Chapter 2
A Brief History of Anger

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Abstract Stories, myths, and religious beliefs reveal the powerful role that anger has played in human affairs since the beginning of recorded history. The projections of anger into the supernatural by ancient and pre-literate societies trying to account for the terrifying vagaries of nature testify to their experience with, and appreciation of, the baleful influence of anger in the human sphere. It has served as an instrument of the moral order, as cast in religious narratives and works of art, literature, and drama, and as legitimized in social rules. Various philosophies of human nature, moral conduct, and the search for perfection in human behavior have struggled to determine the essentials of anger. It is fundamentally linked to our representations of personal and societal order and disorder.

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2.1 Anger: Supernatural and Superhuman

One indicator of the recurrent concern with anger is its projection onto animistic ghosts, spirits, and demons; the gods of the polytheistic pantheons; and the divinities of the modern monotheisms. The specific attributes of these projections served to illuminate anger's effects on social organization and life. Other indicators include extensive lexicons for anger as well as cultural interdictions against it.

The gods must be angry. In many preliterate, animist cultures, angry, malevolent spirits were (and are) believed to cause misfortune. Some were modeled on dangerous wildlife. In the pre-Hispanic

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American Southwest, where water was rare and precious, Pueblo Indians believed that intrusion into springs inhabited by horned serpent spirits would provoke these irascible entities into retaliation by drought or flood (Phillips, VanPool, & VanPool, 2006). Other spirits are more anthropomorphic. As one of the innumerable examples, among the Celts, sudden shooting pains localized to a particular area of the body with no visible cause were "*elfshot,*" the pain of a magical arrow shot by angry elves (Froud & Lee, 1978). In Korea, ghosts are not entitled to *chesa* (feast food), whether they are ancestors who haunt their own households or wandering strangers. Always hungry and full of *han* (resentment and sorrow at having died unsatisfied), they are held responsible for sickness and injury suffered by individuals and households (Kendall, 1985).

The anger of the gods is more dangerous that the anger of the spirits. Anthropomorphically jealous or vengeful gods are found in a number of elaborated mythologies. Was it that early people could only conceive of gods with human characteristics? Alternatively or additionally, the projection of human emotions into supernatural beings served as explanation for frightening, uncontrollable, and otherwise inexplicable, social and natural disasters, especially in cultures where both fortune and misfortune imply agency. In Assyrian cuneiform accounts (circa 1200 BCE), their conquest of Babylonian cities meant that those cities had been abandoned by their guardian deities; the messengers of the departing gods were demons who brought wind, plague, and other calamities (Buchan, 1980). When the east coast of Sri Lanka becomes excessively hot, bringing drought and disease, the goddess Pattini must be angry (Leslie, 1998). Floods of China's Yellow River were attributed to the anger of the river god, Ho Po (Lai, 1990). Aegir, the Norse ocean god, caused storms with his anger. Thunder and lightening were attributed to the anger of the original Zeus of Greece, Thor in the Norse pantheon, and the Mayan Chac. Shango, the Nigerian Yoruba god of thunder and war, carries a lightning spear. He is still worshipped in the African-derived cults of Central America and Brazil and in the Santeria religion of Cuba (Wescott & Morton-Williams, 1962).

Specific words in ancient Hebrew (*'anaph*) and Greek (*Mēnis*) distinguished the power of divine anger, "dreadful, often fatal . . . to be feared and avoided" (Considine, 1986), from merely human irk. In certain versions or stages of the elaborated polytheistic mythologies, anger itself becomes personified as a deity. In Zoroastrianism, a religion dating at least to ninth/tenth century BCE, Aeshma (*Aēšma,* he of the bloody mace) is the demon of wrath. In Hindu mythology, Manyu is one of the 12 aspects of Siva who was himself born of the anger of Brahma. In the Greek parsing of the varieties of anger, Nemesis was the goddess of righteous anger and divine retribution against those guilty of hubris, i.e., the fault of assuming god-like characteristics. The three female Erinyes, supernatural personifications of the vengeful anger of the dead, become the Roman Furies. Lyssa was the goddess of insane rage in the Greek pantheon; Ira is her Roman equivalent. Rabies derives from the Latin *rabere* (madness), the virus that makes dogs *rabid* was designated a genus of Lyssavirus.

What the gods were angry about. The polytheistic deities had recognizable human motivations. Poseidon felt himself the equal of Zeus and was angered by his brother's power over the Olympians. However, what wrathful gods were most often wrathful about was disloyalty (worship of other gods) and disobedience (failure to observe rituals and prohibitions). Some insight into the nature of that projection is that anger about disloyalty/disobedience is especially characteristic of parents and chiefs. While community members may *experience* anger at the social deviance of others, *expressing* that anger is the particular province of dominant individuals and leaders who are deemed to be justified in doing so. Consider, for example, the role of chiefs' *song* (justified anger) as moral guidance for Ifaluk islanders (Lutz, 1988) or the routine early morning moral instruction of younger band members by a Yanomami *pata* (leader/elder) whose angry shouts about their antisocial behaviors oblige them to placate him (Alés, 2000). Similarly, military training drill instructors are notorious for their (orchestrated) angry bark at the performance imperfections of recruits under their command.

The fearsomely angry personage featured in Greek and Roman stories is most often a monarch. The Roman emperor Caligula, infamous for his anger and insane murderousness, blended myth and terrifying reality when he declared himself a god (cf. Seneca, 44/1817).

Do people really believe in angry gods? The Airo-Pai, another Amazonian group, quiet their angry children by telling them that their shouts will attract *huati*, spirit monsters who feed on human souls (Belaunde, 2000). Where and when in history the anger of the gods was interpreted literally, metaphorically, or was used to frighten the children is unknown. Evidence for a literal interpretation comes from hundreds of sixth century and later Greco-Roman "curse tablets" in which people invoked various gods to wreak vengeance upon specific individuals for specific offenses (Harris, 2001). Stronger evidence is the widespread occurrence of appeasement rituals and ceremonies to abate supernatural anger ranging from the fourteenth century BCE Hittite appeasement prayers (Singer, 2002) to the still current offering of "cooling" rituals and foods to Sri Lanka's Pattini. The hungry, angry ghosts of Korea are placated with occasional bits of food, and, when they become really noisome, by the raucous, female-dominated ritual of *kut.* Horses were sacrificed to Ho Po as late as the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE, Lai, 1990). At least a fraction of the human sacrifices that were once prevalent in the Old World, infamously numerous in the New (Davies, 1981) and said to persist in isolated places today (Tierney, 1989), were meant to prevent or reverse natural disasters and appease the anger of the gods. The Aztecs, for example, sacrificed children to the rain god, Tlaloc – the children's tears were thought to be a good omen (Duverger, 1983). For the affront of worshiping Baal, God says to Moses "Take all the chiefs of the people and impale them in the sun before the Lord, in order that the fierce anger of the Lord may turn away from Israel" (Numbers 25:4, New Revised Standard Version). If people did not fully believe in divine anger, they were concerned enough to hedge their bets. And, by implication, the gods not only become angry like humans, but they can be appeased like us, too.

Divine anger, one at a time. As the multiplicity of gods were banished from the Mid-East and Europe by the major monotheistic religions, deity gradually became less anthropomorphic, less sexualized, and more detached from the local landscape, distant, and abstract. Interestingly, however, Yahweh (later God) retained great capacity for anger. In the Older Testament (Hebrew Bible), Yahweh spent a lot of time being mad at people, individually and collectively. He banished Adam and Eve from the garden for disobedience and must have been really angry because he sentenced Adam and all his descendents to life at hard labor with no chance of parole. In anger, Yahweh unleashed the flood upon the world, destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, visited plagues upon the Egyptians for not freeing the Israelites, then punished the Israelites for making the golden calf (Deut. 9:8,19,22) and on and on. In the Requiem mass (the Latin Mass of the Dead or Missa de Profundis), God's anger is represented in the Dies Ire (Days of Rage) segment of the liturgy. So familiar is God's anger that it is referred to as "the wrath" without further attribution.

In context and form, Yahweh's anger is as it was for earlier gods. The sin of verbally disrespecting him has its own name, "blasphemy." He punishes the Israelites as a father would punish errant family members; the avatars of his anger include wild beasts, famine, pestilence, and war. In a more nuanced interpretation of scripture, the destruction of the temple, devastating to the writers of the Bible because of its centrality to Jewish spiritual life, could not possibly be because the Babylonian gods were stronger than almighty Yahweh, but must be because he allowed it. Therefore, he must have been angry at the Jews for their disloyal and disobedient breaking of the covenant (worship me and you will have land and children). In the New Testament, God's less frequent but still considerable anger is focused on disloyal non-believers (e.g., Rom. 10:14,17). Such beliefs persist, as indicated by the claims of a few Christian clergy that, e.g., the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 or the flooding and deaths in New Orleans and other Gulf Coast cities following Hurricane Katrina in 2005 indicated God's anger at American sins. The biblical future is as fraught as its past: On Judgment Day, 7 vials

of God's wrath (plagues) will be poured upon the antichrist, the wicked shall be resurrected in order to be burned in anger along with the earth, and so forth (Rev 16: 15–16).

The Bible is full of God's wrath, yet the disturbed and impulsive anger of everyday human experience is inconsistent with divine perfection. Some clerics argued that his anger did not involve revenge and that he was in control of his mind and emotions. Justification of God's anger as the divine version of "righteous" anger, discussed below, appears in various books of the Bible, such as Psalms, Zephaniah, and Ezekiel. Faced with this knotty theological problem, some Stoic philosophers and Christian ecclesiasts (e.g., Augustine) simply denied that God could be angry.

The Qur'an is replete with talk of rejection, slander, ridicule, curses, threats, punishment, torment, fighting, killing, and the burning of unbelievers in hellfire, at least in English translation. Anger itself is remarkably rare. The Al-Fatiha Surah (opening chapter) is recited five times a day by devout Muslims who ask to be shown the "... straight path, not the path of those who have earned Allah's anger" (Qur'an 1:1[1]). His "Wrath upon Wrath" at unbelievers appears in Surah 2:89–91. The wrath of the unbelievers themselves is noted a few times [in Surah 3:119 they bite (off) their fingertips in rage], as is Moses' anger at the Hebrew's worship of the golden calf. The notable paucity of anger in the Qur'an, in contrast to its abundance in the Judeo-Christian Bible, may reflect its common denial in Arab cultures (e.g., Somer & Saadon, 2000). However, in ninth century *hadith* literature, the Prophet's anger was key in acceptance into, or rejection from, the *umma* (community of believers, Ghazzal, 1998). After the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan killed more than 90,000 people, the mass media there promulgated the belief that the quake was Allah's punishment for sinful behavior. The mullahs incited followers to smash television sets, which had provoked Allah's anger and hence the earthquake.

When gods may be angry, but people may not. In some belief systems, anger may be a supernatural prerogative, to be expected of ghosts or gods but unacceptable for mortals. Cultural restrictions on expressing, or sometimes even experiencing, anger exist in many cultures around the world. These prohibitions generally emerge from three interrelated beliefs: (1) fear of social and/or physical reprisal and, especially in cultures where all harm is thought to result from the malicious action of others, or retaliation by witchcraft; (2) harboring anger invites ill-health and misfortune; and (3) expressing anger is inappropriate for adults; it is irrational, amoral, bestial and/or childish, and very shameful.

Despite the tensions, animosities, and suspicions of malevolent intent that are commonplace in band and village life, people in these groups are careful to maintain cordial social relations. Multiple anthropological accounts attest to these beliefs in Tahiti where they are a part of general pattern of harm avoidance (e.g., Levy, 1973). Variants are found throughout Indonesia and Malaysia, e.g., Java and Bali (Hollan, 1988). Among the Kenyan Taita, unwitting but dangerous "anger in the heart," engendered by violations of a person's jural or kinship rights and revealed by divination, was expelled in the *Kutasa* ritual by drinking and then spitting out beer (for men) or cane juice (for women); consuming the animal sacrifice that followed restored peace and harmony and brought the blessings of children and well-being (Harris, 1978). Notable examples also occur among indigenous people of the New World. The small number of Inuit in the Utku band belies their renown as exemplars of people who do not show anger even in situations that would outrage others; they describe the angry behavior of foreigners as "childish" (Briggs, 1970). Their ultimate sanction of ostracism is potentially fatal in a group whose members must cooperate for survival in an extremely hostile environment. The highland Maya of Mexico similarly maintain an ideal of cool individual non-reactivity and non-confrontational interpersonal relations based on the threat of "buried" anger of the "fevered heart" (Groark, 2008). For the Airo-Pai, as for other groups living along the Amazon, anger is taken as a sign of aggression, and its display is deemed a most significant offense against the community (Overing & Passes, 2000). The Airo-Pai believe that the angry individual loses all moral sense, treats

kinfolk as prey or enemy, and is no longer in a human state. Anger leads to sorcery; e.g., it invites the *huati* to mislead the individual into hunting other people like they were forest game. The Airo-Pai remind themselves aloud that anger against kinfolk is vain and purposeless and that one ought not be angry. Conversely, mastery of anger represents a successful transformation of inimical spirits (Belaunde, 2000). Historically, each time the Delaware Indians were displaced westward by white settlers, they became concerned about *kwulakan*, a taboo against anger instituted to prevent divine retribution (Miller, 1975). In the American Southwest, during the year-long preparation for the winter solstice festival, *Shalako*, the members of the Zuni priesthood of "sacred clown" impersonators must refrain from all negative emotions, including anger, lest it disturb these most dangerous of deities (Tedlock, 1983).

From whence comes the belief that anger may be expected of gods, but is unacceptable for people? The Airo-Pai fear the anger of infants whose cries may enrage their parents to the point of infanticide; their creation myths contain just such an event (Belaunde, 2000). What the Yanomami *patas* harangue about are antisocial behaviors, such as theft from gardens and propositioning married women, which can engender anger, group fissioning, and/or homicide (Alés, 2000). Perhaps, even before the rise of the state and organized religion, repeated experience in family groups and tribal life over the millennia generated a deep understanding that the divisive and disruptive effects of anger lead to social disorganization and intragroup aggression. This understanding is expressed in early taboos against anger. This may be especially true for collectivist cultures as opposed to individualist/egalitarian cultures. In any event, such prohibitions have subsequently been imposed from above by religious and other governing hierarchies with vested interests in stability and social control (a group's healthy fear of divine anger tends to keep their priesthood in business).

The Greeks had many words for it. National (cultural) epics, based on oral traditions predating written history, provide the oldest depictions of human behavior extant. Albeit stylized by narrative conventions, they are rife with references to anger and its expression. In the oldest epic extant (circa 2700 BCE), when Gilgamesh, god-king of Sumer, rejects the advances of treacherous Ishtar, she angrily calls upon her father, the god Anu, to release the Bull of Heaven to destroy him. Rejection and insult trigger anger, which motivates indirect aggression. How modern!

The Illiad of Homer (circa eighth to seventh century BCE, trans 2004) begins with the phrase "Wrath (*Mēnis*) of Achilles." Thus, the first word in the Western canon is anger! The use of "*Mēnis*" recognizes Achilles' semi-divine parentage and the intensity of his anger. Anger in the Illiad is described in full-blown complexity; it arises from various social causes (e.g., insults to honor, killing of a friend), and its many manifestations include facial expressions ("blazing eyes," frowns, tearing of hair, and so forth) and a panoply of verbal (complaints, insults, threats) and physical acts (aggression and homicide). Literary critics have regarded the Illiad as an extended meditation on anger. Most (2003, p. 54) notes "Agamemnon's haughtily self-righteous fury, Achilles' astonished indignation, sullen resentment, uncontrollable rage and glacial wrath . . . Theristes' obstreperous defiance . . . Odysseus' irate disdain . . . Helen's partly relieved contempt . . . Apollo's bland vengefulness . . . Aphrodite's admonitory scorn . . . Ares' insane ferocity . . ." All of these are perfectly recognizable to modern audiences. In contrast to later works of antiquity, characters in the Illiad moderate or master anger relatively rarely. Indeed, characters are criticized for showing anger insufficient to the provocation (Cairns, 2003). This is notably different from the millennium older epic whose central theme is the close bond of friendship that arises between Gilgamesh and the wild man Enkidu when he masters his own anger and declares his respect for the god-king.

The ancient Greek texts pose a challenge for the appropriate translation of many words connoting variations in the intensity, context, and meaning of anger; such multiplicity has been taken as one indicator of their pre-occupation with this emotion. Besides *Mēnis* and *Nemesis*, there is *chalepaino*

(annoyance), *kotos* (resentment), *cholos* (bitterness, literally "bile"), *thumos* (in the more general context of zeal or energy), *orgē* for intense anger, sometimes bordering on madness, and others. These words were at least partially overlapping in meaning, sometimes used interchangeably, and changed over time (cf., Harris, 2001). Note that even preliterate cultures have assortments of words for variations in anger (e.g., Briggs, 1970; Lutz, 1988). In comparing 47 non Indo-European languages that differed in the number of emotion categories that were labeled, Hupka, Lenton, and Hutchison (1999) found that anger, along with guilt, were the first categories of emotion to be labeled. However, different languages and cultures may have no exact equivalents of English emotion words, including "anger." Among the Philippine Ilongot, *liget* indicates both anger and grief and is seen as providing the energy needed for, e.g., a retaliatory headhunting raid (note the similarity in connotation to the Greek *thumos*). Words in other cultures/languages may also be conditioned by the triggers for and motivation of the anger, social roles, and context (e.g., directed against kin or non-kin), classification as justified or unjustified, and so forth (e.g., Harkins & Wierzbicka, 2001; Myers, 1988).

Anger and manhood in other warrior cultures. In stark contrast to cultures that reject anger and aggression, in principle or in practice, are warrior cultures in which anger was cultivated as a special trance-like state that produced indifference to wounds and fearlessness in battle. The best known examples are the Norse or Viking "berserkers," the armor-scorning fighters of myth and history whose rabid fury was described in Hall's (1899) classic treatise on anger. The beserkers' periodic insanity was perhaps enhanced or engendered by ingesting mushrooms, which would account for the psychotic features of their rages (including visual hallucinations, Fabing, 1956). Whatever the cause, the dangerousness of these fighters would dissuade kinsmen of individuals killed by a beserker from their culturally mandated revenge (Dunbar, Clark, & Hurst, 1995). Speidel's (2002) extensive historical analysis traces mad, recklessly fighting, shape-shifting "true berserkers" from the second millennium BC, including Assyrians, Hittites, Thracians, Celts, tribes of Italic, Germanic, and Anglo people, and Aztecs. Various berserker groups fanned their fury with dances, a possible remnant of which is the Maori *haka* with its facial contortions, eye-bulging, tongue gyrations, body slapping, and grunts, all of which convey a wild and fearless, if stylized, ferocity.

"Wild man" and "amok" are related syndromes of highly systematized, eruptive, and frenzied violence in Micronesia and other Pacific Island societies. *Amok* in southeast Asia derives from a Malay word for a murderous frenzy with intense rage. Kon (1994) traced its origins on the Malay Archipelago in the mid-sixteenth century and its subsequent appearance in other societies, including a seventeenth century warrior class in southern India (cf. Spores, 1988). It is almost exclusively a male syndrome, suggesting that it may be a cultural exaggeration of the "male flash of anger" whose adaptive value Fessler discusses in this book. However, amok and allied phenomena are viewed as temporary insanity, even in these cultures (e.g., Carr & Tan, 1976; Gaw & Bernstein, 1992); as described in Novaco's chapter, they can involve deep psychopathology and persisting psychosis.

2.2 The Philosophy and Psychology of Anger

As anger came under rational scrutiny, and was detached from the supernatural, competing interpretations emerged. Anger as a bestial passion rooted in biology can be contrasted with anger as integral to manhood and with anger as a motivator of just action. The metaphor of bestial passion has not been abandoned, but has been transformed into more modern views of anger in the context of development and gender, as well as in insanity, sin, or demonic possession. The view of anger as

integral to manhood and as in support of moral order also continues, as still seen in its role in the maintenance of social hierarchy.

The earliest literature. The Illiad's concerns with anger continued through the philosophies of classical Greek antiquity (fifth to fourth century BCE) and subsequent Greco-Roman commentary, drama, and oration. Why? Although fourth century Athens was famously rough and competitive, anger may have been no more rampant there than in, say, contemporary Washington, DC. Noting no evidence that Athenians went armed to the marketplace, Harris (2001) conjectures that this Greek preoccupation might have been due to the baleful effects of the anger of tyrants, as well as the disruptive consequences of anger on stability within, and competition among, their newly formed and relatively fragile city states. (For an empirically based view of the effects of anger in political context, see Chapter 32 by Petersen & Zukerman, this book.) In any event, the ideas introduced during that period continue to inform contemporary thinking and research. For example, Allen (2003, p. 79) translates Aristotle's definition of anger (*orgē*) as "...a desire, commingled with pain, to see someone punished, and which is provoked by an apparent slight to the angered person, or to something or someone that belongs to him, when that slight is not justified..." This definition includes injustice as a crucial trigger (e.g., Chapter 19 by Schieman and Chapter 24 by Tripp & Bies, this book), requires an appraisal of the situation (e.g., Chapter 17 by Litvak et al. and Chapter 15 by Wranik & Scherer, this book), and stipulates a response tendency of aggression (e.g., Chapter 16 by Berkowitz, Chapter 21 by Fessler, and Chapter 14 by Hubbard et al., this book).

Anger as bestial passion (and what to do about it). Anger is the prototype for the classical view of emotions as "passions" that seize the personality, disturb judgment, alter bodily conditions, and imperil social interaction. The "consensus theory," which developed in the centuries following the Roman era and held sway into medieval times, was that anger is the strongest of the "spirited" or "irascible" emotions whose function it is to obtain pleasure and avoid pain under conditions of difficulty (Kemp & Strongman, 1995). The theme of anger as a bestial passion or irascible emotion is followed logically by the theme that anger must be mastered by reason, will, and self-control. Lucius Seneca (44/1817), arguably the first scholar of anger, sought its eradication in the quest for tranquility of mind. So did the Roman Cicero before him and the Greek Plutarch after him. Earlier Greeks, such as Pythagoras, had taught that consciously restraining one's anger (refraining from speaking or acting when angry) would encourage temperance and self-control; this ancient prescription for anger management remains an element in current approaches (see Chapter 28 by Fernandez, this book). Pythagoras recommended music therapy, countering rage with melody. In Plato's Phaedrus, the charioteer of reason must master the wanton black horse of passion (trans. 1975); the verses of the Dhammapada, claimed to have been spoken by Buddha himself, contain a very similar metaphor (circa 500–400 BCE, Vernezze, 2008). In Freud's (1933) version, the rider is the ego who must control the horse, the id. The metaphor of "rider" above mastering "horse" below re-emerges, albeit fortuitously, in the contemporary neuroanatomical evidence for a balance of functional control, which varies reciprocally between the dorsal areas of lateral and medial frontal cortex that mediate cognition and executive control and the more ventral limbic structures that mediate emotion (e.g., Dolcos & McCarthy, 2006.)

The idea that anger is an irrational, even bestial, passion has a number of implications:

Anger as irrational/maladaptive. Although conflict and combat are fraught with provocations to anger that can motivate vigorous (or desperate) action, historical commentators have cautioned that anger is to be avoided because of its concomitant impairments in judgment. Seneca and others expressed the view that both in sport and in war, the disciplined combatants defeat the angry ones. The military strategy writings attributed to Sun Tzu (fourth century BC) depicted anger as a

fault upon which military commanders could capitalize. In his *Meditations*, Marcus Aurelius, second century Roman Emperor and a Stoic philosopher himself, wrote that yielding to anger was a sign of weakness. Likewise, postponing vengeance until one is calm is a frequently recurring admonition.

Development and gender. Although overt expression of anger is more typically associated with men, children and women were thought by some classical and medieval writers to be prone to excessive anger due to their lack of moral instruction, cognitive immaturity, or poorly developed rational faculties (Kemp & Strongman, 1995). The ancient Greeks believed that babies experienced anger from their first days (Hanson, 2003; see Chapter 11 by Lewis, this book for more modern views); Galen warned that anger was a precursor of severe disease in infants. As chronicled by Stearns & Stearns (1986), the first written use of "tantrums" is in British plays some years after 1748 where the term was used to belittle adult bouts of anger. As used by followers of Darwin through the 1860s, "tantrums" came to refer to children's anger. In the West, such tantrums and other misbehaviors were commonly met with harsh and angry punishment, disciplinary tactics meant to "break the child's will"; if he became enraged, he was punished further. Of course, such discipline taught children not to express anger to parents, but that anger and physical punishment were suitable responses to subordinates (such shaping of behavior is analyzed in detail by Snyder et al., this book (Chapter 29)).

In Classical Greek thought, men's *orgē* was forthright, hot-blooded, and immediate while women's *cholos* was weak, cold, and delayed (i.e., women schemed and were vengeful, Allen, 2003). Although some debate about the existence and nature of sex differences in anger remains, recent research generally indicates that women experience anger at least as intensely as men, and express it as least as often, but differ somewhat in the triggers and modes of expression (Chapter 20 by Fischer & Evers, Chapter 21 by Fessler, this book). Women are less likely to become physically aggressive, but more likely to cry and to express anger indirectly (through "relational" aggression). The Greek version of sex differences may have correctly identified these response elements, although their interpretation of these (and most other) social phenomena was relentlessly misogynistic. Whatever else it might be, women's anger was always unacceptable. This tradition remains widespread. *Ngon* [speech] is the third of four culturally prescribed virtues for Vietnamese women, e.g., it means to speak softly and never raise the voice – particularly in front of the husband or his relatives (Rydstrom, 2003).

Insanity, sin, or demonic possession? In the Illiad, when Achilles learns of the death in battle of his close friend Patrocles, he is engulfed in a "black stormcloud of pain . . . (he) tore his hair with both hands" (p. 430), and he becomes "mad with rage" (Homer, 2004, p. 468). He viciously kills a prince of Troy, Hector, and defiles his body, unflinchingly dismissing Hector's admonition that such defilement will anger the gods.

Orgē was regarded as a form of irrationality, illness, or insanity most notably by Herodotus, later by Galen, and by Seneca who endorsed the view of anger as a "short madness" (p. 222). Galen's (1963) treatise on "passions and errors of the soul" frequently construes anger episodes as marked by madness, including the behavior of his personal friends, his mother, and the Roman Emperor Hadrian – "rage is a madness" (p. 42). As argued by Novaco (Chapter 27, this book), recent offshoots of this line of thought include (1) Fava's (1998) "anger attacks," which connote being seized by a pathological/disease entity that "explains" aggressive behavior and is then suitably "treated" by medication, (2) the general issue of the role of anger in psychopathology, and (3) the proposal that there should be specific diagnostic categories of anger (e.g., Kassinove et al., 1995).

In another recent incarnation of anger as irrationality, it, like other "visceral factors" (Lowenstein, 2000), is seen to impair rational economic reckoning, in part by disrupting normal time discounting of reward value. A neuroanatomical basis for this psychological phenomenon is suggested by Potegal

& Stemmler (this book). In any case, the result is behavior that may appear, and be experienced as, out of the individual's control or, conversely, as anger that has seized control of the individual (anger as a "daimonic," Diamond, 1996). The legal interpretations and implications of anger as form of mental defect are noted by Wranik & Scherer (Chapter 15), by Novaco (Chapter 27), and by Potegal (Chaper 22), this book.

A main line of Buddhist thought is that anger is a moral "blemish" that must be eschewed at all times to attain the tranquility of enlightenment. Anger is also seen as a form of suffering that arises from appraisals that one has been insulted, hurt, defeated, or robbed by another. It can be remedied by "binding the mind' to dismiss these thoughts. Among the reasons for doing so are that we have doubtless offended against others in our past lives, and being offended by others in this life is no more than just desserts (Vernezze, 2008).

Anger as a mortal sin was introduced to Christianity in Paul's letter to the Galicians (circa 50 CE) naming anger as the fourth of the seven deadly sins (*Galicians 5:19–21 NRSV*). The precepts in this letter, which were later to have such a large impact on Catholic belief and practice, had deep historical roots, e.g., in ideas found in Proverbs (6:16–19), some of which can be traced, in turn, to Egyptian writings as early as the second millennium BCE. In Dante's Inferno (1308 CE), the wrathful damned claw each other through eternity in the fifth circle of hell, a burning Stygian marsh (the sullenly angry wind up buried in the marsh). But anger was never the most important of sins [Paul does allow Christians to be briefly angry, but warns them "to not let the sun set upon their anger" (Eph. 4:26.)] After the twelfth century, however, humility and its concomitant of anger control were no longer required of Catholic saints (Stearns & Stearns, 1986). One could be both angry and holy. Since the eighteenth century (e.g., Bellers, 1702), some Protestant denominations have re-focused attention on the evils of anger.

Anger as part of demonic possession, as opposed to mental illness, appears in ancient Egyptian and Hebrew sources (Isaacs, 1987). In the European "Age of the Demonic" (1550–1650 ACE), possession became more prominent in Jewish as well as Christian communities; "diabolic distemper" (excessive anger) was one sign of being a witch. During the Salem, Massachusetts witchcraft episode in the late seventeenth century, Pastor Samuel Parrish wrote in his church book that "The Devil has been raised among us, and his Rage is vehement and terrible . . ." (Trask, 1975). Remarkably, reports of demonic possession continue to the present. In 24 observed or recalled exorcisms by clerics in Rome, Italy, and Berkeley, California, all "possessed" individuals showed facial expressions described as angry, hate-filled, or "distorted" and had furious outbursts in which they might attack religious objects (they also exhibited other, more dramatic, and bizarre behaviors, Isaacs, 1987; Ferracuti, Sacco, & Lazzari, 1996). Clearly, the "script" for being possessed involves displays of anger.

The endpoint of this line of reasoning remains the vexing issue of anger control, which has been addressed in disparate ways by Stoic philosophers, Psalmists, Scholastics, Mayans, philosophers of the Enlightenment, American colonists, Victorians, Existentialists, early North American psychology, Dr. Spock, and by psychodynamic and cognitive-behavioral therapists, to name a few. Interventions for problematic anger have progressed substantially from common language prescriptions throughout the ages and across cultures. As Fernandez (Chapter 28, this book) describes, contemporary therapeutic intervention is theoretically anchored, assessment driven, and evidence based. Meta-analyses of anger treatment have found medium to strong effect sizes (e.g., Beck & Fernandez, 1998; Del Vecchio & O'Leary, 2004; DiGuiseppe & Tafrate, 2003; Sukhodolsky, Kassinove, & Gorman, 2004), indicating that approximately 75% of those receiving anger treatment improve, compared to controls. There is certainly a cause for optimism.

Personality and biology. The observation that some individuals are consistently anger-prone invites explanations in terms of personality. The oldest parsing of anger characteristics that we have

come across is a distinction, written in Egyptian hieroglyphics, between. . . "angry (like a) monkey" and "angry (like a) bull": The angry monkey is loud and showy, but not dangerous; the angry bull is not as flamboyant, but is threatening and very dangerous (Goldwasser, 2005). In contemporary Arab Tunisia, one must beware the angry camel (Maleej, 2004). In the Aristotelian view, personality is shaped by environment and experience, as ironically illustrated by Achilles' anger at the jibe that his chronic *cholos* was a result of having been "nursed on bile" (Hanson, 2003). The contrasting Platonic view of character as predetermined is a precursor to rooting trait anger in biology. This view is strengthened by the reification of anger in acute physiology. Thus, for example, biblical Hebrew terms for anger that refer to the nostril ('ap) or involve hard breathing ('anaph) capture this particular physiological aspect of anger (Harrison, 1979). Green et al. (Chapter 9, this book) present this view in modern dress as the idea of embodiment.

Hippocrates' concept of four humors as the basis of physiology and medicine, later popularized by Galen as integrated patterns of physiology and physiognomy, dominated Western thought until the mid-nineteenth century. In humoral theory, the sharp-featured, anger-prone, "choleric" (from *cholos*) person is ambitious, energetic, and dominant in social exchange. The choleric pattern results from an excess of yellow bile, which also corresponds to fire (more exactly, excess heat, cf. Irwin, 1947) in the four element theory of matter. A similar personality profile in India's Ayurvedic system results from an excess of *Pitta*, the fire-related one of the three "*Doshas*" or elemental forces. Mythophysiology aside, the choleric combination of psychological features presages the empirical identification of Type A personality (Chapter 25 by Williams, this book).

Aristotle's association of anger with heating of the blood around the heart (Kemp & Stongman, 1995) was a little closer to a telltale organ system (cf., Chapter 7 by Stemmler and Chapter 10 by Kövecses, this book). The recent discoveries associating anger and Type A personality with cardiovascular disease (Chapter 25 by Williams, this book) is one of the few current ideas with little historical precedent. As illustrated in chapters by Potegal and Stemmler, and by Harmon-Jones et al., and Stemmler, modern methodology has increased the focus on the neural bases of anger and clarified its peripheral physiological signs.

Anger in support of moral order: Aristotle and afterward. As Plato is a main source for the view of anger as bestial passion, Aristotle is cited for the alternative, conditional view that " . . .anger at the right person, on the right occasion, in the right manner. . ." can be appropriate, virtuous and ethically justified (*Nicomachean Ethics,* Book 4, Chapter 5, 1126b5–10). The admonition, noted above, to postpone revenge until one is calm, has not been universally accepted. In classical Athens, where reputations were always at stake and insults had to be met forthrightly, orators routinely argued that justice should be meted out quickly, "in hot blood," after the crime. A favorite trope was that the law itself was angry at the accused, and you, the spectator, should be angry at him as well (Allen, 2003). In this rhetorical flourish, the idea of justified anger becomes commingled with, if not equivalent to, justice itself.

Experimental demonstrations that anger increases optimism and risk taking that can, in turn, prompt corrective action are relatively recent (Chapter 15 by Wranik & Scherer and Chapter 17 by Litvak et al., this book). However, the idea that anger triggered by injustice to the self or others generates the zeal and discipline for constructive action (Kemp & Strongman, 1995) has historical roots that are wide and deep. The Ifaluk word *song* means anger that is justified by threats to moral order; it is the only socially acceptable form of anger in that culture (Lutz, 1988). The Exnet of Paraguay, who abjure anger and rarely express it against community members, find it acceptable for shamans to direct their anger against malevolent witches and evil spirits (Kidd, 2000). Anger is also acceptable in confronting missionaries and government officials for the common good. In Greece, historically, *nemesis* came to suggest the resentment associated with injustice, which could not be allowed to go unpunished. More recent examples of good works motivated by righteous anger

are numerous. At least according to American presidential folklore, Abraham Lincoln's hatred of slavery and anger at slave owners was part of his motivation for the American Civil War and for his emancipation of the slaves (Paludan, 2006). The role of anger in motivating collective action in, e.g., the feminist movement, has also been described (Hercus, 1999). An extreme form of this idea is that anger, and even rage, is a "daimonic" of pure and beneficial creative energy which will engender psychological and social disorder if chronically suppressed (Diamond, 1996).

However, "righteous anger" is not necessarily constructive and prosocial, but depends on who is getting angry, what they do about it, and who is telling the story. While some of the ancients held that anger facilitated courage, others held that it facilitated a pseudo-courage fit only for barbarians. When peasants revolted in the late middle ages, their anger was not seen as noble or justified, but likened to the rage of beasts (Freedman, 1998). Lincoln's anger was constructive, but that of more recent American presidents has not been (Baker, 2000). In Tsytsarev and Grodnitzky's (1995) instructive account, organized crime hitmen reportedly work themselves into righteous anger by fabricating imaginary injustices perpetrated by an intended victim. The notion that righteous anger deserves special status recurs in the frequent re-invention of two types of anger, e.g., the Epicurean view of appropriate "natural" anger vs. immoderate "empty" anger (Harris, 2001), St. Thomas Aquinas' distinction between righteous anger in response to evil vs. sinful rage (Reid, 2006), and Ellis and Dryden's (1987) "appropriate" anger which motivates rational problem solving vs. "inappropriate" anger which engenders irrational thinking. In this book, Lewis distinguishes between anger, which is appropriately focused on removing a frustrating goal blockage, and rage, which is driven by shame and has no specific goal. Wranik and Scherer contrast "constructive" anger to "malevolent" and "fractious" (venting) anger expression and Fessler proposes a specific, evolutionarily based moral outrage as a reaction to, and corrective of, social norm violations. However, the idea that righteous anger is a specific kind of emotion may confound anger per se with its trigger ("rational" anger may be most frequently about perceived injustice to others), intensity ("rational" anger may be milder), temperament (well-adjusted individuals may be better able to channel their anger into constructive, pro-social action than impulsive, poorly regulated individuals), and also audience (congruence with pre-ordained beliefs of observers).

2.3 The Historical Ubiquity of Anger and the Exercise of Social Control

The work of several groups of scholars suggests that social tendencies to moderate anger have emerged in different times and places. However, these tendencies are pitted against the self-sustaining role of anger in maintaining the status quo of social hierarchy in each time and place.

Then and now. Anger was seemingly indulged in with little censure or shame in Western epic times, but advice about restraint appears as early as Sappho's (circa 600 BCE) line "When *orgē* is spreading through your breast, it is best to keep your yapping tongue in check." This translation is by Harris (2001), who traces a thoughtfulness about anger (and other human actions) and trends toward self-control that emerged in Greece around fourth century BCE. Hyams (1998) reconstructs similar trends in twelfth to thirteenth century England, and Stearns and Stearns (1986) document even more recent trends. The latter authors argue that anger (and other emotions) was more openly displayed in pre-nineteenth century Western society, and elicited less social concern and prohibition, than they do currently. There were loud arguments in city streets, derogatory nicknames and traditional curses in the countryside, and little expectation that anger would or should be moderated. In European cultures, affronts to masculine honor had to be met with anger and counter-aggression, if a man was to avoid shame. Examples of this tradition include medieval and Renaissance vendettas

between families as well as dueling among members of the aristocracy and, later, the mercantile class. So powerful were these traditions that civil and religious authorities were unsuccessful in suppressing them despite continuing interdictions. Notable New World examples include litigious neighbors of seventeenth century New England and the fractious American frontier. Particular subcultures that continue to honor the "angry response to affront" include the German aristocracy and American southerners (e.g., Cohen, Nisbett, Bowdle, & Schwarz, 1994). Anger directed against outsiders, social deviates, and "others" remains widespread (contemporary American rates of anger are reviewed by Scheiman (Chapter 19), this book.)

Against this historical background, Stearns and Stearns (1986) describe a gradual but prolonged shift toward a greater awareness of and appreciation for the role of emotions in social life. Based on diaries, books of advice, marriage manuals, and the like over the last few centuries, these authors annotate an "emotionology" that placed greater emphasis on tolerance, consideration of others, and the gentler passions and conversely, an increasing disapproval of the unbridled expression of anger. Such ideas were part of the eighteenth century European Enlightenment, which emphasized reason, education, and literacy; new esteem for tolerance and ridicule of those who were easily angered. Protestant views emphasized the spiritual equality of women, and subsequent nineteenth and twentieth century sermons and pamphlets of various Protestant denominations attested to the evils of anger. New ideals of romantic love in marriage and kindness toward children appeared, emphasizing the need for restraint in the family, and for masters with servants, and making anger in the home seems inappropriate. With the industrial revolution came increases in market activities requiring civil interactions with strangers while increases in prosperity helped reduce tension in the home. New social classes included shopkeepers who needed to maintain cordial relations with customers. In nineteenth century Victorian views, home was a haven in a heartless world where anger was not to be allowed. A literature on the control of anger for spouses and parents advised the avoidance of conflict. Women should not feel anger and men should control it; not to do so was a flaw in moral character. Distinctions were made between restrained emotional world of adults and the unrestrained world of children; it was during this time that the word "tantrum" was introduced.

In addition to tracking historical trends in anger reduction, Stearns and Stearns (1986) raise the question of who expresses anger to whom. Among the Utku, anger and aggression are directed only to dogs; under the guise of "discipline" it is freely, frequently, and violently expressed to this underclass of creatures (Briggs, 1970). On Ifaluk (Lutz, 1988), *song* is shown by those of higher status to those of lower status (e.g., chiefs to villagers, adults to children); the latter are expected to experience the appropriately fearful emotion of *metagu*. Seneca and other classical writers took special note of anger directed against slaves (Kemp & Strongman, 1995). (Plato advised restraint on the grounds that it made them less inclined to work and more inclined to murder.) As crafts emerged in the middle ages, so did anger directed toward apprentices (see Rosenwein, 1998 for other accounts of medieval anger). Later, house servants were routinely subjected to abuse, as documented in their personal accounts (Stearns & Stearns, 1986). These are all historical instances of classes of social subordinates being subjected to the anger of dominant classes. Although adult male anger directed toward women and children clearly predates any victimization in conjunction with such social classes, economic analyses can be applied to these situations as well.

Anger and social hierarchy. Although the prevalence of anger may be reduced from historical highs, it remains common in work and family situations (Chapter 19 by Scheiman, this book). Recent research addressing anger as a function of relative social status (e.g., Stets & Tushima, 2001) indicates that angry people will approach and confront subordinates, but retreat from and avoid superiors (Fitness, 2000; Kuppens, Van Mechelen, & Meulders, 2004). The observation that anger is more frequently and unilaterally, or at least non-reciprocally, expressed by members of an overclass against members of an underclass is not new and its effects go beyond just modes of expression. In the Illiad,

"A prince is stronger when he *choesthai* with (expresses anger at) an inferior man. . ." (Cairns, 2003). This opinion was shared by medieval European commentators on the power of kings (Hyams, 1998); lesser lords, too, ruled by judicious expressions of anger (Barton, 1998). Conversely, Aquinas, like Aristotle, observed that impositions by those with much greater status and power do not routinely engender anger in the imposed upon. More recent sociologically informed analyses are replete with references to the anger of the lower classes, how it fuels demonstrations and revolts, and how it must be harnessed for change. Accordingly, as Harris (2001) notes, advice to lower classes to restrain anger serves the interest of the upper class. Stearns and Stearns (1986) propose that, from one perspective, this amounts to a class-based solution to the social problem of anger control that works by obedience to authority rather than by the self-control practiced in some of the various band and village cultures noted above. They note that this process begins with parental "will-breaking" of children that then generalizes to obedience to social authorities. The frequent expression of anger by members of the empowered elite, and the seemingly natural (but perhaps developmentally shaped) suppression of anger and resignation toward those of higher status, may systematically function to maintain the status quo of class-based dominance and control. The ancient writers may not have had the framework of structural sociology in which to view instances of anger toward slaves, but they clearly had class-based interpretations of anger.

2.4 Summary

The enormous impact that anger has had on people and their social interactions has been recorded in many ways and in many places throughout history. As we review the impressive gains in scientific knowledge about anger in fields from anthropology to neuroscience, we recognize in contemporary hypotheses and experimental data the historical insights generated by the long line of scholars of which we are a part. This book expresses the continuity of this community.

Note

1. Compendium of Muslim Texts, University of Southern California http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA

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