

Angry Women - Reactions Analyses brut Take 1 2 3 & 4

groupdynamics, remote communication, collaboration and female anger bram.org/angry

Annie Abrahams 03/01/2012

So I decided to put the videos of Take 3 and 4 online as they are. I really didn't make any sense to cut into them, that would take away a very essential part: the process of dealing with this situation of No Exit, of voluntarily being trapped in a grid with 7 other ladies that one hardly knew. I now think I first had difficulties accepting the videoarchives because I realized how they depended on much hazardous trying to interact, to be present in this universe of alone togetherness. Besides I didn't like my own presence (as in other webperformances I felt trapped and revealed myself not as I would have liked to be revealed). But now I begin to accept this (again) as its qualities and I do like the very different dynamics in the two versions.

These performances raise many questions as for instance possible language and cultural differences, that I would like to explore further but for now I would first like to organise an Angry Men performance and I will try to get someone working on interface improvements. (and I would like to find someone to write about this project in a more distant way than I can do it)

Ienke Kastelein 04/01/2012

After watching the two performances I 'm thinking about the set/setting of Angry Women: Suppose we created a situation in a physical reality " on stage" (in face of an -invisible-audience) and we would be in the same position as in the virtual performance : all separated from one and other, facing forward, looking into a mirror to see all performers and **than** trying to have a conversation, how confusing would that be ? Wouldn't that be interesting...

Annie as to your presence in both performances : for me it's not about liking or disliking, but maybe your position is different than the position of the other performers : you seem to be a more or less a "director", more observer than participator.
So maybe you could be in the centerposition?

Also : i like the subject : Anger, but i wonder what the setting contributes to the subject. It seems to me it's more about communication, than about anger (although anger is a very intense way of communication ;-)
What do YOU think?

Helen Varley Jamieson 06/01/2012

annie's position was interesting, to me you were both "director" of some kind and also participant like the rest of us. i wonder whether people watching knew that you were in both roles? or if they perceived you in the same way as the rest of us?
one thing that i asked myself during the performance, was who or what was my anger directed at. it was difficult for me to feel angry without any object for the anger, i needed to feel angry at something or someone. i didn't feel angry with the other women, because of not knowing you & also perhaps because we were all looking out of the screen, not at each other; so maybe the object of my anger was whoever was/is watching?

Annie Abrahams 09/01/2012

Indeed in a certain way Ienke is right in telling the project seems to be more about communication than about female anger - I think a lot more about interaction dynamics than I think about anger - but, it is about anger and not about love or sex or ... I am sure another subject would change the experience completely even while it would still be as much as before about groupdynamics.

I am sure I, we will try that out in the near future as it seems interesting to try to experiment

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with a "on stage" equivalent (needs a proper occasion)

My role as director and participant ?

I am the organiser, not the director, I cannot judge how my presence as a performer influences the process. I should be able to do two exactly the same performance with and without me, which is impossible, so I can only judge by your personal testimonies. If you think my role is confusing, I would rather not participate than be in the center of the "setting".

I didn't feel, nor wanted to be the central person. I do know that it is in my character not to talk too much and to look for moments that can re-orientate what is happening, but I wasn't the only one. For instance Martina influenced "directed" the performance Take 2 (in which I didn't participate) and even more Take 4 very obviously.

Lot's of different kind of interactions were going on, some inherent to the performance setting on the web, others more general. For instance in Take 1 Paula ask at a certain moment (I only noticed this when I listened to the performance afterwards, not during) for some time/space to do a solo. She didn't get that time/space, not, I think, because we didn't want her to have it. Streaming delays make it such that probably her words were not heard by the three ladies that started talking immediately after her request. (another exquisite moment of delay confusion is there when Inès, started "yelling" when all the other ladies were silently waiting for the performance to end in Take 1) But, even in a not machine mediated group of 12 persons such a request might not have been heard.

All the sound of the different individuals is coming in through one pair of earphones, so, changing the position of one's head, as one does in real live when one is with a lot of people, to hear a certain person better doesn't work. So when, as in Take 4 two persons talk one to the other (Why are you laughing?) I cannot easily exclude them from my hearingfield and continue with the others. That's probably why I felt somehow excluded at that moment.

There is one more aspect that wasn't particularly mentioned yet and what might be of great influence in these performances. We are not only alone together, but also facing an image of ourselves in a group condition. The webcam functions as a mirror. What does it mean to see oneself behaving in a group, in a performance? Doesn't this reveal things to oneself that immediately influence our position, our acts?

So again, please let me know your reactions and personal stories, anecdotes, they are all important. So I am for instance quit curious to know something about the experiences of some of you who seemed to follow a kind of prepared scenario, how did that work, what was nice about it, what was frustrating, where did it work and where didn't it work?

Julie Châteauvert 13/01/2012

J'y pense
et j'y repense
et curieusement ça reste difficile à saisir,
à décrire
à en revenir de ces deux performances
deux expériences

la deuxième m'a prise de court.
un truc idiot. Je m'étais préparée et tout, focusée et tout
et au moment où j'allais faire un test technique, un courriel de
Bérénice me fait me demander si je ne me suis pas trompée dans mon

décalage horaire: panique en la demeure, je passe par toutes sortes de manoeuvre pour m'assurer de n'être pas laissée en rade! cours les horloges universelles, envoie des courriels, stress, piaffe, m'attriste et m'énerve, et finalement non! tout est beau, paf, j'entre dans l'interface a temps, mais toute échevelée: dissipée ma belle concentration, ma belle colère astiquée, mes pores ouverts pour l'arrimer à la vôtre, pour la moduler, et la faire moduler. ça m'a fait me rabattre sur du déjà connu ... alors à la fin, je grommelais tout de même d'y avoir pas mis le meilleur. mais quand même. C'est pas dire que ce n'était pas bien tout de même!!

Quant à ta présence Annie, pour ma part, je t'y ai pris comme toutes jamais il ne m'est traversé l'esprit que tu y étais autrement... une parmi les 8 ou les 12, une parmi nous avec nous, après les tests techniques passés, au moment de la performance, j'ai oublié ton statut singulier de monte-le-choeur et je découvrais ta manière d'aborder et la colère et le choeur en même temps que celle de toutes et de chacune. Je ne me serais pas imaginée non plus que tu n'y sois pas. ça aurait comme été être invitée à manger chez toi, de s'y trouver rassembler avec tes amies, et que tu n'y sois pas...ça s'peut pas ce genre de chose! ou bien c'est fait exprès!

Quant à la colère, notre contenance m'étonne toujours...

Quant au choeur cependant:
un million de choses à dire...

d'affection, je crois avoir préféré la première version, celle avec trop de gens, celle avec les délais, les décalages, les difficultés d'orientations, les erreurs d'identification de voix, de parole, de direction, celle des échappées, et de l'orchestration fragile, fuyante, précaire... mais qui en arrive tout de même à ce silence final...qui impressionne.

Sa durée aussi, qui laisse le temps aux fluctuations des états, le temps de dire ce qu'on sait déjà, le temps d'essayer de l'action, le temps de regarder les autres, le temps de se taire, le temps de tenter de s'arrimer aux autres, le temps de tenter d'influencer les autres, le temps le temps d'oser des paroles nouvelles inconnues de soi même, on ose cachée par le délai, on ose pour voir s'il y aura relais, on ose parce qu'on a le temps de devenir téméraire et de se dire, ah ouais? what if? et que c'est un peu ça aussi l'énergie de la colère: "ah ouais? what if?"

la grande grille, la possibilité de placer des regards, vers les autres et droit devant, vers ces autres qu'on ne voit pas.

Le temps aussi de bien vivre le fait qu'on n'est pas ensemble pour vrai, enfin oui, mais non, et de sentir qu'il y a fiction possible... de découvrir qu'on peut faire semblant en se regardant les genoux de regarder sa voisine du dessous.

et ça dit que la colère peut être fourbe.

mais ça dit aussi, qu'en colère, dessous, on peut aussi bien rigoler.

et puis ça laisse le temps de s'imaginer, ceux et celles qui verront et de les inclure.

en douze minutes, c'est vrai que j'ai aussi senti qu'il s'agissait plus d'une communication, d'une conversation assez rapide entre femmes, une sorte de familiarité, pour pas dire, d'un sentiment de connu dans ce que nous dirons, nous ferons.... l'impression que la colère des femmes, on la connaît bien, nous les femmes, ou l'absence de colère des femmes. et puis, oui, ça faisait davantage l'impression d'être en train d'avoir une conversation impudique en face de gens qu'on ne connaît pas... et j'étais moins certaine de leur expérience à eux... et est-ce aussi intéressant? la question me traversait l'esprit. un peu embarrassée d'exhiber une conversation entre amie, et en même temps, un peu frondeuse: allez entendez-la celle là. c'est le côté militante qui parle j'avais davantage l'impression d'adresser un discours à des gens, de leur dire ce que j'ai ou qu'on a à leur dire.

Martina Ruhsam 14/01/2012

Oh, yes, I have many things to say about the „Angry Women“ and so little time to really write these thoughts down....its strange, I write every day some sentences and then I am interrupted by something again and like that my answer is fabricated like in slow motion.

First, a personal story/anecdote :-)

For me the angry women project was first of all a big personal challenge.

I tend to not express or articulate anger or fury in my daily life and to just eat it into myself“ if it comes up. Interesting enough I got a couple of invitations or performances in the last months in which I was asked to be angry.

„Angry Women“ was one of these invitations. As this was not the only proposal i this way, I could not but understand this sudden accumulation of situations in which was asked to express my anger as different helps for me to learn to articulate fury.

So, I considered „Angry Women“ (as also the other invitations) as a personal chance to discover/ experiment with the energy of expressing fury.

And I have to say that all these performances showed me an aspect of myself that began to interest me and all the fury that was expressed also had a kind of liberating effect somehow. I understood/imagined „Angry Women“ more as an attempt of various women BEING angry „together“ – rather than talking about anger. I became almost thrilled by the idea and expectation to be really angry for a certain time with many women together and imagined the condensed energy it could produce. I liked the imagination of WOMEN being angry collectively a lot. I prepared before all takes in which I participated a kind of rough script – so, I collected memories, topics, incidents and facts that made or make me angry and wrote them down in keywords.

Especially in the first take I was very confused, surprised and a bit disappointed that we were all so nice, somehow, I found it not daring/radical enough. I perceived it as very harmless.

Although I have to say that my perception of the total picture was very very limited when I was participating because I was so concentrated on what I might say and I was really working on staying in a state of anger also if I didn't talk. I was also nervous – mainly because of the mirror-situation – and therefore clinged to the notes that I had prepared in advance – being quite unable to really listen or watch what the other women did/said (and on top I could not understand most of them in the first performance I participated in because of the other languages and because of the overlapping sounds....). I think that my notes were partly also

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disabling me from perceiving what was going on around me. I would try to change that if we would do another take.

In general I was very influenced by the project I was working on at that time with 3 choreographers from Vienna. They encouraged me to test the limits of expressing anger (the situation was totally different than in your project and the topic I was talking about furiously was the book I wrote – so, that produced another strange shift because I talked about people I highly appreciate in a furious way). With their help I tested different ways of expressing anger.

When I watched all the takes of „Angry Women“ with some distance now on the DVD you have sent me (thank you for that!!), I enjoyed the multiple frames and all the heterogenous ways of how to deal with this situation. What I like a lot is the contingency that the performance implies and exposes. It is obvious that it is not really clear or determined for us what is going to happen. That makes it very interesting to watch. I love the silent presence of the woman in pink in the middle of the picture in take 1. I also love the big scream that you did together and the fists and the silence afterwards. I realised that understanding the language is somehow important because before we tried I thought that it's nice that noone is really understandable and that it's more about creating a kind of sound-carpet. But for me it was quite hard now to watch the take in French in which I almost couldn't understand anything. So, I realised, that for me (from a spectator's view) the content of what we are saying is not irrelevant and that understanding some bits and fragments of our talking is important.

What I was really struggling with is the mirror-situation – you mentioned. The fact that we permanently had to watch our own faces while trying to express anger made it quite difficult. And it is visible in the results (in some faces more, in some faces less) that we are quite busy with how we look, with caring about our images – the picture. This aspect is not very interesting for me. But it can hardly be avoided when working with webcams....

What I really appreciate is that the outcome of all the takes is so different.

As I perceived the limitations/restrictions that you did for the last take (limited time, only one language) as productive (at least when I watch the result now, while performing I was totally frustrated by the time-limitation), I am thinking if it could be interesting to make some more restrictions. So, to combine the unpredictability of what each woman is doing with some determinations – or a kind of dramaturgy or smth. For example, it could be interesting to fix that we all start with 5 minutes of non-stop talking, then have some minutes without any talking and then try to talk with someone in another frame. I am now just thinking loudly, I mean, visibly :-)) I am just curious about that, because as I wrote, in general I find the high degree of indeterminacy in this project interesting.

Another thing that came to my mind (that is probably technically unrealisable or hardly realisable) is that we would not only be women talking live in front of the webcams but that in one frame there could be a „ready made – video“ - for example a sequence of a person in a Hollywood film expressing anger.

It could also be interesting that we try to reenact one take and that each woman is trying to reenact another woman. So, that I would f.i. Try to say things you said or use gestures you did....

not by being a slave of copying but by trying to reenact another person from the last take with the possibility to do some changes, we would maybe loose the strong concentration on ourselves a bit.

I also like the suggestion that came up – to try the whole scenario in a live-situation.

Ienke kastelein 16/01/2012

The first version of Angry Women there was more of a script, (we concentrated on being angry until no one was speaking anymore, and than we went on from there)

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than the second time (I entered "blanc" without any specific intention)

The first version was more about Anger, and showed more Anger than the second one
The second one the Anger was more "acted", and more women were trying to communicate with one and other about Anger

For me it is impossible to focus on expressing my anger and listen to someone else at the same time : i think in general it's difficult to speak (or shout) and listen at the same time. Talking or shouting at the same time creates a kind of non-communication in stead of communication.

Also I think it's impossible to look at yourself and express yourself (truthfully) at the same time. (it's like you losing yourself)

This is what makes the first version interesting : although we were together, we were not together so to speak, and still there was interaction between us.
The second time there was interaction and communication but especially in the beginning everyone focused in tremendous different ways.
The subject became "communication" more than being angry.
And in the end it went towards talking about the subject of our anger, for instance in politics. That again is a totally different approach.

This might be interesting as well : talking about what makes us angry. (for instance one by one, in that case we could also focus on listening)

Helen Varley Jamieson 16/01/2012

yes, i agree that watching ones-self makes it a very difficult experience; i think i would like to try if/when we do it again, to cover up my own image - even if i'm just putting a bit of paper over it on the screen; so that i am not constantly distracted by what i look like. then it may be more possible to speak and listen at the same time, or at the least to remove the level of self-censorship that inevitably comes into it when you are faced with your own face.

Antye Greie 16/01/2012

self censorship is always with us, you can get drunk to get rid of it or get used to watch yourself act up ?

i guess even i don;t drink, the same performance with 12 drunk woman would be interesting

but seriously, if we are actors and i definitely have to act up to be angry at 8pm sharp, or seek that feeling, a mirror is ok even helpful, i think all actors work in front of mirrors

and we make a performance, we are not friends chatting or playing, in a way we are acting

I'd rather face what I am acting

its practice and trial and error, i think recording voice and listen to it is best to learn how to use voice

same goes for public streaming performances, its a work in progress

we don't know how we should behave, all is amazing to try and test of course

so i think it was about all sort of surprising aspects of anger, from silent anger to aggressive anger to academic anger etc

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and also to be confronted with unexpected anger of female strangers

regarding directing, which was mentioned earlier - not directing might be more interesting in that case it is like life, random, uncontrollable, chaos, human

it would be probably more interesting to hear what people think who watch it.

do they get something out of it ? except that we are all so cool chickas ?

doing this more often would definitely raise the quality of it in some ways and eventually become something else, something we train to do, so the charm is in all stages

Helen Varley Jamieson 17/01/2012

:D obviously it's different for everyone; a mirror is a useful tool for some actors, but a director can be a much more helpful "mirror". when we see and respond to our own reflection it is not the same as a separate person seeing and responding with their external perspective. self-perception is influenced by so much more than what we actually see.

it would be interesting if we had eye-tracking software to see how much time we each spend looking at our own image as opposed to the others or the whole. from my own experience, i would guess that i might have spent about half the time looking at myself; sometimes i looked at the whole screen, trying to take in the overall image of everyone. i also focussed on individuals at different times - sometimes because they did something that caught my attention or sometimes because i realised i hadn't been looking at someone who was being quiet and still. but the attraction to look back at myself was always very strong; sometimes i was checking the placement of my head & shoulders in the frame, or the light, or being self-critical about "how" i looked or sounded; or self-consciously trying to "be" angry.

to me we weren't acting "acting" - yes we were "performing" but we were not playing characters or trying to represent anything other than "angry women". being unscripted means that there is endless room for spontaneity - anything could happen, & that's what makes it exciting. perhaps the role of "director" in something like this is not so much about directing as "conducting" - someone who is not performing, but watching everything & in some way influencing and guiding, encouraging us to explore an element more or to move on or slow down or whatever. this would be interesting to try. we are providing a raw material with our images & voices, which is one performance, then another performance is a "shaping" of it (maybe there could be rules like the colours that we used in huis clos/no exit, or some other system that allows the shaping to be a shared process).

Paula Roush 17/01/2012

Its been very interesting follow this exchange, I will add two issues that occur to me now:

1-in terms of performance this felt to me like an improvisational session, in the jazz music sense, when one plays with others developing the performance based on a sense of care not only for one's act but also for

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what everyone else is doing in that time-space continuum. So in a sense there was a script- "act like an angry woman"- whilst at the same time it was up to one self to find the particular direction ("what does that mean?") and I found myself changing whatever I had planned to be to become something else I had never planned to be for that performance

2-Some of us perform more than others as part of their practice, but this performance relates more to the everyday and gender identity, so it was quite interesting for me to see myself with this number of persons, externally identified as women, but who knows everyone's gender identity really? How many of us are transsexuals or passing ourselves for women?

During the action I found myself taking diverse turns, observing myself and my collaborators enacting stereotypes, disruptions, symptoms of female anger

That sometimes took a collective contour and I found asking myself: are we supposed to be angry at something together because we're all women? Only to be interrupted by some solo action where a female voice- I could identify with- expressed anger at female oppression, female confusion, and again that was replaced by another sign of discomfort, frustration this time more personal, private, from another participant

And this succession of enactments of womanness made me wonder about the gender aspects of the action and the boundaries between any essentialist definition of womanhood and its very performative identity traces

And the fact that we haven't scrutinised this term – woman- whilst the other one- anger- seemed more open to debate...

Lucille Calmel 25/01/2012

for my part, i don't know if being counscious or not there is an audience or not would change my behaviour as we already together are in a way an audience & also as many noticed, we are seeing ourselves

maybe another question, is to be recorded or not as it is quite a different way to be present, behave, improvise or perform with traces or no traces