The roar on the other side of silence:

Women and anger - a postmodern perspective

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this assignment is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university for a degree.

ABSTRACT

Assuming a postmodern perspective, this literature study attempts to address unprivileged dichotomies in an endeavour to make audible the silence surrounding women, emotion and anger. In alignment with the postmodern assumptions of relativity, the tracing of anger involves acknowledging the physiological, social, intrapersonal, interpersonal, behavioural, cognitive and phenomenological propensities thereof. In a postmodern attempt to contextualise the discussion and to trace the relation of women and the female gender stereotype to anger, a selection of etiological perspectives and theories on anger are viewed within the cultural contexts thereof. Juxtaposed in a Western culture privileging reason to emotion, individuality and autonomy to relationship centeredness, a hypothetical understanding of the association between women and emotion is construed. The gender stereotypical erasure of anger from the female repertoire is also addressed. Integrating these assumptions with the possible positive and negative outcomes of anger, a preliminary understanding of the mechanism of and the silence surrounding women and anger is offered.

OPSOMMING

Met 'n postmodernistiese aanslag poog die literatuurstudie om ongepriviligeerde dichotome aan te spreek en die stilte in die literatuur rondom vroue en woede hoorbaar te maak. In pas met die postmodernistiese aannames van relatiwiteit, vereis die beligting van woede erkenning aan die fisiologiese, sosiale, intrapsigiese, interpersoonlike, kognitiewe en fenomenologiese manifestasies daarvan. In 'n postmodernistiese poging om die bespreking te kontekstualiseer en om die verhouding tussen vroue en woede na te speur, is 'n seleksie van etiologiese perspektiewe en teorieë oor woede binne die relevante sosio-kulturele konteks bespreek. Geposioneer in 'n Westerse kultuur, wat rede bo emosie en individualiteit en outonomie bo verhoudingsgerigtheid stel, is 'n hipotetiese verstaan van die verhouding tussen vroue en emosie gekonstrueer. Die beperkings wat geslagsrolstereotipes op vroue se uitdrukking van woede plaas, is ook aangeraak. Deur die gegewe te integreer met die moontlike positiewe en negatiewe impak van woede, is 'n voorlopige verstaan daarvan, asook van die stilte rondom vroue en woede gebied.

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INTRODUCTION
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"I felt the creation of hate in one of the soul's dark porches, felt it scream out its birth in a black forbidden ecstasy."

"I'm a fighter
…Naw, you're a girl. Girls are always lovers. I don't want you fighting. I want you all soft and sugary, all peaches and cream for your Daddy" (Conroy, 1987, p.122).

The challenging imperative of studying women and anger is pronounced in the above assertions. The investigation of this subject is characterized by complexity and paradox. Tracing the tale of anger is marked by the uncovering of possible aggression and destruction, but also by the knowledge of potential self-assertion and healing. The paradox and complexity of the study of women and anger is further strengthened by the simultaneous interplay of intra- and interpersonal; biological and cultural factors in the etiology and mechanism thereof. Although emotion punctuates almost all significant events in life, Ben-Ze'ev (2000, p.viii) believes the study thereof to be "neglected by social scientists and philosophers".

Relevance of the study

For Madow (1972) anger, rage, resentment, hostility and aggression contributes to a boiling of the soul, causing a fire that needs to be extinguished. Based on the presumed relationship between anger and aggression, Madow proclaims that the recognition, understanding and management of anger before it accumulates and produce pathological changes in the individual or society, can be life saving. Accounts of increasing violence, of riots, rebellions and hostilities calls for an understanding of anger as a possible origin of these manifestations. Not only tales of

angry and violent societies, but also inter- and intrapersonal scars left by anger and turmoil, urges for an understanding of the voice and mechanism of anger. Madow proclaims that the "proper recognition, understanding and channelling of this ever-present emotion can change your entire way of life, making it more comfortable, more productive – and even preventing serious illness" (p. x).

However, tracing the voice and impact of anger is a far more complex tale, since the productive use of anger could be a healing power and the inability to proclaim its voice, a symptom of destruction. The female gender stereotype, however, hints on an erasure of female expressions of anger. This necessitates the exploration of the impact of cultural and gender specific phenomena on the experience and expression of women's anger.

Objectives

It is against the background of these considerations that the objectives of this literature study are framed. In this study the relationship between women and anger is explored. The specified focus aims at addressing the silence in the psychological study of women and emotion.

Firstly, the study aims at providing a criptic view of a selection of literature on emotion, and more specifically anger, from a traditionally neglected metatheoretical perspective. Emotion is a truly interdisciplinary subject touching on the disciplines of physiology, neurology, ethology, physiological psychology, personality, social psychology, clinical psychology, psychiatry and theology (Izard, 1977). Assuming the philosophical assumptions of postmodernism, the study aims at providing a

criptical metatheoretical perspective. During the metatheoretical discussion relevant attention to address the double bind of reason-emotion, nature-nurture and individual-society dualities is given. This resonates with the Jungian assumption of the holistic truths that lies within the interaction between supposed binary opposites. In an attempt to balance the dichotomies imposed by dualism, in particular the privileging of intrapersonal to interpersonal, male to female and biological to cultural factors, the paper will assume a postmodern and social perspective.

Secondly, the study aims at providing a traditionally neglected perspective on the relationship between women and anger. According to Nehring (1997) the need to recast the association of women with emotion in an alternative feminist voice is highly belated. In order to trace the importance of interpersonal, cultural and gender stereotype phenomena in the study of women and anger, an interactional and postmodernist perspective will be assumed. In alignment with this interactional and dialectical approach, the paper is intended as a social perspective within a shifting interdisciplinary dialogue.

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Conceptual framework
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"Say not, 'I have found the truth', but rather, 'I have found a truth' … for the soul walks upon all paths. The soul walks not upon a line…The soul unfolds itself, like a lotus of countless petals" (Gibran, 2000, p.63).

Reasons for the selection of a postmodern perspective

This paper is positioned within a postmodern conceptual framework. The study of emotion, a phenomenon that Izard (1977) proclaims a truly interdisciplinary subject, is complimented by adhering to postmodernism, an approach which values relativity and interaction.   As postmodernism aims at balancing binary opposites and addressing traditionally unprivileged dichotomies, the postmodern framework compliments the specific focus on women and anger.

Assumptions

Postmodernism upholds relativity, a concept introduced into science by Quantum Mechanics. With Heisenberg's introduction (cited in Appignanesi, Garret, Sardar & Curry, 1996) of uncertainty and elucivity into science, a new dimension was added to the positivist and modernist strive of objectively measuring particles with permanent certainty. With the emerging theories of Chaos and complexity untangling the modernist assumptions of control, reductionism and certainty in science (and psychology), the postmodern values of relativity, holism, complexity and interconnection came to the fore.

Although Nehring (1997, p. 5) concludes that postmodernism "can be perplexing, … because there are many versions of it, ranging from the positive and celebrating to the negative and apocalyptic", its complex nature adheres to the postmodernist principle of plurality and complexity. Blackburn (1994, p. 294) defines the philosophy of postmodernism as "a mistrust of the *grands récits* of modernity", a conceptualisation which resonates with Lyotard's (1984) definition of the postmodern condition as "incredulity toward metanarratives" (p. xxiv). According to Chagani (1998), the common thread between postmodernists from Nietzsche to Derrida, from Baudrillard, Lyotard and Spivak to Kristeva, is "a radical anti-essentialism", or the assumption of the relativity of metanarratives (p.2).

The postmodernist acclaiming of relativity and denouncing of metanarratives could imply a paradoxical position where postmodernism itself runs the risk of becoming a metanarrative. It is therefore important to relativise postmodernism itself, regarding it as a perspective amongst others within a particular cultural context. Historically contextualizing postmodernism, Hartman (1996, p. 1) positions the movement within the historical period ranging from "about 1980 to the present", a time characterized by information technology and global communication corresponding to its values of interaction. Postmodernism, as terminologically indicated, could also be regarded as a socio-cultural reaction against modernism and its privileging of rationality, objectivity and individuality. Postmodernism could thus be relativised as a binary opposite of and in interaction with modernism, providing a holistic approach through its interactions.

Within the postmodern perspective, theories came to be regarded as strings rather than points (Appignanesi et al., 1996). Adhering to this assumption of

interconnection, the etiological discussion on anger will assume a metatheoretical perspective, with all theories regarded to shed some light on the subject.

Following its principles of relativity, postmodernism established science as a social process. Quantum physicist, Niels Bohr (cited in Apignanesi et al., 1996), proposed that "no phenomenon can be said to exist unless it is an observed phenomenon" (p.109). With observation as meaning giving entity, contextualizing the eye of the beholder became an important feat. In order to understand the tendencies in science (and psychology) it became important to assume a holistic view, to contextualize and relativise theories against the cultural templates of their time. In adherence to the principle of relativity, this paper is intended as a perspective among others, contextualized by its postmodern cultural context.

Upholding relativity, an attempt will be made to contextualize theories on anger within the dominant cultural tendencies of their time. This will be done by discussing the system of binary opposites and the ways in which theories interact with the privileged dichotomies of their time. This not only adheres to the postmodern assumptions of relativity, but also offers perspectives on the cultural contexts impacting the theoretical assumptions on women and anger. As Chagani (1998) concludes, "From a postmodernist perspective, there are no transhistorical or transcultural grounds for interpretation" (p. 2).

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Literature review
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The literature review is a two-fold endeavour, firstly attending to the defining of relevant terminology and secondly providing a criptical review of theoretical positions and empirical findings regarding women and anger. In alignment with the aims of this paper, the literature review starts off by cryptically considering existing metatheoretical perspectives on emotion. In accordance with the postmodern perspective, the metatheoretical exploration will be culturally contextualized against the template of historically predominant dualities of reason-emotion; nature-nurture and individual-society.

Following the assumptions of the postmodern perspective, the literature review incorporates the impact of cultural and gender stereotype phenomena within the discussion. Lastly the literature review provides an integration of the metatheoretical findings regarding women and anger.

Terminological exploration

> "Anger is a compounded phenomenon. It has dispositional propensities, expressive and motivational components, situational and individual variations, cognitive and … interdependent manifestations and psychophysiological aspects" (Vaknin, 2001, p.1).

Defining anger and emotion is a challenging imperative. Because of their phenomenological propensities, their complexity and "great sensitivity to personal and contextual circumstances" Ben-Ze'ev (2000, p.1) believes that, "no single essence is necessary and sufficient for [a definition of] all emotions". The complexity

of studying emotion is further enhanced by the tendency of emotional states to sometimes exist in clusters of emotions instead of one state. Anger could thus be accompanied by guilt, shame or fear and so forth. For Ben-Ze'ev (2000) an emotion is "a highly complex state involving ongoing activity, affecting the person as a whole and having public and private proportions" (p.5). However, despite the complexity and diversities of emotions, Ben-Ze'ev believes that one can make plausible generalizations in an attempt at defining the concept. This however, should be accompanied by an acknowledgement of the complex propensities of the phenomenon.

Reflecting its complexity, Strongman (1978) concludes that the literature on emotion is coloured by a lack of precision surrounding the definition of emotion in general and of specific emotions like anger and fear. In an attempt to accommodate the multifaceted aspects of emotions, Drever (cited in Strongman) defines emotion as "a complex state of the organism involving … bodily changes … accompanied by strong feelings and impulses to behave in particular ways" (p.4). Emotion could thus be described as an affective, bodily and behavioural state.

In Crowther's (1995) distinction between 'anger', 'annoyance' and 'rage' all three concepts are defined as "emotions depicting hostility", with anger as encapsulating term and annoyance and rage used to express the intensity of the anger (p.39). Ben-Ze'ev (2000) distinguishes hate from anger by depicting hate as a global negative attitude towards someone and anger as having a negative psychophysiological reaction towards a specific action of someone, rather than a global attitude.

Unlike anger, a state defined as an emotion with phenomenological, behavioural and bodily propensities, Franzoi (2000) defines aggression in terms of behaviour intended to inflict harm. The possible association between anger and aggression is reflected by terminological distinctions. Hostile aggression is thus defined as a type of aggression triggered by anger and used to attack, damage, injure or avenge. Not all aggression, however, is fuelled by anger and not all experiences of anger leads to aggression (Franzoi, 2000).

Metatheoretical perspectives

"Although emotions punctuate almost all the significant events of our lives, the nature, causes and consequences of emotions are among the least understood aspects of human experience" (Ben-Ze'ev, 2000, p. xiii).

"The truth is rarely pure, and never simple" (Oscar Wilde, cited in Ben-Ze'ev, 2000, p. 1).

Despite their apparent familiarity, emotions are an extremely complex and subtle topic (Ben-Ze'ev, 2000). For Izard (1977) emotion is a truly interdisciplinary subject – a phenomenon that Nehring (1997) proclaims to be an important link between the biological and social spheres of human experience. This declaration despite, the vast bodies of knowledge on emotion is characterized by reductionism and separation.

The postmodern tracing of the vast interdisciplinary and reductionist perspectives on emotion involves an understanding of the dualistic disposition of Western philosophy. Born in the conceptualisations of Plato, the embracing of the mind-body, reason-emotion spit reverberates through the centuries. Particularly resonating in Cartesian thinking, each part of the dualistic pair is given the status of an independent,

autonomous substance, suitable for reductionist scrutiny. Fuelled by die twentieth century Positivist proclaiming of reductionist, objective and scientific exploration, mind and body, emotion and reason, were viewed as separate entities of scrutiny within reductionist intradisciplinary studies.

The reason-emotion dichotomy

> *"Ira furor brevis est /* Anger is brief madness" (Horace, cited in Cohan and Cohan, 1998, p.211).

> "The heart has its reasons which reason does not understand" (Pascal, cited in Ben-Ze'ev, 2000, p. 10).

Juxtaposed against the dualistic Western disposition, the study of women and anger activates the reason-emotion dichotomy. The Descartian announcement, "I think therefore I am", depicts the age-old Western society's privileging of reason to emotion. From Aristotle to Kant, Izard (1977) presumes the privileging of reason to emotion to be deeply rooted within the Western civilization. Izard summarizes what he deems to be the pervasive philosophical assumptions of Western thought as follows:

> a) man is first and foremost a rational being;
> b) rationality is basically good, emotionality basically bad;
> b) reason (cognition) should be used as a control and as a substitute for emotion. (p.31)

Within the *psychodynamic* conceptualisation of emotion, anger was conceptualised as an internal, instinctive energy born from frustration and directed towards death or destruction (Freud, cited in Goldstein, 1994). The psychodynamic conceptualisation of anger as an energy implies, according to the principle of equivalence, that anger

cannot be destroyed even when repressed, while the psychodynamic defining of anger as an instinct, provides it with "bestial" propensities. Fuelled by the psychodynamic definition of anger to be an instinctive force and the *physiological* approach defining emotion as a biological phenomenon, emotion was conceptualised as an instinctive, bodily, involuntary, almost bestial force, while reason ruled as the mark of mankind.

The earliest theories on emotion within the reductionist domain of the physical sciences centred on the order of the occurrence of the mental and physiological propensities of emotion. Strongman (1978) cites the James-Lange theory of emotion to be the most famous of all, generating a lasting controversy within the literature by claiming the affect of emotion, such as anger, to be the result of a bodily reaction to stimuli. The James-Lange conceptualisation thus raises physiology to be the discerning component of emotion.

According to Strongman (1978), the physiological approach toward emotion focus largely on the possible emotional functions of the automatic nervous system, rendering what we have been taught to call anger to a merely physiological phenomenon. Reductionist empirical findings support the hypothesis of genetic factors as possible causes of emotion. Chemical and hormonal factors influencing anger has also been identified (Tucker-Ladd, 2001). According to Derlega and Janda (cited in Tucker-Ladd), abnormal EEG's have been found among repeat offenders and aggressive people and the stimulation of certain parts of the limbic system seems to result in expressions of anger and aggression.

The vast body of reductionist physiological studies emphasizing the physiological component of emotion offers two important implications for women and anger – firstly, viewing emotions such as anger, as survival based, physiological reactions implies the reality and relevance of women's anger as a physiological phenomenon. Secondly, the association between emotion and physiological instinct opened the cultural possibility to privilege reason to emotion, and to equate emotion with socially subordinate groups such as women.

Catherine Lutz (1990) criticizes the potential pathologising of emotion and women by commenting on the cultural models considering emotion as "a purely physical disturbance of the rational order of being to which women are particularly susceptible" (p. 78).   Plant, Hyde, Keltner and Devine (2000) state the assumption that women are more emotional than men to be one of the most consistent gender stereotypes.

According to Nehring (1997), the association of emotion with women is part of a larger association with any subordinate group and could be conceptualised as an attempt of subordination based on the assumption that reason is a nobler value than emotion.   Griffiths (1988) declares the identification of unreasonable emotion (and bodies) along class, race and gender lines as follows: "Black people, 'primitives' and the working class have been thought to be closer to feelings and nature and to be more emotional than white, 'civilized' and middle or upper class people" (p.132). According to Spelman (1989) anger is a particularly salient issue for women and the systematic denial of anger in females is part of the subordination of women.

Interestingly enough, females are associated with all emotions, except anger. Plant et al. (2000) found the association between women and emotion not to be as clear-cut as it appears. There seems to be a gendered definition of emotions which people use for judging emotional experience. In the language of literature and in layman's tongue, anger has been erased from female expression. Fabes and Martin (cited in Plant et al.) found that, although subjects believed both sexes to experience anger, they associated only men with the expression thereof. No account of the "loss" of female anger was given.

Although no explicit cultural explanation is offered, one might presume the answer to lie along the same lines of the Western privileging of reason to emotion. According to De Monticelli (2000), anger, unlike any other emotion, carries the value of morality and reason. De Monticelli conceptualises anger as an ancient virtue, calling it "the feeling of the wrong" and of the moral values that founds it (p.187). For De Monticelli, anger, unlike fear, implies a moral judgement and an intrinsic connection with reason. As De Monticelli puts it, "Even the most irrational outburst of anger carries along the shadow, the fantasy of a right to be sanctioned, of an offence to be repaired" (p. 188). Hinting on reason, moral judgement and proactive agency, anger became the only emotion erased from the female repertoire.

In an attempt to balance the dichotomy, *feminist* philosophers, in synchronization with *cognitive* theorists, tried to equate emotion with reason. As LeDoux (1996, p.36) puts it, "Many emotions are productive of evolutionary wisdom, which probably has more intelligence than all human minds together" or feminist philosophers, according to Nehring (1997) proclaim, "Emotions are rational judgements formed out of social interactions" (p. 124). Although the feminist movement introduces a valuable

variable, the impact of societal influences to the equation, Nehring criticizes the attempt to equate emotion to reason. Implied in the cognitive and feminist attempt, the associated privileging of reason still lingers.

In an attempt to equate emotion to reason, the cognitive and behavioural approaches to emotion, negated the subjective and phenomenological aspects thereof and focussed on learned behaviour and thought processes. Still presuming reason to be superior to emotion, the cognitive approach rendered emotion to be detrimental to clear thinking and proposed endeavours through which emotion could be cognitively identified and controlled (Izard, 1977). According to Nehring (1997) the physical and social sciences "have suffered .. [a] failure to transcend the traditional treatment of emotion as a physical disturbance in need of control" (p. 112).

Providing a "reasonable" account of emotion, the cognitive movement postulated that emotions are controlled through a very close interaction between physiological arousal and cognitive appraisal – the outcome of an emotion pending on the cognitive appraisal of a stimuli (Strongman, 1978). According to Ben-Ze'ev (2000) emotions occur when "we perceive positive or negative significant changes in our personal situation – or in that of those related to us" (p. 13). If the perceived stimuli are appraised as having negative valence and under the control of the transgressor, it is likely to elicit an emotional response of anger (Mallery, 2000). Arnold (cited in Strongman, 1978) defines appraisal as "the immediate, automatic and almost involuntary evaluation of all stimuli" (p. 4). With Antonio Damasio's *Descartes' Error* (1994) Descartes' priority of reason, proclaiming, "I think therefore I am", is up heaved by Damasio's announcement that "feeling [is] an integral component of the

machinery of reason" (p. xii). Focussing on appraisal and cognitive processes, the cognitive approach thus found a way of depicting emotion as reason.

According to Nehring (1997) even this cognitive attempt at balancing the reason-emotion dichotomy by defining emotion as reason, failed to claim the right to anger for women, or to address the implicit cultural patterns of subordination. As Nehring puts it: "But even cognitivism... [with] its continuing priority on reason ... doesn't suffice to achieve the ultimate objective : to claim anger for women too, the only emotion deemed more appropriate in men" (p.122).

Forsaking its phenomenological dimensions, while striving to conceptualise emotion as reason by reducing emotion to the cognitive propensities thereof, implies an impoverishment. LeDoux (1996) criticizes cognitive theories for their lack of phenomenological emphasis, "In trading in the passion of an emotion for thoughts about it, cognitive theories have turned emotion into cold ... states of mind. Lacking sound and fury, emotions as cognitions signify .. nothing very emotional" (p. 42). According to Strongman (1987) studies on emotion would be incomplete without any descriptions of the subjective experiences it involves. Nehring (1997) thus pleads for the acknowledgement of both reason and emotion and the richness their interaction could offer. This co-incides with the Jungian assumption of the richness and holism of binary opposites or the ancient portrayal of the Greek goddess of wisdom, Athena, who is portrayed with the clear eyes of reason, but carries on her shield the fury of Medusa's face (De Monticelli, 2000). Griffiths (1988) supplies a postmodern reconciliation of the reason-emotion, mind-body split by highlighting the simultaneous, dialectical meeting of body and mind, of physical sensation and understanding that occurs in emotion.

Though criticized for their dealing with nonobservables, which are considered "not to provide the basis of scientific investigation", *phenomenological* theories are concerned with a conceptual analysis of the experience of emotion (Strongman, 1978, p.33).

According to Fivush, Brotman, Buckner and Goodman (2000), human experiences are imbued with emotions, their complexity in part derived from their great sensitivity to personal and contextual circumstances. Sartre (1948) believes emotion to involve a qualitative transformation of the world. Izard (1977) describes the phenomenology of anger as follows, "In anger the blood 'boils'... There is a feeling of power and an impulse … to attack … the mobilization of energy is so great that one feels one will explode if one does not … 'act out the anger' " (p.331). Barlett and Izard (1972) conclude that anger causes great tension and an elevation of self-assurance, resulting in feelings of bravery and courage. According to Izard (1977) emotional states may last from seconds to hours and vary profoundly regarding intensity.

Assuming emotion to be an experiential phenomenon, Sartre (1948) asserts that emotion is not something that can be stopped if it is wished to, or cast off because it is unpleasant – an assumption that has important implications for gender stereotype or cultural restrictions on the expression of emotions.

The recognition of social factors in the mechanism of emotion is an important theme within the exploration of women and anger and activates other binary oppositions within the Western culture, namely the nature-nurture and individual-society dichotomies.

The nature-nurture dichotomy

> "In emotion physical feelings are bound up with judgements on social experience" (Nehring, 1997, p.18).

The *physiological* view's conceptualisation of emotion as a physiological response and the *cognitive behavioural* and *social* approaches' defining of emotion as a learned response, positioned emotion within the age-old nature-nurture debate. Favouring nurture, Bandura's (1977) social learning theory depicts anger as learned behaviour governed by rules of reinforcement and punishment, while the physiological model's emphasis on the impact of genetic and neurological influences provides a physiological basis for emotion. Providing a postmodern conceptualisation, Nehring (1997) concludes that this debate has hardly been settled, since both physiology and culture are etiologically related to emotion. Both bodies of physical and social knowledge are thus relevant to the understanding of women and anger - the nature perspective, or physical propensities of anger, claiming anger for both sexes, while the nurture perspective on emotion, urges for an understanding of learned and culturally mediating phenomena regarding the subject.

Stearns and Stearns (1986) believe emotion to be "the foremost link between biological and social experience" (p. 226). This link despite, Middleton (cited in Nehring, 1997) concludes that there is an imbalance regarding the physical and cultural study of emotion, with a lack of studies investigating the cultural propensities thereof. As Middleton puts it, "…not much has changed in the postmodern literary and cultural theory… in which emotions are still assumed to belong to the body" (p. 120). Contextualizing and understanding these phenomena, necessitates the discussion of the individual-society dichotomy.

The individual-society dichotomy

> "Our ways of communication do not emerge from nothingness. They are
> embedded in the foundations of society" (Gergen, 1992, p.141).

The individual-society dichotomy facilitates an understanding of women and anger on two levels. Firstly it provides a socio-historical conceptualisation in alignment with the postmodern perspective. Secondly, is provides a preliminary understanding of the interplay between culturally privileged dichotomies, gender and anger offering a possible explanation of the cultural prohibition of women's anger.

The imbalance regarding the cultural study of emotion could be explained by the Western society's privileging of the individual to society. The individual-society dichotomy also offers a preliminary understanding of the culturally socialised gendered expressions of emotions.

Fischer and Manstead (2000) offer two possible explanations for the gendered expression of emotions, namely Eagly's Social Role Theory and the cultural display rules of emotion. According to the former, gender role stereotypes are derived from a culture's sex-specific division of labour. This traditionally positions women in roles directed towards caring of others – roles linked to prosocial behaviour and "powerless" emotions such as fear, sadness and shame. In a supportive explorative study Fischer and Manstead found women to be more prone to experience and express prosocial emotions (like empathy, joy, enthusiasm) and emotions that imply powerlessness or vulnerability such as fear and sadness. The second theory regarding cultural display rules of emotion refers to culture specific rules regarding

the expression and interpretation of emotion. An explanation for cultural differences regarding display rules for emotion is to be found in the extent to which a culture adheres to collectivist versus individualist values. In an individualist culture, such as the Western culture, strong emphasis is placed on autonomy and independence (Fischer & Manstead).

The Western society's privileging of the individual and autonomy can be traced to antiquity. According to Levin (1992), Plato's accentuation of the importance of the individual reverberates through the Renaissance and Modernism. Sampson (cited in Lannaman, 1995) illustrates the twentieth century's absolution of autonomy as follows, "Individuals, understood as self-determining, autonomous sovereigns, authors in charge of their own life's work, became the central actors on the social stage" (p.118).

Similar to the reason-emotion dichotomy's relationship with gender stereotypes, the Western privileging of individuality and autonomy to relatedness and society, became associated with the male-female dichotomy - the male gender stereotype became equated with the privileged dichotomy of autonomy and individuality, while the female gender stereotype is characterized with a focus on relatedness and relationships. According to Estés (1994, p.367), there is an impetus on little girls to "try to be peacemakers at all costs, not to interfere and stand the pain until everything calms down". Similarly Lips (2000) believes that women are punished more than men for failing to be sociable and "nice".

The pervasive association between men and autonomy and females and relatedness can be traced through theoretical debates on gender and development. Adhering to the female gender stereotype of relatedness, Gilligan (1993) depicts the Ericsonian

developmental tasks' focus on autonomy as pathologising and irrelevant to female development by stating:

> "Although the initial crisis in infancy … anchors development in the experience of relationship, the task then clearly becomes one of individuation…but about whom is Erikson talking? Once again it turns out to be the male child" (p.12).

In accordance with the gender stereotype, Gilligan (1993, p.12) defines female identity in terms of relationship centeredness as she puts it, "the very traits that traditionally defined the 'goodness' of women (are) their care for and sensibility to the needs of others". In a recent case study, tracing the presence of relationship versus autonomy-orientated themes in the narratives of a female respondent, indications of both were found (Smith-Marais, 2001). The female gender stereotype however prohibits the display of autonomy, evidently even in feminist research.

Autonomy and relationship centeredness have an interesting relation to women and anger. According to Brody (2000), emotions, which facilitate social relationships, such as warmth, support and cheerfulness are considered appropriate for women. Jackson (2001, p.3) depicts anger as a seperative power, defining it as follows, "Anger is a hostile emotion that sets people against each other, or even against themselves. By nature anger involves antagonism". As seperative power, anger presumably became inequitable with the female gender stereotype of relatedness. This hypothesis is further strengthened by the cultural prohibition on female displays of anger, except in a maternal role. Anger is thus permissible when it facilitates the relationship and prohibited when associated with separation and autonomy.

In alignment with the association between women and relationship centeredness, Kring (2000) proposes interpersonal factors to be particularly salient for women.

Denham and Bultemeier's study on anger (cited in Kring) found the most common elicitors of anger among women to be interpersonal and societal. According to Kring literature on anger tend to find that women report experienced anger more in close relationships than men. The tendency of women to report more experienced anger in close relationship contexts could compliment the assumption that the female identity is relationship imbedded. If this assumption was true, tracing women and anger should involve an acknowledgement of culture, interpersonal and societal influences. However, studies tend to negate cultural influences in accordance with the Western culture's privileging of the autonomous individual.

On the other hand, women reporting more expressed anger in relationships could mask autonomy drive. According to Kring (2000) the reasons why men and women get angry appears to differ within the context of close relationships. Buss (cited in Kring) found that women tend to be angered by condescending remarks and negative behaviour of men whereas men tend to be angered by women's negative emotional reactions and self-focussed behaviour. The association between women and emotionality, subordination and the prohibition of autonomous and self-focussed behaviour is evident. Understanding women and anger thus necessitates acclaiming the individual as well as the relationship and cultural context and implies an understanding and proclaiming of both reason and emotion, autonomy and relationship centeredness drives impacting, eliciting or prohibiting anger.

The individual-society's privileging of the individual and autonomy not only offers a preliminary understanding of the cultural prohibition of women's anger, but could also offer a potential understanding of the lack of studies regarding the cultural propensities of emotion. Focussing on the individual, vast bodies of studies aimed at

tracing the physiological and intrapersonal origins of anger. Conceptualising anger as an individual, agentic force, the frustration-aggression hypothesis depicts anger as an agentic, motivational force when goals become frustrated. According to Izard (1977) frustration can be conceptualised as "the feeling of being either physically or psychologically restrained from doing what one intensely desires to do" (p.330). Anger thus becomes "a warrior of [individual] desire" (De Monticelli, 2000, p.188).

However, acknowledging the cultural factors impacting anger, anger can be identified on individual and societal levels. Anger is also a social emotion. According to Kring (2000) anger is often elicited by others, directed towards others and its consequences are often interpersonal. On a societal level, economic and political deprivations could produce collective frustration resulting in feelings of anger and aggression. In such instances similar experiences of anger could be a unifying phenomenon and mobilize social reform. According to Ben-Ze'ev (2000) "…emotions are a very important glue that links us to others, and the links to others are important determinants for the generation of emotions" (p.23). Izard (1977) emphasizes the need for the study of cultural influences as social or cultural influences "may modify the expressions of emotion in determining what will trigger the emotion and what the corresponding response should be" (p.6).

Fivush et al. (2000) propose that emotional evaluation and expression are often culturally mediated. The classic study of Condry and Condry (cited in Plant et al., 2000) illustrated this by finding that adult subjects tend to interpret the emotional displays of an infant named "girl" as less angry and more afraid than the same display by an infant labelled "boy". According to Plant et al. this suggests that adults

make stereotype consistent interpretations of infants' ambiguous expressions. This indicates a possible socialization of the emotions of children beginning in infancy.

Malatesta, Culver, Tesman and Shepard (1989) found traces of gendered emotional socialization in the early parent-child interactions. According to the authors, starting in the first few days of life, mothers displayed emotion differently with daughters than with sons, using a greater variety and intensity of facial expressions. Although not at first, at the end of the first year, these differences were evident between male and female infants, presumably following maternal display rules. Not only mothers, but also fathers tended to model emotionality more when interacting with their daughters than with their sons. According to Malatesta et al. (1989), the modelling of emotionality in general pended on the gender of the child rather than the gender of the parent indicating the display rule that women are to be associated with emotions and should be socialized accordingly. As Plant et al. (2000) puts it: "children may learn from adults to label their emotional experiences in a gender stereotyped manner… this … may shape how they respond to emotion-eliciting experiences" (p.87). Plant et al. conceptualise this as display rules, a term he defines as "over learned habits about who can show what emotion to whom and when they can show it…(for example males should not cry; females (except in a maternal role) should not show anger" (p.86). According to Ekman (cited in Plant et al.), it is "virtually taboo for women to express anger toward other adults in the Western culture" (p.87).

There are, however, inconsistencies in the literature regarding women's adherence to the stereotype and their expressions of anger. While most theorists agree that both men and women experience anger, they differ regarding women's expression thereof. According to Burrowes and Halberstadt's self-report study (cited in Kring,

2000), both genders experience and express anger to the same degree, while Halas (cited in Kring) believes women to frequently repress anger. These differences might be explained by the specific population, for example a clinical population experiencing trouble with anger, the level to which the female respondents adhere to the female gender stereotype, or it might be an indication of cultural changes regarding the female role.

Kring (2000) reports gender role differences to be associated with anger expression or repression. People with a high score on masculine characteristics scored higher on Spiegerberger's Anger-Out scale, while men and women with a high score on feminine characteristics scored higher on the Anger-In scale. According to Kring this suggests that sex role characteristics are associated with outwardly expressing or repressing anger.

Acknowledging the female gender stereotype's prohibition on anger, Kring (2000) warns that it is merely a stereotype and that one should be careful not to deduct that all women have trouble expressing anger. According to Kring studies supporting the hypothesis that women do not express anger could strengthen the stereotype and pathologize women. Assuming all women to adhere to the female gender stereotype and repress their anger could be a pathologizing generalization, but turning a blind eye to the possible impact of stereotypes, to the ways in which adherence to it or not influence women, to its cultural changes or the ways in which women experience or express their anger, would be succumbing to the silence surrounding the topic.

In the debate regarding whether women express anger or not, the ways in which they deal with their anger are often left in silence. Whether women adhere to the

stereotype or not, it provides an important cultural context reflecting society and impacting individuals and needs to be explored. Understanding the mechanism of the female gender stereotype is an important feat in understanding the cultural background of women. Not acknowledging its impact, whether women adhere to it or not, could imply a possible privileging of individual to society.   Not addressing the possible impact of cultural and social influences implies a failure to acknowledge the self-other duality.

Assuming a humanist position, Yalom (1995) attempts to explain the human predisposition to be susceptible to social influence and thus to gender stereotypes as follows, "Man is by nature committed to social existence, and is therefore inevitably involved in the dilemma between serving his own interests and recognizing those of the group to which he belongs" (p. 18).   The tension and interaction between the duality of self-other, individual-society is accentuated by this quotation.

The complexity of the relationship between the individual and society, the self and the other is depicted through Freud's psychodynamic conceptualisation of depression in terms of anger against others turned towards the self. As Freud (cited in Kristeva, 1989) concludes, "The complaint against oneself would therefore be a complaint against another, and putting oneself to death but a tragic disguise for massacring an other". The self and others, the individual and society are, as postulated by the postmodern movement, intrinsically intertwined.

Implications: a healing-destruction paradox

"And maybe one day it will hurt enough
To move from this living grave
And burn" (Janes, 2001, p.1).

"Treasure is uncovered by the force of flowing water
And it is buried by the same currents" (Coelho, 1999, p.28).

Negative implications

The implications of anger lie within a paradox of destruction and healing. Envisaging anger as a drive towards destruction brings forth images of potential direct or indirect aggression, violence, hostility and destruction. According to Stabb and Bruckner (2000) anger is typically viewed by professionals and the general public to be destructive, dangerous and unhelpful. The possible negative outcomes of anger not only resides within the overt expression of hostility and anger, but could also be hidden in the denial thereof.

Although a cultural inhibiting of women's anger could imply a presumed limiting of the possible negative outcomes of anger, this is not necessarily the case. Experimental studies indicate that although women are not associated with expressing anger, they experience it (Plant et al., 2000). This indicates that women may use alternative ways of expressing their anger, or that they repress it. The destructive power of repressed anger may be particularly relevant to women.

According to the psychodynamic conceptualisations of Madow (1972), anger is an energy, which by the principle of equivalence, cannot be denied, ignored or

destroyed. As Tucker-Ladd (2001, p.1) puts it, "Unexpressed anger will spill out in other directions by means of displacement".   According to Tucker-Ladd, anger turned inward can cause feelings of helplessness, which can in turn precipitate a depressed mood or suicide. Madow proposes that the repression of anger could have a pervading influence on emotional, psychological and physical well-being.

According to Izard (1977), there are clinical and experimental data suggesting that a failure to respond assertively and appropriately to justifiable anger, can hinder clear thinking, damage interpersonal relationships and cause psychosomatic disorders. A failure to express anger could thus be maladaptive and has been etiologically implicated by Holt (1970) in physical disorders such as rheumatoid arthritis, hives, acne vulgaris, psoriasis, peptic ulcers, epilepsy, migraine, Reynaud's disease and essential hypertension.

The female gender stereotype's erasure of anger from the female repertoire, not only predisposes women to the negative outcomes of repressed anger, but also implies a potential loss of the positive propensities of anger.

Positive implications

Taking an evolutionist position, Izard (1977) conceptualises anger as "a survival mechanism, its value laying in its ability to mobilize energy and providing the means of defending oneself with great vigour and strength" (p.333). Providing self-assurance and energy, controlled anger can "provide the psychological strength to speak one's mind and act assertively" (Izard, p. 334). According to Madow (1972)

anger can enhance physical and mental strength, depending on the following prerequisites:

- The anger should not be overwhelming
- There should not be so much fear of anger that it cannot be released directly
- Opportunities of some socially acceptable outlet must exist. (p.50)

On a psychosocial level Nehring (1997, p.118) states the importance of claiming anger for women in order "for women to empower themselves". Anger, if used constructive and assertively, can offer insight, power and growth, be a powerful motivational force to study, work or attain success and can be used "to accomplish a feat of strength which is beyond one's powers under ordinary circumstances" (Madow, 1977, p.28). Feminist theorists such as Elaine Showalter and Patricia Meyer Spacs (cited in Nehring) speak of anger as a source of female creative power providing the possibility of growth. For many people, social criticism may necessarily begin with anger indicating something is wrong. As Nehring concludes, "Emotion is not easily contained… we work continually to resolve the contradiction between authoritarian demands and feelings we find more persuasive" (p.123).

Nehring (1997) proclaims that anger not only holds the potential of social reform, but also facilitates agency and individualism acting simultaneously as individualistic and societal force. For Nehring "the best evidence … for the existence of agency (or the active constructing of identity) in the postmodern world lies in 'outlaw' emotions, such as anger, that continually arise among various subcultures" (p. 123). Anger thus becomes an agentic force in the construction of a new identity against dominance. According to Nehring our emotional constitution is as important as our expressed beliefs in the ideological maintenance of the status quo. Anger alongside the dread of destruction and pain, could offer the potential of social reform, agency, strength

and personal growth. Acclaiming the dual nature of anger, Estés (1994) urges anger should not be rid of so fast as it can provide a light by which we can see into places we cannot usually see, "… all emotion, even rage, carries knowledge, insight, what some call enlightenment. Our rage can, for a time, become our teacher" (p.352).

Attempts to erase anger for fear of its destructive propensities could facilitate the negative outcomes of repressed anger and imply a loss of its positive powers, while turning a blind eye to the destructive propensities of anger while acclaiming its positive aspects, could result in disastrous outcomes for both individual and society. Following the Jungian assumption of striving towards accepting paradoxes and balancing their dual natures, an intervention approach towards anger should perhaps acclaim the values of anger, while recognizing its dangers. Positions on the extreme ends of the dichotomy should thus be addressed, namely the destructive usage of anger, of the fear of proclaiming its voice.

Addressing anger thus involves research, the communication thereof, pro-active interventions aimed at facilitating not only anger management strategies, but also an understanding of its mechanism and healing-destruction potential and a deep respect for all humans and all emotions. As LeSage (cited in Nehring, 1997) concludes: "It is a task open to all our creativity and skill … to tap our anger as a source of energy" (p.122).

Conclusion and future directions

According to the postmodern acclaiming of interaction and complexity, understanding the emotions of (wo)man, is an ever-shifting endeavour. Assuming a postmodern approach, an approach that aims at balancing dichotomies by addressing previously unprivileged dichotomies, emotion (anger) and woman was explored and contextualized within the reason-emotion and culture-society dichotomies of Western civilization. The tracing of the Western culture's privileging of reason to emotion and individuality to society offered a possible understanding of the lack of literature on the interaction between culture, women and emotion.

In an attempt to trace the female voice of anger, the discussion was culturally contextualized against the Western culture's privileging of reason to emotion and individual to relationship centeredness. In the uncovering of privileged dichotomies and the association between women and all emotions except anger, lingered the possibility of female subordination and a cultural predisposure to repress anger.

Assuming the relativist propensities of postmodernism implies acknowledging the healing-destruction paradox of anger. In light of the female gender stereotype's erasure of anger from the female repertoire, repressed or marked manifestations of anger might be particularly relevant to women. Uncovering anger's equivalent nature, the psychodynamic conceptualisation of anger as an energy implies that the repression thereof would be unable to destroy it and could facilitate destructive physical and psychological consequences. However, a postmodern acclaiming of anger's dual nature necessitates an understanding of the possibility of healing,

insight, growth, self-assertion, agency, social reform, mobilization and power that anger holds. The female gender stereotype or Western culture's disclaiming of anger could imply a loss of its positive powers.

Acknowledging the importance of the female gender stereotype, of cultural factors and privileged dichotomies' impact on women and anger implies the possibility of shifting phenomena. If the gendered socialization of emotion were linked to social roles, as the Social Role Theory proposes, social changes in labour divisions could catalyse a change in the gendered expression of emotion. The tracing of the reason-emotion and individual-society dichotomies uncovered a possible intricately intertwined web of social roles and the association between men, autonomy, anger and reason and women, relationships, emotions and the prohibition of anger. Lifting the carefully intertwined strands by a shifting of labour roles could imply a change in the cultural contexts surrounding women and anger. Hypothetically, more women seeking autonomous employment could facilitate the cultural association between women and autonomy and the proclaiming of female anger and reason. A skewed web, where women come to be associated with anger, but are still regarded as solely emotional and relationship centred, could result in intricate patterns of role-strain, misconceptions, repression, frustration, guilt and shame. Timing and balancing of cultural change are thus important strands in the (present) future tale of women and anger. The future, however, holds many possible truths, but perhaps in it will linger the importance of acknowledging cultural factors, of balancing dichotomies, of understanding the duality of anger and providing both men and women with the means to address this ever present phenomena in ways that acknowledge both individual and society. Social research and the communication thereof could provide a powerful vehicle for understanding and impacting social phenomena.

Future directions

Tracing the insights and limitations of past studies could offer valuable directions for future research. In her analysis of studies on anger, Kring (2000) identified possible limitations regarding study perspectives and methodology.

In alignment with the western society's priviliging of individual to society and male to female, Nehring (1997) proclaims the need for research acknowledging women and cultural influences. Similarly Kring (2000) believes anger to be a social phenomenon and calls for extensive explorative research regarding stereotypes, culture, gender and social influences. This would not only provide a balancing of previously unprivileged dichotomies, but could also offer a traditionally neglected perspective on women, culture and anger. If social influences may mediate the expressions of anger an understanding of relative social, cultural and gendered contexts is essential.

According to Thamm (1999), the South African media speaks of endless accounts of anger, hostility and aggression – a phenomenon she explains through the uniquely South African context – its history and current strains. Taking the host of anger's possible negative outcomes into account, an understanding of anger within the South African context is of vital importance. This despite, research addressing women, culture and anger within a South African context is characterized by silence.

Following a postmodern approach, future research could address the lack of studies tracing the impact of collective African cultures on the experiences and expressions of female anger. This paper largely attempted to uncover the silence surrounding

women and anger by balancing western dichotomies. In acknowledgement of the impact of culture on gender roles, stereotypes and expressions of anger, an exploration of non-western cultures is wanting.

In her analysis of methodological shortcomings regarding studies on anger, Kring (2000) advocates the need for sensitivity regarding the methodological problems of the past and suggests that future studies acknowledge the social propensities of anger, studies the phenomenon within the context of relationships, use multiple research methods and address the possible impact of the researcher's values and stereotypes on the research.

According to Shields (1991), future research should also consider how and when women experience and express anger and how their knowledge of stereotypes impacts them. Such an explorative approach is applicable to the relatively unexplored South African context. For Kring (2000) current theories explaining gendered expressions of emotion in terms of socialization are wanting. She deems explorative studies as essential: "In order for research to progress … theoretically derived hypotheses about how and when women might differ in their anger response will ultimately … tell us more about gender and anger than a post hoc application of socialization" (p.223).

Conclusively, future studies attempting to acknowledge the complexity of anger, should also address its possible positive impact. Assuming the relativist propensities of postmodernism implies acknowledging the healing-destruction paradox of anger.

According to Hegel (cited in Hergenhahn & Olson, 1999) and Jungian philosophy "everything carries within itself its own negation" (p.73). For Jung, the goal of life, in accordance with the principle of entropy, is to seek a balance between polar opposites. The sixth century Japanese philosopher Shotoku Taishi (cited in Estés, 1994) advocated tolerance for every human, every creature and every emotion. In assuming a perspective of relativity, perhaps a glimpse of the *gestalt* could linger within the acclaiming of (both) binary opposites, reason and emotion, individuality and society, healing and destruction and their interactions.

As Gibran (2000) concludes:

> "Reason, ruling alone, is a force confining; and passion, unattended, is a flame that burns to its own destruction. Therefore let your soul exalt your reason to the height of passion, that it may sing…" (p. 58).

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