

READING RAGE

THEORISING THE EPISTEMIC VALUE OF WOMEN'S ANGER

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If you have to shout to be heard, you are heard as shouting.

- Sara Ahmed

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Introduction

The choice to write at least one of my articles for the Research Master on the topic of women's anger was an easy one to make. I had first come across the issue when searching for a topic for my master's dissertation the year before, and it turned out to be so fascinating that a single dissertation was not nearly enough for me to fully exhaust it. Women's anger saw a resurgence in the public eye around 2018 and is starting to get picked up by academic publishing as well, so it proved to be a timely issue to work on. I submitted a PhD proposal on the topic of women's anger to the FWO, but after that was submitted, I did not want to leave my topic on the back burner for a year. When I got the opportunity to write a paper for my Philosophy and Ethics of Gender, Sexuality and Diversity seminar, I quickly knew that I wanted to focus on women's anger once again.

At first, the plan was to re-work an existing article of mine. Soon after I completed my dissertation, I adapted it into an article for a special issue Signs was publishing on the topic of female rage. This article was rejected, perhaps not surprisingly since I had barely finished my master's degree at the time and Signs is quite a prestigious journal. I then re-submitted my article to a second journal, Feminist Encounters. It was rejected once again, but this time around I received extensive feedback from reviewers that I could use to rework the article into a more publishable shape. In the context of the Research Master, I also received feedback when I presented the article in its first form to the professors involved with my gender studies seminar. With all of that feedback in mind, I went back to the drawing board. By then, my thinking around women's anger had evolved significantly, both through writing a research proposal on the topic and simply because quite some time had passed and my thinking had had time to mature. This meant that I decided to write an entirely new article from scratch, rather than editing the one I already had. Writing a new article gave me the chance to explore my matured ideas in more depth, while also ensuring that the resulting article was sufficiently different from my first dissertation so I could use it for my Research Master dissertation as well.

During the writing process, I encountered three main challenges. Firstly, because the article was building on the work I did in my master's dissertation, I was faced with the challenge of condensing an entire dissertation into an article without losing nuance or accessibility. Moreover, because my thinking had evolved since I first wrote my dissertation, I had to incorporate my new ideas and update the arguments I used in my dissertation to fit with them. In the feedback I received from reviewers on the first version of my article, I noticed that many things they found lacking in the article were things I had addressed in my dissertation, but had cut from the article in my efforts to condense my argument. In the second version of my article, then, I aimed to preserve those details

and nuances, while still keeping my article under the journal word limit. Secondly, I had to try to build on previous work of mine without self-plagiarising. I was basing the article on my dissertation, but also on ideas I had started to develop in other places. This meant that I had to find a way to incorporate those ideas meaningfully while still providing added value in this article which previous writings did not have. Thirdly, I focused on helping the reader understand my arguments and guiding them through the text. This was a challenge especially because of the interdisciplinary nature of my topic, which falls on the intersection between gender studies and philosophy and therefore has to accommodate to readers from both backgrounds. I attempted to structure my article as clearly as possible, and I also included a thorough state of the art to provide necessary context.

The topic of women's anger is timeless, as its relevance throughout the history of (feminist) scholarship shows. Still, in today's context it is especially valuable to pay attention to it. As I show in the beginning of my article by delineating an *anger turn* parallel to Sara Ahmed's happiness turn, women's anger is not only extremely topical but also interwoven in the international socio-political scene in countless ways. In this context, it is of the utmost importance to teach ourselves to listen to women's anger, both our own and that of others. Anger is readily dismissed as irrational or aggressive, but making the effort to take it seriously and to consider the messages it sends is crucial. This article makes a case for anger, and asks it reason to consider: what can we learn from listening to anger?

Reflection

Intended Audience

The article featured in this dissertation is situated on the intersection between two different academic disciplines: philosophy and gender studies. It combines both topics and methodological input from these two disciplines into a homogenous whole. The main theoretical framework of epistemic injustice is taken from philosophy, but applied to the topic of women's anger, which is more often studied within gender studies. Moreover, the methodological approach of intersectionality has its origins in gender studies (Crenshaw, 1989) and aims to bring to the fore the many ways in which different identity factors intersect, notably gender, race and class. Taking into account this interdisciplinary approach, the article keeps its double intended audience in mind: both people with a background in philosophy and with a background in gender studies should be able to read and understand it.

Additionally, the article is an academic text, aimed towards academic readers. Because it is situated within a feminist academic tradition, however, I believe it has an obligation towards accessibility. Following McGregor (2020), feminist research can only truly call itself feminist when it is both inclusive and accessible. This has two main implications: the article should be a) available and b) reasonably understandable to anyone who has an interest in it. For availability, open access journals are ideal, but because of the fee involved this was not feasible for a project without funding. Therefore, if the article gets published, I will make a digital copy of it available for download on an online platform such as PhilPapers. This allows readers without institutional access to read it as well. As for making the article understandable to more than a very niche academic audience, I have included a wide-ranging state of the art at the beginning of the article to sketch out the context it is situated in, and I explain the theoretical framework of epistemic injustice and its related terminology thoroughly. Including this background information was a necessity because of the mixed intended audience of the article, which consists of both philosophy and gender studies scholars.

Another part of ensuring accessibility of the ideas expressed within the article is the fact that it is accompanied by several pieces of public scholarship. I have written and published two magazine articles on women's anger and epistemic injustice, one for *Charlie Magazine* (Wallaert, 2019) and one for *MO* Magazine* (Wallaert, 2020). I have also written an accessible academic essay about epistemic injustice for *Algemeen Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Wijsbegeerte*, which is currently in press. With work like this, I aim to bring parts of my academic research to an audience outside of the ivory tower, in accessible wording and format. In this way, my research can also be linked with

current events, such as in the case of my *MO* Magazine* piece which examined the anger of the Black Lives Matter movement. I strongly believe in the importance of science communication and public scholarship, and I keep these values central to my academic work. However, I believe that it is best to create different pieces for different audiences, rather than expecting a single text to be accessible to everyone. In this way, this article is meant for a mostly academic audience, although it should be accessible to a motivated reader outside of that bubble. For a non-academic audience, my opinion pieces and essays are available.

Background Knowledge

Because of the interdisciplinary background of my article's intended audience, I could not presuppose a single body of background knowledge from my readers. As explained above, the article is geared towards an audience coming from both philosophy and gender studies, so I had to accommodate for these different backgrounds. This means that any terms or concepts that I used were either explained in the text or accompanied by a reference the reader can look into in order to learn more. The theoretical framework of epistemic injustice, for example, is thoroughly explained along with any supporting concepts it utilises. This means that the article is suitable as an introduction to the concept of epistemic injustice, as well as to readers who are already more familiar with it.

In agreement with my supervisor, I included a thorough state of the art in my article (in the section 'Women's Anger in Feminist Literature'), with a double goal. Firstly, I wanted to place my article within the existing tradition of (feminist) literature about anger and women's anger. A wide-ranging body of scholarship already exists, especially within Black feminist academic traditions, so it was crucial for me to situate my own contribution in relation to this scholarship. Secondly, I wanted to make clear where exactly my article adds to the tradition, where it is new and where it is innovative. On previous versions of the article, I received the feedback that it was not entirely clear what was new about my article and why my contribution was important. By making the scholarly context of my article explicit and pointing out the gaps in the state of the art that my article aims to fill, I addressed that feedback and made clear to readers why my article can be a useful contribution to the existing scholarship around women's anger.

The interdisciplinary character of the article means that it should be accessible to readers regardless of their academic background. In order to fully grasp the significance of the point my article is making, however, a certain non-academic background is recommended. First of all, the article presupposes a certain type of political thinking, leaning strongly towards the progressive and socially aware side of the spectrum. A reader who approaches the text from, say, a right-wing background,

would presumably have a hard time following the arguments it makes. Secondly, a familiarity with the resurgence of women's anger in the public eye would also help the reader to grasp the potential significance of the article. An ideal reader might have read one of the popular books on women's anger that were published in the *anger turn* that I argue for, or one of the articles that were written in the same context. Most of all, however, the article aims to be an accessible starting point for readers making their way into the literature around women's anger. Rather than presupposing extensive background knowledge, it provides pointers that can lead the interested reader towards more knowledge, both of an academic and a non-academic kind. In this way, rather than supposing pre-existing background knowledge, the article can be a way into that background knowledge, allowing the reader to build up knowledge by looking into the references it provides.

Choice of Journals

The process of selecting a suitable journal for my article started with an assessment of which discipline I should situate the article in. As discussed above, it is interdisciplinary in that it combines elements of both philosophy and gender studies. The only journal which is located at the exact intersection of those two is *Hypatia*, which publishes feminist philosophy, but since it usually publishes more established scholars and I was very conscious of the turnaround time of reviews, I decided not to pursue it. In the end, I decided to look at gender studies journals for one main reason: this is the field where most discussions around women's anger are taking place. If I want my article to make a contribution to this field, I should aim to publish in a related journal.

My strategy for compiling a shortlist of journals was to simply check Web of Science in the Women's Studies category, and then to find the best thematic matches within those journals. I used Web of Science because as a first choice, I wanted to try an A1 journal, and that is where those are compiled. This search resulted in a top three of possible journals: *Differences*, *Feminist Studies*, and *Frontiers*. A fourth one, *Social Philosophy Today*, was added after a suggestion from one of my supervisors.

Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies is an A1 journal. It asks for MLA references but does not specify a word count. On its website, it describes itself as “[highlighting] theoretical debates across the disciplines that address the ways concepts and categories of difference—notably but not exclusively gender—operate within culture.” (Differences, 2020). It has its interdisciplinary nature and its focus on gender in common with my article. The second focus of culture is less well matched, although it could be linked with my concept of the anger turn. Overall, *Differences* is not a bad choice, but not my first choice either.

Feminist Studies is also an A1 journal, asks for references in Chicago, and has a limit of 10,500 words. On its website, it is described as being “committed to publishing an interdisciplinary body of feminist

knowledge that sees intersections of gender with racial identity, sexual orientation, economic means, geographical location, and physical ability as the touchstone for our politics and our intellectual analysis.” (Feminist Studies, 2020). The journal publishes articles that “address social and political issues that intimately and significantly affect women and men in the United States and around the world.” (Feminist Studies, 2020). The interdisciplinary and intersectional focus of the journal match my article, as does its focus on socio-political issues. However, after taking a look at the types of articles the journal usually publishes, I found those to be less abstract than mine, and more focussed on a concrete case that exemplifies a certain issue. I concluded that *Feminist Studies* would be a good candidate, but not my first choice.

My co-supervisor then saw a call for papers by *Social Philosophy Today*, an A1 journal. The journal specifically invited submissions on the topic of ‘Respect, Social Action, and #MeToo’, which fits well with my article. On the journal website, the sub-topic of epistemic (in)justice and #MeToo received a special mention (NASSP, 2020), so my article would definitely not be out of place. I was strongly considering this journal until I noticed its 6.000 word limit, which is significantly less than my article’s 9.400 words. This means that *Social Philosophy Today* was ruled out.

Finally, my first choice became *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*. This is again an A1 journal, it asks for references in Chicago and it has a 12.000 word limit. On its website, the journal positions itself as “a place to think, challenge, and engage in feminist conversations that matter.” (Frontiers, 2020). The conversation around women’s anger definitely fits that description. Moreover, the journal stresses that “feminist theorizing is complexly intersectional and interdisciplinary”, which are two of the core values of my article as well. The journal also commits itself to “questioning what is known and how it is known, what is reality – the epistemological and ontological” (Frontiers, 2020), so it should be open to my theoretical framework of epistemic injustice. I had a look at some of the articles already published by *Frontiers*, and I found them to be a mix of conceptual and concrete, and truly interdisciplinary. A possible counterargument was the estimated review period of six months, but because the thematic match was so good and the longer review process did not really affect my PhD applications, this journal remained a very strong candidate. After discussing my possible journal choices with my supervisor, we agreed to select *Frontiers* as our first choice. The article has already been submitted there and at the time of writing we are waiting for reviewer feedback.

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Abstract

The topic of women's anger is not new to feminist literature. Not only have feminists long been angry themselves, but feminist academic traditions have also argued thoroughly for the use and value of this anger. Notably Black feminist academics like Audre Lorde and bell hooks have championed anger as carrying an important message. This epistemic value of women's anger has also been alluded to throughout feminist traditions, often in combination with the silencing of this anger, such as in Bailey (2018), who introduces the framework of Miranda Fricker's (2007) epistemic injustice in this context. What is so far missing, however, is a thorough investigation of the epistemic value that women's anger carries and the ways in which anger can both jeopardise and safeguard the transmission of women's messages. This article utilises the framework of epistemic injustice and uses it to rigorously theorise the epistemic value of women's anger. It mobilises both kinds of epistemic injustice, testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice. The article argues that testimonial injustice can both endanger the transmission of an angry message through identity prejudice, and can cause more anger in the person who is not being heard. Secondly, it argues that women's anger can be used to combat hermeneutical injustice by functioning as a kind of epistemic bridge, safeguarding the epistemic value of the anger itself. In this way, the double epistemic value of women's anger is better understood and might be better heard as well.

Reading Rage: Theorising the Epistemic Value of Women's Anger

In 2020, the race for the American Democratic presidential nomination played out as much online as it did offline. As a part of that online campaign, candidate Elizabeth Warren posted short videos of her speeches on Facebook. On the 26th of February, she posted a remarkable one, on a remarkable topic: anger. Anger is an issue of power, Warren explained, of who has it, who wants it, and who wants to keep it. Those without power, such as many women, are told to stay quiet; anger is for those in power to wield. So Warren declared, subversively: "Today, I am angry, and I own it." (Warren, 2020). The audience cheers. In this short video, Warren managed to grasp the essence of a feminist perspective on anger. Fundamentally, who gets to be angry and who does not is an issue of power. This power makes itself felt on many levels and in many domains. One of those domains is epistemic (in)justice. This will be the focus of this article, which asks: in which ways can the theoretical framework of epistemic injustice be utilised to understand and demonstrate the different layers of epistemic value that women's anger carries?

Women's Anger in Feminist Literature

Women's anger is not a new topic, especially in feminist circles. Not only have feminists long been angry themselves, but feminist academic traditions have also argued thoroughly for the use and value of this anger. In this literature, several themes emerge. One theme is that anger has been considered in its intersections with various kinds of social identity factors. Sometimes this is anger and gender, such as in Chemaly's (2018) and Traister's (2018) more popularising works on women's anger. Manne (2018) analyses the logic of misogyny and often sees anger being classed as a privilege for men, and Harris (2001) points out that this has been the case since antiquity. Frye (1983) classifies anger as a way of asserting one's agency. In other research the factor of race is also considered, such as in Lorde (2017), hooks (1995) and Cooper (2018) who examine the relations between (black) women's anger and racism. A second theme consists of explorations of the normativity of anger, and whether or not anger should be tolerated or even encouraged. In this category we find Nussbaum (2016), who argues against a normative anger because she sees the emotion as fundamentally retributive in most cases. Similarly, Pettigrove (2012) urges us to consider meekness a virtue, and with it the successful governance of one's anger. We also find Srinivasan (2018), who adds the factor of 'aptness' to the discussion around anger which often centres around productivity. Whereas most voices look at the consequences of anger to determine its desirability, Srinivasan goes back to look at where it originated to determine whether, based on its reasons, the

anger is apt or not. In this same normative category, Kay and Banet-Weiser¹ (2019) argue for a revival of 'respair', a kind of positive answer to despair which is encouraged in combination with women's anger. Wood (2019) champions the concept of 'irreverent rage' as a strategy towards effecting political change. Thirdly, women's anger has in some ways already been studied in relation to its epistemic value. Several authors have emphasised that anger carries a certain message, such as Lorde (2017) and Baker Miller and Surrey (1990). The ways in which this message is affected by the audience's perceptions of anger have been theorised as well, for example by Bailey (2018), who brings in the framework of epistemic injustice and examines angry silences and silencing. These silences are saturated with anger, she writes, which still carries an important message. The topic of silencing women's anger has also been studied by Orgad and Gill (2019), who posit three so-called safety valves that are employed to defuse the potential power of anger. One of these safety valves consists in making the anger itself the focus of the story and ignoring its underlying reasons and messages. In this way, anger is seen but not heard.

What is so far missing, however, is a theoretically structured analysis that brings all elements concerning the epistemic value of women's anger together, both the message the anger carries and the ways in which anger and its interconnected social identity factors can jeopardise this message receiving uptake. This is the objective of this article, which builds on feminist traditions of analysing women's anger and aims to propose a novel theoretical framework for grasping the specific epistemic value of this anger.² Specifically, this article argues for the epistemic value of women's anger, as supported by the theoretical framework of Miranda Fricker's Epistemic Injustice (2007). In this article I take a strongly analytical approach, leaving the real-world applications of the theories discussed for further research. My method is strongly intersectional, recognising the ways in which different and intersecting identities can interact with and influence matters around social identity. Therefore, gender is not seen as separate from other identity factors, but rather as bound up with other factors such as race. A second methodological intersection is that between philosophy and gender studies. This article draws upon sources in both areas and aims to be interdisciplinary in scope. The framework of epistemic injustice finds its origins in philosophy, but in this article it is combined with a rich tradition of literature from feminist and gender studies.

I start by laying out the background against which the article is situated. I draw the outline of what I call the *anger turn*, a shift in the popular perception of women's anger in particular, and I examine whose anger exactly is being included in this picture. Next, I turn to epistemic injustice and I examine

¹ This article, together with Wood (2019) and Orgad & Gill (2019), is part of a special issue of *Feminist Media Studies* which focuses on the topic of female rage.

² This project was initiated in an essay for *Algemeen Nederlands Tijdschrift voor Wijsbegeerte* which is currently in press.

the ways in which it can play out as a specifically gendered injustice. Finally, I address each of Fricker's types of epistemic injustice in turn, laying out their connections with women's anger: testimonial injustice as compromising the epistemic value intrinsic to the angrily expressed message, and hermeneutical injustice as being somewhat compensated by the epistemic value of the emotion of anger itself. I conclude that women's anger has a many-sided relationship with epistemic value. The anger carries a double epistemic value, comprised of the angrily expressed message and the signal that the anger itself sends. And while anger can be the basis for stereotypes causing testimonial injustice to take place, it can equally compensate for the effects of hermeneutical injustice.

Setting the Scene

Defining the *anger turn*

Following the 2017 rise of the #MeToo movement, 2018 saw the beginnings of a (re)valuation of female anger in the public eye, or maybe just a valuation of it, since women's anger historically has not been valued very highly (e.g. Harris 2001). With #MeToo as a catalyst, there appeared a visible trend in both on- and offline publications of more and more women talking about their anger and urging other women to employ their anger's full potential. Examples are books like Soraya Chemaly's *Rage Becomes Her* (2018), Brittney Cooper's *Eloquent Rage* (2018), Rebecca Traister's *Good And Mad* (2018) and Lilly Dancyger's *Burn It Down* (2019), or the series of articles on women's anger that were published by online platforms like Bitch Media (e.g. Zeisler 2018) and Electric Literature (e.g. Harding 2018). These are all sources of a non-academic nature, but they do have some academic counterparts. *Feminist Media Studies* (volume 19, issue 4 (2019)) published some insightful articles on the topic of women's anger, the winter 2020 issue of the *Boston Review* focuses on the topic of anger, and a special issue of *Signs* on the same topic is forthcoming in 2021 as well.

This surge in publications could be just a publishing trend, but there are reasons to suspect that it is more. Visible parallels exist with what Sara Ahmed (2010) calls the "happiness turn", which means that anger, like happiness, has made itself felt on four different fronts: in publishing, in the media, in academia, and in policy and governance (Ahmed 2010, 3). The first three of these fronts are covered by the publications listed above. Numerous books were published, articles were written, and journals were and are being edited. The last front is less obvious. In the case of the influence of happiness on policy and governance, Ahmed points out cases such as the Gross National Happiness Index in Bhutan and other attempts by governments to measure and quantify their population's happiness. For anger, no similar attempts have been made. However, anger has made its way into the political sphere in a different way. Elizabeth Warren's presidential campaign is a clear example. A few days

before the video mentioned in the introduction was posted, Warren's perceived anger became the focus of an intense debate on Twitter. Self-professed conservative opinion writer Jennifer Rubin wrote: "Mean and angry Warren is not a good look" (Rubin 2020). This tweet received more than 26.000 replies, ranging from supportive to critical to scathing. A notable reply came from the democratic politician Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who publicly supported Bernie Sanders (and not Warren) in the democratic presidential race, but stood up to support Warren nonetheless. She wrote: "Warren was not mean, nor angry. She was effective. And by the way, we are allowed to be angry about racial profiling. You're allowed to be angry about sexual harassment. Or at big banks committing fraud against single parents. Anger at injustice is quite appropriate." (Ocasio-Cortez 2020). A few days later, Warren's aforementioned Facebook video followed, in which she stated: "Today, I am angry, and I own it." (Warren 2020). In this way, anger, and specifically women's anger, did become a talking point on the political playing field. Moreover, women's anger was starting to be seen in a positive light. Women like Warren and Ocasio-Cortez were owning their anger, in defiance of the stereotypes (cf. infra) that are traditionally associated with women's anger. So while as of yet, no policy has been directly structured around women's anger, the emotion has made its way into the upper strata of the political playing field, and its influence there can hardly be denied. For these reasons, I argue that the public (re)valuation of women's anger fits the criteria of Ahmed's happiness turn, and I will call this spike in public awareness and support of women's anger an *anger turn*. This shows that there truly is something afoot concerning the public perception and use of women's anger, and that there is something there to be investigated further, in this moment in time especially.

Moreover, the *anger turn* does not stop at these four fronts. It is making itself felt on one more significant front: social activism. This is especially clear in the context in which the *anger turn* originated, which is that of the online #MeToo movement. #MeToo was originally started by the Black activist Tarana Burke in 2007, but it was further popularised following a tweet by the American actress Alyssa Milano in October 2017. Its workings and implications are well-known. And although the women participating in it were undoubtedly motivated by a mix of emotions, it is undeniable that anger was (and is) chief among them. Both the #MeToo movement and the *anger turn* were, and are, strongly motivated by experiences of misogyny, whether consciously enacted or not (cf. Manne 2018, 20). Both are women's movements, inspired by harm done to women and enacted by women as well. Misogyny is a kind of injustice, and following Ocasio-Cortez's tweet, "Anger at injustice is quite appropriate." (Ocasio-Cortez 2020). Another key point that characterises #MeToo and the *anger turn* is that they move the focus to the perspective of the victim, in this case mostly women. Victims got the chance to tell their own story and to keep control over the narrative, choosing what,

when, and how much they shared. Many abusive people were named publicly in the context of #MeToo (for example on the *Shitty Media Men* document created by Moira Donegan (Donegan 2018)), but they were not in control this time. Focusing on their own status as victims, the women of #MeToo were able to shape the narrative from their own, historically imposed subordinate point of view, which would be neglected in the dominant story of the perpetrator. This context again shows why the epistemic value of anger is especially poignant to be researched right now: the message expressed in the context of #MeToo is and was often one saturated with anger, and this anger deserves to be studied and theorised more closely, especially in relation to the messages it carries.

Whose anger is this?

In talking about misogyny, its victims, and their often angry reactions, it is tempting to resort to binary language. The term ‘women’s anger’ overtly refers to people of one gender, women, and a contrast with men is quickly felt. However, this binary language is not desirable. Many men and non-binary people experience sexual harassment as well, but they are typically not (equally) included in initiatives like #MeToo or the women’s anger movement. Perceived women’s problems, like sexual harassment, misogyny, inequality of education, wage gaps... are in fact societal problems. They have a negative impact on people of all genders, and they should be addressed as such: it is not right to leave problems that concern mostly women to be solved by women alone. However, to move the focus to *all* humans equally, for example by simply talking about ‘anger’ rather than ‘women’s anger’, ‘is to deny the specific and particular problem of gender’ (Adichie 2014, 41). While feminism is aimed towards women’s issues especially, it does not aim to exclude people of other genders. It recognises that gender is an important factor, but it does not exclude all other factors. Equally, I believe that the movement of women’s anger should be understood as being inclusive of more people than strictly those who identify as female.³ Women’s anger, therefore, is not in any sense an essentialist concept. On the contrary: while in the current political climate women’s anger is mostly expressed by people who identify as female, the concept is not restricted to people who identify as such. Thus, while I call it “women’s anger”, this sort of anger can equally be felt or expressed by non-female people, trans people, non-binary people, etc.

Apart from gender, the factor of race is another issue that needs to be considered. The #MeToo movement has often been criticised for being too white (e.g. Rottenberg 2017), and it needs to be made clear that the same can in no way be said about women’s anger. The history of women’s anger is strongly rooted within black feminist traditions and practices. As Leslie Jamison argues, “the real entitlement has never been anger, it has always been its absence” (Jamison 2019, 20). White women

³ In writing about this topic, however, I do mostly adopt the binary language of men versus women. I recognise that this is not ideal, and I welcome any feedback on this issue.

complain about having to repress their anger, but according to Jamison, this is in fact a luxury. In reality, black women have no choice but to express their anger in order to survive. This tradition of black anger is felt throughout the history of feminism, notably with Audre Lorde's essay *Uses of Anger* (2018 [1981]) and bell hooks' *Killing Rage* (1995), who both argued for anger as a means to combat racism. When discussing the *anger turn* and its implications, this racialised history should always be kept in mind.

Epistemic injustice

Characterising Epistemic Injustice

Before I can start with the core of my argument, I have to outline the foundational concepts that it will use, starting with the one at its core: epistemic injustice. In her 2007 book *Epistemic Injustice*, Miranda Fricker discusses two kinds of epistemic injustice: testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice. In the introduction, she defines them as follows: "Testimonial injustice occurs when prejudice causes a hearer to give a deflated level of credibility to a speaker's word; hermeneutical injustice occurs at a prior stage, when a gap in collective interpretive resources puts someone at an unfair disadvantage when it comes to making sense of their social experiences." (Fricker 2007, 1). In the words of Alison Bailey, "all testimonial exchanges take place on an *uneven knowing field*" (Bailey 2018, 94; emphasis in original). Some knowers receive more credibility than they deserve, others receive less. Both testimonial and hermeneutical injustice are ways in which the playing field is tilted. In this article, both kinds of epistemic injustice will be covered in relation to women's anger.

At the core of Bailey's "uneven knowing field" lies power (which, as previously mentioned, is central to anger dynamics as well). Fricker outlines two kinds: social power and identity power. She defines social power as "a practically socially situated capacity to control others' actions, where this capacity may be exercised (actively or passively) by particular social agents, or alternatively, it may operate purely structurally." (Fricker 2007, 13). Identity power on the other hand is characterised as follows: "Whenever there is an operation of power that depends in some significant degree on such shared imaginative conceptions of social identity, then *identity power* is at work. Gender is one area of identity power, and, like social power more generally, identity power can be exercised actively or passively." (Fricker 2007, 14). In this way, identity power can be seen as a kind of social power.

Linked with power, another foundational concept is that of credibility. Fricker recognises the possibility of both a credibility excess and a credibility deficit, which she defines as follows: "Broadly speaking, prejudicial dysfunction in testimonial practice can be one of two kinds. Either the prejudice results in the speaker's receiving more credibility than she otherwise would have - a *credibility excess* - or it results in her receiving less credibility than she otherwise would have - a *credibility deficit*."

(Fricker 2007, 17; emphasis in original). The unfair distribution of credibility is, on a simplified level, what constitutes epistemic injustice. In actuality, however, epistemic injustice is situated more on the interpersonal level than on the level of the unfair distribution of some good. As Fricker stresses, epistemic injustice is “a kind of injustice in which someone is *wronged specifically in her capacity as a knower.*” (Fricker 2007, 20; emphasis in original).

Finally, the last element of the puzzle is the way in which a judgement of credibility is made. According to Fricker, this happens on the basis of stereotypes. She uses the term ‘stereotype’ neutrally, without value judgement, to mean simply ‘*widely held associations between a given social group and one or more attributes*’ (Fricker 2007, 30; emphasis in original). A problem arises when the stereotypes we base our judgements on are informed by prejudice. Basing ourselves on stereotypes in our credibility judgments is by no means epistemically ideal, but it is unfortunately inevitable. In the absence of detailed knowledge about the sender of a certain message, we have to base our judgement on the limited and often biased information we do have available, and use it to draw a number of inferences about that person’s credibility (Fricker 2007, 32). In other words, we are linking certain social characteristics of a person with the attribute of credibility, which conforms to Fricker’s definition of a stereotype as cited above. The stereotypes we use in our credibility judgments are largely based on culturally driven social and historical concepts. Therefore, the dominance and subordinacy represented in society and throughout history are reproduced in the epistemic landscape, in the form of testimonial injustice. The same social groups who are subordinate in terms of societal power will receive a credibility deficit, and those who are societally dominant will receive a credibility excess.

Gender and Epistemic Injustice

Epistemic injustice is not gender-neutral, which, in an article about women’s anger specifically, is not irrelevant. While the stereotypes that lie at the base of testimonial injustice in particular can be of many kinds, gender stereotypes play a significant part. In this society, whether someone identifies as a man, as a woman, as non-binary or as something else entirely will undoubtedly call upon “shared imaginative conceptions of social identity” (Fricker 2007, 14). These conceptions will in turn have an influence on the stereotypes associated with the person concerned, on which testimonial credibility is then based. Gender is an important factor in determining identity power. This is the case for all genders, but the way in which it swings the balance varies strongly based on the gender in question. While gender is obviously not the only social identity factor to be considered, being male mostly contributes to a credibility excess, while being non-male contributes strongly to a credibility deficit. As Kate Manne puts it:

“When it comes to a “he said”/“she said,” “her word against his” scenario, there are obvious reasons to give him testimonial priority, from the point of view of upholding patriarchal order. For what if she is right? Then he would stand to be proven wrong. She would have the power to take him down with her word, when she is the more credible. And that power does not tend to be granted to historically subordinate people vis-à-vis the dominant without a fight. Such flipping of gendered hierarchies is part of what misogyny is effectively meant to prevent from happening.” (Manne 2018, 52)

The fact that a perceived male gender identity is given testimonial priority is not to be seen as disconnected from the rest of the world view that constitutes the common ground. The “unlevel knowing field”, then, slants in the same way as the playing field of gender does: male at the top, non-male at the bottom. The mechanisms of epistemic injustice are one of many systems keeping this imbalance in place.

Women’s Anger and Testimonial Injustice

Having laid out the necessary background concepts, I can now move on to the main part of the analysis, first of anger and testimonial injustice, then of anger and hermeneutical injustice. To repeat, Miranda Fricker defines testimonial injustice as occurring “when prejudice causes a hearer to give a deflated level of credibility to a speaker’s word” (Fricker 2007, 1). Kristie Dotson argues that the mechanism of testimonial injustice can go into effect in two different directions, which she calls “testimonial quieting” and “testimonial smothering” respectively (Dotson 2011, 242-4). The first, testimonial quieting, happens “when an audience fails to identify a speaker as a knower (Dotson 2011, 242). An example of this is Donald Trump’s response to the many sexual assault allegations made against him (e.g. Stracqualursi, Kelly and Murray 2019): Trump does not only deny the allegations, he also works to undermine the credibility of the women who accuse him by challenging their capacities as knowers. The second direction, testimonial smothering, consists of “the truncating of one’s own testimony” to make it more palatable to one’s audience (Dotson 2011, 244). This self-inflicted testimonial injustice is often expected of a speaker by her audience, as in the case of Audre Lorde who, when giving a talk at a conference, was told by her white audience to quiet down her anger so they could understand her better (Lorde 2018, 23).

Testimonial Injustice Threatens the Epistemic Value of the Message

These two directions of testimonial injustice have the same effect: a speaker is not taken seriously in her capacity as a knower and, crucially, her message is not heard. She receives a credibility deficit. With women’s anger, this happens often. As discussed above, testimonial injustice operates on the basis of stereotypes. While these stereotypes do not have to be negative, in the case of women’s

anger, they often are. The stereotyping and ridiculing of women's anger goes back to Ancient Greece. As Harris (2001) describes, in both Greek and Latin texts the angry emotions were feminine, and the angry woman was used as a *topos*, a recurring trope. The angry woman was commonly used as a joke, for example by the comedian Aristophanes in his play *Lysistrata*. Harris writes: "The stereotype [...] implies that there was almost no legitimate place for women's anger in the classical city. The point of the stereotyped angry woman is that she represents an attempt at the thorough denigration, indeed delegitimization, of female anger." (Harris 2001, 274). In much the same way, throughout the ages angry women have been categorised as hysterical, another delegitimation technique. This is what Lyman calls the psychological critique of anger: "anger has been constructed as a psychological problem rather than as a form of political speech." (Lyman 2004, 134). Or, alternatively, women's anger is dismissed because of its external appearance. As evidenced by Jennifer Rubin's tweet discussed above, anger is deemed "not a good look" (Rubin 2020) on a woman.

When these stereotypes go into effect in the minds of an audience, that audience is less likely to grant uptake to a speaker's angrily expressed message. This is the first kind of epistemic value that is being denied through epistemic injustice: because of testimonial injustice specifically, the epistemic value of the angrily expressed message is not safeguarded. The message stands separate from the speaker's anger, but is simply wrapped up in an angry mode of expression. This epistemic value is separate from that of the anger itself, which will be discussed later on. At this point, an intersectional feminist perspective necessitates that we consider the ways in which stereotypes around anger might be intermingling with stereotypes around other identity factors. Two of those factors are gender and race.

A frequently recurring issue in angry communication is that of misogyny, which can constitute a second, added layer of epistemic injustice. When feminist writer Lindy West was badly harassed by a so-called internet 'troll' - a term I find inadequate because it masks the seriousness of the threats these online harassers often spout⁴ - she didn't follow the advice that women in similar situations often get, which is to stay quiet and let it pass. Instead, she tracked down the man in question and sat down with him for an interview, a transcription of which is available online (Glass 2015). And, interestingly, when the issue of anger came up, it was on the side of the harasser first, not on West's

⁴ Not only does this terminology - reminiscent of fairy tales or fantasy stories - mask the seriousness of these cases, but it also has the consequence that victims (often women) are taken less seriously when they complain. After all, it's 'just a troll', so what are they worried about?

side. Her writing, the harasser confessed, 'kind of stoked that anger that [he] had.' Reading what she wrote, it seems, made the man uncomfortable. He explained:

"You used a lot of all caps. You're just a very - you almost have no fear when you write. You know, it's like you stand on the desk and you say, "I'm Lindy West, and this is what I believe in. Fuck you if you don't agree with me." And even though you don't say those words exactly, I'm like, "Who is this bitch who thinks she knows everything?" (Glass 2015)

And this, the harasser also admitted, was largely because West is a woman. According to Kate Manne, this kind of assertive, angry way of expressing oneself is seen as a masculine-coded privilege (Manne 2018, 130). When a woman uses it, men feel hurt, they feel threatened. The harasser literally admitted to having such feelings, saying: 'and I think, for me, as well, it's threatening at first.' Hence, when a woman expresses herself in anger, she faces a double obstacle towards getting the credibility and the uptake she deserves: there are stereotypes associated both with her anger and with her gender, and both of those stereotypes engender testimonial injustice.

For women of colour, a third obstacle is added: race. When they express themselves angrily, they are hindered by common perceptions of their anger, their gender, and their race. Audre Lorde gives a striking example of this in her essay *Uses of Anger*:⁵

"I speak out of direct and particular anger at an academic conference, and a white woman says, 'Tell me how you feel but don't say it too harshly or I cannot hear you.' But is it my manner that keeps her from hearing, or the threat of a message that her life may change?" (Lorde 2018, 23)

In this case, clearly, the racial identity of the speaker and her audience are not irrelevant. The woman positioning herself as the audience is white, pointing the finger at Lorde, a black woman, because of her anger. In situations like this, we cannot ignore the trope of the 'angry black woman'. As Ahmed writes, "The anger of feminists of color is [...] read as unattributed." (Ahmed 2010, 68). This happens in Lorde's case as well: the white woman tells Lorde to tone down her anger, as if her anger stands on itself and is unrelated to the message she is expressing. Instead, the anger is a vital part of her message, and should be heard as such. This is also a case of what Gaile Pohlhaus Jr. calls 'wilful hermeneutical ignorance,' (Pohlhaus Jr. 2012) by means of which members of dominant social groups refuse to recognise the hermeneutical tools of subordinate group members, thereby inhibiting the transfer of knowledge between them. Lorde knows very well that racism is at work

⁵ The use of which in this context I owe to Bailey (2018).

underneath the white woman's words, but the white woman does not appraise this reality and instead remains wilfully ignorant towards Lorde's epistemic capabilities.

Anger in the face of testimonial injustice and misogyny

Importantly, testimonial injustice both makes it more difficult for people to find uptake for their anger *and* makes them angry. The silence of a person whose testimony is not heard is "saturated with anger because injustice is painful" (Bailey 2018, 96). This creates a "vicious cycle of testimonial injustice" (McKinnon 2016, 440): not being heard makes people angry, which makes them less likely to be heard, which makes them even angrier, etc. It can also result in a misattribution of anger. Sara Ahmed writes: "Your anger is a judgement that something is wrong. But in being heard as angry, your speech is read as motivated by anger. Your anger is read as unattributed, as if you are against x because you are angry, rather than being angry because you are against x." (Ahmed 2010, 68). Ahmed argues that there is, in fact, a message being transmitted by anger, but if that anger is misattributed, the message fails to receive uptake. This issue, combined with the other factors discussed in this article, makes testimonial injustice an especially poignant problem for the angry woman.

But equally, anger is one way women try to use their voice in the face of patriarchally inspired testimonial injustice. And "to be angry, it has been argued, is to put oneself in the position of the judge, which for a woman in a patriarchal society means to be insubordinate" (Harris 2001, 275). Anger is often about control, and gender strongly influences who gets to be in control and who does not. In a patriarchal society, men are generally in control, and women generally are not.⁶ Therefore, it is men who get to use their anger, while the anger of women is delegitimised. In Western society today, women are often expected to be meek beings without anger, fully dependent on their male counterparts. Our gender norms "connect anger to power and authority" and therefore to masculinity (Nussbaum 2016, 44). Still according to Nussbaum, this connection between anger and masculine qualities is the reason why women feel like they should appropriate it for themselves as well. However, it might be more apt to see anger as just a neutral emotion, and therefore a part of what it means to be fully human. Anger's contingent connection to masculinity is a fact, but that does not mean that it is the only thing that enables its value. Rather than wanting to lay claim on anger to be equal to powerful men, maybe women just want the right to experience and express the full range of human emotions, including the ones traditionally seen as masculine.

⁶ Although it has to be noted that, as Michael Kimmel points out, "patriarchy is not simply men's power over women; it's also some men's power over other men" (Kimmel and Wade 2018). On his analysis, women experience a symmetry in their power(lessness) while men experience an asymmetry: women are both individually and socially powerless, while men are socially powerful but can still feel individually powerless.

Emotions like anger, which society deems unacceptable for certain people to experience and/or express, are what Alison Jaggar (1989) calls 'outlaw emotions.' Coupled with Mary Holmes' (2004) concept of the situ-relational character of anger - which brings attention to the effect context has on the reception of anger - we can picture anger as being an outlaw emotion for certain people in certain contexts. For example, a woman expressing anger in her workplace, especially in the face of men, can be categorised in this way. These emotions have a strong subversive character, as Manne also notes with regards to anger (2018, 52). When a woman takes hold of an emotion which is traditionally forbidden terrain, the results can tilt the slope of the epistemic playing field. In this way, anger can also become a feminist emotion. Still according to Jaggar, "emotions become feminist when they incorporate feminist perceptions and values, just as emotions are sexist or racist when they incorporate sexist or racist perceptions and values" (Jaggar 1989, 166). Women can of course be angry for a full spectrum of reasons, just like men can. But when we look at the women's anger movement that appears coupled with #MeToo, the anger in these instances can be identified as strongly feminist according to Jaggar's (1989) definition. In these cases, women are angry at misogyny, at the gender pay gap, at men getting away with sexual assault. They are angry because they want to be respected and treated as equals, and that wish is at the core of feminist ideals.

Being situated at the upper end of the "unlevel knowing field" (Bailey 2018) feels comfortable and normal to men, so they are not very inclined to give up their privileged position. However, a woman getting angry can be a way to turn this patriarchal pattern of misogyny on its head. When a woman *takes* anger instead of *giving* understanding, she puts herself in a position of power. This constitutes a great opportunity for women: they can claim what Manne calls a "masculine-coded privilege" (Manne 2018) for themselves. For men, this feels uncomfortable, because their usual position of relative power is being threatened. Women are coming to claim their part of the social power pie. As Fricker points out, social power "may be exercised (actively or passively) by particular social agents, or alternatively, it may operate purely structurally." (Fricker 2007, 13). By expressing her anger, a woman can do her part to move from female agential power, exercised by individual agents, to female structural power, embedded in the fabric of society. Or, more concretely: the sum of many different angry women, each letting their individual angry voice be heard, can cause structural changes in the patriarchal systems that underlie our society.

Women's Anger and Hermeneutical Injustice

The second part of my analysis concerns the multifaceted relationship between women's anger and hermeneutical injustice. At the very beginning of her book, Fricker defines hermeneutical injustice as occurring "when a gap in collective interpretive resources puts someone at an unfair disadvantage when it comes to making sense of their social experiences." (Fricker 2007, 1). As with testimonial

injustice, power is a central concept here, in particular social power. As Fricker points out, our shared understandings and our epistemic tools “[reflect] the perspectives of different social groups”, which means that “relations of unequal power can skew shared hermeneutical resources so that the powerful tend to have appropriate understandings of their experiences ready to draw on as they make sense of their social experiences, whereas the powerless are more likely to find themselves having some social experiences through a glass darkly, with at best ill-fitting meanings to draw on in the effort to render them intelligible.” (Fricker 2007, 148). Moreover, the effects of hermeneutical injustice are not equally distributed. They tend to show up more in so-called “hermeneutical hotspots,” which Fricker defines as “locations in social life where the powerful have no interest in achieving a proper interpretation, perhaps indeed where they have a positive interest in sustaining the extant misinterpretation” (Fricker 2007, 152). These quotes show that power relations determine both who is affected by hermeneutical injustice and the context in which this injustice takes place.

Hermeneutical Injustice and the Angry Woman

A poignant case study of hermeneutical injustice in action can be that of the angry woman. A common experience which can make women angry is misogyny. While misogyny can make itself felt in countless ways, for the purposes of this article, the fact that women are often denied the expression of their anger is especially poignant. By stereotyping and diminishing women’s anger, an underlying patriarchal rule keeps being reinstated: anger is the domain of men. Following Kate Manne’s (2018) analysis, the underlying pattern here is one of giving and taking, whereby women are generally expected to give and men can take freely. When applied to anger, this means that men are free to use it as a tool (*taking* anger for their own use), while women are expected to react to men’s anger with compassion and empathy (*giving* understanding of men’s anger). When a woman gets angry in this context, two kinds of epistemic injustice take place. Firstly, as discussed above, her audience might have certain stereotypes about angry women in mind and thus not take her or her anger seriously. But, secondly, neither the woman in question nor her audience might understand what is making her angry: this is where hermeneutical injustice comes into play. On Manne’s analysis, our collective hermeneutical resources are skewed towards a male perspective, while experiences that are specific to women’s lives remain unseen. One of these specifically female experiences is misogyny: not only do men not feel as urgent a need as women to grasp these experiences in a thorough epistemic matter, they might even benefit from misogyny staying out of the epistemic spotlight.

This inability of women to identify and express their issues with misogyny due to a socially determined gap in collective resources constitutes a primary harm of hermeneutical injustice, what Fricker calls a “*situated hermeneutical inequality*: the concrete situation is such that the subject is

rendered unable to make communicatively intelligible something which it is particularly in his or her interests to be able to render intelligible” (Fricker 2007, 162; emphasis in original). But this primary harm is not the only harm caused by hermeneutical injustice in the case of misogyny. When women’s experiences of misogyny are not being understood, neither by themselves nor by others, this also means that they do not have the tools to combat them, and that they will continue to suffer. In not understanding what is happening, women might start to blame themselves or to develop stress responses to the situations they find themselves in. Therefore, hermeneutical injustice is again more than an epistemic wrong, it is a personal wrong as well, which harms the subject at the very core of her personhood.

Anger Itself has Epistemic Value

While discussing testimonial injustice, we saw that it can cause the angrily expressed message to not receive the uptake it deserves. The epistemic value of the message itself, however, is not the only epistemic value that anger carries. On a second level, the anger itself also carries a meaning. It is a signal that ‘something is wrong or something hurts and needs changing’ (Baker Miller and Surrey 1990, 2), a sign to both the subject and her audience that something is going awry. But, in the words of Audre Lorde, “when we turn from anger we turn from insight, saying we will accept only the designs already known, deadly and safely familiar” (Lorde 2018, 31). The very fact that anger is an unexpected and underutilised resource increases its value. From it, we can gain insights that we would not have been able to gain anywhere else on more familiar terrain. By striving to recognise the epistemic value of anger, we can gain insight into the struggles of subordinate groups especially, for it is those groups whose anger has been suppressed the most.

The message a woman’s anger carries can easily be overlooked when her audience focuses solely on her mode of expression and uses that to discount the speaker and what she has to say. This, too, is a kind of hermeneutical injustice, which concerns not the content but the form of what is being said (Fricker 2007, 160). However, it would be wrong to assume that there is *an* angry mode of expression. Rather, anger can be expressed in a multitude of ways, ranging from tearful to aggressive to silent. And of course, not all angers carry the same straightforward epistemic value. Some angers can be illegitimate: anger is by no means a shortcut to truth, and it should not be used as such. The fact that someone is angry does not mean that they are correct in the reasons for their anger or that they are entitled to any or all means of restitution. However, this surface-level mistake does not mean that illegitimate angers do not have epistemic value at all. Even if the subjective reasons for anger are illegitimate, there will still be some other, objective causes of this anger, and the anger carries this information as well. Anger will most likely still be a signal that something is going awry, whether that something is what the angry person is subjectively expressing or something else.

The epistemic value of anger is especially poignant in the case of subordinate groups in society. As Lyman writes, “the anger of the powerless is an essential voice in politics, not least because angry speech contains a claim that an injustice has been committed. When anger is taken seriously as a communication, rather than as psychological disorder or uncivil behavior, a spirited but ultimately constructive public dialogue about the justice of the dominant political order is possible” (Lyman 2004, 133). As mentioned before, both forms of epistemic injustice disproportionately affects less powerful groups in society. By not recognising the epistemic value of their anger in particular, these societal inequalities are only exacerbated. Lyman (2004, 134) also characterises anger as “a form of political speech,” and rightly so. The anger of the subordinated is a case of ‘the personal is political’, a slogan which is not only applicable to the women’s rights movement but to all kinds of groups who are in some way subordinated. Due to identity prejudice and gaps in interpretative resources, these groups’ voices are not being heard when they are calm, which makes them angry, which ensures that their message gets even less uptake. Additionally, not only are their voices not being heard, but they are actively being silenced. This again causes more anger, which causes more silencing, etc.

Importantly, even when a knower is reduced to silence, this does not remove her epistemic capabilities nor her anger. As Bailey writes, “silence is saturated with anger because injustice is painful” (Bailey 2018, 96). Lyman adds that even though “silence suggests the acceptance of the injuries of domination, [...] some kinds of silence are accompanied by indirect forms of speech” (Lyman 2004, 138). Words are not the only means of expressing anger, and their absence does not imply the absence of anger either. Taking the mythological example of Penelope, who unravelled her weaving work each night to keep suitors at bay while she waited for her husband Odysseus to return, we can see that actions can convey anger even when words do not. Her calm exterior and even her outward actions conveyed nothing about her anger, which is hidden from view by her sly plan. In the same way, subordinated groups’ outward compliance can hide the anger within. Silence, then, can be a form of political speech as much as anger can. Hearing it is only a matter of listening and allowing those who are being subordinated their right to speech.

Anger can compensate for hermeneutical injustice

In response to silencing, for example through epistemic injustice, it is possible to cultivate a “knowing resistant anger”: knowing because of its epistemic value, and resistant because it is able to persist through silencing practices (Bailey 2018, 103). This type of anger is “not an automatic response” to silencing: it is something that must be consciously worked on. An understanding of the origins of one’s anger is crucial here in order to be able to focus it. This means that anger not only has epistemic value for an audience, but also for the angry individual herself. In a way, these two directions of epistemic value are related: the self-reflective epistemic value can be utilised to clarify

anger first to oneself and then to an audience, to convey its meaning in a clearer way. Both should be valued and both should be paid attention to.

For less privileged, subordinated people especially, the inward epistemic value of anger is most poignant. The fact that anger is a felt emotion means that it can be experienced regardless of whether the subject has a conceptual framework to categorise those experiences in (Jost 2019). Members of less privileged communities might not have access to the knowledge, resources or education required to build a useful conceptual framework. Terms like 'feminism' or 'sexual harassment' or 'misogyny' might remain abstract concepts, not readily applicable to their lived experiences. In situations like these, the felt experience of anger can provide a stepping stone towards a conceptual framework, or it can be enough in itself. About feminism, Sara Ahmed writes:

"Feminism often begins with intensity: you are aroused by what you come up against. You register something in the sharpness of an impression. Something can be sharp without being clear what the point is. Over time, with experience, you sense that something is wrong or you have a feeling of being wronged. You sense an injustice. You might not have used that word for it; you might not have the words for it; you might not be able to put your finger on it." (Ahmed 2017, 22)

This quote exemplifies the gradual way in which the epistemic value of emotion can work. An unnamed experience of anger can turn into a named experience of anger, which can be collected with other similarly named experiences, which can in turn lead to a more conceptually structured framework, like that offered by feminism for example. In this way, the inward epistemic value of anger can be of special value to women as well. In allowing for a categorisation of certain experiences by way of lived and felt experience rather than (immediately) by way of a shared conceptual framework, it can either be a stepping stone towards or a replacement for such a conceptual framework. Similar situations where a woman was made to feel angry can lead her on the way to feminism. But, equally, they can be enough in themselves, grouped together by means of the shared emotion. This means that women's anger can function as a kind of epistemic bridge between an experience and an epistemic framework, allowing women to categorise the different experiences that make them angry and to understand these experiences better. Equally, women's anger can function as an epistemic bridge between people. When two women know that certain experiences make them angry, they can use that anger as a point of connection to start a dialogue about those experiences, which might lead them to improve their epistemic frameworks.

For those in more privileged positions, it might be more important to pay attention to the outward epistemic value of anger itself, especially in the anger of groups who are less privileged. This can

constitute a part of what Fricker calls “hermeneutical justice”, the virtuous counterpart of epistemic injustice. To quote Fricker: “The form the virtue of hermeneutical justice must take, then, is an alertness or sensitivity to the possibility that the difficulty one’s interlocutor is having as she tries to render something communicatively intelligible is due not to its being a nonsense or her being a fool, but rather to some sort of gap in collective hermeneutical resources.” (Fricker 2007, 169). Equally, instead of being put off by someone’s anger and demanding that she express herself in a calmer way, an audience can try to accept the speaker’s angry mode of expression and to read it as a message in itself. When epistemic resources fail and the speaker cannot communicate her message effectively, her anger is still there and still intelligible (and recognisable) to her audience. Making an effort to listen both to an angrily expressed message and to the anger the message is packaged in can constitute a step towards a friendlier, more inclusive epistemic climate. As Fricker herself writes, “In so far as the exercise of the virtue at least sometimes involves the creation of a more inclusive hermeneutical micro-climate shared by hearer and speaker, its general exercise is obviously conducive to the generation of new meanings to fill in the offending hermeneutical gaps, and it is thereby conducive to reducing the effects of hermeneutical marginalization.” (Fricker 2007, 174). In the case of women’s anger especially, many single hearers taking an epistemically open and friendly stance towards it can, combined, make a large systemic difference.

Conclusion

Throughout this article, I have used the theoretical framework of epistemic injustice to understand the workings of the epistemic value of women’s anger. I have delineated an *anger turn* that exemplifies the newfound importance of women’s anger in the public eye, while clarifying that women’s anger should by no means be read in an essentialist manner and that it should always be an intersectional, inclusive concept. I started my argument by laying out some of the key concepts and terms related to Fricker’s epistemic injustice. My argument then came in two parts. Firstly I discussed women’s anger in the light of testimonial injustice, and I argued that this type of epistemic injustice threatens specifically the epistemic value of the angrily expressed message, often exacerbated by misogyny and/or racism. I also discussed women’s anger in the face of testimonial injustice, which can lead to the misattribution of this anger, but equally has the potential to equalise the knowing field. Secondly I turned to women’s anger and hermeneutical injustice, discussing how hermeneutical injustice affects the angry woman specifically. I argued that anger itself has epistemic value, separate from that of its message, and that this second kind of epistemic value can help anger combat instances of hermeneutical injustice.

This approach of applying the framework of epistemic injustice to women’s anger in a thorough manner allows us to better grasp its different levels of epistemic value, and to reach insights about

our lived experiences with women's anger, both our own and others'. We learn that though it can be uncomfortable, anger is worth sitting with and listening to. While testimonial injustice is never far away when it comes to women's anger, we can make a conscious effort to become aware of our own identity prejudices and to not let them cloud our ability to listen to women's felt and expressed anger. By becoming better listeners to angry women, we gain access to multi-layered insights that we might otherwise dismiss too quickly. By keeping both our tendencies towards testimonial injustice and the epistemic value of anger in mind, we can facilitate angry communication and ensure that angry women's voices are heard.

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Conclusion

Through this dissertation, I hope to have conveyed some of the importance and the salience of the topic of women's anger to the reader. Not only is it topical in light of current events, it also affects everyone in different ways, whether that be directly or indirectly. In the current context of Black Lives Matter especially, we can see the importance of anger, and women's anger specifically, illustrated clearly. Just like we have seen happening to women throughout history, the BLM protestors kept getting one main reaction to their anger: they were told to quiet down, to speak calmly, to suppress their emotions in favour of a rational façade. These reactions miss the message at the core of this dissertation: anger has a message. It is not possible to ask someone to express their angry message without the anger; the anger is part of the message. Asking angry women, or angry Black people, or angry environmentalists to calm down before you want to listen to them amounts to asking them to dismiss part of what they have to say. It is crucial to listen to anger, whether that is a comfortable experience or not. When anger speaks, we should listen, because we have so much to learn.