

explain unpredictable, illogical behavior and abnormal emotional responses. In Chapter 4, we shall see that when the rules are discordant with reality or are applied excessively or arbitrarily, they are likely to produce psychological or interpersonal problems.

CHAPTER 3

Meaning and Emotions

Men are not moved by things but the views which they take of them.—Epictetus

THE MEANING OF MEANING

Why do so many students of human nature and its aberrations turn away from conscious meanings? Meaning provides the richness of life; it transforms a simple event into an experience. Yet, contemporary systems of psychology and psychiatry either completely disregard meanings or go to extremes in seeking esoteric ones. Behaviorism detours around thoughts and "mentalistic concepts." Classical psychoanalysis, dissatisfied with "superficial" meanings, takes flight into an elaborate infrastructure of symbolic meanings that are contrary to common-sense meanings of an event.

Despite their many differences, behaviorists and psychoanalysts are similar in their reluctance to accept a patient's description of his psychological processes at face value; both schools are skeptical of "common-sense" explanations of behavior. The behaviorists dismiss people's reports of their "subjective" experience as unre-

liable because the experiences cannot be verified by other observers. Psychoanalysts assume conscious ideation is simply a product of unconscious forces which work to disguise the "real meaning" of events. Neuropsychiatrists are content with notions such as, "under every twisted thought is a twisted molecule." The psychological meaning of the aberration does not interest them.

In contrast to the "hard-headed" behaviorist and neuropsychiatric attitudes and the abstract classical psychoanalytic position, the cognitive approach is concerned with conscious meanings as well as external events. The person's reports of his ideas, feelings, and wishes provide the raw material for the cognitive model. Furthermore, his various interpretations of events are accepted as basic, rock-bottom data—not as a superficial screen over "deeper" meanings such as the psychoanalysts postulate. At times, it may be necessary to sift the automatic thoughts and other introspective data to delineate the intricate pattern of meanings and connotations. The formulation is then "tried on for size" and may have to be reworked until the patient determines that it fits his particular construction of reality.

To understand the emotional reactions to an event, it is necessary to make a distinction between the dictionary or "public" meaning of an occurrence and its personal or private meaning. The public meaning is the formal, objective definition of the event—devoid of personal significance or connotation. A boy is teased by his friends: The objective meaning of the event is simply that they are goading him. The personal meaning for the boy who is teased is more complex, for example, "They don't like me" or "I am a weakling." Although he is aware of this special meaning, he generally keeps it to himself

because he knows that if he admits his private reactions openly, his friends will probably tease him even more. A girl who receives the best grade in her class may think, "This shows I am better than the other students," but she is not likely to express this special meaning lest she antagonize her classmates. Special meanings are evoked when an event touches on an important part of a person's life, such as acceptance by peers, but they frequently remain private and unexpressed.

Private meanings are often unrealistic because the person does not have the opportunity to check their authenticity. In fact, when patients reveal such meanings to their psychotherapist, this is frequently the first chance they have had to examine these hidden meanings and to test their validity. A successful salesman in his mid-fifties became intensely anxious when told he must enter a hospital for treatment of pneumonia. Although he acknowledged the usual conception of a hospital as a place where illness is treated, his private notion (as revealed by his automatic thoughts) centered on anticipations of being anesthetized, cut up, carted off to a morgue. His anxiety was produced by the personal meaning—not by the socially accepted definition of a hospital.

At times we find that a person's reactions to an event are completely inappropriate or so excessive as to seem abnormal. When we question him, we often find that he has misinterpreted the situation. His misinterpretation comprises a web of incorrect meanings he has attached to the situation. Interpretations that consistently depart from reality (and are not simply based on incorrect information) can be justifiably labeled as deviant. As we shall see, the deviant meanings constitute the cognitive distortions that form the core of emotional disorders.

A person may have to concentrate on his stream of thoughts or images at the time of an event in order to pinpoint its personal meaning. For example, a medical student experiencing horror at seeing a patient bleeding during an operation was unable initially to understand his exaggerated reaction. However, after prodding his memory, he recalled that, at the time, he had experienced a visual image of *himself* bleeding and also remembered having had the thought, "This could happen to me!" The fantasy and thought rather than the sight of the patient were the key factor in evoking horror. Observing the same sight during subsequent operations no longer produced either the unpleasant feeling or the fantasy.

Meanings, significances, and imagery comprise what has been called "internal reality." Psychoanalysts have made Herculean efforts to explore it, but, reluctant to accept patients' reports at face value, have recast the ideational material into theory-derived constructs. Even when meanings are elusive, however, careful introspection and reporting of internal experiences help to expand a person's awareness to encompass a continuous flow of images and thoughts. The nature of this cognitive flow was described in Chapter 2.

THE ROUTE TO THE EMOTIONS

We have noted that common-sense observations and generalizations form the groundwork for the physical sciences. These generalizations are derived from establishing a causal relation between events and physical phenomena: The support is removed from an object and it falls. Similar kinds of relations may be demonstrated in developing a scientific approach to psychological phe-

nomena. However, in contrast to the early stages in physical sciences, the most significant data are subjective and intrapsychic rather than objective and external. Only the person who actually experiences the emotion, idea, and image can make and report his introspective observations. Tentative relations among these psychological experiences established for a given person may be confirmed by comparing them with relevant reports from other persons. In this way, generalizations are gradually developed. In addition, the sequence from external, objective events to specific ideas, to emotional reaction may be traced in order to determine consistencies as well as differences among individuals.

Consider the following example of how a specific external event evokes meaning for different people. A teacher remarked to her class that Tony, a bright student, received a low grade on a test. One student was pleased—he thought, "This shows I'm smarter than Tony." Tony's best friend felt sad (as did Tony): He shared Tony's loss. Another student was frightened: "If Tony did poorly, I may have done poorly also." Still another student became incensed at the teacher: "She probably marked unfairly if she gave Tony a low grade." By being "unfair" to one student, she had violated a cardinal rule and, therefore, she could be unfair to any student. Finally, a visiting student had no emotional response at all: Tony's grade had no special meaning for him.

This example demonstrates an essential relation: The specific content of the interpretation of an event leads to a specific emotional response. Further, based on examination of numerous similar examples, we can generalize that, depending on the kind of interpretation a

person makes, he will feel glad, sad, scared, or angry—or he may have no particular emotional reaction at all.

The diverse personal meanings of an event not only account for the variety of emotional responses to the same situation but have direct application to understanding emotional problems. A person who attaches an unrealistic or extravagant meaning to an event is likely to experience an inappropriate or excessive emotional response. A man lying in bed who imagines that each noise is a burglar breaking into the house will feel excessive anxiety. If he consistently interprets innocuous stimuli as danger signals, he may develop an anxiety neurosis.

The thesis that the special meaning of an event determines the emotional response forms the core of the cognitive model of emotions and emotional disorders: The meaning is encased in a cognition—a thought or an image. Sometimes the cognition may consist simply of a connotation or value judgment such as “awful” or “wonderful.” It is a commonplace observation that a particular emotion may have no connection to the external circumstances at the time. If we are daydreaming or ruminating, our emotion is generated by the content of the reverie or ideas (rather than by an external stimulus). Finally, if we distort a situation grossly, our emotional response is consistent with the distortion rather than with the factual aspects of the situation.

The cognitive model of emotions is derived, initially, from reports of introspective observations of thoughts and feelings. Second, the relation of thought to feeling is determined. Third, generalizations are made regarding what kinds of thoughts (or meanings) lead to which emotions.

Other theories of emotions have ignored or have not

adequately used people's reports of their thinking and feeling. Classical behaviorism uses a stimulus-response model to explain emotional reactions. It proposes a simpler route by which an external event leads directly to an emotional response—without interposing thinking or meaning between stimulus and response. According to behavioral theory, the sequence between stimulus and response has been established as the result of previous conditioning; hence, this formulation is often referred to as the conditioning model.

The classical psychoanalytic model of emotions is far more complex. Reduced to simple terms, the sequence is as follows: A stimulus or event occurs and arouses an unconscious wish or impulse. Since the wish is generally unacceptable to the person, its incipient emergence into consciousness poses an internal threat. If he is unable to ward off the taboo impulse through the use of a defense mechanism, he experiences anxiety or guilt. For example, according to Freud's concept of the Oedipus complex, a young boy reacts to the sight of his mother (the stimulus) with an unconscious sexual impulse directed toward her. If the wish threatens to break into consciousness, the boy feels anxious because of possible punishment from his rival—the father.¹

The behavioral and psychoanalytic models are similar in that they minimize the importance of meanings that are accessible to introspective observation and report. The behaviorists reject meaning totally and the psychoanalysts emphasize unconscious meanings. The

¹ The child's stream of ideas is less esoteric. If questioned about his thoughts and feelings, he is likely to state that the sight of his mother stirs up a rather prosaic fear—such as the fear of being punished for making a mess, for having hit a younger sibling, or for having done poorly in school.

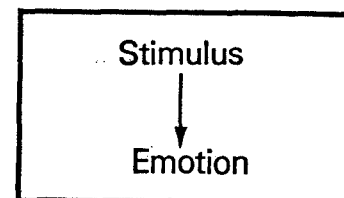
models differ in the location of the controlling stimulus: According to the conditioning model, it is external; according to the psychoanalytic model, it is internal but unconscious (See Figure 1).

The psychoanalytic and behavioral models skirt the common conceptions of why a person becomes sad, glad, afraid, or angry. The cognitive approach, however, brings the whole matter of arousal of emotion back within the range of common-sense observation. By sorting out the specific meanings of events, this approach draws together many diverse or dissimilar situations that lead to the same emotional response. Although at times the specific conditions for the arousal of a particular emotion may seem too obvious to warrant fine-grained analysis, they are crucial to the development of the generalizations. These generalizations, in turn, serve as the basis for understanding emotional disorders such as depression, mania, anxiety neurosis, and paranoid states.

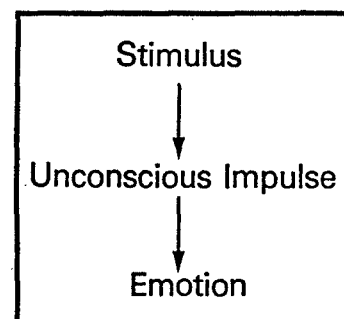
THE PERSONAL DOMAIN

A man was shown a picture of a coat of arms by a friend. He was indifferent to it until he was persuaded that it was actually a picture of his own family's coat of arms. From then on, he prized the picture, was excited in showing it to other people, and was hurt when they seemed uninterested. He reacted to the illustration on the piece of paper as though it were an extension of himself.

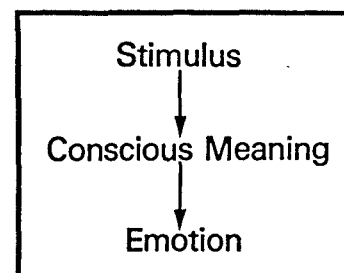
This incident illustrates how a person attaches special meanings to, and is moved by, objects that he judges to be of particular relevance to him. The objects—tangible and intangible—in which he has such an involvement constitute his personal domain. At the center of the



Conditioning Model



Psychoanalytic Model



Cognitive Model

FIGURE 1
THINKING AND EMOTION

domain is the person's concept of himself, his physical attributes and personal characteristics, his goals and values. Clustered around the self-concept are the animate and inanimate objects in which he has an investment. The objects typically include his family, friends, material possessions. The other components of his domain vary in degree of abstractness: from his school, social group, and nationality to intangible values or ideals concerning freedom, justice, morality.

The concept of the personal domain helps to explain how a person can be strongly affected even when an institution or person geographically remote from him is involved. For instance, a person may become euphoric if a member of his racial or ethnic group is honored, or he may feel outraged if such a person is mistreated. He reacts as though he himself were the object of good or bad treatment.

As we analyze the circumstances relevant to the emotions and the emotional disorders, the importance of the concept of the personal domain will become apparent. The nature of a person's emotional response—or emotional disturbance—depends on whether he perceives events as adding to, subtracting from, endangering, or impinging upon his domain.

Arnold (1960), one of the first theorists to elaborate on the central role of cognition in producing emotions, asserts, "Emotion is the process which starts when something is perceived and appraised. We decide that it is good or bad for us." Depending on whether someone appraises a stimulus as beneficial or detrimental to his personal domain, he experiences a "positive" or "negative" reaction. "Something good for me" leads to emotions such as joy, pleasure, happiness. Something appraised as bad induces sadness, anxiety, or anger.

Although Arnold, experimental psychologists such as Richard Lazarus (1966), and clinicians such as Albert Ellis (1962), have clearly marked the route between thinking and emotion, they have not delineated the particular kinds of appraisals that lead to specific emotions. In fact, the vast literature in personality and social psychology hardly touches on the question of what ideational content in response to a noxious stimulus or a threat produces, respectively, sadness, anxiety, or anger. Granted that the initial appraisal may be a global "bad for me," the individual's unique interpretation of the noxious stimulus determines his emotional response.

SADNESS

Sadness is not only a ubiquitous human experience, but at times, is the most puzzling. How often have we heard a child or even an adult say, "I'm sad but I don't know why!" The sad feeling is often contrary to the apparent life situation. A person "who has everything" may feel sad and another person "who has nothing" may be content and even happy.

Consider some typical instances of paradoxical sadness. (1) A salesman received news that he was promoted to a higher position in his business organization. To his surprise his reaction was sadness rather than joy. (2) A mother felt unhappy when her long-time ambition was fulfilled: Her daughter married a very suitable man. (3) A college graduate attended a class reunion he had eagerly anticipated for many years. As he mingled with his old friends he felt a pall of gloom descend over him. (4) After moving into his "dream house," a middle-aged man began to feel sad.

Can any common meaning be wrung from these

experiences? The information supplied by each person provides a plausible explanation for his sad reaction. The salesman became disheartened when he thought, "I will be moving far away. I don't have any friends there." The mother managed to identify the automatic thought that precipitated the gloom: "I have lost my baby." The college alumnus experienced a low mood as he began comparing himself unfavorably with his friends and judging himself a failure. The new homeowner became sad as he thought about the "stark reality" of how much money his house had cost him.

Although each of these people had in actuality added to his domain by attaining a long-cherished goal, his dominant interpretation was the opposite: *Something of value has been lost.*

The special meaning of a particular loss determines whether a person will feel sad: namely, if he conceives of the loss as subtracting from his domain in some significant way. For example, a millionaire who accidentally loses a few dollars might be indifferent to this loss because it doesn't perceptibly affect his financial worth; however, he might become sad if he lost the same amount of money on a bet, because then the loss would have negative connotations regarding his judgment or luck. Similarly, a criticism from a disoriented patient may not hurt a psychiatrist if he does not value the patient's judgment. The same criticism by a colleague may substantially lower the psychiatrist's self-esteem. If the person does not value an attribute, he is not disturbed at its removal from his domain. The loss of a wart is likely to produce satisfaction, but the loss of hair, sadness.

It is easy to observe how many life situations can be interpreted as a loss or can lead to a reduced valuation of

the domain. The different kinds of events that may lead to sadness can be readily categorized:

1. Loss of a tangible object that is considered a source of gratification or is valued for some other reason.
2. An intangible loss such as the diminished self-esteem produced by an insult or disparagement.
3. A reversal in the value of a component of the domain; for example, what was regarded as an asset is now judged negatively.
4. A discrepancy between what is expected and what is actually received, i.e., a disappointment.
5. A fantasy or expectation of a future loss: The individual tends to live through the anticipated loss as though it were happening *right now*, and so he experiences the sadness before the loss actually occurs.
6. Hypothetical loss: No loss has occurred but it "could" happen.
7. Pseudo loss: The person incorrectly perceives an event as subtracting from his domain.

Actual loss may refer to deprivation of something tangible and definable, such as money. An intangible loss, such as the loss of another person's affection, may produce a sad feeling like that produced by the loss of a tangible object. Similarly, a reversal in a person's evaluation of an attribute may trigger sadness; for example, a person who previously regarded himself as humorous may decide that people regard him simply as a buffoon.

The intensity of the sense of loss is proportional to the amount of depreciation in the value of the attribute rather than its "absolute value." A girl, for example, who had previously regarded herself as beautiful, determined that people considered her merely pretty: Her sense of loss and sadness corresponds to the degree she considered

herself less desirable than previously. Similarly, a parent who had regarded his child as an exceptional student felt sad upon learning that the child was simply above average.

The ideation involved in unfulfilled expectations and disappointment also incorporates the theme of loss and triggers sadness. When a person expects to receive an honor, prize, or salary raise, he immediately takes partial title to it, as it were. While the object occupies its fantasied place in his domain, he generally experiences some gratification. If he does not receive the expected object, he may experience as much sadness as though he had actually received and then lost it. Intense disappointment is experienced even though the expectation was highly unrealistic.

Many people "live the future in the present" and experience an anticipated loss as actual. A woman, when informed that her husband would be leaving in a few months for a brief business trip, felt as sad as she did when he actually left. When she thought ahead to the time when her children would grow up and leave the house, she was brought to tears.

When a possible loss is treated as though it were an actual deprivation, it is labeled a hypothetical loss: A woman would feel sad, for instance, whenever her husband talked to another woman. She would think, "It's possible that he may be falling in love with her."

Invalid "bookkeeping" is an example of a pseudo loss: A man experienced a sense of loss whenever he spent money to acquire something of value—until he was helped to realize that the expense was more than balanced by the acquisition.

EUPHORIA AND EXCITATION

Just as common-sense observation links sadness to loss, the necessary condition for euphoria or excitement is the perception or expectation of gain. The person increases his evaluation of his domain. The boundaries of the domain may be expanded, for example, by adding new friends, by acquiring new tangible objects, or by attaining a goal. A woman may rate her social abilities more highly after her first successful dinner party; a man may like a new suit more after he has been complimented on it.

Not only does a positive appraisal, which leads to self-enhancement, produce feelings of euphoria but *anticipation* of future pleasure or enhancements may also lead to immediate pleasure. In fact, this kind of anticipatory thinking can have an escalating effect. For example, a man noted a description of some of his professional work in a newspaper article, and his first thought was that his work (actually *he*) was very important to warrant so much publicity. This idea produced a noticeable elevation in his mood. He then thought of all the people who would see this article, and his euphoria increased markedly. Next, he fantasied receiving greater publicity and becoming increasingly famous. With each successive broadening of his expectations, there was a corresponding boost in his mood.

Whether or not the person experiences pleasure depends on the meaning attached to a particular situation or object. A young man observed that a girl was watching him. He thought, "Nancy likes me." He then generalized this conclusion to: "Because she likes me, her friends will

like me." Then: "I guess I'm pretty popular. People in general like me." As he expanded his positive evaluations, he felt a corresponding elevation of mood.

It is not necessary to have a pre-existing "need" or "drive" fulfilled in order to experience pleasure. Any event—or idea—that represents a meaningful addition is sufficient to produce pleasure. A person, for instance, may unexpectedly receive a gift without ever having wanted it and may, nonetheless, experience pleasure. However, once he has felt pleasure, *then* the person may develop an active desire for more of the pleasure-producing object. A taste of fame may make a person hungry for more in order to maintain his new self-evaluation.

Thus, an increase in self-evaluation may have a substantial effect on motivation. Receiving a reward can result in a generalized increase in the expectation of rewards, and consequently energize the person to work more productively. This principle is particularly useful in helping depressed patients overcome their inertia.

Feedback mechanisms may play a role in escalating the response to gains. The subjective experience of euphoria after a self-enhancing event may be interpreted as further evidence that the event is a "good thing." This positive appraisal may stimulate further desires for the pleasure-inducing object or circumstances.

ANXIETY

It is a commonplace observation that when someone considers himself in imminent danger he is likely to feel anxious. Threats of physical harm, serious illness, economic disaster, or social rejection quickly come to mind as typical anxiety-producing situations. Moreover, we can

observe that a threat (real or imaginary) to the safety, health, or psychological state of any other person within his personal domain may also produce anxiety. A person may also become anxious if he perceives a danger to some institution or principle he values.

The prospect of losing some important object, animate or inanimate, is another common kind of threat to the personal domain. A person may become anxious when threatened with losing money or material possessions. Anxiety may also be induced by the anticipated loss of a friend or relative through geographical separation, sickness, or death of the other person. Anxiety in response to psychosocial threats (such as anticipation of criticism, humiliation, or desertion) has the same quality as distress over threats of physical harm or illness.

We label anticipation of damage fear, and the unpleasant emotional reaction anxiety.² If a person feels confident in his ability to cope with or repel the threat, anxiety is minimized. It is increased when he considers the potential damage to his domain as imminent, highly probable, and highly destructive. Anxiety may be further increased by uncertainty with regard to when the harm may occur.

In identifying a situation as dangerous, one must make a series of almost simultaneous judgments. The initial judgment, which Richard Lazarus (1966) terms "primary appraisal," identifies the situation as a threat and assesses the probability, imminence, and degree of the potential harm. Next comes secondary appraisal—an estimate of one's "counter-harm" resources; that is, ability to neutralize or cope with the danger. The ratio

² The distinction between fear and anxiety will be elaborated in Chapter 6.

between the negative factors in the primary appraisal and the positive factors in the secondary appraisal constitutes the perceived risk. The latter in turn, determines the intensity of anxiety.

The importance of meaning in the arousal is illustrated by the large variety of situations that produce this emotional response and in the degree to which it occurs in different individuals in the same situation. We are familiar with the fact that someone who is highly sensitive to social disapproval may become alarmed if placed in a situation in which his weaknesses could be exposed; for example, he may consider having to speak before an audience as a potential catastrophe. Another person will experience minimal or no anxiety in such a situation because he attaches a different meaning to other people's possible evaluations of him.

Similarly, unusual anxiety reactions to situations or objects that are generally considered safe are found to be related to private, idiosyncratic meanings. A healthy woman, for instance, experienced anxiety whenever she became short of breath following exertion because she thought she was having a heart attack. A man felt anxious whenever he was on a bridge because as he crossed over he would have a visual image of the bridge collapsing. Later we shall consider other illustrations of the crucial role of meaning in pathological states of anxiety.

ANGER

One of the examples occasionally cited as the prototype of anger is the reaction of a primitive organism to destroy or repel a noxious agent. This analogy illuminates one basic pattern in humans: When a person is attacked

(physically or verbally), he may become angry and counterattack.

Although the formula, "attack leads to anger," fits some of the most obvious conditions for generation of anger, it does not always apply. We know of instances in which an attacked person has felt paralyzed with anxiety or has become sad after being defeated in a physical battle. Other mammals, such as chimpanzees and dogs, respond to attack with reactions that seem to resemble human anxiety or depression. Cannon (1915) describes reactions to attack in terms of a fight-or-flight pattern, corresponding roughly to anger or anxiety. His formula, however, does not account for a depressive response, nor does it specify the reasons for individual differences.

Another familiar situation that often produces anger is the frustration of a wish or drive. This common observation, was expanded by Dollard et al. (1939) into a broad theory (the frustration-aggression hypothesis), proposing to account for the spectrum of aggressive and hostile behavior. When subjected to critical analysis, however, it becomes apparent that their concept encompasses only a limited range of anger-producing situations. Furthermore, by overlooking the *meaning* of frustration under varying circumstances, the authors include instances of frustration that do not produce anger. As pointed out by Ellis (1962), and demonstrated experimentally by Pastore (1950, 1952), people are unlikely to respond with anger if they judge the frustrating agent to be justified, nonarbitrary or reasonable. A husband who generally becomes angry if his dinner is not ready when he comes home will not be annoyed if he discovers his wife was too sick to prepare the meal.

If we reflect on the kinds of situations that can

produce anger, ranging from mild irritation to extreme fury, we can probably think of an almost endless variety. We would be hard-put to consider the different kinds of anger-producing situations as all related in some way. Nonetheless, by singling out the central features of these situations, it is possible to expose the bonds of kinship.

TRANSGRESSIONS—INTENTIONAL AND UNINTENTIONAL

Consider these examples from the broad spectrum of everyday situations that often produce anger: (1) An adult is pelted with stones by a gang of adolescents. (2) A student is singled out for reprimand by his teacher for whispering with several other students during class. (3) A theater-goer's attempt to purchase a ticket is thwarted by somebody pushing ahead of him in line at the box office. (4) A woman is jilted by her lover. (5) A child is told by his parent that he must share his toys with a sibling. (6) A member of a committee attempting to introduce a new policy is opposed by other committeemen.

At least one common thread runs through each of these confrontations. The main character (or protagonist) is subjected to an unpleasant experience (the offense) by one or more adversaries: He is the object of *deliberate* physical attack, criticism, coercion, thwarting, rejection, deprivation, or opposition. These situations are noxious because they encroach on the protagonist's safety, self-esteem, or desires; they are perceived as a deliberate, direct impingement on his domain. Even when the offense is not motivated by malice, it may be perceived as such by the protagonist.

Another group of anger-producing situations is composed of commands and restrictions which the individual

interprets as encroaching on his rights. A restriction by a person in authority may make an individual angry though he had no prior desire to engage in the forbidden activity. His "rights" may include not only autonomy, freedom of action, and freedom of expression, but also expectations of respect, courtesy, consideration, and loyalty from other people. Social or professional status may prompt the expectation of special privileges and may cause offense if they are not accorded, or anger if a person of lower status tries to claim privileges to which he is not "entitled."

INDIRECT TRANSGRESSIONS

Still another type of interaction accounts for many of the angry responses we experience ourselves or may observe in others. The following situations do not appear at first glance to represent a direct assault on the domain; yet, they may produce anger: (1) A host feels annoyed at a guest for showing off his knowledge at a dinner party. (2) A clerical worker is irritated at a friend's stories of his success in business. (3) A young man is furious with his girl friend for chatting in an animated way with another man. (4) A student who received an outstanding grade becomes annoyed at his professor when he learns the professor gave the same grade to a fellow student. (5) A husband is infuriated because his wife gives him only a mild compliment for what he considers a major business triumph.

On analyzing these situations, we can understand why they are regarded as noxious: The meaning of each is an assault on the self-esteem of the protagonist. The behavior of the offender *indirectly* exposes the protagonist to self-devaluation. The first group of incidents are

examples of jealousy or envy. The attention-getters are offensive because they threaten to dim the image of the protagonist: "He is getting all the recognition and I'm not getting any," "He is making a better impression than I," "He is more successful than I." Such comparisons lead the protagonist to question his own importance. The student's enhanced self-esteem for receiving an outstanding grade is diminished when he loses the exclusiveness of his claim to excellence. The husband is annoyed at his wife's lukewarm response because it seems to devalue his achievement.

Since the "offenses" represent a kind of loss, why does the protagonist feel angry rather than sad? We find that he experiences anger as long as he is able to ward off his devaluation by focusing on negative attributes of the offender: He is a "show-off," undeserving, empty-headed, unfair. If, however, the protagonist accepts the imagined loss of status as reasonable, just, or fair, then he feels sad. If he fluctuates between blaming the offender and regretting his loss, his mood oscillates between anger and sadness.

HYPOTHETICAL TRANSGRESSIONS

We can think of other instances in which neither a direct nor an indirect transgression seems to account for an angry reaction: (1) A pedestrian becomes angry at seeing a motorist drive through a stop signal. (2) A parent is incensed at his child for not showing "good table manners." (3) A wealthy man is infuriated at being approached for a charitable contribution. (4) A man devoted to the principle of law and order becomes enraged at hearing of a crime committed thousands of miles away.

None of these episodes produces an obvious infringement on the individual's domain; yet, he may react as strongly as he would to a direct assault. He may readily acknowledge that he was in no way personally damaged by the event. If this is correct, then why is he angered? The common denominator in each of these incidents is that the offender has violated a rule regarded as important to the offended. Because this violation leads the protagonist to regard himself as vulnerable, it represents a potential or hypothetical transgression.

The pedestrian explains his anger at the speeding motorist: "I *could have been* walking across the street at that time" (or might have crossed at some future time when the motorist was speeding through). The parent is annoyed with her child because she conjectures that, if an outsider were present, he might judge her to be a bad mother for rearing "an ill-mannered child." The wealthy man is incensed because he speculates, "If I had to give money to every charity, I would go broke."

In hypothetical attacks, the notion that it *could* happen carries almost as much weight as if it *did* happen. The hypothetical infringements, although subtle, account for a large proportion of the discord in human relations. As we proceed, we shall see that these offenses consist largely of the violation of some generally accepted rules of proper behavior or, in some instances, certain idiosyncratic rules and standards.

The imposition of a value judgment on other people's behavior points to the existence of an implicit code of laws, rules, principles, and standards. These rules seem to be applied as though they serve to protect the protagonist from physical or psychological harm even though his person and his domain are in no way involved

in an interaction with the offender. Thus, the pedestrian, although not actually endangered, becomes furious at the motorist because violation of the law might affect his future safety.

The principles of fair play, justice, and reasonableness constitute a kind of outer wall or defense of the domain. Arbitrary, unfair, unjust acts arouse anger (even when not directed against a particular person) because they are regarded as a threat to the protective wall.

Other customs affecting human interactions are heavily invested with importance. Diagnostic clues of the violation of such conventions are found in angry complaints such as: "They have no right to act that way." "He should not have done that." "Those people should behave better." "It's the principle of the thing."

A middle-aged business executive becomes irritated by a host of behavior patterns in other persons such as their being "loud-mouthed," aggressive, careless, or unkempt. On being questioned, he readily admits that he has not personally experienced any injury or loss from this behavior. He protests nonetheless that such behavior is "wrong" or "bad" and that the offender should be punished in some way: "Those hippies have no business wearing their hair so long and being so dirty. They should be locked up."

Acceptable forms of behavior constitute a moral code that is embedded in the domain. *A breach of the code produces the same reaction as an attack.* The personal code varies widely within a cultural group, and may be idiosyncratic. Anger produced by violation of such codes may seem inappropriate and unhealthy to others, but it seems appropriate to the individual, who has his own standards of right and wrong. A violation of his

personal standards is regarded as an attack on his domain.

Social conventions appear to play a greater role than is generally recognized in specifying the conditions under which anger is considered justified, expected, or even demanded, but also set the limits beyond which anger is deemed excessive or inappropriate. Such limits are implied in statements such as "You're over-reacting," or "Why the temper tantrum?" We have probably all encountered situations that made us angry but did not affect a friend, and vice versa. Similarly, when we have reacted with equanimity to a noxious situation, we may have been told, "You should have gotten angry," or "I would have told him off!" When a person exhibits a strong outburst of anger over what is generally regarded as a trivial incident, we may suspect that the situation has a special idiosyncratic meaning for him.

We can now summarize the kinds of situations that commonly lead to anger: (1) direct and intentional attack; (2) direct, unintentional attack; (3) violation of laws, standards, social mores: hypothetical threats, substandard behavior, breach of idiosyncratic moral code. The common factor for arousal of anger is the individual's appraisal of an assault on his domain, including his values, moral code, and protective rules. This factor, while a necessary condition, is not sufficient in itself to arouse anger. In order to provoke anger, other specific conditions must be present. First, the individual must take the infringement seriously and label it negatively. A small child throwing snowballs at his parent is likely to provoke amusement rather than anger. Second, the individual must not consider the noxious situation an immediate or continuing danger. If he is concerned primarily

with his own safety, he will be more anxious than angry. Third, the individual must focus primarily on the wrongfulness of the offense and the offender rather than on any injury he may have sustained.

The sequence of psychological reactions leading to anger may be compared with the steps in the production of anxiety. The individual makes a primary appraisal in recognizing and labeling the noxious stimulus. Concomitantly, he assesses his ability to sustain, neutralize, or repel the impact of the noxious stimulus (secondary appraisal). In the following example, the protagonist fluctuated between anger and anxiety as his confidence in his ability to repel the noxious stimulus increased and faded.

A college student was blocked in traffic by a slowly moving car. He became very angry because he was both inconvenienced and offended by the other driver's disregard for an accepted rule of driving. He sounded his horn repeatedly and swore at the driver—he regarded himself as strong enough to cope with possible retaliation which, in any event, he considered unlikely. To his surprise, the other driver got out of his car. The student was angered even further at such pugnacity. When it became plain that the second driver was huge and menacing, the student became anxious and drove off quickly. When he was a safe distance away, the student felt another wave of anger as he reflected, "The big bully—trying to push me around."

This example illustrates that when a person is not concerned about his safety, he is prone to experience anger toward the offending agent. When he focuses primarily on imminent danger, his anger is replaced by anxiety.

Analogous fluctuations between anger and sadness

were experienced by a man whose wife had reprimanded him severely. One moment he would think about how unjust she was to criticize him, and he would feel angry at her. Then, he would shift to the idea that he had lost her affection, and would feel sad. All day the focus of his thinking alternated between blaming his wife and being deprived of love, with corresponding oscillations between anger and sadness.

The degree of anger is generally proportional to how unreasonable, arbitrary, or improper the offense seems to the protagonist. These characteristics are of extreme importance in understanding excessive reactions to what may seem to be trivial offenses.

The conditions that *accentuate anger* after an offense has occurred may be summarized as follows: (1) offense perceived as intentional; (2) offense perceived as malicious; (3) offense perceived as unjustified, unfair, unreasonable; (4) offender perceived as undesirable person; (5) possibility of blaming or disqualifying offender.

Converse conditions tend to reduce the anger, e.g., the offense is perceived as "accidental," "well-intentioned," or "justified." Other mitigating factors are the protagonist's view of the offender "as a nice guy" or his belief that he himself was at fault.

DISTINGUISHING AMONG AROUSAL OF SADNESS, ANGER, AND ANXIETY

Everyday observation indicates that the same external conditions may produce sadness in one person, anxiety in another, and anger in a third. Moreover, circumstances that seem basically alike may make someone sad at one time, anxious at another time, and angry a third

time. If we know the meanings attached to the event, we can generally predict which emotion will be aroused. Paramount meanings are determined by the person's habitual patterns of conceptualizing particular kinds of life situations and also by his psychological state at the time the situation occurs. If his main concern is with danger, he feels anxious; if he is preoccupied with loss, he feels sad; if he focuses on the unacceptable behavior of the offender, he feels angry. The necessary and sufficient conditions for the arousal of each emotion may be demonstrated by pinpointing how similar conditions may produce different emotions.

SADNESS VERSUS ANGER

Downgrading (as by insult or criticism) may produce either sadness or anger. If one accepts the validity of the insult sufficiently to lower his evaluation of himself, then he feels sad. Similarly, even when he considers an insult invalid, he may feel sad provided he considers merely being insulted a bad reflection on him. If the criticism or insult is perceived as unwarranted, unacceptable, or unjust, he is likely to experience anger.

The person may realize that if he accepts the validity of the "criticism," he may feel sad or guilty. However, if he can discredit the criticism by disqualifying his critic, he is likely to experience anger instead of sadness.

SADNESS VERSUS ANXIETY

A person is likely to feel sad rather than anxious when the loss has already occurred or when the domain

has been devalued in expectation of a loss. He will experience anxiety as long as he regards himself as still intact and the loss or other injury as only imminent. An example of the production of sadness rather than anxiety in anticipation of a noxious event is the knowledge of some future loss—be it an important person, job, or status. Sadness results if the projected loss is experienced in the present rather than in the future, that is, when the person makes the subtraction from his domain before the actual loss occurs.

ANXIETY VERSUS ANGER

For the arousal of anxiety, the salient feature is *danger*: The person is concerned primarily with the possibility of being hurt and with his perceived lack of coping devices to deal with the noxious stimulus. In the case of anger, he is more concerned with the violation of rights, rules, and principles and with the blameworthiness of the offensive agent, and less so with the danger to himself.

The typical ideation leading to either anxiety, sadness, euphoria or anger has a counterpart in the characteristic ideation found in anxiety reactions, depression, mania, and paranoid states, respectively. A significant difference between psychological disorders and normal emotional responses is that the ideational content of the disorders contains a consistent distortion of a realistic situation. Whereas the normal emotional response is based on a reasonable appraisal of the reality situation, the responses in psychological disturbances are determined to a far greater degree by internal (that is, psychological) factors that confound the appraisal of reality.