

An Analysis of the Role of Moralizing in Conflict Performance and Behavior

By

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Abstract

In this thesis, I use the Insight approach and autoethnography to examine my own performance in a conflict that occurred during group work. I capture and analyze empirical data and develop theoretical implications about the role of moralizing in conflict behaviour and about the effect of greater reflexivity about moralizing on conflict practitioners and participants. Throughout the thesis I am guided by my research questions: a) How does moralizing function in conflict behavior? b) How can understanding moralizing contribute to improved conflict performance on the part of both the practitioner and the participant?

Moralizing is an intrinsic element of conflict performance. It involves a judgment of self or other when the individual conflates knowing and valuing. When one moralizes one treats either oneself or another as an object and ignores the subjective or inner performance of the operations of consciousness; or makes assumptions about it without adequate knowing. This results in epistemological and ontological distortion, e.g., when one treats the attribute as an unchanging aspect of the individual's personality. Further distortion occurs when one treats the entirety of an individual's personality as defined by a moral attribute. Such distortion creates a moralized object that then distracts one from one's own interior operations and which thus limits curiosity.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

The Question

Conflicts often involve moralizing and moralizing statements. Consider, for example, Donald Trump's criticism of Justin Trudeau on Twitter, "PM Justin Trudeau of Canada acted so meek and mild during our @G7 meetings only to give a news conference after I left saying that, 'US Tariffs were kind of insulting' and he 'will not be pushed around.' Very dishonest & weak...!" (Canadian Press, 2018) But we needn't venture into the rough and tumble world of politics to find such moralism. Moral judgment is a prominent feature of our everyday lives. Consider the following statements: "Sheila is untrustworthy," "Mary is interested only in herself," "Rupert doesn't even understand the word loyalty," "Anthony is selfish," "Teenagers are irresponsible," "You always find fault with my behavior." These expressions of judgment can initiate and can escalate conflict. Statements like this are hallmarks of the ways in which we express ourselves when we feel threatened. We make sweeping generalizations about individuals even, or perhaps especially, those we love. Bushe (2010) vividly captures the negative effect of such moralizing judgments on conflict participants.

Implicit in your judgments is that I am right or wrong, good or bad. When I hear your judgments of me, I want to argue and defend myself. Instead of getting more clarity, we end up hurling our judgments at each other without ever inspecting the stories we are making up that lead to those judgments. More than likely we walk away hurt and angry, and our relationship is in worse shape than if we had said nothing at all. (p. 158).

There is broad recognition of the impact of such moralizing on a vast array of roles and activities and of the importance of adopting a “non-judgmental” attitude.¹ Rohde, Dietrich and Michalak (2014) indicate how a *non-judgmental orientation* can increase curiosity, openness, and acceptance of self. Zabelina and Robinson (2010) draw a positive correlation between non-judgmental self-compassion and creativity. Weston (2015) argues that being non-judgmental is important in relation to others, if we are “fully to embrace and appreciate our common humanity” (p. 109). A study by Geurtzen, Scholte, Engels, Tak and Zundert (2015) concludes, “higher levels of non-judgmental acceptance of parental functioning as reported by the parents were related to lower levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms based on adolescents’ self-report” (p. 1124). Gabarre and Gabarre (2016) argue that adopting a non-judgmental stance promotes trustworthiness of data gathered from research respondents.

In conflict engagement, being non-judgmental can facilitate the performance of both the conflict practitioner and the conflict participant. Davis (1989) states, “When mediators step out of the expected judgmental role, the parties no longer have to defend their past actions. They can engage in self-reflection and self-analysis” (p. 20).² Cheryl Picard states, “I want to stress that the questions used to deepen the learning conversation stem from genuine wondering, and so are

¹ I will discuss issues around moralizing in greater detail in Chapter 5.

² For a fascinating account which points out alternative approaches to mindfulness within the Buddhist tradition see Dreyfus (2011).

intentionally open and non-judgmental” (Picard, 2018, p. 7). The phrase “non-judgmental,” however, has the potential to be misleading. In fact, I do not believe it is literally possible to be non-judgmental. Rather, as I conceive it, when we speak of a “non-judgmental attitude,” this does not entail a complete lack of judgment. I believe, it is more precisely defined as entailing the recognition that judgment involves one in epistemological and ethical distortions of self and other. Further, it entails a willingness to correct this distortion when it occurs. A non-judgmental attitude thus reflects a capacity to engage the judgments we make in a tolerant and forgiving manner.

I have noticed that when I find myself in a conflict I often end up making moralizing judgments. When individuals fail to act as I believe their roles prescribe, I often engage in moralizing through which I evaluate the person’s character based on their failure to act in the way I believe they should. These judgments, in my heart, raise me to the level of judge and focus on the wrongdoing of the accused. Such judgment has led me into conflict and escalated conflict once there. It has caused me pain and has, on occasion, estranged me from colleagues, friends and family.

For me the issue of moralizing is a profoundly personal and passionate concern. Yet it is not merely personal. J. Price (nd) indicates that moralizing statements are the “common coin of conflict” and that insight practitioners need to develop competency in identifying them and understanding their function. I have articulated my interest in the phenomenon of moralizing into two research questions that attempt to address these competencies: a) How does moralizing

function in conflict behavior? b) How can understanding moralizing contribute to improved conflict performance on the part of both the practitioner and participant?

Case study

The centerpiece of the thesis is a case study that provides a vivid example of the primacy of interiority in conflict performance. A very commonplace and seemingly simple disagreement over scheduling led to a significant group conflict that, over time, became a wonderful learning experience. In a tantalizingly ironic misadventure, our group (Vito, Luca, Kay and David) became embroiled in a conflict while studying conflict analysis. We disagreed on the process through which we would schedule meetings to complete group work. The conflict on its external side, therefore, was commonplace. Nonetheless, group members experienced the threat as significant. The time constraints on us during residency were severe. If we couldn't resolve things quickly, then we faced genuine consequences by way of low marks and a loss of face in front of our instructor and our classmates. With coaching from our instructor we managed to resolve this side of the conflict with alacrity. We completed the assignment on time and did well in the course.

What is noteworthy, however, is that while a mediated resolution occurred, the internal dissipation of the tension of the conflict, for me, continued for many months. Months after the incident I was even hesitant to contact group members to ask for permission to use the conflict for my case study. I still felt a sense of threat from our interactions and projected that they might make writing the thesis on this topic difficult for me by withholding their permission. They were anything but difficult. Rather, they were collegial and supportive.

By attending to the operations of my consciousness (knowing, valuing and deciding) through the extended period over which my inner experience of the conflict fully dissipated, I came to a richer understanding of how it is that the interior operations of my consciousness contributed to the conflict. Particularly, I began to see the force that moralizing had as a carrier of my consciousness.

My case study is relevant to the study of conflict because it illuminates the interiority of conflict behavior in a specific dispute resolution as well as in the extended process of dissipation. A striking feature of the conflict is that while it was significant and emotionally intense, with potentially serious consequences for relationships among student colleagues and for their performance in the course, we nonetheless resolved the external aspects of the conflict quickly and efficiently. We showed good will and worked together based on common values, navigating the prickly weeds of anxiety and hostility with a certain finesse. But the relative simplicity and efficiency of the *external* solution only serves to highlight the intensity and resiliency of the *internal* conflict in which I was engaged; an internal conflict fueled by moralism.

The case study, therefore, is focused on how my inward performance of knowing, valuing and deciding led to moralizing and, therefore, to the origin of conflict, its escalation and *internal* continuance. I experienced a significant gap between who I wanted to be and how I was behaving. I, therefore, have a powerful personal motivation in writing this thesis: I want to understand better the process of moralizing in order to be more open and curious in my conflict performance.

I believe, however, that my narrative and analysis have a more than personal relevance. This thesis should contribute to the research on conflict by utilizing the Insight approach and autoethnography to analyze the empirical data of the case study. The purpose of this analysis is to address my two research questions: *a) How does moralizing function in conflict behavior? b) How can understanding moralizing contribute to improved conflict performance on the part of both the practitioner and the participant?* To this end, I investigate the source of moralizing in the way we use our minds and explore ways to adopt a more reflective attitude toward it. Moralizing often involves principles that are important to us and our attachment to these principles can override other practical concerns, one's self-interest, relationships, or institutional belonging. To be aware of the effect such moralizing has on the performance of the operations of consciousness and our conflict behavior helps avoid the distortion they can entail; distortion which distracts us from our own reflexive awareness.

Curiosity is fundamental to the learning that the Insight approach advocates. Achieving clarity about the operations of one's own consciousness in moralizing will promote curiosity on the part of practitioner and participant precisely because it reduces moralizing certainty. Moralizing certainty comprises a sense of limited and fixed possibilities. One is certain of the righteousness of one's cause because one has deliberated in an unimaginative fashion, considering only those elements of the conflict that confirm one's judgment. Curiosity allows for the consideration of more imaginative possibilities and for a more expansive performance of the operations of consciousness.

The thesis explores the critical elements of interiority and the operations of consciousness in order to articulate the function of the moralizing that I experienced in my personal experience of conflict. The case study provides empirical evidence found in the data of my own consciousness, which supports the account of conflict developed by the Insight approach.

The Insight approach

The Insight approach describes “moralizing statements” as confluences of knowing and valuing (J. Price, 2018). J. Price (2018) provides an example with eloquent simplicity. One roommate leaves his dishes in the sink and the other pronounces him a “bastard”. The significant connection between the facts, in this case, that dishes have been left in the sink, and that one roommate judges the other “a bastard,” exists not in the facts *per se* but in the valuing through which the subject discerns the significance of the facts (J. Price, 2018, p.7). Here the roommate who finds the dishes in the sink has made a “decision to defend based on a discernment of threat” and a conflict has resulted (Jull, 2018, p. 3).

The conflation of knowing and valuing results from hasty verification of one’s understanding. In this instance, the individual discerned a gap between her belief about how roommates should behave towards each other and the dish-leaver’s behavior.³ The significance she discerned in the behavior was a product of her valuing. In her defensive response to the threat, she feels certain that the roommate

³ This can also be reflected in our own self-judgment witnessing a gap between our expectations of ourselves and how we behave.

is a bastard. However, she is not reflexively aware of the activity of her own inwardness and its act of valuing in her judgment of the roommate. Discerning a threatening significance in the roommate's behavior and having moralized about his behavior leaves her with a limited or contracted sense of the options to pursue and in Price's example leads to the unfortunate result that she throws the dishes on the other roommate's bed in an expression of her displeasure (J. Price, 2018).

Insight practitioners approach such situations by asking questions designed to make conflict participants reflect on the operations of their consciousness (knowing, valuing and deciding) (J. Price, 2018). This reflexive self-awareness has the effect of enabling individuals spontaneously to become curious about themselves and others and thus to become more open to alternative accounts of the conflict and to a greater variety of options for its resolution. This sense of enhanced possibility can dissolve the constraint that individuals experience, that feeling of being locked into one's position and inevitably in opposition to one's conflict partner. This liberation is empowering; it reduces the sense of threat, the sense of vulnerability, and allows individuals to be more open (more tolerant and forgiving) to themselves and to others.

The focus of the Insight approach on these internal operations makes it a valuable tool for me to understand the role moralizing played in my conflict behavior. Outwardly, very little happened to initiate the conflict – a minor scheduling disagreement. But inwardly there was an extremely complex defense response fueled by a sense of threat that led to contraction and moralizing with the

result that I became intractable in my perspective and approach to the conflict so that the internal dissipation of the conflict took an extended period to occur.

The paucity of external instigation serves to accentuate the depth and significance of interiority in my conflict performance. My consciousness was carried by my sense of personal responsibility in the group. I believed that through my academic and administrative experience I could bring a sense of process to the group work that would allow things to move more efficiently and productively. I felt it my responsibility to contribute to a pattern of cooperation that would work for everyone. Price (2014b) indicates that a pattern of cooperation indicates how we interact with each other in light of the context of social organizations. There are both structural norms that guide our behaviors and decisions and actions we take to animate the pattern.

In this context, the role I assumed, and the roles I saw others in, had significant implications about what sorts of attitudes and behaviors I believed were required in context of university group work. A gap existed between my expectations and my perceptions of the behavior of the group members that to me appeared as an objective and factual state of affairs. Through insight discussions with Dr. Marnie Jull, my thesis supervisor, and through reflection on the events using insight theory, I have come to an awareness of my own causality in and responsibility for the conflict. Having greater awareness of my “role” in the conflict facilitates more critical control of conflict performance. In turn this allows for the consideration of more options and for more conscientious engagement. This

liberates me to some degree from past patterns of conflict and opens me up to more flexible conflict engagement, and to more imaginative responses and solutions.

Autoethnography

To access this interiority, I utilize an autoethnographical method, which allows me to articulate the subjective data that I analyze through the Insight approach. In its basic form autoethnography denotes the use of personal experience to examine and illuminate cultural experience (Holman Jones, Adams, & Ellis, 2013). I employ autoethnography in order to develop and convey a first person narrative through which I pay particular attention to my own subjectivity in its relation to others. In addition to the emphasis on subjectivity and emotion that is characteristic of autoethnographic research, my choice of a narrative form provides a way to structure the articulation of my subjectivity. Ellis (2008) states that in narrative, stories are “written in an episodic form that dramatizes the motion of connected lives over the curve of time; thus it resists the standard social science practice of portraying social life and relationships between people as a snapshot frozen in time” (p. 50). The narrative form is thus well suited to describing and reflecting upon change over time and hence an appropriate method for delineating the extended process through which the dissipation of conflict occurred in my case.

The narrative I develop articulates my experience of conflict during group work as a student in an MA program. It also tells the story subsequent to the conflict, of how I deepened my reflexive awareness about my performance of the operations of my consciousness during the conflict and this serves to highlight the importance of the interior activity of the mind as the central locus of the conflict.

The narrative of the *external* conflict contains very little dramatic content. There was only about 40 minutes of heated exchange before we began to find ways to resolve the conflict. Nonetheless, this *external* narrative provides a starting point of the analysis through the choices made concerning characters and events. The *internal* narrative traces the extended period of my inward conflict dissipation. In these ways the writing of the narrative is not simply a descriptive account that is then subject to an external theoretical framework. Rather, the writing of the narrative contains the activity of analysis as part of the story, as a part of my *internal* conflict journey. This act of writing is thus itself the process of research.

This account, then, focuses on my own perceptions and their contribution to the conflict, not on the perceptions of the other conflict participants. Nonetheless, in investigating the performance of my own operations of consciousness, and their role in moralizing, I hope to point to theoretical and practical implications that go beyond my own personal situation. For example, I provide analytical and empirical grounds for articulating a systemic realm of significance in the discernment of threat. In support of the generation of data and analysis that is more than subjectively valid, I also engage in collaborative autoethnographic research in the form of insight conversations with my supervisor. Lapadat (2017) defines collaborative autoethnography as an, “autobiographical, autoethnographic, polyphonic approach to writing, telling, interrogating, analyzing, and collaboratively performing and writing up research on personal life challenges and on negotiating personal and professional identities” (p. 597). In the insight conversations in which we engaged, Dr. Jull and I examined my reflexive awareness of the operations of

consciousness through my response to her elicitive questions about my perceptions and behavior. Further, we shared perspectives on events we had both been involved in. The conversations were recorded (video and audio) and then later transcribed by me. Selections from these transcriptions are an essential dimension of the case study of chapter four.

This collaborative approach added a “multidisciplinary lens to inquiry, thereby reducing the likelihood of criticisms about lack of rigor, narcissism, or self-indulgence”(Lapadat 2017, p. 599). Addressing these elements draws the evocative dimension of the narrative into “data-transcending practices that are directed toward theoretical development, refinement, and extension” (Anderson, 2006, p. 387).

Outline of Chapters

Following the present chapter, which serves as an introduction to the thesis as a whole, the thesis will unfold in five further chapters comprising a literature review, methodology, case study, implications of the case study and conclusion. In chapter 2, Literature Review, I articulate the reasons for utilizing the Insight approach as the theoretical framework for this thesis. My consideration involves comparing a variety of contemporary conflict engagement theories to the Insight approach in terms of their fit with my research questions. While many texts on conflict practice and leadership assert the importance of avoiding *judgmentalism*, both on the parts of the participants and on the part of mediators, the Insight approach provides an account of the precise place of moralizing in the inward operations of consciousness. It thus provides rigorous critical control that can identify the function of moralizing in

conflict behavior and illuminate pathways to its correction and to enhanced performance in conflict situations. In this way it can contribute to better self-understanding on the part of both the participants in the conflict and the conflict practitioner. This moment of inward reflection, a turn from the object of one's moralizing into the process of the operations of one's consciousness, is commensurate with heightened curiosity. To be incurious is to be certain about the validity of one's perspective. One is convinced that one has deliberated and evaluated judiciously and that one's decisions are correct. Curiosity about self reduces the sense of certainty one has in one's perspective and thus opens the door for a wider deliberative consideration of options including those advanced by other people. Curiosity about self thus can lead to more expansive performance and precipitates curiosity about other selves. Herein lies the potential for deeper understanding among the parties, which can support the dissipation of conflict.

Chapter 3, Methodology, comprises an examination of how the central questions of the thesis require a response that focuses on the subjectivity of the researcher. The central thrust of this chapter is to justify the use of a layered autoethnography that combines evocative and analytical approaches together with collaboration. This research will center on the data that emerges through a case study describing a conflict that arose in group-work in a university course. The evocation of my subjective perceptions in my experience of conflict is then subjected to insight analysis that itself becomes an element of the narrative as my deepening awareness of the roots of my own conflict behaviour becomes a part of the conflict story. The insight method provides not only a strong analytic dimension to the

thesis but also allows for a collaborative element in the form of insight conversations with my thesis supervisor Dr. Jull.

Chapter 4, Moralizing – A Case Study, comprises the heart of this thesis and reflects upon a remarkable learning experience that occurred during a course in a Master’s program. Students were organized into groups of four persons to complete a team-based assignment. The assignment was to select one conflict case study from the team members’ pre-prepared conflict scenarios and to engage in a series of role-plays to practice and analyze the skills of conflict intervention. In the course of very preliminary discussion about how to approach the assignment, particularly when to meet, the group became quite conflicted, so much so, that Dr. Jull intervened to coach us toward better conflict engagement. She further suggested that we consider using the group conflict we had just experienced as a live case project instead of the original assignment. This option allowed us to turn our conflict into a substantial learning experience.

On the surface, the conflict had its origins in a very simple scheduling disagreement. However, this small *external* spark gave rise to a significant *internal* conflagration that involved personal, practical, relational and systemic threats. While the “externals” of the conflict (the group dissension and disagreement) were resolved quickly, the internal dimensions of the conflict, particularly, my perceptions of the performance of other group members and of myself, as well as my view of the conflict, developed over many months. It was through my exploration of this interiority that the conflict became for me the major learning experience in the program and allowed me to increase my proficiency with the Insight approach to conflict behavior and to develop my autoethnographic skills. Further, it allowed me to generate empirical data by

investigating the data of my own consciousness. This data supports the development of the Insight approach with respect to how moralizing functions.

Chapter 5, Implications, utilizes the Insight approach, to explore the nature of the moralizing in which I engaged. To this end, I explore the personal, practical, relational and systemic gaps that I perceived and the sense of threat each generated. In investigating my moralizing response to this discernment of threat, I discover that moralizing carried my consciousness in a manner that involved significant ontological and epistemological distortions, which obscured my own interiority and performance. From this analysis, I propose a definition of moralizing. Also I consider the social dimensions of the conflict in pattern of cooperation and role, and the function of these in relation to moralizing. Throughout I am concerned with the practical implications for practitioners and participants.

Finally, chapter 6, Conclusion, reflects on how the choice of methodologies exploited a remarkable affinity between autoethnography and the Insight approach. The deep congruity of these methods supported a layered account that both evoked empirical data of my subjective emotion and perception, and facilitated rigorous analysis of this empirical data. The results are of both personal and scholarly value. They emerge from autoethnographical reflection on my own inward experience and contribute to a greater self-awareness and a more expansive conflict performance. Greater awareness of the operations of consciousness that produce moralizing contributes to greater curiosity about self and other. Beyond the deepening of my own self-awareness, this thesis, I believe, has more general scholarly value in that it sheds light on the inward dimensions of conflict performance in the operations of consciousness, particularly as relates to moralizing.

My research has identified moments of *reflexive shift* that altered the trajectory of my conflict behavior. Those moments enabled me to move from a righteous insistence on process to a more collaborative stance and from a condemnatory accusation that foreclosed engagement to a view that allowed for more complex appreciation of the views of others.

Writing this thesis has heightened my interest in a number of possibilities for future research within the framework developed by the Insight approach. Of particular interest are the conception of values as carriers, the relationship of moralizing and spirituality and the development of practical exercises to help in the correction of moralizing.

Finally, I conclude with a poem that I wrote during my conflict experience and which reflects the individual, systemic and spiritual elements of that experience and something of the more expansive spirit to which it led.

CHAPTER 2: Literature review

In this chapter, I articulate why I chose to examine my conflict experience through the lens of the Insight approach as opposed to some of the other distinctive and interesting contemporary approaches to conflict. To justify the selection of the Insight approach, I discuss its theoretical basis and its relevance to my research questions: *a) How does moralizing function in conflict behavior? b) How can understanding moralizing contribute to improved conflict performance on the part of both the practitioner and the participant?* Further, I review literature from other well-known approaches to conflict specifically, interest based, human needs, transformative, and narrative approaches, and indicate that, while of merit in their own right, they do not address my specific research question to the degree that is possible within the Insight approach. I thus show the validity of the Insight approach as the theoretical foundation for my thesis in terms of its high degree of complementarity with the questions I ask relative to other possible approaches.

The Insight approach

In this section, I introduce the conceptual resources offered by the Insight approach, beginning with its understanding of *the felt response to threat* as a driver of conflict behavior (Jull 2018). I discuss the Insight approach's model of cognition that explicates conflict behavior as a decision to defend based on a discernment of threat. The model of cognition represents the patterned flow of consciousness in which seven distinct operations and their performance ranges are identified and functionally related. I then explore the Insight approach's recognition of the social

dimension of cognition and conflict, particularly the concept of *roles*. I outline the three-step method through which Insight practitioners facilitate more expansive knowing, valuing and deciding that can elicit change. Further, I consider reasons for the selection of the Insight approach as the theoretical foundation for pursuing my research questions.

Picard and Jull (2011) state, “What makes [the Insight approach] different from other ... approaches is that rather than understanding conflict as a problem to be solved (interest-based), a moral undertaking (transformative), or the result of cultural stimuli (narrative), it understands conflict as a relational, emergent dynamic of meaning-making that generates defend-attack patterns of behaviour” (p. 157). On the Insight view, what generates these defend/attack patterns of conflict behavior is the apprehension of *threats-to-cares*. Picard (2017) indicates that the concept of “cares” refers to that which has personal and/or relational significance to individuals and groups. “Shap(ing) our actions and decisions”, our cares are registered through our feelings” (Picard, 2017, p. 3).

The Insight approach thus emphasizes the element of feeling or emotion. Picard and Siltanen (2013) state,

First, emotions not only lead insight mediators to threats-to-cares, they can also lead them to knowledge of the parties’ learning process. Second, for insight mediators to use emotions as pathways to deeper understanding within mediation, they must be willing to explore emotions as signposts of values and explore emotions as either a signal of an issue in the party’s

willingness to learn or as signals of particular moments in the learning process. (47)

On the Insight approach, then, conflict behavior is defined as a decision to defend that emerges from the discernment of a threat. When our conflict partner perceives our defense as itself threatening and they respond defensively, a pattern of interaction is established, which when left unchecked, “serve[s] to escalate and sustain conflict” (Picard, 2017, p.4). Insight practitioners see emotion as a doorway to the values that underlie our cares.

Let us explore more fully the theoretical foundation of the Insight approach to conflict and the method through which it engages conflict participants in the dissipation of conflict.

The Patterned Flow of Consciousness

The Insight approach had its first systematic expression in Melchin and Picard’s *Transforming Conflict Through Insight* (2008). This work developed the theoretical basis of the Insight approach by applying the thought of the philosopher and theologian Bernard Lonergan to conflict engagement. The Insight approach thus focuses on the interiority of conflict participants, specifically the “related and recurring operations” of consciousness. Insight practitioners believe that by becoming aware of these operations, conflict participants can become open to new possibilities of conflict resolution (Jull, 2018, p. 3). These “related and recurring operations” comprise a patterned flow of consciousness that J. Price 2018 articulates in the insight loop represented in figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Insight loop

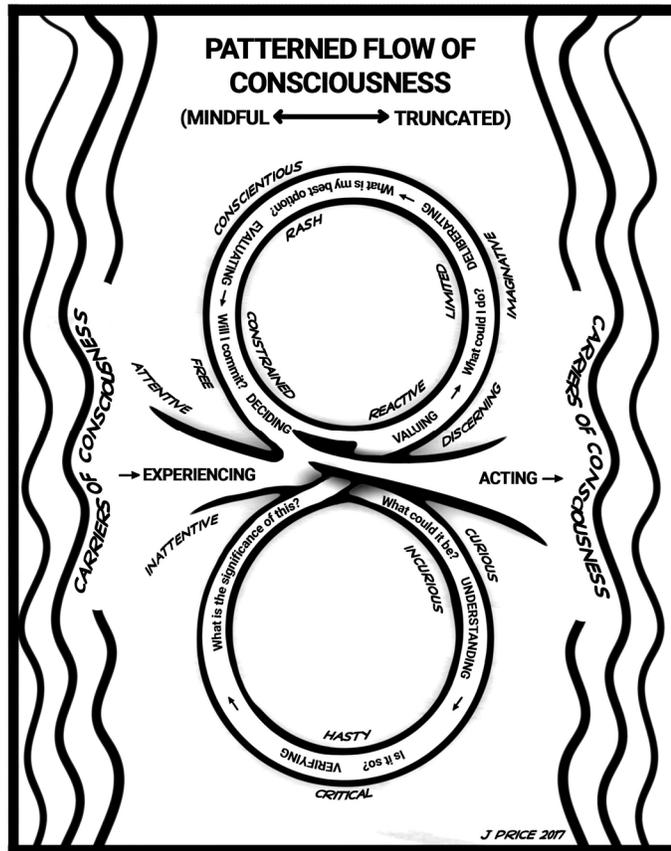


Figure 1. Representation of the operations of consciousness in the Insight approach. A detailed portrait of the operations of knowing, valuing and deciding. From "Method in analyzing conflict Behavior: The Insight approach," by Jamie Price, 2018, *Revista de Mediación*, 11, p. 4. Copyright 2017 by Jamie Price. Reprinted with permission.

As imaged in the Insight loop, Insight practitioners seek data in two sources:

- The data of sense, which arises through sensory experience and
- The data of consciousness, which arises through the experience of reflexive self-presence (J.

Price, 2018, p. 3).⁴ The conception *data of sense* comprises those things we see, hear, touch, taste and smell. The data of consciousness, by contrast, cannot be sensed in this way. Rather, it derives from the reflexive awareness of one's own mind. (J. Price, 2018). This reflexivity is functionally defined in the Insight approach in the operations of knowing, valuing and deciding (Jull, 2018). On the insight loop, our knowing is represented in the bottom circle (comprised of experiencing, understanding and verifying). These operations are functionally related, insofar as what we discern as significant (our valuing) depends upon what we know. Similarly, what we decide depends upon a process of deliberating and evaluating that is related to that which we discern as significant.

Following Lonergan, these functions are defined through the questions they seek to answer, the diverse operations they comprise, and the performance ranges that characterize the effectiveness of their employment (J. Price, 2018, p. 5).

J. Price (2018, p. 5) provides a useful table that charts the relations between question, operation and performance range as represented on the Insight loop.

⁴ That our knowledge has its ground in experience accounts for the resolutely empirical dimension of the Insight approach. Lonergan (2004) contends that method puts the mind “under the constraint of an empirical principle” and that “there is always required some empirical element in any judgment of fact or of probability” (as cited in J. Price, 2018, p. 3).

Table 1. Question, Operation, and Performance in the Insight Loop

QUESTION	OPERATION	PERFORMANCE RANGE
	Experiencing	Attentive-Inattentive
What could it be?	Understanding	Curious-Incurious
Is it so?	Verifying	Critical-Hasty
What is the significance of this?	Valuing	Discerning-Reactive
What could I do?	Deliberating	Imaginative-Limited
What is my best option?	Evaluating	Conscientious-Rash
Will I commit to it?	Deciding	Free-Constrained

Note. Adapted from From “Method in analyzing conflict Behavior: The Insight approach,” by Jamie Price, 2018, *Revista de Mediación*, 11, p. 5. Copyright 2018 by Jamie Price. Reprinted with permission.

Let’s explore the components of this chart in more detail.

Operations and Questions

Human *knowing* occurs through the operations of experiencing, understanding, and verifying. These operations are animated by questions that are oriented towards discovery. In seeking intelligibility, our minds are animated by the question, “what could this be?” Animated by this question, the process/operation of understanding discovers a hypothesis. In making a hypothesis, our minds spontaneously move to a process of verifying, seeking confirmation through the question, “is it so?” Once the operation of verifying has determined validity, or knowledge, our minds are spontaneously oriented to discerning significance. The discovery of significance occurs through the operation of valuing. J. Price (2018) defines valuing as follows, “Technically, valuing is an act of affective cognition that seeks as its object the answer to the question for valuing: What is the significance of this?” (P. 7). Indeed, we give value to our knowledge by asking the question: What is the significance of this (to me)? Significance is defined as “the gap or the fit –the

disjunction of congruence- between what you verify to be so in your current circumstances and what you would hope or welcome to be the case” (J. Price, 2018, p. 7). Price (2018) argues that a gap or a fit can be experienced in three areas: personal, practical, and relational.⁵ A gap in any of these realms is registered in the felt response to threat.

Consider a man who couldn't sleep and decides to go walking in the forest at two o'clock in the morning. Having walked awhile, he sees a strange glow in the distance and smells the faintest trace of wood smoke. Is someone having a bonfire? He walks a ways, the smell of smoke becomes more pronounced, and the glow of the flames now lights the night-time sky. Oh my God the forest is on fire! Oh my God, my cabin is not half a mile from here!

Having determined significance, (in the example, the threat to the forest and to his cabin) he enters a process of *deciding* what he's going to do, especially because he discerns a disjunction between his expectations and the state of affairs and thus he experiences a felt perception of threat. The process of deciding comprises deliberation, evaluation and decision. Deliberation focuses on the question: What could I do? What options do I have? Evaluation involves discriminating among options. Its guiding question is: What is my best option? The final element of decision-making is the process of committing oneself or not to the best option one has discerned.

⁵ In chapter four I will argue that this list should be extended to include systemic/structural significance.

I've got to do something: try to put the fire out, call the fire department, warn my neighbors, get my valuables out, find the cat. By the time I get to my cabin that fire's going to be much closer and much bigger. I better call the fire department first and then make sure my neighbours are aware. He takes out his cell phone....

In following the flow of consciousness represented in these operations, and depicted in the *forest fire* example, we see that our knowledge is not merely abstract or theoretical, rather it has a personal significance and forms the basis of action. In this way Insight theorists connect the operations of consciousness with human agency (Sargent, Picard and Jull, 2011).

Performance Ranges

Having discussed operations of consciousness and the questions that animate them, we now turn to their characteristic performance ranges. Our functioning of the operations of knowing, valuing, and deciding fall within the performance range appropriate to their operation on a scale from “mindful to truncated” (J. Price, 2018, p. 5) or from mindful to “elemental” (J. Price, 2018, p.7). Our *understanding* can range from curious to incurious depending on whether or not we are sincere and open in asking the question “what is it”. If we have a preconceived answer in mind, for example, we will tend towards the incurious. Our performance of *verifying* can range from critical to hasty based on whether or not we are taking the time to test our understanding against the available facts. If we are rushing to confirm what we already believe, our performance will not be optimal. *Valuing* can range from discerning to reactive depending on whether we

are exploring the significance of how we feel about an event, person, or thing or merely reacting to this feeling. *Deliberating* can range from imaginative to limited depending on whether or not we are considering a wide range of possible responses or solutions. Our *evaluating* can range from conscientious to rash hinging on whether or not we are taking the time to find the best options among the possibilities we have considered. Finally, our *deciding* can range from free to constrained based on the degree of agency or compulsion we experience in deciding.

The Social Dimension: Roles as Carriers of Consciousness

This focus on interiority, reflexivity and agency does not entail, however, that the Insight approach is grounded in an individualist conception of human being. Rather, our actions are significantly influenced by the social roles we play and the manner in which these roles carry our consciousness.

A carrier of consciousness is “whatever is guiding and directing the flow of your consciousness” (J. Price, 2018, p. 5). Price further argues that our “consciousness is always carried “(2018, p. 5). This means that what we are able to know, value and decide depends upon our social contexts. Our knowing, valuing and deciding are shaped by the roles we enact, the narratives that orient us within the cultural contexts in which we are situated. Jull (2018) contends that our consciousness is carried by the social roles we play (p.2). As children and parents, students and teachers, employees and managers, owners and workers, men and women, for example, we inhabit roles. Our sense of these roles is shaped by diverse factors such as our familial upbringing, our experience at school, our friendships, our moral religious and philosophical beliefs. These beliefs are likewise shaped by

the process of socialization.⁶ Picard (2017) states, “Knowledge acquisition and identity formation, referred to as social cognition, emerges from observing others within the context of our social interactions and experiences, and from imagining ourselves as others see us” (p. 4). This sense of role, then, is central to the operation of valuing. Inherent in our conception of role are norms and values through which we form expectations for our own behavior and that of others that guide us in the performance of the role. In this way values and moral norms carry consciousness in our conflict behavior even when they are registered pre-reflexively and we may struggle to articulate precisely what our expectations are (Jull, 2018).

Valuing, therefore, is at the heart of conflict. There would be no cares and no threats-to-cares without our sense that something significant is at stake. The sense of significance is a product of valuing. To address this dimension, Insight practitioners seek to elicit a more discerning performance of valuing by asking curious questions that verify the act of valuing, clarify its object, and differentiate its carriers (J. Price, 2018, p. 7).

As noted above, the Insight approach facilitates, in conflict participants, a reflexive awareness of the operations of their own consciousness: their knowing, valuing and deciding. It is worth recalling that as J. Price (2018) states, “... the objective of an insight question is not so much to discover *what* a person is thinking – the *object* of their consciousness- as it is to clarify *the way* they are thinking about

⁶ See chapter three and the discussion of the social nature of self (Chang, 2008) and the social aspect of writing about self (Denzin, 2014).

this object” (p. 6). Once participants become more aware that they are knowing, valuing and deciding, it affords the opportunity to perform those operations more expansively (to become more curious or discerning, for example).

When we experience threat, the flow of consciousness can be compact and elemental (J. Price, 2018, p. 7). In this truncated state, our valuing can become more symbolic than reflexive, expressive more of feeling than of discerning. Glenn Hughes (2011) argues that symbols, in this elemental expression, are by definition not fully understood. Further, it is not that “other central aspects of cognition, such as understanding, judging, evaluating, and deciding, are not also engaged— but they are engaged in a subsidiary way, as informing the appreciation of elemental meaning in the flow of experience” (Hughes, 2011, p. 39). He contends that the significance of the symbol is inadequately objectified, scrutinized and judged (Hughes, 2011, p. 40). One of the goals of insight questions is to interrogate such symbols in order to discern the valuing that renders them significant (J. Price, 2018).⁷ Through such questioning the conflict participant may become more discerning in their valuing and is thereby afforded the opportunity to discern a more than elemental significance. This unlocks the possibility of a more critical and creative response to disjunctions and congruities, to gaps and fits. In the case study comprising chapter four and subsequent discussion I show how through the insight

⁷ In the eloquent case study of J. Price (2018) “[Lily’s] elemental experience of the dishes is an emblem of a pattern of cooperation she finds unacceptable. ‘Roommates should not treat each other this way’” (p. 7).

approach I was able to move from righteous certainty to a much more expansive performance and more positive conflict behavior in the conflict in question.

My reflection concerning this case study has been guided by my research questions as noted in chapter one: *a) How does moralizing function in conflict behavior? b) How can understanding moralizing contribute to improved conflict performance on the part of both the practitioner and the participant?* I have chosen the Insight approach as the theoretical foundation with which to approach these questions for three central reasons. First, the main reason that it is an appropriate foundation from which to pursue my research questions is that it focuses on interiority. As I noted above, the group conflict in which I participated was in many ways resolved quickly and efficiently; successful mediation occurred through the intervention of Dr. Jull. However, while *externally* conflict was dissipated and we engaged a renewed pattern of cooperation, *internally* my consciousness continued to be carried by moralizing judgments of myself and others that constrained my willingness or ability to interact with them for several months after the assignment was completed. It is through my own inward reflexivity that the data for this thesis is generated. The Insight approach is useful for the purposes of this thesis because it has a well-developed framework and empirical method with which to engage with the data of consciousness (from which the conflict emerged).

Further, the Insight approach is useful in providing the analytical tools required to respond to the questions that guide this research. Through its articulation of the operations of consciousness, the Insight approach allows me to define moralizing as a form of valuing. J. Price (2018) argues, that moralizing

statements conflate the performance of knowing and valuing (p.7). Here the construct of the operations of consciousness both allow me to locate the interior origins of moralizing and provide a method to characterize the performance of the operations of consciousness in moralizing along the performance range the Insight approach has specified. This allows considerable critical control in maneuvering through one's own subjectivity and a rigor of description and analysis.

Finally, the Insight approach provides not only a method through which to explore and analyze my own interiority, but it also situates that interiority in relation to roles and patterns of cooperation. This allows me to articulate relational and systemic dimensions of my experience, in the interpersonal and institutional contexts in which I engage.

A survey of a variety of other conflict theories indicates further why it is that the Insight approach is acutely appropriate to the exploration of the questions I pursue.

Interest Based Negotiation

In *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement without Giving In*, Fisher and Ury advocate directing parties inward to discern their own interests and encouraging a collaborative form of negotiation in order to obtain their primary interests (Fisher & Ury, 1981). Like Insight theorists, Fisher and Ury (1981) encourage the participants to distinguish fact and value, asking participants to separate their fundamental interests from their perceptions of others. In this way they attempt to provide a more expansive perspective on the conflict than that expressed in positional bargaining. Fisher and Shapiro (2005) further develop the interest-based

perspective through greater receptivity to emotion. Here the authors are critical of dualistic approaches to reason and emotion, but nonetheless they maintain a distinction between negative and positive emotions which tends to limit this receptivity.

Nevertheless, the Insight approach is distinct from the interest-based approach in its more thorough link between emotion and value. As Picard and Siltanen (2013) state, "If emotions are pathways to parties' cares as well as indicators of how they learn, expressions of negative emotions such as the ones Fisher and Shapiro identify are not to be seen as inappropriate and needing to be managed but as pathways to explore and understand" (p. 49). The interest-based approach to emotion, then, limits the access the conflict practitioner and, therefore, the participants have to the values underlying the conflict. In this way they are unable to discern the full significance of the valuing and knowing that defines moralizing.

Further, the emphasis on competing interests does not deepen the reflexive awareness of the participants so that they may uncover the operations of consciousness operative in moralizing. The focus simply is not on the participants' reflexive self-awareness. Interest-based negotiation seeks agreement between the parties. It might be portrayed as asking the question: What should we do? My research questions focus on a wider range of questions that require an exploration of interiority that is not within the purview of an interest based approach. This has important practical significance. Agreements reached as a *modus vivendi*, for example, may be perfectly good mediations of the external aspects of the conflict.

However, as my case study shows the deeper significance of the conflict often resides in the interior operations of the conflict participants' consciousness. Without addressing this interiority, the interest-based approach will address conflict behavior but not conflict performance. As a result it may achieve only an apparent solution to the conflict.

Human Needs Theory

Human needs theory, like interest-based theories, moves beyond positions to more fundamental concerns. However, by contrast with interest-based approaches, human needs theory asserts that conflict emerges from more basic aspects of human existence than interests. By contrast with the compromise and negotiability characteristic of the interest-based view, John Burton, for example, portrays basic needs as non-negotiable: each of eight basic needs must be met or the potential for conflict increases. Burton lists eight basic needs: distributive justice, safety and security, belonging, self-esteem, personal fulfillment, identity, cultural security, and freedom (Danesh, 2001). Thus, like Maslow, Burton emphasizes human biological, psychological, and social needs. As I see it, the Insight approach recognizes each of these needs as significant. However, whereas human needs theory is focused on the objective aspects of conflict, that is, the objects pursued, the Insight approach is focused more on the subjectivity of the conflict participants, on the *way* in which they are using their minds as they discern the significance of their needs and how best to fulfill them. To address the question of moralizing requires extended reflection on my own interiority and it is only through this type of reflection that I am able to generate implications for conflict practitioners.

The Transformative Approach

Melchin and Picard (2008) articulate a conceptual affiliation between the Insight approach and transformative mediation in their focus on relationships (p. 78). There are nevertheless clear distinctions between the two approaches. The Insight approach has its basis in a systematic articulation of the interior operations of knowing, valuing and deciding that can be empirically verified by reflexive self-awareness. The Insight theory of change is that when individuals are more aware of their performance of the operations of consciousness, this enhanced reflexivity precipitates curiosity, and enables the generation of more critical and creative possibilities for the dissipation of conflict.

By contrast with the Insight approach's focus on the operations of consciousness, the focus of transformative mediation is substantively ethical, focused on producing empowerment and recognition. Bush and Folger (1994) assert a conception of the good life that involves a "major shift in moral and political vision" connecting transformative mediation "to an emerging, higher vision of self and society, one based on moral development and interpersonal relations rather than on satisfaction and individual autonomy" (p. 3). On their view, the productive response to conflict changes and transforms the parties as human beings and brings out "intrinsic goodness" of human beings (p. 82). They argue, "The case for the transformative approach rests on whether people believe in the value that drives it" (p. 279).

This focus on what the participants value is quite distinct from the Insight focus on the way the participant is performing the function of valuing. And the

distinction here is significant. First, the transformative approach involves a clearly articulated process for achieving empowerment and recognition. However, this process focuses on actions the mediator should take (adopt a microfocus, encourage deliberation and choice, encourage taking others perspectives) not on the conflict participant (Bush & Folger, 1994, pp. 99-104). For Bush and Folger (1994) the mediator, then, understands what genuine goodness is (p. 279) and is equipped with a map of interactive patterns through which they hope to guide the conflict participants (p. 103). But there is no account of how the conscious activity of the conflict participant is engaged by the mediator's suggestions, that is, of what is the empirical ground for what Bush and Folger (1994) call "the serendipitous moment of transformation" (p. 83).

As a result, the transformative approach provides at best partial conceptions of the operations of consciousness and of the pattern of interactions between conflict participants. For example, Bush and Folger (1994) state, "Disputing parties are typically unsettled, confused, fearful, disorganized, and unsure of what to do" (p. 85). This is often true but it fails to articulate the *righteous certainty* that threat can elicit and, therefore, it does not adequately address a central obstacle to curiosity. The Insight approach addresses more fully my research questions in that it can articulate precisely the operation of valuing and its performance range involved in moralizing and its righteous certainty.

Narrative Mediation

Narrative mediation "starts from the idea that people construct conflict from narrative descriptions of events" (Winslade and Monk, 2000, p. xi). The goal is to

reconstruct these narratives along less conflictual lines (pp. 3-7). There are significant continuities between narrative mediation and the Insight approach (Melchin & Picard, 2008). For example, both, in some ways, share an emphasis on the co-creation of knowledge (Winslade and Monk, 2000, p. 9) and in curiosity (pp. 78-9). Further, Winslade and Monk (2000) articulate a sense of the role of truncated functioning in conflict behavior. They state, "It is very common in conflict situations for one party's description of the other party to narrow considerably" (p. 132). Also, "The complexity of experience tends to get reduced to a small range of words that are applied to the exclusion of other possibilities" (p. 132).

Nonetheless, there are important distinctions between these theories that make the narrative view less conducive than the Insight approach to my research questions. By contrast with Insight's resolute emphasis on interiority and the operations of consciousness, Winslade and Monk (2000) focus on "externalizing conversations," which "reverse the common logic in both popular and academic psychology that increasingly focuses explanations for events inside the person" (p. 6). Externalizing conversations have as their goal the separation of the conflict from the parties involved (Winslade & Monk, 2000, p. 143,144) Rather than focus on the responsibility of the individuals involved, they focus on "the discursive conditions out of which the conflict has arisen" (p. 144). This externalization, they argue, dissipates the sense of blame and guilt conflict participants often feel. They state, "... the two persons involved are given a different condition. They are the recipients of the problem's malevolent design rather than the originators of its operations" (p. 144).

From my perspective, the interest in diminishing a sense of blame is important in the consideration of moralizing. Nonetheless, an important dimension of the resolution of the conflict at the heart of this thesis occurred in my awareness of my responsibility to become aware of the performance of my operations of consciousness in the conflict in which I engaged. My sense of responsibility involved not a sense of overwhelming guilt but rather a sense of agency: discerning that the key to improved performance lay within gave me a strong sense that change was possible. In a certain sense it might be argued that the concept of the operations of consciousness act as an “externalization” in that it constructs a structure that represents the flow of consciousness and not that flow itself. However, my experience of analyzing my conflict performance in these terms was phenomenologically an experience of enhanced reflexivity through which I came to understand myself better, particularly in terms of the operations of consciousness. In this light while there is significant overlap in terms of resources for the consideration of moralizing, the Insight approach seems better suited to my experience.

Thus, like transformative mediation, narrative mediation differs from the Insight approach in that, in principle, it cannot attend to the truncated performance of the operations of consciousness and the conflation of knowing and valuing that lies at the heart of moralizing.

This examination suggests the paucity of reflection upon moralizing that exists in conflict literature. Further, it shows how the Insight approach is an appropriate theoretical framework to address my research questions which focus

on the interior operations of consciousness that are involved in moralizing. It is hoped that in addressing the issue of moralizing this thesis will make a contribution both to the Insight approach and to the general scholarship on conflict.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

This thesis exploits the deep affinity between the Insight approach and autoethnography in their attention to interiority. The focus of the Insight approach is to elicit in conflict participants and practitioners a sense of curiosity about self and other, as regards their conflict performance. This curiosity is inherently reflexive, drawing the individual's attention spontaneously to their own interiority and then outward towards a more expansive and curious approach to the other. Autoethnography as utilized here presents a first-person narrative in which, as researcher, I focus my attention on my own subjectivity, as it is operating in relation to self and to the subjectivity of others.¹

The interweaving of the Insight approach and autoethnography provides for an exploration of subjective perceptions, emotions and values while at the same time maintaining critical control of the investigation of this data through rigorous analysis in terms of the patterned flow of consciousness in the functional relation of the operations of consciousness. The resultant data and analysis have a more than subjective validity as they can be verified empirically in the consciousness of both the participant and the researcher, as well as that of other conflict scholars.

In this chapter, I discuss the definition of autoethnography in its evocative, analytic and layered forms; indicate why I have chosen to employ a layered autoethnographical method; discuss the grounds for my choice of a narrative

¹ See Jull (2018) and Denzin & Lincoln (2008).

approach to autoethnographical writing; discuss the relevance writing has not only as the expression of research findings, but also in the process of research itself; and discuss the process of writing poetry as a dimension of my research.

Autoethnography

Autoethnography contains a diverse array of practices. Reed-Danahay (1997) differentiates three distinctive forms of autoethnography in terms of the degree of emphasis placed on (a) research process (graphy), (b) culture (ethnos) and (c) self (auto). My thesis emphasizes the process of self-reflection and thus falls on the *auto* side of this continuum as I pursue my research questions: *a) How does moralizing function in conflict behavior? b) How can understanding moralizing contribute to improved conflict performance on the part of both the practitioner and the participant?* In addressing these questions I am both researcher and subject. I am engaged in a reflective practice in which both theory and behavior are mutually informative and supportive. As Chang (2008) contends, “[Autoethnography] allows researchers easy access to the primary data source because the source is the researcher themselves” (p. 52). I am researching my own interiority. What I discover is enhancing my understanding of the theory and the method through which I examine myself: the Insight approach and autoethnography.

Holman Jones, Adams, and Ellis (2013) articulate additional characteristics that distinguish autoethnography from other kinds of personal work.

These include (1) purposefully commenting on/critiquing of culture and cultural practices, (2) making contributions to existing research, (3)

embracing vulnerability with purpose, and (4) creating reciprocal relationship with audiences in order to compel a response. (p. 22)

In this light, I wish purposefully to comment on and to critique the cultural practice of conflict engagement both on the part of conflict participants and conflict practitioners. Also, I wish to contribute to existing research by considering more fully than the extant literature the role that moralizing plays in conflict. Here I wish to make a contribution to the literature on conflict engagement generally, but more specifically to the Insight approach. To this end, I investigate my own performance in conflict particularly how I engaged in moralizing in response to a sense of threat. I am vulnerable here because I will be discussing aspects of my behavior about which I have felt a degree of shame and guilt, and elements of my performance which I sincerely wish to change. I hope that this resolute and emotionally honest introspection will make a connection with those who read this thesis, and that they might recognize in it some of their own struggles to engage in conflict with integrity, curiosity and compassion. Anderson and Glas-Coffin (2013) state, "Inquiry that is vulnerable, forthright in exploring the character weaknesses, struggles and ambiguities of the researcher can touch readers deeply and evoke an open heart and mind to self-scrutiny as well" (p. 75).

My reasons for choosing autoethnography as a method arise in part from its appropriateness to the data considered but also from reflection upon the historical and intellectual development of the genre. This reflection allows me to situate myself in relation to a debate (about what counts as scholarly valid forms of autoethnography) where terms have been refined and a degree of consensus has

been reached. This gives me both perspective on autoethnography, its possibilities and possible drawbacks, but also confidence that it is intellectually credible and that in principle there is no contradiction between its evocative dimensions and the analytical aspects of the Insight approach.

Butz and Besio (2009) argue that autoethnography in its current forms emerged from the crisis of *representation in* anthropological thought precipitated by *Writing culture* (Clifford & Marcus, 1986). They argue that a wide range of scholars began to “question the conventions by which other disciplines constituted the objects of research, gathered information about them (ethnographic and otherwise), and developed representations of reality that counted as knowledge” (Butz & Besio 2009, pp.1661-1662).

On their view, autoethnography emerged in a context in which realist conventions of writing were being challenged by the view that knowledge claims are constructed (Butz and Besio, 2009, p. 1662). In this light, the claims of the objectivity of the researcher were deconstructed by a clear sense of the role of power and subjectivity and of the “interaction of the researcher with the research setting” (p. 1662). They deftly describe the conception of autoethnography that emerged in this milieu: “One form non-conventional writing took was *autoethnography*, which radically foregrounds the emotions and experiences of the researcher as a way to acknowledge the inevitably subjective nature of knowledge, and in order to use subjectivity deliberately as an epistemological resource” (p. 1662). In contradistinction, then, to realist conventions, autoethnography developed first as predominantly evocative.

Evocative Autoethnography

For some, evocative autoethnography is a redundant term, so closely do they identify autoethnography with evocation (Jull, 2016, p. 21). Winkler (2018) catalogues a number of elements that various authors have stressed in characterizing evocative autoethnography. On his view, the evocative style is an emotionally self-reflexive alternative to the realist tradition in ethnography. It is meant to evoke feelings in the reader connecting them to the other. It utilizes a variety of forms affective, aesthetic and rational whose object is to move the reader (p.239).

The focus of evocative autoethnography is the articulation of the emotional dimensions of experience in a variety of forms. I utilize data from journal accounts written at the time to form a linear narrative as it best captures the trajectory of my learning over time. Likewise, I use detailed accounts of particularly strong epiphanic moments to indicate sudden shifts or deepening of perspective. This approach to experience employs the evocative style of autoethnography.

I have, however, also utilized the analytic approach.

Analytic ethnography

Jull (2016) contends that while analytic autoethnographers, by contrast, “Share evocative autoethnographers’ commitment to reflexivity as a visible and active researcher in the text, [they] value an approach that can transcend the specific context of the investigation to make broader, more generalizable knowledge claims” (p. 22). Anderson (2006) stressed the conceptual dimensions of analytic autoethnography, stating, for example, “The self-narrative of analytic

autoethnography is used, in part, to develop and refine generalized theoretical understandings of social processes ... (p.385). On this approach the autoethnographer uses “empirical data to gain insight into some broader set of social phenomena than those provided by the data themselves” (p. 386-7). Thus, Anderson (2006) states, “I use the term *analytic* to point to a broad set of data-transcending practices that are directed toward theoretical development, refinement, and extension” (p. 387)

The terms analytic and evocative have been refined through this debate as to what counts as valid scholarship in autoethnography. I believe that through this debate, a *rapprochement* has emerged. For example, Anderson states, “If in the end I remain committed to an analytic method of autoethnographic writing, I do so today with a greater sense of blurred boundaries as opposed to clear distinctions” (Anderson and Glas-Coffin, 2013, p. 64). Further, he has become convinced of the similarity that exists between the evocative and analytic approaches, and now sees them as existing along a continuum (Anderson and Glas-Coffin, 2013, p. 64). This speaks to what Butz and Besio (2009) refer to as the autoethnographic sensibility (pp. 1664, 1671).

Layered autoethnography

Layered autoethnography recognizes the blurred lines between evocative and analytic autoethnography and as a result it combines both the evocative and analytic approaches. The centerpiece of the evocative dimension of my autoethnography is a narrative account of my conflict experience. There are a variety of options to choose from in determining the form of one’s autoethnography,

memoir, poem, and so on. But I choose to articulate my experience primarily in narrative form because it best captures the arc of my experience and best allows me to show how the evocative and analytic elements of my autoethnography are organically intertwined.

Narrative

Latta, Schnellert, Ondrik and Sasges (2018) state, “It is the receptive character of knowledge-making, with participants seeing and acting accordingly, that authorizes inquiry. And it is a receptivity that is not instrumental or applied, but must be practiced (p. 4). This sense of the capacity of narrative to articulate reflective practice is commensurate with the view of Clandinin and Connelly (2000) that “Experience is what we study and we study it narratively because narrative thinking is a key form of experience and a key way of writing and thinking about it” (p.18).

I have chosen narrative form because it best articulates the distinct phases of the reflective practice through which I gained deeper reflexive awareness of my conflict performance through evocative and analytic autoethnographical writing and research.

In this narrative form, I follow Denzin (2014) who lists five narrative conventions characteristic of reflexive writing: a) People appear as characters in the narrative, b) Context is provided including place and situation, c) The events revolve around *epiphanies*, d) The events are ordered temporally, and e) There is a point or moral through which the story gives meaning to the experiences portrayed in the story.

This narrative framework captures very significant elements of my conflict experience. First, because I am focused on my own interiority and not that of my conflict partners, they appear in my case study as somewhat unidimensional characters (Vito, Carlo, and Kay). They are not subjects *per se* and I do not explore or make assumptions about their interiority. They are involved only in the rapidly resolved external phase of the conflict.

Second, the context of the conflict provides substantial content for my research. My analysis of the context of the (university) system in which the conflict is situated is crucial in my account. The conflict would have a very different shape if its roles and regulations were not those of a university setting, and if my partners in the conflict were not fellow students. This systemic analysis is one of the contributions my research makes to the Insight approach.

Third, the epiphanic aspect is a pronounced element of my research. Primarily, the deepening of my awareness of my conflict performance was precipitated by sudden reflexive shifts brought about through conversation with my thesis supervisor, Dr. Jull. It is important to note that neither Dr. Jull nor I are simply characters in this narrative in the way that Luca, Vito and Kay are. I am both researcher and participant and Dr. Jull is in crucial ways a collaborator (as supervisor commenting on various drafts, as the facilitator of insight conversations, as course instructor). The whole narrative is built around my access to my own subjectivity and Dr. Jull's graciousness in granting me access to hers. These inter-subjective elements are essential to the epiphanic quality of the narrative.

Fourth, this epiphanic quality was complemented by long periods of research, study and writing through which I processed their significance. The temporal dimension is thus an essential component of the conflict. The reflexive shifts opened the doors to personal insight that were analyzed over an extensive period. This time frame allowed a thorough exploration of my interior conflict performance and permitted an analysis that demonstrated that that they had more than personal significance.

Central to the generation and analysis of data in this thesis are the insight conversations between myself and Dr. Jull. These conversations – contributing both data and analysis- add a collaborative form of autoethnography, which, as Lapadat (2017) states, “adds a multidisciplinary lens to inquiry, thereby reducing the likelihood of criticisms about lack of rigor, narcissism, or self-indulgence”(p. 59).

Finally, my narrative is fueled by a personal quest for self-understanding and congruency between how I wish to behave and how I actually behave. A significant discovery in my research is that curiosity is the key to self-awareness and recognition of the function of moralizing in conflict performance. Curiosity deflates the righteous certainty that can cause and escalate conflict and that can lead one to judge others without humility or compassion.

Narrative, writing and self

Throughout my narrative I am aware that I am constructing a sense of self and other. In fact I have constructed multiple selves making choices about the emotional and intellectual details to include in my narrative. From the rich variety of emotions, ideas and experiences involved in the conflict, I have chosen those which I

believe best evoke a sense of my motivation and conflict behavior and which illustrate the operations of consciousness I performed. As indicated above I was guided in these choices by criteria asserted by Denzin (2014). In this light I focused on my own interiority and its epiphanic moments. These involved significant reflexive shifts that precipitated substantial insight. Following the Insight approach, I attended to the presence of strong emotions and used them to guide me to the valuing that informed them. I resolutely followed the path of my own interiority convinced that by attending to it I could evoke my truth and hoping that the analytical framework I had employed would make this truth significant for others, including conflict participants, conflict practitioners and conflict scholars. I have tested these choices through self-reflection and numerous re-writes, trying to be as precise as I can. Also, I have tested these choices with my thesis supervisor, to see if they ring true with her sense of what transpired.

I follow Chang's sense of the interpenetration of the social or cultural and the individual: "One does not exist as a psyche – a self – outside of culture; nor does culture exist independently of its bearers" (Chang, 2008, p. 52) Autoethnography therefore should reflect the interconnection of self and other (Chang, 2008). Further, I am aware that by writing myself, I am also writing others into the script. Denzin (2014) states, "As we write about lives, we bring the world of others into our texts" (p. 6). So I do not conceive attending to my own self as abstracting from or in opposition to other selves or to the social world. Rather I am expressing both my own self and my social nature albeit through the lens of my own subjectivity. My

assumption is that in the narrative both the self and other are constructs that bear connections to embodied selves.

One vivid example of this emerges in the portrayal of Vito, Luca and Kay. While I am focused on my own perception, I am nonetheless implicating existing individuals in the conflict, ascribing behaviors to them, and analyzing my response to *them* as individuals.

In considering how to deal with this matter ethically, I was guided by the Research Office at the university, particularly by its Ethics Review process. The Office indicated the importance of obtaining permission from the individuals in order to use the conflict in which they were involved as the subject matter for my research. Also it indicated the importance of disguising the identity of the individuals to protect against anyone outside the course recognizing the specific individuals from whom the representations are drawn. This intersection with official research regulations and guidelines was extremely helpful and bolstered the ethical conduct of the research.

The character of the *I* in the narrative, David, occurs in a certain sense as many selves or as a multi-vocal self; each self-differentiated by the role he is assuming: conflict participant, conflict practitioner, student, and philosophy professor, (each role implicitly drawing a host of others into the text). Differences of emotion and perspective inhabit each role. As participant I felt threatened at times, as practitioner I felt embarrassed or enlightened, as student I felt curious, as philosophy professor I felt stretched.

The explicit articulation of these selves emerged only through the writing of the thesis. As I explored and untangled the various threads of significance involved in my elemental response to the conflict, I became aware of a variety of roles and expectations that carried my consciousness in the discernment of and response to perceived threat. This articulation of the various diverse expectations made it possible to ask what roles or “selves” carried the expectations. The act of writing was an important component of both the generation of the data and its analysis. Thus as Richardson (1994) contends, “Writing is also a way of ‘knowing,’ a method of discovery and analysis. By writing in different ways we discover new aspects of our topic and our relationship to it” (p. 345). The forms of writing mirrored the differences among the roles: journaling, class assignments, thesis, evocative, narrative, analytical, transcription and poetry.

Poetry

Writing the poem with which the thesis concludes allowed me to articulate in condensed form the emotion intensity involved in the conflict, the struggle to gain reflexive self-awareness and conceptual control, and the spiritual horizon of my experience. In writing the poem I was guided by Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, and Bertsch (2003) who articulate a *listening guide* that distinguishes a multiplicity of voices to which one can be attuned in the process of writing poetry. Typically the listening guide is utilized with data obtained through interviews with individuals and focus groups (Koelsch, 2016). Transcriptions of these interviews are then subjected to four diverse readings in which the researcher attends to distinct authorial voices: the “plot” voice, the “I” voice, and two readings devoted to

detecting "contrapuntal" voices (Koelsch, 2016). In writing the poem "Child, Spider, Web" I followed a modified version of this approach reading my journal entries and insight conversations and focussing on the range of voices there. These voices occur as the child and the spider.

The poem likewise expresses the three categories of research-based poetry discerned by Prendergast (2009):

- 1) Literature-based poems which have theoretical or critical dimensions. I attempted to give the poems a systemic (in the image of the web) and philosophical (referencing Heraclitus) and theological (referencing grace) resonance. Likewise, the terms contraction and storm are drawn from conflict literature.
- 2) Researcher-voiced poems drawn from researchers notes to give expression to the research process. The emphasis of the poem as of the research process is on my own interiority and on a process of coming to enhanced self-awareness: "I see myself", "observe and learn", "weaving a life-sized map".
- 3) Participant-based poems composed from participant data. As participant I articulate aspects of the subjective dimensions of the research: a sense of threat ("Wind comes form nowhere", "I shrink with fear"); suffering, constraint ("I am anchored").² All the while I wished to write poetry whose aesthetic dimension was not undermined by didacticism.

My sense of the conflict was transformed over time by these differentiated acts of writing (analysis, narration, transcription, poetry). The immediacy of the conflict was expressed vividly in the journal entries. They reflected directly the

² See Koelsch (2016).

contraction I was experiencing and focused narrowly on my sense of threat. The early insight conversations with Dr. Jull began the process of expanding my perspective and improving, slightly at first, the performance of my operations of consciousness in the conflict. I began to view not only the actions of my fellow students but also my own actions in a more expansive light. The experience of analyzing the conflict through the insight method had the effect of transforming my conflict experience. This experience reflects the view of Anderson and Glas-Coffin (2103), "Insofar as the self is a multifaceted and fragmented social construct, our memories and understanding of events may shift significantly over time and context" (p. 69). Further, as Richardson (1994) states, "The researcher's self-knowledge and knowledge of the topic develops with experimentation with point of view, tone, texture, sequencing, metaphor, and so on (p. 360).³ She argues, "[This] deepened understanding of a Self deepens the text. The text will be less boring because the writer will be more consciously engaged in its production, more present to self and others" (p. 361).

Summary

Both the Insight approach and the autoethnographical approach emphasize reflexivity and thus provide powerful epistemological tools for articulating and analyzing one's conflict performance. Autoethnography provides a means to make explicit what is going on in one's consciousness and thus rather than being subjective and indulgent, provides access to the empirical data through which our

³ This informs my decision to include a poem as the conclusion of this work.

account of conflict performance can be grounded and systematic. The Insight approach brings a rigorous analytical method to bear on the evidence our consciousness provides but it also meets the evocative dimensions of autoethnography half way, with the significance its places on interiority and emotion. Together they support insight into the way our minds work when we moralize.

CHAPTER 4: Moralizing—A Case Study

Introduction: A question of interiority

On its surface the conflict at the heart of this case study is singularly unremarkable. It was a simple dispute over meeting time that was mediated and resolved quickly. This prosaic surface, however, throws into relief an interior conflict experience that was intense, complex and long-lasting. In order to grasp my own experience here I needed to access and articulate my own interiority through a method that could express with integrity my own subjective emotions, perceptions and motivations. This was the basis for my choice of an autoethnographical method.

The reader's access to my subjectivity is the product of what I choose to share, and there can be a myriad of questions about my choice of details and the veracity of my expressed reflexive awareness. In certain respects I can only hope that my narrative rings true for the critical reader. Yet this forms a kind of naïve quality control for me. I want my narrative to be believable to others, to portray my responses to events in ways with which the reader can identify. To that end I have tried to be honest about my conflict behavior even when it was contracted and not expansive, and I was not proud of my performance. My sense of accomplishment and pride in this work has, from the beginning, hinged on the degree to which I was able to tell the truth as I see it. The self-awareness generated and expressed in this thesis is hard won. It was a struggle to recognize the degree to which I lacked discernment into my own conflict performance. To shine a light on my own shortcomings made me feel vulnerable in that I was revealing my own weaknesses.

Interestingly, the more enhanced my reflexive self-awareness became, the more vulnerable I felt. Yet as I gained critical control in my self-reflection through the use of the Insight approach, I was able to be even more vulnerable. And frankly this vulnerability has been empowering.

But beyond narrative credibility, I believe my use of the Insight approach provides analytical intelligibility. Thus the reader can evaluate my account not only through the believability of its story but also through the intelligibility and coherence of its analysis of the story.

There is an organic connection between autoethnography and the Insight approach as my deepening understanding of the conflict reflects a deepening understanding of the Insight approach. The narrative thus relates a reflective practice in which there is a sustained to and fro between theory and practice in which development on one side fosters growth, development and change on the other.

These developments occurred for me not only in the isolation of my own subjectivity but also in creative collaboration with my thesis supervisor (and board) both through the writing process and through insight conversations with Dr. Jull in which we mutually developed and verified the significance of my experience.

It is important to note that in analyzing the conflict I will be focused on my own interiority and the operations of consciousness in which I engaged; I will not be concerned in any significant way with the conflict performance of other group members, their perceptions, feelings etc. I will, however consider the social dimensions of the conflict in terms of social roles and patterns of cooperation.

Through researching and writing this thesis, I have come to gain enhanced awareness of the moralizing I had engaged in about group members and towards myself. The result has been a deepened reflexive awareness and a growth of curiosity towards self and other. This deepening and emergent curiosity signals the subjective end of the conflict for me. My consciousness is no longer animated by moralizing judgments against my group-mates and instead I am deeply grateful for the experience and for their generosity in allowing me to use the conflict for my thesis.

Structure of the Case Study⁴

The structure of the case study is as follows:

1. *The spark*: This section expresses the data of sense and consciousness involved in the external onset of the conflict.
2. *Resolving the Conflict in its External Dimensions*: This comprises a description of how the group worked through the conflict, becoming sufficiently expansive to complete the assignment. *Resolving the Conflict in its External Dimensions* comprises

⁴ The case study covers a period of time, which includes, a) residency (October 2-October 13), b) post-residency assignment work (October 16- November 11), c) early stages of research (Dec-March 14), d) collaborative insight conversation (March 15), and e) drafting and re-drafting of thesis (March 16-Nov 3). I include the writing of the thesis because I continued to gain insight into the conflict's internal dimensions through the writing.

three phases: a) Insight analysis of the reflexive shift that gave rise to my first inklings of curiosity; b) group deliberating, evaluating and deciding concerning what form our assignment would take; and c) group deliberating, evaluating and deciding concerning what guidelines to adopt for our group work process. In these latter two phases, (b) and (c), I provide an Insight analysis in which I focus on how the group addressed the primarily practical gaps that we discerned and the somewhat more expansive operations of consciousness through which our knowing, valuing and deciding occurred. The focus of these phases is the pattern of cooperation we developed for our group work. By the end of the third phase the external dimensions of the conflict were *resolved* in that we had developed a process and then completed our assignment.

3. Resolving the Conflict in its Internal Dimensions: In this part of the case study I explore the internal dimensions of the conflict. At this point, while I had, with the other group members, resolved the external dimensions of the conflict I had not yet worked through the internal moralizing that contributed both to the cause of the conflict and its escalation. Thus in *Resolving the Conflict in its Internal Dimensions*, I analyze the growth of my deepening reflexive awareness and curiosity, post residency. It is in this phase that what I would call the internal resolution of the conflict occurs in earnest. In this analysis I come to a deepened reflexive awareness of the operations of consciousness and of my elemental performance of these operations. I discover that through the activity of moralizing, with its conflation of knowing and valuing, I had distorted my discernment of the significance of my own conflict behavior and that of others. I show the effect of insight conversations in

deepening my reflexive awareness and curiosity concerning the origin of the conflict and its resolution.

The Spark⁵

Although the case study emerges from a commonplace disagreement about scheduling, the banality of its genesis serves to make vivid its inner complexity and depth, and thus to foreground the significance of interiority in conflict behavior. I will present a dramatic re-enactment of the origin of the conflict in order to highlight this contrast between its innocuous beginning and its inner intricacy.

The setting: Wednesday, October 4, (a few days before Thanksgiving weekend). Four unsuspecting students sit in a breakout room.

*David: So why don't we have a chat about when we can meet to work on our assignment.*⁶

⁵ This is not an exact replication of the conversation but I believe it captures the spirit of what transpired. I have verified its authenticity against my recollection of my felt experience at the time and against subsequent conversations with group members.

⁶ Text that is both bolded and italicized expresses aspects of my interiority, emotions and glimpses of insight that informed what I was saying but was not expressly articulated in the conversation.

This seems to me like a good-natured suggestion to address a pragmatic gap. We needed to get the ball rolling. I have a sense that time is short and that we have a fair bit of work to do.

Vito: This weekend's obviously out.

This strikes me as unfortunate and unilateral. It is something we could come to a consensus on if it was the best for everyone. But I'm not comfortable with one person deciding. I don't want conflict at this point so I'll try to diffuse the way I'm feeling by letting the group know how I feel in a somewhat exaggerated, hopefully slightly humorous fashion.

David: I feel triggered by that response and I believe we need a better process to decide what times we will be meeting.

Luca: Come on David. Give the guy a break he just made an off the cuff remark.

So that didn't produce the desired result. I'm beginning to feel anxiety that this group will prove to be as difficult as I've thought since we were assigned to each other. I think I can avoid conflict here by sticking to process.

David: Whatever. But I still think a process will help us in doing our group work.

Luca: What do we need a process for, we're all adults, I think we just need to lighten up a bit and this will look after itself.

I'm now thinking that we're already experiencing the need for process, in the inability to discuss the issue I set out to discuss.

Vito: I take it back, I just thought people would want to spend time with their families; it is Thanksgiving.

David: Sure but as a group we need to decide how we're going to handle differing points of view.

ENTER Dr. Jull

Dr. Jull: Hey guys what's happening.

David: We're experiencing what happens when you don't have a good process in place.

Kay (to Vito): Wow you're doing it again. I was in a group with you before and you made problems there too because of your lack of commitment. I don't think you're being responsible; it puts burdens on the other group members.

Luca: Well we just witnessed a vicious attack on Vito.

David: I didn't attack

Luca: Not you ...

Kay: I thought you guys attacked Vito yesterday.

David and Luca: What?????

Dr. Jull: So it seems that there's a little storming going on here.

David: Just what process can help us deal with.

Luca: You need to just give a guy a mulligan, David. We all make mistakes....

David: I know that Luca Whatever Vito intended, I still think the point about process is good.

Kay: I can't get a word in edgewise here.

David: It's not all about you....

Dr. Jull: Wow. You guys have enough here to make this your role-play instead of the assigned work, if you want to.

Resolution of the Conflict in its External Dimensions

Reflexive Shift 1: Dr. Jull's Socratic Humor

In this section, I present my experience not in the form of dramatic-reenactment but rather in the form of narrative and detailed analysis that is focused on my interiority and the operations of my consciousness. For me the resolution of the conflict's external aspects began after Dr. Jull had, in the midst of the conflict, introduced the idea of using it as the material for our assignment. In the course of discussing the merits of her suggestion, Dr. Jull worked to dissipate the conflict by evoking our *better selves*, pointing us to positive behaviors we were showing despite our contraction, and coaching us into trying to engage each other with curiosity. I was straining to ask even one genuinely curious question of Luca: "So Luca what problem do you have with process?" At this point Dr. Jull intervened, "That's a more curious question," David, she said, [*pause*], "just slightly more, but more." I laughed out loud. For me this was the beginning of the resolution of the external dimensions of the conflict.

This was a very significant occurrence in my understanding of what was happening and produced what I would call a *reflexive shift*. As I use the term here, reflexive shift denotes a deepening of self-awareness – specifically of one's own operations of consciousness and their role in conflict performance – that results in a more expansive and curious approach to the conflict at hand. For the first time, I became slightly more reflexively aware and in doing so noticed that my

performance had been elemental and contracted. I realized that I had been moralizing, insisting on one rigid path, blindly unaware of my own feelings and those of others, and resolutely incurious. It was a deft use of humor on the part of Dr. Jull. I became curious about my own behavior, but this had little effect at this point on my curiosity about others. Nonetheless, it made me reflect on my own conflict behavior and become somewhat less insistent, a little more empathetic and I believe a better group member.

Patterns of Interaction and Group Decision Making: Deliberating, Evaluating, and Deciding

In this and the next section, *Resolution/Agreement/Cooperation: Deliberating, Evaluating, Deciding*, the data of the narrative I present is drawn from a journal kept during the time period in which the events took place. In the course of completing the assignment, the group verified this data with each other. I later utilized Insight analysis to name what I perceive as distinct operations of consciousness in our knowing, valuing and deciding.⁷ Through this I am able to indicate the degree to which I believe our performance of these operations was expansive, to articulate what I believe was the basis of the successful resolution of the conflict.

Once we took a little time for ourselves and to let the air clear, we met and began deliberating about what to do, about what shape our assignment would take.

⁷ This Insight analysis was completed in two stages (1) immediately after residency in writing a term paper on the conflict experience and (2) during thesis writing as I refined my sense of the operations and their functional relations.

We began a process that would ultimately resolve the *external conflict*. However, it is important to note that *internally* I was still contracted in my relation to my colleagues and, therefore, limited in my curiosity. Nevertheless, we began to cooperate in our deliberations about our options in the light of Dr. Jull's suggestion that we could use the conflict we had experienced as our assignment. We agreed on process, immediately stating that we would seek consensus but resort to voting if no consensus emerged, the proposal with the most votes winning.

In our deliberation we conceived of three possible paths. We could:

1. Ask for the group to be dissolved and the members to be re-assigned to other groups,
 2. Insist on working on the original role-play or,
 3. Accept Dr. Jull's suggestion to use the conflict we had just experienced. From my perspective the decision was left entirely to the group's discretion. I felt no pressure from Dr. Jull to choose any particular option, though I assumed she favored 2 or 3.
- Still we were limited in generating options.

We discussed significant ways to address practical and personal gaps we perceived. Practically, we experienced a gap between how thoroughly we wished to work on the assignment and the time constraints that were in place. However, given the gap, we felt that these options were the most viable given the severe time constraints we faced. Nonetheless, we were familiar with these constraints and this sort of gap from the ordinary conditions of group work. This gap, therefore, had a systemic dimension and that was inherent in the structure of the residency, that is,

it did not seem to be a product simply of our conflict. In some ways it appeared as a common obstacle and we were able to respond to this with a common struggle.

Our evaluation of the options drew on our shared social and academic values in an attempt to address the personal and relational nature of some of the gaps we faced. We felt that dissolving the group would be embarrassing and would put an unfair burden on other groups. In the end, from my perspective, we chose the third option (Dr. Jull's suggestion) because we recognized the challenge involved in working together in the wake of the conflict we experienced. We believed that using the group conflict would exercise our capacity for self-reflection in the moment of conflict and its aftermath. There was intellectual excitement and a sense that we could improve our understanding. I believe that our shared practical and ethical values carried the consciousness of each of the group members towards this cooperative deliberation.

Nonetheless, this revisioning of our assignment led to the apprehension of further threats. The shift from role-play to reality seemed significantly to increase the level of threat apprehended by myself and the other members of the group. The role-play had provided the protective shell of a thin veil between reality and performance. Further, in the role-play one had a wider choice in terms of role: observer, speaker or listener. If we chose to deal with our real conflict, we would each have to take on the role of conflict participant and conflict practitioner. This is especially challenging when dealing with your own conflict! Analyzing this new and more intimate conflict exacerbated the threats that I felt from my perception of the

group dynamics, and so I continued to work to get the group to develop some common guidelines about how we would proceed.

I wanted the group to function for each individual and to facilitate the actualization of our learning goals.⁸ I did not believe that deepening conversations among the members would be productive. Rather, I feared that they would lead to further conflict. And so at this stage my curiosity was directed only towards myself. While I wanted the process to facilitate self-discovery among the members of the group and the attainment of the assignment goals, I was not curious about the content of their self-discovery, their perceptions, feelings, thoughts etc. I was still contracted in my conflict performance, still reacting to a sense of threat.

Resolution/Agreement/Cooperation: Deliberating, Evaluating, Deciding

In this phase of *Resolving the External Conflict*, the group wrestled with guidelines for the group process in completing the assignment. Our success at deliberating about what process we would employ to complete our assignment arose, I believe, from the necessity of making a decision but also from our shared values and common struggle. From my perspective, this success also contributed to teambuilding as we realized that, despite threat, we could still work together productively. At this point we began to deliberate over what steps we needed to move forward.

⁸ These goals were to recognize our own habits, generate insights, and create more skills and choice in our engagement with conflict (course description).

Deliberating

Our deliberating was somewhat limited in that we considered only two elements as central to completing the assignment: fairness and conflict avoidance. Our goal was to give everyone a chance to work on their own performance at the depth they decided without entangling other group members.

Evaluating

A consensus formed around guidelines that we felt were central to the process. The guidelines were intended to allow us to complete the assignment and to support fairness while avoiding possible areas of threat. We would forego the original intention of the assignment, which was to provide feedback to each other, for a more individualistic focus on self-discovery.

The only area of expressed concern, a concern shared by all group members, was that our strategy of avoidance would limit how deep we would be going with each other. Here we were conscientious and expansive in our evaluating; we recognized the trade-offs we were making but accepted these as preferable to the alternatives. We ultimately drafted and accepted a list of guidelines with the proviso that we could make attempts at deeper understanding and analysis only if we felt secure enough in the workings of the group.

Nonetheless, we sacrificed depth of conversation and feedback for civility and completion of the assignment.⁹ There is no way to say with certainty what

⁹ It truncated the potential for learning through deepening conversations (Picard & Jull, 2011).

would have happened with another process or in the absence of process. The adoption of this specific process was a judgment call under conditions of severe time-constraint and significant stress. Nonetheless we recognized the cost of civility and conflict avoidance. It kept the peace but at the cost of a certain superficiality in our interpersonal discussion.

Deciding.

My understanding of the decision making process in which we engaged has changed over time. I am able to detect three distinct stages in this change:

1. On **October 7**, the day we had our guidelines meeting, and for some time after, I was concerned mostly with my own performance, with whether or not I was being too assertive in promoting the guidelines. So, again, I was back to asserting the importance of process but this time I had a clear sense that this was not simply a matter of principle but of protection for my own vulnerability. I tried to model this more expansive and vulnerable sensibility to others.
2. Throughout **Winter 2018**, as I worked on my thesis and reflected back on the conflict, I began to focus more precisely on the ways in which my assertiveness had interfered with our deliberation. We had not even asked what other possibilities there were for guidelines or for alternate approaches.
3. As of **June 5, 2018**, I came to believe that my previous phases may have ignored important aspects of the group dynamic and the decision-making process in which we engaged in the determination of guidelines. I was certainly being assertive in advancing guidelines. And I was quite clear that I was not prepared to go forward with the group without the security of at least some guidelines. However, the group

recognized that, even if we did not need process before, we needed it to complete the assignment and they accepted my facilitation of this discussion.¹⁰ At this point a number of gaps I had experienced were addressed as both the value of process and my role as facilitator were recognized.

The group as a whole decided on what guidelines were appropriate. There was an open democratic process of voting on the proposal. Also, we raised questions about its fundamental point, which was to avoid deep mutual engagement of each other's performance. The group decided to accept this but with a proviso, that allowed us to engage under specific circumstances.

Our decision to adopt the guidelines helped prevent further serious conflict because it allowed us to avoid working through our conflict performance directly with the other members of the team. It thus clarified our roles allowing us to be both participants and practitioners with ourselves as individuals but minimizing the dual role with reference to the other group members. The guidelines thus provided a stable basis on which to complete the assignment within a very strict timeframe, and to that degree, at least, proved successful. It helped establish a new pattern of cooperation with clear understanding of roles.

To my mind, this marked the resolution of the external dimensions of the conflict. We had harnessed our insight and passion, we were able to deal with minor disagreements that emerged along the way, and we cooperated in a genuinely

¹⁰ There was a process of roving facilitation, with different members facilitating different parts of the discussion.

respectful way. To top it off we managed to produce a reasonably good class presentation, *The Floodlights of Consciousness*, which focused on the origin of the conflict, the process we adopted to complete the assignment and the individual learnings this involved for each of us. It featured some striking and evocative artwork by Kay. We were all satisfied with the generous mark we received.

Resolving the Conflict in its Internal Dimensions

In the post residency period I returned to Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador and continued to work on the final course assignment in which I had to reflect on my own experience of conflict in the group work. At this point I connected with my fellow students online. My grasp of the conflict at this point was substantially the same as that expressed above. In the course of completing the essay, however, I experienced a second reflexive shift that opened a window to deepened self-awareness and led to the generation of the further data analyzed in this thesis. In this section, *Resolving the Conflict in its Internal Dimensions* I will first discuss this second reflexive shift. Then I will articulate the process through which I achieved a deepened awareness of my own conflict performance through Insight analysis, particularly in the form of Insight conversations conducted by Dr. Jull. These Insight conversations focus on my original perceptions of the origin of the conflict, particularly the threats-to-cares involved. I also re-examine the initial “Socratic” reflexive shift that contributed to the external resolution but this time

with a deeper self-awareness having processed the experience more fully.¹¹ It is through this enhanced reflexive awareness that the conflict was finally resolved in its internal dimensions.

Reflexive shift 2 “This is not an insight discussion” – Dr. Jull.

In the course of completing my individual term paper I had a phone conversation with Dr. Jull that proved revelatory. It was a late Sunday afternoon in early winter, the snow outside was fresh and crystalline, the sun was low in the sky, the light was gentle, the air crisp. I was feeling good about how my final paper was shaping up, and the curiosity that had been engendered during residency was guiding my seemingly thorough exploration of my own interiority and the operations of my own consciousness.¹²

MARNIE: How is your paper going?

DAVID: I’m pretty happy with it. I’m gaining some facility with the concepts, I believe. I’m excited about the discoveries I am making about my own performance.

MARNIE: That sounds good.

DAVID: I’d like to run some of my perceptions by you to see whether you can verify them in your consciousness.

MARNIE: Ok.

¹¹ While this “Socratic” moment was also the subject of an insight conversation, it seems to me to be most clearly expressed in expository form.

¹² The following is a transcript of the basic thrust of the conversation based on notes taken at the time.

DAVID: I've been thinking about why the conflict got so intense for me. And it seems that particularly with Kay's behaviour it was a bit like my worst fears were being realized. I mean her attack on Vito was pretty vicious.

MARNIE: Hmmm. Before I respond I just want to be clear that this is not an insight conversation.

DAVID: Okay, so she's going to tell me what she really thinks. That's really nice. It must be a bit of a risk for her to be stepping out of the more structured and formal confines of an insight conversation. She clearly wants to help me see something and I expect she'll be more directive than elicitive. (This discernment happened instantaneously). I hope this isn't too painful.

MARNIE: I think you should look at the terms you are using to describe her action. There seems to be a lot of valuing going on there: "vicious, attack". I did not perceive her behavior as vicious. She expressed her anger directly but I did not perceive it as vicious.

DAVID: I am given pause by her sense of the evidence. I trust her judgment, but it is so disconcerting to be questioned on whether an "attack" had occurred. Immediately, I discerned that my contracted state may have weakened my power of observation - even more dramatically than I had previously realized.

Also, her suggestion that I be more curious about the use of the word "vicious" brings me to an acute awareness of how value-laden my description and, therefore, my perception of the conflict was/is.

This is extremely disorienting. It seems like the bottom is falling out of my self-understanding. I am almost breathless and somewhat dumbfounded, deflated and almost nauseous.

I guess I have some more thinking to do.

MARNIE: Let's be clear I'm not disputing your discernment. I am letting you know that mine is different and suggesting you take a look at your own valuing here.

DAVID: Got ya

What still resonates is the sense of disorientation that resulted from the conversation. It was as though I were watching myself being turned around, being shown where to look. The preface "this is not an insight conversation" focused my

attention. She then directly pointed me to the terms I was using as descriptors, i.e., “vicious” and “attack”. She indicated that this was not her observation and suggested that I should reflect especially on the term “vicious”. I felt that I was taking a wrong step and that she wished to help me see a better path. I detected her concern about the directiveness of her approach but also, and more so, concern about my wellbeing. I appreciated that she was taking a risk for my benefit. This reflexivity itself elicited curiosity. It directed my attention away from the moralized object and inward to the operations of consciousness. I became curious about other possible differences of perspective.

This reflexive shift illuminated *the degree* to which I was blind to the role my moralizing had in my understanding of the conflict and its significance, and in my deliberating, evaluating and decision-making. I was also blind to their persistence. As a result of our phone conversation, I began to see my perception of Kay’s actions in a different light. I began to see that I had simply borrowed Luca’s characterization of her from the conflict encounter to serve my own moralizing purposes. I also began to empathize with what I perceived as her struggle to speak her truth in that situation – my performance of the operations of consciousness was so elemental that I had literally no curiosity about her behaviour at the time of the conflict. My reactive valuing had disengaged me from any sort of empathetic response to her concerns – I was trapped inside the truncation of my own performance and had seen her actions simply as threats. This reflexive shift and enhanced self-awareness precipitated the possibility of enhanced awareness of Kay. As M. Price (2018) states, “Curious questions targeted at eliciting the threat registered through our

valuing and the decision to defend against it produce the uncertainty necessary to reengage the critical thinking that has been compromised” (p. 5). Dr. Jull’s questions served to engender a deepened curiosity in me and I began to re-evaluate not only my moralizing about Kay but also about Vito and Luca. This curiosity led to the internal resolution of this conflict through the completion of the term paper and then much more thoroughly in the writing of this thesis.

In the next sections I provide an Insight analysis of the origin of the conflict in two phases, which indicate how my felt sense of threat was heightened. I explore in brief the threats that I discerned and the valuing, deliberating, evaluating and deciding which determined my actions. Further I examine the practical, personal and systemic gaps that emerged as the sense of threat grew.¹³ Following this analysis I will discuss how these insights were deepened and verified in Insight conversations with Dr. Jull.

Threats to Cares 1: A gap in how I thought Vito should act as a group member and how I perceived him to be acting

The first inkling of conflict, its first phase, occurred in my response to Vito’s assertion that the weekend was “obviously out” for meetings. It is remarkable how quickly I moved through understanding and verification to valuing. Almost instantaneously, I answered the question “what is it”. I understood this as a *unilateral* decision about the group’s schedule; I discerned that my *agency* in this

¹³ Though more precise and developed, the insights in these next two sections, prior to the insight conversations, are substantially consistent with the insights expressed in the term paper I wrote in November 2017.

matter was thwarted. I was extremely hasty in verifying my understanding. I read the tone of his voice, his body language, and his facial gestures to suggest that he was being serious, that the weekend was out of the question. Further, the reason suggested, "because it was a holiday," seemed, on its face, to be *weak*. My consciousness here was carried by a sense of how we ought to perform our roles as group members.

I immediately valued his action in this light and determined the significance of the statement he had made, the action he had taken. I believed that I was dealing with someone who either *did not understand* the basics about group work or who *didn't care* that much about them. This appeared to me to be inconsistent with good group-work, which, to my mind, involved collaboration and cooperation, which in a group setting would be facilitated by simple and transparent process. In my opinion, lack of process often favored the most vocal in the group and had the risk of not allowing some people to talk.

The significance I discerned was that Vito was not acting as a group member should. This narrowed my focus considerably and, I believe, resulted in truncated performance of the operations of consciousness. In my *deliberating*, I considered only two options: Engaging Vito in direct conflict (calling him out) or avoiding conflict by attempting to smooth over what I saw as a breach of manners and good process through the use of mild "humor." My *evaluating* of these limited options was relatively conscientious in choosing what I took to be the more peaceful approach. I felt I had to do something, so I committed to commenting that I was triggered by a

picayune matter (*deciding*). Still the situation showed no improvement and, in fact, it seemed to worsen.

I was anxious that we not proceed without a process because I was concerned about how some of the group dynamics might affect Kay, and about the negative effect that her getting angry could have (*valuing*). I was concerned about the wellbeing of the group and I realized that one of the group members, me, was feeling extremely worn and likely not on top of his game in terms of awareness of others. I was afraid that direct conflict in this state would lead me to respond in an overly aggressive fashion. But I was prepared to live with what I perceived as differences in *maturity* around the table (*evaluating*) and attempted (*deciding*) to avoid conflict on this matter by light-heartedly saying: “Oh wait a minute, this is triggering me a little. I feel we need a better process for making these decisions.”

Threats-to-cares 2: Personal, Practical, Relational and Systemic gaps.

The threat I felt at this phase of the conflict reveals the creation of a defend pattern that exacerbated the conflict (Picard, 2016, p. 16). I had felt threatened by my anticipation of an unfortunate future based on my sense of the possibilities for emotional outburst, given my understanding of the group dynamic. The response I received from Vito, with Luca chiming in, exacerbated the cycle of threat and defense response.

I felt personal, practical, relational and systemic gaps at this point. Personally, I was concerned with losing my temper. Practically, I was concerned that I may not do well on my assignment. Relationally, I feared for our collegiality. Systemically, I thought the principle that process is important (to group work) was

not being recognized. Further, I felt that I had made an appropriate gesture to take on the roles of initiator for group discussion and facilitator for this initial phase. I felt that my gesture was disrespected. This heightened my sense of threat considerably and moved it from the relatively impersonal threat to good process, to more personally significant threats to my sense of self, and my self-image as a rational facilitator.

Insight Conversations

This next section considers the same data of sense and consciousness that is the basis for the analysis of threat above. Threats-to-cares 1 and 2 above were analyzed through a reflexive analysis of the operations of consciousness in my conflict performance. An insight conversation between my supervisor Dr. Marnie Jull and I generates the current section.¹⁴ Insight conversations, also known as “deepening conversations” are intended to help conflict participants gain insights that shift their pattern of conflict behavior by enhancing their reflexive self-awareness. To this end the insight practitioner employs an array of active listening skills, including curious questions that draw attention to the conflict participants’ performance of knowing, valuing and deciding in their conflict behavior in an effort to facilitate the deepening of the participants self-awareness in order to overcome the contraction of righteous certainty (Picard & Jull, 2011, p. 153). Deepening

¹⁴ This Insight conversation was held March 15, 2018. It was recorded using Blue Jeans technology and I subsequently transcribed the conversation. It is used with permission from Dr. Jull.

conversations thus facilitate a learning process whereby new creative possibilities for action are generated whereby “cares can be maintained without necessarily generating threat”(Picard & Jull, 2011, p. 158).

It provides a vivid example of the Insight approach: treating feeling as a symbol of value, examining valuing as the source of significance, and correlating valuing and deciding. In the course of the conversation I gain further insight into the anger I felt, the importance of role in carrying my consciousness and informing my valuing, and the options for action that I was unable to consider in my contracted conflict performance.

Valuing: Getting to the Feelings¹⁵

MARNIE¹⁶: ... so you're noticing kind of the effects of the feeling. But the feeling, what were some of the strands of the feelings.

....

I feel challenged here. I am trying to express my feelings and Marnie is pushing me to look more deeply into them. It is not easy to apply the distinction she is asserting here between feelings and their effect. I'm struggling with what she is trying to get at. She is not only challenging but encouraging, there is a sense that we're getting there. And yet I feel a

¹⁵ Text that is both bolded and italicized expresses aspects of my interiority, emotions and glimpses of insight that informed what I was saying but was not expressly articulated in the conversation.

¹⁶ I have chosen to refer to Dr. Jull by her first name in these insight conversations because it better captures, I believe, the informal co-creation of knowledge that transpired. I believe that to refer to her formally would undermine this representation. .

little dissected, I find it hard dealing with my own interiority with the sense that someone else has an insight into my behavior that I do not have, or do not have yet. This is a little frustrating. I am aware, however, that Marnie intends this for my own good, for my own learning. I am aware as well that I trust her intentions. And then suddenly...

DAVID: *I felt anger, I mean I was angry. I was angry and I felt you know I guess. You were saying the other day, you used the word "small," and I think that's a word that comes. I wasn't being recognized and I felt diminished in that way. The personal: I just didn't feel I was being respected, I felt disrespected*

The feeling of disrespect washes over me and ignites a visceral memory of the anger I was feeling. I am sure my blood pressure is rising. This seems to me to be a very basic, very elemental response.

MARNIE: *I see.*

DAVID: *And in a way. I felt my well-meaning gesture was being not well received and also I felt the threat that if we can't agree, on what I took to be very basic process, where the heck is this going to go.*

MARNIE: *So is it two parts? So the anger ... you saying, when are we going to meet? That's the precipitating event of the anger.*

DAVID: *The response was that, "Well we're not going to meet this weekend a sense that that was obvious." ... I kinda said ... I thought I was being half playful. Because I said first "Okay, that triggers me a little bit and I clearly wasn't triggered at that point."*

....

MARNIE: *Right. So we've already got a complex system going here, a bit of a foray into process, knowing you'd have to do something on process because of the complexity of the group, "So let's do a little on process. So let's manage the process;" then the gesture of "when are we going to meet;" then the response "Well we're not going to meet this weekend," which came with the tone "that's obvious."*

I discern that she understands my perceptions of the facts of the situation. And her portrait is making it even more vivid to me.

DAVID: *Yes.*

MARNIE: *Then being able to have enough equipoise to say OK that's kind of triggering me, so that gesture, and then when the gesture wasn't received that really got the anger going.*

Wow: I had equipoise. I was not a complete jerk. I was making a generous gesture of sorts. This recognition from Marnie makes me feel a stronger sense that I was trying my best and was not acting in a totally obnoxious or objectionable manner. I realize as well that I had been moralizing about my own performance and behavior.

DAVID: Yes

MARNIE: So say more about that anger at the gesture not being received.

Having gotten more clearly to the feeling of anger, the complexity of the event and my response comes into focus and I am intellectually stimulated and wish to ensure precision in my account.

DAVID: It's so complex; it's a very complicated thing. And when I said "obvious," for the sake of clarity, there was the sense that it's obvious in the tone, I took you to be saying it, in the sense that "anyone should see that" but also there was the sense that that "it was "settled."

MARNIE: Aha, better, aha No space there

DAVID: Exactly. I just felt, excuse the language, what the fuck am I going to do now? How am I going to have even this conversation?

I can feel the sense of frustration that I felt at the time. My teeth are gritted and I'm shaking my head. A wave of exasperation washes over me.

MARNIE: Right

DAVID: If we can't even say we need a process.

I have a felt response of exhaustion here, a sense of the helplessness that arose from my perception of the failure of others to respond to the situation rationally. I am genuinely worked up.

MARNIE: Right

DAVID: And even now thinking about it I'm getting worked up, thinking about it.

My feeling of anger is an object for me here. It's like watching a movie about my experience, emotionally compelling but with enough distance to contemplate its relevance and meaning. I feel myself becoming more curious about it, not simply reliving its intensity.

MARNIE: That's great.

If we attend to the beginning of the conversation, we see Dr. Jull bringing my focus to emotion in an attempt to help me articulate what is of significance. She is working to help me “gain insights into the meanings that cause the strong reactions that fuel conflicts” (Picard & Jull, 2011, p. 158). If we attend to the end of the conversation we see the anger resurfacing in my consciousness. This retrospective feeling emerges in clear distinction from the behavior of Vito and other group members. That I can re-experience the anger in the absence of the group and without being angry at anyone in particular, serves to differentiate the feeling from the behavior of my fellow group members. It is my performance and my discernment that is in question here, my own interiority. I am moved beyond the truncated knowing and *choice-less* choice that fixed me in a pattern of response to the conflict and kept me from a robust and self-aware performance of the operations of consciousness (J. Price, 2018).

When the conflict was occurring, I became angry as I perceived my gesture of suggesting process and my “light-hearted” attempt to smooth over what I took to be Vito’s unfortunate behavior went unrecognized and unreciprocated. I guess I expected Vito to say something like, “You’re right that was a bit rash on my part. What do others think?” And I expected Luca to respond by saying, “Okay what does good process look like to you?” But I perceived both Vito and Luca to rebuff this gesture. At this point in the conflict, I became relatively undifferentiated and elemental in aspects of my response (J. Price, 2018, p. 7).

I became angry and decided to respond by restating the logic of my position, that is, the superior rationality of establishing a process. However, while believing myself to be the soul of rationality, I was, in fact, becoming increasingly more anxious, frustrated and angry. I had a sense both that I was constrained and that, while I could not move myself, others were forcing me into a direction that would be harmful. I was feeling a strong threat at this moment of the conflict. My decision making is severely contracted. The only option I can see is to “endlessly” repeat my point. I was not in any way attempting to understand why others were responding in the way they were, and I made no effort to take the temperature of the room, or to show curiosity or concern for anyone else. Instead, I treated them to the jack-hammering repetition of a sermon on process. While certain that I was trying to show the light of process, I was, in fact, taking away space from others in the group. Kay, for example, stated that she “can’t get a word in edgewise.”

The Insight conversation with Dr. Jull clarified the nature of my emotional response, i.e., that it was anger. I was trying to do the “right thing” to help the group find a process that could facilitate a productive working relationship. But, as my anger revealed, the response to my attempts left me feeling a sense of threat and I approached the matter in an angry and unhelpful way. Recognizing this dynamic through the collaborative conversation with Dr. Jull, I began to look more deeply into my own interiority in order to see what the source of my response was.

Valuing: Finding the Significance

What is the valuing that related to the emotional response to the threat(s) I feel? As the insight conversation with Dr. Jull proceeded, we begin to discern the

expectations I carried concerning how the good of the group required each of us to perform certain roles.

MARNIE: ... not only were you affected in your role, someone kind of usurped your collaborative gesture ...

David: Yes, that's right.

MARNIE: ... for a unilateral one, and then it is also a repeat of a kind of futile or a rejection of that role again and then even more so there is some risk that what you took to be a socially oriented acting-on-behalf-of-the-group was taken to be advancing a personal need. And particularly when you saw that the other person was advancing their particular needs. That was what made it. There was something quite explosive about it; there was quite an intensity that you were experiencing at that time.

DAVID: It became that yes.

MARNIE: ... am I following you in discerning the significance of all that.¹⁷

MARNIE: How do you feel now, how do you characterize the intensity and what made it so intense?

I begin to approach the conflict through the lens of two questions: a) What caused the emotional intensity of the encounter? b) What values are signified in the emotion? As I deepen my self-reflection, I see that my expectations about our social roles, in this context the role of student, is carrying my consciousness here.

The outrage stemmed from my expectations about the ways individuals should act in their roles as group members, i.e., as collaborators, and cooperators, supportive of process because it facilitates and enhances collaboration; collaboration being essential to the co-creation of knowledge. I experienced a

¹⁷ Here Dr. Jull is verifying her discernment of what is significant for me.

painful gap between my sense of what was appropriate and the way my colleagues were performing or might perform their social roles.

I believed that I was fulfilling the responsibilities of this role but that my collaborative gesture to facilitate the initiation of group work had been rejected. Further, my attempts to smooth over what I took to be Vito's unilateral approach was rebuffed. In the response to my efforts, I perceived a gap between the importance I placed on process and the importance Vito and Luca placed on process.

The significance of the gap I perceived in terms of expectations for process was an important insight:

DAVID: ... Really, there was a sense too that there was really a pedantry involved on my side. That we can do this far more spontaneously, and naturally and process people are always so finicky, and all that kind of thing and it was like guys do you really see where this is going for God's sake. Can you see what's happening here.

MARNIE: So a sense of it, the content not being that important but a varying in the significance; where you're seeing [this] as significant to the success of the group and others not sharing that, generating that gap, that gap between what you consider and what they consider. Then there is also the gap of your idea of wanting to be seen as a good person in this and [you feel] relationally moralized as being a pedant rather than a facilitator and that's a very contracting place to be in.

DAVID: Right

MARNIE: So at this point you are insisting on process and it seems to you that both Vito and Luca are thinking that process is not so important and that you are being "finicky" in insisting on it. Which led to what?

DAVID: Redouble my efforts insisting on process, just a doubling down at that point. (Laughing)

I am simultaneously amused and slightly embarrassed by my stubborn ham-fisted insistence. I feel a strong sense of my own clumsy lack of mastery and my obtusely repetitive assertion.

MARNIE: Right. And what were you hoping to be better?

DAVID: I hoped that people would stop and just say, "Yes boy for the love of God. Just do it!"

I now see as laughable the hope that repeating the same thing over and over could be successful. It underscores the contraction and lack of self-awareness that had overtaken me.

MARNIE: You're hoping that by re-doubling your efforts, so that maybe perhaps you hadn't said it forcefully enough or maybe they didn't understand. Then you would say it again and they would.

DAVID: Yes.

MARNIE: That was what you were hoping and what was the downside of that?

DAVID: It just exacerbated whatever happened initially whatever the dynamic was it just got more of the same.

MARNIE: Right, it reinforced it so you found yourself more contracted into the role of pedant.

DAVID: Right

I have a strong memory of being pushed, of feeling things were getting out of control, of being misinterpreted and of being constrained and unable to correct the misinterpretation, of, instead, encouraging further misinterpretation.

MARNIE: And contracted into the role of process person, which you were in some ways taking on then.

DAVID: Absolutely.

MARNIE: And that's that horrible feeling of taking on the role you so wanted to reject.

DAVID: Right

The horrible feeling here involved a deeply personal threat to my capacity to decide and act. I felt constrained by both the inward and outward dimensions of the situation. Inwardly, I had been choicelessly carried into my behavior through

dogmatic decision-making. Outwardly, I experienced being socially framed into the role of insistent pedant.

Through the Insight conversation I have become more reflexively aware of the way in which emotions signify values. Also I have verified in the data of my own consciousness that these values are carried in the social roles that we play. My sense of self as a facilitator and my sense of the way group members should behave reflect social and individual norms about how we should conduct ourselves in the patterns of cooperation we engage. Discerning a gap between my valuing and the performance of group members, I attempted to fill the gap while I was in a defensive posture and performing the operations of consciousness in a truncated or elemental fashion. As a result, I was unable to show the genuine curiosity that could have more effectively secured a fair pattern of cooperation or engaged the conflict with greater artistry.

Deciding: Correlating Valuing and Deciding 1

Having differentiated the performance of valuing, Dr. Jull and I now proceed to “critically correlate the valuing and deciding operative in the individual’s conflict behavior” (J. Price, 2017, p. 8). This occurs through a number of very precise questions towards the end of the insight conversation:

MARNIE: And so then there was something that made it the most viable choice at the time. What were your other options?

DAVID: I couldn't think of any.

I am interested in the clarity of the analysis here, I see vividly how unimaginative my deliberating was and how rash my evaluation. I feel both a rush of insight and a feeling of pity for my dumb performance.

MARNIE: Ahuh. Nothing.

DAVID: Not really, at that angle. I guess if I had asked the question which I hadn't, there would have been a variety of things that could have been done. But I wasn't asking those questions at that time.

MARNIE: Ya, and so looking back like what could you have done.

DAVID: The simple one would have been to say, "Are you serious, you really don't want to meet this weekend, its impossible for you?" Or, you know, "Why is it that really that important?"

The duality of insight and a feeling of past dumbness continues.

MARNIE: It's also interesting to me you know that's a sort in conflict behavior redoubling your efforts is not necessarily a bad thing. You could have hit him or run out of the room or done a lot of other things.

Again, I appreciate Marnie's pointing out the positive dimension of my response. I begin to be more expansive in my perception of myself.

It has become apparent to me that, as a result of my somewhat reactive and elemental valuing, my sense of the available options was unimaginative. My deliberation on what could be done considered very few options. Yet my decision to insist on process showed at least a somewhat conscientious, though ineffective, effort to discern the best of what I perceived to be the available options. This recognition of the conscientiousness of my efforts by myself and by Dr. Jull is expansive for me. I realize that just as I had been contracted in my approach to others, I was also contracted in my approach to myself. I had focused on my own poor performance just as I had judged their performances as poor. But even in my angry bumbling, I was pursuing a good as I saw it. Just as I moralized about others, in my contracted state, I had moralized about myself as well.

MARNIE: And so in dogmatic decision making there is something in the way that your mind is carried around we're going to have this as a logical argument and that has worked successfully in many ways

DAVID: That seems right.

MARNIE: ... that's been a go-to decision that's worked successfully, it been a successful technique, so that's the dogmatic deciding, you're carried in the way that has served you in the past.

DAVID: And in that there's also a fear of being too aggressive, of being too assertive, of bullying and just really straining in the past few years to see that that itself can be a form of bullying because not everybody is going to address issues in that way and so your forcing a kind of logic onto people. And it becomes so contracted because it's not aware that you need different strokes for different folks around the table.

MARNIE: Interesting there. Is that even considering the other forms of contracted behaviors you're avoiding being bullying by attempting to convince by logic, you didn't insult him. So there's a number of ways you're choosing the least bad conflict option that was available to you.

DAVID: Yes, I think that's fair, that's interesting.

MARNIE: Ya, that does seem interesting, ya, so you're not being too bullying by being logical.

....

DAVID: So the least bad conflict option right?

My consciousness was carried by a dogmatic decision towards the assertion of process based on my past experience in numerous leadership and facilitation roles. It emanated in part from my recognition of the steep learning curve I had had in those roles, precisely in terms of creating space for others to speak and of curbing my own assertiveness. It was a response to threats I felt not only in relation to the potential failure of the group but also about my own capacity to undermine good functioning through being too assertive. Though constrained it was a conscientious effort not to bully and to prevent others from bullying. Nevertheless my pursuit of

this good, at a time when my performance of the operations of consciousness was truncated, achieved the opposite of what I intended.

Reflexive Shift 1 Again: An Insight analysis of Dr. Jull's Socratic Humor

In this section, I return to my discussion of the important intervention by Dr. Jull that occurred during the group work and that produced my first significant insights into my own conflict behavior. Dr. Jull indicated in a humorous way that I was asking a slightly more curious question, with the emphasis on "slightly". Earlier I discussed the intervention itself which had precipitated a more curious performance on my part that contributed to the resolution of the conflict in its external dimensions. Here I am discussing the same event but now as part of the insight analysis through which the conflict was resolved in its internal dimensions. That intervention still has a wonderful, even somewhat startling power for me, it remains inspiring, humbling and revelatory.

So what happened? Why did this friendly jibe allow me to become even a little more curious and expansive? Why not more defensive and contracted? What produced this curiosity? First, Dr. Jull's intervention had reduced the general sense of threat. She had quickly begun to characterize our behavior charitably, evoking a more expansive sense of the significance of our actions. She pointed to our attempts to be honest and curious, to our courage in facing down such a conflict, and to our potential to grow from the experience. To be honest I felt gently chastened by her capacity to see "stretching in Vito," "good will in Luca," and "awareness in Kay": I had completely missed our team's potential for transformation because I was overwhelmed by anger, self-righteousness and contraction. In the moment of

humor, we had a shared understanding of my truncated performance and of the intention, action, and reception of the statement. It was a marvelous inter-subjective encounter. I believe, I understood Dr. Jull's intention in the way she intended. Also this interchange seemed available to all the subjectivities in the room. In retrospect this seems a wonderful example of humor greasing the wheels of the operations of consciousness.

I sensed what I took to be her awareness that my humorless contraction was not the whole story about me; that she was not being judgmental. So Dr. Jull's mindful and compassionate humor took me out of the self-absorption I was feeling and gently prodded me to look at my behavior in a new light. I almost immediately became aware of the somewhat Socratic dimension of her pedagogy. In my philosophical education I was schooled by professors with a zealous respect for the Socratic approach to learning, in which, to learn one must recognize one's ignorance. While I certainly don't like being wrong or ignorant, and, while I feel a sense of threat when being brought up against the limitations of my knowledge, I am convinced through years of experience that this is usually a good thing, and a prelude to filling a personal gap rather than an actual threat. I believe the sense of threat occurs in the recognition of self-limitation. I'm not as wise as I thought I was. Although I was in the midst of conflict, upon experiencing this familiar sting, I became somewhat more differentiated and expansive. I had a sense that perhaps I had been taking myself too seriously and that it might be a good idea to lighten up. Also because of my familiarity with the Socratic method, in this instant I became more mindful of my role as a student and felt a very appropriate challenge to

improve my conflict performance. Even though I was coming up short in my performance as a student, Dr. Jull allowed me to feel valued and encouraged. This led to a deeper self-presence and recognition of the priority of the role of student to that of facilitator. It was this kind of learning that I had come to residency for! I was no longer stuck in a sense of inadequacy and pedantry, rather I was teachable! This moment of seeing myself from another's perspective and of seeing the difference of that perspective from my own self-awareness was itself expansive. It loosened my self-absorption and added another's perspective to the extent possible. Until the moment of Dr. Jull's Socratic humor, I had thought that I was simply and transparently upholding good process. In fact, however, I was contracted and moralizing. As a result I ignored the emotional dimensions of my own behavior and that of others.

Dr. Jull's intervention allowed me to differentiate my response to the threat from the threat itself, as I perceived it. I began to realize that there were better ways to respond to the perceived threats, and slowly, very slowly, began to adopt a more curious stance and examine a wider range of possible options. This reflection brought me insight into the nature and strength of curiosity, as I moved from certainty that I was right, to uncertainty about my performance in conflict engagement. This uncertainty created a space for curiosity and a more expansive performance (Picard & Siltanen, 2013, p. 36). As M. Price (2018) contends, "uncertainty drives curiosity" and "the more curious we are the better we perform" (pp. 2-3). Certainty, as a defense response to threat, increases the haste with which one moves through the operations of consciousness and expresses the contracted

performance that this entails. We move “quickly through the questions of interiority that move us from experiencing, to knowing to valuing to deciding. We become inattentive to new information, certain that we know, quick to judge and rash in our responses” (M. Price, 2018, p. 3).

Further, M. Price (2018) points out that in this contracted performance of the operations of consciousness “we fail to adequately answer the questions propelling our consciousness” (p. 5). Becoming reflexive, however, shifts our fixation from the object of our valuing and its attendant certainty and in its very inward turn stimulates curiosity.

My experience of this first reflexive shift was both exciting and troubling. As Picard and Siltanen (2013) state, “The learning process itself can involve quite negative and difficult feelings” (p, 43). So, while I saw this as a new opportunity for growth, I was a little embarrassed by: how quickly I had become contracted; how stubborn and insensitive I had become; and how Dr. Jull had witnessed it all. Nevertheless, I returned to the attempt to build a renewed pattern of cooperation with the group that would be based in part on a fair and protective process. Yet, I was no longer *as* certain about the behavior of the other group members. I recognized that their behavior could be viewed in a more charitable and less moralizing light. I also recognized more fully the truncation of my own performance of the operations of consciousness. In this sense I approached the question of process with more humility and an awareness that I needed to be less moralizing in my approach.

So I was now more curious. However, while I was genuinely curious with reference to my own conflict performance, I was still only slightly more curious about the other members of the group. I had achieved at best a merely formal curiosity. I was no longer as certain as I had been, but I remained contracted due to my continued fear of the possibility of emotional outburst. I was empathetic as a team-member but at this stage only in relation to completing a very discrete goal, i.e., the assignment. I could, perhaps, apply certain techniques of curiosity but I was not genuinely curious. Nevertheless I was now more self-aware and together with the group began working with the conflict.

Summary

The simple external circumstances in which this complex conflict had its genesis points to the causal primacy of human interiority in the creation of conflict. While the external conflict was mediated and resolved with alacrity, the internal side lingered long after, and took much longer to discern and dissipate. Even after I had reflective shifts that produced insights into my lack of curiosity during the conflict and my continued moralizing about Kay's behavior even after residency, I still felt fear when I considered contacting her and the other group members to ask permission to use the conflict for my thesis. I feared that they would hesitate to grant permission or that further conflict would emerge. However, all three granted permission and when I spoke to Kay on the phone she was gracious and convivial; our conversation seemed to me to be sincere and to go below the surface of our conflict encounter. This provides strong evidence, I believe, of the possibilities opened up by curiosity.

The autoethnographical method has provided unique access to my inward emotion and perception, or perhaps more precisely, to the empirical data to which my analysis has been directed. There would be little data to analyze were it not for the autoethnographical method. The very possibility of analysis in my case thus depends on autoethnography.

The compatibility of autoethnography with Insight analysis has allowed a layered examination of the conflict that has both personal and theoretical import. One striking feature of the case study is that it testifies to the capacity of the Insight approach to facilitate learning even in conditions of complex conflict. Insight conversations were essential to my learning process throughout the conflict and provide a richly collaborative dimension to complement other analytic and evocative aspects of the project.

Gradually, I began to see that in asserting the principles of collaborative process, I was not acting in a simply rational manner but in fact quite passionately and emotionally. My emotions, then, registered the threat I was experiencing and became guides to significance and valuing.

Therefore, I reengaged the critical thinking necessary to articulate the improvement in both the individual and group performance of knowing, valuing and deciding. I began to see how the “Socratic” reflexive shift had altered my understanding and valuing in the situation. I began to see how it had altered my conflict performance also. I went from considering myself to be a noble upholder of process to recognizing that I was incuriously insistent. This led me to be less certain of my stance and thus more curious about my conflict performance. This enabled a

role-shift in which I moved from the role of “process keeper” to “student.” My conflict behavior shifted from insisting on process to a greater openness to the others in the group. It seemed that we were all able to reidentify with our roles as students and that this led to a renewal of our curiosity and a renewed and enhanced pattern of cooperation that allowed us to complete the assignment.

CHAPTER 5: Implications for Conflict Practitioners and Participants

My research questions were developed in order to address areas of competency that J. Price (nd) has indicated are significant for conflict practitioners. He argues that moralizing statements are the “common coin of conflict” and he contends, therefore, that insight practitioners need to develop competency in: (a) identifying them, (b) understanding their function, and (c) asking questions to disaggregate the knowing and valuing that precipitates them. To identify moralizing, understand how it functions, and undo the conflation of knowing and valuing at its heart, I have focused on the operation of my own consciousness and shone a light on my own conflict performance. My research questions were articulated in an attempt to develop my own competency in these areas and hopefully to contribute something that might be of use to others. Again my questions are a) How does moralizing function in conflict behavior? b) How can understanding moralizing contribute to improved conflict performance on the part of both the practitioner and the participant?

In this chapter, I wish to explore the implications of my case study for conflict practitioners and conflict participants. Following a recap of the threat I discerned, the chapter is structured in terms of the three areas in which there are implications for conflict practitioners and participants:

- (1) The individual dimension of moralizing.
- (2) The social dimension of moralizing.
- (3) The meaning of being non-judgmental.

The experience of threat

According to the Insight approach, all conflict is a function of deciding to defend in response to a apprehension of threat. When a person is not living up to our expectations, we can experience this as a threat to what we value. The flow of our consciousness when responding to the sense of threat is often compact and elemental. As a result, we engage in reactive and reflexively truncated valuing that is neither differentiated nor mindful. In Chapter Four, I introduced an analytical and empirical argument for conceiving of four realms across which this gap can be perceived: personal, practical, relational and systemic. We may register a gap in any of these realms as a threat and further represent this gap symbolically in a fixed image that expresses for us the feelings generated by the threat. The image serves as a carrier of hurt feelings and disrespect, for example, such that one can relive the feeling by calling to mind the image.

In the case study, my feeling of anger was elemental and I did not objectify, scrutinize or judge the significance either of Vito's statement (*"This weekend's obviously out."*) or of the reinforcement of that significance received from the responses of Luca and Kay. My valuing, therefore, was "elemental, reactive, and reflexively truncated" and, as a result, I did not adequately discern the significance of the experience for me (J. Price, 2018, p. 7). Vito's statement became a symbol of multiple gaps that involved both him and other members of the group.

First, as discussed above, I felt a systemic gap between the guidelines I expected my fellow students to follow in our group in their role as collaborators, and Vito's undemocratic/uncollegial decision-making (which was a threat to the

way I thought we should behave in the role of student collaborators). Second I experienced a practical gap between the ordered process I desired and the disorder I perceived that a lack of process could bring. (This manifested in a sense of threat that the discussion would be overly conflictual and that the group may fail to complete the assignment). Third, this process gap likewise involved a practical gap between my hopes in terms of grade and my fears about the grade we would receive if the assignment was adversely affected because we were embroiled in conflict. Fourth, relative to Kay, I experienced both a relational and a systemic gap concerning my expectations for respectful discourse and what I perceived as her propensity for emotional outburst. Relationally, I was concerned that our collegial friendship would be undermined by the frustration I would feel if her expressions of emotion hampered the functioning of the group. Systemically, I was concerned with the effect this would have on the group's functioning and its capacity to reach its goals. Fifth, relative to Luca, I experienced a relational and systemic gap between my expectations for mutuality in listening and what I perceived as his deficits in this area. I was afraid that his behavior would upset me and lead to degradation of our collegial friendship and of the interpersonal relations among members of the group as a whole. I believed in particular that Kay would be upset by not being adequately listened to (albeit while showing little or no capacity in this area myself). Systemically, I was concerned that this would hamper the efficient operation of the group in its goal to do well in the assignment. Finally, I experienced a personal gap between how I wished to be perceived by others, especially by my supervisor (as

fair-minded, collegial and skillful) and my belief about how I was being perceived (as choleric, conflictual and singularly without skill). I felt diminished.

My anger reveals my perception of a threat in Vito's decision not to meet on the weekend – and I name the gap “We need process!” The image of Vito saying, “This weekend's out, that's obvious,” and the feeling of anger it provokes were, at that point, representationally conflated. The symbol carried my consciousness. So what I then took to be the significance of the situation was in fact saturated with an element of emotion of which I was not reflexively aware.¹⁸ I was not simply upholding a principle, rather I was moralizing.

Definition of Moralizing

On the basis of the case study at the heart of this thesis, I propose the following definition of moralizing: Moralizing comprises the discerning of the significance of the behavior of self-and/or other in relation to a moral norm when (a) one's performance of the operation of knowing is incurious and hasty, (b) one's performance of the operation of valuing is reactive and, (c) one has thereby conflated knowing and valuing. In this contracted and elemental state, one formulates and expresses statements of value (moralizing statements) as though they were statements of fact. This definition informs the implications that my analysis of moralizing has for conflict practitioners and participants.

¹⁸ Reflexive awareness here would require a differentiation of knowing and valuing of which I was incapable in my contracted state.

Implications 1 – The individual dimension of moralizing:

How moralizing involves ontological and epistemological distortion of self and other.

In my elemental discernment of these gaps, as the conflict arose and grew, I found my consciousness carried by the moral principle of fair process. But the way in which I asserted the principle was, as we have seen, highly contracted. I was aware neither of my own emotional response nor of that of the other group members.

A corollary of this elemental assertion of principle was my moralizing about those who I perceived as not accepting or not living up to this principle. Thus, “Vito is disengaged and irresponsible,” “Luca doesn’t know how to listen to what people are saying,” and “Kay is prone to emotional outburst.” The value of fairness and the technique of process in this contracted state generated a righteous certainty in which I saw myself as the upright defender of principle and judged the others as the opponents of fairness.

This moralizing contributed to considerable epistemological and ontological distortion. Epistemologically speaking, I was unable to discern numerous aspects of my own interiority or to seek out verification of what I discerned in the behavior of others.¹⁹ Ontologically speaking, I thus ascribed attributes to the character of individuals, myself and others. I constructed the others as moralized objects toward which I stood in righteous judgment. The fixity of judgment about character is a

¹⁹ M. Price (2018) suggests three “cognitive deficiencies” that emerge from a sense of threat: tunnel vision, selective perception, and confirmation bias (p.3).

hallmark of moralizing in my experience. I will discuss these distortions in further detail.

First, I envisioned myself as the rational protector of principle. And, as I have noted, I was completely unaware of the emotional dimensions of this behavior, of the contracted nature of my performance and of my lack of curiosity. A significant aspect of my elemental and moralizing performance was that the principle I believed myself to be upholding carried my consciousness in an exclusionary manner that eradicated my awareness of any other aspect of the situation, such as the emotions I was feeling, how others might be feeling, what was important to them in the situation, or how my behavior was affecting them. The implication for conflict practitioners is that it is important to pay particular attention to the self portrait of conflict participants as it may signify the existence of moralizing. Further, because one form moralizing takes involves the exclusionary assertion of principle, enhanced reflexivity can be facilitated by asking questions about the emotions the moralizing participant is experiencing. As a conflict participant, I will be more sensitive and critically aware of the self-image I am asserting in my conflict behavior.

Second, in my incurious state, I was reactive in discerning the significance of the actions of the others.²⁰ I ascribed intention to the group members based on what I could perceive of their action and my reactive judgment of it. I did so without

²⁰ As Picard (2017) states, "In conflict situations, when others do not act towards us as we expect, we conclude their contrary actions are intentional" (p. 4).

attempting to verify my perceptions, in the only way possible, that is, by addressing them as persons with an interior and self-reflective awareness, available to me only should they choose to communicate it. By ignoring their subjective awareness, I, in fact, treated the other group members as objects, as if the meaning of their actions could be discerned without reference to their interiority.

The implication for conflict practitioners is that the curiosity of conflict participants must be directed to the interiority of their conflict partners. Otherwise they cannot verify their perceptions of the other. Conflict partners can choose whether to attempt to reveal their interiority or not. In order to facilitate access to another's interiority, conflict participants need to be encouraged to ask open-ended questions that avoid the appearance of coercion and that are directed not towards proving what one already believes (because that is the result of incurious understanding) but towards an openness to what the other reveals. As a conflict participant I will strive to maintain this openness and curiosity.

The third distortion involved my failure to differentiate the character or personality of the individuals from their behaviors. For example, I conflated Luca's behavior with Luca himself, with the totality of his moral character. I expressed my flawed judgment then not as "I perceive Luca's behavior as boorish," not as "Luca's behavior (in this instance) is boorish," nor as "I perceive Luca to be boorish." Rather my moralizing statement was "Luca is boorish." A central difficulty here is that in my flawed performance I reduced the complexity of the individuality of my colleagues to a simplistic and fixed attribute. It is worth noting that this simplification exists as well in positive moralizing. To say, "Kay is courageous,"

“Luca is magnanimous,” or “Vito is resilient” can be no less problematic in terms of the performance of the operations of consciousness than the statements “Kay is cowardly,” “Luca is mean-spirited” or “Vito is weak.” My positive self-moralizing, as the protector of process, was a central aspect of the conflict as it unfolded.

The implication for conflict practitioners is that judgments about the character of one’s conflict partners signifies moralizing. As a conflict participant I will endeavor to remain aware that such judgments are a distortion of my conflict partner and poor performance of the operations of consciousness. I will treat such judgments as telling me more about my performance in conflict than they tell me about my conflict partner’s character.

In my contracted conflict performance, I had constructed an image of the other individuals in the group. I then took my perception to be factual, and I made no attempt at verification. I perceived defects as fixed aspects of the character of other group members. Thus my gaze was focused on a constructed moralistic image of the other members of the group and this distracted me from self-reflection. I was fixated on what I thought about them (the content or object of my consciousness) and this obscured *the way* I was thinking about this object (J. Price, 2017, p. 6). I treated my own perceptions as if they belonged unproblematically and undifferentiatedly to the individuals I judged. In this way, I failed to take responsibility for the role my valuing played in my understanding of the other group members. In my righteous certainty, I was curious neither about myself nor about others. Conflict practitioners and participants need to be aware that moralizing carries one’s consciousness away from one’s own operations of consciousness, to

which one has direct access, and directs it to the interiority of one's conflict partner, access to which depends on relating to the other with curiosity. One needs to be aware that moralizing is deeply distorting. One believes one is acting on the basis of principle alone but the reality can be far more complex and compromised.

In this context, the very assertion of principle can be self-defeating. Ironically, my truncated performance in the pattern of cooperation called group work led me to act in a manner that belied my own conscious intention. In my elemental response to Vito, I found myself acting in a manner very similar to how I perceived he was acting. I believed that he was asserting his own preferences about the weekend in a non-collaborative manner. At this point, however, I was asserting my own preferences, about the appropriateness of process, in a similarly non-collaborative manner. The result of this undifferentiated and dogmatic assertion of a principle of behavior involved me in behavior that was opposed to the principle asserted. The manner in which I asserted the virtue of collaboration and process was dogmatic and decidedly non-collaborative. In fact, there was a gap between the virtue of collaboration and my own behavior and a felt threat to my self-image as a fair-minded upholder of process; I now appeared as dogmatic and hypocritical. Instead of the calm and diplomatic purveyor of rationality that I intended, I had become a huffy, red-faced, contracted, incurious troll. My self-righteous attempt to be morally good seems to have undermined itself. Conflict practitioners can help participants to recognize this self-defeating behavior by eliciting a correlation of valuing and deciding to explore the extent to which one's higher aspirations correspond with one's actions and their outcomes. Recognizing that one is acting

“in opposition to oneself” in this way can encourage a reflexive shift that increases one’s curiosity about oneself. Reflection that one is undermining one’s principles, in the very assertion of them, raises significant questions about one’s performance. The effect of the shift can be a greater sense of humility. As a conflict participant I will strive to maintain an awareness that my performance of the operations of consciousness is imperfect.

Such reflexive shifts were critical to my coming to an enhanced awareness of my conflict performance and of the effect of my moralizing. Moralizing distracted me from reflexive awareness of my own knowing, valuing and deciding. Coming to enhanced reflexive awareness in this area was disorienting, even painful. When I recognized that “Kay may not be vicious,” I was not only liberated into greater self-presence but I was also very unsettled. I began to wonder how many of the other judgments I had made might likewise be wrong. The certainties that conflict participants have is important to them, and the loss of such certainties can be painful. The implication for conflict practitioners is that while the reflexive shift affords the opportunity for more expansive operations, it can also open a gap and therefore elicit a threat. While focusing on the *way* the individual is thinking, insight practitioners deeply affect *what* individuals are thinking. The recognition of the significance of the *object* of thought to the conflict participant, even as one facilitates enhanced reflexive awareness of the *process* of knowing, valuing and deciding is, therefore, of significance for conflict practitioners. As a conflict participant, the awareness of this possibly disorienting moment of conflict resolution helps to prepare me for the variety of emotions that conflict learning can involve.

Awareness of the function of moralizing in conflict performance and behavior is essential, therefore, to the conflict practitioner's reflexive awareness of their own moral values and of their own propensities for moralizing. In my experience, conflict practitioners are highly principled in their attempts to dissipate conflict. Awareness of the possibility that an assertion of principle can mask one's elemental performance of the operations of consciousness has, therefore, important implications for conflict practice. Consider, for example, the importance of this reflexivity for the practice of deepening conversations. Picard and Jull (2011) state,

The mediator cannot 'deepen for the party's own good'; to do so would be directive and disrespectful to the party. Were this to happen the mediator would have stopped being curious about the party's meaning-making and become a problem-solver who is certain about what is best for the party. The mediator needs to maintain her commitment to curiosity in the face of her own desire for certainty. (p. 174)

It is not the role of the conflict practitioner, therefore, to tell conflict participants what they should do. The participants must come to their own understanding and decisions about what a resolution to their conflict entails. A strong sense, by the practitioner, of what the resolution should be can distract the practitioner from their focus on the conflict participants themselves, which is the only place from which a genuine resolution can come. When conflict practitioners feel a strong sense of certainty about what should be done, it is quite possible that they are moralizing, even with positive intentions. It is therefore possible that they are inadequately curious about the participants involved and distortedly simplifying of

their interiority. The implication for conflict practitioners is that they must resolutely work against their own certainty about what should be done

Implications 2 – The social dimension of moralizing: Roles and patterns of cooperation.

Thus far, my consideration of the implications of my analysis of moralizing for conflict practitioners and participants has focused primarily on my own individual interiority. There are also implications to be discerned from the methodological approach I have applied to “the social dimension of the objects and operations of consciousness” (J. Price, 2014b).

According to J. Price (2014b), the concepts of patterns of cooperation and social role are essential to understanding the social dimension of conflict behavior, including moralizing. J. Price (2014b) contends that the term “pattern of cooperation” signifies the way we interact with each other in light of the context of social organizations. When we interact in specific organizations, from coffee shops to community groups, from sports teams to courts of laws, from grocery stores to universities, we engage in patterns that express our knowledge of how to operate in these settings. We pay at the counter for our coffee, we don’t argue balls and strikes with the umpire, we stand when the judge enters the court and so on. Price (2014b) describes these patterns as the “linked series of decisions and actions” through which we engage social contexts and organizations. Further, he contends that they set “performance horizons for the way we use our minds: what we pay attention attend to, what we ask about, the valuing we engage in, the options we consider, and the decisions we make” (Price 2014b).

The concept of social role embodies the norms and functions that are involved in a pattern of cooperation; they play a mediating role between the individual and the group and specify the sort of tasks and performance that the pattern of cooperation entails. To perform a role in a pattern of cooperation is something like acting a part in a play. You draw on personal experiences, insights and abilities but it is generally in the service of a character that is not identical to you, although you may identify with it. A role is defined by its function within a good of order and it specifies the tasks you should perform and in some instances the way in which you should perform them. So, a waiter in a restaurant will be required to serve food and may be asked to do that in a relatively formal or informal manner depending on the goals of the restaurant.

The concept of role as a concrete element of a pattern of cooperation has been useful in helping me examine the moralizing I discussed in the case study of chapter four. The decision to attend the university engaged each of the members of my group in a complex pattern of cooperation. In the course, our primary role was that of student and what we were to study was specified by the course outline and by the professor, Dr. Jull, in the performance of her role. We were asked as a group to pick a case study from those each student had prepared and to role-play the parts of participant, mediator and observer. The element of group work comprises a significant pattern of cooperation. But it embodies a pattern that can itself seem threatening at times.

Group work takes me out of my academic comfort zone, as it does for many students, and involves a distinct ethos and skillset beyond those involved in solitary

scholarly pursuits. There are many expectations involved: that you relate respectfully to others; that you do your fair share of the work; that you show up on time for meetings; that you produce any individual contribution in a timely way; that you are willing to discuss ideas as well as strategies for getting the work done; and that you are able to deal with conflict. Group work calls you out of your individual focus on the particular goods you wish to achieve and involves you in collaboration with others to achieve a common good. At its best group work involves the expectation that there will be genuine learning from each other. When the work of group members is not marked on an individual basis but students receive only a common group mark, it certainly ups the ante and the mutual expectations of the respective members.

This pattern often causes me immediately to experience a sense of threat: what if everyone does not pull their weight, what if I cannot get along with certain members, what if I don't find their ideas sufficiently interesting, what if they don't like me? Consider the first sense of threat: What if everyone doesn't pull their own weight? This raises personal, practical relational and systemic concerns. As a personal concern, if everyone doesn't work hard, this may put pressure on me to work harder and I'll feel taken advantage of. This could lead to practical difficulties in that we might not get our work done and receive a poor mark. This practical concern also has a personal dimension in that it would negatively affect my self-esteem to get a low mark. These concerns lead me to worry about the stress level of the members in the group. I worry about how we might create appropriate rules and guidelines to structure our interaction. Finally, if the experience of group-work

is not favorable it could call into question the viability of group work as an appropriate pedagogical approach (a further systemic concern).

I believe the case study has implications for group work beyond my own experience. First, working in groups can involve the perception of threat even before individuals interact in a meaningful way. If, as individuals, we have experienced what seem like the inevitable pitfalls of group work, we may come with negative expectations about what the future may hold. It is important to be aware of how these expectations are influencing our interactions. Likewise, it is often a good idea to try to articulate the duties and responsibilities that the individual members of the group believe to be involved in the particular pattern of cooperation.

Further it is clear from the case study that the moralizing in which I engaged served to exacerbate this sense of threat. My concerns about individuals in the group, as outlined in the case study, precipitated my decision to adopt certain roles in the group work, those of initiator and facilitator, as well as my emphasis on process. Further, as discussed in chapter four, my being rebuffed in my assumption of the role of initiator/facilitator was a significant aspect of my felt sense of threat and my emotional response of anger. I felt a personal affront as well as a fear that without some facilitation and process the group would inevitably fail. It is significant that my understanding of the particular role of initiator/facilitator was informed by my past experience in such roles as a professor and university administrator. Primarily I had come to see how a lack of process could result in the most assertive individuals dominating the conversation, even if unintentionally, whether in the classroom or in the boardroom. Having been guilty of this

throughout much of my life, my own desire to curb my natural assertiveness and to allow others an opportunity to speak played a significant part in my adoption of the role and my assertion of a certain kind of process. My consciousness was carried here by my own personal history, which led to a dogmatic decision about how to act. Conflict practitioners should be aware that the roles participants adopt can signify a sense of threat to which the adoption of role is a response. It is commonplace that individuals are sometimes drawn into leadership roles because they cannot bear the thought of other less deserving individuals adopting those roles. When we perceive a gap between what we believe about the skill of individuals in the group and what the roles in the group require, we often attempt to fill this gap by adopting what we see as the appropriate role. As a conflict practitioner and participant, I will strive to be more critically aware that the adoption of role can signify the recognition of a gap and a sense of threat.

Further, in my contracted state I adopted the role of initiator/facilitator in an undifferentiated fashion that allowed this role to carry my consciousness away from the other roles that I could play in the pattern of cooperation, e.g., student and collaborator. I thus failed at points to have a student's curiosity or a collaborator's openness. It was an important pedagogical moment when Dr. Jull, Socratically, brought me back to a sense of the primacy of my role as student. The implication for conflict practitioners is the importance of recognizing the exclusionary possibility that one's performance of role can involve. When one is elemental in one's knowing, valuing and deciding, one may not be conscious of the other possible roles one could play in a given situation. Encouraging awareness of the complex diversity of roles

that could be played is an important way to facilitate enhanced reflexivity on the part of participants. As a group member and conflict participant I will strive to be aware of the possibility to perform a diversity of roles.

Equally significant for our understanding of the systemic aspect of conflict is Dr. Jull's suggestion that we use the conflict we were experiencing as the subject matter for our assignments. While systemic elements can calcify, for example, into a rigid and bureaucratic beaurocracy, we also saw how individuals playing roles within a system can evoke wider possibilities within systemic pressures and constraints. Dr. Jull's suggestion and our agreement to it, reimagined the systemic constraint we were experiencing and allowed us to take advantage of the potential for learning that our conflict embodied. Further, our enhanced, although still imperfect curiosity, facilitated the ability of our group's members to reimagine extant patterns of cooperation. The implication for conflict practitioners and participants is the importance of recognizing the agency of participants within patterns of cooperation and social systems. Systemic transformation is difficult, but curiosity makes it possible to engage patterns of cooperation with free and conscientious creativity.

Implications 3 – On being non-judgmental: Imperfection, complexity and remediation.

The investigation of the individual and social dimensions of moralizing have further general implications for how we might deal with moralizing and how we can bring a non-judgmental presence to the room. We have examined the ways in which human knowing, valuing and deciding is subject to incuriosity, hastiness, reactivity, limited imagination, rashness, and constraint. The flawed performance of the

operations of consciousness traps one in one's own subjectivity and makes it extremely easy to moralize. The implication for both conflict practitioners and participants is the importance of recognizing that moralizing is a mark of our fallibility in performing the operations of consciousness.

Further, we have seen that even something as apparently simple as a group assignment relies on a complex system of constraint and opportunity that can both support and impede individual goals. To succeed at the assignment, it was required of the individuals in our group to foreground the role of student and resolutely to pursue academic goals. Also, it was necessary to respect the temporal and logistical confines of course work even though they exacerbated the sense of pressure surrounding our inter-personal conflict. Deadlines had to be met and there were practical, personal, relational and systemic threats if we did not succeed. The challenge for our conflict performance is thus twofold: not only are we fallible but the systems in which we operate are complex and demanding. The implication for conflict practitioners and participants is the importance of humility. Even when we try our best, we are faced with obstacles that challenge our performance. Humility is enhanced by curiosity and reflexive awareness of imperfection and complexity.

But it is important to recognize that while we are imperfect and we work in systems that can constrain us, we can find more expansive possibilities in our self-awareness and in our awareness of the pattern of cooperation in which we are situated. To avoid conflict totally, perfectly to perform the operations of consciousness, always to be curious, never to be contracted, always to play one's role appropriately seems beyond the grasp of most humans; it is certainly beyond

my grasp. Recognizing this has significant implications for our approach to moralising as both practitioners and participants.

Therefore, as both practitioners and participants, I think that it is important that we avoid moralizing about moralizing. Such moralizing leads to the distortion of self and other discussed above. We can get caught in a moralizing loop of blame towards others and blame towards self. However, both practitioners and participations can find a certain liberation in discerning that despite our best efforts we are not perfect and, as a result, that moralizing is to a certain degree inevitable. Further, we need to recognize that the systems in which we operate are extremely complex, and themselves imperfect. Thus even when we perform our social roles to the best of our abilities, we still risk poor performance of the operations of consciousness and a judgmental attitude towards self and other. So the goal, then, is not to rid ourselves of moralizing, much less moral values. Rather, the goal is to recognize moralizing as a result of our human-all-too-human fallibility and to take restorative steps to remediate ourselves, to temper the values in light of which we judge, with our other values of kindness, compassion, and understanding. Just as moralizing can tend towards a contracted sense of one's role-possibilities it can also tend to a contraction of our sense of the values we can bring to bear in a conflict. While we are righteously upholding and defending a value we feel to be threatened, we are often ignoring other values that are equally important to us. The implication for conflict practitioners is the importance of correlating valuing and deciding and the significance of curiosity in allowing participants to bring their diverse moral resources into play.

Insight questions play an essential role in this remediation. As M. Price (2018) argues,

Because these questions are targeted in a nonjudgmental way to understand a person in terms of their own valuing and decision-making, they produce the feeling of being really understood. Once a person begins to feel understood, the possibility of critical reflexivity and self-awareness emerges that can improve the respondent's thinking about both themselves and those with whom they are in conflict. (p. 5)

In response to moralizing it is important, therefore, to be non-judgmental. However, as we have seen, being non-judgmental does not entail a simplistic absence of judgment. Rather, moralizing judgment is in certain respects inevitable. A central implication for both practitioners and participants is the importance of recognizing both this "inevitability" and the remedial possibility to address moralizing. The key to this remediation is curiosity about moralizing.

CHAPTER 6: Conclusion

The blackbird, picking food,
Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears at all;
So often has he known thee past him stray,
Rapt, twirling in thy hand a wither'd spray,
And waiting for the spark from heaven to fall

(Matthew Arnold, *The Scholar Gypsy*)

Interiority and methodology

A miniscule spark fired the conflict that is at the heart of this thesis and has, I believe, helped me to shed light on a significant dimension of our conflict performance, that of moralizing. Throughout the thesis I have been guided by two research questions: a) How does moralizing function in conflict behavior? b) How can understanding moralizing contribute to improved conflict performance on the part of both the practitioner and the participant?

I pursued these questions in the case study of Chapter Four, in which I articulated both a commonplace conflict event, a minor disagreement about process, and examined how moralizing, social roles, and feelings of threat can turn even simple disagreements into complex conflict. What emerged was, I believe, a significant discernment of the primacy of interiority in conflict behaviour and, therefore, of the need curiously to attend to this interiority in order adequately and thoroughly to engage conflict.

The choice of methodology was essential both to articulating this interiority and to analyzing the conflict. The narrative style of evocative ethnography allowed me to detail from within my own subjectivity how my inner emotions and thoughts, through the interior acts of knowing, valuing and deciding, led me to sustain and to escalate the conflict. The Insight approach subjected these evocations to orderly analysis in light of an empirically grounded method that was able to discern significance on both an individual and a social level. As such my personal narrative can be shown to be of broader relevance to the field of conflict analysis, as well as to both conflict practitioners and participants.

Conflict practice

It is my hope that this thesis has contributed to conflict practice in a number of ways in both the conceptualization of the individual and social dimensions of conflict and in the practical implications that arise from this conceptualization. Fundamentally, it has emphasized the centrality of interiority for conflict engagement. By investigating my own interiority, particularly my performance of the operations of consciousness, I explicated the function of moralizing and showed how it involved ontological and epistemological distortions of self and other. Also, I was able to articulate the way in which the elemental assertion of a moral principle can lead to the opposite of one's intention. On these grounds I was able to bring further precision to the definition of moralizing in the Insight approach.

Also, in exploring the social dimensions of conflict, I was able to develop both analytical and empirical grounds for distinguishing a fourth, systemic, realm of

significance.²¹ In my analysis of systemic dimensions I discussed the effect that curiosity about one's social roles and patterns of cooperation can have on one's engagement with individuals and social organizations.

Throughout my analysis, I articulated a number of significant implications for the conflict performance of both practitioners and participants. These implications have broad applicability in conflict practice. Two specific implications are of note. First, practitioners and participants need to be aware of the potentially disorienting effect that reflexive shifts and enhanced self-awareness can have on conflict participants. Practitioners and participants need to be aware that curiosity about the *how* of thinking can very much affect the *what* of thinking. It is important to be aware of the painful effect that such curiosity may have. Second, I have suggested that moralizing is in certain respects inevitable because of the fallibility of our operations of consciousness and the complexity of our social systems. In this light I have argued that the correction of moralizing is fundamentally a remedial and restorative activity.

The Insight approach has provided me with a conceptual framework that has allowed me to articulate how the undifferentiated and elemental assertion of one's moral principles adds fuel to the fire of conflict. The Insight approach does not attempt to change individual's values. In contrast to directive approaches, the Insight practitioner's intention is "to pay attention to the process by which the parties have made meanings in the conflict situation and to help them elaborate the complexity of their experience and meaning-making"(Picard & Jull, 2011, p. 165).

²¹ This in addition to personal, practical and relational realms.

Thus, the Insight approach works to help individuals achieve sufficient reflexive awareness and curiosity about self and other to shape their conflict performance so that they engage conflict behavior more conscientiously and imaginatively. With this enhanced awareness it becomes possible to apply one's principle without necessarily deepening conflict, by contrast with my poor performance as articulated in the case study.

Consider how simple it would have been for me to better avoid the conflict and to contribute more directly to the proficient functioning of the group. All that was necessary was curiosity, a willingness to ask questions and to be open to engaging the response. In the absence of curiosity I became dogmatic, swamped by righteous certainty. So instead of the open pursuit of truth, that I purport, as a philosopher, to seek, I engaged in the bumbling, fuming, irascibility that made this thesis possible. The moral sense can support valuable critical perspectives that allow us to interrogate the value of received patterns and goods. Moral principles can challenge us to order our world and ourselves not in terms of pragmatic interests but in terms of our deeper values. But they can also carry consciousness in a way that promotes conflict.

The Insight approach challenges us to perform operations of valuing with a reflexive awareness of our epistemological fallibility and of the complexity of the systems in which we exist. To pursue the good often involves conflict but, as the case study demonstrates, even the most stubbornly recalcitrant individuals can

learn and grow from the experience of conflict through striving for curiosity and humility.

The point of Insight questions is not for the Insight practitioner to understand the conflict participant, rather it is for the conflict participant to understand themselves and thereby to become more curious about their valuing (Picard and Jull, 2011). With reference to a conflict participant in their case study, Picard and Jull state, “The daughter does not gain insight by virtue of the mediator’s insight. Insights come of their own accord to the mind that is willing to receive them. Insights are responses to questions so first the daughter needs to become curious” (p. 172).

But the Insight approach (and this thesis) does not offer a cure for moralizing, let alone conflict. Rather, they provide a method through which individuals can become aware of how they are showing up in conflict, of what their conflict performance looks like. It helps individuals hold a mirror to themselves and to be aware of the social construction of their values and the social impact of their decisions.

Questions for Future Development

In the course of exploring my research questions, a number of further questions have emerged, which I would like to pursue within the theoretical framework of the Insight approach but for which I did not have space within the limitations the current project.

First, I am interested in exploring the concept of moral values as carriers. As I have argued, moral values seem to have as an essential element that they are

concerned about the way individuals, organizations and institutions *ought* to be, how they *ought* to behave. They carry our minds to value the way things are in light of principles of how they ought to be. Individuals and institutions are often not aligned with our values (or with their own expressed values). Moral carriers, therefore have the potential to promote the discernment of gaps and thus possibly facilitate the existence and escalation of conflict. I am interested in the ways in which, as carriers of consciousness, moral values may reflect potentially moralizing and conflictual dimensions that are embedded in social roles and patterns of cooperation. Examples of these moralized roles and patterns might be found in the answer to such questions as: What counts as marriage? Who counts as a citizen? What is the appropriate punishment for criminals? Social roles and patterns can be constructed in ways that are exclusionary or require severe consequences for certain individuals. I would like further to explore my intuitions about the function of moralizing in this context.

Second, moral values have historically been connected with profound religious experiences. The image of Moses carrying the *Ten Commandments* down Mount Sinai, of the enlightened Siddhartha teaching the *Four Noble Truths* and the *Eightfold Path*, of Jesus and the *Sermon on the Mount* all connect spiritual vision with moral carriers that orient knowing, valuing and deciding. I am interested in the question of how spiritual experience is affected by reflexive shifts that enhance one's self-awareness of one's moral carriers. A complementary question concerns how spiritual experience affects moral carriers. I would like to explore these questions through the same theoretical framework and methodology advanced in

this thesis. I believe it would help show the primacy of interiority in human spirituality – and this with empirical and analytical rigor.

Together with these explorations of values and spirituality, I would like to continue to develop practical exercises that facilitate enhanced reflexive awareness of one's moralizing that can contribute to conflict practitioners' capacity for expansiveness and curiosity. But these questions are for another time. Now I must finish mapping the current journey.

I hope that you, the reader, have found something of yourself in my struggle to become less contracted and moralizing; to become more expansive and curious; to become less self-enclosed and more open to others. I also hope that I have been able to contribute to the theoretical discourse concerning moralizing and to advance, in some small way, the understanding of conflict in the Insight approach. I will conclude with a poem I wrote to give expression to my experience of self and system as I struggled to deepen my reflexive self-awareness:

Child, Spider, Web

I see myself as a child
 Watching a spider building a web
 Watching light, watching raindrops
 A thread leads from the center to the edge.
 "Heraclitus," says the spider,
 "concludes the road up and the road down are one and the same."

How old are you? I am ancient.

The web shakes.
 Wind comes from nowhere
 Time consuming,
 the spider says,
 this is time consuming.
 I am feeding space and consuming time."

The child says, "I would like you to suffer so that I may observe and learn."
 The spider says, "I would like to suffer so that you may observe and learn."

How old are you? I am endless.

I am following a thread.
 I am weaving a life-sized map
 to which I am anchored; a chain of thread
 fastened to my leg.

The wind comes from everywhere:
 Blustery, unsettling, a squall.
 delicate Point d' Alençon, tensile
 and filled with grace.
 I shrink with fear, contraction without birth.

"Love suffers long and is kind," says the spider.
 So, suffer and be kind.
 For you are one another:
 Spider, child, web, of one design.

How old are you? I am eternal.

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