understood and transmitted in the UK. DP reveals how the participants utilize interpretative repertoires to communicate their experience and how they choose to orient to that experience within the context of the interview. IPA explores how participants make sense of their experiences during the interview[20].

3.2.1: Thematic Analysis

For this study I carried out a thematic analysis which resembles what Guest, McQueen and Namey (2014) call *quick and targeted analysis,* the purpose of which is to "help in the design of a subsequent instrument or other research element" (p.11, ch.2). In the case of my study, I aimed to bring up themes that could inform the cultural framework in which my participants' interviews could be understood. A theme should represent a conceptual category which can work as an umbrella-term under which representations of different but similar items can converge and be accurately summarized.

My corpus included 100 Google-hits and 9 websites from Anger Management Centres in London. These were divided into two sets of data (the Google hits on one hand and the AMCs' websites on the other) which were approached differently.

For the first set, my interest as a researcher was dual: What is it that people google about anger; and how anger is presented in the introductory 2-line sneak-peek. This sums up the information and general impressions that circulate widely among the British public through access to this search-engine.

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[20] In my view, the interactive context of the interview is extremely important in phenomenological methods. How relaxed and safe a participant feels will have a direct impact on his/her exploration of his/her experience.

I did not visit any of the websites in the list for a more extensive exploration of their contents; instead, I only analysed the 2-line "sneak-peeks". By focusing exclusively on the titles and "sneak-peeks" Google offers, I aimed to get the impression that someone who googles "anger" in the UK (on 12 October 2016) would get. My approach for this set was therefore inductive and themes were identified on a semantic level; I was trying to see what these data have in common and how they can be grouped together in themes. I followed the six steps offered by Braun and Clarke (2006). I familiarized myself with the data and generated initial codes. Then these codes were brought together for me to start forming themes. For example a website coded as "damage" and another coded as "help" would be brought together because of their conceptual similarity (what would form, for example, the theme of "control"). Eventually, if enough codes could be brought together, a theme was generated.

In other words, my aim was to explain how Anger is conceptualized in Britain's Google-searches through targeting these Google-search items themselves. In contrast to classic versions of thematic analysis, where a text would be explored as a whole to identify the different themes that arise in it, my analysis started from a list of items, all independent and very different from one-another but all relating to anger, and the themes I identified are different angles on the topic of anger, each of which presents a point of convergence for two or more items.

In order to keep the analysis focused and explanatory, I had to decide the depth to which I would go for my analysis and whether or not each sneak-peek could be used for more than one theme. Websites offer a particular perspective about their content and it is hard (maybe even impossible) to talk about a subject (say, "the faces of anger") without bringing in a set of values and ideologies about this subject – which will in turn result in a textured approach that reveals more than one assumption, evaluation and presupposition about the topic.

Given that this is a "quick and targeted" analysis which is meant to inform (but not determine) the subsequent different stages of analysis, I decided to strip things down to their baselines; I decided to use each Google-hit to correspond to one theme only. This limitation had to be imposed in order to avoid *conceptual tunnel vision*: "the overcategorisation of data, assigning more data to one category than actually belongs, or seeing or justifying most things as being related to, or

considered examples of, the concept being investigated" (Morse and Mitcham, 2002:30). So, essentially, even though different sides of evaluation are sprinkled all over the texts, I posit that there is a core of meaning, the "theme", which defines the text. It was slightly risky methodologically, but since I am the only researcher, I had to uncover the meaning for each text independently.

This also brought about the necessity to acknowledge that some websites could not be included in the analysis, as the themes best used to describe them did not amass to a greater theme shared between websites. For example, three of the items that appear on the list are news stories that popped up simply because the word "anger" was in the title and they were popular because they were in circulation at the time. They were very different from one-another however, and the best theme they would build up to would be "news stories" – which is not very apt as a theme as it does not provide any substantive perspective, evaluation or even information to be analysed about anger.

For the second data set the same six steps identified by Braun and Clarke (2006) were followed, but the approach was framed differently. The themes here were generated from my theoretical interest in the area instead of inductively. The first step had given rise to a theoretical question which was "how do experts in the topic of anger construct the topic?". I visited each of the nine websites and looked for the ways they present anger and the angry person, as well as the way they present themselves. Therefore, instead of focusing on semantics alone, this part of the analysis was aimed at the latent content of the websites. As such, the second step of the thematic analysis comes largely from a constructionist paradigm, "where broader assumptions, structures and/or meanings are theorized as underpinning what is actually articulated in the data" (Braun and Clarke, 2006:85).

Taken together, the two steps (of Google-hits' inductive analysis and of AMCs' constructionist analysis) form a small, self-sufficient study which starts from an exploration of what Google presents as anger in Britain and moves to an investigation of how anger experts theorize the emotion. This study was designed to provide a context both for the (loose) structure of the interviews and for their analysis, since my assumption is that the information, perspectives and discourses people are exposed to somehow inform them about how they ought to attend to their anger.

3.2.2: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Phenomenology can best be seen as philosophy with many different branches, approaches and angles (Willig, 2008:71; see also Giorgi and Giorgi, 2008:165). There are however two main strands of phenomenological psychology: descriptive phenomenology and interpretative phenomenology. The present study follows the second strand, with what Schleiermacher (1998) termed the hermeneutic circle: a circular movement for the researcher from his/her presupposition to interpretation and back again. This strand has been developed in the last two decades into the method called Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (see Smith, 1996; Smith, 2011; Smith and Eatough, 2006; Smith and Osborn, 2004; Smith, Flowers and Larking, 2009).

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was developed as a means to study lived experience and its significance for the person. Its two main axes are Phenomenology (see above) and Interpretation. The researcher employs the hermeneutic circle to establish a link between the two. By employing the hermeneutic circle, the researcher tries to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of the experience. The participant, in other words, engages with the interpretation of the phenomenon, while the researcher engages with the interpretation of the participant's interpretation. The whole and the parts are equally important in IPA, as the whole illuminates each part and each part contributes towards an understanding of the whole.

IPA research is usually conducted in face-to-face settings, where the participant is invited to talk about his/her experience of a phenomenon. Popular applications have been found in health psychology with researchers investigating the experience of pain (e.g. Smith and Osborn, 2007); sexual practices (e.g. Flowers, Duncan and Knussen, 2003; Lavie and Willig, 2005); or addiction and recovery (Penny, Newton and Larkin, 2009). IPA is exploratory and idiographic. In contrast to the vast majority of psychological research, IPA does not look to be nomothetic, to come up with rules that may neatly explain the bulk of the studied phenomena. Instead, it focuses on the personal take of each participant, highlighting the way

that participant presents the phenomenon and drawing attention to the similarities as well as the differences between participants' accounts.

IPA is guided by rigorous methodical and theoretical underpinnings, and these were followed for this study's design and analysis (Smith, Flowers and Larkin; 2009:79-107 passim). I started with the way the interviews were conducted: semi-structured, one-on-one face-to-face interviews with open-ended, exploratory questions that allow the participants to bring what they consider important to the conversation; and prompts that invite them to dig deeper into the account they have given me. Following the verbatim transcription, each interview was read and re-read in order to familiarize myself with the data. This was accompanied by the step of initial noting, where I made notes on the parts of the accounts that immediately struck me as important, to help me formulate a clear idea of how each interview unfolds. These included descriptive, linguistic and conceptual comments. Based on the first two steps, emergent themes were developed. The aim here was to reduce the volume of the material while maintaining complexity. Following that, I searched for connections across the emergent themes. By abstracting the gist of what the participant says, contextualizing his responses, locating polar opposites in his narrative, gauging the frequency with which themes appear in the narrative and paying attention to the function each theme serves, different themes from different parts of the interview come together to form *super-ordinate themes*; large-scale themes which bring several minor themes under the same roof and further allow to reduce the volume of the material, while at the same time elaborating on the complexity of the themes.

This process was followed for each participant separately. Following that, I looked for patterns across cases: the most potent themes and the way theme in one participant illuminate themes from another participant were the driving factors here, in an effort to locate and explore the key features the participants' accounts have in common. Then a table was formed, displaying how many of the participants touch on each theme (see Appendix C).

In IPA research, as the object of inquiry shifts from the researcher's understanding of his/her own experience to understanding the experience of a research participant, so does the way of attending to the phenomenon change: "the research participant's account becomes the phenomenon with which the

researcher engages" (Willig, 2008:54). That is because the researcher acknowledges that there is neither a direct access to the other person's experience, nor a way for that person to suspend all presuppositions and presumptions about what it is that they experienced. The *experience for that person*, then, becomes what the researcher explores. In that exploration, the researcher must acknowledge his/her own contribution in shaping that particular account of the experience (what is termed *reflexivity*) and must instead try to *bracket* the phenomenon – to try and "engage in a critical examination of his or her customary ways of knowing (about) it" (Willig, 2008:54).

The researcher has to suspend all prior beliefs s/he holds about the topic of their research and rather listen to what the participants have to bring to the table. At the same time, the researcher needs to assume a role similar to what Moustakas (1994:39) describes as "enhancer of identity": s/he must make the participant feel secure and relaxed enough to explore his/her experiences and expose them to the researcher; assure them that what they have to say in the present context is what the researcher takes most interest in; and help them in their process of deciphering the meaning of their experiences.

The participant, in turn, must be presumed to take part in the study because they are willing to follow the steps of phenomenological reduction (and thus become engaged in a phenomenological analysis of their own experience): suspend how they feel now about the events discussed and try to remember and describe in as much detail as possible how they felt when it happened; understand how their prior experiences shaped the ones under discussion; and understand how the experience came into being in the way it did.

"Phenomenology is the *first* method of knowledge because it begins with "things themselves"; it is also the final court of appeal. Phenomenology, step by step, attempts to eliminate everything that represents a prejudgment, setting aside presuppositions, and reaching a transcendental state of freshness and openness, a readiness to see in an unfettered way, not threatened by the customs, beliefs, and prejudices of normal science, by the habits of the natural world or by knowledge based on unreflected everyday experience." (Moustakas, 1994:41)

But this may actually be too much to ask of people. Even the seasoned researcher, rigorously trained in phenomenology's grounds, with great skill for introspection, is still a human who has grown up among, and has been taught by, other humans. He or she might think they have reached this transcendental state when reflecting on a "thing itself", but one can always argue that this is still a 'distorted' view of the state and of the thing, largely informed by what they have come to identify as transcendental through these long years of immersion into a culture. Imagine asking a participant who is taking part in a university study to reach this state within the few hours of interviewing! This brings up the challenge Heidegger posed to Husserl's thinking: namely, that *description is interpretation* (Giorgi and Giorgi, 2008:167). It would be fairly easy for anyone at any time to provide a factual description of their experiences. What they are really called to do, though, is to provide an interpretation for their experience – and this seems to address higher mental activities.

The researcher then has to try and get in the participant's shoes both in the time of the event and in the time of the interview/research. The researcher has to try and understand why the participant now speaks about the event that took place then in the way s/he does and what importance and influence it had in their life. All this without any claim to an objective understanding of the experience either, since there is no direct window to someone's reliving of that experience in their minds.

Setting and interlocutors are also important in IPA. The researcher acknowledges that his/her understanding and ideology, orientation, and prior assumptions all factor in to how s/he will interpret the participant's input. This is where social constructionism and symbolic interactionism can provide a solid ground for reflection on why things present themselves the way they do: an investigation of how and why things are presented and what actions of self-presentation are accomplished through that construction.

IPA has strong links to symbolic interactionism (Smith et al. 2009:194). These links are mostly along the lines of theory, epistemology and ontologies. IPA is partly influenced by symbolic interactionism. "Symbolic interactionism provides a theoretical perspective with basic assumptions that people act on the basis of the meanings that things have for them and that meanings emerge in the process of social interaction between people" (Shinebourne, 2011:44; see also Denzin,

1995:43-47 passim). At this stage, the analytical procedure shifts its focus from the empiricist to the constructionist, since the topic is approached as a construction of the experience into a narrative that is produced to be communicated. The originators of IPA strongly emphasize its focus on linguistic devices available to, and utilized by, the individual to bring forth his/her experiences.

An understanding of the main theoretical (and methodological) underpinnings of symbolic interactionism, as presented by Denzin (1995:43-44) will help illuminate the origins of IPA and its take on phenomenology.

Denzin presents 7 key points for symbolic interactionist thought (and action). First, interactionists see society as "a framework for the construction of diverse forms of social action" and they study "how people produce their situated versions of society" (1995:44). Second, they examine how people "do things together" (1995:44) – i.e. how everything is culturally grounded, shaped and interpreted. Third, interactionists "like texts which express an immediacy of experience, unmediated by the social scientist's interpretations" (1995:44) – they like to stay close to what the participants bring to the table and explore it from the participant's side. Fourth, interactionists understand "that their texts create the subject matter they write about" (1995:44) and that no imported model from other disciplines can fit the lived experience of a person. Fifth, interactionists "study the micro-power relations that structure the daily performances of race, ethnicity, gender and class in interactional situations" (1995:44). Sixth, interactionists focus on "biographies and lived experiences of interacting individuals… the stories people tell one another about their life experiences" (1995:44). Finally, interactionists ask "how" instead of "why" (1995:45). Therefore the seven points of Denzin can be crystalized to a methodological view that privileges the case study and the idiographic approach. They focus on how a person, living in a particular society at a particular time, coming into the communicative practice with a history/biography, utilizes linguistic, cultural and other symbolic resources available in order to present a version of his/her experiences, the way s/he understands the phenomena under examination. The researcher then engages in an analysis of the account produced by the participant, with special focus on the participant's way of presenting the case, the case itself, and the way it is being constructed for presentation within that particular interactive setting.

These fit in nicely with IPA's orientation to idiographic, exploratory enterprises, utilizing the hermeneutic circle. Essentially, researcher and participant engage in a mutual attempt to understand the subjective experience of the phenomenon under investigation. An acknowledgement of symbolic interactionism also opens up the possibility for a fruitful dialogue between IPA and Discursive Psychology since they place the development of the hermeneutic circle within the interactional context.

3.2.3: Discursive Psychology

For this study I employ Discursive Psychology (DP), in order to explore what it is that the participants do with their language during the interview: how do they construct themselves and the situation and what implications does this create about the way I am expected to interpret it? How does, what is said, justify or excuse the participants' actions, thoughts and behaviours?

DP is concerned with how people accomplish actions through their speech. It focuses on how, through their linguistic and discursive choices when giving accounts of phenomena, they create implications for the way they see the world, the way they exist in it, and the way they relate to others. Through their discursive constructions people create excuses, offer justifications, make accusations, give praise etc. "Instead of cognitive entities and processes being the principal analytic resource, as they are in mainstream psychological research, they are approached empirically as participants' ways of talking. The focus is on the way cognitions are constructed in talk, and how their implications are oriented to" (Edwards, 2001:3)

DP highlights three core approaches to discourse. First, that discourse is both constructed and constructive. In order to express themselves, people draw from a well of already established repertoires within a culture. At the same time, they can be inventive and original with their use of these repertoires in order to give rise to new meanings and ways of being and seeing the world. Second, that discourse is action oriented. People use these repertoires precisely because they want to be understood in a certain way by their interlocutors. Third, discourse is situated in time and space; in an interactional setting; and rhetorically. In other words, what is said can be understood according to what came before and after, according to the

identity/role the speaker enacts (e.g. a medical doctor in a hospital or a patient in the hospital) and in relation to what it counters: alternative constructions of events are thus used to manage attempts (real or potential) to counter them (Potter, 2012:119). "Thus, to understand discourse fully, one must examine it in situ, as it happens, bound up with its situational context" because "people construct versions of the world that have implications for their own dispositions and thoughts; and they construct versions of that psychological stuff to have implications for actions and events in the world" (Wiggins and Potter, 2008:77).

A vital tool in conducting DP is the "interpretative repertoire": "a lexicon or register of terms and metaphors drawn upon to characterize and evaluate actions and events" (Potter and Wetherell, 1987:138). Interpretative repertoires do a similar explanatory work as social representations, which are "dynamic models of the interrelations of schema and experience. They are group representations which allow communication between individuals about internal or abstract experiences and concepts" (Campbell and Muncher, 1987:489). An interpretative repertoire can be conceptualized as "a cluster of terms, categories and idioms that are closely conceptually organized. In most cases, interpretative repertoires are identified by analysing a set of open ended interviews in which participants address a set of different themes" (Potter, 2012:114).

An advantage of interpretative repertoires over social representations is the idea that rather than make the unlikely assumption that all the people who use them are members of the same social group, "it is much more fruitful to accept that repertoires are available to people with many different group memberships, and patterns of accounting may not be the neatest way of dividing up society, or confirming conventional categorizations" (Potter and Wetherell, 1987: 156). In other words, the concept of interpretative repertoires takes the focus away from the "nature" of the speakers (which is seen as somehow entangled with their group memberships) and places it on the phenomenon that is discussed. As a result of this, "a second major difference with social representations theory is that there is no attempt in discourse analysis to find consensus in the use of repertoires in the sense that some people are found to always use a certain repertoire, and certain people another" (Potter and Wetherell, 1987:156). The focus therefore remains firmly on the situation/occasion and not on the identity of the speaker. Finally, "discourse analysis has eschewed any form of cognitive reductionism, any

explanation which treats linguistic behaviour as a product of mental entities or processes […] The concern is firmly with language use: the way accounts are constructed and different functions […] the point is that analysis and explanation can be carried out at a social psychological level which is coherently separable from the cognitive" (Potter and Wetherell, 1987:157).

The founders of DP focused on the interactive unfolding and the multiple linguistic tools available to make oneself understood the way they want to be. In order to achieve that without explicitly saying "I wish to be understood as X", the speakers will have to address shared social ground with their interlocutors. As such, DP seems to have strong connections to 'positioning theory'.

What Davies and Harré defined as *positioning* can be seen as a discursive practice "whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and intersubjectively coherent participants in jointly produced storylines" (Davies and Harré, 1990:48), whereby interlocutors take up positions already offered by their society/culture to paint themselves in the light of the presuppositions and the implications that come from these. These positions allow the speakers to get their interlocutors to understand the message of their words on a deeper level, one informed by the way marked terms have been coloured in their culture and society throughout the years. Nevertheless, the authors stress, this process needs be neither conscious nor completely informed regarding the history of said marked terms. However the use of terms or syntactic structures does bring along with it assumptions and presuppositions about what is being said that go beyond the surface level of pragmatics.

Positioning theory refers to how the narrators utilize existing discourses available in their societies to align themselves with, in order to explain what they experience, how they experience it and why they experience it in that way (Harré, 1990). Burr describes Harré's work on positioning as emphasizing the role of choice in the Western mind-set and the moral responsibilities that come with it, as shaped by centuries of cultural products and discursive practices that emphasize this particular aspect of humans - in contrast to, say, Islamic cultures where "the focus

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is upon how people may bring themselves to act in accordance with choices and decisions that have already been made for them by Allah" (Burr, 1995:133). Harré and Van Langenhove argue that "in conversations, the social forces of acts of speaking, positions and storylines form mutually determining triads, called positioning-triangles. Adopting a 'position' involves the use of rhetorical devices by which oneself and other speakers are presented as standing in various kinds of relations. These include relations of power, relations of competence (knowledge/ignorance), relations of moral standing (trustworthy/trusting) and so on" (Van Langenhove and Harré, 1999:362). By (consciously or not) adopting positions, therefore, speakers signal to their interlocutors where they are coming from and create a context in which their utterances are to be interpreted.

DP therefore is preoccupied with both *construction* and *function* of speech. How is the utterance constructed by the individual, and what effects does this have in the communicative event? Essentially DP focuses on meaning-making, and therefore shares some ground with IPA (Eatough and Smith, 2008:184). From a DP perspective however, "the person providing the account is not consciously constructing, but a construction emerges as they try to make sense of a phenomenon or engage in unselfconscious social activities like blaming or justifying" (Edwards and Potter, 1992:34).

As a set of data I used the interviews carried out for the participants' exploration of their anger. These interviews were conducted using open-ended questions and are not naturally occurring data, thereby violating one of the rules for DP. However, I propose that they still make for fruitful ground for Discursive Psychology because the topic of the interviews invited the participants to display opinions and psychological states that would very likely require some further self-presentation and action-orientation for them to get their point across to their desired effect. Therefore I could still approach the same data with a different set of analytic questions for the Discursive Psychology part of my analysis.

My broad question revolved around the way the participants present themselves in the experience: what ownership do they claim over their emotions; and how do they justify their thoughts and actions during and about the emotional episode? As I became more and more familiar with the data the questions started getting more refined, focusing both on the micro-level of justifying their choices and on the

macro-level of making global presentations. These then started crystalizing into the phrases that guided my coding of the data: how is anger presented and what implications does this have for the presentation of the self and others? Similarly, how is the 'angry person' presented and how is the participant's image of himself constructed to compare to that?

In order to analyse the function of their accounts, I had to 'read' the context in which they were constructed (Edwards and Potter, 1992:33), both in the cultural context in which they were produced and in the communicational situation. Sitting across the table from a stranger who is asking them about issues that may compromise their self-image and public standing. The single word "anger" may be broadly seen as one of the six core human emotions (according to Ekman, 1973). However, often being classed as a "negative" emotion (mainly because of its ties to destructive, offensive or self-harming behaviour – Strongman, 1996:112), it carries harsh connotations (in the western world).

3.3 PROCEDURE

The way the data was collected included me sitting down for a face-to-face interview with participants (who willingly and voluntarily contacted me in order to participate in the study). The interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions, thus going against DP's principles (Wiggins and Potter, 2008:75) and towards IPA's principles.

In order to be eligible for the study, participants had to be male (to minimize gender differences in the perception of the gendered self; differences in physiological arousal; differences in expression and language); adults (for ethical reasons); and living in London for a minimum of 5 years. This final criterion was inserted in order to ensure that all participants have all been immersed in the British culture as found in the country's capital; and that they participate in the same rhythms of life and speech; hence I expect my participants' experiences to be presented in a way that can be expressed and understood within that community.

The researcher tries to make sense of the participant who tries to make sense of the experience (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009:3). There are several implications that arise because of this:

First of all, an implication is that the researcher does not have direct access to the participant's experience. S/he only has access to what the participant shares with them; and that, only through the researcher's own understanding of the world, the self, and the topic.

An equally important implication is that the participants do not have direct access to their discussed experiences either. These experiences are of the past, so they only have access to the memories of those experiences. Little cognitive, behavioural, judgmental or physiological changes due to the experience itself occur during the interview- and any changes in any of those domains is only down to the recall of the experience and the changes this recall brought rather than an encounter in the here-and-now of the interview.

If a participant was to be made angry, they would experience a change in cognition, behaviour, judgment and physiology – and the understanding of that would be the experience itself. For the needs of this study, however, the participants need to discuss their past experience of that emotional state. In other words, they need to put into words their recollection of that experience – and this gives rise to a whole new set of implications.

"Individual self-reports of emotion may be influenced by stereotypes and are certainly dependent upon memory (Fischer, 1993). Fieldman Barrett (1997) has shown that retrospective reports of emotions are influenced by an individual's perception of their personality" (Kring, 2000:223). Also, the participants did not generate their stories in isolation; they were in a room with me. This implies a need for the study of interaction itself. Starting from the previous point, the two interlocutors (researcher and participant) are engaged in a conversation – however, only one's face is at stake in this conversation; the participant's. Their experiences might set their public face at risk of compromise. They talk to me about their experience of that "negative" feeling and thus they portray themselves as having indulged in it. Since the study is largely phenomenological in scope, it is worth remembering that "Phenomenological Psychology is not concerned with understanding cognition… Instead, the intentional correlation leads to a focus on the experience of things in their appearing and the way in which they appear to us as we focus our attention on them in consciousness. The mind is, therefore, no longer understood as something that is private to an individual ('a ghost in the

machine') but instead recognized as something intrinsically public" (Langridge, 2007:13-14). Therefore, participants are invited to share their experiences of anger with me in the risk of being understood as not fitting into the socially acceptable way-of-seeing and way-of-being in the world.

3.4 Participants

Ten adult men took part in the study. They were recruited either through responding to advertisements that were posted around the university, or through snowballing from common acquaintances of ours. The degree of distance between researcher and participant was not always rigid (for example, participant 3 is a friend of a friend, so we had met twice on social occasions before doing the interview; and I could recognize participant 5 from his name and bands' pictures as, at the time of the interview, I was writing for a music magazine that covers this music). It was held up as a standard, however, to allow participants an exploration of their emotions without the stress that their participation might have an impact on their social lives. Given the grey area[21] in which most human relationships operate, the lack of familiarity between researcher and participant was necessary to allow for references to people and situations that might have been left outside the accounts if the participants feared this information might leak outside the boundaries of the present study.

As Denzin (1995:44) points out, from a symbolic-interactionist perspective it is important to have some notion of the biographies interviewees bring to the discussion to frame their experience. I will here attempt to present the participants in the way they presented themselves to me. Demographic details were chosen to provide enough information to give an impression of where their accounts are coming from, but also not enough information to jeopardise their anonymity. Additionally, the main aspects of themselves they brought into the conversation are included, since they formed the prism through which the participants were talking to me about their experiences of anger.

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[21] By "grey area" I am referring to the multiplicity of feelings we might be holding for any one of our close relationships. I might be best friends with someone but, in exploring my anger, I might find I need to refer to that one time that particular person made me furious – and how this was resolved; or not resolved.

P.1 is a 2nd generation British, in his mid-20s. He spoke a lot about his OCD and the frustrations this brings with it on an experiential (e.g. how he feels in front of his family about it) as well as the practical (e.g. how he will avoid places and situations he thinks will trigger his OCD) level.

P.2 is Canadian in his early 40s. He spoke a lot about how he relates to his memories both on a personal (e.g. how he deals with past trauma) and on a professional level (i.e. how he uses this connection to his past to bring the roles he plays as an actor to life).

P.3 is mixed-race Scandinavian in his late 30s. He spoke a lot about frustrations that arise due to lack of internal balance and social acceptance. This includes past abuse of recreational drugs, problems fitting-in because of his dark skin tone, unfair treatment by friends, and more.

P.4 is British in his mid-20s. He spoke about how, at the time of the interview, he was attempting to find some meaning and pleasure in life. Bringing his anger under control was one aspect of that, accompanied by attempts to balance work and pleasure, to find a way to communicate with his friends and girlfriend calmly, etc.

P.5 is Scandinavian in his early 30s. He spoke about his attempts, at the time of the interview, to rise above problems of the past (controlling anger being one of them, along with injuries which halted his career in sports, problematic communication with work partners etc.) and be a calm and composed person.

P.6 is European citizen in his mid-30s. He spoke about how, at the time of the interview, he was in the process of rediscovering himself away from his family influence and trying to push forward with his own decisions in life.

P.7 is British in his early 30s. He spoke about efforts to reclaim his standing in the world, which seems to be damaged after leaving the UK educational system. He spoke a lot about the discipline that comes with being in a boarding school and how he went through a period of his life feeling weak, attempted suicide and was admitted to a mental health institution.

P.8 is 2nd generation British in his early 40s. He spoke about frustrations that arise because of his family situation (partly caring for an autistic child), instances of being taken advantage of in the past, and how he pursues a new outlook on life

nowadays through studying law and keeping up with social issues in the UK and abroad.

P.9 is British in his early 30s. He spoke of frustrations that arise from his family circles (where violence is a commonplace and communication fails), from abusive relations of the past and present, and from his mental health which has in the past led him to be hospitalized. His viewpoint is a positive one though, stressing that he was, at the time of the interview, in the process of improving all these situations.

P.10 is British in his early 30s. He spoke a lot about his relationship, citing it as a source of anger and frustration as well as pleasure and comfort. His accounts were largely about balancing priorities between what he wants to do and what his girlfriend wants to do and mentioned in length how some of her family problems have had an impact on him, from which he had still, at the time of the interview, not recovered.

3.5 Researcher

The participants are invited to explore their experiences and present them as clearly but also as truthfully/accurately as possible. The researcher is invited to explore these narrations too, through the process of interpretation. A few words on myself, then, might provide transparency and add rigor to the analysis.

At the time of writing this (March 2019) I am a 32 year-old Greek, living in London since 2004. From a very young age I have been attracted to anger as found in Greek mythology, Biblical stories, tales and legends that are passed down from generation to generation, comic books, cartoons, and then later movies and music - I am an avid fan of heavy metal and its multiple sub-genres (indeed, incorporating the heavy metal cultural context was part of my initial plan for this study). I am also very preoccupied with aggressive thoughts and fantasies, and I still struggle to find ways to express my anger in a way that is appropriate to the social context and the interactional situation. I am working on these through creating my own art, studying psychology and psychoanalysis, and attending psychoanalytical therapy.

3.6 Recruitment

The study was approved by the Psychology Ethics Committee at City, University of London, in July 2016 (code: PSYETH (R/F) 15/16 213b). The approved *Standard Ethics Form* ensures that all measures are being taken to ensure the safety of researcher and participants; that participants are made aware of the topic of the study, the way their data will be stored, analysed, presented and destroyed; their assured anonymity; and their right to withdraw at any time or ask the researcher to remove their data from the study within 72 hours from the end of the interview. The ethics committee also approved the *interview schedule* (which consisted of the open-ended questions and some potential prompts), the *Participant Information Sheet* (where all the above are mentioned and clearly explained), the *Debrief Form* (where the participants are reminded of the study's aim and the way their data will be treated), as well as the *Recruitment Advert* which is a summarily presentation of the study's aims and an invitation for people who fulfil the inclusion criteria to contact the researcher so they can arrange a meeting to participate in the study. All this material can be found in Appendix E.

Each participant got in touch through the e-mail address supplied in the advert (participant 9 contacted the supervisor via email instead). Following an initial screening, where they had to confirm that they meet the inclusion criteria of being male, adults and living in London for a minimum of five years (two people who responded to the advert could not be included in the study due to violations of one of those), the participant information sheet was sent to each participant and an interview place and time was arranged. Most interviews took place in semi-private places: Participants 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9 and 10 were interviewed in rooms at City University that I had booked especially for the occasion. The participants who weren't students were signed in at the reception desk – the rest found me in the allocated room. The participants were familiarized with the safety instructions (like how to contact the security in case of emergency; or where to go in case of an evacuation process). Participant 4 was interviewed at his workplace: he works at a pub in north London and the interview took place at the staff room, which was sufficiently quiet for the interview to go on uninterrupted and to be recorded

clearly. Other staff members (and customers) were in the premises but they did not enter the room, allowing the participant free expression. Participant 5 was interviewed at his house after his request because of long working hours and inconvenient location. I informed a friend about the address I was visiting and instructed him to try and contact me if I hadn't sent a message within 3 hours of the beginning of the interview. The participant's wife was on the lower floor of their house and the interview took place in the upper floor. Participant 6 was interviewed at his workspace: a rehearsal and recording studio. Again, I informed the same friend about the address I was visiting and gave him the same instructions. The interview took place in out-of-hours at the studio, which allowed us a great degree of quiet even though owners of adjacent studios were in the building.

Following our introductions and me welcoming them to the room, participants were presented with the participant information sheet once more, as well as the consent form. I explained the details of the study, their right to withdraw at any time, their guaranteed anonymity and the use their data will be put to. After making sure they had no questions about the procedure, participants gave consent by signing the form. The interviews were invariably held one-to-one, face-to-face to allow the participants a degree of relaxation and to avoid having to conform or comply with other participants' accounts, thus jeopardising the idiographic nature of the exploration. Interviews were audio-recorded in two devices (an mp3 player and my mobile phone), both of which were constantly visible to the participants to remind them of the ongoing interview.

3.7 Why Men?

Anger is linked to aggression and violence, which are in turn linked to the hormone testosterone (e.g. Peterson and Harmon-Jones, 2012). Therefore, the basis for differences in the experience of anger between men and women is already there from the biological underpinnings of each sex: men are by nature designed to be more responsive to anger than women do. Physiological reactions of men's and women's bodies in anger seem to be different, too – as well as the medical conditions they lead to (Kring, 2000:220).

Perhaps more importantly, however, men and women have different ways of perceiving and expressing themselves and their emotions, based largely on notions of what constitutes masculinity or femininity within a particular culture. In Europe and England, the social construct which links males to anger is based on the "warrior values" that for many centuries have been seen as a central part of being masculine. These involve "physical courage, endurance, strength and skill, honour" as McCarthy (1994:106) writes. The author gives a brief history of the relation between men and the "aspirational and normative" (idem) warrior code. In England, from the middle ages anger and aggression were linked to chivalry and, whereas the reification of these qualities saw a brief and slight decline during the age of the Enlightenment, it was back with romanticism which revolved to a great extent around the cult of the hero (McCarthy, 1994:114). The fact that people in Europe in the 20th century were going to school and could read meant they would read the tales of the warriors and in that way perpetuate in their imagination the aspiration towards these values.

From a biological perspective "one of the best replicated findings in psychology is the existence of sex differences in the rate and level of aggressive behaviour" (Campbell and Muncer, 1987:489), from a social perspective. Contrary to falsely cited clinical literature, "women do not report suppressing their anger more often than men nor do men report expressing their anger outwardly more often than women." (Kring, 2000:217). However "women experience more anxiety about expressing aggression than do men" (Campbell and Muncer, 1987:491), despite reporting "more frequent and intense experience of emotion than men do" (Lench, Flores & Bench, p.838). So even though men tend to avoid expressing a richness of emotional experiences when talking to others, they do tend to both report more anger and to feel more comfortable reporting this anger than women do. This can be best seen as the result of socialization and education on what is considered appropriate within culturally determined gender roles (Lench, Flores & Bench, p.838).

"At least three things can be seen to be done via the rhetoric of emotional control: It (1) reproduces an important part of the cultural view of emotion (and then implicitly of women as the more emotional gender) as irrational, weak and dangerous; (2) minimally elevates the social status of the person who claims the need or ability to self-control emotions; and (3) opposes the

view of the feminine self as dangerous when it is reversed, that is, when the speaker denies the need for or possibility of control of emotion" (Lutz, 2008:65)

For men, this assignment of appropriate experience and expression of emotion according to gender has been shown to create a gender role conflict, where they experience a "restriction of thoughts, feelings and behaviour to appear stereotypically masculine" (Cohn, Seibert and Zeichner, 2009). This has an effect on how they express their anger and other emotions (O'Neill, 1981). Going back to the social dimension of emotions, and the impact they have on the way one is seen by his/her surroundings:

 "Men generally have higher levels of aggression and are more willing to discuss aggressive feelings and behaviour (Duncan and Hobson 1972; Frodi et al. 1977). A number of writers have even suggested that among males failure to react aggressively under certain forms of provocation may lead to negative labelling (Toch 1969; Wolfgang and Ferracuti 1967). Aggressive episodes, then, are viewed not as a breakdown of control but as the rehearsal of a required social performance" (Campbell and Muncer, 1987:491).

Given that research already exists in the field, and my emic approach as a male, I only used males as participants in order to increase sample homogeneity according to IPA principles and gain a more in-depth perspective into how men think and talk about anger. "In general, boys learn to conceal their feelings, whereas girls learn to more freely express their feelings while also learning how to control their expressive behaviour. Thus, the expression of emotion appears to be more heavily socialized than the experience of emotion" (Kring and Gordon; 1998:668)

When it comes to expressing emotions, men appear to be very limited in what they are socially allowed to do. Evidence suggests that "a masculine-relevant dispositional factor, gender role conflict (GRC), potentiates aggression in men (Cohn & Zeichner, 2006; Cohn, Zeichner, & Seibert, 2008). GRC reflects "a psychological state in which socialized gender roles have negative consequences on the person and others" (O' Neill, Good, & Holmes, 1995, p.167), resulting in men's restriction of thoughts, feelings, and behaviour, to appear stereotypically masculine, exerting negative effects in intra- and interpersonal domains (O' Neill, 2008; Shepard, 2002)" (Cohn, Seibert and Zeichner, 2009:218)

Anger, nevertheless, seems to hold a special place in that limited space. It appears that anger (again, its controlled, appropriate expression) is the one emotion that makes men appear closer to the stereotype of men to others around them. To that extent, other emotions that demand expression come out camouflaged as anger (Cohn, Seibert and Zeichner, 2009:219).

Reviewing studies on the difference of anger experience between men and women, Kring (2000) notes that "in the context of close relationships, the reasons why men and women get angry appear to differ. Specifically, women tend to be angered by the negative behaviours of men, whereas men tend to be angered by women's negative emotional reactions and self-focused behaviour" (Kring, 2000:213).

Some gender differences in the reports of anger expression have been reported, but these differences usually have to do with the manner, not the frequency of expression. "Specifically, men report that they physically assault objects and people (e.g., hitting, throwing) and verbally assault people (e.g. name-calling, sarcasm) more often than women, whereas women cry more often when angry" (Kring, 2000:218). Hence, the male way of *doing* anger is one of aggression and confrontation and therefore action, whereas the female way is one of withholding and inaction. This brings the focus on the importance of shaping the expression in a way that brings the individual's self-perception in harmony with the expectations gender roles generate in society. Working with measures of self-report on gender-role uptakes, "Kopper and colleagues have found gender role differences […] suggesting that feminine sex role characteristics are associated with suppressing anger and masculine sex role characteristics are associated with outwardly expressing anger" (Kring, 2000:218).

The act of expressing anger also sees differences in the way the target shapes the expression. "Blier and Blier-Wilson (1989) found that men reported more confidence in expressing their anger to other men than to women. Moreover, women were more confident in expressing their anger to other women than men were" (Kring, 2000:218). Once can only speculate about the reasons that cause this, but some element of self-awareness as belonging to one of the two sexes and the way this expression will be received by the audience and other participating members must be in place for this difference to exist. "Both men and women

reported experiencing negative consequences following a particularly severe anger episode. In the context of close relationships, men reported expecting that their partner will display hurt feelings and reject them in response to their anger, whereas women expected that they would be mocked by their partner" (Kring, 2000:221). The direction of anger's expression therefore also seems to be gender-bound but the level of relationship with the target of anger is also a central concern. "Women are more likely to direct their anger toward a male relationship partner, whereas men are more likely to direct their anger toward male strangers […] particularly if the object and target of anger are the same. By contrast, women are more likely to express anger towards familiar or close others, whether be male or female, particularly if the object and target of anger are different" (Kring, 2000:219). In other words, men are more likely to deflect the anger of theirs and their partner's towards strangers, whereas females are more likely to express their anger to their male partners especially if it was brought about by a third person or situation. Keeping anger within male circles seems to have been socially shaped to safeguard romantic relationships, while *allowing* women to express their anger to men does the same. In the former case, the man turns his anger to someone that has been brought up to deal with anger, whereas in the latter case the man serves the role of being strong enough to receive the woman's anger *and not retaliate*. Therefore, there seems to be an element of responsibility attached to men's anger, one that presupposes that in order to do anger 'like a man', one needs to be careful of the targets he chooses for the expression of that emotion.

Campbell and Muncher (1987:503) note that, for men, the equality of the protagonist in terms of sex and age was paramount for the 'appropriate' expression of aggressive behaviour. On the other hand, "there was a general agreement on the importance of territoriality in fighting. Men were seen as fighting legitimately in defence of their neighbourhood, their friends or their local bar" (idem, p. 503) regardless of the protagonist's identity.

Therefore, for men "the form of control was represented as more of a social management issue than one of self-control" (Campbell and Muncher, 1987:502) The authors stress that, among their sample, "it was generally agreed that fights should not be sought out for their own sake" (Ibid., p.505), furthering the link between appropriate responses and appropriate masculinity. The authors then add that, according to their participants, "fights should be undertaken only when the

opponent refused to show sufficient contrition for his offence" (Idem.). What this sentence reveals is that anger responses are still very much linked to one's own appraisal of the situation, and that the way one constructs the anger situation in his head is usually one where the target has committed an offence. The angry person is then brought to the position of the judge – a judge of whether the offender has regretted their action *enough*. This brings back the "ought" of the anger that was mentioned earlier but also, when considered alongside to the rest of the material in this section, constructs the men as gatekeepers of social order and personal/familial/territorial honour.

These attributes associated with how each person is expected to attend to their anger experiences depending on their gender appear to have formed criteria for judging anger expression in others based on their gender. "Men's and women's anger is also judged differently by men and women. For example, a vignette study by Smith et al. (1989) indicated that men rated anger from men and women more appropriate than women did" (Kring, 2000:221), whereas it wouldn't be false to say that, even to this day, "angry women are more likely to be called hostile or bitchy, whereas men who display anger may be referred to a strong (Shields, 1987; Tavris, 1989)" (Kring, 2000:223).

3.8 Other Inclusion Criteria

Of course, how one understands themselves, their gender, and anger is largely based on the cultural frame they operate in. Therefore, I will limit my participants to British nationals or to people that they have lived in the U.K. for a minimum of 5 years, which is the time that is required in order to apply for naturalisation into the British society.

(As found in: https://www.gov.uk/british-citizenship at the beginning of this research)

The criterion of living in London comes not so much as an attempt to define the way participants may have experienced anger, but mostly as an attempt to focus on the way they have learnt to express it. This does service to the study (since I support the view that the culture influences the results) and to the city (since it brings people from different parts of the planet in geographical proximity and thus "forces" them to learn to communicate with one-another).

To better understand the universality of the emotion, and to reflect the multicultural society of London, I had no exclusion criteria for race, ethnicity or social status.

The inclusion criteria with regards to anger relate to self-reported anger rather than any objective measure. The main inclusion criterion is that anger has a prominent presence in the life of the participant. This presence can take many forms (and exploring those forms is actually the very question that drives this research). Therefore, no objective way of measuring anger (e.g. Sternberg's State-Trait Anger Inventory or the BUSS Aggression Questionnaire) can be brought into the recruitment process as this would exclude cases of people who experience anger in different ways. Consequently, as long as one reported that anger is something they have intense and vivid impressions and experiences of, they qualified for the interview.

CHAPTER 4: ANGER IN THE BRITISH CULTURE

A community may be tied together through a variety of features its members share, like location, language, social and cultural practices, etc. The present study assumes a tie among participants that is brought about through the space they occupy (London) and the language they employ to communicate with other members of the London community.

There are always competing discourses that surround core concepts in each community. Different institutions address anger from a different angle. For example, an English Socialist Newspaper may urge for (justified) anger to be directed towards the Capitalist establishment, whereas an English Neoliberal newspaper may condemn the (unjustified) anger of those opposing the establishment.

This chapter presents some of the ways anger is represented in electronic forms in the British culture.

4.1: Google Search

The three main themes that arise from the analysis of the top-100 Google-hits are: "Help-Control", "The Faces of Anger", and "Definitions of Anger". "Help-Control" was used as a label to encapsulate the urgings of the websites towards the users: the main idea is that anger needs to be controlled at all costs, and the underlying idea is that the user is not well-equipped to acquire this control over his/her anger by him/herself. "The Faces of Anger" arose as an umbrella-term for websites that try to explain how anger might influence one's life. Essentially, it brought together websites that try to present anger under a particular light, with views to linking it to notions of well-being and socialization techniques. In other words, this theme encapsulates websites' theories and interpretations of anger. "Definitions of Anger", on the other hand, is a theme that brings together websites whose primary goal is to define anger without any reference to consequences it might have for a person: a surface-level, dictionary-style presentation of the lexical item. Although there is some occasional overlap between themes in single items, the prevailing theme is usually easy to identify. For example, search result no.15 is a definition of anger from the Cambridge English Dictionary which nevertheless

portrays anger as harmful and intrusive (which in turn falls under the "The Faces of Anger" theme): "a strong feeling that makes you want to hurt someone or be unpleasant because of…". Despite its clear presentation of anger as destructive, the sneak-peek does not urge one to take action or be alert about anger – therefore, it would fall under the "The Faces of Anger" instead of "Help-Control". Since the text primarily attempts to offer an explanation of what anger is, however, the item falls under the category "Definitions of Anger" instead of "The Faces of Anger".

Purely in terms of quantity, the prevailing theme is "Help-Control": websites giving advice on how and/or why anger can and must be controlled. 50 out of the 100 Google-items fall within this theme. It is worth reminding ourselves that the Google hit-list is shaped by the items people do actually search for, so this means that a large proportion of the people in the UK who google about anger are actually trying to find something to help them with this state of theirs. At the same time, however, this also means that people who google "anger" will be presented with an overwhelming impression that anger must be managed and that the individual may need help to do that. Therefore, anger is immediately portrayed as a both nasty and overpowering state. The label "Help-Control" was chosen for this theme to underline the urgency and sense of necessity that comes with these websites' narratives.

"The Faces of Anger" brings up 22 items but no concrete description of what anger looks like. The label was therefore chosen to highlight the different (and occasionally conflicting) information found in the different websites. Most of the results' "sneak-peeks" try to strike a balance between three qualities: "natural", "destructive" and "potentially good". Therefore anger is conceptualized by this Google-list as a state that is hard to explore, accept or use. It is natural (as 10 out the 22 sneak-peeks stress) but also destructive (as 13/22 hits underline) and, whereas it can be used for good, only 3 items from the list present it in that light. So, from a sum of these as they are presented in a list, the person is left rather perplexed: anger is a human emotion and therefore feeling angry is natural – should they feel guilty about it though? Or maybe proud? Is experiencing the emotion what makes anger and the angry person good or bad? Or is it the way the emotion is expressed?

It is perhaps because of this perennially-fleeting and hard-to-grasp nature of anger that the third theme in this Google-analysis is "Definitions of Anger" (although with only 5 out of the 100 hits): people are actively trying to understand what anger is and how it can be defined. Presumably, an individual hears about the word "anger" and understands that it describes some of his/her experiences and so tries to get a definition of the term to see if his/her experiences can be clearly labelled as "anger". Perhaps this search for a definition is in an attempt to answer a question posed by one of the previous themes: What is and what is not anger? Is there a natural way to be angry and, if so, what is that? Should certain behaviours, thoughts or affects be kept in check? Could anger and these behaviours, thoughts, affects be helpful? How and where to ask for help?

A naïve person googling for anger, therefore, will be presented with an idea that anger is a natural emotion which however brings out the worse in humans. The Google-search will also bring with it a strong impression that people need help to deal with anger. Anger is projected as an emotional state that is hard to describe as it can take different shapes and forms – it usually ends up in disaster though, damaging relationships, making people lose face and leading to a feeling of helplessness. Interestingly, the Google-search does *not* establish a strong link between anger and aggression, physical abuse and violence. Instead, the overall picture that emerges is one of the angry person *suffering* from anger, as the effects of that state primarily return to the person experiencing it instead of affecting other parties.

4.2 Anger Management Centres

For this part of the study, I look at how anger, persons and the relationship between them are presented in 9 London-based AMCs[22]. This data was collected and analysed early in 2016 (re-touched mid-2018) to inform my understanding of the interviews as they unfolded, as well as the subsequent analyses. I start by showing how they accomplish the construction of expert discourses and then turn

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[22] These 9 centres are: Priory, Anger Clinic, The British Association of Anger Management (BAAM), The Centre for Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy, Anger Planet, Efficacy, Harley Centre, Anger Management London, Beating Anger.

to the themes they bring up about anger and the angry person. The process of claiming expertise and presenting a (virtually) uni-dimensional take on the phenomenon has implications for the way people will talk about this phenomenon to a stranger. In particular, I hypothesize that this study's participants came into the interview setting trying to figure out what I expected to hear from them. Given that psychology and counselling are bordering on the therapies offered by these centres, they would probably expect me to expect them to give similar accounts because this is what they thought I was interested in.

Theme 1: _Pathology_

AMCs are there to help people deal with their _problem_, which is anger. The first discourse AMCs draw upon to address their clients is that of pathology. Anger is presented as a pathological item, either a symptom/result or a cause of cognitive and bodily dysfunctions.

The theme of "anger as pathology" paints the emotion as a force that harms the individual. Anger disrupts mental balance, afflicts the body, and prevents the afflicted from communicating that very state in a way that can be understood by others. As an extension of that, the angry persons are presented as under the influence of anger, unable to think, act or express themselves appropriately (or at least as they would in their calm state) and are therefore portrayed as unable to help or to conduct themselves.

Anger Clinic marks it as an emotion neighbouring to aggression, bitterness, and hatred, exclusively. Anger is therefore marked as a "negatively charged" emotion, something that gives rise to tensions within the individual and his/her relations to other people (since all three imply not only an emotional and cognitive state, but also a disposition, a behaviour and an attitude towards others), and something that goes hand-in-hand with dysphoria (as expressed through negative thinking). Anger is presented as a pathogen here, the advent of which disrupts the person's composure and social relations.

BAAM links it to stress (anger fuelled by stress) and states that anger can cause somatic discomfort, even illness "such as acid reflux, headaches, anxiety etc.". Stress has a cognitive and a bodily aspect and the two are presented here as

forming a vicious cycle: stress negatively affects the mind and body of the sufferer. This eventually generates anger (a symptom of stress) which in turn generates bodily symptoms[23]. On the cognitive side, the centre BAAM presents the angry person as the victim of frustration, a person who cannot understand what it is that sweeps him/her into that type of behaviour. Anger, therefore, is once again conceptualized as something that may or may not be based on a valid, real stimulus – but is nevertheless a problem of the sufferer's thinking and understanding of situations. Anger is in this way presented as the result of problematic thinking, not the cause of it, implying that if it weren't for these mistaken attitudes, anger would have no place in the person's life. The sufferer must first and foremost correct his/her *mistaken* beliefs and learn how to manage stress in order to avoid getting angry.

The *Centre for Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy* describes anger as arising from extensive stress in the body and leading to a *sense* (hence cognitive appraisal) "of threat, violation, frustration, fear and guilt". Consequently, the centre furthers the link between stress and anger as presented by BAAM to state that the angry person will proceed with interpreting their environment in a toxic way and therefore will find it difficult to successfully interact with it. All of these hark back to the loss of agency and the fear in uncertainty of what the next anger episode will be like – or when it will strike. Lack of logic or balance are therefore seen as inherent in the state of anger, further highlighting the notion of the individual being swept up in a wave of anger instead of working with that anger. The centre states that anger stems from "deeper core belief and schemas from early life (up to sixteen)". Anger is thus seen as a symptom of dysfunctional thinking which has been solidified over years of repetition of this mode. Examples of the situations that led to this dysfunctional thinking can be found in "subjugation, mistrust, punitive parent, emotional deprivation, vulnerability to harm from others not [sic] being good enough/worthy". The anger of the sufferer then is linked to dysfunctional relationships with others which have crystalized into "underlying non-conscious beliefs". These subsequently give rise to dysfunctional thinking, which drives the

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[23] Presumably, given what is stated in this study's introduction about the pre- and post-monitoring stage of emotion, these bodily symptoms will lead to some appraisal similar to fear which will then generate more stress and, therefore, more anger.

person to compare him/herself with others and consistently sees her/himself as inferior. In other words, it is almost as if the person has created a blueprint from previous unhealthy relationships and repeats that in their head, letting it guide their future relationships; and thus sabotaging oneself, perpetuating the demise and staying out of control of his/her anger. The service user, consequently, is positioned as someone who has been damaged by these relationships; someone who has lost sight of his/her goals, lost touch with his/her emotions, or even lost his/her sense of self.

Similarly, *Anger Planet* presents anger as "a symptom of a wind-up"; hence the angry person as having fallen for the emotion's bait. The control of anger is something that is taught, therefore, through tackling the way one approaches the world, the way one thinks about themselves and others and the way one's bodily functions contribute to mental health. The immediate measures for anger control the centre offers are there to stop people from "destructive temper outbursts", again stressing the person's loss of control and agency during the anger episodes which hint towards a pathological state. "We get stuck in angry behaviour" the centre states, implying that once this has been established as a response to situations it is very difficult to disengage and to see other ways of thinking and acting.

Efficacy states that through controlled breathing they can help the sufferer bring the whole surge of anger under control. Lack of such control is presented as the internal (bodily) triggers of a person. External triggers correspond to reactions to situations, therefore cognitive orientations. The centre offers the sufferer the chance to "rescript" their internal dialogues and thus change the way they understand, analyse and respond to situations. Controlling anger is also portrayed as assessing goals and coming up with plans to achieve them. Anger is therefore conceptualized as the result of one's failure to achieve one's goals and an expression of the frustration this brings.

Besides bodily and cognitive symptoms, another part of anger's pathology is to be found in the act of communication between the service-seeker and his/her surroundings. This becomes most evident when looking at how AMCs suggest they can help the service-seekers. By focusing on the ways each AMC offer to help the service-seekers manage their anger we learn more about how anger is

conceptualized: in order to offer a cure, an understanding of the disease (of what it includes, how it manifests and why it comes about) is necessary.

Harley Centre focuses on improving the patients' "communication skills and self-expression". The expression of anger consists of two points: the understanding of its conception and the transmission of that understanding. How one thinks about anger and how s/he communicates it are seen as the two problematic factors the sufferer must tackle. This implies again a pathological state of anger in the sufferer (probably blowing things out of proportion and taking them too seriously, as previous AMCs have presented) and a dysfunctional communication of that state. Anger-provoking situations, then, are best managed through "coping strategies and tools" which allow the sufferer a more well-designed and functional approach both to his/her thoughts during the situation and the way s/he expresses these thoughts.

BAAM stresses that, if nothing else, the service-user must learn how to express anger cleanly. This is important in its own right, as the centre in that way states that anger *should* be expressed – only in the right way, though. Not knowing the right way to express anger is therefore constructed as an integral part of the anger pathology.

Anger Planet points to the way anger distorts stimuli and reactions: anger is presented as arising from a form of blowing (little) things out of proportion, as well as a way of engaging with/submitting to negative and critical thoughts. At the same time, the message the angry person sends is presented as difficult for others to grasp, since the person's reason and logic have given way to angry behaviour (which by analogy is presented as muting the logic of an argument) – the result of this is that the person's message is not heard. Anger therefore is doubly dangerous: it leads the person down dangerous and illogical mental paths while distorting the message of dysphoria that could be heard by others if anger was not in the way.

In *Anger Management London's* portrayal anger is *a way* of expressing oneself. It is presented as inherently problematic though, as it is "outbursts" of anger the person employs instead of controlled, constructive use of that anger. Anger, then, is seen as having a pulse of its own; as a force that sweeps the individual into a one-way path where anger dictates their thoughts and actions. Moreover, their presentation makes it look as if the help-seeker knows no other way of expressing themselves than through these outbursts, which conceptualizes the help-seeker as

immature communicator. Anger then is portrayed also as the result of one's way of relating to other people, establishing assumptions and implications for one's own self-image, sense of self-worth, self-esteem etc. These assumptions and implications are invariably of a negative nature: anger is not empowering the individual; rather, it brings their sense of self-worth, self-esteem and self-image down. Anger then is mapped as more a problem with one's own self than one's problems with others.

For *The Centre for Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy*, the destructive nature of anger is identified as "outbursts" and "loss of control" and therefore linked to the individual's lack of agency over his/her own actions. The individual's experience is then linked to a sense of threat, violation, fear and guilt. This signifies that what brought the person to seek help from them is the destructive (and socially-alienating) effects of anger which require immediate attention from the calm and steady practitioners of the centre.

Efficacy extends their ways of helping the service-user manage their anger to social terrains, where the centre offers social skills training (to teach participants appropriate behaviour and responses) and Assertiveness Training and Conflict Resolution, where the sufferer can learn how to project their aggressiveness as ("the more acceptable") assertiveness. Again, anger is constructed as leading the angry person towards an unacceptable or fruitless mode of communication.

Priory, finally, tailors its programmes according to each sufferer's needs, but they all revolve around "interpersonal communication" and "learning skills of appreciating other people's points of view". Anger, then, is seen as the breakdown of one's understanding of what the other person asks of them, followed by inappropriate communication of their frustration.

Theme 2: *Research (Evidence-Based Practice)*

To pathologize anger, AMCs draw on discourses of "research". Anger and the angry person are treated here as objects of study – a study that the AMCs imply they have carried out. Their way of writing is an impersonal one, presenting their viewpoints as incontestable "truths". In their texts, the angry person is presented

as indistinguishable from other angry persons. Their voices are presented as a single one when the centres attempt to communicate or "quote" what the angry person is thinking.

Anger Planet states that "once you see "there is light at the end of the tunnel" you will start to feel calmer and more at ease", implying that the sufferer's condition is exaggerated from their problematic thinking which leaves them unable to see beyond that and that the centre has had many cases like that one in the past – the present service-user will be no exception. Also, the progress from the angry and restless state to the calmer one is presented as a certainty. *Anger Clinic* states that their mission is to help the service-user develop an understanding of the relationship between negative thinking and anger and how to change it. This implies that the centre's history allows its practitioners to have a general view of anger that can be applied to all cases of patients. Moreover, it implies that the patients have a lesser understanding of their own anger than the centre has through its practitioners' experience. *BAAM* states that anger and mischief (which go hand-in-hand in the centre's view) have four purposes that the client has to learn and recognize. This statement places the centre in an asymmetrical relationship to the client. It presupposes that the centre has carried out research which has demonstrated that there are *four* purposes behind anger and mischief – not three, not five. This constructs the centre as an evidence-based practice place, where the service-user will learn new things about their own emotional experience. The centre builds on this promise of new knowledge by stating that the service-seekers usually ignore the "unexpected option" of not picking up the "tug of war" that is anger. Therefore, the clients are constructed as lacking knowledge about their state and the centre is constructed as the bearer of that knowledge. *Anger Management London* offers that one will "be helped to find other ways to express yourself other than through outbursts of anger". The centre therefore posits that "outbursts" of anger is the only way any service-user knows how to communicate their anger and positions its practitioners as having superior skills and ready to help the service-seekers. The impersonal tone also creates the implication that many others have been helped in the past. *The Centre for Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy* divides its programme into three stages which presuppose a prior-knowledge of what is urgent for the service-seeker and what is going to be the long-term work. The necessity for three stages is presumed to have arisen through previous research

and practice of the centre; this understanding has come about through the practitioners' previous experience with patients which now informs their practice. The first stage offers techniques to bring anger's symptoms "immediately" under control.

Theme 3: *Guidance*

Finally, the AMCs draw on discourses of guidance in order to accomplish what they propose to be doing: offering their service-users ways for managing their anger more effectively. Here the AMCs claim expertise both by positioning their practice as having a deeper understanding of anger, and by stressing they have the ways to alleviate the suffering of their patients. In presenting this process, the AMCs construct relationships of power asymmetry between their practitioners and the service-users.

Harley Centre promises to "work with" the patients to improve their "communication skills and self-expression" through "coping strategies and tools". Initially the centre establishes that there will be an element of co-operation between their practitioners and the service-user; they will "work together". This does not serve the function of positioning the two entities on the same power level. On the contrary, it stresses indirectly that the service-user will have to be actively engaged in the process and follow the guidance offered by the practitioner. The power asymmetry is further solidified by the fact that it is the centre that will judge how much the service-user's communication skills and self-expression have improved. In that way, the centre constructs its practice as holding the key to these coping strategies and tools which they offer to the service-user

BAAM clearly labels anger as a symptom of maladaptive attitudes and underlines that, unless people let the specialists in and allow them to "identify and replace their mistaken attitudes", they are bound to "react and find themselves in another anger outburst situation". Therefore, the centre presents a picture where it knows something about the participants that they do not know about themselves and can guide them towards the "right" path. The centre aims to help people control their "thoughts and mistaken beliefs" and, where it is not possible to do that, to teach them "how to manage stress" and "how to express anger cleanly". An element of

teaching and learning is foregrounded, positioning the practitioners and the service-users on the two ends.

Anger Planet's approach is "integrative, combining psycho-education with ideas from Gestalt, Existential and Body Psychotherapy". From the start, then, the centre projects a number of techniques that are removed from the average person's list of skills, therefore signalling the need for the angry person to turn to them for guidance. The centre's course content teases some of the ways they will help the client, through teaching them the answers to simple questions like "How can little things make me so angry?", "How can I control my angry behaviour?", "How can I get my message across and be heard?" "How does the justice of my message get lost in my angry behaviour?", and "Dealing with negative and critical thoughts". The implication thereby created is that the service-seeker wants the answers to these questions that the centre holds; maybe, they need to learn how to ask these particular questions, too. The centre is therefore showing them a way they could not see until they reached out for the centre's services.

In their sessions, *Anger Management London's* practitioners will help participants "investigate the relationship you have with people with whom you most often experience anger. You will understand what is going on for you in relation to those people and how you might relate to them in a way that reduces your anger". The centre's practitioners are constructed as figures that *will* (i.e. certainly) lead the service-users to understand the roots of their anger and techniques to ameliorate its effects.

The Centre for Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy divides its programme into three stages. At stage 1, "clients often tape sessions which are initially designed to change their anger behaviours through specific techniques that are used immediately to bring anger symptoms under control". Stage 1 is consequently designed as a 'crash course' to the distressed service-seeker by the calm and steady practitioners of the centre. Stage 2 of the programme is designed "to challenge negative thoughts and beliefs about the self, other people, and their future". Anger here is portrayed as dysfunctional thinking and thus a problem of the person, since the treatment aims to discover "what errors of logic are being made" and to substitute them with "a more balanced way of thinking". The unsaid implication here is that the centre's practitioners uphold the standards of logic and of balanced ways of thinking. Stage

3 focuses on "deeper core belief and schemas from early life (up to sixteen) which are then modified to aid in relapse prevention". Again, the centre's positioning here is one where they have the capability to undo years of toxic activities and therefore as something that the service-user should put his/her trust on.

Efficacy conceptualizes anger as a multi-dimensional construct through the various different techniques they employ for its control. The first set of techniques focuses on one's breathing. By controlling one's breathing, one controls one's body and, to some extent, the physiological processes in it. From the get-go, therefore, the centre presents its practice as able to help even with matters that might seem trivial to the service-user. Responses to external triggers also involve "time-out strategies", where the individual actively removes him/herself from "potentially explosive situations".

A slightly different approach is offered by the centre Beating Anger. Whereas the other AMCs in this list insist that their approach can work as a blanket for all angry people, *Beating Anger* offers "workshops" where the sufferer can "discover [their] triggers, anger styles, where [their] anger comes from, why [they] react the way [they] do, identify [their] own natural resources (…) identify [their] anger substitutes, learn simple coping strategies, deal with trauma (…) and generally beat theirs and other peoples anger". It is interesting to note that, instead of "therapy", this AMC offers "workshops". Anger, therefore, is conceptualized not as something to be cured, but as something to be worked on; an integral part of the human experience which the visitor of the centre aims to master. They master this by discovering what causes their anger (triggers, trauma); exploring how it is expressed (anger styles, why they react the way they do); and by bringing it under control. This control is presented as a capacity the person has at their disposal from within (natural resources), as a technique (coping strategies), or as something they can use in the place of anger (substitutes).

Constructions of pathology, evidence-based practice and guidance as outlined in the preceding pages demonstrate that the AMCs draw on expert discourses in their constructions of anger. The AMCs provide both an explanation of why anger manifests the way it does; in whom anger is found; and a sense of what anger is like in their effort to construct expert discourses on the matter. They make factual

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claims/statements about what anger is and how the angry person behaves, offer "objective" assessments of situations about how anger arises, and offer "tried and tested" methods that will help the service-users to moderate the negative effects of anger (that is, what the AMCs present as negative- and therefore in the process declaring a knowledge of the difference between the positive and the negative aspects of anger, and having the ability to draw a line between them).

Through their constructions of expertise the AMCs also lay out themes about what anger and the angry person is. (i) Anger is seen as a result and a cause of problems with one's mind and body. (ii) The angry person is therefore conceptualized as a sufferer in the way they think, feel, and behave. (iii) These, combined, give rise to notions of interpersonal problems that await the angry person. Notions of violence and relationship breakdowns are found throughout the AMCs' websites.

Anger is thus conceptualized as a maladaptive and dysfunctional response to situations. The dysfunctional nature of those responses might be down to the individual's appraisal and comprehension of the situation, their bodily responses to those, or the communicative tools and strategies they employ to express themselves to others. Anger is seen as an "outburst" which leaves little to no choice of alternative thinking or action to the sufferer.

This, in turn, creates assumptions about the angry person. They are portrayed as unable to shake off the blindfolds of anger because within these blindfolds is how they have learnt to operate. These blindfolds symbolize the person's readiness to lose themselves in the surge of anger and their roots can be found in the person's psychological damage or distress, dysfunctional attitudes, difficulty in articulating their thoughts, lack of self-control, and immaturity. The people seeking help from these centres are seen, therefore, as seeking help in order to re-wire themselves to respond more effectively to situations.

This version of anger and the angry person is also seen in the non-textual ways of communication AMCs employ. The people portrayed in their pictures are either in despair or in full-blown rage. For example, Anger Planet shows the picture of a man leaning against a wall, covering his face with his hand while also holding a cigarette.

This lack of stability (as expressed through his body posture) coupled with self-destruction (cigarette) is topped by the person covering their face, to indicate despair. The edges of the picture are blurred as though to create a sense of lack of space and time, a place where this feeling of despair lingers perennially.

Everyman Project features a photo of a man and a woman: he has an angry expression on his face and has her by the hair, getting ready to hit her as his hand pulled back indicates. She is trying to cover her face and looks scared. Anger Management London displays a picture of a man in a suit telling off a woman in a suit (mapping also on a gendered version of anger where men are the perpetrators and women are the victims[24]). His facial expression is angry and his hand gesture is both threatening and accusing (his middle finger is extended while his other hand forms a fist), while her expression is one of despair and her hand gesture is one of defence. These pictures point to an expression of anger that is destructive: verbally or physically abusing the recipient.

The colours and non-human pictures used to represent anger are either fiery or cold. For example, BAAM features the picture of an elderly man waving his fist at the camera with a filter of red and yellow colours; The Anger Clinic shows the picture of a fire; whereas Everyman Project shows a man and a woman seated before a counsellor who holds a red notebook (where presumably all their anger is to be recorded). Anger Planet shows the picture of a planet gravitating towards a black hole, a picture of a man crying and covering his face, the colours of which verge on black-and-white, and a woman covering her face while staring into nowhere, again using the same range of colours; while Priory's picture shows a young man looking sad inside a dark room, staring outside where the sun seems to shine. The choice of colours hints towards the understanding of anger as a hostile, uninviting and dark place.

To contrast with these states and to denote the transformation that is promised by the centre, practically all of them have a section where they show their team smiling in bright photographs, or calm and non-threatening settings like a green field (Efficacy), rays of sunshine shining through the leaves of a tree (BAAM), or a path in the countryside in a sunny spot away from clouds in the horizon (Beating

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[24] A further issue of gender arises here – one pertaining to hierarchy. The suits probably symbolize a business environment. Presumably, an inferior within such an environment would not lash out at his employers so the woman is portrayed here in her "normalized" role, as the employee of males.

Anger). They invite help-seekers to leave the gloominess of anger behind and to allow their team to lead them to that bright place.

It is interesting to note the differences in face depiction. Most of the "angry people" are shown hiding their faces. This might be a way to invite the visitors of the websites to see their face there. Alternatively, it may stand for the metaphor of "losing face" and experiencing shame because of anger – having to regret the consequences of anger. On the contrary, the therapists are all showing their faces, staring directly at the camera. Relating to the previous point, the therapists are shown as not having to regret losing face. By extension, this practice might be inviting the visitors of the centres to try and see their face in a similar angle: staring directly at the world, with clear eyes, mildly smiling.

The visitors of AMCs' websites therefore are presented with the impression that anger is taking over their lives because they have learnt to let it do that: they are giving up control of their actions and thoughts while in that state and they get into that state because of malfunctioning attitudes and problematic thinking. They see themselves as the source of the problem. This damning version of themselves, however, brings with it promise that they can change. This change requires primarily their own dedication to it, but can only be brought about with help from the AMCs – that is because anger directs the people experiencing it towards more anger and therefore away from other ways of thinking, communicating and connecting with the world.

Therefore, when one visits the websites of AMCs, one finds their anger defined in ways which point to an understanding of anger as a problem that starts from the mind and manifests behaviourally. What is interesting is that, presumably, it is precisely this link of anger with dysphoria that leads one to visit an AMC website. The dysphoric nature of anger is thereby validated and focused upon, while the visitor of the website is provided with words and discourses to communicate his/her experiences.

Of course, AMCs present a very narrow version of anger as a problem because they want to sell their services. This version cannot be exhaustive of how anger is

portrayed in the British culture – after all, the epic English story of Beowulf revolves around anger as something natural that needs to be respected and attended to from multiple perspectives. This country is also the birthplace of both Punk Rock and Heavy Metal, two music genres that deal with anger on both a musical and a lyrical level. Nevertheless, AMCs are one of the few mediums where anger is discussed (as opposed to turned to art or activism) and their presence is very prevalent in British life, as the numbers of the Google-search (50% of the hits were about managing anger) demonstrate.

CHAPTER 5: DISCURSIVE PSYCHOLOGY

The next four sections examine how the participants choose to speak about their experience of anger. What interpretative repertoires do they draw on and how do they utilize them? How do they align themselves with particular moral orders, restrictions and possibilities that arise from these repertoires? What presuppositions and assumptions are necessary for the interpretation/understanding of these positions, and what implications do these positions create about the objects and subjects of talk?

Essentially, the focus is not on the experience but on the portrayal of that experience and the way the participants "actively produce social and psychological realities" (Davies and Harré, 1990:45). The analysis was carried out after I got familiar with the texts my participants produced and started looking for patterns between them in what the participants brought to the table regarding their presentation of the topic.

The four repertoires that came up are seen in the following table:

Table 1: Linguistic Repertoires and their Sub-Themes

Repertoire	Sub-Themes
ANGER AND FRUSTRATION	Bringing Anger and Frustration Together
	Expressing Frustration through Anger
ANGER IN AND OUT OF THE BODY	Anger in and out of the Body
ANGER AS HARMFUL AND CHAOTIC	Chaos
	Harm
	Chaos and Harm
CONSTRUCTING ANGER AS SHAMEFUL	Constructing anger as shameful

5.1 Anger and Frustration

This was explicitly brought up by the majority of the participants, and implicitly touched on by the rest: the relation between anger and frustration. The link between the two states seems to be a strong one, as (8 out of 10) participants tend to bring them up as a combination of internal states (i.e. "anger and frustration") that best describes their experience. It is also presented as a cyclical one: frustration leads to anger, which then leads to more anger (something that will be expanded on in the IPA chapter of "While in Place, Anger is Irresistible" later on in the analysis) and frustration. Frustration, the current theme shows, can be best understood as not being able to reason with people or situations - especially if one thinks, knows, or thinks s/he knows they could do so.

This section is divided into two parts: the first is titled "Bringing Anger and Frustration Together" and it explores how the participants bring these two states seamlessly together in their accounts. The co-existence of these two states in almost all 10 interviews is very striking and it warrants a section of its own as it is vital in forming the repertoire, as it creates the implication that anger rarely arises without frustration. This, then, creates implications for one's responsibility and agency when angry. The second part is titled "Expressing Frustration Through Anger" and it focuses on how the participants describe their anger experiences as stemming from their frustration, either as an internal state or with the situation, and, moreover, as a voluntary or non-voluntary way to communicate that frustration and to put it in perspective.

5.1.1: Bringing Anger and Frustration Together

The combination of anger and frustration was evident in virtually all of my participants' accounts. It consists of linking the two states (of anger and frustration) and presenting them as a unified experience. This was done mostly by bringing them together as a single phrase (i.e. saying "anger and frustration"). The participants speak of frustration as a source for their anger, thus presenting their emotional response of anger as a result of not being able to engage successfully with other people or situations.

Participant 3, when prompted in the beginning of his interview to give me examples of what it is that makes him angry, starts by telling me about his frustrations, which he presents as starting from his encounter with a situation that is out of his comprehension and then get internalized, leaving him puzzled as to why he feels this way:

"when I was frustrated and felt that I was definitely out of control of the situation (..) […] a::nd that being more so the frustration of not being understood […] a:nd uh (..) and as I got older it was the: (.) the frustration of (.) having a certain stance and feeling that people were (.) were treating me differently to (.) to the way they treated others and therefore ah (.) mm (.) it's incomprehension and (.) in my mind trying to set them straight" (lines 39-45)

This account and the prominent point in the interview where it was produced (while we were still warming up to the subject) show how his approach to anger links the emotion inextricably to this frustration of "not being understood" and of being treated differently to others. The participant creates some common ground between those two conditions and stresses that he expected something different from what he found (i.e. he expected to be understood and to be treated equally to others). More importantly, the participant constructs his figure as practically unable to change the situation he is confronted with: he cannot make people understand him and he cannot convince them to treat him like they treat others. He thus constructs his figure as "out of control of the situation". This perceived lack of options is presented as that which generates the frustration inside him. He presents it as building up and himself as trying to contain it by means not involving communication with others: "in my mind trying to set them straight". Confronted with the inexplicability of the event, the participant presents his reaction as blocking out any interaction with the people who brought him to that state, thus leaving the question of where the blame lays open. In his account he leaves the statement "it's incomprehension" unexplored; he does not state where the incomprehension comes from, whether it's his or the others', which makes the statement open to both possibilities. In the latter case, it would be the others' incomprehension of his subjective stance that makes him angry. In the former case, it would be his incomprehension of the others' double-standards (i.e. treating him differently to other people and not trying to understand him) that causes the anger. A combination of these two possibilities in the participant's account constructs

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frustration and anger as running in circles: the participant's frustration is presented as stemming from his inability to grasp the others' incomprehension of his anger, and that frustration is presented as generating more anger because he cannot find alternative ways of feeling or expressing himself. The participant therefore constructs a situation where he is left unable to act or feel any other way because the way others relates to him generates frustration and anger in him.

Participant 4 presents anger and frustration as inextricably linked, too. Starting with what it is that makes him angry (page 1 of the interview transcript), the participant draws attention to his surroundings and says:

> *"frustrations (.) generally (2sec) um:: I kind of resent (..) that I'm working (.) for idiots basically [laughs] serving idiots (.) when I'd much rather be at home (.) drinking (.) sitting around in my underwear (.) ah: (..) writing (.) or playing music (.) a::nd (.) I wanna do those things more (.) more than anything" (lines 24-26)*

The passage constructs the helplessness of him seeing his time going to waste[25] as he works long hours at the bar, serving customers he has no respect for. What is worse, he says, that keeps him from spending time the way he would rather do "more than anything": working on music. Holding down a job makes it impossible for him to do what he loves, and so he is kept away from his passion in order to make a living. This is presented as a frustrating state for him – especially given that, presumably, the context involves his customers having a good time drinking at the pub while he suffers in silence serving them. Therefore the participant's account here constructs an unbalanced situation, where his suffering is necessary for the customers to have a good time (given that they need someone to serve them their drinks and he needs the money). This is inserted in the narrative as that which gives rise to his anger, which is only accentuated by him being so close to people having fun without him being able to partake in that euphoria. The participant further highlights, even exaggerates, the degree to which he would prefer to be doing other things by making references to drinking and being in his underwear. This

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[25] In a later part of his interview he describes that feeling as "it just feels rea:lly stressed out (.) really frustrated very (.) very angry (.) feeling like time is kinda slipping out of my fingers […] yeah just very very stressed and frustrated and kinda feeling like you're sitting on your hands an:d ah (.) you're waiting for your life to (.) resume as soon as you get out of the door"

exaggeration can be read as a reaction to the labyrinthine questions the situation brings about, regarding his wants, needs, obligations etc. The frustration is vividly sketched out here as the participant draws a distinction between having desires and wishes; and needing to work to survive. He thus constructs his situation as a regret of not being in a comfortable state (i.e. underwear), doing the thing he loves (writing and playing music) but instead stuck in a nauseating (for him) environment: this is presented as frustrating and perhaps this exaggeration can be seen as a way for him to put forth something he feels very certain about, thus breaking the cycle of his internal frustration. He thereby justifies his anger as arising from frustration which is generated by the very nature and conflicts of his everyday life.

Participant 6, when asked what it is that made him decide to take part in this interview, offers:

"Um:: (2sec) well (2sec) I:: (..) I know* I've got a lot of anger [...] I do* know that (.) a::h (.) and I've been thinking about it actually recently more and more (..) [...] and trying to understand why* I feel this anger and this frustration" *(lines 5-7)*

It is worth noting that my initial question brought the topic of the interview (i.e. anger alone) to the fore. His reply, however, brings frustration into the discussion in a way that presents the combination of the two internal states as very natural for the participant. Also, the participant's construction indicates that his main motivation for taking part in this study was to try and untie the knot of his internal frustrations, to try "to understand why" he feels this anger and frustration and, in that way, to break free from them: the link between anger and frustration is thus intensified in his narrative. Lack of understanding is put at the heart of this participant's experience, as he presents himself feeling not understood by others as a child[26] and he himself also does not understand why he feels this anger. Again, here we have a form of "double-incomprehension" surfacing in the narrative: others not understanding him, and him not understanding why others don't understand him. This leads to his questioning his comprehension of his own self. In the process, the participant implies that he is not fully aware of the internal machinations that make him feel this way but also, more importantly, that he wishes to learn about them. He thereby lays claim to a process of self-

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[26] The story best illustrating this can be found in lines 238-257 of the participant's account.

understanding which, in his opinion, will bring an end to the internal frustrations that generate anger in him. The elimination of frustration is therefore presented as going hand-in-hand with bringing anger under control and consequently as a step towards reclaiming control over himself.

Going further on the relationship between the two states, participant 7 describes how frustration brings about anger. In his interview he states that he augments negative events in his imagination; what he admits he interprets as a "minor event" in hindsight, while it is happening he tends to load it with further significance and ideas about what it might mean for his relationship with the others involved. This is presented as generating frustrations in him, probably precisely because his thoughts cannot be logically supported – so he finds himself making thoughts that he feels very strongly about but also doubts at the same time. For example, in the following excerpt he describes an evening at his home; during the day he felt he was very badly treated by a senior at work ("that woman") and, when he tried to explain the situation to his mother over the phone she could not understand why he got so upset over the incident. This leads him to feel that he is not being understood and, thus, to frustration:

> ""Why are you wronging me as well?" It's always this (.) impression* that everyone is wronging me (.) everybody* (..)
>
> -mhm
>
> -you know? It was that woman now it's my mother (.) ah now my flatmates are (.) you know cooking at (.) 10 pm at night and I can't sleep (.) "oh my god!" you know? (3sec) ye:ah very frustrating yeah" (lines 311-312)

The participant produced the account while explaining to me how, in his own words, he "blows things out of proportion". The ideas that he blows out of proportion appear to translate the others' stance as an intentional attempt to disturb him, thus wronging him. Frustration here is presented as arising from his internal state but also from the continuous problematic relationships with others (his colleague, his mother, his flatmates), thus giving way to anger with the participant's exclamation "Oh my god!". This could be read as an expression of his anger at others, but most probably also marks his inability to cope with these out-of-proportion ideas and a passage into angry mode, where the emotion comes

pouring out uncontrollably. The question that transforms frustration into anger can be traced to his quotation of his understanding of the event at the time: "*Why* are you wronging me?". This demand to know why something is the way he interprets it may be the key turning point in transforming situational frustration to anger. This attempt at an explanation is doomed to fail because of the very nature of internal frustration which distorts the participant's judgment and thought. If he could disentangle from this frustration in him, he would (presumably) see the incident as minor and/or he would be in position to see that the other is not doing it to upset him – he simply gets upset because of his own frustrated state and the way he interprets the world around him while in that state. The problem then is presented as found within the self and the fallacious way of looking at the situation, rather than between the participant and other people. The participant presents himself as not able to see that while in a state of frustration, and therefore as struggling to justify something that is not there to begin with. This attempt is doomed to fail as the object he attempts to understand is non-existent. Consequently, anger's rise is presented as providing the participant with a way out of the self-reported ever-growing feeling that he has no agency over a situation where the others' sole purpose is to displease him. What the participant presents here is his impression that everyone is wronging him, and casts it as an exaggeration of the actual situations and not based on reality. Nevertheless, he presents it as a state that feels very real for him and that informs his understanding of the situations that bring this about. He therefore implies that, when calm, he understands that it is frustration that brings about anger. However, when angry, the two states merge into one and his judgment is clouded and frustration *leads* anger.

For participant 10, a source of anger and frustration is offered as arising from his surroundings: he finds himself unable to please other people, even though he tries his best:

"I feel like I never do anything (.) properly and I've some times I feel like I'm giving aw(.) I'm giving away a lot of myself to other people […] ah: to make them happy (.) and they're never happy* (.) and that just makes me (..) angry* and frustrated" (lines 320-323)

The participant presents himself as making a plan to please others. Unfortunately, however, others are constructed as always finding things to complain about. His efforts, consequently, are presented as going to waste and this, in the account, is what makes him think that he is giving away a lot, perhaps too much, of himself without the desired reciprocity or appreciation. This understanding is presented as creating tensions in him, presumably leading him to questions of why he attempts to please them, whereas an element of shame is probably also prevalent here: the way others disregard his offerings leaves him feeling embarrassed and humiliated. His effort to comprehend the other's lack of desired response constructs his figure as "angry and frustrated". His figure is therefore cast in a light of incomprehension; incomprehension both of what he is not doing right, and of why the others cannot be at least appreciative of his efforts. Frustration is therefore presented as an element of stagnation and misery in his account, since it prevents him from taking decisive action to lift his mood. This indirectly justifies the surfacing anger. If he had the means to get the answers to these questions, he would not feel so frustrated and consequently he would not feel so angry.

Participant 8, offers a story where he was arrested for drink-driving. He admits that this was his fault, but what he foregrounds in relation to his anger is the distance between the legal system's workings and what he calls "common sense" – he presents himself as found trying to explain a situation to people who would not understand:

> *"once the cops get you and they come after you and they start harassing you (.) [claps hands] that's it (.) it's [muffled] complete*
>
> *-did that* piss you off?*
>
> *-yeah I was pissed off but you know the the cops it's like you're fighting a brick wall you know you fight a brick wall (.) and I had to go and deal with cases and judges and (.) I came to realize "my God" (.) common sense* (.) my common sense thinking (.)" (lines 703-705)*

The participant's figure is presented here in a situation where the discourses in operation are others than the ones he masters. In other words, he constructs himself-in-a-situation where the common, everyday words he uses were not

admissible; he presents himself as lacking the means to defend himself within a legal setting, even though his words would be perfectly understood outside the legal setting. The tools he has been using all his life to effectively communicate with others are presented as not working there. It was this incident, he states later on in his interview, that made him start studying law: he wanted to be able to express himself within that realm, using the discourses people of that realm comprehend – and presumably relieve himself of some of the tension caused by this lack of agency he found himself in through this process. The participant mobilizes the repertoire of "frustration" here to justify his emotional reaction of anger.

For most participants, it seems the state of anger is closely linked to that of frustration. The two appear together in their accounts, and frustration is presented as breeding anger and therefore, by the sheer number of bringing the two states together, a co-existence of the two is normalized and therefore implied throughout their accounts. The participants present their inability to attend to situations maximally and comprehensively as the equivalent of goal obstruction where the obstructing agent is unidentifiable and that generates anger in them which might be directed to the situation, to the others involved, or to themselves. Their constructions present the origin of anger as a non-understanding other (the 'frustrating person', or actor attribution) the behaviour of whose leads the participant into anger, or a situation where their social competence and performance break down, leaving them puzzled as to why this happens. This is not the sole relation that is presented between the two states. As we shall see in the next section, internal frustration is often expressed *in the form of* anger.

5.1.2: Expressing Frustration Through Anger

In response to a question about the origins of anger, Participant 1 offers:

"Um, getting frustrated is the first part (.) but then (.) getting angry is a whole different step (..) And so, getting angry is I think (.) version 2 of getting frustrated and it's just getting frustrated on another level where you just have to take it out on something (.) or you have to say something" (lines 204-205)

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Anger, in this passage, is presented as the resolution to maximized frustration ("frustrated on another level"). It is also presented as different from frustration since it involves the agent taking action: no longer dwelling on the incomprehensibility of the logic behind the events but letting it out, either as a comprehensible course of action (saying something) or simply as an explosive reaction (taking it out on something). Anger, then, is presented as the participant's response to his internal frustration. While angry, he is letting out frustration. This automatically creates the implication that the participant cannot be in control of his behaviour or thoughts while angry, because these are by their very nature a product of frustration, clouded in a mist of incomprehension for him.

The way one's inability to express his frustration turns it into anger is best sketched out by Participant 3 in the following excerpt:

"I never thought about (.) I mean "I want control on people; this or that" you know (.) it's ah: it was always more I wanted to show people how (.) frustrated I was with them at that times and I couldn't express it in any other way than just [kicks and punches the air]" (lines 494-495)

Discussing how his anger makes him shout at people, he stresses that his shouting is not an attempt to control their behaviour or to impose his way; rather, he sees it as an attempt to express his frustration with others. The expression it assumes, of course, scares people and that extends his internal frustration even further, as he still does not get his message across – his interlocutors get a wrong or distorted message which he then has to rectify in order to get his real message across. This inability to give his internal frustration the expression he would like to is presented as resulting in non-communication which is in turn presented in his account visually, by pausing his narration and simply gesturing kicks and punches in the air: trying to break out of a fishing net of incomprehension which only entangles him further, augmenting his internal frustration and turning it into anger - which he then uses as a force to keep trying to get out of that net of incomprehension. Frustration in this account is presented as the reason why the participant cannot be in control of his actions (or the results of those) while angry.

The lack of understanding and the shortage of ways to improve things also makes its appearance in the following description of the link between anger and frustration by the same participant:

"it's obviously a cumulative thing as well cos you know it's not like I'm always impatient with people like that but you know it's after a certain amount of time (.) I wouldn't say anything at all (.) then you get frustrated for a certain amount of time you think "oh bloody hell it's a normal part of life to be frustrated with people" cos I'm not a complete psychopath it wasn't a complete psychopath either but eventually it comes to the point where nothing gets any better even though you drop hints etcetera you know in that (.) you know you think that the last resort is to get re:ally angry" (lines 117-121)

This account was produced when the participant described his relationship with a person he used to be friends with. The participant says he was annoyed by some things that person did. At first he was saying nothing, telling himself that "it is a normal part of life to be frustrated with people". After a while the participant tried to communicate his frustration with the situation to his friend, unsuccessfully: the person did not change their ways. The frustration then becomes more and more an internal state, a state where the participant does not know how to express himself more effectively or what to do in order to get rid of that negative feeling. "It comes to the point where nothing gets any better even though you drop hints etcetera" the participant says, highlighting the difference between what he expected or hoped to see (change and improvement) and what he found (stagnation and misery). "The last resort is to get really angry" he concludes, again stressing the direct link between internal frustration and anger, how the former works as a catalyst for the latter and how anger is presented as a last resort, a clumsy but necessary reaction to get rid of the frustration.

It is worth noting that in this passage anger is presented as a conscious choice, a conscious attempt to break out of the state of frustration. Essentially, what the participant constructs here is the choice of letting go: frustration and anger are presented as continuously building up the more he keeps them inside him and so his decision to express them is presented as an attempt to put an end to this tyrannical crescendo. Even though the action of letting his anger out is presented as a conscious effort and thus under his agency, the way in which it is let out is presented as shaped and guided by the internal frustration which is there precisely because he cannot find any other way of letting others know of his anger.

Participant 5, when asked to give examples of what generates anger in him, describes his relationship with another member in one of his bands:

"there's a certain member in that band who has been a proper pain in my side for years (.) unfortunately he's ludicrously talented so (..) I cannot just (.) stop working with him as he would sort of (..) a lot of (.) the band would lose identity if he were to leave the band (.)

-Mhm

-Which he has done on numerous* occasions and keeps coming back* (.) the main issue is that he is one of the forming members along with me and (.) um (.) the band means a lot to him (.) like a (.) I don't think many other things in life mean quite a lot to him than the band (.) as the band does (.) ah: and he's a very very frustrating person (.) um: he's the kind of (.) he's very very (.) pigheaded in a way (.) or very mule-like in a way that (.) when he decides he can't be bothered to do something he won't do it (.) even though he's promised* (..) he won't answer his phone (.) he won't show up (.) and (.) he clearly has seasonal depression for (.) in the winter he clearly has this depression and (.) he basically knows this (.) but he refuses to do anything about it (.) it's something that can be dealt with quite easily today um:: but basically (.) ah: he decides not to and he makes that (.) not only his* problem but also our* problem so I find it very very hard to deal with his* stubbornness and his way of not doing things he's promised" (lines 38-46)

The participant's frustration here is squarely presented as arising out of the member's behaviour. The musician ("a certain member" as the annoyed participant presents him in an effort to diminish his significance) is painted as a "ludicrously talented" individual, who has been a co-founder of the band. With him comes a lot of the band's identity. These statements solidify him as someone the participant cannot easily dismiss or do away with: the musician is an important part of the band's history and identity. He is, however, presented as someone who is very difficult to work with: having left the band a number of times only to come back; making promises pertaining to the band's career which he later breaks; and going into long periods of not showing up at rehearsals or even answering his phone. Most of these, the participant adds, are effects of his seasonal (winter) depression; something which everyone in the band is aware of, including the member himself.

This is something the participant implies he can understand. The musician is presented as "refusing" to do anything about it, even though in the participant's eyes "it is something that can be dealt with quite easily today" (e.g. by going to a psychiatrist, as the participant adds later on in the interview). This constructs that member's lack of action as something the participant cannot understand or justify. By making this decision to not take care of his depression, the musician's figure is cast as creating problems for the band. It is exactly this refusal from his side to explore options that would make his and the band's life easier (options which are clear to the participant), as well as his unstable character, that is presented as a source of frustration for the participant.

The situation here is that of a band: the band is composed of its members; each member has his own life but they all contribute towards the band. When one of the members fails to keep up, the band lags behind. If it was something that could not be avoided, or if the musician tried to find a way to work through it, the participant implies that he would not be as angry. Since there are solutions, however, or at least a basic morality of keeping one's promises which needs to be upheld, the participant describes the musician as "pigheaded", "mule-like" and "stubborn", qualities that signify one as a person hard to work or reason with: a "frustrating person". This relational context, the inability to reason or to have a mutual understanding of one-another is presented as the source of frustration for the participant; and this frustration is presented here as being internalized and giving rise to anger (note that the account was produced when asked about things that make him angry, not frustrated). The participant constructs a situation where the musician's behaviour has left him feeling internally frustrated because he finds himself powerless to engage with the situation and interact with that person; a necessity to keep the band going. Anger is presented as the participant's justified response to finding himself unable to reason with that person and situation: as coming in place of what would be a comprehensive conversation and mutual agreement with that member of the band but that other member does not facilitate.

Discussing whether anger is a natural state for him, as he "knows" he has a lot of it, Participant 6 goes on to say:

"if I think about it I don't think people are born like that I think it's something that has developed in* me because of frustration (.) that's why I've been thinking a lot about it recently (.) to try to understand because I don't think it's normal* I don't think it's healthy because it brings you stress (.) you know so: I (.) I am pretty sure it's related to my education um: (.) a lot due to what my parents forced* on me (.) um having no freedom" (lines 180-183)

In this quote, anger is presented as born of frustration. Frustration, at the same time, is presented as instilled in him from his very inability to find his own voice among those of his parents. His parents, the participant claims, had a mould for him and would not listen to his own wishes about his future. So, a person describing himself as having a lot of anger, takes a step back and tells me that the anger is not there by itself, but was brought about by frustration generated by his surroundings and relationship with his parents: the frustration of his upbringing, where his parents "forced" ideas, practices and attitudes on him. Essentially, the participant constructs his parents' figures as ones that never loved the "real" him, but instead an image of his that they wished to shape[27]. This, in his account, is seen as leaving him experiencing himself as a child vulnerable to their decisions and unable to take control of his own wants and plans, or to even express them to his parents. He constructs a narrative where his loss of agency and engagement with the situation during his childhood is what frustrated him internally and, since he could not express this frustration even to his closest people (his parents), his anger started building up. Anger is therefore presented as something the participant is in possession of, precisely as a way to counterbalance frustration.

Participant 10's account of his anger experiences largely revolves around his frustration at not being able to reason with his girlfriend of many years. When asked to give me an example of what his bottled-up anger feels like when exploding, he offers:

"my girlfriend was complaining about her weight (.) for a long time (.) and so I kept suggesting (.) do a diet go to the gym (.) to do these things and (.) we (.)

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[27] "you know (.) the frustration part of them (.) ah (.) forcing* me into one specific way of life (.) that* leads to anger but maybe the part that leads to melancholy and sadness is probably the (.) the (..) the love (.) you know because basically I've I feel that (.) I wasn't aware of that as a kid (.) but I was probably feeling it (.) that (.) my parents weren't loving* me they were loving (..) an image of me or or something they (.) they thought I should* be (.) so they were creating (.) another* person" (lines 253-257)

you know we started talking I started trying to encourage her and um (..) eh: (.) I was getting so* frustrated that (.) I was just like (.) [shouting] "I don't wanna have to say these things again! I keep saying this to you!" or "why aren't you listening to me? I've… This is what I've done this is what other people have done why don't you just try it might be different than the past"" (lines 83-86)

The situation here is that of a discussion between him and his girlfriend, who is complaining about her weight. The participant constructs her figure as a frustrating one because of the lack of comprehension between them. He stresses that, in his eyes, she does not really want to try and change it because, if she did, she would be following the advice he has given her time and again: "do a diet go to the gym". So the way it is presented is that while he is trying to encourage her towards improvement of the situation with reasonable arguments (tried and tested methods that he and others have successfully followed, as he stresses in the interview), she seems more interested in complaining than in seeking any advice. The participant feels that his words fall on deaf ears ("why aren't you listening to me?") and his time and effort go to waste ("I don't wanna have to say these things again!"), so his frustration that is generated from continuously failed communication with his partner turns into anger which he indirectly justifies by implying that she is wasting his time and testing his patient.

This inability to verbally get his message across, then, is presented as making space for anger to roam and to dictate thoughts and behaviours. Describing how this makes him feel, the participant offers:

"I I've never hit* my partner I never would* but um (..) I sometimes I feel like I (..) you know (.) not I want to but (.) it's just (.) there's a point where it's just (.) I can't I can't I can't (.) express* myself through words anymore (.) and getting I'm getting more* and more angry and I don't know what is (.) I don't know how else to get that aggression that's boiling up inside" [note: he was banging his hand on the table throughout this passage] (lines 93-96)

Here the participant appears torn on whether he would want to hit his girlfriend as a result of his internal frustration or not. His inability to express himself through

words is presented as driving him to find a different, non-verbal way to do so; only this time it is not his thoughts, but his emotions that he wishes to express. The emotion is constructed as outpouring during the interview as well, as the participant was banging his hand on the table persistently while giving me the above account. This banging I would interpret as a mirroring of what he was telling me at the time – his internal frustration giving way to anger which can be best expressed not through words but through actions of destruction, violence and oppression so that the participant's voice can be finally heard. This is presented as a shameful reaction, since he implies that he is embarrassed about the way he feels.

Discussing further whether physical violence, however morally unacceptable, *might* be a solution to the problem, a way of making his girlfriend see his own viewpoint, the participant says:

"I'm getting this* frustrated (.) like th(.) the (.) normally the extremity of it would be like me posturing or shouting or doing something that's (.) that puts her on an edge and stops her (.) which isn't right (.) but her (.) her dad (.) you know (.) maybe go (.) have gone a bit further [...] on this isolated occasion like maybe 2-3 occasions that that's happened a:nd (.) um (.) I'm like (.) I kind of understand why (..) why h(.) why h(..) why: he did that (.) not that I think it's right (.) not that I would (.) I would always wanna stop myself from doing it (.) bu:t (..) I get to this point where it's like (2sec) [bangs hand on table] I'm getting so* frustrated that that seems like the rational* (.) thing to do like (.) [raises his volume] "can't explain anymore! Can't talk anymore!"" (lines 498-505)

Physical violence is here presented as something that could bring an end to frustration – both the situational one (where his words fall on deaf ears) and his internal one (where he does not understand why this is the case). Seeing that his girlfriend fails, refuses, or avoids to see eye-to-eye with his own logic time and time again, the participant presents himself as beginning to sympathize with the violent way her father acted towards her in the past: when words or logic fail, he says, violence feels like the only way of putting across one's point of view. This comes screaming out of the account in the same way that the participant ends his account with an enactment of how he feels when confronted with his girlfriend's irrationality: "Can't explain anymore! Can't talk anymore!". The frustration of

having to explain the same thing over and over to someone who eventually does not follow up on it is presented as giving way to anger over this very situation of having to waste one's time and effort on someone who does not understand. This account underlines releasing this internal frustration as anger, as an explosive instinct, but also that his rational side immediately jumps in and disclaims "not that I think it's right… I would always wanna stop myself from doing that". Nevertheless, his frustration at the situation is presented as creating a bridge between his own experience and that of his girlfriend's dad: a confrontation with a girl who prefers to whine than taking action, while simultaneously asking for their help. This behaviour of hers, in the participant's account, creates a frustration which, in the participant's eyes, justifies her father's behaviour (perhaps the participant wishes he could put rationality aside and act similarly himself). In turn, this justification he gives to her father's action is constructed as a further source of internal frustration for him: he presents himself as unable to accept that he would endorse this behaviour even in the slightest – nevertheless, he finds himself making these thoughts. He therefore presents himself as a figure in a situation where he needs to acknowledge the fury generated in him, which he cannot rationally embrace even though he sees it as justified. In other words, a dialogue inside the participant's head between his moral, ethical and emotional selves is constructed at this part of the narrative: the emotional self justifies his desired actions, whereas the moral one condemns it. This in itself is given as magnifying the participant's frustration, as he presents different modalities of himself as conflicting with one-another.

This theme shows that anger and frustration go hand-in-hand. What appears to be the case for the participants is that anger starts as frustration: the inability to comprehend or engage in a situation when they feel they should be able to do so eventually causes internal frustration.

Frustration is presented as a double process, involving not being understood on the one hand and not understanding why they are not understood on the other. As frustration grows, the participants present themselves feeling not only out of control, but out of touch with the situation; their sense of agency as dissipating; and anger as a way for them to express themselves in an effort to break down the situation into more comprehensively communicative parts, find and explore a new

way of looking at the situation for them and the others involved, and thus make themselves understood.

5.2 Anger In and Out of the Body

When asked about what anger feels like, the vast majority of my participants mentioned changes in their physiology as its primary manifestation. They therefore construct a repertoire of anger as something that comes in and out of the body. This shines through in the metaphors used by the participants to describe its presence.

P.1 for example, when asked what anger feels like, offers the following description:

"Your veins start… For me, I don't know how other people (.) but for me it feels like your veins and your blood (.) rushes more around your body. It feels like (.) there's something in me (.) that's not me (.) like, it doesn't feel like it's me that's in control of my body." (lines 73-74)

The description draws on bodily changes exclusively. Besides the effects of vein dilation and blood rushing fervently around the body, the participant also states that, when angry, he does not feel in control of his body. He therefore implies that it is either him, consciously in control of his body and what he does with it, or anger in his place, in the process implying that he cannot be held responsible for his behaviour when angry.

Even though the anger manifests in the body for this participant, its origins seem to be elsewhere. A few lines later, the participant exclaims: "It comes to you. It comes to you within an instant" (line 199).

In this quote, the participant brings into the discussion a perceived difference between internal and external world; i.e. world within the body and outside it. Describing anger as "coming to you" means that anger is not generated within the

body; rather, it pierces it from the outside. The process is described exclusively in terms of space/body, as the absence of time ("within an instant") denotes.

Other participants also describe anger as lingering inside the body – not a sensation though, but an entity separate from the experiencer's body. P.3 explains that even after the event that gave rise to anger is over, the leftovers of anger are still there: "you get angry and afterwards it lingers the anger stays there" (line 135). P.5 also describes the advent of anger in bodily terms, and anger itself as contained within his body: "as anger comes it comes like as a wave it feels almost like it's coming from my spine to my head" (line 135). P.7 describes his experience of anger as a chemical that floats around his body ("for me it's (.) in here [points to the chest area] (.) feels like some sort of chemical is being released" (line 137)); whereas P.8 describes anger as a heat wave that travels around his upper body:

"it's like something's boiling from (.) inside me (.) it's going up my chest and it's like (.) I feel like heat in my chest you know like steam (.) not h not like stea:m like I want to burp (.) but it's not coming out as a burp you know?

-mhm

-and then (2sec) you know (..) it's like it's in my hands (.) it just goes from my chest it goes to my shoulders it goes in my arms" (lines 85-88)

In this participant's account anger is mapped onto many different areas of the body, making his description of the transference of heat from one to the other very rich and deep. Starting from the chest (where breathing occurs and the heart beats), anger is then likened to steam which travels through the participant's larynx "like a burp" and thus flows towards his mouth. The participant then describes this steam as taking a detour from his mouth and ending up in his shoulders and then in his hands. The participant is thus presenting the whole journey of anger as spreading across his body like a steam ending up in his hands, which hints at preparedness to take action and to fight. The underlying impression is that anger is creating pressure and leads to congestion or over-fullness as this entity of air takes up space in an already full body and this creates the grounds for a justification for his behaviour when angry – he claims he physically needs to empty up space in himself by getting rid of the anger (which happens in anger's own terms, as the IPA theme of "Anger is Irresistible" shows later on in this thesis).

P.9 describes it as:

"(.)almost like a hydraulic system I feel* like there's a well within me" (line 23)

and stresses that it is elements external to himself (in particular "drama" from his partner) that raise the volume of water in that well inside him:

"-Does this drama make you angry? Or /

-/Yes it does* (.) it does (..) I take it inside*" (lines 177-178)

It is interesting to note how "taking it inside" for the participant marks the onset and presence of anger. His body acts like a vessel (this is a metaphor he used himself at a different stage in the interview[28]) where anger is poured and contained. Participant 9, in other words, presents his body as a receptor of elements from the external world which alter his internal balance (of humours).

The whole presentation of anger as an external entity coming into the body leads to an evaluation of it as dysphoric. The body feels under pressure and the person feels the strain. He therefore implies that anger's advent is something he does not welcome but cannot avoid either.

P.3 describes anger "like there's a heat there (.) and there's a pressure there a:nd you can feel yourself trembling and your heart rates are starting to go up and m. you are about to explode" (lines 218-219). Dysphoria is strikingly present in this account: anger is presented as a heat that links to pressure (harking back to the "boiling" metaphor) which makes him tremble and feel like his body is about to explode. Assuming that composure and the ability to diffuse negative affect are considered desirable traits in adults and signs of a person who is in control of their own body, anger here is presented as a disruptive force for the participant in relation to his body and, by extension, his presence in the world. Anger, therefore, is constructed as disorientating him and throws him back into an immature state.

P.5 speaks of "anger* that's bursting*" (line 20) and mentions that "the fury is just (.) overboiling" (line 64). Again, anger here is likened to a force that threatens to break through the very fabric of the participant's body, whereas fury is again compared to boiling water which is about to spill out (thus again hinting towards a

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[28] "I might be a suitable (.) ah (.) vessel for other people to pour whatever they want into" (lines 309-310)

breakdown of the barriers imposed by the participant's body, which stands in place of the hob here). Similarly, P.6 describes himself when angry as "my blood is boiling" (line 92) and anger itself as a "build-up (.) you know and then it explodes" (line 405).

The notion of explosion is central to the participants' accounts. With it, of course, comes the implication that the participant is no longer in control of his own actions. The actions he carries out while angry, therefore, are implicitly constructed as by-products of the explosion. They are not actions anymore, since they are not wilfully executed by an agent, but rather a kind of fall-out from an accident.

P.7 compares anger to a wave[29], referring in particular to the wave's intensity (that presumably crushes or sweeps the person). This wave is also, the participant says, spread out across time and not limited to the moment the angering event occurs. Evaluating its effects, P.7 stresses that this disrupts his regular ability to focus and proceed with his daily routine and needs:

"this wave when you reach the peak it starts to go down afterwards but of course uh (.) this (.) wave could last several days (..) um:: certainly yeah (.) eating (.) performing normal bodily functions is difficult (.) don't wanna eat (.) don't wanna drink (.) can't sleep (.) can't read" (lines 711-713).

Describing in more detail how he understands this experience, the participant stresses the unpleasant nature of that wave with references to his body: "it manifest itself (.) with a terrible (.) feeling in your chest (.) something there which you've (.) got to get rid of (.)" (lines 608-609). Anger here is firmly located in the chest and the participant stresses that there is a desire to get rid of it, to take it off his chest. P.7 also described anger "like an oaring sensation" (line 182). This evokes simultaneously the effort from the side of the person who oars to go against the pressure of the water; and the vertical up-and-down movement the boat is led to by sea-waves. Therefore notions of pressure, strife, and imbalance come together to describe the experience of anger. This metaphor links well with his use of the "wave" (whereby the participant struggles to navigate amidst the waves of anger) but also signifies a sense of nausea that comes along with anger.

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[29] "just like a wave you know… because it's a (.) it has intensity (.) that's why I think a wave describes it so it's like (.) the intensity can grow you know even after the effect you know?" (lines 198-202)

Bringing the notion of anger as extra (and unwanted) weight back on the table, P.8 states that "you get angry and angry (.) the more you get angry the more it gives you (.) pressure" (line 710) while describing anger as a "pile-up on you" (line 45) to underline the uncomfortable feeling that comes with it. These two quotes reveal how the pressure induced by anger is perceived as constraining by the participant, congesting his body and making movement difficult.

P.9 also brings up this notion of piling up by referring to anger as "seething":

"It seethes it kind of (.) it builds up* (.) it's almost like a hydraulic system I feel* like there's a well within me (.) you know and I try to keep the levels down but every now and again sometimes some extreme* (.) overflows occur" (lines 23- 24).

His choice of the term "extreme overflows" to describe angry outbursts points to an unpleasant and uncontrollable outpouring of anger, implying that the participant then has to go back and metaphorically clean up the mess caused by this outpouring. It is also interesting to note here that outpourings, like explosions (as mentioned in other participants' accounts), are destructive events which can be best conceptualized as accidents instead of deliberate actions. Hence, the notion of agency (of lack thereof) makes its way indirectly in the participant's account here too.

P.10, along similar lines, refers to anger as "that aggression that's boiling up inside" (line 96) before expanding into a variation of a widely used metaphor: "people use the: (.) the example of a kettle [bangs hand on table] you know like going going going and then like (.) exploding" (lines 75-76). The participant probably refers to a "pressure cooker" instead of a kettle: a cooking hob that starts a whistling sound while water turns to steam and eventually the tap shoots out unless the pressure cooker is taken off the fire. It is interesting to note how the kettle eventually switches off instead of exploding, when enough steam has been produced. The way the participant portrays it here though brings destruction (through explosion) to the metaphor. The metaphor is one of pressure building inside him and then leading to an uncontrolled explosion if not attended to.

In line with this description of anger as inside and outside the body (anger present and anger gone, respectively), P.7 described the act of expressing his anger as

"letting it come out" (line 51), whereas P.4 described it as "getting it out" (line 81) and "putting it out" (line 164). Despite the different representations of the person's power over anger in these two accounts (the former represents the person as a passive host of anger whereas the latter as an active agent in how anger is shaped), the phrasal verbs both used point to moving anger from inside the body to outside it. Both hint at a level of discomfort: "Letting it come out" hints at a strain while the anger was in, whereas "getting it out" denotes an active effort to no longer have it.

Anger, then, gets out of the body when it is expressed. This is something that most of the participants brought into the conversation – again, mostly through their language use itself, instead of detailed descriptions of their experiences.

The distinction between internal and external takes on further significance when it comes to expressing anger. P.2 for example, to describe what expressing his anger feels like states that "once it's out, it's gone* it's out of you, you don't have to, you don't have to carry it around with you anymore" (line 123-124). The organization of the discourse here follows a clear pattern where "in the body" means "angry" and "out of the body" means "calm". Contrasting the process of relief from anger with the lack thereof, the participant describes the angry person as "carrying anger around" with them. Similarly, the same participant mentioned in a different part of his interview that, when not expressing his anger, "the feeling is still there, it's still manifesting inside" (line 150). Here, too, the participant clearly locates anger as inside the body. Participant 2, then, describes anger as a concrete entity that has weight, separate from him and his body that, when manifest, he carries around with him and inside him.

Freeing up space in the body by diffusing anger is brought up by other participants too. For P.3, anger "bursts out" of the body when expressed:

"normally it doesn't bother you but then one day you decide that it does and [snaps fingers] burst out" (lines 156-157).

P.6 speaks of "getting it out" ("yeah I wanna punch something sometimes I feel like that (.) and I just (.) yeah I wanna get it out (..) but I I rarely do" – lines 544-545), whereas P.7 stresses that expressing his anger is an effort to "get rid of" that terrible feeling in his chest generated by anger ("it manifest itself (.) with a terrible

(.) feeling in your chest (.) something there which you've (.) got to get rid of"- lines 608-609).

All of these accounts evoke an image of anger as something that possesses the person; something like a wild animal or an alien force that the person needs to discard from their body in order to feel calm again.

Getting rid of the anger, therefore, is a "release". For P.9, anger and "the need to let it out" are both seen as "forces" of human life: "it's a real force of human life (.) aggression and the (.) the need to (.) let it out" (lines 561-562).

P.4 describes it perfectly when he speaks about writing lyrics to his songs inspired by his anger: "it feels like an urge and part of that is getting (.) releasing all that anger and getting it down onto (.) to paper" (lines 82-83). For P.4 then, anger follows a course of a build-up which then makes him look for a release (a release he manages to get through creative and artistic activities):

"if this is all the build-up and the ah: the tension (.) then the release of all that wherever (.) you know if I'm playing live or if I'm in the studio or even if I'm just writing and I'm alone (.) um (..) it does feel like a physical release" (lines 73-74).

The participant describes the need for release as an urge brought about by anger's build-up.

Interestingly, when it leaves the body anger is passed on to others. When prompted, P.6 theorizes the very nature of anger as a type of energy that can be transmitted to people: "I think it's something you can pass on to people" (lines 737-738), later on explaining that if someone is angry in a room then others will absorb this negativity and get angry or irritable themselves. P.10 explains how arguments with his girlfriend pass her anger on to him ("or maybe it will just be ten (.) five minutes of me going "mmm" you know "whatever" and like it will just stay with her (.) like instead of passing on (.) to me"- lines 369-372). What the participant was talking about at that stage is the arguments he and his girlfriend get into. He proposes that, in instances where his partner initiates the fight, he could stay out of the argument (by "going "mmm"") and let her anger stay with her. As soon as he engages in the argument, however, he feels anger seeping into his body. In other

words, if he stays away from that radiant anger she brings to the table, he will not be infected by it.

This closes the circle of anger as in and out of the body, showing how others can make one angry and, in turn, this one person also makes others angry. As energy cannot be destroyed but only moved or be transformed, so does anger have to be moved somewhere or turned into something else (like words on paper or music).

Anger is talked about as having weight, even substance of its own. This invades the body and brings the sufferers under its possession, compromising their control of their actions, thoughts and feelings. Conceptualizing anger in that way brings about further implications for both the *thing* described (anger) and the ontologies discussed (the participants). The body is presented as a defined space. This helps outline anger's arrival and departure, making the event a highly distinguishable one: the person *is* or *is not* angry. Anger may take some time to diffuse, or it may explode, overflow or burst out. After it does, the person returns to his normal, calm and composed state. The participants, then, are presented as aware of their own state and thus able to say whether they are in control of the situation, or whether anger has taken control of them. By employing this theme, therefore, the participants present anger as a passion (in Averill's terms) which takes over the individual and leaves him/her no other option but to follow anger's commands. The participants therefore make excuses for their behaviour while angry (which tends to be harmful and chaotic as the next theme shows) by stressing that anger's advent is a physiological process and they cannot stop it or control it better.

5.3 Anger as Harmful and Chaotic

The participants of this study used metaphors that construct anger as chaotic (disruptive of reason and patterns) and harmful (to the self and to others) extensively. This section explores how anger is portrayed as leading to chaos within and without the person; how anger can cause harm unbeknown to the angry person; and how chaos and harm form a cycle of disruption, distress and destruction. These accounts link well with the theme of anger as a pathogen as

presented in the AMCs (see chapter 4), having damaging consequences for the person's mental balance and physical health.

5.3.1: Chaos

The notion of chaos as the disruption of established norms is branded onto the participants' narratives of anger.

For example, P1 describes the process of letting anger go as follows: "regain composure, become yourself, and then, you carry on with whatever you do" (line 95). This implies that, while angry, he is lacking composure and is unable to "carry on with whatever" it is he does: anger has taken this ability away from him. It is interesting to note that the participant also includes the phrase "become yourself", implying that while angry, it feels like he is not himself anymore. "The self" for this participant, therefore, revolves around notions of composure, continuity and agency. All of these are shattered by anger's arrival. The participant here justifies his stance towards anger as a definitely "negative emotion" (as he states towards the end of his interview) by saying that it is him, first and foremost, who suffers from anger's effects.

Along similar lines, P.3 explains how anger leads him to behave in ways that leave those around him gobsmacked. He explains that, while in that state, he tries to explain to others what it is that made him so angry but the state itself creates a mist around him and leaves him unable to accomplish that explanation until after anger has died out:

"The explanation will come but th (.) why I was so angry will come () A:nd but it was always too late () So (..) because man I used to get rea:lly angry (.) like (.) fucking irrationally swearing and screaming at the top of my voice angry and you know throwing shit about" (lines 85-92).*

Chaos here is depicted not only through his reported inability to control his thoughts and express himself assertively and calmly during the anger episode, (which illuminate chaos as the force that disrupts his mental and verbal faculties), but also through his description of himself as throwing stuff around and screaming at the top of his voice: anger leads him to create chaos around him in an attempt to express this anger. Finally, the participant describes his reaction as "irrational"

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which highlights his inability while calm (like during the interview) to relate to that state of anger, but also brings up irrationality as a trait of anger. The notion of shame is very prevalent here since "the explanation… was always too late" and this is used by the participant in order to mark himself as apologetic for his behaviour when angry.

Chaos, anger and the suspension of the ability to make calm and rational decisions are presented as going hand in hand in my participants' accounts. For P.9, the surfacing chaos inflicted by anger is what sets things off course. Anger appears to cloud his rationality and judgment; this led him in the past to actions that were out of control, to the extent that the police had to intervene:

"I was so* angry that (.) you know (.) my decision-making was (.) was (.) limited to the extent that the authorities had to get involved you know? I was not able to make rational choices" (lines 33-34).

The participant presents his anger as a barrier in his logic, therefore as a gateway to chaos. He constructs his figure as running out-of-control into a harmful situation and therefore implies that he does not welcome anger and he would rather retain his rationality[30].

P.7 too makes a connection between anger and the disruption of his self-control, describing how there is always a good reason to make him angry but the effects the emotion has on his thinking lead him to chaotic mind paths which he struggles to keep under control: "there's always a truth when I say I've been wronged there's always a truth in it (.) it's just I blow it out of all proportion" (lines 323-324). He continues by saying that when he takes a step back from the situation he sees that his initial thoughts are not logically supported but he cannot help making them:

"and actually I'm sure that's not the case right? I take a step back I'm sure that's not the case (..) but it doesn't stop my mind from thinking like that and trying to put everything together into some grand story (.) some grand horrible story" (lines 169-170).

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[30] This is challenged later in his interview (in the IPA theme of "Anger Can Be Positive" when he welcomes anger as a gateway for him to take action and therefore reclaim some of his face and agency.

The participant here "takes a step back" to signal that during his interview, when he was in a composed state, he can see that anger brings about the disruption of logic and that his account of how he thinks when angry entails exaggeration. Anger leads the participant to extrapolate from a tiny fragment of logic that he can justify into out-of-control spiralling thoughts that he himself could not justify in his calm state. Chaos reigns supreme over logic when he is angry, consequently.

This tension between anger and logic is something that other participants have drawn on. P.4, for example, explores how anger dictates a different kind of logic than what he would employ in the absence of anger. Early in his interview the participant mentioned that, when customers at the pub where he works "cross a line" and start insulting him or other staff members, he feels "justified" to respond in an equally insulting way. Later on, I asked him if he only feels justified to do that or if he actually does it:

> *"Mmm (2sec) you mentioned before that in other pubs you've worked that you were allowed to say "fuck off" to people and stuff like that (.) have you ever done this actually?*
>
> *-Yeah (.) yeah a few times (.) um: but I would (.) I would like to think not without good reason" (lines 36-38)*

His anger, therefore, is a "good reason" for him to be rude to people. Anger, then, for this participant *is* a form of logic. The participant here creates an excuse for himself stepping outside the social boundaries of not insulting other people (especially when these are supported further by work boundaries of not insulting customers) by saying that it was them who brought about this reaction in him, whereas he only used his anger in order to justify this reaction and carry it out.

Chaos expands as anger is transmitted to others and disrupts *their* calm as well. Participant 6 says:

> *"if you're angry you're you get up (.) you're angry you go and take your car drive and being upset on the ro:ad and piss off other people that person might*

have a good day started his day well but then you got him upset he gets to

work and gets his frustration on someone else*" (lines 746-749)

It is important to note that, in this passage, the reason for the anger changes – *mutates*, one may say. Person A was angry about something and acted chaotically, then Person B got angry at Person A acting chaotically, Person C sees Person B's frustration and gets angry as well etc. It is essentially presented as a domino effect of anger, internal frustration and situational chaos in which any reason or logic is lost very early in the process. Interestingly, the participant employs a road with cars as the setting for the example he gives; roads are governed by strict rules and any violation of these rules may cause harm or, at the very least, chaos. Therefore, his option of a setting highlights chaos as prominent in anger.

Anger is therefore chaotic as it destabilizes the norms and smoothness of everyday life, even the sense of agency one has over his own self. Chaos, therefore, represents the opposite of reason (in the sense of rational behaviour) and by bringing the two together the participants justify or excuse their behaviour when angry, as it is attributable to the anger and not to the romantic view of their "true selves" (see Potter and Wetherell, 1987:99-101 passim).

5.3.2: Harm

Harm is commonly associated with anger, especially through anger's relation to acts of aggression, as the thematic analysis on Google-search has revealed and literature amply supports. The participants orient towards a discourse which constructs "anger" and "aggression" as closely linked. They all seemed to be aware of that construction, as they all stressed that they do not physically attack other people – at least not unless the others start first. Nevertheless, harm finds its way into their construction of their experiences in two ways: as an intent (to cause harm); and as an element of anger that backfires (causing self-harm).

P.8 presents his take on the harmful nature of anger in the following extract: "I've seen the kind of way that anger* is kinda eating people around me" (lines 28-29) he uses the verb "eating" to describe anger's march: a violent expansion that leads to conquest, defeat and consumption of people in general. So here anger itself is personified and constructed as the aggressor (who is 'eating people'). It is

interesting to note how (relevant to the "transmission of anger" as discussed in the previous section) anger here has not one source – it is presented as manifesting on all people simultaneously, for a different reason in each one. The participant here portrays himself as having witnessed the effects of anger, and therefore *knowing* of its harmful nature, implicitly marking the emotion as a negative force to be avoided.

P.7 describes how anger harmed him and his mental stability:

"it was such a difficult period for me that extreme anger if you like and I ended up (.) suffering* from depression and I was put in a: (.) a hospital for people with mental health problems" (lines 2-3).

The story here is one of a difficult period full of suffering and sadness. The participant presents the case without distinguishing between his anger and the source of his problem: his anger *was* his problem, although the source of his anger lay elsewhere. Regardless of what caused his anger, it was the anger itself that harmed the participant.

Continuing with the theme of harm, participant 6 presents anger as a force that drives him to cause it:

"I really wanna break the bike [laughs] I really wanna break the bike (.) well take (.) you know take it out or do* something"; "yeah I wanna punch something sometimes I feel like that (.) and I just (.) yeah I wanna get it out (..)" (lines 67-70).

Anger, then, is expressed through harm and destruction, which is simultaneously a way for the participant to "get it out"; anger therefore is constructed as some kind of negative energy that the participant does not want to keep inside but cannot get rid of in any way other than allowing it to take control of his body and unleash its wave on the world through him. Harm is one of the processes anger needs in order to feel satisfied (as the IPA chapter of "Anger is Irresistible" shows) and therefore the participant here creates an excuse for his violent desires when angry, implying that it is only natural under these emotional circumstances, as the laughter signifies.

Anger and destruction seem to go hand-in-hand for P.9 as well. While stating that he has suppressed the desire to break things (which he explicitly identifies as a

desire that follows anger) in his everyday life, P.9 stresses that he would still give in to it if he had a chance to do so in a controlled, legal and safe environment:

"it makes me (.) agitated (.) I wanna (.) I wanna smash shit up (.) I mean that* impulse has been suppressed () but if I were in a room with plates and a baseball bat I would have so* much fun smashing shit up" (lines 557-559).

Destruction for him is presented as a joyful way of letting his anger out. Anger, therefore, is intimately linked to destruction in the participant's account. The participant here clearly labels himself as being in check of his behaviour in social relations ("that* impulse has been suppressed") and no longer being a threat to himself and to others. The nature of the emotion is presented as such that it creates this violent urge in him. The participant attempts to make no excuses for this violent urge, celebrating it instead for the pleasure and fun it can lead to when performed in isolation.

Nevertheless, P.9 does not proceed with the intent to destroy things. Instead, he takes the anger inside of him – and that leads to self-harm:

"-And is this the source of anger? This internalization?

-Ye:ah:! (.) it f (.) it feeds into like (.) risk-taking behaviour you know if I decide I wanna like (.) take some drugs or (.) take* an overdose or maybe I'm suicidal you know all of those things come from that amount of continual absorption of of (.) of affect* that warrants an a reaction but I don't I don't have the right or I don't have the space to react" (lines 184-188).

The violent urge and pleasure that comes with it (as discussed in the participant's previous quote) are also constructed here as a road to self-destruction: a calculated drug overdose and suicidal thoughts that are brought about by anger's build-up. Anger therefore is constructed as a double-edged sword: expressing it leads to deterioration of relationships, while keeping it inside leads the participant to risk-taking behaviours in an effort to relieve himself of the negative affect anger brings about. It is interesting to note here that the participant presents the hypothetical situation of his overdose as a conscious decision to take an overdose – therefore anger here is seen not as a suspension of logic, but as a force that penetrates the participant's logic, making the prospect of an overdose (and therefore possible

death) seem like a plausible, and possibly good, idea. Therefore, anger is presented as distorting the participant's logic and thereby leading to harm.

Whereas P.9's account hints towards the self-destructive activities anger might lead to, P.10 presents it as bad for one's health: ""it kills" it kills people you know (.) not just like someone gets so angry that they kill someone but so angry that (.) it (.) affects their health" (lines 310-311). The participant here presents what is constructed as "a fact": "anger kills people". By doing so he distances himself from any accusation that he might welcome, or potentially enjoy the emotion. Anger here is presented as the cause of death for the people experiencing it; it is something that affects not only the way they feel, think and act, but also the way their bodies operate. The participant, then, constructs a personified version of anger as a killer, something/someone one ought to stay away from.

5.3.3: Chaos and Harm

Chaos and harm are present in the participants' accounts and each of these is addressed as having specific results for the individual. There are parts in the interviews however when the two come seamlessly together, creating a blizzard of negativity.

P.2 gives a description of how his anger can hurt the ones close to him (here he speaks about his girlfriend in particular) in ways that he is unaware of:

"I don't intend* to make her (.) you know, sad or hurt in any way... ah (.) I mean
I suppose (.) the very rare time when we are arguing, you know, I can, I'm also
just expressing how I'm feeling at the time (.) which can some time be anger
(..) but even then, I'm not intending* to hurt her or anything" (lines 38-40).

Anger, in this account, is presented almost as an entity with its own agency; a force that takes over its host and spreads negativity to those around the participant. The participant paints himself as fully aware of the dynamics of the relationship and the boundaries within which he needs to remain in order to avoid hurting his girlfriend. The need to express his anger, however, is projected as his excuse for occasionally doing so. Going further, the participant offers examples he sees in the world of how anger can be harmful. These range from fairly negligible

harm to people when one does not conform to social norms of behaviour; to acts of abuse, tyranny and life-shattering acts:

"Ah:: it can manifest itself into (.) um (.) just a general kind of um (.) ill-treatment whenever you'r. you're out in public um when you're buying something at the store you can snap* to the (.) at (.) at the cork Um (.) I mean one can say that it even could even manifest itself into being a very* abusive person and you can end up like physically or even sexually abusing a child (..)" (lines 467-471).

It is important to note that the participant may or may not have witnessed acts like this in person. Indeed, he stresses that what he mentions about child abuse stems from a conversation he had with his partner about her country of origin and the way children are treated there. The fact that he chooses to attribute such actions to anger, however, points to his perception of it and the way he apprehends it. Having realized the extent of the harm anger can bring about, including the troubles that follow bottling it up (as we shall see in the IPA theme of *Hell is Other People*), the participant stresses that one should "try to let it out in appropriate ways, you know… in safe, non-hurtful kind of ways" (line 126). All these point to anger as a potentially harmful force. Chaos is also a major component in it too though. As the participant goes on to say, "it's just a moment[31] of being out of control" (line 180) and, in that way, he brings chaos into play as well: anger can inflict harm but also temporarily suspends the participant's self-regulatory abilities when angry, thus taking him in a state of confusion about his intentions, thoughts and actions. Chaos suspends the participant's self-control and reason, thus opening the gates for harm to flood the space between him and the persons near him. The participant attempts to excuse himself for behaving the way he does when he is angry, as he constructs his figure as being in control the overwhelming majority of the time; this one moment he can't stay in control however, and this when anger takes control.

P.6 describes how anger makes him want to bring harm *through* chaos in the lives of others:

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[31] "it could be seconds it could be minutes it could even* be an hour or two" (lines 183-184)

"For example (.) in my studio I've got control of the power supply of the (.) quite

a few studios around here and if someone else (.) who runs the studio next door

is being annoying and ah (2sec) behave in a way that is ah not acceptable* (.)

according to me (..) I'm thinking I can switch off their electricity to piss them

off (.) that's* some sort of revenge (.) you know I [laughs] you know" (lines 52-

56).

Chaos ensues from the disruption of the smooth running of people's business (since functioning electricity is the norm in that studio) but, within a recording studio setting, where the vast majority of the equipment is electrical, it can also bring harm (e.g. the musicians/producers might lose any work they haven't saved, and the client will have to wait until the electricity comes back on). The participant here presents himself as motivated by anger to bring about chaos and harm to the people who generate that anger in him. The way he negotiates this desire, by stressing that the way they behave is not acceptable and laughing after that desire's expression can be seen as an attempt to frame his words in a way that I can understand as justified. Moreover, it is framed as something the participant feels ashamed of, since his laughter indirectly marks the desire as childish.

Participant 3 offers an account of how and why anger (or rather, the unchecked expression of it) is unacceptable in social settings:

"It's been a problem for me becau:se it's (..) alienate a lot of people in my life

(..) And it's a problem for me (.) e:h I came to realize that it was (.) not (.) a

normal* reaction to have to things" (lines 10-13).

Essentially the participant presents anger as a force of alienation of others because it is not a "normal reaction to things". A "normal reaction to things" is a social construct, as people in different places and at different points in time consider different reactions to be normal. For the participant, expressing himself without the filter that society would impose has led to the alienation of people from his life. The disruption of social norms that anger (through chaos and harm) brings about inflict severe social sanctions from people who have grown accustomed to this normalcy, which in their turn cause further harm and chaos.

The above considered, it should come as no surprise that the participant states that he does not like getting angry; rather, he does not like the things that make

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him angry but he likes himself when angry even less, precisely because he finds it hard to justify his reactions to himself and to others. Discussing a story when he got furious at a friend[32] and bandmate when, after a show, the latter was too drunk to carry the equipment, he says:

"and I remember uh: after that (4sec) um:: yeah (..) not feeling very happy about it (.) I mean I was pretty unhappy about having to do this shit but I was pr.I was even more* unhappy that I got that angry" (lines 247-248).

Anger, therefore, is something that frightens[33] people (through its chaotic and harmful nature) and, given the social nature of human beings, this has a backlash to the person who brings anger with them. By bringing this into the conversation the participant assumes responsibility for the irresponsible way he acts when he is angry, and further signals his regret for that.

P.8 proposes that alcohol facilitates anger, precisely because it allows for chaos and harm to erupt by overcoming expected social norms:

"chemically cos once it gets in you (.) alcohol is like fuel innit? it's just pure energy (.) you know? And then the problem with it is that you know (.) alcohol is the perfect* drink for people who want to get angry and mad… if you want to release your anger and you want to go crazy you drink alcohol (..) cos alcohol is fuel (.) it burns so it's (.) a lot of energy (.) then it like (.) it shuts down part of your brain (.)you know (.) so you can (.) so you don't have any (.) what are they called? Inhibitio:ns (.) you just do whatever you want (.) drink it and go mad and break and destroy everything"[34] (lines 513-520).

The participant here presents himself as seeking a trigger in order to unleash his anger with the intent of causing chaos and harm. The qualities he highlights are loss of inhibitions, increased energy, and destructive mania. Chaos comes with the combination of these, as everything is presented as floating partly within but also

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[32]Participant 8 too states that the harmful nature of anger has harmed him, as a host of anger, as well: "I lost a lot of friends because I was a bit too (.) too quick to anger" (line 552)

[33] P.6 does evaluate this drive as something "frightening": "you see adults being angry swearing probably being violent (.) you know in a state of anger (.) can be frightening can be scary" (lines 568-569).

[34] P.4 seems to agree: "it causes me to kind of (..) be short with people and a bit (.) bit aggressive (..) maybe if I've had a few drinks as well that definitely* opens up (.) dialogue:" (line 192).

partly outside of reach of the participant's control. The participant goes as far as to describe the option to drink alcohol as a way to evoke chaos and anger. Anger and the expression of it, therefore, are constructed as a conscious effort, a project: a state that is engineered, deliberately brought about with the help of alcohol. The participant presents the 'madness' of chaos and harm as a choice: he opts to drink in order to unlock the possibility of ignoring the social norms and boundaries and therefore giving himself to anger.   He describes himself under the influence as fuelled up but with a part of his brain switched off; hence full force with minimal thought. Alcohol therefore, gives him permission to be unreasonable and in that, to indulge in his emotion of anger.

Anger is therefore seen here as a personal as well as social phenomenon. Its experience and expression lead to harm and chaos which are generated in the individual but also carry consequences with them.

5.4 Constructing Anger as Shameful

Discourse analysis focuses on the discursive actions of speakers and the construction of their subjectivities as much as it does on the things that are talked about. *Action orientation* sees the narrator not only constructing the objects of discourse but also positioning him/herself towards that construction. Given the interactive context in which the interviews were produced, it is interesting to note a discursive strategy employed by all participants. They would suspend any narration or evaluation of stories (including characters, events, thoughts and actions) to give me a (brief or not) still of their self-presentation. This self-presentation is not about the person in the story or in a particular context, but rather hints towards a description of stable, unchanging personality traits. These appear to be traits that distance the person from the stereotype of the "angry man", as it is presented by anger-management centres; the popular depiction of anger in the UK; and the themes previously discussed in this thesis. Thereby they construct a repertoire of anger as shameful and distance themselves from that shame.

P.1, throughout his interview, refers to a technique to control his anger he picked up from a therapist: "if you're standing up and you're angry, sit down… if you're sitting down and you're angry lie down. And then the anger should go away after a bit" (lines 45-46). His explorations of times he felt angry are invariably followed by an assertion that he did that in order to diffuse his anger. He underlines that, by doing that, he feels that he is "in perfect control" (line 60) – a desirable trait and one that establishes a distance between him and the irrational, uncontrollable and chaotic person he becomes under the influence of anger. Towards the end of the interview, when I ask if he has anything he would like to add, he responds with a "that's really it to be honest" (line 265) (signifying that he has told me *all* he had to say about anger), before adding the affirmation "I'm a peaceful guy" (line 269). This is the picture of himself he chooses to end the interview with, highlighting that although he did take part in an interview about his anger, that anger is only a circumstances-bound state and that he is not a violent or hostile person in general or by nature.

Starting the interview with P.2 I asked him what made him decide to take part in this study. He responded with "I wouldn't say that I'm an angry* guy but I can* have a bit of a temper" (line 8). He therefore distinguishes between being an angry person (unchangeable, stable trait, defining a person) and having a temper (occasional, circumstance-bound and non-definitive). Further in his interview, while discussing how his occasional temper might "put people on a back foot" (line 30) as he calls it, he states "I mean I'm also very (.) tend to be a very friendly guy, a personal guy, a caring guy" (line 27). By lining up these adjectives one next to the other, the participant seems to attempt to forge a shield against the notion of an "angry person". He is friendly, so open to people; he is personal, implying that he devotes time to his loved ones; he is caring, signifying that he brings with him compassion and warmth. Note how these traits are presented as stable personality traits of his. In that way, he implies that his occasional "temper" is not sufficient to alter these. It is interesting to note that the participant here utilizes a "three-part-list", a discursive feature that has been identified as a strategy to achieve a sense of completeness and, as a result, present a more convincing account. The participant may or may not be doing this intentionally – either way, he has picked up the technique from its use in society (e.g. advertising, political speeches) and

this technique makes its way into his narration and self-presentation. This gives a sense of exhaustive self-presentation and "triangulation" of his good nature.

Towards the end of his interview, I asked P.3 whether he would like to add anything. His response was very animated, both physically and verbally. The participant leaned closer to the recorder and said:

"I would like to add (.) for the record that these days I cope with it a lot lot better than I used to [laughs] and I very rarely get angry" (line 844-845).

Him leaning towards the recorder marked this point as one of vital importance for him; he wanted to make sure that the recorder gets his words, he wanted to make these words sound louder than his previous narrations, and he wanted to signal to me (being in the same room as him) that what he is about to say is important. He states that what he adds is "for the record", hence stressing further its importance and implying that this is his status quo these days. "These days" marks a break from his earlier self (delving in irrational anger) that he had been talking about throughout the interview. He quantifies his improved coping with anger twice ("a lot lot better") to stress that he has come a long way from that irrationally angry version of himself. He follows it up with a laugh which hints towards a sense of exhilaration, euphoria, liberation, or ridicule towards his earlier self who could not cope with that anger. Indirectly, the participant thus puts a distance between how he used to be (irrational and angry) and how he is now (coping well and rarely angry). The distance between the two selves is presented as so great that the current self can laugh about the former (angry) self, which has ceased to be a threat and a source of shame. He ends by saying that he "very rarely gets angry" nowadays, thus presenting a firm statement of his current position which paints his current reactions to events as far removed from the instant anger of the past.

The distinction between an earlier version of himself as given to anger and a current, more composed self, seems to be of central importance for P.4 as well. Contrasting how he used to get absorbed into negative thoughts, violent fantasies and depressive mindsets when he was younger, he states: "I don't waste time

thinking about that stuff anymore (.) now I know how I can funnel it channel it"
(lines 140-141). The participant here presents the act of dwelling and ruminating
on anger as a "waste of time" and that, instead, that anger should be funnelled and
channelled into appropriate and/or creative activities ("and it's just yeah [bangs
hand on the table] waiting to get into the rehearsal room or writing it down when
I get home after the shift"- line 143). This implies a level of self-control which, in
turn, creates the implication that the more mature the participant gets, the less
given to anger's ways he is. Maturity (and self-control) are thus presented as stable
traits of the participant nowadays, whereas outbursts of anger are presented as
circumstance-bound, temporary and fleeting. The instances of anger can therefore
be omitted from his self-presentation. A variability in his account comes shortly
afterwards, however, when he admits that despite what he says, he still does not
feel unashamed about his behaviour.

  The effort to strengthen this control over himself and his anger are presented as
qualities he aspires to, and a motivation for the participant to sign up for the study,
because sometimes his own wits are not enough as he says:

"like I was telling my girlfriend before (.) coming here to speak to you today
that this is sort of like a prelude to my therapy (..) sometimes I do think I might
need to speak to someone cos when (.) yeah when I can't funnel it channel it
into writing and rehearsing (..) I don't know what to do" (lines 170-174).

  He therefore stresses that his techniques of funnelling and channelling anger are
not yet perfect but he also presents himself as someone thinking of going to
therapy, therefore someone who wishes to improve and stabilize his anger
situation. It is also important to note here that he ends the statement by saying
that when his techniques fail him he does "not know what to do". Therefore, he
presents himself more internally frustrated by his anger than helpless against it,
further signifying his will to change his ways. By saying this, the participant achieves
a further strategical discursive move: he constructs himself as a responsible agent
who has the ability to reflect on his experiences even when they are challenging;
thus, not giving away his sense of agency to a vague, indeterminate notion of anger.

  Towards the end of the interview I point out to him that, for someone who
experiences anger often and intensely, he is a very smiling person. He responds by
saying "I try I try to keep a sense of humour and try to remind myself how (.)

absurd* life is and how absurd it is to (.) get frustrated and angry at it" (lines 494-495). In that way, he projects humour as his antidote to anger and thus paints himself as someone who is (finally?) more eager to laugh at the absurdities of life than to get angry at them. Again, the participant is thus constructing himself as a rational, reasonable self, looking at and reflecting on his angry, unreasonable self. Agency and responsibility are therefore under his control.

The interview with P.5 started again with me asking what made him decide to sign up for the study. His reply was:

> "In general I wouldn't consider myself an angry* person but I would say that I'm someone who (.) does experience anger and is quite (.) ah (..) is almost annoyed by the fact that I get really angry"[35] (lines 2-3).

From the get-go, therefore, the participant engages in a method of self-presentation and draws this distinction between stable traits and emotional states. He "is not" an angry person, but he "does experience anger". In other words, he is a calm (and rational, as he often states in his interview) person who gets afflicted by anger "and is almost annoyed by the fact" that this is happening. The participant thus constructs a sense of shame in his account for his anger, stressing that he would rather not feel this way; he is annoyed at his own emotional reactions. Anger is therefore portrayed as an invasive force which the participant cannot repel but does not welcome either. Ending this act of self-presentation which he offers as a reply, the participant says "I've definitely had my battles with anger" (line 4). Here he clearly constructs the invasion of anger as something he battles against and therefore signals himself as an opponent of anger (an opponent who, unfortunately, is defeated quite often). Anger, therefore, is clearly placed outside of him and constructed as not a part of him. It is something that comes and goes, as the theme of "Anger In and Out of the Body" explores.

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[35] The participant reiterates that at a different stage of the interview, where he says: "I'm not (.) actually (.) an angry person (.) I'm just (.) angry (.) when (.) the I have these few triggers which I (.) just can't stand that they're there" (lines 289-290).

In a later part of his interview, after he has established that he generally does his best to refrain from unfair comments and violence (and the shattering of these efforts is one of the reasons he does not welcome anger), I mention it to him:

"-So you overall try to refrain from ah (.) unfair comments or (.) yeah violence as you said

-Ye:ah (..) yeah I mean I try it myself* I don't see why other people can't (.) but yes some people they (.) they seek out these things I mean I have a friend who (.) who will go to sports games mainly to get drunk and shout abuse at others (.) starts fights and you know I ah: I talked to him once and asked "why are you doing this? Can't we just watch the game?" and he said "no, that's the bit that I enjoy most, being a loud-mouthed cunt"" (lines 210-213).

He starts by confirming that he does refrain from unfair comments and violence and adds that more people should be doing this, therefore implying that this is the right way to behave. Perhaps the way he starts his account with the words "I try it myself I don't see why other people can't" hints to his own perception of himself: a rational person who likes to remain calm but is often tortured by anger's attacks – nevertheless, he goes against these unwanted intrusions and keeps himself under control. If he can do it, certainly others who have much less intrusive anger patterns should be able to do so, too.

To illustrate his point that not enough people are striving towards this considerate and self-controlled behaviour, he reports his habit of watching football games with a friend of his whom he depicts as exactly this inconsiderate type of person. By bringing this story of his friend to the table, the participant marks himself as the opposite of that type of behaviour. The way he presents his comments to his friends clearly reveal his disapproval at the anger and unnecessary violence/abuse his friend brings with him. "Why are you doing this?" the participant asks, indicating that he sees no reason for these actions. "Can't we just watch the game" he continues, showing that the way his friend behaves detracts from the enjoyment of watching the game while constructing himself as a reasonable person who questions that behaviour and calls people up on it. The way he reports his friend's reply also points towards the participant's disapproval of this behaviour: "Being a loud-mouthed *cunt*". The figure of the friend is therefore constructed as embarrassing and shameful. Whether or not his friend did use these words (i.e.

whether or not his friend recognizes that he annoys his "enemies" and friends alike), this word makes its way into the participant's narration. The participant here accomplishes a surprising discursive positioning: he attributes this type of behaviour to a person he would label as "a cunt" and therefore something he refuses to do himself.

P.6 is someone who, throughout his interview, stresses that anger is very prominent in his life. His response to my question of what made him sign up for the study he offers: "I know* I've got a lot of anger" (line 3). It is interesting to note here, too, how the participant refers to anger as something that he "has", not something that he "is". He presents it as a weight on him, mentioning several times throughout his interview that he considers anger to be "childish" and "immature", implying that he wishes to break free from that state and that he regrets having so much anger in him. Indeed, this construction maps onto Scheff's (2004:397) description of shame as "regressive, that is, childish". Therefore the participant expresses shame about his angry behaviour. This becomes explicit and clear halfway-through his interview, where he discusses the symptoms and manifestations of his anger. The participant suspends the narration to exclaim:

"and I don't want that to happen actually you know (.) I wish* I could just be maybe someone like Ghandi or you know just (.) ca:lm and don't say anything and accept everything and (..) but I cannot* (.) it's very difficult" (lines 102-105).

Here the participant underlines that he is not comfortable with that state and emphasizes that he wishes he could be like Gandhi. The image of Ghandi here evokes qualities like calmness, acceptance and an overall state of peace and harmony, which the participant immediately goes on to explicitly spell out: to be calm, to not pick up fights and to accept everything (hinting perhaps to the Stoic school of thought, too). The participant almost laments the fact that he cannot get to that stage – instead, he is left to observe his own angry responses in dismay and shame, since he does not want his responses to be of that nature. Moreover, however, the figure of Ghandi invokes the notion of actually taming one's anger and accomplishing strategic feats instead of either pretending the anger is not there or staying paralysed because of that emotion. This statement consequently constructs the participant as someone keen to demonstrate his resolution to

disown that angry and uncontrollable part of himself in favour of composure, calculation and determination.

P.7 goes to great lengths in his interview to state how his anger "turns inwards" to himself and morphs into sadness. The participant experienced a heartbreak a few years ago; this caused a reaction that started as anger but ended up in depression (in the clinical sense of the term). Describing the event, the participant offers:

"it was such a difficult period for me that extreme anger if you like and I ended up (.) suffering* from depression and I was put in a: (.) a hospital for people with mental health problems (…) for like two months (.) then gradually I sort of recovered* from that over like two years (.) but still I find myself suffering from anger" (lines 2-7).

It is interesting to note how the participant describes both depression and anger as something he suffers from. This implies that the way he experiences anger is as crippling for him as depression was and highlights how the participant wishes to be rid of anger, or "recover" from it. Anger is constructed here as an affliction or disease (not unlike depression) and, therefore, as something that plagues the participant and disrupts his normal, calm state.

Later on in his interview, P.7 describes his reactions when angry and how he was taught to bottle up his emotions. In that excerpt, he includes the following snippet: "I don't hit people I haven't (.) I've never been to prison or anything (.) when I get angry at people I don't hit them you don't need to worry about that" (lines 41-43). The participant starts by stressing that he refrains from violence and that he has never been to prison – he thus marks himself as outside the sphere of chaos (prison; disruption of freedom) and harm (hitting people) that anger brings with it. Then there is a repetition of the "rule" that when the participant gets angry he does not hit people. This indicates that he does get angry (so he is not trying to deny that emotional state), but more importantly that he feels an obligation not to lash out in anger and that he has mastered the technique of holding back. He then ends his disclaimer by saying that *I* need not worry about that. There are two possible interpretations in this statement. On the one hand, he could be addressing *the*

researcher who might be scared that disclosure of violent attacks or prison time might flag the participant's account as unsuitable for the research. On the other hand, he could be addressing a person of the public who would be relieved to know that the person opposite them has the ability to restrain himself as he brings back painful memories and enraging events.   In the process, the participant has constructed the stereotype of an angry man as someone who cannot control himself and ends up beating people or even spending time in prison. With his account he positions himself in a distance from that stereotype, flagging up that he is not one of *these people*, thereby discursively deflecting the shame that comes with being labelled as an "angry person".

Further, the participant underlines that he is not looking for reasons to feel angry:

"I think there are some* people (.) it's probably not my place to say (.) some people who (.) go out of their way to look* for anger when nothing's* happened (.) I wouldn't say I'm one of those people (…) you might see them trump people deliberately start fights and they might deliberately try to create a reason to be angry" (lines 336-337).

The way the participant stresses that "nothing has happened" while these people (who are different from himself) are looking for reasons to be angry paints him as someone who understands the difference between having a reason to be angry and not having that reason. Thus the participant expands on his stereotype of the angry man and constructs a group of people who look for trouble, which then allows him to position himself firmly outside of that group. It also harks back to the question of stable traits vs. circumstance-bound reactions, where the participant contrasts his momentary, circumstance-bound anger to the stable trait of remaining reasonable and staying away from trouble.

P.8 does not offer an explicit presentation of himself in terms of stable traits vs. temporary reactions. It is interesting to note that he stresses he nowadays drinks less, when he has earlier (p.144, in the "Anger as Harmful and Chaotic" theme) described alcohol and its effects as harmful and chaotic. The participant had stated that in the past he used to drink a lot but now he refrains from that, opting for small quantities of expensive alcohol over large quantities of cheap alcohol. This implicitly

marks his transition from someone who wanted to get blinded and violent to someone who refrains from both and cherishes self-control and calmness instead.

P.9 is another participant who draws on the distinction between stable traits and circumstance-bound reactions:

"I am certainly not* a violent pe:rson but (.) if people push me or if I feel under attack or threatened or I feel (.) injustice* there have been times when I (.) I just used that* as an excuse like n (.) nothing (.) nothing will matter (.) my life wouldn't matter (.) I will fight* for the principle" (lines 53-55).

In this extract, he presents himself as reacting angrily when situations call for it; he even uses situations as "an excuse" to express his anger (presumably including supressed or bottled-up anger from earlier events, too). It is equally important to note that he starts this self-presentation with a statement that he is "certainly not a violent person", thereby marking his reactions as justifiably tied to the events surrounding him and unrelated to his personality traits. The co-existence of this description as "certainly not a violent person" and the use of situation as "an excuse" to act violently points to a tension in the participant's account. He portrays himself as not-angry but also as someone who needs to not keep anger inside and looks for opportunities to express it. Again, the underlying assumption is that his stable personality trait is not expressing anger unless the situation calls for it – but the type of situations that call for it is reserved for the participant to decide. Therefore, he describes anger as a response to a moral threat and not as a personality trait; at the same time, he acknowledges that he does have anger inside him but stresses that he only vents it at the right time and on the right people.

The above is further highlighted by the self-presentation the participant offers later on in his interview:

"while I only have compassion for myself and what I've seen I have no qualms with the amounts of anger and aggression and (.) and violence that is within me and I am quite proud of myself for the (.) amount of control I have (…) for how soft-sounding I might be and how caring and compassionate I can be to other people (.) I just have no interest in opening myself up to anyone's (2sec)

interests". In this quote, the participant clearly describes himself as someone
with great "amounts of anger and aggression and violence" (lines 305-311).

He explains that these were hailed into being from previous experiences of his (particularly from the household in which he was born, where violence was commonplace) and implies that he feels sorry for himself for being in that state; he has "compassion" for himself. He presents himself as beaten down by fate and therefore justified in having these amounts of anger and violence inside him. Moreover, he explicitly states that he is proud of the control he has over these states, which implies that as long as he does not let his instincts run wild, he sees no problem with having them. Besides, as the quote continues, these instincts protect him against interests which run contrary to his own. He presents himself as "caring and compassionate" which show a high level of interest for other people's wellbeing. If something or someone seeks to take advantage of him, however, he states he will not open up himself to their interests. Nevertheless, he also asserts that this is reserved for certain situations only and his usual approach to people is one of openness, not confrontation. Anger, therefore, and its controlled expression, is something the participant embraces as a barrier between him and injustice. Anger is thus constructed here as a protective mechanism against being taken advantage of and treated unjustly.

P.10 refers to his partner throughout the interview as the major source of his anger. His account is filled with examples of how they attend to situations and their emotions differently and what problems this generates for him. It comes as no surprise, consequently, that his account is filled with instances of tension between them, leading either to a confrontation or the active avoidance of that.

Reporting their confrontations, the participant says: "I'm the taller person I can (.) I can* have a loud impressionable voice if I want to (.) but it's not something I use cos I know* that it's (.) scary (.) you know" (lines 86-87). Here the participant establishes that, if this confrontation was to explode, he could defeat his "opponent", or scare her away. He therefore acknowledges his physical traits that would put him in a superior position if aggression was to break out. He stresses that he chooses to diffuse the situation and not to use that weapon though, as he "knows" that it's scary. What the participant is saying here is that he understands

how he may be perceived by his girlfriend and, as a result of that, he restrains himself in order not to scare her. He therefore constructs himself as a considerate and sensitive person, while at the same time he is reminding the listener that he could "use" this threatening presence of his if he so chooses. The participant is portraying himself as having knowledge of his physique and the advantage in aggressive behaviour it could provide but actively chooses not to lose himself to anger's voracious appetite, hence extra-considerate and extra-sensitive (since if he did not have that physique he would not pose a threat to the "opponent").

Further down, he describes how his partner was a victim of violence from her father when she was younger. The participant says:

> "(.) I kind of understand why (..) why h(.) why h(..) why: he did that (.) not that I think it's right (.) not that I would (.) I would always wanna stop myself from doing it (.) bu:t (..)" (lines 502-504).

The participant can understand why his girlfriend's father acted that way (although he underplays his understanding with the use of the diminutive "kind of", thus implying that he does not understand it completely and therefore distancing himself from the image of the man who would not think twice before exerting physical violence on women). This is explicitly stated in the beginning of the quote. He continues by stressing that, although he can relate to her father's reaction, he does not think it is right, he would not do it himself and his wish would be to always be able to stop himself from doing that. The strain is high, in other words; he feels the urge to respond with violence but holds back – and the reason for that is that his moral values tell him that it is wrong.

The moral values seem to be a restraining force for this participant, even though he does not discuss what it is that makes some actions right and some others wrong. One could argue that this draws from a moral discourse because within that type of discourse, the desirability or not of an action (or thought) is self-evident. Later on in his interview, he offers how he often thinks violence or aggression will help him get his point across to his girlfriend but this moral discourse holds him back[36]:

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[36] This raises questions about the relationship between discourse and action, which will be explored in the Discussion chapter.

"I'm getting so frustrated that that seems like the rational* (.) thing to do like
(.) [raises his volume] "can't explain anymore! Can't talk anymore!" (.) "can't
come up with ten different ways to say the same thing. Can't keep battling"
(..) and (.) that (.) like (.) so (.) violence seems like a (.) like "this will stop her!"
(.) you know (…) "this will show what I mean" (.) this will mean (.) this will be
like (..) "listen to me" you know? (…) ah (.) and that's quite scary (.) thing to
like (.) a thought process to go through and (..) be like "wooooh! Don't do
that!" [laughs] like "that's awful" (.) you know (.) and (.) I (.) I've never done
that and I don't want to do that (.) you know" (lines 504-511).*

In the beginning of the quote, the participant offers the distortion of his logic that
arises from his girlfriend's reluctance to take his advice or to see his point of view.
He explains that her refusal to listen makes violence look like "the rational thing to
do" and he attributes this distortion to the frustration that comes from his
discontent at his girlfriend's behaviour. This situational frustration then becomes
an internal one and this is what he spells out through the reported speech that
follows that statement: he draws from the well of his experience to go back to his
way of thinking while angry. The participant then pauses to evaluate that urge. He
labels the whole thought process as "scary" and reports again an inner voice (his
internalized morality) that is telling him not to do it because the use of violence,
especially against women, is "awful". By using reported speech here he brings to
the picture the people who taught him that such behaviour is wrong; and he
emphasizes that he has received social training and is therefore more than an
animal following his urges and instincts. The gendered dimension of social
responses is also foregrounded here, as the participant essentially states that he is
aware of the divide between the two genders when it comes to the use of violence.
Men don't attack women; and him saying that further supports his self-portrayal as
someone who knows how to conduct himself (and thus avoid shame and losing
face).

So he seems to be constructing different parts of himself which are in conflict
with one-another (very much along the lines of the 'calm' vs. 'angry' self). By giving
the different parts their own voice (through the instances of reported speech he
uses) he achieves both to emphasize one's independence from the other but also
to underline their ability to communicate with one-another. The different parts of
himself are all his and they make him who he is, but he recognizes them as

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independent of one-another and is in control of them and their expression. The participant ends the excerpt by saying that he has never acted aggressively towards his partner and, more importantly, he does not want to do that. He wishes to remain forever peaceful towards her, even though his body and mind are occasionally telling him to shatter the peace and act violently. In that way, the participant firmly constructs himself as a person whose personality is not one of an "angry man".

It is interesting to note that the personality traits the participants choose to foreground are presented as ones that set their owner apart from the harmful and chaotic nature of anger (as previously discussed in this chapter) and from anger as irresistible and taking control over the person's thoughts and actions (as will be further discussed in the next chapter). The participants therefore position their calm, composed self as taking a stance against their own anger (and the angry self this evokes) in their narrations and therefore the participants claim a nature for themselves that is removed from anger.

It is worth noting, finally that all my participants systematically tried to ensure that me and them are 'on the same page': they would frequently use phrases like "you know", "you see" – or indeed their respective questions "you know?", "you see?" - to invite my participation. While this can be interpreted as a standard way of engaging audiences in English, I interpret it differently in light of what this theme shows: I think it can be seen as a way to invite my participation and to have me reassure them that they are not irrational, thus assuring that they are not heading towards a situation of frustration in case they realize later on that what they have been telling me seems incomprehensible to me. In the process, they probably also try to avoid a situation where they would feel ashamed for the information they have shared with me and the light they painted themselves in.

CHAPTER 6: INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

This chapter examines how the participants explore and make sense of their experience of anger. The participants are invited to explore their experience and present them as clearly but also as truthfully/accurately as possible. The next four sections are about how I make sense of the participants making sense of their experience.

The superordinate themes and their respective subthemes discussed in this chapter are presented in the table below, while a more elaborate version closer to IPA's outlines can be found in Appendices A and B.

Table 2: IPA Themes and Sub-Themes

Theme	Sub-themes
While in Place, Anger is Irresistible	*The Wild Joy of Anger* *The Punishing Thoughts of Anger*
When it's Over, Anger is Regrettable	*Anger is a Bad Adviser* *Anger and Relationships* *Seeing Themselves in the Eyes of Others*
Anger Can Be Positive	*A Blessing and A Curse* *Welcoming Anger But Hoping for Better Control*
Hell is Other People	*The Others* *The Parents / Social Forces* *Confronting the Other and Claiming Moral High-Ground*

6.1 While in Place Anger is Irresistible

This superordinate theme encompasses themes where participants describe how they cannot escape anger and angry reactions once the emotion has been sparked. Essentially anger is experienced as a reaction to situations that the person perceives as offensive, threatening or unjust. Here my participants explore how anger's effects permeate different aspects of their being, as well as their inability to control its influence on these aspects.

<u>6.1.1: The Wild Joy of Anger</u>

The symptoms of anger can be described as manifesting in different parts of one's activities, thoughts or body. Participant 7 explains:

> *"well for me it's (.) in here [points to the chest area] (.) feels like some sort of chemical is being released (.) and it's an odd feeling cos it's a feeling of rage (.) you know and wanting* to something to take action* (.) right? Like "I wanna do* something" but at the same time it's a feeling of sadness* (..) and being wronged at the same time and it's (.) it's a (.) not pleasant feeling and wanna be out of it (.) wanna be out of it (..) and my body is telling me (.) I suppose it's a bit like adrenaline (.) "the way to get out of this terrible feeling is to do* something" you know (.) [bangs hand on desk] to scream (.) slam the table whatever it is eh (.) and it's something I want to escape* from" (lines 138-148).*

Participant 7 chooses the term "chemical" as a metaphor for anger and anger's bodily manifestations. This choice creates several implications for the nature of anger in this particular person. The description establishes a sharp difference between the presence of this chemical and the absence of it. Therefore, there is a clear distinction between the angry and the calm selves brought forward here: a chemical is assimilated into the body's vital functions, changing the person's usual behaviour. So, as there is a clear distinction between the presence and the absence of the chemical, once the chemical is activated its effects cannot be escaped – the chemical affects and even directs the participant's physiological and mental functions. Of course it could be argued that what the participant describes here is the feeling of constriction and shortened breath that other participants have

associated with anger. Him not mentioning those effects and instead pointing to the chest area (where vital organs such as the heart and lungs are located), however, underlines the vigour with which anger manifests. This chemical is depicted as almost controlling the very nature of this participant's being.

To underline this further, the participant describes it as a negative feeling, one that he wants to escape from. Nevertheless, under the influence of anger, the only options his body dictates are angry ones – "scream, slam the table, whatever it is". Therefore, anger is something he does not enjoy but while angry, he can only think and act as an angry person, thus empowering the angry self and letting his calmness and composure drift with it. The comparison to a substance and its influence is literally spelled out here, where the substance has to take its route and bring about its behavioural and mental effects in order for it to then dissipate from the body. Anger is therefore both the problem and the solution to this problem in this account and, while the participant reports not enjoying the state of anger, anger itself appears to enjoy taking control of the participant.

Prompted to discuss anger's arousal, Participant 5 discusses how anger's evocation spells its unavoidable dominance over calmness:

"as anger comes it comes like as a wave it feels almost like it's coming from my spine to my head I can fee:l it and it just engulfs* (.) ah (.) it takes over the head completely* (.) ah (.) and it sort of ends in my frontal lobe (.) I can feel my frontal lobe just s (.) shattering you know not shattering but I can feel the pressure on the frontal lobe very strongly and (.) you know (.) it's just there* and it takes over (.)" (lines 198-201)

The metaphor here is that of a wave – a wave that slowly but steadily engulfs the skeleton of the participant, ending up in his frontal lobe. Again, there is an obvious comparison with the physiological manifestation of anger as pressure in the head; this is a common, folk representation of anger's effects, one that many of my participants reported. The very fact that the participant describes anger as ending up in, and engulfing, his head creates further implications. The head is where the brain can be found, arguably the primary organ in controlling the body and the thoughts. Therefore, what the participant is describing here is how anger conquers his thoughts, intentions and actions and how he can do nothing about it. The anger's effects make the participant feel his frontal lobe shattering, through which

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he emphasizes the intensity of the emotion. Of course his skull is not shattering but the pressure caused by the wave is so strong that he feels he can hardly contain it. To round it off, he describes anger as a wave which, once done engulfing his head, "is just there" and he cannot get rid of it. Underlining his helplessness against this wave, the participant adds that anger then "takes over", thus elaborating on the contrast between the calm and the angry state. The two are presented as mutually exclusive and when a clash erupts anger is, for the participant, habitually dominant –it leaves him unable to operate notwithstanding its commands. It is also important to underline that the participant does not link the above account to any particular context or situation; rather, he presents it as a habitual and unsurprising model of anger attacks. When anger is prompted, it "takes over completely" and does not allow any space to calmness.

Besides purely physiological symptoms, anger appears to be irresistible when looking at the participants' behaviour, too. Participant 2 stresses:

"I swear. Um, I mean I kind of swear anyways but certainly when I'm angry I swear because I've just learned that, for me (.) um (.) often the, the (..) the feeling, it needs the right word[…] And (.) when I say that when I'm angry, if, then the anger feels a little satisfied. It's like I've, I've um (.) I've just given that (.) that feeling its, its (.) the expression that it needs." (lines 137-155)

The participant personifies the feeling of anger in his account. It is there, demanding that the person uses the right word to express its urge. The participant's account is almost like presenting a creature craving satisfaction. Anger is inside the participant like an itching that needs to be scratched or a thirst that needs to be quenched. The use of the swear word is not something that appeases anger, nor is it a spell to ward it away; rather, it is presented as an item that partially and only momentarily soothes and satisfies the angry feeling inside the participant and one can almost see the creature manically moaning in pleasure before asking for more. It is worth paying attention to the choice of words by the participant. Anger "needs" a certain word to be satisfied. Anger, then, is driving the participant towards that word, leaving no space for negotiation: it is not an option but a mandate that draws the participant's "calm self" into anger's realm with the sole purpose of satisfying the emotion's demands.

When anger takes the reins, swear words are one vocal expression it assumes. Another is the urge to scream incoherently, as participant 5 explains:

"but basically just screaming (.) scre:aming trying to (.) just nothing that (.) no words just out of sheer fury" (229-230).

Anger here is seen as a force that pushes the participant to produce loud noises with his mouth and, in that description, anger is a key to regression. He regresses away from his 'civilized', 'educated' nature into a primitive, perhaps infantile state while losing himself in the emotion. The participant, in that way, becomes the vessel for the emotion and thus gives it space to dwell. In doing so he also gives it voice – and the voice anger here chooses is one of "no words just sheer fury". Notice how the participant begins to describe the action as "trying to…" before cutting himself short. What I read here is the participant trying to make sense of the experience. At first he is under the impression that, while screaming, he *tries to* do something. Upon the narrative's unfolding, however, he understands that he is not really trying to do anything – he is already doing it. The incomprehensible scream *is* the action.

Similarly, P.10 offers: "I* know that my anger's taken like control of me when I (.) eh:: (.) I (.) shout really loudly" (line 89). In this short passage, the participant presents himself as losing control when anger strikes. His control of himself is presented as actually being handed-over to anger. The participant then finds himself in a situation where he recognizes the anger that has taken him over, from the level of his volume and this again is presented as a generalized effect, not tied to any specific context or situation: it is an unmistakable sign of anger's advent.

In that sense, when anger strikes it puts the person under its spell. Anger comes with a demand and the person has to both channel and satisfy this demand. If they don't then they are only suffering from it. If they do, they commune the wild joy that the expression of anger brings. This wild joy comes across most vividly through the participants' description of violence. In their descriptions, 3 and 6 celebrate violence as something that felt good in its own right.

Participant 6 describes how he got into a heated incident with another driver while on the road, which led to the other driver following him to his work's parking space and starting a fight with him as soon as the participant stepped out of his car.

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He punched the participant and then went into his car to get away from the scene. The participant then avenged himself by punching the guy through his open window and made him bleed, which the participant describes as making him feel good.

> *"and he was driving back trying to run me over (.) I stepped to the side a and I saw him and I had all those thoughts (.) like it was quite fast but I had all those thoughts I described[37] (.) I had all those thoughts in 5 seconds and I was like "this guy is gonna go" (.) you know "go away unpunished" and I looked at him and through the window I punched* him [laughs] like (.) re:ally hard (.) I made him bleed actually (.) I opened his his eyebrow (..) and it made me feel good (.) oh yeah [laughs] yeah I'm telling you I felt good* (.) it was (.) I don't know it felt like re::ally good (.) because also I think he was taking a punch for the other guy (.) at the other story before um and you know went unpunished (.) I think he was taking a punch for both so (.) it felt good but he didn't like it obviously" (lines 306-314).*

This good feeling of his regarding this action stems first and foremost from the feeling that justice is being somehow restored through this punch; not only did the other driver punch him first, but that was also a repetition of a similar incident as the participant described earlier in his interview. Therefore, the participant feels he is correcting an earlier wrongdoing against him, as well as the present one, with his punch. That past event that he makes relevant here, one where a similar thing had happened, can perhaps be seen as having left a residue of shame, since the participant did not manage to reclaim his face or his right then – from that perspective, that past instance fuelled the "shame" in the "shame-anger spiral", intensifying the participant's anger in the story he recounts here. Interestingly, the other driver was also caught up in a shame-anger chain-reaction himself, since my participant had 'flicked the finger' at him and it was that event that escalated to the fight. A triple-spiral of anger and shame might be in place here too, with each of

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[37] The thoughts the participant is referring to here revolve around the issue of having proof of the assault he suffered and finding justice for it. The participant said: "I was like "shit what's going on? That guy's gonna go I don't even know if those cameras have seen anything if I can…" and the problem is that I (.) I've had another issue maybe like a month before with another guy and in my head (.) in my head straight-away I thought "ok, this guy just punched me and he's (.) going away I'm not sure I've got his plate if I go to the police station it might be (.) nothing* might happen (..) um: last* time I did that I didn't do anything to the guy I went to the police station they didn't said nothing, they did nothing because the camera was not working there was no proof or anything I was like "that's happening again. No way!"" (lines 300-303).

the two participants caught up in an intrapersonal feeling trap while a loop is formed between them.

It is worth noting how the participant either talks about feelings of rage, or about the acting out of his anger but not both together. He does not establish a link that would bring together his perception of his emotional state and his actions. This leaves a gap between the two which, the quote implies, is filled up by the emotion itself: it is not the (calm, rational self of the) participant that is in control anymore, but anger (that has infiltrated the participant's existence).

Nevertheless, it is worth highlighting the pleasure of engaging in violence in itself for the participant, even while remembering it at the time of the interview. Notice how the narrative flow breaks to accommodate the action and the participant's description of it. He freezes the storyline to explain that he punched him really hard, made him bleed… and then he tries to explain the feeling he got out of it. However, after three attempts at it which only contain the confirmation that it felt good, the participant stops trying to explain it further and simply states "I don't know it felt rea::lly good". This overwhelming pleasure cannot be explained in any other terms, it simply has to be accepted (embraced) as it is. He stresses the discomfort and unpleasantness of this action for the other driver while highlighting his repetition of "it felt good" – "but he didn't like it obviously". This damage to the opponent seems to be a vital part of the pleasure induced by violence and stands in stark contrast to the "controlled" accounts of other participants who stress that they refrain from physical violence and only opt to punch pillows, doors and other inanimate objects instead. The participant here is given completely to the emotion which arose out of the other driver's wrongdoing and therefore the punishment of the other driver seems to be the best way to satisfy this emotion. The moral side of the story might, however, just be inserted in his interview to make himself not look like a bloodthirsty individual. Anger is sketched as the force that possessed the calm, rational person that is the participant, and made him take joy from that act of violence. Further highlighting the gendered dimension of emotional expression, it is worth noting here that the participant probably feels comfortable with sharing this story because his aggression was directed at another male. His account comes with no excuses or attempts to present a more detailed context for his response. Letting out his anger in that way towards another male is acceptable, since physical

combat among males is part of establishing oneself in the social hierarchy as an alpha.

Similarly, Participant 3 presents the following story which took place in the fencing club he was a member of in his late teens, where another member was very confrontational towards him:

"A:nd one day you know like we're doing training again and he's doing the trick where you'd slap the epee like that on your arm [slaps his arm] without scoring a point it just really hurt* (.) I said "stop doing it" (.) instead of being rational and say "that's it we're not fencing anymore" and go to the coach and say "hey listen, it's not for me it's for this guy [code name] Uffe cos he's a (.) he's a real bitch" I just fucking screamed "cunt" in Norwegian I called him "hinte" [repeats word in Norwegian] and I slammed my epee to his chest (.) broke the blade in half (.) see I actually hurt him but that was just cos he was physically hurting me (.) but it was in the context of fencing and I just completely lost my shit with him (.) dude I broke the thing in half and broke two of his ribs a:nd (.) my fencing coach (.) funnily enough he was on my side he saw the whole thing happen and he sent Uffe home and blacklisted him from the fencing club (..)" (lines 431-439).

The participant starts by explaining how the other person was annoying him. The annoyance came from two sources. The first is that the other person was slightly bending the rules of the game, not to win (since his actions would not confer him points) but precisely to annoy the participant. The second is that the other person's actions caused physical pain to the participant. The participant explicitly states that "instead of being rational" he went down anger's path, thus drawing a sharp distinction between reason and anger (not dissimilar to what the theme of "Anger as Harmful and Chaotic" in the previous chapter highlights). He started with a verbal insult and he went on to harm the other person with his epee. The narration freezes here too, to allow the participant to delve into the memory of the emotion. He "completely lost" it as he says, which again points to the very irresistible nature of anger which strips the individual of their sense of agency and responsibility. What the participant says here is that he was no longer his normal, calm self; instead, he had been transformed by anger and obeyed anger's directives. He then repeats

almost triumphantly that he broke the blade in half, given to the passion for violence anger generates. He ends his narration of the complicating event with a statement that he broke two of the other person's ribs. And so anger got its way, giving a sense of wild pleasure to the participant – one which is further embedded in the account through the participant dwelling on how he screamed "cunt" thus creating a distance between himself and his opponent, firmly placing himself in the attacking side. Focusing on the presentation of the event, it is also interesting to note how the participant (like Participant 6 earlier in this section) describes the actions the way they unfolded without any reference to his intentions or thoughts at the moment. In that way, perhaps unknowingly, the participant takes an observer position to his own actions, reinforcing the idea that anger had taken over and he was no longer in control of himself – it is almost like, at the time of the interview, he is watching a film and describes what is happening in the screen; like watching himself at the time of anger as a different person, inside the mind of whom he cannot gain access.

Of course, this account is given against a backdrop of morally justifiable behaviour, both generally (as when the other person initiates violence one is required to respond by fight or flight) and specifically (as the fencing coach's reaction marks the participant as being in the right). This is included in the story as the result of the conflict between the two fencers: the other person's expulsion from the club for being an annoyance to my participant, indicating that the coach also believed my participant was in the right. The fact that his aggression was directed towards another male makes it justifiable on the gender dimension too, since violence and physical combat is acceptable when among men as discussed earlier. Earlier in his interview, the participant had stressed that he never engages in physical violence. Upon reaching this point in his narration, however, he revisits this to correct it and tells me that this has actually happened but only a handful of times and that it was always the other person who started it. This revision of his actions points to the fact that he has now (upon telling me this story) revealed the pleasure that physical violence brings. In a sense he feels empowered at that stage to tell me that he has actually engaged in physical violence, a pleasure that could not be admitted earlier on in the interview while the participant was still exploring the socially acceptable limits within which he could operate.

Besides guiding their actions, anger is also described as irresistible when it comes to taking over the participants' thoughts. Only on this, there is no wild joy but a very punishing persistence. Participant 5 has offered that "I find that there are two sort of ways one is the one that lingers and it's there all the time and one which is just fury". The latter maps onto what was discussed in the previous sub-theme of the present section, whereas the former describes what is discussed in the current sub-theme: anger's persistence and weight that blocks the participants from finding calmness and composure.

Participant 3 offers:

"you get angry and afterwards it lingers the anger stays there (.) the frustration which is long-term keeps on going and afterwards you get to the point where (.) you know you burst out in anger and after you've taken that one step and afterwards the mood you have anything for that person is always constant* anger" (lines 135-138)

Participant 3 here presents the case. Anger can be compared to a seed in his account; a seed that is initially planted and then grows and grows until it blossoms into a "point where you burst out in anger". What makes this type of anger different to the expressions of anger discussed above is that anger does not go away even after it has been expressed. The person who angered the participant remains in the participant's mind as a constant reminder of his anger, very much like a thorn in his side.

Discussing anger and how it dominates his thinking, Participant 5 states:

"it's just there (.) it lingers and it takes (.) chains you to this thought which (.) like an earworm like a song just won't go away from your head it'll just (.) it goes in circles and it comes back and returns and (.) whenever you have a moment when you don't really think about much (.) for example you just walk into the station or something (.) to go to work in the morning and there's like nothing in your head besides of "let's get this routine over with let's go to the station" it's still* there it's (.) that's exactly* when it strikes when you're not thinking about anything else" (lines 68-72).

The participant here describes himself as *chained* to the thought that makes him angry. This metaphor portrays him as a prisoner of this thought, unable to break free from it. The thought that angers him is constantly there, preventing him from moments of peace and calm. In other words, for as long as anger is in operation, the participant is constantly preoccupied with it, like a thorn in his side. The participant describes anger's movement here as a cyclical one, where it "comes back and returns". Notice how this description does not involve the anger ever going away – there are variations in its intensity, but the thought is always there.

Asked how he would define anger in a few sentences, Participant 7 starts by calling it a combination of extreme rage with sadness before moving to its manifestation in the person. In his description, Participant 7 too presents this lingering aspect as one of anger's defining features:

> *"it manifest itself (.) with a terrible (.) feeling in your chest (.) something there which you've (.) got to get rid of (.) and it's that same feeling which is both driving* that (.) anger (.) and which for some reason you think by being angry you get rid of that feeling of course I'm not sure if it's true* (.) that by being more angry you alleviate yourself of that feeling I don't know if that's true at all but of course this (.) this angry feeling on the inside (.) it's telling me [shouts] to go crazy! To throw this up in the air! To shout and scream because I've got this terrible feeling and I wanna get rid of it!? and to get rid of it that feeling says "you can get rid of me by being more angry! Be more angry!" (lines 608-619).*

Here anger is squarely presented as an irresistible force, both in nature and in intensity. By its very nature, the participant claims, it is designed to augment and to find satisfaction within itself. This self-feeding loop leads to the strange situation where the participant wishes to alleviate himself of anger but anger, guiding his thoughts, tells him that the only way to do that is to get angrier. In that way anger creates a self-feeding loop. A nice way of visualizing the participant's account is to think of anger as a tunnel. The participant is trapped within that tunnel and he does see light at the end of it. The only way to get to the light is to traverse the tunnel but, the further in he walks, the longer the tunnel gets. In this visual representation of the participant's account, anger is both the tunnel and the light. Throughout the

process anger is summoning the person towards it and makes him feel like this process is the best and only way for them to get out of there, back into the calm state of being and thinking. The participant therefore keeps getting deeper and deeper into the tunnel in the hope that he will get out of it. In that way, anger is presented here as a perfect trap.

Both outbursts and lingering sensations are presented as anger's way of possessing them. Nevertheless, the one is not described as mutually exclusive with the other, but as its natural continuation: even though both are evoked by anger, neither dispels it completely. Anger is there before and after the outburst, as the situation is not rectified.

It is interesting, finally, to note how my participants accounts of surrendering to anger are designed to contrast their normal, calm selves. They portray their calm selves as rational, disciplined, friendly and constantly trying to improve their behaviour and stance towards other people. Anger comes along, however, and turns them into hot-headed, one-track minds, chaotic, rude and obnoxious characters. This is where the next superordinate theme ("When it's over, anger is regrettable") comes into play…

6.2 When It's Over, Anger is Regrettable

This superordinate theme points to the feeling anger leaves once its effects disappear. Anger, like all emotions, brings about changes in physiology, cognition, attention and judgment. As the previous section highlights, then, anger leads the person to act, think and feel different from what they do when they are in their calm state. It feels as if anger sets in on them, taking control of their bodies and minds. Consequently, after anger has subsided, the angered person looks back at the state s/he was in and tries to find an evaluation and justification for that. The person then recognizes himself as the agent in, and owner of, these states. Nevertheless, the person rarely stands behind these states of acting, thinking and

feeling, as the present superordinate theme reveals. Participants here describe anger or, more accurately, their own selves when angry (the "angry self"), as the cause for regrettable actions, compromised relationships, doubting the self, and embarrassment.

6.2.1: Anger is a Bad Adviser

Looking back on their anger and trying to make sense of their state, my participants almost unanimously classify it as an immature and inappropriate manifestation of internal frustration. They use adjectives like "childish" and "silly" to describe it and they contrast it to the proper, "grown-up" way, in their opinion, to deal with situations: this revolves around notions of calmness, composure and self-control, in contrast to the tantrum-like nature of anger. Because of this, they find it hard to make sense of their anger when they are not angry and to accept that part of themselves as unproblematic.

Participant 6, for example declares:

"yeah* I find that very silly* (.) it's um (3sec) I mean (.) the story with the car (.) me putting my car right next to (..)

-mhm

-I could have just (.) there was enough space for me to still park my car in my parking space (..) um (.) a mature way of dealing with it (.) and that's what I wanted to do and now I remember (.) is to write a (.) you know a note and put it on the windscreen but (.) and again it's unjustice coming into play (.) I felt "why::* should I waste my time going up (.) to my flat (.) find a piece of paper and a pen (.) think about writing you know something (.) without letting my anger out (.) because even on a piece of paper you can let your anger out 'you piece of shit what are you doing on my parking space?'" cos that's how I feel but I'm trying to control it because as I told you I've been thinking a lot about anger recently and try to (..) evolve (.) try to be more mature that's why I'm

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saying "silly" I was like "that's the way to do it and you should do it" and I was

like "no... I'm wasting my time because that a(.) that punk* was like parked on

my parking space" was like "why!?" you know? (..) and (.) reacting that way is

stupid (..)

-mmm

-it is (.) it's not mature (.)" (lines 581-594).

The story he refers to takes place in his residence's garage, where another person had parked their car in a way that blocked half of the participant's parking space. The participant then lifted the windscreen wipers of that car in order to demonstrate his dissatisfaction. He stresses that he is aware of a "mature" (as he calls it) way of dealing with the situation which would involve him writing down his complaint on a piece of paper and leaving it on the other car's window. He then goes on to say that he opted not to do that as a further act of revenge against the other person. He believed that the "mature" option would be a further waste of his time and that holding back the anger would be too nice towards the other person: they did not deserve it. The participant had already set in his head that he is dealing with what he presents as his stereotypical image of the person who has no concern for his fellow-citizens. He thus decided that he wouldn't waste his time on such a type of person.

Taking a step back to evaluate his reaction, however, he explicitly describes it in the interview setting as "silly", "stupid" and "not mature". By employing these terms he signals himself as not proud, rather ashamed, of his state when in anger. There seems to be an archetype of a "mature person" that the participant adheres and aspires to. By trying to bring himself closer to that archetypical behaviour he aims to "evolve", partly by breaking free from anger or at least learning how to better control it. Anger and the irrationality it brings along seem to stand in the way of that desired evolution: remember, throughout the whole story the participant is motivated and mobilized by nothing else than a) the perceived injustice towards him (which he recognizes as exaggerated by acknowledging at the time of the interview that "there was enough space for me to still park my car") and b) by the image of the other driver he had formed in his head without any credible evidence for it. The participant, then, implicitly describes his thoughts during the incident as

unjustified and over-dramatic. To this extent, he sees himself as less mature than he would like to be, for letting anger get in the way of his thinking and acting.

Anger can make someone irrational and over-dramatic in many ways. One of them is that it pushes people to great efforts over meaningless and futile activities, as some participants stress. For example, Participant 6 recalls the incident where he got home after a long day at work and tried to phone the delivery company that had failed to deliver a package he had ordered. It was late in the afternoon and their offices were closed, but he still "wanted to try":

> *"it was a silly move I should have just (.) give up and sort all that in the morning because I knew* at that point there was nothing (.) else I could do but I still wanted to try*

> *-mhm*

> *-I wanted to shout at someone! I wanted to say just [laughs] "you're wrong, you're rubbish!" you know or "you're crap!" you know I wanted to say that to someone" (lines 424-428).*

Anger here is presented as the driving force, demanding that the participant expresses himself to the people who wronged him. In hindsight, he labels that move a "silly" one as he knew at the time that no-one would pick up the phone and that he should wait until the morning instead. Anger, however, pushed him to try and keep trying. Presumably, anger was growing in him the longer he stayed on the phone and the longer he confirmed he would get no answer before the morning. Anger, therefore, had gone into its self-feeding loop, using the participant's effort and time to grow and to become fiercer. The participant had surrendered to anger and was therefore happy to waste more of his time engaging in this meaningless task. In the context of the interview, where he revisited his behaviour, he saw the silliness of it. He (or, more appropriately, his calm self back then) "knew" that there was nothing he could do but his angry self would not let up. Now that his calm self confronts the angry self, however, he is perplexed by what it was in him that pushed him in that direction and why he didn't stop it. It is presented almost as a hostage situation, where the angry self has taken hold of the calm self and forces him to spend more time and effort in the task while he (the angry self) laughs manically.

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Consequently, the dissonance between the angry self and the calm self surfaces when the calm self attempts to justify the actions and the wild joy felt by the angry self. For example, Participant 5 offers:

"but I wanna punch things but (.) most of the furniture in this house is mine

-[laughs]

-my own property and sort of (.) I built it myself (.) most of it (.) you know from IKEA packages and stuff so I don't wanna break anything but (.) but there is there is this nee:d to (.) well I once punched a cupboard door (.) broke in half [laughs] I was so angry

-Wow (.) did it feel good?

-Yeah it felt* (.) no it just hurt [laughs]" (lines 234-240)

The account starts with a demonstration of the participant's reasonable and rational nature. He states that he often finds himself wanting to punch things but, he stresses, most of the furniture in the house is his property, things he's spent money and time on. Why would he damage them? Then again, once he was "so" angry that he punched a cupboard door and broke it in half. His angry self overrode rationality and acted on the principles of anger. When asked whether it felt good, the participant seems to momentarily go back to the angry phase and pick up on the wild joy he felt while doing it, expressed in the quote both through the initiation of his response ("Yeah, it felt…") and by his laughter. He immediately cuts himself short, however, rewinds to the calm and composed state he is in during the interview and evaluates the action as "no, it just hurt" before rounding it off with a laugh. What he does with this re-working of his answer is he inspects his anger from the calm state he is in naturally. Not only did he go against his principles of working things out rationally and dialectically; not only did he annul the time and effort he put into the cupboard by breaking it; he also hurt himself in the process. Therefore he paints the image of his angry self as a very foolish person. More importantly, he now (at the time of the interview) laughs at this person's reaction, indicating that he does not want to associate with that.

For Participant 7, his suicide attempt was a case he now finds hard to justify:

"I mean ultimately it was all fu- futile it was all pointless it was all a waste of time (.) me being angry (.) for six months at the hospital (.) didn't achieve anything

-mmm

-didn't (..) make me a better person I mean (.) if anything I just wasted six months of my life you know (.) I could have been working or studying cos I was supposed to be (.) at Cambridge at the time" (lines 476-480)

The participant believed that he was on the road to forming a romantic relationship with someone but he soon found out that this person was simply leading him on, exploiting him and his resources. The participant's angry response to that was to try and take his own life. He doesn't discuss much about his rationale for doing so, but it appears to be a combination of sadness for the relationship he was denied and, consequently, a form of revenge: perhaps he thought that killing himself would make the other person feel sad; that they would regret not honouring their relationship with him; and guilty because they would realize that their behaviour led the participant to this action.

Looking back on his action now, the participant struggles to decipher what his rationale was. He appears to fully regret that decision – it might not have cost him his life, but it did cost him spending six months under sedation in the hospital. He stresses that he should have been studying at Cambridge (where he had a place at the time) instead of being at the hospital and he evaluates the whole experience by saying "didn't achieve anything… didn't make me a better person". The participant, therefore, is at present finding it very difficult to relate to the person who felt this anger and acted out its irrationality. What makes it even worse for him is that from his current place, outside the energy-field of anger, he ranks the event as "quite minor" and he therefore cannot understand why he took such extreme actions:

"in retrospect as someone who's recovered from it now (.) I think it was quite minor [laughs] my reaction was ridiculous* but (.) anyway that's what happened" (lines 395-396).

Eventually, his anger turned to himself for having been that angry over a minor issue:

"it was coming back to this idea of hating myself for putting myself in that situation and wanting to change (.) things (.) so going back I would never meet that person I'd never lend money to people I'd never (..) I'd never actually do this that or the other (3sec) [bangs hand on desk] and it (.) became all about me

-mhm

-I'd be constantly thinking over the situations that had happened (.) thinking over how (.) I'd let myself (.) it was nobody else it was all about me (.) anger at me and thinking how (.) fucking stupid I was (.) what a fucking idiot I was and blah blah blah (..) that's (.) self-hate I suppose (.) when I was sick for about six months (..)" (lines 418-425).

Anger, therefore, fed on anger and erected a monument of self-hate when the participant tried to explain to himself why he had acted the way he did. What he describes here is how he could not comprehend what pushed him to these actions. The reasons for his initial anger were strong enough for him to get angry, but his reaction was "ridiculous". With the realization that it was his own angry self and no-one else that led him to that way of thinking and acting, he finds his own absurdity and over-reaction atrocious. This quote is also a testimony to his regrets over his actions prior to the onset of anger, though. He describes himself as naïve in thought (since he fell for that person) and in behaviour (in lending money). This extends to colour anger as the wrong course of action which he further regrets.

6.2.2: Anger and relationships

Anger arises out of a perceived offense. The person's response might be directed to that particular offense but it may also be let out to other people; similarly, the response/reaction is hardly ever likely to match the intensity of the offense itself. More often than not, the angry person reacts much more severely than expected in terms of volume and time. Once anger has passed, they find it hard to justify this reaction. Therefore, anger is the path to treating others the wrong way.

Jokingly, Participant 5 says that these days he tries to get away from people when he is angry to avoid making them sad:

"actually these days I just try to just get away especially from my wife so I don't say anything bad to her for no reason you know

-Mhm

-There's been a few occasions you know ah (.) of course I'd never (.) I never bring any violence or anything like that just (.) just you know say a really shitty comment about something (.) I think I once got angry when she put butternut squash in my favourite meal [laughs] I hate* butternut squash [laughs] but that was when I had when my anger issues were worse than they are" (lines 202-208).

He admits to making "shitty comments" towards his wife. The choice of the adjective "shitty" denotes that he (his calm self) does not approve of these comments and that he regrets making them. Nevertheless, he does make them when he is angry and he cannot deny that. To underline the absurdity of his comments and the awkward situation these lead to, he mentions an instance when he got angry at his wife for putting butternut squash in his favourite meal – adding with laughter that he hates butternut squash. So essentially, he is telling me that now he is looking back on this very minor thing and he cannot justify the levels of anger in his response. Furthermore, he understands that this reaction of his must have made his wife feel sad.

Similarly, Participant 4 narrates how when he gets drunk his anger gets out of control. This feels good while it lasts but the next day is usually an exercise in regret:

"We:ll you know you wake up the next day hangover and you go over everything you said loudly and obnoxiously and you know how (..) how over the top (.) you were" (lines 449-450).

What he essentially says here is that he was a nuisance to his company the night before and he very much regrets it. In a similar vein, the same participant explains that his negativity spills over to areas he is sharing with friends and fellow-

musicians. Losing control of his ranting appears to be a source of regret, especially when it comes to considering the impression he gives to others:

"So um (.) so around certain people I hold it at certain times I will hold the anger yes (..) um (..) and I'm trying to hold it now because I've realized that (..) for example (.) well I keep coming back to this example cos it's a big part of my life (.) if I'm in a rehearsal room with three other people (..) it's not pleasant for them to listen to me for four hours yell about this or yell about that and occasionally play a song with them [bangs hand on table]*

-I see

-So (.) I need to ah: I've learnt to kind of restrain myself the:re (.) I've learnt to restrain myself (.) around my girlfriend because to me it's just normal to me (.) I'm obnoxious and (.) loud and opinionated so (.) I'll just yell at trivial things at home (..) and I did don't always see how that can be kind of (.) jarring or exhausting for (.) people around me" (lines 238-247)*

As he explains here, after having done this a few times, he now understands that he is not always a pleasant person to be around. He presents the case of being in a rehearsal studio with his band and, instead of playing music (like a band in the studio is supposed to), they all end up listening to him "for hours yell about this or yell about that" – notice how his description signifies that it is hardly ever anything really important he is yelling about. He then explains that the rehearsal room is not the only place this happens – at home, too, his girlfriend often has to put up with listening to his complaints. "Jarring and exhausting" is how he describes his behaviour and he goes on to describe himself as "obnoxious and loud and opinionated" – all these are transitive qualities in the sense that they directly affect the other person. Shame is therefore the main emotion that accompanies anger in this account of the experience.

Participant 7 presents an account of how anger sometimes throws relationships off-balance; this example is also rooted in lack of understanding. He explains that he felt wronged and hurt by a lady at his workplace who made him feel embarrassed by not picking up the present he had bought her for secret Santa. As he was telling his mother the story, she couldn't understand his anger towards that lady. Then, as he says, he snapped at his mother for not understanding him:

"my family's always been very supportive and loving (.) so they don't deserve me to be rude to them (.) you know they're the ones who help me in life (.) this fucking* (.) lady who was rude to me she doesn't deserve anything from me she's* not my kin she's not my friend she's not my (.) anything* she's just a very* rude lady (.) if anyone deserves me to be rude to them (.) she* does (..)

-mhm

-not* my family (.) but I ended up being rude to my family (.) and particularly to my mom (..) yeah" (lines 536-541).

The participant was angry at that other woman at work when he started a conversation with his mother. His anger towards the other lady drove his interaction with his mother and, the longer she did not understand his anger, the angrier he got. The participant, therefore, was angry and tried to explain his anger to a third person. Anger therefore was present as both the affect and the topic of discussion with his mother and, the more he talked to her about this emotional state of his, the more the emotion intensified. Eventually he directed the affect towards his mother and, at the moment of the interview, he strongly regrets this expression. He describes his family as very supportive and loving and stresses that "if anyone deserves" him to be rude to them it's that lady at work. Anger here, consequently, got out of hand. His mother ended up receiving the expressive delivery that was intended for that other person because the participant could not control himself while he was angry.

Anger, indeed, seems to spill over from one field of life to another quite easily. Its furious and uncontrollable nature makes it hard to contain and to direct it appropriately. As a result of this, one is highly likely to find oneself apologizing to people who were exposed to his/her anger without it being their fault.

Participant 6 offers a somewhat different account. He explains how his girlfriend attracted his anger to her after a very difficult day for him. But, whereas the previous account by Participant 7 explains how he sees snapping at his mother as his fault, participant 6 does not apologize. Whereas participant 7 snapped at his mother for not understanding his anger, participant 6 describes his girlfriend as augmenting his anger by not acknowledging it. As his previous quote (see p.156)

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suggests, he went home after a day where a few things went wrong and he was trying to resolve a delivery issue over the phone while his girlfriend kept asking him to put the phone down and eat something first. It is important to note that he interprets this as her own desire to eat, which she disguises as a concern for his wellbeing. Therefore he shouted at her, leading to an awkward night between them. He evaluates the story as:

> "-I should feel bad about it (.) you know taking it on my girlfriend (.) who cooked dinner that's how (.) I mean um (..) consciously or or if you know if I think about it like (.) like that I should feel bad but I don't because it's more complicated I mean I've got (.) relationships are never e:asy or straightforward there's (.) there are older stuff that piss me off with my girlfriend that's probably also (..) ah: linked to why: I (.) I reacted like that towards her yesterday
>
> -I see
>
> -but (.) obviously it's not (.) right (.) you know to (.) but I (.) I think I needed to let out something (..) you know? And then she was trying to (.) problem is there is no communication as well (.) communication doesn't work sometimes (.) I try to tell to tell her something and she doesn't get it!
>
> -mhm
>
> -you know I just wanted her to leave me alone*
>
> -like you said
>
> -yeah (2sec) um:: (3sec) if* she had just left me alone I think I wouldn't* have (.) you know I would have kept angry to that man but she almost like (.) I mean that may be unfair for me to say but almost like she attracted my anger to her" (lines 438-451).

It is interesting to note how, in his evaluation of the reaction, the participant keeps a check on himself and his role in the story. While he has established that she did make him angrier as the night went on, he keeps wondering whether it was simply his own disposition that is to blame for his rage. He mentions that he should feel bad about it, that he should have kept the anger to himself and that perhaps

he was being unfair. On the other hand, trying to make sense of the situation and his reaction, he also contemplates on how previous problems with his girlfriend may have surfaced during that episode, how she often does not understand his perspective, and how she could have helped prevent this reaction if she had granted his request to be left alone. Therefore, he establishes the space in which the two figures (himself and his girlfriend) interacted that night and he tries to make sense of the dynamics in it during the interview. Although he finds his anger was justified and is able to understand its origins and escalation within the context of the relationship, he also appears to be bewildered by the intensity of it and realizes that this may poison the relationship or at least put an extra strain in it without him realizing.

Anger, then, also acts as a gateway for a flood of further anger. Older problems may find a good opportunity to come to the fore (like with Participant 6) or new problems may arise because of the wild nature of anger and its uncontrolled expression (like with Participant 7). Like an avalanche, anger breaks barriers in behaviour and communication and brings out earlier or current dissatisfaction with people in general (not only the person responsible for their anger). This often leads to "taking it out" on one's loved ones, over-reacting and being overall difficult, which translates into troubles for relationships (familial, friendly or romantic).

The participants say that, when angry, it feels like they are driven by a primitive force. If other people don't understand this force or don't give it what it needs for whatever reason, the participants might take out their anger on them even though these people are not to blame for instantiating that anger. It is as though anger has possessed their mind, speaking and acting through them. Irrationality, when viewed from the calm person's perspective, is therefore very prominent in angry people and, as a result of this, the participants find themselves lost for words when they try to explain their behaviour after anger has subsided.

The previous sub-themes bring up the calm self being critical of the angry self in two main ways: regarding the self-image the participant is faced with; and regarding the strain it puts on personal relationships. The combination of those two leads to the present theme: how the participants see their angry selves in the eyes of others.

Discussing how his girlfriend reacts to his way of talking and acting, Participant 2 presents the following:

> "You know, I mean generally people tend to like me but there are times when I think they just get a little bit (.) on the back foot. I mean like, my, I mean my girlfriend* (.) does sometimes tell me to, you know (.) to (..) um, tone down voice a bit and, you know (.) and (.) and certainly when I'm upset and that (.) um (.) she'll tell me that I'm shouting and that (.) and sometimes she'll even [laughs] tell me that I'm shouting at her and I'm (.) not even intending to but (.) I am anyways haha… you know what I mean. It's a (.) like, I think it's just my, my volume can (.) really (.) go up. Ah:: I mean I do have a trem(?) voice and (..) it's naturally a powerful one anyway so, between the two, um: yeah, it doesn't take much for me to get loud.

> -Mhm (5 sec. pause) So how does it make you feel when, for example, your girlfriend tells you to tone down?

> -Ah:: (3sec. pause) Slightly (.) Slightly embarrassed (..) um… and also, slightly ashamed I mean… I don't intend to" (lines 29-40).

The participant here describes how he sometimes loses control of his tone of voice when annoyed and angered by something. His girlfriend then tells him to tone down. This, as he explains, leaves him feeling embarrassed and ashamed. Essentially, the whole passage is a portrayal of him feeling ashamed and embarrassed. Notice that in the first part of his narration he describes things as if they slightly get out of hand for him and then magnified by his girlfriend. He starts by establishing that he is a nice guy and people tend to like him. Therefore, he finds

it uncomfortable to relate to the image his girlfriend sees of him. In his account, the participant then laughs at his girlfriend's accusations that he is shouting *at her* when he is angry. This laughter is trying to be sympathetic, like he is trying to show me that he finds it sweet how off the mark his girlfriend's judgment of his behaviour is. Nevertheless he immediately recognizes that this is actually how it appears to the other person, even though he might not be aware of it: "I'm not even intending to but I am anyways". Then he stresses that he has a naturally powerful voice and that when he's upset "the volume can go up", so as to make an excuse for actually doing what his girlfriend complains about. Notice how in this description he does not appear as an active agent of increasing his volume – like the previous superordinate theme demonstrates, he views himself as a puppet of his anger.

Having positioned the figures of the story in that way, the setting comes across as one where he does raise his voice and it is this that is then misunderstood by his girlfriend. They are both right, the way he presents it. Then, however, he confirms that this misunderstanding makes him feel embarrassed and ashamed and he recognizes that the fault lies (mostly) on his side: he is hurting her with his way of speaking, even though he does not intend to. Therefore he feels responsible for her getting "on a back foot" and this makes him understand his experience of anger (and the expression this assumes) as the source for his embarrassment and shame, but also as putting his relationship at risk. As a result, he realizes he gives his girlfriend a nasty image of himself - one that he doesn't approve of either, as his use of diminutives, adjectives and laughter indicates. With these he creates a sense that he is trying to present the episode in passing, to excuse himself and to prevent it from becoming a central piece in his self-presentation. Along a similar line of thinking, there is an interesting use of the diminutive "slightly" in both cases, it is almost as if he is downplaying the feelings of shame and embarrassment in an effort to defend himself by implying that it is never as serious as it might sound – and here too, the participant sees himself in the eyes of someone else: the interviewer

Going back to Participant 4's account of his jarring and exhausting behaviour:

"So (.) I need to ah: I've learnt to kind of restrain myself the:re (.) I've learnt to restrain myself (.) around my girlfriend because to me* it's just normal to me (.) I'm obnoxious and (.) loud and opinionated so (.) I'll just yell at trivial things

at home (..) and I did don't always see how that can be kind of (.) jarring or exhausting for (.) people around me" (lines 244-247).

It is interesting to note that these are the same qualities he attributes to the people at the bar who annoy him, as he offers at a different part of the interview:

"yeah it causes me to kind of (..) be short with people and a bit (.) bit aggressive (..) maybe if I've had a few drinks as well that definitely* opens up (.) dialogue: (.) ah: (5sec) yeah (.) yeah If I'm in one of those depressive (.) states where I feel that everything's kinda pointless and futile (..) and then I go out and I (..) um (..) I end up talking to someone who's just [bangs hand on table] (..) you know (.) obnoxious (.) dominating the conversation it's a one-way conversation they're just chatting (.) bullshit at me that I have no interest in hearing (.) um (..) if I've had enough drinks and I'm depressed and I'm frustrated I::'ll just snap at them (.) because I (.) I feel like they're wasting my time and they're not (.) you know (.) elevating the mood" (lines 192-199).

He therefore, perhaps involuntarily, presents himself as perceived by his friends the same way he presents people who annoy him. Therefore, it is safe to assume that he would not endorse his angry behaviour when calm. This is presented here through the interplay between his perception of other people and the perception of himself by his friends. He thus foregrounds the notion of shame by recognizing the events that lead to it; 'by-passed' shame nevertheless, since he does not explicitly express the emotion as part of the episode.

Participant 5 describes how, when he gets angry at his friends he has taken up the habit of writing a letter to them but not sending it. This is his way of letting out steam while not allowing for irrational behaviour to reach its intended recipients, which would most probably cost him a friendly relationship:

"it's quite professional if you will because I find that (..) that you know big capitals or (.) big exclamation marks and swear words don't really have the effect that a very deep (.) trying to reach down to their sou:l and trying to grab it out and explain to it why it's such a (.) why it's being so unreasonable (.) so yeah I mean I usually delete those because otherwise (.) you know (.) they might find them and you know (.) these are people (.) these are pretty much

always people I've known for 15 years (.) my nearest and dearest" (lines 381-386).

He starts off by saying that, for these letters, he adopts a "quite professional" tone. The first point to be made about it is that he thus establishes some emotional distance between himself and the recipient. Instead of using swear words or any other "warm" approach, he instead shifts to "cold" methods. More importantly, the participant clearly lays out his intentions, which are to "reach down to their soul and grab it out". He appears to be aware of the sadistic nature these intentions border on and he understands how upsetting this must be for the intended recipients who, as he says, are usually people he's known for many years, his "nearest and dearest". He realizes that this is anger blowing his annoyance out of proportion; he sees uncalled-for malice in it and is stunned by it. Therefore, he habitually proceeds to delete these letters in order to avoid the embarrassment, awkwardness and negativity they might bring about if they are ever discovered by his friends. Awkwardness because they will see what he has thought of them; negativity because they might get angry because of this; and embarrassment because he will not be able to rationally justify this emotional explosion. He is viewing himself through their eyes and it is this that makes him understand how hurtful this expression of anger can be. Thus, through the practice of writing but not sending, the participant expresses his anger, directed at the person who made him angry, but without making it known, as he has learnt that it is very likely that he will regret it afterwards. Through this process, he confronts his own angry self by portraying his anger and witnessing what the intended recipients would witness if he did express it, acknowledging the shame this would bring about but not allowing to materialize.

Participant 3 discusses how colleagues and friends pointed his anger issues out to him and how that made him feel:

"I never really gave it much more thought than that until it came to the point especially at work where I'm just getting really really angry and (.) I just had to (.) I had to justify myself and then I'd realize I couldn't really justify it (.) I realize that they (.) you know you can't justify (..) being balls obviously it's a professional setting and obviously that's kind of a hint that there's a problem

there (.) somewhere (.) you know and then bit by bit people (.) friends would

open up to me and (.) not bit by bit but every once in a while my friends would

tell me "man, you really got to control your temper" and shit like that you know

so (..)

-I see

-Mmm (.) so yeah that's how (.) I came to realize (..) it wasn't exactly (.)

exactly* normal" (lines 24-34).

Here he describes his behaviour as abnormal and by that he means that it puzzles others. He explains that the others' reactions is what made him realize how irrational he appears to them. It is interesting to note that, the way he presents it, it worked as an indication to him that there is "a problem" there – hence why he calls it abnormal. Notice how his choice of the word "normal" to describe what is absent from his behaviour is something that is socially constructed and defined; in other words, ultimately judged by others. By adhering to this concept, he embraces the criticism made by others, implying that he understands why they see what they see in his reactions. As his colleagues say, the main problem is his lack of control over his temper. His reflections therefore probably unfolded with him thinking how this appears to other people, which made him feel ashamed; and that was the catalyst for him to take steps towards changing his ways.

The same participant also offered the following example, where the relationship between how he sees himself in other people becomes more explicit:

"knowing this dude here made me actually reflect on myself quite a lot (.) this

was about 2006-2007 (.)

-Mhm

-That's when I first started becoming aware of my (..) issues you know [laughs]

by this guy I mean like "oh my God this guy" you know let's call him (3sec) Fred

(.) so Fred, right? He'd always (.) he'd get so fucking annoyed you know and

get like (.) with himself* not necessarily other people most of the times with

himself he'd just throw shit around and I complained to the rest of the band I

was like "fucking hell, Fred man, he fucking loses it all the time!" they're like

"man, shut up, you* lose your shit all the time" I'm like "no I don't" they're like

"yes you do!" I'm like "hmm yeah yeah I do actually"" (lines 671-679).

In this example, the participant is talking about a former bandmate of his. As he says, he was bewildered by his bandmate's angry behaviour to the extent that he "complained" to the rest of the band about him and his anger. The other band-members then turned around and told the participant that this is something *he* does as well. The way the participant presents the dialogue, he was not aware of it and he found it hard to comprehend at first ("no I don't"). When the bandmates insisted though, he started realizing that his anger is witnessed by them. Following on from his need to "complain" about the other person's anger, it can be assumed that he, at that point, saw himself in the eyes of his bandmates as an annoyance. That was when he "first started becoming aware" of his anger issues.

Going further in the theme of expressing anger appropriately in front of others, Participant 1 offers:

"Yeah, I mean (…) one of the things I always think about is, when you wanna kick something or punch something you've gotta think about other people as well. So (..) it just wouldn't have made sense if I had punched the wall or kicked the door or something.

-So you were in a public space.

-Yeah.

-And (.) how do you think others would have reacted to that?

-I think that they'd have just been shocked. I mean (.) a stranger (.) I'm a stranger to them and they don't know me and (.) but (.) but (.) not (.) I don't mean to sound rude but I don't really care about their opinion (.) if that makes sense but (.) it just wouldn't have been a nice thing to do… like, if someone did that and I was looking (.) I would have been (.) and something happened to me because of it (.) I would have been a bit upset so… when you consider other people (.) you should always kind of consider other people first." (lines 31-41).

The participant here describes a hypothetical unrestrained expression of his anger as potential (psychological and physical) harm for others. He says that something could happen to them in case he sets his anger free; at the very least, they would

be shocked. "It wouldn't have made sense" and therefore they would be witnessing a spectacle they do not understand. What is contrasted here is the two ways of acknowledging, understanding and expressing anger: the composed, socially-acceptable, learnt way on the one hand; and the chaotic, anti-social, innate one on the other. Notice how this participant too describes his own experience as it would be interpreted in the eyes of the public: he sees himself in their eyes and identifies this uncontrolled expression of anger as inappropriate, which would confer shame upon him. Even though he stresses that he does not "really care about their opinion", the very fact that they are there witnessing his expression of anger makes him reconsider the significance and the appropriateness of his reactions. Alternatively, perhaps his insistence that he does not care about others' opinion may reveal a fear of his: aware that the image he sends out to them is not one he would himself embrace when calm, he tries to tip the balance a little bit to his favour. If the others are not worth taking into consideration, then surely their perception of him must be insignificant for him. This would make the task of embracing his angry self as part of his personality a little easier. Nevertheless, he recognizes that this way of presenting it is exaggerated and that how others see him is how he sees himself in others. Society and the learnt way of expressing anger set the tone whereas he, blocking his uncontrolled expression of anger, aspires to this; aspires to grow up and to mature and to not trouble people with his behaviour.

Participant 4 discusses how he goes to the pub but is not happy with the people there:

"yeah you know sometimes (.) sometimes you're out and you just (.) your mind can't click and you're in this fog of (.) depression and (3sec) you can't relate to a lot of people you'll be out and you'll feel (.) a little bit separate like you (.) you're on an island (3sec) and at the time you're just thinking "well these people they're just idiots, they're stupid" and you're not (.) cos you're in the middle of this (.) you know you're in the eye of the storm and afterwards you think (..) what an asshole you are [laughs] and you don't really understand where (.) that anger has come from or why and it's quite depressing" (lines 130-134).

Here the participant presents his thoughts as the source of shame. Anger clouds his judgment and makes him short with people (as he says in a different part of the

interview). He uses the expression "in the eye of the storm" wrongly, to convey the feeling of being unable to act any other way: whereas in the eye of the storm one is actually safe for a few moments, he uses it to describe the feeling of being maximally swept away by the winds of anger. Therefore, according to his account, the thoughts that race through his head while in that state are negative thoughts about others around him, making him angrier and throwing him within a tornado of negativity. Once the storm of anger has passed, however, he looks back on his reactions and cannot comprehend where this anger came from. Eventually he ends up calling himself an "asshole" for having been swept into this storm of anger, thus foregrounding the shame that follows anger. Going further into why he is "an asshole" according to his opinion, the participant offers:

*"I don't wanna be angry and snapping at people around me (.) even if they're
(.) you know dominating conversations and being obnoxious you know I (.) I
chose to come out and I should just leave and go to the other end of the bar
[bangs hand on table]" (lines 427-429).*

In this account he stresses how he is a person with a free will and who, as such, should be taking responsibility for his actions. He is the one who chose to come out and, since he does not like it, he should try to make it better (even by simply moving to the other end of the bar). Therefore, one may say that, while angry, the participant neglects his responsibilities and his agency in spending his time the best way he can. Also, the way he appears to others is not the way he would like them to perceive him. Therefore, as soon as he goes back into his calm and composed state, he regrets having previously lost his focus in the middle of the storm.

Participant 3 describes how his expression[38] of anger habitually leads him to feeling sad:

"-A:nd after this (.) anger has been (.) expressed if you will

-mhm

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[38] "would never actually hurt anyone or want to hit them or anything like I (.) I would* want to but I would always have enough self-control not to do it you know cos I knew (.) at least I knew that I have (.) limits I'm not going to (.) I don't wanna harm people physically whatever (.) I feel that you know harming people psychologically is enough (..) so I never really go beyond just screaming banging my fists throwing shit about if it really gets bad (.) throwing shit about is de.is like the last level of anger that I get" (lines 189-192).

-how does it feel?

-I feel very depressed

-Oh really?

-Yeah (.) it's a (.) after that I just feel really like (..) things got a lot more complicated and (.) I invariably blame myself for it as well because eh (..) eh:: I feel like I made a fool of myself (.) you know it's like when you start acting quite irrationally like that it happens and afterwards you sort of eh (.) it's the (.) it's catching yourself (.) and the thing is my problem in the past was always I'd catch myself afterwards (.) when I was for.when I (.) when I was trying to manage my anger it's to catch yourself in the situation (.) before* it happens"* (lines 195-208).

His expression of anger to friends (he draws this distinction between friends and strangers explicitly later on in the conversation) involves him losing his temper. As he explains, as soon as it's over he feels "very depressed" because he has made things between him and his friends a lot more complicated. This complication arises from the fact that they witnessed this beast that was barely under control – so he has to explain how this side of himself co-exists with his calm self. Depression (which can be best understood here as unacknowledged and undischarged shame) therefore arises out of his seeing of himself in the eyes of others; he sees how others see him and that makes him sad. The participant stresses that this makes him feel like he has a made a fool of himself with his irrationality and lack of control. He subsequently stresses that a great part of his mental exercises to manage this anger revolves around detecting the emotion arising in himself and suppressing it (or giving it a   prettier face) before it comes out – therefore saving his friends the bafflement and himself the embarrassment.

Anger is understood as leading the participants down paths they might regret when they think back on their actions. Putting relationships at risk, engaging in self-harm and behaving exhaustingly feel natural while angry; the "angry self" has taken over and his wild joy comes (to a large degree) through these activities. When the "calm self" has to face the consequences, however, the participants find it hard to

justify why they did what they did. When they understand how they must have looked to others during their anger episode, they feel embarrassed and confused. Therefore, the participants describe themselves when angry as childish, helpless and immature[39]: they believe they should have had better control over themselves.

Consequently, what the participants present here is an extension of what Scheff calls "shame". As the author describes it, drawing on Darwin's notion of blushing as a sign of heightened self-awareness (Scheff, 2004:398), "the basic shame context is seeing one's self negatively in the eyes of others" (Scheff, 2003:743). However, the version of my participants comes from a slightly different angle. Instead of presenting unacknowledged shame which leads to anger in their accounts, they rather present a state where anger leads to shame. They therefore reverse the shame-anger spiral to begin with anger: "anger-shame spiral". They find that, when bursting out in anger, they then have to rectify the damage they did and then, as participant 5 says, even find themselves angry at themselves for being angry and inflicting this shame on themselves. This is a shame they acknowledge and cannot overlook and it is constructed as habitually following their anger outbursts.

6.3 Anger Can Be Positive

The previous theme focused on the negative consequences of anger. When the participants discuss the long-term effects of their anger, however, they explore (sometimes to their own surprise) a different angle - that anger propelled them at one point of their lives or another to take action: to hone their skills, to correct their behaviour, to sharpen their discipline and to do whatever it takes in order to stop themselves from coming close to the source for their anger again – be that another person, a situation, or a trait of themselves. This theme discusses anger as a force for self-improvement. This quality of anger appears to be something the participants did not have in mind when they attended the interview; they mostly discuss anger as a negative force but, at parts, their accounts lead them to a

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[39] This is also how Lewis describes the experience of shame: "The self feels small, helpless and childish" (Lewis, 1971:430).

realization that, through and because of this negative energy, they ended up in a better place than before.

<u>6.3.1: A Blessing and a Curse</u>

This theme addresses the participants' presentations of anger as a motivating force that can be used constructively or destructively.

Participant 3:

"Again it's (.) I mean you're dealing with it still in a very angry way cos all you do is complaining and (.) not talking about it in full re.you know ranting* (.) not* coming up with solutions ()

It's just perpetuating it (.) the slow-burn anger is like that and sounds like you express it a lot like that like you're always being negative about stuff (.) or that particular thing that has (.) that thing that made you (..) go from frustrated to angry (.) well not the thing but the thing you are frustrated with first and then angry with afterwards you know ()

So you always talking you know and you just let that eats you and then eventually you just cut that person off your life (..)" (lines 306-317).

Improvement in the case of Participant 3 is finding the logic to come up with solutions and the strength to implement them. As the participant describes, anger may take its time distracting you from everyday activities and productivity, but eventually it will lead to coming up with solutions. Indeed, initially the anger seems to be that distracting and self-eating force that was described in the theme "After it's Over, Anger is Regrettable". However, the participant here refers to an accumulation of this negative energy which, building up over a period of time, eventually resolves into taking action to separate himself from the source of that anger. It is through this build-up, where the person can no longer bear to live with that anger, that the (one) solution appears to them. This gradually appears over time but once it is made it is sharp and leaves no space for negotiation: "you cut that person off your life"!

Participant 7 explains how he was mistreated by his boss at work: at a secret-Santa exchange, he felt offended by her leaving the present he had bought for her behind. First of all, it is worth noting here that there might be a triple-spiral of anger and shame unfolding. His boss was diabetic and, since the participant was not aware of that, he bought her chocolates. This, supposedly, made her feel ill-treated – maybe she saw it as a joke on her condition. Her response was an angry one: not picking up the present because the very act made her feel embarrassed. This was received as an offence by the participant, who felt embarrassed in turn. This embarrassment then turned into anger and, presumably, each would be angry at the other because of that misunderstanding which made them both lose face. The participant's immediate response was to go home and spend two hours crying, swearing and punching a pillow. In the long run, however, he gathered power from his rage: he devised a plan to remove himself from that environment and found the moral strength to implement it. His plan was to get to a place where his boss could never get. Given her age, level of education and computer literacy, the participant concluded that she would never be able to become a computer programmer[40]. Therefore, after submitting his resignation notice, he signed up for a course to become a computer programmer. This would secure him a working future better than the one he had in his previous job. More importantly, however, it secures him a working environment where that particular lady (or anyone like her) could never find herself.

> *"and you know I thought "god, it's very... rude" I was being so angry (.) with myself* for being in the same situation that I thought you know "I've got to get out! I've got to make sure my skills are so much better than hers..." I hated her so much at that point (.) so I did (.) I knew about [institution] that it's very respected (.) it was at that point that I actually (.) signed up for the course (.) thinking cos I want to upskill you know and get better (..)*

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[40] "I mean serious anger (.) serious anger and actually part of that (.) the reason I'm here at [name of the educational institution he attends, where the interview took place] I'm taking a short course as I said in my e-mail in Programming and one of the reasons I'm doing that (.) in fact my main motivation (.) is basically (.) this woman she might be successful but she's very* old (.) she can't use a computer she certainly can't program I don't wanna be rude bu:t she's not particularly clever she:: (..) you know she neve:r (.) in her day they did any A-levels which is like (.) GCSEs today she never did anything beyond that (.) she never went to university etcetera etcetera" (lines 99-104).

a:nd (.) yes it was that anger that motivated me (..) absolutely (.) and there've been other times (.) like this in my life (..)

anger has motivated me to make a (.) positive difference actually (.)" (lines 106-115).

In that way, Participant 7 distances (and secures) himself from the source of his anger: he is upgrading his skills in order to move to a different field, far from her reach, and over which he is far superior than her. It is interesting to note how the participant describes this whole process as making "a positive difference": he does not focus on retribution towards the offender, but instead aims towards his own self-improvement. This positive difference stems from his anger towards the other person and towards himself for sharing an environment with her.

Participant 5 offers how his disappointment at bandmates has pushed him to become a better musician so that he can fill-in the parts they are not doing:

"and and that's somethi:ng (.) that's just there (.) that sort of the anger and* the disappointment breed the anger (.) eh: cos you get so angry that this person has had the cheek or whatever to do this to go here a:nd to let you down to this degree cos I'm someone who really works and believes that (.) hard work should be rewarded and it's very hard for me to deal with (.) the fact that someone has not done their part cos cos I've I always try to do my bit I try to learn to use different (.) let's say if again for music I try to use different music programmes so I can (.) if the drummer isn't doing something I can program the drums (.)

-mmm

-I learnt to become a ten times better guitarist in a few years just cos (.) someone wasn't writing the songs so I* had to write the songs and you know (.) I find it (.) really annoying for example when (.) because I've gone to these lengths that someone then wouldn't for example write any songs (.) because I can do it you know" (lines 341-350).

Anger is instigated by disappointment at the bandmates' laziness and their lack of commitment to their parts, the participant says. He also explains, however, how

these emotions spur him on to build a new setting where he is not dependent on his bandmates: he now is a better guitarist than them, writes the songs they don't write, and can even replace the drummer's work with some programmed drums (a skill he also appears to have picked up lately). The fact that the participant feels he has been "let down to this degree", then, makes him struggle to make things as he wants them to be, even if this means the other members of the band do not follow.

Participant 6 touches on the theme of his parents trying to force him down a different career path than the one he wanted to follow. This he describes as a huge source of anger in his life and as something that hurt him very deeply. However, when I asked whether anger can be anything other than negative, he replied:

"so far the way I've described it yeah (.) because maybe it's it's ah: what I've been focusing on within me (.) right now like that specific anger (.) but no it's not necessarily* negative I would I would say (.) anger can drive* you as well

-do you maybe have an example of that from your personal life or::

-um (.) not especially I mean just like not like a clear* example (.) but um (7sec) I'm very* determined person (.) I'm very driven (.) and I'm wondering i::f you know that frustration and anger I've got due to my parents' education (..)

has uh helped me being where I am now (.) achieving what I've achieved […] so:: maybe* it's all that frustration and anger that (.) you know (.) drives me as well ()ah: and help me (.) carry on (..) tell my parents "fuck off! I wanna do music, I am a musician, I love it, I will find my way" you know and and (.) so anger is not necessarily negative um (..) don't know if I can think about anything else um (5sec) I would* say anger is mostly* negative in general um (5sec) but it can help (.) sometimes um:: (..)" (lines 633-662).

For Participant 6, it was anger that made him break the chains his parents had imposed on him through their way of raising him (what he calls "education" in the quote). Upon realizing that his life is going in a different direction than the one he wanted, he plucked up courage amassed from his anger and went against his parents' wishes. He expresses this anger in the interview through reporting that he told his parents to "Fuck off!", thus denying all and any help they would offer him,

and stresses that anger helped him "carry on"[41]. Anger, then, was like a refuge for him, leading him to reject a life on his knees and aim for a fulfilment of his desires. He rounds this off by saying that his move was a successful one and that he now runs his own business doing what he loves. Thus, anger helped him get to the place he always wanted to be but was obstructed by his parents.

Throughout his interview, Participant 4 talks about the way anger drains him of energy and leads him to situations that make him feel miserable and helpless. When he starts describing how anger relates to his musical endeavours (his great passion), however, he recognizes that anger drives him to spill his guts on the guitar or on paper. This, for the participant, is a necessary condition for the creation of honest music. He therefore exclaims:

"anger so it's [laughs] it's a blessing and a curse (2sec) it's nice (.) when you can use it" (line 120).

6.3.2 Welcoming Anger But Hoping for Better Control

In the majority of cases I found a right spot to ask the participants whether they would classify anger as a positive or a negative emotion. Either I would take a lead from something the participant said, or I would ask as an autonomous question toward the end of the interview. The only two who classify their experiences as definitely or entirely negative are participants 1 and 5 – and these are the two participants who find themselves being very unproductive when angry. Participant 1 states:

"Definitely negative. Um… Yeah. I mean (.) some people would say it's positive in the sense that it probably spurs you on to do more. If you're angry at yourself and you're at work, you want to (.) do more work (.) and then, you won't be angry. But (.) when I'm angry, I just sit. I'm (.) I'm not productive, I can't do anything until I've calmed down for like 5 minutes…" (lines 219-223).

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[41] "yeah I could have just accepted it (.) my parents forcing me to take one way and (.) you know (.) just study and be (.) become whatever you know but not my (.) not who I am" (lines 651-652).

Participant 1 presents himself as tied down by his anger, unable to do anything until the emotion has subsided. It is interesting to note that the participant blurs the lines between voluntary and involuntary behaviour in his account. Earlier in his interview he makes the case that when he gets angry, he *chooses* to go and sit down and refrain from any activity or interaction with other people. In the present passage, however, he presents a rather different take on the situation: that it is anger itself that paralyzes him. The way it is experienced for the participant, then, appears to be a combination of the two – maybe not even he is sure which one is more prominent. It can be said, perhaps, that anger clouds his judgment and takes hold of his behaviour; upon realizing this, he chooses to sit it out in order not to embarrass himself or regret his actions later. Paralysis according to this interpretation relates more to the inability to control oneself and less to the inability to move. Unable to control himself, the participant realizes that he needs to cease any and all activities in order to avoid destructive behaviour.

Participant 1 also presents his idea of how other people might make use of anger, and his impression actually fits in quite well with how other participants described their experiences, as we saw earlier in the text.

Participant 5 evaluates his experience as follows:

"-is anger a positive or a negative emotion? Or neither? Or both?

- The way that I (..) the way that I experience it is very negative

-negative

-yeah it's (.) I don't* really get angry beyond (.) you know I usually get disappointed I usually get saddened (.) anger in the way that I experience it the way it links is highly* disruptive for me (.) because I don't want* to be angry I'm not* an angry person (..) but anger just comes in these waves that I (.) I don't* control (.) and I find it really really disruptive" (lines 489-495).

Read at face value, what the participant finds negative about his experience of anger is how it distracts him from his activities, just like Participant 1 says. He finds lack of control over the emotion frustrating (therefore the situation of finding

himself under the passion of emotions makes him internally frustrated) and its effects disruptive. What seems to be the core of the problem, however, makes its appearance as the explanation of the experience: "because I don't want* to be angry" he says. So anger throws him in a state he does not enjoy and he cannot bring himself out of it. He then confirms that he is "not* an angry person". Perhaps then anger makes him question his own identity as someone who values reason but cannot help but surrender to the wave of anger. In a sense, this double existence of the calm and the angry-self might be a difficult thing for participant 5: one is the identity he endorses and desires; the other is an identity he disdains. Both are found within the same body however and acknowledging both seems to bring about a tension in his understanding of the experience. His state of anger breeds more internal frustration, then, as he finds it challenging to comprehend what it is that makes him feel and act in that way.

This reading can be best understood when read alongside the participant's quote in the previous section, where he describes how his anger spurred him on to become a better musician. After all, a little later in his account he offers: "I find it's amazing* for my music but I find it really* (5sec) makes me angry [laughs]"[42] (lines 508-509). Even though Participant 5 states time and again that he does not like getting angry, he also states that something good comes out of anger: music-making. Given that music occupies a very special place in this participant's life, one can assume that the positive weight of anger is quite important for him. The reason why he does not explicitly embrace anger, then, is that he finds it very hard to control it. Essentially, the way he presents anger as being "amazing for his music" confers no agency to himself; it is spelled out almost as if the musical piece is writing itself. Anger as a force for improvement is present in this participant's account but

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[42] "is anger a positive or a negative emotion? Or neither? Or both?
- The way that I (..) the way that I experience it is very negative () yeah it's (.) I don't* really get angry beyond (.) you know I usually get disappointed I usually get saddened (.) anger in the way that I experience it the way it links is highly* disruptive for me (.) because I don't want* to be angry I'm not* an angry person (..) but anger just comes in these waves that I (.) I don't* control (.) and I find it really really disruptive if ()
-aha
-so um you know so in a way anger is really very negative for me I find it really unproductive I find anger doesn't really do anything ah: and there is no time where (..) when I was doing something angry that I wouldn't have done it better* if I wasn't if I'd calmed myself down and did it so::
-aha
-yeah I find that I get rid of so: much anger with my music that I don't need it for anything else (.)" (lines 489-509)

he does not "want to" apprehend or consciously endorse this because it throws his sense of identity off balance.

When prompted to give their opinions on whether anger is an overall positive or a negative emotion, the other participants picked a third option: that it can be either; that it is a natural state; and that it is the way you use it that makes it a positive or a negative presence.

Participant 2, for example, says:

"-Is (..) would you say that anger is a negative or a positive emotion?

-I would say anger is never negative (..) I would say what you do* with your anger can be negative () If you use your anger to (.) to physically assault another person that* is a very* negative (.) ah (.) thing (..) but the feeling is never (.) um (.) negative (..) not in a (.) not in the sense that I think that you're talking about I mean (.) as in bad as in (.) um (..) shouldn't be felt shouldn't be expressed (.) Ah:: you know as in "sinful" (.) not* in that kind of way (.) I mean (.) um (.) you could say that there's a (4sec) a (5sec) [laughs] (..) you could say that there's light and heavy emotions and that there's there's emotions that really (.) um (.) emotions that light you up (.) that free you up that ah: that fee:l quote-unquote positive and then there's emotions that (.) really feel like they're weighing you down like they're (.) they're constricting you like they're making you (…) and that you can say is quote-unquote negative (.) But (..) even then it's the (.) heavy emotions are not bad

-OK

-Sorry, no, actually, let me rephrase it

-Please

-Yes there are positive and negative emotions

-Mhm

-But positive / negative just simply mean (.) meaning like (.) in an electrical charge type of way (.) not in a good and bad kind of way (.) there are no such things as bad emotions" (lines 516-537).

Participant 2 describes emotions as "electrical charges" and divides them into "light" and "heavy" emotions; the former lift you up while the latter weigh you down. He goes on to explain, however, that this does not translate directly into a desired/undesired continuum. The participant interprets my question as asking whether anger is "a sin", something that must not be felt or expressed – and his answer to that is that anger "is never negative". As his rejection of the desired-undesired continuum presents, all emotions are natural; they must be embraced, experienced and expressed by the person[43]. The assumption here is that humans are endowed with emotional reactions and that engaging with these reactions is what brings us closer to the fullest lived experience of being human possible. It is what the person does with these emotions and their expression that can be negative. Talking about anger in particular, the participant gives the example that if you use anger to assault another person, then you are using it in a negative way and thus wrongly. A little later in his account, the participant offers some ideas on how anger can be positive:

> *"ah:: sometimes anger can be an (.) an inspiration to do (.) activism (..) Um (.) if you're angry with (.) say (.) what the government is doing right now (.) you can use that anger to spur you on to (.) um organize a protest to start a petition (.) um (.) you know even to even to make a public speech about it and an event (.) you can write about it (2sec)" (lines 554-558).*

Anger, then, for Participant 2, can be a force to change the world.

Participant 3 offers:

> *"ah: would you say anger is a positive or a negative emotion?*

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[43] "-OK (.) so if I've got it right you wouldn't say that anger (.) that feeling angry makes you a worse person
-No (..) feeling anger never (.) never a worse person (.) in fact I would say you're a better person if you acknowledge it and even express it appropriately
-I see
-Ah: no (.) a person is never* bad for feeling whatever they're feeling" (lines 564-567).

- I think anger is a normal emotion (..) It's how you deal with it (.) ho:w and what makes you angry especially (.) it's like (.) you have to reserve your anger for the right* things

-Mhm

-For example this person I told you about who made me incredibly angry (.) I have no* regrets about that anger (.) I have regrets about plotting his murder but I have no:* regrets about that anger (.) not* one* instance* (.) because that guy made my life such* a fucking misery right? Now of course* when I think (.) I'd be an absolute idiot if I wasn't feeling anger when I think about this guy (..) but I think about all these other situations where I got very angry you know I say you know that's dumb (.) that's not (.) you know a normal situation to get angry in (.) so* (.) in (.) as a means to better the situation to express yourself or an outburst of those it's not a positive thing a good thing at all (.) that's a problem* (.) but* it is (.) anger is a big part of being human you have (.) it's not you have to reserve* it but you have to (.) ah you know ensure that you get as angry as little as possible but there are definitely certain situations where eh: anger is justified (.) You know? () But yeah it is like (.) that's almost like using anger as a reaction for everything* and any time there is a problem () That's* a problem (.) however there are situations in your life where boy if you don't feel angry then you're just a fucking idiot basically [laughs] like (.) this is a horrible thing but say sexually assaulted a relative of yours and you're like [puts on funny voice] "no just stay Zen about it you know? Anger is a bad thing" you know if someone goes like (.) if someone your dad tries to teach you Norwegian you can't read it properly enough you scream and snap your pencil (.) that's dumb you know [laughs] you see what I mean?

-I do yeah

-So you have to (.) I think it's important to make (.) anger is a normal (.) it's a normal thing to feel (.) and it's but it's also something that all humans have to know how to deal with (.) because it's such an animal side of us" (lines 785-817).

Participant 3 describes anger as a "normal emotion" and "a big part of being human". His description is essentially saying that it's not good to suppress anger, to try to present it as something else, or to negate its existence. As human beings, we're hardwired to experience a range of emotions and anger is one of those emotions. He then goes on to say that anger can be used justifiably or unjustifiably, giving examples of each use. His examples place human agency in the middle of the experience: the person is responsible for his/her anger and has to "reserve it" for the right occasions instead of using it as a response to anything that upsets or annoys him/her. He brings the example of getting very angry when "your dad tries to teach you Norwegian" and "you can't read it properly" as a fine example of misplaced anger and describes it as "dumb"; it is frustration with situations that one cannot control, hence lets out as anger. Moreover, he repeats the sentiment found throughout the interview that "as a means to better the situation to express yourself or an outburst of those anger is not a positive thing a good thing at all" because, as he explained earlier, it blows things out of proportion and is usually followed by regret for this irrational and unjustifiable behaviour. The participant stresses, however, that there are times in life where anger is definitely called-for, where "boy if you don't feel angry you're just a fucking idiot basically". His prosody changes to emphasize this in the two examples he brings to the discussion. In a hypothetical situation where one's relative has been assaulted, one cannot be calm and "Zen about it [because] anger is a bad thing". The participant impersonates the "fucking idiot" here by putting on a funny voice, trying to present the full scope of idiocy that goes into not getting angry when the situation calls for anger.

Going back to his example from his flatmate of many years ago whom he was experiencing as a real pest and whom he was planning to murder, he states that he has "no* regrets about that anger (.) not* one* instance* (.) because that guy made my life such* a fucking misery". By placing so many emphatic cues (stresses and pauses) in such a short text, he signals the necessity of anger as a response to that specific situation: the participant felt his life becoming a misery from that person so getting angry at him was the reasonable thing for the participant to do. He flags up that he does regret plotting this person's murder though. That is, I assume, because murder is a reaction blown out of proportions (he was doing a lot of recreational drugs at that time, as he said earlier in the interview) that could have had very negative repercussions for him had he carried it out. The emotion itself

however is most welcomed by him in that case. His anger is presented like it almost gave him a sense of identity: through anger, the participant established his own space, strongly separating himself from the source of anger and finding pride and strength in doing so: it really is him who reacted in that way and, if he hadn't, he "would be an idiot", he would have wasted more of his life within that place of misery.

Bringing the focus with more rigour back to the situation and persons that cause anger, the participant explains that if they behave with respect and openness, then anger is not justified:

"I don't think anger is justified when it deals (.) when it comes to dealing with (.) ah:: (.) a normal rational situation a normal rational person a person who is dealing with you (.) you know in normal rational ways" (lines 799-801).

Again, the focus here is on the other and how they treat the participant – therefore, the rise and expression of anger is presented here as a mutual affair: if one of the two parties acts irrationally, abnormally (disrespectfully or other) towards the other, then the other is justified to, and *should*, feel angry.

The participant ends by calling anger "an animal side of us", stressing that humans need to *know* how to deal with it: to acknowledge it and to express it accurately. This description allows for a peek inside the participant's experience: "an animal side" can be rephrased to mean a primitive state, one where the animal is solely interested in its own survival and prosperity and one where dialectic and dialogical relationships are done away with. The animal goes wild and makes the participant lose his composure. Moreover, the account is telling us that knowing how to deal with anger is something humans learn in the process (after finding themselves feeling embarrassed and ashamed time and time again). Rationality and anger are presented as two states that cannot easily co-exist. Linking anger to the 'animal side' of human experience takes it away from the 'cultured' side and thus makes it incompatible with patterns other people can comprehend or relate to. So when the participant is inside the cloud of anger, he feels and acts in unacceptable, by social standards, ways. Rationality here is therefore presented as something different from reason: whereas reason could be defined as concerned with cause-and-effect (which would justify the participant's behaviour since it is caused by something),

rationality seems to be linked to symbolic representations and interactions that can be socially comprehended.

Participant 4 also presents a balanced version of anger:

"It depends on the type of anger (.) um (3sec) and when it's being angry at yourself all the time and ah or fuck it a rude person at work or whatever (.) all that anger is just everyday trivial nonsense and to get (.) wrapped up in it is not good (.) it's negative (.) um (.) but to be angry and have a reaction if someone does* do you wrong or to be angry at the way the world is or (.) you know things like that (.) it's it's better than being numb* and having your eyes closed and your ears closed um (3sec) I'm trying to learn to keep my mouth shut more often but I think (.) overall it's better* to [laughs] you know to stomp around a bit and let off steam than just uh (.) you know (.) cruise through life asleep or half-awake or something so (.) yeah I'd say it depends on (.) it depends on the type of anger and the situation um (.) some things call for anger you know? Um:

-Mhm

-you can change things politically (.) you can change things socially (.) you know (.) how much racists and fascists are empowered now with (.) Brexit and Trump and all this kind of stuff (.) you can't just nod and go [puts on funny voice] "oh I understand" you know and "oh it will work itself out" and be calm (.) I think the time for that is past (.) so you gotta be angry then (.) you know (.) but that's yeah that's a positive that's a productive (.) productive anger (.) if it helps you achieve something rather than (.) you know (..) smashing people's faces in" (lines 427-445).

The participant begins by stating that anger can be positive or negative – and that, as it turns out, is largely dictated by the way one reacts to situations and by the situations themselves. Where possible, the person should look for rational and reasonable solutions: it might all depend on his own actions, thus feeling angry is unjustified. Revisiting his earlier story of going to the bar only to find himself caught-up in "a one-way conversation" with someone who is "just chatting (.) bullshit at me that I have no interest in hearing (.) um (..) if I've had enough drinks and I'm depressed and I'm frustrated I::'ll just snap at them (.) because I (.) I feel

like they're wasting my time and they're not (.) you know (.) elevating the mood"
(lines 195-199), he presents the case of "being angry at yourself all the time and ah
or fuck it a rude person at work or whatever (.) all that anger is just everyday trivial
nonsense and to get (.) wrapped up in it is not good (.) it's negative" (lines 430-432).
So anger for him is negative when it is not offering solutions but instead
perpetuates one's misery (and prolonging anger itself via anger's self-feeding loop).

But anger can be positive too – indeed, the participant presents anger as
mandatory sometimes. His point is that, if there is a reason to be angry, like when
someone mistreats you or when world events alarm you, then you should get angry.
"Productive anger" as he calls it can lead to social and political change. For the
participant, it is mandatory in cases where fascists are empowered or when the
fabric of equality and peace in society is otherwise under threat. This participant
uses the prosodic features of a funny voice to mock the people who try to see the
other's point of view in everything with the way he says "oh I understand". This, for
the participant, seems to go against the idea of anger as asserting one's authority,
sense of self and point-of-view; after all, it is the violations of these two that give
rise to anger. When that happens, the time to be calm is past and the person should
act as the participant puts it. It is equally interesting to note how he contrasts this
"positive" type of anger which, for the reader, might be equated with violent
reactions, with mindless violence ("smashing people's faces in") – violence, if there
is to be any, should serve a purpose. Finally, the participant says that anger is
"better than having your eyes closed and your ears closed"; anger, then, requires
being alert to the world around you. He pauses to note that he is in the process of
self-improvement by learning how and when to express his anger appropriately,
then adds that "overall it's better* to [laughs] you know to stomp around a bit and
let off steam than just uh (.) you know (.) cruise through life asleep or half-awake
or something" (lines 435-436). In other words, anger is presented as a sign of life,
as nature's wake-up call and people need to heed to that call in order to navigate
their environment maximally.

When asked whether there is something he would like to add before ending the
interview, Participant 7 paused, then gave me the following answer:

Participant 7:

"um (..) I'll just have a think (8sec) anger (5sec) oh yes there is one thing I would like to add

-please

-so I do think anger is natural for everyone to have a little bit of anger from time to time (.) you know like it's natural to have sadness from time to time (.) happiness from time to time

-mhm

-but I feel in my* circumstances anger's assumed a bigger than normal price (place?)

-mhm

-so I think I'm […] than other people that's what I'm saying (.) but I don't want to get rid of anger altogether

-you don't?

-no no (.) cos I think it's natural (.) it's more of a philosophical point

[…]

-so you do feel comfortable with your anger

-no I don't feel comfortable with my* levels of anger

-mmm

-but (.) at the same time (.) when I'm (3sec) I hope in 10 years time I won't have any anger problems anymore but (.) I still want to have a little* bit of anger () just like I want to have a little bit of sadness from time to time a little bit of hope from time to time a little bit of happiness you know it's just philosophically I mean everything should balance (.) like if I couldn't feel a little bit of sadness I would never be able to feel a little bit of hope () just like (.) if I couldn't feel a little bit sadness from time to time I'd have no idea what it feels like to feel a little bit happy

-mmm

-from time to time (.) I'm not trying to delete it from my body (.) like I said I think it's perfectly natural to have a little* bit of anger (.) it's just unfortunately* I have an awful lot" (lines 757-792)

For Participant 7, it is his *levels* of anger that make life difficult for him, not anger itself. Surprisingly, even though throughout the interview he is talking about anger as a possessive force which leads him to self-destruction, he concludes by saying that he does not want to get rid of anger altogether. He wishes to gain better control over it but he considers it an integral and vital part of being human. His concern, therefore, is that he hasn't mastered yet how to be properly human; how to tame his anger and control it at will. This seems to be a point of central concern for the participant, since he felt compelled to include it in the interview.

Discussing his past, his family and his school, participant 7 concludes that at the age of 21 he had "no idea how to express" his feelings.

"so then I'm coming out an angry young man aged 21 with no idea how to express my feelings (..) or how to deal with anger and you know that wore me down a cause of (.) extreme anger and unhappiness (..)

-mmm

-I have heard of a school or college that gives anger lessons and also happiness lessons to its pupils so maybe that could have been good for me (.)

-you think so?

-yes if it was (.) assuming it's a proper (.) properly taught thing where they have experts or professionals who know* how to help people with anger or to get people to help themselves with anger (.) that I think would be a very* good thing" (lines 565-574).

In what appears to be a day-dream directed to correction of his self, the participant says that he has heard of a school that gives anger and happiness lessons; a school, in other words, that teaches pupils how to embrace and control their emotions. The participant starts by saying that this school "could have been good" for him, implying that his story would be very different (and much brighter) had he attended that school instead of the one he was sent to. Then, continuing on

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the daydream about how that school might be, he brings into the discussion the issues of expertise and professionalism that such a place would require. The team must be trained to high standards because this is people's wellbeing on the line: one wrong advice, we can almost hear the participant saying, and they might scar the "student" further, leaving them even more unable to express themselves appropriately and accurately. Having entertained this "safe space" in his fantasy, the participant then states that that "would be a very* good thing", implying that he would consider attending even now, in an effort to reach his desired levels of control over anger.

The accounts presented here point to the relationship between anger and agency/responsibility. Most participants describe the emotion as leading them to a crossroad where they have to either accept their lives are going to be miserable because of their aggressors or the situations they have found themselves in, or they are going to do something to change that. Anger is described elsewhere as taking away the calm person's sense of agency by pushing them to do things they later regret. This theme shows that anger can also re-confer a sense of agency to the individual: bring them back to a point where they look at themselves in the situation, make a plan and take action. This comes with a price though, as they are likely to indulge in their anger in excess and thus let the emotion again take the reins.

6.4 Hell Is Other People

Much of the literature around anger presents it as arising out of perceived injustice, threat, goal obstruction, damage or insult to the self. These inflictions can occur through actions of the self alone (e.g. hitting your knee on a corner, regretting the purchase you made, or forgetting an important date with your spouse) or from natural phenomena (e.g. the hurricane that blew down your house, the bugs that

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ate your trees, or the death of a loved one); they are, nevertheless, most usually served, willingly or unwillingly, from other people.

This highlights the logic behind the present superordinate theme: when evaluating their experiences, the participants position themselves opposite to the offenders, creating thus points of contrast between themselves and the people who made them angry. Essentially, these points of contrast between offender and offended are deeply ingrained in the experience of anger itself: they shape the understanding of the event as it unfolded (both while it was lived and as it is remembered), the way the participant views himself and the world, and the actions they take as a result of the event.

6.4.1: The others

A nice introduction to this theme is the way participants describe "the others" – the general population. The participants almost unanimously presented a negative picture of society and people and stressed that this gives rise to their anger.

What Participant 6 describes when asked what it is that makes him angry is the essence of goal obstruction. Either he is facing a problem the solution to which eludes him, or he finds himself stuck "*because* of someone else":

"if I'm facing a problem and I cannot find a solution or I find myself stuck

because of someone else* (2sec)

-mhm

-um:: that's* what makes me angry" (lines 84-86).

The source of anger in both cases is the obstacle presented to him by a person. The two cases are very different though: whereas in the former case he gets angry at himself, in the latter case he gets angry at someone who obstructs him. One could hypothesize that the way the participant stresses "someone else", followed by the pause in his account, reveal a side of anger specially reserved for "the others". He rounds up his argument by stressing that he gets upset "if people don't behave the way I personally would and feel this has an impact on my freedom on my happiness".

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Participant 5 complains that:

"everything* is just headlines nobody really dives deep into things (.) learns to be really great at them (.) but they just know (.) this very upper crust (.) this very icing you know rather than the actual cake (..) ah (.) you know it's ah (.) it's something that frustrates me in society (.) to a large degree (.) but then also (.) from my other sort of perspective (.) you know so what? Let them do that ()younger generation is just so appallingly* (..) they have basically been marketed to the limit that the corporations that (.) now I sound like a hippie (.) ah that the big corporations want to be and they easily control that way (.) and I find that just to be appalling and the (.) and the fact that the large mass can be controlled also means that everything will be shaped and formed in society based on the way that (.) they are (.) and the way that you can get the majority to (.) ah: to behave and act and it's just (.) you know that* point even affects me (.) it affects me that Brexit's happened (.) that Trump's gonna be U.S. president you know (.) and that way I find that mass culture is so easily deceived () probably 1/4ᵗʰ of the population is probably (.) pretty fucking daft

-mmm

-but that doesn't matter! You can be daft and happy you know (.) doesn't matter to me (.) as long as you don't make it my problem really" (lines 301-328).

In this part of his interview, Participant 5 started talking about the state of the world today, even though he was not prompted on such an action. It soon became apparent that by talking about the world and other people he was strongly expressing anger. He presents, through a series of detours and parentheses, his opinion on the people of the world today: brainwashed by the big corporations, victims to the click-bait culture and, even worse, having only surface-knowledge of skills and a very short attention span. When he pauses and says "now I sound like a hippie" the participant probably hints that other people would say that it is *his* view of the world that is distorted, not their way of being in the world. Moreover, he is actively taking a step back to tell me that he is probably exaggerating in his *evaluation* of the society. This does not matter when it comes to how he *feels* about

people though; whether or not he would fully back each of his statements in formal dialogue, this is how society is making him feel – like he is surrounded by idiots. "But that doesn't matter!" he proclaims: "You can be daft and happy… as long as you don't make it my problem". As he explains, however, the fact that people vote to get figures like U.S President Donald Trump in power or set processes like Brexit in motion directly affects his life. So, in other words, the above passage is essentially a lament for the modern world: a bleak realization that one's life is directly affected in a negative way by the uninformed actions of those around him.

Participant 1, when given the freedom to add anything he wants (or nothing at all) at the end of the interview, chooses to speak about the rudeness of people in society and about the hypocrisy he witnesses in the world:

"-Anything you would like to add?

-Um (.) about (.) treating other people how you want to be treated yourself…

-Mhm

It does frustrate me how, given that we're talking about anger and frustration… when I, when I don't see people do it. So, um, one example would probably be like, don't know… in retail a lot (.) you hear stories about people who treat the workers like (.) not very well and they treat them like they're nothing…

-Mhm

-But really, if the, the, the shoe was on the other fore, it wouldn't be like that would it? They'd probably be like all rosy and stuff. So, it does annoy me when people are a bit hypocritical and they don't do what they say" (lines 244-252).

Essentially, the participant is saying here that, once people feel in some way superior to another (e.g. economic status, physical strength), they tend to be impolite, rude and nasty to them. This violates the social norm of treating others how you want to be treated yourself and the participant offers his idea that, if they were the ones on the receiving end, they would not like this treatment. Arrogance and not treating others as equals is what the participant sees prevalent in society.

Participant 4 also discusses his dismay at people in society but, instead of focusing on their political actions and behaviour, he focuses on their levels of intelligence:

"I don't like rudeness (.) um::

-Mhm

-Or stupidity a:nd working in (.) public (..) working with the public you deal with that every day (.) rudeness and stupidity (.) so that kinda wears me down gets on my nerves (.) um: (3sec) lot of frustrations (.) generally (2sec) um:: I kind of resent (..) that I'm working (.) for idiots basically [laughs] serving idiots (.)" (lines 22-27).

As a worker in pubs, participant 4 interacts with many people from all walks of life every day. His general conclusion is that he deals with rudeness and stupidity. The combination of the two is what produces the amalgam of "idiots", which is the noun he uses to describe the customers in his workplaces. Following up on this, he brings a small dose of humour in the discussion by labelling his answer as a "cliché", adding that he doesn't like the "way of the world" and "bad music", before turning more serious and saying that he doesn't like politicians, fascists and "all that kind of stuff"[44] (lines 34-36). Through this dose of humour he acknowledges that his opinion is not a very original one – many people get angry from these. More importantly, however, he flags these as qualities that one encounters very often in the world – hence they turn into clichés. Hence rudeness, the thing he does not like, is employed as the only appropriate response to these qualities- by calling others "idiots".

6.4.2: The Parents/ Social Forces

Participants, then, find their interactions with others painfully stressful: the general public is forcing their stupidity and vulgarity on them in ways the participants cannot control. This is carried across to their description of their

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[44] "Yeah: you know (.) all the clichés where (.) way of the world
-[laughs]
-Bad music bad bands politicians (..) fascists (.) racists all that kind of stuff (..)
-I see
-Makes me angry" (lines 34-38).

relationships with their parents which, as many of the participants say, shaped in one way or another their relationship with anger. The shape itself that their parents gave to that relationship, however, made it a problem for the participants.

For Participants 3 and 9, it was their parents' anger that made them see it as normalized (and thus created problems for them later on in life).

Participant 3 gives a brief explanation very early in his interview of why he calls anger a "problem":

"because I come from a family where my.my mother and father would get (.) openly very loudly angry very easily and so (.) and they would always argue and stuff and so for me it was ah: it took me time to realize that this is not a normal thing" (lines 15-19).

The way his parents behaved made anger seem like a normal or even the only reasonable reaction. His phrase "very easily" points out that they would start yelling over trivial things and so anger would be an everyday phenomenon in his house. Especially considering how a young child might see his parents arguing "openly very loudly angry very easily", it might be that this appears to him as the normal way families (i.e. teams) interact: by getting openly angry at one-another. Thus, it would mean that he carries this over to his interactions with friends without realizing that he is causing dysphoria or even offence with his behaviour.

Participant 9 was brought up among anger, too – only in his case, anger was accompanied by violence. This created an environment where the qualities of anger and aggression are coupled with those of familial bonds and care:

"my mother (.) demonstrated that to me my whole life she never* left my father he used to beat her (.) stupid day-in day-out and (.) even to her dying day she was devoted to him and she was (.) reassured by his devotion to her (..) it was like (.) she told me this (.) that (2sec) being hit or being (.) um (.) the subject of some (.) my father's aggression was proof that he loved* her and was better than nothing" (lines 257-264).

Growing up in a household where violence was commonplace seems to have shaped the way the participant approaches anger: he sees anger ultimately as a sign that someone cares and thus "better than nothing". He entertains this thought at several parts of the interview but he occasionally steps back to suggest that he

might be living a distorted reality and that the messages he got from his parents might be problematic. For example:

"the confusion comes in from (.) perhaps being given the wrong messages as a child that (.) love is wrapped up with violence and (.) anger is not always proof that there is no love in fact sometimes anger is (..) proof of the opposite (.) there would be no anger if (.) someone did not care so I think that's* where I'm (..) troubled" (lines 240-242)

His confusion, as the above passage reveals, stems from this intertwinement of anger and affection in his head. This goes deeper than simply being happy when someone gets angry at him: he actively strives to enrage his loved one(s) in order to test their love for him:

"It's something I know to be true (..) so secretly I might have made someone angry and they'll be angry with me and it'll be hard for me to deal with but some* part of mine will be like (.) happy like "ah:: they still care" and that is just (.) a dysfunctional and disturbing reality that I've lived my whole life" (lines 255-256)

He clearly labels this as a "dysfunctional and disturbing reality" (line 257) but he sees himself as unable to change it as it has been ingrained in his thought process. His label "I know [that] to be true" should be read with an emphasis on "I" and thus as a point that distances him from the average person who separates between the two: in his account, he clearly states that this way of thinking is dysfunctional so it cannot be called factually true but rather something that sets the tone in the participant's own world. In other words, the participant highlights how his understanding of anger has brought about a way of relating to it that he finds disturbing.

He concludes in internal frustration and anger, as banging his hand on the table denotes that "that is (.) what I gained [bangs hand on table] from (.) my parents this is what I (.) learnt (.) about love (3sec)" (lines 263-264). He thereby blames his parents for tuning his mind to that dysfunctional way of thinking and the personal and interpersonal disturbances it brings about.

For participants 3 and 9, it was their parents' openness about anger that led them to adopt it as a default method of understanding and approaching the world. For

participants 2 and 7, on the other hand, it was their parents' restrained approach, and the education of "bottling up" that they see as having set the ground for their anger outbursts.

Participant 2 offered:

"I've only been realizing, last couple of years (.) stuff that I think I bottled up when I was even a little boy () I don't think I was (.) I don't think I could, I was allowed to fully express myself when I was growing up. () And I think maybe (.) then those, some of those emotions manifested themselves into other problems. Um (.) quite deep problems. Ah:: and ones that, you know, um (.) affected my life in very* negative ways." (lines 67-74).

When asked to elaborate on the negative ways bottled-up anger has influenced his life, the participant produced the following account:

"-Bottled-up (7sec) [sighs] ah (3sec) I would say that (.) bottled-up anger (..) becomes* something else (..) it (.) um (.) it becomes (.) it can (.) kinda metamorphosize itself into (..) ah (2sec) areas like self-loaving.self.self-loathing (.) ah (..) lack of confidence (.) um self-harm* (..) even subconscious self-harm (.) you could be doing things to yourself that you're not even aware (.) that it's hurtful (..)

-Mhm

-Ah (.) it can (.) manifest* itself into a genuine loathing for other people (.) um (.) which in turn can become violent and (.) and abusive () It can result into a genuine hatred towards (.) ah (.) towards people and therefore (.) um (.) you know I think a person can become completely* self-oriented (..) ah they can become (.) it can manifest itself into being so* career-driven that you're going to step on others and hurt others just to get to the top (..) Ah:: it can manifest itself into (.) um (.) just a general kind of um (.) ill-treatment whenever you'r. you're out in public um when you're buying something at the store you can snap* to the (.) at (.) at the cork […] Um (.) I mean one can say that it even could even manifest itself into being a very* abusive person and you can end up like physically or even sexually abusing a child (..) Ah: because* you're so (.) you're.you've (.) you're so* repressed (.) ah (.) emotionally yourself (..)" (lines 447-473)

In what is structured as a general, theoretical approach to the effects of bottling-up, the participant delivers an account of the metamorphoses anger undergoes when it is not expressed. The results of these metamorphoses, as presented by the participant, is most commonly oriented towards self-loathing and "a genuine loathing for other people". The person who bottles up, in other words, struggles but fails to find a place in the world for him/herself, and thus they end up feeling uncomfortable in their own skin and in the presence of others. This mental shift is the first step towards a change in behaviour which can result in being abusive towards others, violent, self-destructive and even perverted. And all these, as the participant stresses, stem from one's own self-repression; a force that often goes unrecognized but leads the sufferer to displaced and misplaced reactions in order to ameliorate his/her condition.

The participant did not go into details about how bottling up affected his life in particular but one can assume that the general, theoretical account offered above includes some aspects of his personal experience. The participant explicitly raises the issue of parental prohibition against his free and honest expression of his feelings. As he says this caused him psychological problems as well as the inability to properly express himself, which stayed with him for many years. In other words, Participant 2 understands his anger and the ugly, uncontrollable and ever-shifting forms it takes as being an extension of his upbringing and the way his parents taught him to attend to his emotions.

Participant 7 felt the need to bring his upbringing to the discussion to provide a background against which his current relation to his anger can be understood:

"and (.) I think something that I* think is important (.) I really do* wanna share (.) is that in my upbringing (..)I was always told that you know anger (.) no not only anger but I was explicitly told that violence is bad (.) I (.) I don't hit people I haven't (.) I've never been to prison or anything (.) when I get angry at people I don't hit them you don't need to worry about that

-ok

-but as part of this up(.) upbringing (.) and my school was very strict (.) parents very strict you know there is also a sense that if you get upset or angry or (..)

something's (.) annoying* you (..) you should not take it out on other people

you should not shout you should not raise your voice" (lines 39-48).

Early in the interview, when I was asking my exploratory questions about what the participants consider important when it comes to their anger, Participant 7 paused and said that he wishes to discuss his upbringing. Participant 7 describes it as very controlled both from his family and from his school. Both sides were telling him to avoid displaying any emotion to other people, which he abided. He explains that further down the line, his bottled-up emotions led him to strange life choices, like attempting to take his own life (Participant 2 also says that bottled-up emotions turn into something ugly, including self-harm). For participant 7, however, this creates further complications in his day-to-day life, his understanding of himself and his relation to his emotions.

"although I feel my anger is justified I've been told my whole life never* to let it come out never to let anybody see (.) to bottle it up I suppose we've been told to bottle these things up bottle good feelings up you bottle bad feelings up you certainly don't get angry at other people (.) at work they'd say it's unprofessional my mother would say it's immoral you know (.) teachers would say it's wrong you'd get in trouble for it at school (..) and I think that contributes a lot because I'm sort of (..) feeling* very angry and grieved (.) for something terrible that (.) I think has happened to me and it's wrong and it's wrong and I've (.) every right* to be mad (.) but then at the back of my head (..) I'm being told that voice you know from my teachers from my mom (..) from society "you can't get angry" (.) even if they've wronged you you can't get angry you know (.) "turn the other cheek"

-mhm

-and then that (.) uh (..) it always makes me more* angry you know?" (lines 51-60).

The participant here describes an internal conflict, arising in him through the clash of how he feels and how he has been taught to approach his feelings. The way he describes it, the feeling is there: he cannot get rid of it. He acknowledges it and, by the way he reasons it in his head, he is right to feel this way. That reasoning, then, creates a certain flow of emotions and thoughts that are in harmony. This harmony

is interrupted, however, from the voices "from my teachers from my mom from society" in his head, telling him that he cannot feel angry even if he has been wronged; they urge him to "turn the other cheek" instead. Anger is accompanied with shame in this instance: an external social monitoring that labels his emotional experience as shameful. This conflict generates internal frustration and makes him even more angry, as is the nature of a shame-anger spiral. The fact that authority figures have prohibited this emotion makes him feel like he is violating social norms and expectations when he gets angry. As a result of this, he blames himself for getting angry and then he gets even more angry, only this time at himself, for not being able to bridge the way he feels with the way others expect him to be and behave.

Whereas the participants discussed so far were taught how to treat their anger by their parents, Participant 6 attributes the greatest part of his anger to his parents' behaviour toward him. He starts with a somewhat general and vague comment that brings together parents and other social institutions as elements hindering one's personal development; a society that aims to force people into moulds, thus stopping them from being themselves:

"in our type of society um (.) whether it's from the parents' education the teachers o:r the society itself forcing people to (.) to be: (.) uh (.) what they not" (lines 654-655).*

One may assume that these forceful manipulations result from the others' expectations and demands: the parents may demand the child to be successful and make them proud, the teachers may expect the student to sacrifice his/her other activities to make the grade, "society" (as defined by social norms and dominant culture) may demand that one becomes successful, pretty, glamorous and a good example for those around them. All these, in order for that one person to feel like they actually have a place in society. In that way, the participant presents society as composed of the manipulated and the manipulators - not many other options are available. People are, therefore, either malevolent or weakened.

Then, when the participant starts talking about his anger and how he understands and relates to it, he focuses further on his parent's behaviour, offering:

"I think it's something that has developed in me because of frustration (.)
that's why I've been thinking a lot about it recently (.) to try to understand
because I don't think it's normal* I don't think it's healthy because it brings you
stress (.) you know so: I (.) I am pretty sure it's related to my education um: (.)
a lot due to what my parents forced* on me (.) um having no freedom (.) that's
probably where the unjustice is from (.) even if my parents are probably one of
the most kind and giving people I know you know they're very (.) very-very
giving people (.) ah the way my mum mainly educated me is that she had an
idea of who* she wanted me to be*

-mhm

-so:: she forced me to do things she (.) instead of just letting me be: and
discover with me who (.) what kind of person I am (..)*

-I see

*-um: so she wanted me to be either a doctor or a surgeon or you know this kind
of things (.) a lawyer (.)*

-mhm

-my mum is Jewish so she wanted me to be a (.) a good Jewish boy you know
like following the tradition learning about the Jewish tradition and everything
(..)*

-aha

-but it wasn't me (.) I hated* that" (lines 180-195).

The main complaint expressed in this passage is his disappointment at his parents'
attitude towards their child: he presents them as having a preconceived idea of who
they wanted him to be when he grows up and tailored their behaviour to that
model. They were not open to share his exploration of himself, his tastes and his
preferences, and they "forced" him down a path he did not feel happy or
comfortable with. This generated a lot of anger in him.

The participants therefore present their parents as teaching them wrong lessons
about relating to their anger. Their parents, the participants say, passed down
problematic ways of expressing and attending to anger to their children and

provided them with a dysfunctional way of viewing themselves under the influence/pathos of an emotion.

<u>6.4.3: Confronting the Other and Claiming Moral High-Ground</u>

My participants present their experiences of events that angered them through a lens of injustice, threat, damage, or insult to the self from the other. In their accounts, they highlight the injustice they felt at the time of the event and project themselves as being on the morally right side. (This extends to the way they present some stable traits of themselves– like just, polite and restrained, as we shall see in the quotes that follow).

A nice example of unethical treatment that leads to anger comes from Participant 5 in the following story:

"yeah there was another week when a girl at work you know she (.) she wrote me sort of a reminder e-mail about me having forgotten to send her a handover e-mail which basically is an e-mail that explains what has happened the previous day so then so that (.) when she takes over when I'm not at the office (.) she then knows what's going on (.) so I'd forgotten to send that (.) but there was absolutely nothing* to fucking report (.) so she sent an e-mail cc'ing the entire* team and my manager so e:verybody saw her and she made me look like almost deliberately look like a fucking bitch you know and look like an incompetent ba:stard and I've just had this day when I couldn't write much and she cc's the entire team just (.) for no:: reason for no reason that I can justify and that was the only time actually ever to get going and she was corny answered and and said "was there anyway you could have done that to make me look less incompetent and unprofessional?" and she didn't understand it at a::ll* she she was just like "I don't I don't understand" and that that made me so* angry and I'm so* glad I didn't do anything stupid cos I was so near of writing a proper "fuck off" email to her (..)" (lines 472-483).

In this story, the participant talks of an instance where he was made to feel ashamed; he presents a wrongdoing on the side of the other person, who made a public spectacle of what was supposed to be a personal reminder. The participant clearly states that the girl at his workplace had good reason for sending this e-mail and assumes responsibility for not carrying out the work protocol to the letter (even though he makes sure to demonstrate the low importance of his omission by saying that there was nothing to report on that day), thus achieving further moral ground for himself as a man who admits his mistakes. He then explains that the girl included every single person from the team to her reminder e-mail when, one would assume, just the participant would be enough. Therefore she turned his fairly harmless omission into a laughable spectacle, making him look as incompetent and unprofessional in the eyes of others. Therefore, even though technically she did the right thing by sending him this e-mail, the way she carried out the action was unethical, the participant claims. What makes matters worse for the participant's anger is her reaction: after he politely complained to her, she responded that she does not understand what his complaint was about. This obliviousness of hers for moral matters paints her further as an immoral person to the participant's eyes. This might be an instance of a triple-spiral of anger and shame if we assume a similar reaction on the colleague's side when she received the participant's email. Maybe she too felt humiliated and tried to ward off the attack by foregrounding that she does not understand – or maybe her response was addressed to the participant's reaction, not his complaint: maybe she was saying that she does not understand (i.e. cannot accept) his reaction. In that view, there is one chain reaction of anger and shame in each of the interlocutors, and one between them.

The humiliation he received, then, includes a notion of insult which he interprets, or at least interpreted at the time, as malice. The question of whether he would see it as malicious both when angry and when calm was not answered (directly or indirectly) in the interview. One can suppose, however, that the angry self and the insult are so intertwined that, even when the person is calm, he will interpret the other's actions from that perspective: after all, it was that action that evoked his anger and so the angry self will be hailed into existence with every remembrance of that event when he recalls the story. His anger can therefore only be understood in response to that, and that can only be understood as the cause for his anger. Insult and the angry self then are intertwined into a self-sufficient capsule and, as

insult was inflicted through an unnecessarily degrading process, the participant sees himself morally justified for feeling angry. From the distance afforded at the time of the interview, he reflects on the event and exclaims that he is happy he didn't let his anger take the reins and "do something stupid" like writing an insulting e-mail to her. Therefore, within that setting of the triple-spiral of anger and shame between them, he claims for himself the virtue of responsibility, since he managed to silence his angry self in spite of the dire circumstances.

Participant 7 states:

"I always think it's because I've been wronged (.) those people have wronged me (.) they've done an injustice what I perceive to be an injustice (.) and it's terribly unfair (.) for me: it must* be the sense of injustice* (..) I've* been wronged and that's* why I'm angry and I should be angry because I've been (.) fucked over by someone who's breaking the law or breaking (.) a social contract" (lines 649-653).

Participant 7, in his archetypical story of enragement, clearly positions the two figures (himself and other, offended and offender) on different moral grounds. As he puts it, this difference is essential to evoking anger in him. As it is the other person breaking a law or "a social contract"[45], the participant is in the right and has been offended: he feels that he has been wronged and "should" therefore be angry. The others' immorality is what drives his anger.

Participant 5, exploring the theme of the unhelpful musician again, states:

"He doesn't acknowledge that he's done anything wrong (.) I've actually taken him aside a few times and tried to talk to him and he (.) "you realize why this is not… ok" and he (.) you know (.) for me* (.) that is also something I'm currently dealing with I've actually stopped caring to a large degree about what he thinks or what he does but the thing is what he* does (..) directly influences my* life you know I have to write a lot of the music (.) ah (.) create a lot* of the product and (..) "what so (..) and then play it with him?" you know

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[45] The participant here does not refer to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's seminal thesis, but to the established norms of acceptable communication within a group of people.

after all the crap that he's done to me I should give him the joy to play music

that he enjoys? He refuses to really write I just have to tell him what to do and

yet he keeps on claiming and I believe he's just having a big break-up in his life

as well (.) broke-up with his girlfriend for this very reason (.) that he doesn't

give a fuck about pretty much anything (.)" (lines 84-91).

In this passage, Participant 5 identifies one further source of problems caused by other people. Throughout his interview he mentions his belief that hard work should be rewarded and that people should carry out their promises. This leads to the story involving a member in one of the participant's bands, who does not care about the band and does not work with them despite what has been agreed earlier. The participant is aware that that member suffers from winter depression – he brings it up frequently when discussing his case. He finds the fact that the musician lets it get in the way of the band, however, unacceptable. In the participant's mind, there are things one can do to be functional again despite their depression: seeing a "shrink" is just one of those but the musician refuses to even look into the possibilities. "He doesn't give a fuck about pretty much anything". This becomes a problem for the participant since he then has to come up with that member's patterns on top of the melodies and song-structures. What turns this problem into further rage, nevertheless, is then having to share the fruits of his labour with this apathetic person in the band. "After all the crap that he's done to me I should give him the joy to play music that he enjoys?" (lines 88-89). The injustice in this case, then, revolves around the workload (unpleasant) and the results (pleasant); who does what; and who gets what. In the participant's view, it is immoral of the musician to ask to be part of the product when he has contributed nothing but instead made the whole process more difficult for everyone involved by not keeping his word.

A sense of moral transgression on the part of the offender gives rise to anger in the participants – not only when they are the recipients of the offence themselves, but also when they see it happening to others.

Participant 8 offers a long-winded story which illustrates the point of moral high-ground. The story (which can be found in lines 199-324 of his account; see Appendix D) can be summarized as follows: he was on the bus, a group of teenage boys got on and started annoying other passengers with their music. One of them initiated

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an attempt to flirt with a girl on the bus, who was not happy about it and asked the participant if she could move next to him (so that he would work as a barrier between her and the boy). The participant accepted but the teenager continued trying to flirt with the girl. That got him in a verbal dispute with the boy, which culminated in the boy grabbing the participant, who asked him to let go of him. As the teenager did not comply, the participant grabbed the boy and pushed him off. "I threw him pretty well" the participant exclaims (thus perhaps giving voice to the wild joy of anger as described in the "While in Place, Anger is Irresistible" theme), and evaluates the event as:

> *"to grab me (.) that was just foolish that is like (.) I mean I can understand if it's (.) the man going after his wife or guy and a girlfriend you know? This is different (.) this is like (.) there's not a po(.) there's not a po(.) there's nothing* between you (.) you understand? If there's something between you and you I'm at the bus and you're (.) arguing with your wife (.) I'm not gonna come between that* you know? Even if she comes and hides behind me (.) the only thing I'll do is (.) I'll try and stop you try to reason with you stop from hitting* you understand? But I won't get between you if you want to talk to her (.) you know (.) that's not my business (.) I don't wanna get involved in that* (..) or your girlfriend or whatever it is you understand? This is a different thing (.) this is a kid chasing after a girl (.) who don't want nothing to do with him so (..) I was in my (.) I was justified in my position to say "no" (.) to behave like I behaved (.) you understand? so: I was angry* but really it was like (.) I was (.) kind of I felt (.) little bit justified* (.) to be pissed off" (lines 276-291).*

As the participant stresses, his role in the event was one of a shield for the girl who found herself prey to the boy's lust: he was protecting an innocent. This gave him a platform to justify his anger, which in turn paints his figure in the story as occupying the moral high-ground since he was acting for the protection of a defenceless girl. He solidifies this position by establishing that he can distinguish between different cases (like between this boy chasing the girl and a man having a row with his wife) and that he would react differently depending on the situation.

Anger then, it seems, needs to be talked about with reference to rules and norms of behaviour. The participants need to construct it as justified and just to claim for

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themselves the identity of the avenger instead of the lunatic; the person whose anger motivates them for good instead of bad.

Participant 9, who describes himself as "soft-sounding, caring and compassionate" gives a glimpse into his reaction to injustice:

"I will go any (.) level to (.) to sabotage their life if I see an injustice on my friends or on myself () when the injustice is happening it's when (.) I'm angry (.) when I'm most angry when I feel an injustice (..)

-and how do you (.) behave or feel?

-I think that's when I (.) can* lose control that's when I can (.) really (.) explode that's when I can become (.) physically (..) you know (..) not violent cos I don't attack people but people coming towards me I will defend myself" (lines 487-501).

In this passage the participant clearly states that he does not attack people, thus signalling himself as a peaceful individual. This does not stop him from protesting injustice in the fiercest ways, however; he states that these are the times when he feels he "*can* lose control". In other words, he presents himself as restrained in his everyday interactions, but when injustice prevails (and, consequently, when there is a moral stance to be taken by those involved), he feels justified to "lose control" and address the transgressor and the transgression in ways he wouldn't normally do. Anger here is seen as unleashed because of the moral superiority that follows it.

Participant 4 lays it out in a very nice way with the following story, where he justifies his telling customers at the pub where he works to "fuck off":

"I would like to think not without good reason ah:: it will be nights where we're understaffed and it's really busy (.) a:nd people are just rude and aggressive for no reason (.) they (.) they act entitled and they'd be rude and aggressive to me or my colleagues (..) um: (..) a::nd when they cross a certain line if they say "fuck off" and they'd say something like "I pay your wages" or "you're here to serve me" that's when I go "OK, they've crossed the line, I can say whatever I want now" so (.) yeah just shout right back at them (.) tell them to fuck off (.)

fuck themselves all that kind of stuff [laughs] there's the entitlement there's
the lack of manners there's the belief that (.) those who are serving them are
servants and are below them um:: (..) the lack of yeah lack of respect you know
I don't believe you should go into restaurants or bars or pubs and (..) put your
feet up on the furniture and believe it.act like it's your living room and these
people are your (.) you know your servants or whatever" (lines 41-58).

In this account the participant presents customers at the pub where he works as often "crossing a line". The line they cross is that they do away with good manners and even basic respect to the people who work at the pub. They may be paying customers, the participant says, and it is true the workers there get paid to serve the customers drinks. This doesn't mean, however, that workers are servants (a term opted by the participant to emphasize the importance of freedom, free-will and dignity) or that they are inferior human beings.

So there is a line crossed both on the social level (where the participant sympathizes with fellow pub-staff) and on a personal level, since the participant is himself the recipient of such a behaviour. The inappropriateness of the customers is emphasized here by the description "I don't believe you should go into restaurants or bars and put your feet up on the furniture and act like it's your living room" which denotes unjustified entitlement to a space and its services. By bringing this information to the discussion, Participant 4 portrays himself as a respectful person, who understands the importance of being kind and polite to people around him. The customers cross the line of appropriateness by insulting the workers either through swear-words or through statements that bring to light this way of theirs of looking down on staff members as inferior humans. Customers do sometimes, then, drop the politeness strategies of their society and treat fellow citizens in an impolite, even dehumanizing way. Once this line is crossed, the participant feels entitled to express his anger and "say whatever he wants" (and thus entertain the wild joy of anger induced by swearing and shouting). It is interesting to note that throughout this account the participant presents himself as being on the right moral side: even when he does stop acting politely towards the customer he makes no apologies, because he acts in an effort to restore dignity and respect in himself and his fellow workers, following a course of action initiated by the offender – it wasn't him who dropped politeness first, but he is happy to respond in an equal way. His slight laughter after reporting the "fuck off" and "go fuck yourself" he

offers to the offenders also points to his portrayal of himself as "the good guy" in the story, but also as the guy who does not feel comfortable using this language without good reason, also reinforcing his self-presentation as a "good guy".

For Participant 4, therefore, the qualities of politeness and restraint seem to be temporarily halted in order for justice to prevail. More importantly, this does not compromise his self-image as a polite and restrained person.

There is an important point to be made here, as physical violence or other forms of retribution appear to be acceptable by my participants when there is a moral justification for them. If acts of violence and retribution are not the result of some wrongdoing by the other party, they are treated as a different type of response and not celebrated. So in their stories of past events, the participants always make sure to go into detail about how they had been wronged by the other party, to stress that they have the right to (and ought to) be angry. Anger, then, is partly destigmatized in the participants' accounts: it more often than not has its roots in an actual injustice or inconvenience. The participants also refuse the stigma of an angry person by stressing that they do not enjoy being angry but sometimes it is the only reasonable reaction. In that way, the participants stress that the "others", the offenders, are bad because they are lacking intelligence, manners, or morality; the participants themselves do not lack any of these qualities however – on the contrary, they look out for them and their absence is often what leads them to anger.

Finally, as an extension of the above, a point can be made about the way social forces shape their anger. The participants expressed a high level of distress for the way they feel society, their parents, or some other external agent has shaped their relationship with anger. They are not happy with the way they attend to their anger but this is how they have been moulded by these forces. In that way, they achieve a two-fold positioning enterprise. First, they use this statement to reinforce a sense of unified character: they have this part of themselves that they don't like. Then, because of that, they achieve a claim to innocence: they shift their description of their relation to anger from "this is how I am" to "this is how they made me". Thus, they put the blame for their problematic behaviour to the others, not to themselves. Elaborating further on the issue, some participants seem to attempt a

presentation of themselves as given to a wave of anger whole-heartedly only when the situation calls for it: when an injustice is carried out or when the weak cannot raise their voice. This feeds into a discussion on whether the expression of anger is voluntary or not; which further elaborates on the tensions presented in other themes between anger as harmful or constructive.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

This chapter starts with a summary of the IPA and the DP findings individually to see what each has to offer: what did we learn about the experience and what about the way it is presented? I will then offer a view on how the two can be combined on a methodological level, as well as an exploration of the picture of anger and the self that emerges from the combination of their results.

Before we proceed to a synthesis of the results brought up by the two analyses and explore what they reveal about the participants and their involvement in the study, it is worth exploring the themes of each mode of analysis separately.

7.1 IPA Findings

The four superordinate themes that IPA brought up are: "While in Place, Anger is Irresistible", "When it's Over, Anger is Regrettable", "Anger Can be positive" and "Hell is Other People". What do these tell us (individually and combined) about the experience of anger as explored by the participants?

The theme of "While in Place, Anger is Irresistible" revolves around notions of control: control of the self, of the emotional state and of its expression. The consensus is that the participants are not good at it: once instantiated, anger seems to appear to them like a force that grips them and drives them. This finds shared ground with previous IPA findings. Eatough and Smith note that their participant, "Marilyn experiences anger as an emotion which gains ground and slowly takes her over" (Eatough & Smith, 2006b:485), while Thomas also writes of her participants' worries that anger exerts control over them. This notion of a grip, subsequently, splits into two main directions.

On the one hand, we have the participants describing anger as a violent force that takes control of their body and demands certain actions and behaviours in order to be pacified. Hitting things, getting into verbal disputes, lashing out on musical instruments, swearing and screaming incomprehensibly are just some of the routes anger digs inside them in order to be channelled. This fits nicely with the first theme Barber's (2018) brought up, namely that anger impacts the participants'

sense of agency as well as their physical sensations. My participants therefore position themselves as not-responsible for what they do in anger. This state is described as consisting of two points: an unsettling point when anger kicks in / makes its appearance and the person starts feeling irritated and restless; and an almost euphoric point when anger is unleashed and with this comes a sense of relief. The process of anger's arrival and expression, at this stage, is described in bodily terms: it is *in their bodies* that the participants feel the presence of anger, and that paints them as puppets in the hands of anger. The theme of bodily manifestations of anger seems to be a recurrent one in phenomenological inquiry, as it is pronounced in studies from 1971 (E.L. Stevick) through to 2003 (Thomas), to 2018 (Barber). The participants of the present study seem to be semi-unaware of their actions while at that state and almost completely unable to control themselves (unless, as P1 stressed, they voluntarily immobilize themselves). This ties in well with the second theme Barber identified, namely that anger brings about the participants' changing self-concept, their loss of awareness and control and sense of responsibility for actions taken. My participants are all very careful to stress that they don't hit people (unless the other hits them first at least) though. This brings a claim of agency and self-control to the narrative, at least on the most basic of social and legal levels. The positioning thus achieved is one of moral agency – it implies that there is something in the participants' personality that keeps them on track even when they "lose themselves".

On the other hand, the participants talk about the punishing thoughts that anger brings with it. Anger is described as latching on to their brains, incessantly producing negative thoughts: flashbacks of unhappy memories, labyrinths of thought over why things turned out this way, despair at the prospect of being unable to rectify the situation that makes them angry. These are presented as constantly present and unsettling, as entities that prevent the person from focusing on what they would like to, or pursuing the goals they have set for their lives. This entails an element of anger hindering their self-improvement – a point which is elaborated by several of the participants. They refer to these fits of punishing thoughts as preventing them from reaching a point where they could observe their emotions passionlessly and act them out in full consciousness and to their own advantage (or alternatively Nietzsche's "notion of the individual striving to reach the highest possible position in life, in which all emotions are welcomed and

celebrated, including anger, as part of the experience of being alive" – in Barber, 2018:333); or as derailing them from acting as fully integrated, culturally trained members of society. In that way, a self-presentation as weak "victims of anger" is achieved by the participants: they want to be understood as suffering from anger, which threatens and undermines their status as emotionally and mentally mature citizens. They want their accounts to be understood as complaints about the presence of anger in their lives.

Anger, based on this theme, is presented as an almost atavistic state, throwing them away from a state of personal and social integration, back into a state of animal instincts, knee-jerk reactions and child-like obsessions.

As soon as anger arises in the individual, then, it is bound to have its way – the participants all mentioned that there is very little chance of controlling it. This doomed attempt at control means that while angry they surrender themselves to the wave of the emotion. Consequently, after the emotional event is over, the participants will have to look back and face the results of what that force produced. This takes on two faces: the positive and the negative one.

The negative face of anger is that of regret and shame, as the theme "After it's Over, Anger is Regrettable" illustrates. In that theme, anger is painted as a bad adviser. What seems natural to do while in the surge of anger's wave, what appears to be a good idea or a mandatory action, then leads to unexpected results. These results more often than not point to a greater backlash than the participants had expected. Anger creates a design where the participants are positioned against people and they find themselves losing – often leading to an avalanche of negative affect and unpleasant necessities to repair their social standing. These lead to an experience of shame: They over-react because anger brings together various negative thoughts which may or may not relate to the history between the participant and the person or situation that made them angry. The participants' anger then brings the negative affect produced by these thoughts and memories out as a wave of negativity towards the person or situation. As a consequence, the damage the participants cause is greater than the original offence calls for and then they have to rectify the situation (often by stooping down to levels where they wouldn't want to, like apologizing or otherwise losing face, which would not be necessary if they had not over-reacted), or live with the knowledge that they got to

a worse place because of their own fault / inability to control their anger and themselves. The participants say that, as a result of the grip their anger has on them, they respond with massive intensity to incidents that later on seem trivial, they fail to make a concrete and focused case for their argument/complaint, or they "take it out" on people they should not be taking it out on: these are usually people of their close surroundings. On this last point, anger is not "constructively motivated" as Averill (2012:186) would call it. The mismatch between the instigator and the receiver of anger means that their loved ones pay for something they did not do. So, instead of a constructive expression in an effort to "change the conditions that led to the instigation" (ibid), it creates tension between them and loved ones, leading the participants to realize that they ruined a relationship, they scattered their chances at success at a desired goal, or at the very least they caused emotional harm to someone who did not deserve it. Discussing this process, the participants stress that they then see themselves in the eyes of the ones they hurt, and this makes them realize the full scope of the words and behaviours that were brought about by their reaction, making them feel ashamed of themselves. Comparably, Marilyn in Eatough and Smith's (2006) study says that anger episodes leave her feeling depressed and desperate while trying to put the blame on hormones and alcohol. In search for a greater cause, she blames her mother and the way she treated her as a child, which seems to be very similar to the way she treats her husband.

Observing the ruins the anger wave leaves behind it, the participants see themselves in the eyes of others: they see the others' disappointment or bitterness at them and they realize the others have a right to feel that way. This leads to an experience that most participants labelled "depression". This is not "clinical depression" as defined by the DSM but rather closer to the everyday/folk sense of the word: extreme sadness, and a sense of hopelessness and futility.

This is not the only direction anger's effects can take, though. This positioning of the participants against others can take a different valence, assuring the participants that they were in the right all along. The positive face of anger means that the emotion spurs them on to get out of situations where they didn't feel comfortable before. Essentially, they realize in hindsight that where they were / the

things that made them angry, were truly toxic for them: people and situations were gradually eating away the participants' wellbeing. Contrary to the effects described so far then, anger can also have an "eye-opening effect". The emotional reaction is described as leading the participants to realize that their sense of agency and volition was dampened or downright shattered by people and situations. By getting angry and lashing out in anger the participants not only create chasms between themselves and the toxic people and situations but also, and by doing that, reclaim a sense of self-determination. This also ties-in with notions that the participants stand their ground in clashes over ideological issues and inappropriate behaviours (referencing what they consider to be unacceptable alignments and actions, like fascists and rapists; and how anger is a natural and welcome emotion to feel towards these people). The experience of anger, in that way, reassures them that they are well-aligned with their own viewpoints and morals and that they are prepared to take action to defend them. The previous themes show that anger takes away the sense of agency from the individual. This one shows that anger can also lead people to a place where the sense of agency is restored. Seen from a different perspective, the participants here use their narrations to stress that anger does bring an enhanced correspondence between implicit and explicit attitudes (as Huntsinger's 2013 study shows) and that the way they think and act when angry allows them to express dissatisfaction with people they are rightly dissatisfied with. In other words, anger works as a trigger for expressing their disapproval to those who deserve it and, in the process, the participants mark their territory as their own. All participants were quick to stress, however, that they wish they could control their anger better: the result might be overall positive, but anger either took too long to manifest, or it created some nasty side-effects.

What the discussion on the two faces of anger shows can best be understood as follows: anger digs a tunnel and takes the participants down with it in a wave of emotional reaction. When they come out of the tunnel, the participants look around, as if they have just been washed ashore by the raging sea. What they find is more often than not surprising, in a good or in a bad way. The bad way means that they have harmed people they care about and, by extension, harmed themselves. The good way means that they have broken out of a place that they now realize was not good for them. This links well with the Western discourse on

emotions, which "constitutes them as paradoxical entities that are both a sign of weakness and a powerful force" (Lutz, 2008:63).

It is interesting to note, however, that when left on their own participants only discussed the negative consequences of anger. Maybe they thought that this is what I was interested in (probably influenced by the way anger is portrayed in the media and AMCs as we saw in the relevant chapters), or this is indeed the largest part of what anger produces. The participants seemed to come to a *discovery* (in Rogers' 2004 sense) of the positive effects of anger when they were asked about them; the question seemed to be a catalyst that revealed to them what they always knew – namely that the wave of anger can wash them ashore to a positive place as well as a negative one.

Following on from the realization that anger can be positive, the participants discuss how their anger is evoked by other people and they state that their reaction is (when not addressed to loved ones) by and large reasonable and justified, considering what the other people are like. Unfortunately, however, anger always comes with some harm to the person experiencing it. In the theme "Hell is Other People" the participants embark on discussing two main aspects:

First, they explicitly compare themselves to the people (and the situations these people create) that make them angry. This comparison is carried out by each participant against a background of what he perceives to be desirable personal and social traits, thus claiming higher moral ground for themselves. The way this is communicated reveals a further level of interpretation of the way the participants make sense of the experience. No participant paused to ask me if I agree that racists and fascists are a problem in society, if I agree that Donald Trump and Brexit are signs of a bleak era, or if I agree that observing the etiquettes of politeness is important. Given that these people (racists/fascists), situations (Trump presidency/Brexit) and behaviours (impoliteness) exist in the world, it is clear that not everyone agrees with the participants' views. It could be expected that, since I am a stranger, the participants would feel uncomfortable talking to me about their views on these. Instead, the participants went ahead and started accusing people who support these ideologies and practices. In their minds, they themselves are right for opposing these and they see the need for this opposition as self-evident.

As a result, they present their anger as justified and justifiable and stress that their reactions are reasonable. Eatough, Smith and Shaw's (2008) study also highlights the theme of anger arising out of (perceived) injustice and thus justifiable. Anger here seems to be crystalized around an extended notion of a mental construct which encompasses morals and ways of thinking about the world – as "an outcome or effect of social processes" (Barbalet, 2008:106), i.e. as a reaction to the violation of a socially established cultural construct - and thus as being *in the service of the community*. When social norms and standards are violated by other people, the participants' wild animal of anger is brought forward flying the flag of justice, respect and equality. The participants deliberately position themselves as being morally in the right and the instigators of anger as being in the wrong. They therefore can lay claim to an attack on morally corrupt orders.

Secondly, however, the way they have been taught to attend to their anger feeds into this theme. Their families, schools and the British society are clearly portrayed as agents who shaped the participants' relation to their own anger (and emotions in general) in a dysfunctional way, like Marilyn's mother (in Eatough and Smith's 2006 study) did for her. These figures have made the participants' lives hell precisely because they, in the participants' view, have not taught them how to cope with anger productively. This is made relevant to the notion of controlling the expression of anger but also to the way they experience the emotion. Main complaints that arise from the participants on this front are about the British notion of "bottling up" (according to which emotions should not be expressed, even their very existence is to be negated) and prescriptive approaches to what the participants should do with their lives, which never took into account the participants' own will/desire. The participants were therefore found lacking agency and control over their goals and on top of that felt that their emotions are unwanted by other people – by extension, they felt that these emotions in themselves are hindering social and personal integration. As a result, participants stress that they grew up without knowing why they feel the way they do about some things and, more importantly, not knowing how they should express themselves about these feelings. Expressing these emotions in a socially comprehensible and acceptable way is not an easy task and the participants feel they are lacking these skills precisely because their family/school/society taught them how to hide them away instead of embracing them. This creates a sense of

incongruity within the self ("*why* am I feeling this way?") but also leads to a mutation of emotions into more nasty forms. Sadness or even happiness are transformed into anger, whereas anger itself takes on a more nasty face than it should. It is this nasty face that makes its appearance when they break down and finally express it, and it is this that makes them then regret their anger release. Anger, therefore, is cast as part of a wider psychical complex. The positioning achieved against the "others" is here turned on its head, therefore. Whereas they can claim to act against injustice when angry, the way they relate to their anger positions them as victims of the norms, morals and rules that have been instilled in them. This highlights an ambivalent relation with the moral order, where the participants see the value of upholding it in a broad social level but stress that the way their close social circle trained them to approach their own emotions is problematic.

Each of these themes ("While in Place, Anger is Irresistible", "After it's Over, Anger is Regrettable", "Anger Can be Positive" and "Hell is Other People") revolves around notions of agency, self-control, justification, as well as questions of what parts of themselves are invested in the experience of anger. The participants achieve an array of different (often opposing) positions through their utilization of these elements.

Anger is presented as a force which possesses the individual and leads them to thoughts and actions they have little agency over. This force is personified and treated as an entity with physical as well as mental properties: it can be described as a body within the body or, indeed, a self within the self. The sub-self that inhabits the calm, rational individual is the "angry self" and comes with a notion of altered consciousness from the "primary self". After the emotional event is over, they have to look back and account for what the angry self did. The problem that arises here is that the angry self occupies the same body as the calm self. To the observer, therefore, it is the one, indivisible person who acted in the way they did. The person's themselves, however, finds it difficult to take responsibility for the actions of the angry self, precisely because their calm self was not exactly present at that stage.

Let's turn now to how the participants draw on different discourses that underpin their accounts and that bring that experience to life in the interview setting.

7.2 DP Findings

The four themes that DP brought up are: "Anger In and Out of the Body", "Anger as Chaotic and Harmful", "Constructing Anger as Shameful" and "Anger and Frustration". Each of these maps onto how the origin of anger, its manifestations and the consequences of its embodiment/enactment are communicated by the participants. This is where the role of the Google-analysis and AMCs as presented in this study's early chapters becomes more obvious, as these analyses also reveal similar tensions. It is worth bearing in mind how discourses about anger are formed, as described in the thematic analysis of Google-search and the discourse analysis of the AMCs.

Discourses create assumptions and presuppositions about the object that is addressed. From a constructionist perspective, one can see the thoughts of the participants, as laid out in the interviews, having "a discursive, argumentative or dialogical character that utilizes the 'common sense' themes and dilemmas" of their culture (Cromby, 2004:797). It is, of course, perfectly possible that none of the participants of this study ever visited AMCs-websites or even googled about anger. However, the way similar discourses make their way into both entities (the cultural data and the interview data) is an indicator of how 'common sense' and uncontested they have become in the British society.

The theme of "Anger in and Out of the Body" resonates with what is found in AMCs' websites, which speak of anger through its bodily manifestations. This includes both what afflicts the body (acid reflux, headaches) and what goes into the body ("what we eat and drink also contribute to the way we experience and deal with anger", as Anger Clinic states, whereas others stress the importance of correct breathing). The theme implies that anger is not always there – the participant is normally a calm, composed individual. Anger strikes are presented as distinctive and as creating a sharply differing state from the calm state of the individual. The

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onset and dissipation of anger are clearly marked, since the body is a discrete object in space, delineated by the skin. Also, it implies that anger is an entity, not an integral/organic part of the participants' personality. Furthering the material nature of anger, participants talked of it in terms of physical sensations like pressure and heat. These coincide with folk representations of anger which have even found their way into the language we use everyday (across several cultures, as well): Blood that is boiling, heat in the head, pressure in the chest etc. What is achieved by such a presentation of anger is a part negation of responsibility for the thoughts and actions the participants make when angry since they are under the influence – something beyond themselves has taken control and dictates their behaviour.

The theme of "Anger as Chaotic and Harmful" finds agreement with the view of anger as something that gives rise to tensions within the individual and his/her relations to other people; a maladaptive attitude towards the others, the self, and the relation between the two; a result as well as a cause of problematic thinking, mistaken attitudes, and blowing things out of proportion. The theme implies that it is not the individual who brings about chaos and harm – it is anger instead. The participants therefore partially negate responsibility for the harm and chaos they cause, attributing it to anger. Again, anger is here portrayed as an entity distinct from the person, not as part of their personality. Chaos and harm are also brought together as two aspects that support each other: chaos causes harm and vice versa. By employing this joint presentation and evaluating these traits negatively in their narratives, the participants signal that they value order and safety and therefore signal themselves as disapproving of anger's effects and stress that they are not proponents of anger as an excuse for bringing about these qualities.

"Anger and Frustration" corroborates the link between the two that is also presented in the AMCs. The centres stress that the relationship between the two is reciprocal; situational frustration leads to anger (e.g. anger is seen as the breakdown of one's understanding of what the other person asks of them) and anger leads to internal frustration (e.g. anger is presented as bringing with it a generalized and vague sense of dread which the sufferer interprets as what AMC Centre for Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy's website describes as "threat, violation,

frustration, fear and guilt"). The previously-seen valuing of order also shines through in the theme of "anger and frustration". Frustration is talked about as the participants' emotional reaction to not being able to fruitfully interact with people and situations when they feel they should. This generates negative affect which, in turn, leads to diminished problem solving abilities like Isen et al.'s (1987) study shows. Therefore, this situational frustration generates more internal frustration and thus more anger.   This shows that anger comes from a dark place – a place where reason, order and expectations are not as clear as they used to be before the advent of the emotion. By employing this construction, the participants further highlight that they are the victims of anger, not its enactors.

In the AMCs, anger is also presented as having a pulse of its own: a force that sweeps the individual down a one-way path where anger dictates their thoughts and actions. The AMCs paint the situation of anger's rise as one of a wind-up (where the person is tricked into letting down his/her guard and thus opens up to anger) and as appearing to leave no choice to the sufferer but to indulge in it and allow it to take control over their thoughts and actions. The Google-search strongly paints the angry person as a sufferer who cannot exert control over the emotional events and is left to witness their relationships being damaged, see their public face threatened and surrender to helplessness – all because of actions the others witnessed the sufferer's body and face carrying out. The participants utilize this discourse to negate those attributes, the "stereotype of the angry man" – in doing so they recognize the position offered to them but refuse to take it up, and in the process they construct the theme of "Constructing Anger as Shameful".

In their construction of anger as shameful, the participants attempt the reverse process of what Scheff calls the "shame-anger spirals". Whereas in Scheff's terms one feels angry because they (were made to) feel ashamed, what my participants describe is a process where they feel ashamed because they felt angry, and because they expressed that anger in the way anger demanded. They see themselves as childish and immature for letting anger lead them onto behaviours they would not approve of while calm. The participants speak of the aftermath of anger as a source for shame (internalized anger and shame), precisely because they look back at how they acted while angry and they are not happy with what they see. In order to express this shame, the participants revert to discursive practices of disclaiming and neutralization techniques. Campbell and Muncher (1987) pointed out that women

in their sample "seemed to place themselves in the role of an observer and offered precisely the kind of condemnation that would be expected from an unsympathetic onlooker" (p. 507). The researchers termed this form of defensive self-presentation as "preemptive self condemnation". Although for Campbell and Muncher this strategy was only found among women, in my sample it was very prevalent among men[46].

However, when discussing the three events that can be seen as instances of triple shame-anger spirals, the participants used the narrative to construct their figures as being the mature and responsible party in the interaction: they were the ones who halted the chain reaction of shame and anger between themselves and their insulters, therefore highlighting that they managed to rise above the overwhelming pressure. Participant 5 did not send an insulting e-mail to his colleague; participant 6 stopped the fight in the parking space because there was danger that they could get seriously hurt; whereas participant 7 opted to remove himself from the office instead of having to bear his boss' contempt. Shame is thus used to cast the participants in a favourable light, either through their own explicit pre-emptive self-condemnation or through their construction of their figures as able to rise above the triple shame-anger spiral and give an end to it.

Throughout their accounts, the participants constructed figures and principles of masculinity as well. Most strikingly, the participants went to great lengths to assure me that they do not practice violence, hostility or aggression towards women and children. By stressing this to me the participants attempt a presentation of the way they do masculinity. They present themselves as strong but also responsible, thus constructing their figures as understanding the biological differences that would render such an attack an instance of asymmetrical aggression, stressing the social role of men as upholders of peace and order. In the process, however, they also *emphasize* these traits and implicitly take up a dominant role against women: the thoughtful and careful dominant who will restrain himself to not hurt the weak – a dominant person nonetheless!

Furthermore, by presenting anger expression to other men as acceptable (in contrast to that expression towards women or children) the participants treat it as

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[46] This could be a sign of changing gender roles, as there is a 30-plus year gap between the two studies; or an indication of cultural differences between the U.S. and the U.K.

a communal and even bonding experience. Anger is an acceptable emotion for men and therefore its expression solidifies the state of being a man in the eyes of observers. Similarly, it could be argued that, in order to arrive to that presentation, the participants draw from common, 'normalized' and uncontested versions of social constructions of anger as an acceptable emotion for men. Therefore, by presenting it as part of their socialization with other men they mark themselves as men.

The issue of gender remains relevant when taking a step back and looking at the accounts as produced in interaction. The participants most of the times present angry as a natural response, something that is hardwired in their beings. This involves the regrettable as well as the benevolent aspects of anger; and the way it is or is not allowed to be expressed towards another based on the other's sex and age. Would they present it as a normal response if the interviewer was a woman, though? Presumably, they understand that, as discussed in the introduction, women have different ways of doing anger.

"From a self-presentational perspective, the aim of account giving is to construct a mutual and sympathetic social framework for the aggressive reaction which will cast it in the most favourable light. The construction of this common framework depends upon the speaker bringing the audience's interpretation of both the aggressive situation and the speaker's behaviour into line with his or her own and to achieve this the speaker must first establish the prevailing social climate – he or she must anticipate where the audience currently stands on the issue" (Campbell and Muncher, 1987:490).

My (visible) gender probably gave the participants a first indication of what I might expect to hear. The rest they had to discover as the interviews unfolded and they shared their experiences with me, and that is the topic of the next section.

7.3 Methodological Considerations

Let's turn now to a brief overview of how the two methods of analysis can complement each-other in our understanding of the experience anger. Part of the purpose behind this study is to demonstrate how IPA and DP can be complementary

to one-another. Together, the two analytic methods can provide a fuller and more solid presentation of what the participants did with their narratives. In this part of the discussion I will present a combination of the themes of the two methods, to illuminate the presentation of the self's involvement in the experience as accomplished by the participants. The way I conceptualize it, the experience of anger is talked about with the use of discourses available to the participants through the society they live in. These discourses are brought in to form the discursive construction of the experience – but in the process they also guide the narrator to what may be the "important parts" or "highlights" of that experience. Similarly, the experience leads the person to attend to specific aspects which are then coloured through the discourses that make their way in their accounts. Language and experience are thus intertwined in a way that one allows for a fuller exploration of the other, leading to something that could be likened to a chain-reaction. By utilizing certain discourses the participants are able to talk about their experiences; and by talking about their experiences in the idiographic way they do, they form repertoires to illuminate the particularities (and peculiarities) of their experience.

Interviews unfold in time. So at X point the participants could be telling me about their experience and at Y point they could be justifying why they present the experience in that way, ad infinitum. This has implications for how they believe they are understood and how they want to be understood.

7.3.1 Complementary Methods: IPA in DP

The IPA theme of anger-as-irresistible consists of the sub-themes of "The Wild Joy of Anger" and "The Punishing Thoughts of Anger". The Wild-Joy is expressed in a discourse of anger-in-the-body, where it is their bodies that host the anger and act out its demands, but also in a discourse of anger-as-harmful-and-chaotic, because that wild-joy then leads to unforeseen and often damaging consequences for the participants and for others. The punishing-thoughts are constructed as harmful and chaotic too, since they do not allow participants to focus on what they

want and they fill them with negative affect while leading them to doubts about their relationships with other people and themselves. Accordingly, punishing-thoughts are also talked about in a discourse of frustration, because it is precisely these thoughts that create a labyrinth of internal frustration.

The discourse of anger-and-frustration is also utilized to talk about seeing themselves in the eyes of others, which is a sub-theme of the IPA theme of anger-as-regrettable. Seeing how others react to their anger outbursts leads participants further down a path where they feel they cannot be understood and they cannot understand why they are not understood. Anger-as-regrettable is rounded up by the sub-theme of anger-as-bad-adviser, which also finds expression through the discourse of frustration, but also through the discourse of anger as harmful-and-chaotic because the advice participants take from anger doesn't seem to help them make something productive out of the situation. By presenting their experiences in that way, the participants disclaim the angry self (as the DP chapter underlines).

Turning to the exploration of the IPA theme of anger-as-positive, the participants are essentially disclaiming the angry-self (as stated in the DP theme). By calling it a blessing-and-a-curse (DP theme), they claim that they have ways to make it work to their advantage, even though more-often-than-not they fail to do that. This further leads to an expression of a wish-to-control it better, which also employs the discourse of anger-in-the-body to be presented clearly. The body provides both the platform for the rise of anger and the means by which it is expressed, so an examination of embodied experience, how they feel anger and relate to the world *with* their bodies, allows for the exploration of the possibilities of a firmer control of anger. The frequent inability to control their anger, as the IPA theme underlines, is expressed again through a discourse of frustration, because the strategies are clear to them when they are *not* angry – it is almost as if they perennially realize *in hindsight* how they should have acted.

The discourse of frustration is also employed to provide a way for the participants to talk about their views of other people and how these others make the participants' lives hell, as the IPA theme revealed. Both in the behaviours they encounter every day, and in the way they have learnt to attend to and express their own emotions and viewpoints, the participants run into a wall of frustration generated by the lack of understanding of why things can't be better.

Respectively, the DP theme of anger-and-frustration was subdivided in the themes of "bringing anger and frustration together"; and "expressing frustration-as-anger". Bringing anger and frustration together paints the process of getting angry as one provoked by punishing-thoughts (as the IPA theme illustrated): internal frustration lingers and generates more anger, bringing negative memories and affect back to the mind of the angry person. Furthermore, the deployment of that discourse points to the IPA theme of Hell-is-other-people because, both the way people in the world think and act, and the way their parents/schools/society taught participants how to think and act, generate internal frustration in the participants since these ways do not match the way they feel. Expressing-frustration-as-anger feeds into the IPA sub-theme of the wild-joy-of-anger because the process of getting rid of internal frustration brings with it an exhilarating sense of joy. This then leads to either bad repercussions, which paints anger-as-a-bad-adviser; or to good results, which is what leads participants to talk about anger as a force-for-improvement.

The tension between the IPA themes of wild-joy and anger-as-a-bad-adviser is also brought up when discussing anger-as-a-body (one of the two sub-themes of anger-as-in-and-out-of-the-body). Anger is portrayed as an entity of its own, a creature which leads the participants to bizarre or inexplicable behaviours in order to get its pleasure. Once the emotional event is over, however, and the participants are left alone with their bodies, they look at the costs of that wild-joy and realize that anger is a bad adviser. Talking about anger-in-the-body (the other sub-theme of this DP finding) allows participants to invoke the possibility of tighter control over it in the future. If anger is not a separate entity but instead is to be found in their own bodies, then there is a chance of actually getting a grip on it through training and focus.

When engaging in the discursive practice of disclaiming the angry self, the participants speak of themselves as generally calm, composed and in-control; and

they make a claim against the angry self. Attempting this construction of themselves as calm and in-control creates the notion that anger is disrupting this balance and is, hence, regrettable as expressed in IPA terms. They see themselves-in-the-eyes-of-others (as IPA brought up) and realize that this is not the image they want to portray, hence they suspend the narration of the emotional experience to posit that their calm selves are very different from their angry selves. Following this line of thought, they position their calm selves against the angry selves, blaming anger for being irresistible and regrettable, while expressing the wish that they could control it better.

The DP theme of Chaos and Harm discusses anger as a cause as well as a result of chaos and harm, and it brings chaos and harm together as one leading to the other in a vicious circle. In doing so, the participants paint anger as regrettable, because *they* cannot make sense of its commands and neither can others.

7.4 The Person in the Experience

This part of the discussion examines the discursive constructions of anger and the self with reference to Rom Harré's *positioning theory;* as well as Averill's Five Principles for interpreting emotion as passions.

When talking about anger as in and out of the body, the participants address several notions at the same time. The onset and dissipation of anger are clearly marked, since the body is a discrete object in space, delineated by the skin. There might be a gradual transition between the calm and the angry self, but the two are clearly distinguishable. The act of distinguishing between the two creates the basis for the negation of responsibility for the actions, thoughts and judgments the participants engage in while angry. In order to do that, though, they have to provide a good supporting reason – something that would make the listener agree with them that they really had no option. Describing how anger gets in and out of the body, participants talked about anger as a substance that is inserted in the body. It takes the shape of either a substance in itself (with reference to hydraulics and steam-pressure) or of alcohol. This substance, the IPA findings tell us, takes control

of the individual. Therefore, they somehow also negate notions of agency and control over their actions, since they claim that it was the substance and its irresistible nature that made them act in that way. A substance enters the organism and puts its parts under influence, gaining control of the person's thoughts and actions. It is the substance's dominance over the individual's agency and self-control that is to blame then – an evil agent derailing the smooth course of events. The participants therefore position themselves as victims of anger, which is here constituted as a passion because of the way it is made relevant to the biological imperative.

Anger is described as chaotic and harmful, which is another way of describing what Averill referred to as "cognitive disorganization". The participants acting out their anger lose sight of where their volition starts and ends, feeling like they actively augment something that is beyond their control. There are several layers to be explored here. First of all, harking back to notions of regression to an animal stage, anger seems to be the enemy of focused thinking and planning. Not only do the two modes not work well together, anger actively ravages one's focus and planned actions every time. Anger can be seen here personified: the emotion is an agent in itself, the appearance of which alters the organism. When angry, the organism is preparing to fight and thus cause harm to the opponent/instigator/tormentor and it is the attack of anger that brings about this change in one's physiology. The harm is also inflicted on one's own self however. Taken together, these two attributes constitute anger as *evil* (Baumeister, 1999): an evil force leading the inflicted down an evil path. This coincides with notions about the loss of agency (a form of evil blinding the sufferer) and also with popular perceptions of what an evil person/evil deed is characterized by: destructive mania, which on a P grammar is both the agentive factor and, at the same time, the factor derailing agency. The positioning achieved here is one of lack of agency for the participants: it is anger driving them, and that makes them a less composed individual –indeed a different individual- to what they normally are in their calm state. Consequently, they further solidify the position of the victim, and also stress they are incapable of accounting for anger's acts.

Anger in the body, then, distorts the individual's sense of understanding. The theme of anger and frustration can be best seen as the participants talking about a cycle. Frustration can be best understood as a situation where the participants feel they are not understood and cannot understand why they are not understood. It makes them feel like they are out of control of the situation and themselves and that generates a sense of loss, as they find themselves in the air when they thought they were on solid ground. Frustration leads to anger, which then leads to more anger and frustration because it disrupts the person's focus and planning, leaving them at a state where they feel unable to hold on to logic or knowledge they have. By employing this discursive construction, the participants negate part of the responsibility over their thoughts and behaviours while angry, claiming that not even they understood exactly where these come from. They position themselves as channels of anger clouded in confusion. The notion of social imperatives surfaces here, as the breakdown of understanding for the participants comes either through the others' transgression of social norms, or through the way they taught/instilled these social norms to the participants. Furthermore, anger is also utilized for the expression of internal frustration. Given its forceful nature, the participants attempt to get back to solid land (i.e. to make themselves understood and understand again) by getting rid of the thing that pushed them out of the solid ground in the first place. This of course cannot be done simply by one's own efforts, because what it actually takes is reasoning and discussing with another person (i.e. the one who does not understand the participant). All the while, anger is inviting them to become more angry in an effort to get rid of that emotion. Therefore, the cycle expands but its negative affect stays with the individual, leading them down a spiral of self-doubt and incomprehension. By expressing anger in whatever way they can, like screaming incoherently (as Participants 3 and 5 stressed) or swearing (Participant 2), the participants communicate something to the other: that the situation is not ok or, at the very least, that they are not ok themselves. This is an attempt to cut through the internal frustration by acknowledging it and sharing its experience with the people who cause it.

It should therefore come as no surprise that the participants are disclaiming their angry selves. They do admit these selves are there, but they stress that these are only sub-selves, and that their main mode of operation is a calm and composed self,

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able to introspect, to detect and correct flaws, and to socialize properly and appropriately with others. The positioning here achieved runs contrary to that of the 'victim of anger'. Here the participants attempt a positioning that portrays them as reasonable and rational individuals, well-accustomed to the social life of the community and aligned with forces of improvement. They distance themselves from the stereotype of the "angry man" as portrayed in AMCs and as it shines through in the other themes generated by their interview. They stress that they can be many other things/selves besides angry and that they are composed enough to avoid anger's bad advice, generally. When anger strikes they have no option but to give in, but they are capable of postponing its strikes under some circumstances. Also, they point out that they strive to make their anger outbursts coincide with instances where one would be justified, even compelled, to feel anger (like injustice).

The participants, as we have seen, take up the position of the "victim of his own anger" that is offered by the AMCs and Google-search. But they also go one step beyond with (the IPA theme of) anger-as-positive and their disclaimers-of-the-angry-self to show me that they can incorporate anger within an overall socially-acceptable framework, thus achieving a positive positioning of themselves-as-persons.

Participants engage in internal dialogues to attend to their memories of anger, which are then adequately phrased for another person (the researcher) to comprehend. These dialogues bring into the discussion the unavoidable/mandatory (body) with the optional (agency concrete or thwarted – e.g. by alcohol-) in relation to how the participants feel during/after anger episodes and the effects this has for their relationships to other people and to themselves.

7.5 The Self, The Angry Self

All this points to a re-thinking of the self-in-anger. The participants talk about their attendance to their experience while angry as a very different thing than when they are calm. Most of the "public models of being a person share three features that

together form the dominant version of Western personhood" (Fischer and Jansz, 2008:166-167): *Rationality*, *self-determination*, and *responsibility*. A disruption of these signifies a disruption in the individual's organisation of personality.

The bodily sensations, along with cognition, behaviour and judgment, is presented as altered during anger. For the participants it feels like a different self has taken control during the anger episodes. They see through that self's eyes and that self acts through their bodies – but the angry and the calm self are presented as distinct from one-another. Like Marilyn in Smith and Eatough's (2006) study, the participants in the current study experience "anger as an emotion which gains ground and slowly takes [them] over" (Smith and Eatough, 2006b:488). Similar to Marilyn, then, they present depictions of their anger as a powerful force that "constructs a self which is experienced as non-agentic" (Smith and Eatough, 2006b:489)

The transition resembles Averill's description of emotions-as-passions: frustration builds progressively internally and they can feel anger coming as a result of it, but once it strikes they cannot find a way not to experience it and act it out. The attempt to then look back and find a clear line of thoughts and actions between the two self-positions leads to further internal frustration, since they realize that anger has made them over-react and behave irrationally and their calm self cannot justify that sweep of change. Indeed, throughout the interviews, anger is portrayed as incompatible with rationality. The angry self, then, is something they clearly experience but are not proud of. Eatough and Smith's 'Marilyn', "instead of citing provocation as an excuse, she portrays a situation in which she is an object who becomes a 'wild' person because of external and internal forces. In effect, she is the excuse in that she invokes the behaviour as a consequence of who she is. […] she represents her emotion and behaviour as illogical and arbitrary" (Eatough and Smith, 2006b:489).

The *angry person* is not the same as *anger* though. The participants (with the exception of P.1) clearly indicate that there are positive sides to anger: it is an appropriate reaction to situations, it arises as a response to violations of social norms and desirable behaviours (hence working in favour of order), and it even

leads to surges of creativity[47]. However, when it comes to how they embody and channel the emotion themselves, these traits are turned around as the problem of control and agency comes into question. They see themselves as emotionally incontinent, unable to break free from the chains and demands anger places on them – thus, as comparable to "drunk, mad or sleeping people" (in Aristotle's terms).

The participants try to ameliorate this loss of agency and state that their anger is induced by instances of injustice and in an effort to correct wrongdoings. Surrendering to an emotional wave that is shaped by discontent and moves towards the direction of (personal or social) improvement should mean that, even though they are not in control of their thoughts and actions, at least they are given to a force for improvement. However, anger brings memories from past events along with it and multiplies the affect in a way that leads the participants to blow the situation out of proportion. In that way anger almost inevitably ends up causing chaos and harm.

7.6 A Critical Look at the Status of the Accounts

This study started by acknowledging the role of affect, pre-conscious and bodily processes have in the generation of what is later identified as an emotion; and that emotions are relational patterns. The participants of this study used the former definitions to disclaim their responsibility and agency for their thoughts and actions when they are angry, and to present the emotion itself as a 'passion' in Averill's terms; and the latter to justify their thoughts and behaviours when angry.

The body is beyond reason and therefore presenting the emotion as a bodily affect dissolves any possibility of having agency over it. Their personal and social relations are also portrayed as inherently problematic, which somehow automatically confers a 'right' to them to get angry in that way.

The participants also took up the task of openly condemning the effects of anger on their lives, which appears to be the broader context of understanding anger in

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[47] Like Morgan and Averill (2008:161) mention, "crisis and disorder […] provide the strongest occasion for both creative and "true-feeling" episodes".

the 2010s U.K. as the literature review and the thematic analysis found earlier in this study show. When they talked about the positive effects of anger, they made claims of justice in their behaviour and a type of need to act that way – a need that has, nevertheless, been shaped by moral orders that align with prevalent social norms in the U.K.

The participants' decision to present themselves in that way takes us to the very notion of a "sign" as composed of a signifier and a signified (Labov), which only works so within a particular community and historical era. "Peirce (and Ogden and Richards) see the sign, that to which it refers, and its users as the three points of a triangle" (Fiske, 2011:39) Therefore, one of the implications of this study is that the participants (neither of whom are close acquaintances of the researcher) discussed their experiences within that framework ("triangle") informed by the term "anger" and the meaning it has been endowed with in the present-day London. Many of my participants come from other countries but the very fact that a) they have been living in London for a minimum of five years (most of them have been here for over a decade); b) talk to a person who also lives in London; and c) do so in English, will lead them to a certain way of putting their appraisal of the experience into words. This method can accommodate many different views on the subject (e.g. from a celebration of anger to a condemnation of it; from describing their experience of violence as a liberating event to a self-demeaning event) all of which, however, are tailored to be understood by someone who partakes in the reality of living and communicating in a British context.

The "British context" is something non-concrete but infused in society. For this study I took the "expert discourses" of AMCs as a good indicator of what this context entails for anger. These centres present anger as pathology and the angry person as helpless and hopeless (without these centres' guidance). They construct a prevailing repertoire for understanding anger in the U.K., which (as the 50% Google-hits supports) has largely found fruition in the mouths and minds of people in London.

I would even venture as far as to claim that probably (a large number of) my participants had a hypothesis that these repertoires were precisely what I expected them to bring to the study, and they therefore foreground it in their accounts. It was always late in the interview and/or after a prompt of mine (which was

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intentionally designed to counter the repertoires offered by the AMCs and therefore often surprised them) that they started bringing in different perspectives of what the experience of anger is like (presumably, these are the perspectives they were there to bring from the start). Since I did not ask them, however, this remains my own speculation.

Along this line of thinking, on the interactional level, at the time and place of the interview, the participants almost *en masse* act out a role – that of the person afflicted by anger. One should therefore be careful how much truth they accredit to the accounts of the participants. Their interviews are not objective and impassionate accounts of how they feel, think and act during anger. Instead, they are subjective and passionate explorations of who they are; and an attempt to present this exploration to a stranger. The participants do address anger as a "true feeling" as Averill described them: deep, intense and passionate, close to the literal meaning of "beyond-control"; markers of "authentic being" that map onto the individual's "inner" needs and capacities; and helping to form an answer to the question "Who am I?" (Averill and Morgan, 2008). Their interviews can be best viewed as *emotion narratives* though, the primary function of which "is the repair of a person's status as a responsible member of society (Shotter, 1984), and more specifically of his or her threatened identity" (Fischer and Jansz, 2008:168).

At different times of the interview, each participant explores the possibilities of: a) recasting themselves (i.e. the repeated experience of anger which has shaped what they are talking about in the interview) as either victims, hence powerless, hence not responsible; or as channelling the essence of what is *socially desirable* (in Fairclough's terms, e.g. justice, respect) through anger; and b) stressing the necessity to get in control of anger and channel it for 'good' only. There is a tension prevalent here. The participants essentially say that there is a reason for them to get angry; hence the evocation of the emotion is achieved through a reasonable and thus justifiable process, which marks the participant as a rational person. Once they get angry, though, they get irrational. The participants therefore report a loss of reason but also make a claim to reason at the same time.

Like Averill (2012) claimed, then, anger is presented by the participants as a passion that alters the organism across a variety of systems. Similar to Lench et al's (2011) study, the participants report that their second-order monitoring of their

experience of anger is accompanied by a detection of change in their cognition, behaviour, judgment and physiology.

For James (1890), possible selves are characters that one chooses to bring to fruition. They are termed characters because they come part and parcel with a story (in Hermans, 1996:36). Hermans (1996:38) then wonders whether the self is a story (*me* – in Jamesian terms), or the teller (*I*) of the story. Based on the findings of this study, I would claim that the self is the teller of the story trying to make sense of that story as it is constructed to address the specific audience to which it is told.

Chapter 8: Conclusions and Prospects

8.1 Main findings/ Contributing to Debate:

The main findings about what constitutes the experience of anger is that it is felt like a passion: an out-of-control imposition that affects or even controls one's actions and thoughts.

A tension prevails between and within participants when discussing the effects this passion has in their lives. On the one hand, it is presented largely as justifiably instantiated and benevolent. The participants stress that the target of their anger has either committed an offence against them, or broken one of the social norms that are found in the British culture and therefore anger energizes them to respond to that offence and correct the wrongdoings. On the other hand, however, the expression of anger is presented as problematic in two ways: either its intensity is usually much greater than that of the offence and thus compromises the person's public face; or the expression is concealed and anger is directed inwards and compounds with frustration, leaving the person at a loss over making sense of their experience.

When it comes to a presentation of themselves during anger, the participants sketch a clear distinction between anger and non-anger states. The advent of anger marks a different mode of operation with the world in their accounts, one of clouded judgment and heighted physical responses. The combination of these leads to unwanted consequences which the participants describe as shameful. The accounts of the participants therefore invite the audience to make excuses for the angry persons, implying that their agency is compromised.

Also, the pluralistic approach presented in this study can work as an example of how different qualitative methods can be combined. DP and IPA can be combined by drawing attention to how one informs the other, whereas Thematic Analysis can provide a solid background for the prevailing social constructions against which the interplay of DP and IPA can be illuminated. What linguistic repertoires are mobilized to address what aspect of the experience? Similarly, which aspects of the experience best illustrate which repertoires? Furthermore, what could be the

reason that this presentation of the experience and the person in it was preferred over another?

8.2 Future research: Given the physiological differences between the two sexes and, perhaps more importantly, the differing social expectations attached to each of the two genders, this piece of research could work as a first part of a comparison of the analysis of the experience of anger between men and women. Many women I spoke to while working on the thesis expressed a strong interest in having their experiences included in the study (and I had to politely remind them that I am exploring the experience in men exclusively, which occasionally made them take offence as they thought I was downplaying the shape the emotional experience can take in women). This interest (verging on enthusiasm), combined with the notions of restrictive emotionality and the expression of emotion in the two genders, could bring up very interesting results both from a phenomenological and from a discursive perspective: it could reveal characteristics of anger that are shared between men and women while also drawing attention to the differences between them. Besides covering a broader range of human experience, it could also be a methodological shift in IPA, a discipline which does not endorse comparisons between groups. Furthering the role of linguistics in this sphere, the nature and experience of swearing and curse words can also be a fascinating area of research. Why do people swear when there is no obvious practical gain from that? What social and biological processes guide this behaviour? This could even link to medical conditions like coprolalia and the Tourette syndrome to explore how the brain accommodates and employs the swear words.

8.3 Limitations: Now that the study is over, I see that it would benefit from a more defined context. Following the advice of the then-secondary supervisor of the project, I aimed to keep the inclusion criteria as minimal as possible so as to tap into the pan-human experience of the emotion. Looking back at my readings and findings, it is apparent that at the age range of the participants should be controlled more rigorously. I was lucky that all of my participants were between their early-20s and early-40s, but given my research design, if a participant in his 60s appeared, I would have to include him. This would stretch the age range, while also potentially creating the equivalent of outliers in quantitative research: the case that what one

person says have very little in common with what the others say. Limiting participation to a ten-year range (e.g. males between 20 and 30, or 30 and 40 years old) would make sense in two ways: First, from a biological perspective. Anger appears to be inextricably linked with physiological processes so having participants who are closer to one-another in years would add depth to the physiological processes and how they translate to an aspect of the experience of anger. Second, from a socio-historical perspective. The world is rapidly changing and so bringing together participants from the same generation would improve the focus on how they have learnt to attend to, as well as express, emotions and situations.

8.4 Strengths: I believe there are some strong points in the study. First, I myself have a strong interest in anger and therefore I was naturally interested in what the participants had to say. This leads to the second point, that the interview situations proved to be successful in making the participants willing to explore their experiences with me. They managed to relax early in their respective interviews and seemed responsive to my questions and prompts for further exploration. The interview schedule displayed a nice balance between allowing the participants to address whatever issues they considered important and pushing them for further justification of why they consider these aspects important and why they present them in that way. Finally, the way I attended to the participants' exploration of their experiences allowed for the hermeneutic circle to provide vivid results.

8.5 Quality: Yardley (2000) has outlined four key dimensions for demonstrating the quality of qualitative research: sensitivity to context, commitment and rigor, transparency and coherence, impact and importance.

The IPA themes and interpretative repertoires were extracted with close attention to what came before and what came after the quotes I used in the participants' accounts. From this view, the context of the account was treated as one of primary importance. The social context was also given a central role in the analysis, starting with the version of anger presented in Britain from Google, following with the thematic analysis of Anger Management Centres' "expert discourses", and finally by focusing on the way the participants' accounts draw

attention to the ways their social surroundings have shaped their experiences of anger, their expression of anger, and their understanding of these processes.

I strived for a high level of transparency in a number of ways. The procedure of recruiting and interviewing participants is clearly outlined in the study, and they received full information on the study before participating as well as a detailed debrief after their interviews had ended, explaining what would happen to their data. I included verbatim transcriptions of the participants' accounts in the appendix, and each of the quotes is referenced appropriately to the line in the transcript it can be located. Finally, I spelled out my reasons for labelling each theme the way I did and why each quote was included in each theme; and I included sections on researcher-reflexivity as well as notions of that reflexivity in the text.

Different analytic techniques were used in different parts of this study. Each was developed individually according to its respective methodological and theoretical underpinnings. Some compromises had to be made (e.g. using a set of data that did not occur naturally for the DP analysis) in order to promote the feasibility of the project (within the PhD timeframe) but these were kept to a minimum and are addressed in the text. Moreover, the results these different techniques generated were then brought together in the discussion to afford a deeper understanding of the phenomenon (i.e. the experience of anger as it is discussed in the interview setting) and to offer a triangulation: to reflect different aspects of the phenomenon and to inform the researcher "about both the phenomenon under study and the research process" (Frost, 2011:8).

The importance of the study is twofold. On the one hand, it sheds light on the emotional experience of anger – and this is important because it is still an under-explored, stigmatized emotion which nevertheless has very real consequences in people's lives. On the other hand, it works towards formulating a critical way of looking at participants' accounts when discussing such stigmatized states, where they also have to make attempts at self-presentation and disclaim undesirable connotations that the popular view of the emotion and the person experiencing it bring along.

8.6 Applications: The very act of thinking about the times one was angry could be applied to a number of disciplines, including Anger Management, Health Psychology, Social Psychology; and policy-making in education. The benefits of getting one to reflect on that state include (but are not limited to) a way to overcome (or bypass) the notion of 'bottling up' without necessarily expressing emotions that could lead to social awkwardness and/or sanctions. The act of reflecting on the emotion and the self while in that emotional state could bring about an all-encompassing view of the self, with the various sub-selves or different ways of being and seeing while under different conditions. This, by extension, could lead to lower levels of internal frustration when faced with the question of "Why did I act or feel this way?" and the attempt to reconcile the different aspects of the self. Applying this to Anger Management, it could lead to a more multi-dimensional image of the self, not simply as a victim of anger but also as someone who is right to be angry – and therefore lead to a cleaner expression of that anger with better practical results when it comes to inter-personal relationships. Also, including the notion of anger more elaborately in education might prevent pupils (and therefore people) from falling blindly into frustration when the emotion is brought about; it might lead to a more composed way of thinking about the situation, its origins, and its potential solutions. A hopeful thinking might even extend this to result in less violence in society, since people will not be expressing their frustrations to other people through anger.

8.7 A note on reflexivity: Given my passion for the exploration of, and multi-angular interest in anger, I think my approach influenced the process of this study's unfolding. From the conception of the topic, to the interview questions (and prompts especially, which were purposefully designed to challenge the versions of anger found in anger management centres and in its popular perceptions in the Western world), to the way themes made sense to me, to the way I wrote about and explained the themes.

My sincere interest in the emotional state itself probably shone through during the interviews. I assume this made the participants feel more comfortable talking to me about their experiences because, I presume, they felt (or sensed) the non-judgmental stance I was taking. My desire to actually find more about the state and go deep into the experience was also probably evident (as I wasn't going through questions one-by-one but rather dwelled on what the participants had to say) and

that probably helped them open up even more. The fact that I am male also probably helped, since they could be more direct in their answers, assuming a common ground of experience and understanding of the self in the social setting.

At the same time, I was influenced by the study too, in two main ways. First, the literature review helped me frame my interest in more solid theoretical and historical grounds. I started thinking about anger and emotions in general in ways that I had not envisioned earlier. Second, my pursue of the topic was partly inspired by my desire to find out more about my own anger. The literature review helped me add depth and meaning to emotions and how they intertwine with other aspects of life; whereas my participants' answers often strongly resonated with me, even to the point of giving me words to explore my own experiences (as was made evident in my personal psychoanalysis sessions).

8.8 Last Words: Anger has been with the human race as a result of evolution but is not yet harmoniously incorporated into our lives. Given its disruptive nature and the human ability for –and social expectations of- accountability, there is a chance it never will. This should not stop us from reflecting on it, trying to bring it under control and thus reap the benefits it can give.

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