

Anger

Anger has long been one of the most dreaded emotions. For the ancient Roman moralist, Seneca, anger was uniquely dangerous: in a state of anger—which typically involves anger toward another individual--the ground rules are loose and free.

The initiating intentions are hard to isolate or analyze, for one thing, because the initial moves, of the angry person, are cloaked in intensity and arbitrariness. As a result the angry person is frequently the last one to understand what his or her angry emotions involve. The emotions of anger surge up over the angry person, well documented though they may have been in the past, and tiresomely part of yesterday's news.

For some reason, the classic behavior in face of anger between two male individuals is a blow with the angry person's fist to the recipient's chin. (Obviously we are talking male sociology, even male mythology). Can we reduce or modify that classic pattern—emphasizing the arbitrariness of the parts of the drama? Can we review this pugilistic kind of event sequence by thinking of it as a not yet scripted drama? How about expressing your anger through a startling blow to one's adversary's upper right pectoral, or to his waistline? Would that deconstructive strategy help us to start dismantling the mystique of anger? Is the mystique of the military destined to be with us forever? Is it impossible for me not to get angry with you, after you have made a step forward into the male anger mystique?