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CN 1

CT # A Framework for Thinking about Gender and Emotion

EP1 "When I get upset, I can't express myself at all, but if my wife's upset, you'd think you were hearing poetry. She can express exactly what she's feeling inside."

EP1S ~~1~~ M Adult male research participant[1]

NORMAL When non-psychologist friends ask me what I'm writing a book about, invariably reply, "the development of gender differences in emotional expression." Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their party. And just as invariably, my answer is met with blank, ~~uncomprehending~~uncomprehending stares. So I try to elaborate, saying something like, "You know, how when they're upset, women ~~ACRONYM~~ say they feel sad and hurt, while men say they feel mad." My friends' eyes light up and their heads nod, "Oh, yes, now we understand. How interesting," they say. I continue, "Yes, and I'm writing about why that happens, a developmental model." My friends query expectantly, "So, what's the model?" Well," I reply, "it's complicated. There are all kinds of reasons: biological differences, cultural pressures, family relationships, peer interactions.▼.▼.▼." My voice trails off at this point. "Well, it would take me a long time to tell you about everything." And I usually end lamely with, "Maybe you should read my book."

My attempt to encapsulate this complex and burgeoning field for my friends by linking the expression of sadness with females and expression of anger with males does capture some ubiquitous stereotypes about emotional expression in the two sexes. It is also rooted in data showing that in some anger-inducing situations, both young girls and adult females express more hurt, disappointment and sadness than do their male counterparts (Brody 1993). For example, in a study I conducted of American middle aged married couples, women and men said that they would feel equally angry, but women said that they would feel more hurt, disappointed, and sad than men in response to the following story: “You always do favors for Bill. One day you ask Bill to mail an important package for you, and he forgets” (Brody 1993).

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But as with any single example, my response belies the complexity of gender differences in emotional expressiveness. In fact, there are many situations, such as marital conflict, in which women actually express more anger than do men. And men respond to anger-inducing situations with a multiplicity of reactions, including cardiovascular reactivity and voice intonation patterns not seen in women (Gottman and Levenson 1992; Siegman 1993). The quality of women and men’s emotional expressiveness depends on a host of interacting factors,

including the nature of the situation they find themselves in, who the participants in the situation are, what culture they are from, what ages they are, and what social roles they play. Moreover, whether or not there are gender differences in emotion depends on what aspect of emotional expressiveness you are referring to: is it words, voice intonation, behaviors, physiological arousal, facial expressiveness, or some combination of these?

As my friends' head-nods indicate, generalized stereotypes about women and men's emotional expressivity are ubiquitous and the idea that gender now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of the party differences may vary in different situations and as a function of different individual and cultural characteristics is neither a popular nor an easy idea to convey. Yet, understanding the conditions AQ 001 under which gender differences sometimes do and sometimes do not occur is a valuable enterprise in its own right, one that allows us to go beyond our gender stereotypes, affording both women and men their due measure of respect. Perhaps more importantly, by trying to understand the complexity of how such gender differences emerge and develop we may gain some freedom over the power these often unconscious processes play in our lives and in our relationships.

This book is both a synthesis and an interpretation of the existing literature on gender and emotion. I explore the nature

and extent of gender differences in emotional expression, as well as the fascinating question of how gender differences in emotional expression come about. Although there is an inseparable interaction among biological, social and cultural processes which powerfully contribute to gender differences in emotional expressiveness, the current evidence points a more confident finger to the contributions made by cultural and social processes than to biological ones. Biological sex differences contribute to gender differences in emotion only insofar as representatives of the culture, in the form of parents, peers, teachers, and the media, respond to these biological *differences in dissimilar ways, in accordance with cultural values and stereotypes. In fact, we will see that we can never be certain if biological differences are the result, not the cause, of different environmental or social stimulation that the two sexes receive (see Dawson et al. 1992, 1997; Shatz 1992). This may be true even when very young infants are studied, since males and females may receive different types of environmental inputs as soon as they are born.

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* Testing the footnote feature. This is a test for insertion in a footnote. If long footnote occurs in a document, does the remainder of the footnote go to ~~this is deleted~~ the bottom of the next page? Yes. This is the continuation of a AQ 004long footnote. Check to see if italic will convert to underline for printing in footnotes.

I take a functionalist approach to the study of emotional expression, arguing that the expression of emotions is useful and adaptive for accomplishing our social roles as well as for communicating our needs and goals to ourselves and to others. For example, expressing anger lets both us and others know that something is not going well, that something needs to be changed. It may even provide the energy needed to effect change (Campos et al. 1994; Campos, Campos, and Barnett 1989). Taking a functionalist approach leads me to ask and answer two critical questions. First, how do the social roles, needs and goals of the two sexes differ? I include in my conception of social roles how power, status and intimacy differ for men and women, since these processes are fundamental to human social interaction across cultures (Fiske 1991). In answering this question, I am led to another critical question: How do the emotions men and women express help them to adapt to their differing needs and motives, to the differing circumstances in their lives? For example, the lower power that most women have relative to most men may contribute to their minimization of expressions of contempt, since contempt may be aversive to others, and men (who have higher power) may respond to contemptuous behaviors by potentially hurting or harming women (who have lower power).

Boys' and girls' emotional expressiveness is ultimately (and probably unconsciously) shaped to prepare them for successful

completion of their future gender roles, with roles for women emphasizing affiliation and caretaking and roles for men emphasizing competition, power, control, and protecting others. In accordance with these roles, boys are shaped to minimize emotional expressions with some important exceptions: notably anger, pride and contempt. Girls are shaped to maximize emotions which promote affiliation and restore social bonding, such as warmth, empathic distress, respect, shame and guilt, as well as those that promote helplessness and lower power, such as fear and sadness. The expression of these emotions enables the two sexes to successfully accomplish their future gender roles as well as to maintain existing power and status differences between the two sexes.

I emphasize family processes as formative for gender differences in emotion, processes which play themselves out within a particular cultural context and within the framework of a particular set of cultural values. I have been strongly influenced by Sara Ruddick's (1982) ideas that one of the primary goals for parents is to raise children who are socially acceptable and well liked by others in the culture. Very few parents want to raise children who don't "fit in," who are isolated or outcast, identified as "different" by teachers and peers. I will review convincing evidence that when children express emotions in accordance with cultural norms, they are

better liked. For example, cultural norms, or display rules, dictate that females are allowed to express sadness but males are not, while males can express aggression, but females can not. In accordance with socially acceptable goals, parents reward their children (both unconsciously and consciously) in subtle and not so subtle ways to conform to the cultural values surrounding gender and emotional expression. Some research, for example, shows that in the same setting, parents minimize the extent to which they refer to “angry” feelings when talking to their preschool daughters, but not to their sons (Fivush 1989, 1993).

I will further emphasize that cultural values surrounding gender and emotion are transmitted not only by parents, but also by other socialization agents, such as peers, with whom being popular comes from expressing emotions in gender stereotypic ways. For American boys, this means acting invulnerable, tough and “cool”; for girls, it means almost the direct opposite: expressing vulnerable feelings and behaving unaggressively. Gender images depicted on the media also foster prescriptive stereotypes in powerful ways.

Parents and other socialization agents may be driven to respond differently to their male and female infants not only because of cultural values, but also because of differing characteristics of female and male infants themselves. I will analyze considerable evidence that boys and girls differ in

subtle ways at birth, which may evoke different reactions from their parents. I focus on gender differences in temperament, a construct which refers to AQ 002relatively stable biologically based behavioral tendencies that are extant early in life (Bates 1989). Temperament refers to the extent to which infants become aroused in response to stimulation, including changes in their physiological, motor, or emotional responses. Temperament also embraces the extent to which infants can facilitate, inhibit, minimize, or modulate their arousal, using such processes as self-soothing, attending, approaching, withdrawing, or attacking (Rothbart 1989). Gender differences in several aspects of infant temperament, such as activity levels, may evoke different responses from parents, and both parents' and children's temperaments become transformed over time as a result of their repeated interactions with each other. This transformative process is one that developmental psychologists have called a transactional relationship (Sameroff 1975), and I will argue that it gradually shapes the nature and extent of gender differences in emotional expressiveness.

That parents and children exert mutual influences on each others' development is consistent with systems theories of development, which hold that there are non-linear influences among cultural processes, parents, and their children. Moreover, family systems theories maintain that the family unit as a whole

needs to be taken into account in order to understand how and why gender differences emerge. What this means, for example, is that the effects of mother-child relationships on children's emotional expressiveness cannot be isolated from, and are influenced by, other co-existing family relationships, such as the quality of sibling relationships, or mother-father relationships.

So far I have sketched out two major explanations as to why families socialize their daughters' and sons' emotional expressiveness in different ways. The first is in order to conform to cultural values (including power and status differences between the two sexes), transmitted in the form of prescriptive stereotypes. The second is that parents' responses may be influenced by inherently differing characteristics of the two sexes, which leads to different early experiences for daughters and sons in relation to their parents.

Differing experiences in sons' and daughters' early relationships with parents may have long term consequences for children's relationships with people outside of the family, and may affect the kinds of emotions that children express in their future relationships. This is a perspective emphasized by object relations theorists, such as Fairbairn (1952). Children's early emotional reactions to their parents' behaviors, such as warmth in response to a parent's acceptance, or anger in response to a parent's rejection, are hypothesized to become internalized as

templates or models for future emotional responses. Expressing anger may be a way of signalling to the parent that the relationship is not satisfying, and in fact may be an adaptive communication in that it serves to create distance from the parent. For better or for worse, the expression of anger and distress then become habitual and generalized to subsequent social relationships. In fact, older children and adults tend to repeatedly re-create the quality of early parental relationships by continuing to respond to their current partners in ways that were characteristic of their early relationships. In doing so, they evoke familiar responses from their partners. For example, they may make mistakes (perhaps unconsciously) in order to evoke criticism from a partner, because they were raised by a critical parent. By re-creating the quality of previous relationships, people re-experience and re-work their previous relationships, avoiding the pain of loss and seeking the comfort of well-known feelings (Sandler and Sandler 1986).

Feminist object relations theorists such as Chodorow (1978), Fast (1984) and Benjamin (1988) have argued that girls and boys internalize and experience different kinds of early family relationships because both sexes are parented primarily by women. As a result, their emotional functioning develops differently. By virtue of being the same sex as their primary caretakers, girls identify with them and are hypothesized to internalize a sense of

connection to others and of shared and reciprocal emotional experiences. In contrast, boys, by virtue of being the opposite sex as their primary caretakers, de-identify with them in order to develop a male gender identity. They are hypothesized to internalize a sense of being disconnected from others, of becoming different in emotional expressiveness from their mothers. It is only with the onset of adolescence that girls are pressured to become more autonomous from their mothers. It is hypothesized that it is at this time that girls may use expressions of hostility and distress to facilitate separation from their mothers (Chodorow 1978).

Feminist object relations theorists also hypothesize that the unequal power and status that males and females wield, both in the family and in the culture, impact the quality of the emotions that boys and girls experience and internalize. One example—the gendered nature of the traditional family structure, in which mothers do more child care and have less power than do fathers, may set into play differing dynamics for mother-child as opposed to father-child relationships.

I question and elaborate the view that the different roles played by mothers and fathers in the family set into motion different patterns of emotional expression for daughters versus sons (Benjamin 1988; Chodorow 1978; Fast 1984). I explore current data which are germane to the validity of these theories,

focusing on whether, in fact, early mother-daughter relationships are qualitatively different from early mother-son relationships. In turn, I also review how these relationships relate to daughters' and sons' emotional expressiveness. In particular, I focus on the counter-intuitive idea that the same maternal behavior, for example empathy, may be responded to differently by daughters and sons because the two sexes are under different gender role identity pressures. I emphasize that current data relevant to these feminist object relations theories are limited but encouraging, suggesting that these theories warrant further attention by researchers.

An important contribution I make to previous theories is to confirm the critical role that fathers play in the emergence of their children's emotional expressiveness. Among others, Nancy Chodorow (1978) has theorized that if fathers play a major role in child care and the and here should be highlighted if mothers have valued roles and higher status and power in the culture, then both sons and daughters should develop positive characteristics typical of both their own and the opposite sex, including becoming emotionally expressive, interpersonally oriented and also goal directed.

My data show this prediction to be correct: when the traditional structure of the family is changed, and fathers play an active role in child rearing, there are shifts in the degree

to which their children's emotional expressiveness is gender-stereotypical. Sons in non-traditional families become more emotionally expressive than do their male counterparts from traditional families; daughters in non-traditional families express more competitive themes and less vulnerability, sadness and fear relative to daughters from traditional families (Brody 1997). Involved fathers may enable sons to learn that masculinity and emotional expression are not necessarily incompatible. Involved fathers may also help daughters to differentiate their emotional expressiveness from that of their mothers, facilitating their expressions of aggression and competition, while minimizing their expressions of dysphoric emotions.

I also suggest that boys' and girls' emotional expressiveness may be affected by their parents' stereotypes about emotional functioning in the same and opposite sex. Compared to non-involved fathers, involved fathers may be less likely to gender stereotype their children, inducing fewer self fulfilling prophecies in their children's emotional development. Insights gleaned from social psychology research show that stereotypes for members of your own sex, who constitute an "in-group," are more likely to be accurate than stereotypes for individuals of the opposite sex, who constitute an "out-group"(see Fiske 1993; Swim 1994). Mothers' stereotypes about their sons' emotional expressiveness may be more distorted than they are about their

daughters', while the reverse patterns may be true for fathers and their children. These stereotypes may insidiously affect the development of emotional expressivity in sons and daughters, changing the quality of family interaction and resulting in self-fulfilling prophecies for daughters' and sons' emotional development.

The powerful observation that changing the traditional structure of the family affects gender differences in children's emotional expression indicates that social factors construct gender differences in emotional expression. This remains true even after we acknowledge that at least some formative social factors originate in response to biological gender differences. Although Freud's oft-quoted expression that "anatomy is destiny" has been interpreted to mean that the anatomical differences between males and females determine their differing social roles and fates, I argue that anatomical processes merely contribute to destiny, along with complex social and cultural processes, including the structure of the family itself. We cannot ignore the fact that gender differences in emotional expression vary in different social and cultural contexts.

Throughout the book, I draw on a research study I conducted, funded by a Gender Roles Grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, that involved 95 families, with each family including a mother, a father, and at least one school aged child, aged 6 through 12.

Fifty-one of the families in the study had a participating daughter; 44 had a participating son. All of the parents in the study had been married or living together for at least three years prior to the start of the study. The parents in the study ranged in age from 27 to 62, were predominantly European-American, and ranged from lower to upper class, with the majority of the participants being middle level administrators or white collar workers. Their education ranged from 6th grade to completion of graduate school with the average educational level being one year of college.[2]

I was interested in the emotional expressiveness as well as in the gender roles of each family member. To measure their gender roles, each member of these families was asked about their participation in household tasks and child care. For example, both mothers and fathers were asked how many hours they were employed per week, as well as how often they and their spouses got their children ready for school in the morning, or went to parent-teacher conferences, or did the laundry or car repairs.[3] All family members were also asked about their attitudes toward women's roles using the Attitudes toward Women's Scale (Spence and Helmreich 1972)[4] which included items such as the extent to which they agreed with the statement, "Women should never ask men out on a date". Further, parents were asked about their child rearing practices, including how nurturing or restrictive they

were, using the Block Child Rearing Practices Report (Block 1965).

Patterns of emotional expression in family members were measured in two different ways. The first involved asking family members how they would feel in response to stories such as the following, “You’re sitting in your room and suddenly you see someone looking in your window.” The second involved asking children and parents to write their own stories in response to three pictures. The pictures are displayed in Figure 1 (see pp.■) and depicted a same sexed person looking in the mirror; two same sexed people facing each other; and two opposite sexed people facing each other. Parents and children were independently asked the following questions about the pictures: “What’s happening in this picture?” “What’s going to happen?” “How are the people feeling?” and “What are the people thinking?” Stories were coded for the frequency with which family members used various emotion words, such as sad or happy; portrayed physical aggression or competition themes, such as “Bill and Harry were arguing over who was the better ball player”; and portrayed interpersonal affiliation themes, such as two people discussing something in a positive way. Not only were emotions coded in these stories, but also the identity of the story characters. Did children choose to include mothers, fathers, or themselves and

their peers in their stories? These measures were used to explore the quality of family members' relationships to others.

Along with in-depth interviews which were given to 16 randomly-selected families, the analyses of these measures provided me with some key findings that inform the conclusions I draw about gender differences in emotional expression. I often quote stories written by the participants, as well as the evocative statements they made which depict some kernel of truth about gender differences in emotional expression. These data are synthesized with other relevant research throughout the book, in an attempt to evaluate what we currently know about gender differences in emotional expression and to understand how such differences come about.

HEADING 1 ## The Goals of the Book

NORMAL This book explores the existence and emergence of gender differences in emotional expression from a feminist empiricist perspective. I believe that carefully done research which attends to the experiences of both men and women, and which particularly highlights the cultural and situational specificity of gender differences, can make a clear contribution to our understanding of both gender and emotion (Enns 1992). I also believe that empirical evidence concerning gender differences is uninterpretable and often meaningless without an existing theoretical context within which to understand such differences.

As I discussed above, I draw heavily on two theoretical perspectives for exploring the emergence of gender differences in emotional development: a family systems perspective and a feminist object relations perspective.

HEADING 2 Heading Level 2

NORMAL My analysis directly contradicts “essentialist” theories, by proposing that the differing emotional expressions of women and men are neither inherent in their biological genders nor are they products of a unitary, shared psychology for either sex (Hare-Mustin and Marecek 1994; see also Assiter 1996). Rather, gender differences in emotional expression are created by complex interactions among biological, social and cultural factors. The extent to which such differences do or do not exist varies a great deal depending on the particular group of females or males under consideration, on their cultural and family backgrounds, and at what point in history they live.

HEADING 3 Heading Level 3

NORMAL On the other hand, I assume that there are some experiences that all women share: in particular, having lower status and power than males, and being stereotypically responded to as “females.” I also diverge from some feminist analyses of the family by acknowledging that biological differences between infant boys and infant girls play a role in patterns of interactions between

children and their parents.[5] Perhaps my argument can be best categorized as "modernist feminism in a postmodern age", to quote the title of Alison Assiter's (1996) thought provoking book. In other words, although I acknowledge that there are universal features and experiences that all women share, I also acknowledge the complexities of the social, cultural, and psychological processes that influence these experiences, as well as the particularities of the consequences that ensue as a result of those experiences. The consequences for how males and females differ in their emotional expression are neither universal nor essential to the nature of males and females, and have complex biological, developmental, and socio-cultural roots.

EXT1 The book is written in three parts. Part I considers the nature and functions of emotional expressiveness, distinguishing it from emotional experience, and reviews the evidence that males and females differ in their expression of emotion. This is a complex issue, because emotions are expressed not only via the nuances that language conveys, such as "I'm hurt" vs. "I'm disappointed," but also via facial expressions, voice characteristics, physiological responses, such as sweating, and behaviors, such as hitting or withdrawing. Gender differences may occur in any or all of these modalities and also in the patterns of interaction among different modalities. Further, gender differences may exist in some situations, for example, interacting with peers; but not in others, for example, interacting with a superior. Finally,

Part I considers whether or not males and females differ in their emotional expressions in all cultures, or only in some.

NORMAL Part II tackles the provocative issue of how gender differences in emotional expression come about by focusing on the interaction of biological and social processes in a family context. In particular, I explore the development of gender differences in emotion using a transactional model of development. I assume that biological and social influences transform each other over time. I also assume that parents and children exert simultaneous and mutual influences on each other, and that both parents and children are influenced by the values of the larger culture. Neither biology nor socialization can be discounted in understanding the origins of gender differences in emotional functioning, although I argue that cultural and social pressures drive more of the dissimilarities between males and females than do biological ones.

Part III focuses on the cultural and social influences outside of the family which affect gender differences in emotion. These include the contributions made to emotional expressiveness by social roles, cultural stereotypes, peer interactions, and power and status differences between men and women. Part III also explores the consequences of gender differences in emotion for health, self esteem and social relationships. How the two sexes

express emotion has particular interpersonal consequences, as well advantages and disadvantages for the mental and physical well-being of females and males.

I end with an appreciation for the complexity of these issues. How and why the two sexes differ in their emotional expressiveness can be neither easily summarized nor simply explained. Multiple biological and social processes are involved in producing the contextually and culturally based gender differences that we see.

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NORMAL

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NORMAL

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NORMAL

ET Notes

HEADING A 1. A Framework for Thinking about Gender and Emotion

ENOTTXT [1] Quotations at the beginning of each chapter are taken from individual AQ 003interviews ~~conducted~~ with family members who participated in the research this is to test tracking changes in endnote material project on gender and emotion discussed later in this chapter (see Brody, Lovas, and Hay 1995).

[2] The results from this study have been presented or published in the following papers: Brody, Hay, and Vandewater (1990); Brody (1993); Brody, Lovas, and Hay (1995); Brody, Pfister, and Brennan (1997); Brody, Wise, and Monuteaux (1997); Brody (1997); Brody (in press).

[3] This household tasks checklist was adapted from one used by Baruch and Barnett (1986a).

[4] The children were given a children's version of the Attitudes toward Women Scale.

[5] Assiter (1996) points out that biological accounts of gender differences have waxed and waned depending on the state of the economy. When unemployment is high and the need for women employees is low, women's "natural" and biological roles as homemakers and nurturers become emphasized by researchers. Although I would like to believe that my account of gender differences is true regardless of the historical context in which

I write, I know that my work is undoubtedly influenced by the values of the culture in which I function. Check to see if italic will convert to underline for printing in endnotes.