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Writing Up Imaginatively: Emotions, Temporalities and Social Encounters

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Abstract

Fieldwork involves imagination, social encounters and a recognition of feelings, emotions, in observer and observed. As with 'the field' itself, emotions and encounters are dynamically temporal, whether they are observed, or felt by the investigator, or described by interlocutors. If we want to develop anthropological work on emotions and their significance, we must be aware of the layers of interpretation that mediate between a fieldwork event and its often manifold recensions. 'Writing up' therefore requires consideration of how to (re) present persuasive accounts and analyses: examples are discussed of such modes in different media and the role of mediators in academic descriptions of emotion.

"That's the problem of consciousness in a nutshell," Ralph says. 'How to give an objective third-person account of a subjective first-person phenomenon."

"Oh, but novelists have been doing that for the last two hundred years", says Helen airily (Lodge, 2002, p. 42).

"Every anthropological fieldworker would readily acknowledge that the accepted genres of anthropological expression - our fieldnotes, diaries, lectures and professional publications - do not capture the richness and complexity of our lived experience in the field. There are inevitable gaps between reality, experience, and expression" (Bruner 1986, p. 7).

How, as academics, should we present – re-present – our findings? In this tentative account, I focus on the representation of emotions, a relatively new topic for social anthropologists, and the necessary role of imagination in doing so. Representation requires

remembering and often derives from social encounters, so I also sketch out the sequences of interaction that must occur before we come to set down an account in writing. These sequences are complex, they are defined partly by temporality – they involve different times - and they include sequences of feeling, emotionality, both in the observer and the observed. I consider some examples from texts and my own observations, so as to illustrate and discuss these issues.

Theoretical Backgrounds, Imagination and Evocation

When Edward Bruner wrote the introduction to *The Anthropology of Experience*, published in 1986, he was very conscious of the interests of his collaborator Victor Turner, who had died in 1983, but is nevertheless listed as the co-editor of the book. He presented Turner as a lifelong opponent of structuralism, so important in 1970s social anthropology. Since then, other theoretical and ethnographic emphases have largely suppressed the memories of structuralist innovation.

Lévi-Strauss argued that he recovered deeply enduring social preoccupations through symbolic oppositions in myth, because these articulated the very structures of consciousness (1983/1985, e.g. Chap.7). The contributors to *The Anthropology of Experience* looked instead at how to explore the character of performance, using different indigenous genres of storytelling, rituals, and dramas, because they felt these public events offered a way into the subjective and private but highly significant consciousnesses of their subjects, not through abstracting normative features but by recognising the power of symbolic and metaphorical expression to encode subjective experience. The feeling of Bruner and his co-revisionists was that structuralism was reductionist and over-generalising whereas analysis of expressive forms-in-the-act, in how they are performed and experienced, revealed complexity and an enormous diversity of reception; there is no single experience, but many different experiencers, including listeners, audiences, different kinds of participants, readers and viewers.

This approach is now being enriched through anthropological interest in creativity. As Karin Barber pointed out, analysis of performances ‘opens a view onto the way that social creativity happens between people rather than originating with a single consciousness and then being disseminated to others’¹. These consciousnesses are also the outcomes of social relationships: we can argue that all anthropological fieldwork involves social encounters and the necessity for trust (Tonkin, 2005).

Of course, such points have been made before, even before the so-called ‘literary turn’ heralded by collections like Bruner’s and *Writing Culture* (Clifford & Marcus, 1986). My epigraph from Bruner’s own 1986 Introduction claims that frustration at the difficulty of doing justice to fieldwork findings has always been commonplace, but I think the literary turn became mainly directed towards ‘ethnographic authority’, that is the writer’s attitude to his or her subjects, and the rhetorical means by which it had been achieved. In a climate of post-modern distrust, the emphasis on authority came to imply that the ethnographer

¹ The citation is from Barber’s abstract for the 2005 Association of Social Anthropologists’ conference: see too her contribution and the whole published volume from this conference (Hallam & Ingold, 2007).

(‘one who writes ethnos’) should be criticised for presuming to speak for ‘the Other’ or indeed for presuming to claim factuality for any findings. ‘Text’ and ‘discourse’ became key terms. Clifford’s own approach is never so limited, see his excellent *The Predicament of Culture* (1988, with guiding insights in Chapter1).

These discussions still left open many issues of how ethnographers shape their accounts. Anthropologists must try to create persuasive texts that hopefully will evoke appropriate feelings in others. Our understanding of the imaginative work needed to transpose any performance into print, to translate and evoke the experiences that the anthropologist wants to report, as well as to analyse, could be enhanced by the new emphasis on creativity, since as theorists, we should also recognise that as theorists and reporters we are necessarily creative. We have to communicate what people have communicated to us. In the UK, creativity is receiving rather belated anthropological attention (see Hallam & Ingold, 2007). Every worker who makes something, transforming materials in the process, is thus a creator, and that must include the anthropologist whose book, or article or presentation has necessarily transmuted experiences into a new medium, using metaphor and symbols to do so. To be innovative anthropologists of memory and emotion, we have to create innovative, persuasive styles of evocation. And this requires imagination.

How to define imagination? In the past I have been helped by the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s model of imagination, produced some two hundred years ago, which centralises creativity in ways that still sit well with contemporary scientific findings. He defined ‘Primary and Secondary Imagination’ so as to show (using my words) ‘(1) the central necessity of imagination, (2) that it is a fundamentally creative power, it makes real, (3) that the means which create what are so-called ‘works of imagination’ are not specific to them, but part of universal mental equipment’. What we often designate as ‘imaginative’ is what Coleridge defined as the Secondary Imagination ‘differing only in degree and the mode of its operation’ from the primary kind’ (Tonkin, 2005, p. 58 from Tonkin, 1979, p. 237).

As I understand neuro-scientific findings today, brain sites produce creativity, memory, emotion, linked in ways that mean we cannot treat them simply as separable functions. Imagination is fundamental to cognition, and not simply ‘fanciful’ or opposed to reason. Likewise we cannot equate emotionality with irrationality (Tonkin, 2005). As humans, we are able to imagine what we cannot see and in English we can say that we use imagination to ask what might have been going on, and whether events could have turned out differently, or to see if someone’s theory is helpful. To quote the novelist Terry Pratchett, and his collaborators:

“Because a lot of science is really about this non-existent world of thought experiments, our understanding must concern itself with worlds of the imagination as well with worlds of reality. Imagination, rather than mere intelligence, is the truly human quality” (Pratchett et al., 2002, p. 12).

C. Wright Mills' surprisingly undated *The Sociological Imagination* (1959/1970), never actually defines 'imagination' but he saw it in analogous terms². He says that 'it enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society' (1970, p. 12). He claims that it 'enables its possessor to understand the larger historical scene in terms of its meaning for the inner life and the external career of a variety of individuals' (1970, p. 11) and in his Appendix 'On intellectual craftsmanship' - helpful hints for graduate students - he reminds them that 'the sociological imagination...in considerable part consists of the capacity to shift from one perspective to another, and in the process to build up an adequate view of a total society and of its components' (1970, p. 253).

These perspectives suggest how imagination must be used to do cognitively creative work. It is therefore definable more broadly than as 'symbolism' and 'metaphor,' albeit that these are also fundamental to thought (see e.g. Ricoeur, 1978) as well as to so many of the actions analysed by anthropologists. Creativity in turn includes the modes or genres that shape our 'anthropological expressions' as Bruner put it (see Tonkin, 1992). I will return to these points. This is the normal text / body text (Times New Roman 12). Use this for the larger part of the article.

Social Encounters: Sequences and Temporalities

It's hardly new to point out that social encounters are fundamental to social anthropology. As Johannes Fabian said: 'Ethnographic authority may be said to rest on "having been there"...but what would our presence count if it were not matched by the presence of those whom we study?' (2007, p. 5). How then may we do justice to the character of what is actually a whole sequence of interactions that must occur before we come to set down an account in writing? There is no one way to deal with them, but it is worth recognising their complexity. They include many times and many encounters that occur before the presentation of an academic account.

Evidently, if encounters are remembered and reported they have had to be put into words. That is how most memories are made public. For a researcher, there are least four types of social interaction involved, and each is very complex, even if we ignore the interactions for a performance involving many people, which Karin Barber has written about very perceptively (Barber, 2007).

There is first an interaction that elicits an articulation of an experience. That is, a teller has to put an earlier experience into words. Obviously this can mean just talking with someone, not necessarily a researcher, but also I think we could include the complexities of articulating a description in one's head, or into a diary, or becoming an autobiographer, and writing for an imagined audience, since I'd argue that memoirs, diaries and life histories all involve some kind of internalised interaction too, involving a consciousness of oneself as a self interacting with other selves.

Secondly, there are the teller's interactions with the people who had been involved in the events that give rise to the memory – from before the event remembered - and with the

² Atkinson (1990) deliberately echoed Mills' title, but he did not discuss imagination. Rather, he analysed selected sociologists' ethnographies, largely from the Chicago School, very perceptively and in depth, so as to reveal their literary and rhetorical modes of operation.

people involved subsequently. Thirdly, there are the audience's responses. That phrase is easily said, but is enormously important – and difficult. A posh term for its discussion is Reception Theory. Every one of us has to interpret what we hear or read and there is no guarantee that we will do so in the same way - in fact, we all use very different presumptions and experiences to grasp what each of us thinks the reporter is talking about. This diversity continues at every stage of interaction, including a seminar or conference presentation. Again, you or I may find that when after some years we re-read or re-hear a text or a tape we respond to it differently than the first time. This is a common discovery in old age! But it also becomes evident to researchers who deal with politically or personally fraught memories that they themselves may change over time.

Fourthly, finally, there is an extremely important type of intervention that is rarely discussed: the many sorts of interactions involved in editing a researcher's eventual presentation or publication. How many doctoral candidates have had the very first draft of their thesis accepted? Who has had an article published only after the editor has asked for changes? More subtly, how conscious are we of adjusting a presentation to each audience? I try to prepare a style for an oral delivery that is different from an academic article, since the rules of speech and writing are very different. They require transmutations of medium, including gesture and register that are a form of translation, which also is a constant difficulty for writers, and an occupational one for anthropologists.

Here is an example, which can illustrate these points:

"I was three years old and I was frightened. Someone tall was holding my hand and trying to reassure me, saying that everything was going to be all right. We were in a strange house, opening a dark wood-panelled door, going into a gloomy room. Adults were talking over my head. I leaned against a rough wooden bench, and saw that on the table in front of me, on a level with my eyes, were some chipped and battered enamel mugs. I had been delivered to the place that was to be my home, and I have no memory at all before that: no mother or father, no house, no familiar bed or toy that I must have known... All that remains after seventy years is the small dark room, the fear and the chipped mugs."

These are opening words from a short locally published memoir by a former English trade unionist in Oxfordshire, David Buckle, with an undescribed co-author, Jan Greenough, also credited on the title page (Buckle with Greenough, 1999). Buckle was raised in a sort of private orphanage and never knew his parents. The memoir, with its ambiguous title *Hostilities*, gives many details of his subsequent life, through childhood and the Second World War as youthful agricultural labourer and later successful soldier, and thereafter as a senior trade union organiser in the once huge Oxford car industry.

All this material could be a useful resource for a social historian, and though the early sections are often painful, it mostly seems pragmatic and factual. Can we trust the opening that I have just quoted? What can we say about it as a memory? How significant are the social interactions? According to the criteria described by the Dutch historian of psychology Douwe Draaisma (2004), it appears in all respects a classic initial autobiographical memory. Apparently three is a likely age for such memories, when the subject has just learned to talk. They stand alone in our recall and are sharply visual, with physical details seen literally from the child's perspective. They usually (but not always) have a strong emotional charge, and that is very often fear. However, the characteristics of

Buckle's memory are all found as well in memories of people who have had happy family childhoods.

So, Buckle's memoir seems to convincingly report a one-off event that in this case could not have been learned from family stories, as autobiographical memories may be. But of course, his account is not as simple as it may seem. He says himself that he is remembering - re-remembering - what he can from seventy years earlier. Over time too, many changes occurred in his life. How significant is that temporality?

Academics are literates, we tend to take for granted that orality gets transcribed into print, as here with Buckle. But they are very different media, as I've said, and we don't know that the print report is in his own words. They are striking and strikingly placed words: this is an opening that persuaded me to read further. But do they tell an accurate story? Perhaps the co-author may have re-worded or even written it. Did Buckle speak into a tape recorder? Did his co-author elicit details by asking questions? ("You don't even remember a favourite toy?")

David Buckle's story is one of great grimness. We can see from reading the whole memoir that this is a memory of a special event that has emotional truth and large significance for him, even if it cannot be checked. Buckle himself verbalises it in visual terms. All communicators have to represent a memory appropriately. Placing it at the beginning emphasises its significance to a reader, and implies its importance even to researchers who may be only interested in – say – trade unionism.

The memoir exemplifies different aspects of memory. It reminds us that all memories are different from the event remembered and from any actualisations of them. This memory also involves social interaction, although it conveys intense isolation. Someone tried to reassure the frightened child; adults talked, literally above his head. No doubt, if Buckle or someone else could have interviewed any of them their accounts would be different.

Researchers, whether anthropologists or oral historians, work in a hall of receding mirrors and many temporalities. Buckle, like so many interviewees, is recalling an event that is impossible to observe let alone participate in. It involves temporality in many ways. Nevertheless his account opens up further social relationships and it may also point to themes for analysis that were out with the teller's own perceptions, whether issues of emotion and memory, or orphanage conditions in the 1930s.

That is where the ethnography we gather starts our anthropological analysis going: it nourishes our interpretation and points to new possibilities. This means too, that Buckle's account opens up a typical nesting of anthropological data such that 'the field's' location may recede, although it can also be foregrounded: it can be an element in a wider story - or taken from the memoir as a document, or a major event. Thus an anthropologist could have read and used it, during fieldwork or when writing up (as we tellingly (!) say), as well as herself meeting the writer and recording his account. Or she could have heard a rendering of the account from a third party.

Anthropologists I think tend to see such interviewing as a part of fieldwork, to provide a record that may be plundered for significant remarks and open up new areas of interest – or used by a researcher interviewing him. In contrast, the main aim for an oral history archivist is to record or represent such an interview for the historians to use as an oral document. (Digitisation is one buzzword for these aims).

Here, I will only repeat that the emotional charge of memories, whether or not they are wholly ‘true,’ must be treated as significant evidence, along with checking for their accuracy. Buckle’s remembered fear is a part of any judgment we could make about - for example - the character and effects of institutional care in 1930s Britain. Memories must also be grasped in the teller’s context. A good example is a published oral history (Hewins, 1981) recorded and put together by relatives of George Hewins who was born a very poor illegitimate boy in Stratford on Avon – Shakespeare’s birthplace. His repeated references to prices, wages, costs of rent, are important not as simple economic facts (which may be checked in official documents), but because their repetition brings home George Hewins’s experience of their power. It’s through his emphasis on money that we grasp something of the pain and difficulty of living in real poverty as Hewins did for most of his life (he was born in 1879 and lived to be 98). We grasp this by reading - experiencing - the memoir as a rounded whole, and not by just treating it as a possible source from which to extrapolate data.

Representing Emotion in Encounters: Interviews, Mediators, Emotionality

So we may want to represent emotional truth and understanding of the past in any analysis. The question is, how to achieve it? It’s easy to imagine Buckle’s memory turned into a film, with evocative music, clever camera work and no need of words to convey his fear. British TV uses visual aids to present tellers in historical documentaries, who respond with their memories to an invisible interviewer, but are shown doing so sitting ‘at home’, with a matching vase of flowers nearby, and often an insert photograph of themselves when young, or an elderly interviewee might wear his medals or even a service uniform. Thus we know to contrast the past and the present.

A specialist - in fact any viewer - can realise that selection has been at work here and we are only getting a partial picture. Yet despite their many limitations, I think that because such visual conventions in television are partly intended to show that oral testimony is valuable, it also means that the tellers are themselves being treated with respect. Above all, these kinds of television and radio programmes are designed to let the audience feel that they are themselves participants in the story, as if they might themselves be the interviewer. That means members of the audience can feel part of an egalitarian social relationship. Nowadays that’s a prominent feature of the UK media, begging all of us to become interlocutors - ‘Tell us what you think!’ ‘Email us!’ ‘Text your views!’

The editors and producers of these documentaries tread a narrow path between being popular and being authoritative. Emotionality can be a significant part of serious media reportage. Thus - for instance - in two BBC Radio 4 programmes entitled ‘History’s Witness’ (2 and 9 July 2007) a BBC correspondent, Kevin Connolly, presented excerpts from his interviews with family members of men who had been killed in Northern Ireland some thirty years earlier. These people had already met individual retired English police officers who had been tasked with reviewing the available evidence on how the 3000+ victims of the so-called Troubles in Northern Ireland had died. Connolly also gave excerpts from his interviews with some of these policemen, in which they discussed their work, and made some comments, often emotional too, on interviews with the relatives that they had had themselves.

I listened to these programmes because I'd lived in Northern Ireland from 1991-2004. With my academic interests in mind, I especially noticed the inclusion of long pauses and catches in the throat in the programme clips. I also noted that we were given some of the interviewer's questions as well as the responses. A retired BBC producer told me that she had worked in a culture where meticulous respect for what actually happened was ingrained. For her, respecting and noting the hesitations and stress features was necessary, as the aim was to make a truthful narrative.

In this radio example it is an important part of the story - a meaning of the narrative - that strong emotions can be still evoked in a teller who is remembering a relative's death that occurred up to 30 years ago³. By retaining pauses and near sobs for the broadcast version it is presumed that we, the listeners, can apprehend their meaning directly without explanation. The producer does not assume that cultural norms differ, but as anthropologists know, they may do and it may be needful to interpret the real significance of what a speaker is saying. Equally, the users of the television conventions seem to assume that their format is directly accessible to viewers, wherever they come from. But they may push the viewer towards a more complex response according to how they set the interviews in a wider context.

As academics - and many academics appear on British TV programmes as experts - we try to persuade by the strength of the evidence and by contextualised arguments. On TV we also know, even if we don't notice, that there will be a massive use of 'background' support, with music and evocative visual clips, to help television viewers appreciate or share the feelings of tellers, just as had already been developed in cinema, and is now often done in museum exhibitions as well.

Using Mediators to Represent and Analyze Emotions Persuasively

In contrast to these historical evocations, British TV's current dealings with anthropology reveal that it is still presumed to deal with the Other, and therefore it is hard to persuade a mass audience that the other is like us, human like us. A mediator is needed to persuade us. At present, this is increasingly done using a non-anthropologist, who is shown 'joining in' - submitting to tribal ordeals, attempting to make Slovakian sausages, or whatever. These mediators are *shown* to be not academic experts, but personable bushcraft experts or celebrity travellers or even 'ordinary' like us, like the single mothers staying with 'a tribe' in Papua New Guinea (theme: what will they learn?).

³ In an inaugural lecture in Queen's University Belfast, Hastings Donnan powerfully used sound and sight in an analysis of Protestants living on the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to evoke the anger and pain of memories of the Troubles there. In other words, this was an anthropological narrative that evoked the emotions and sense of time and place of his subjects in ways that would be hard to do by written or spoken words alone. Fabian (2007, pp. 10-11) believes that putting original material on-line solves some of these problems – and that would allow Donnan's effects to be repeated for web-users -but I am not clear that all questions of analysis will be solved in this way.

It's easy to be sniffy about the superficiality of these exchanges, although they are a basic part of what anthropologists themselves do, and we are right to be sniffy about the invisibility of the social encounters we are not shown, especially the social intervention made by a necessarily intrusive TV crew, but I think it's too easy to stand aside. This only confirms programme makers' assumptions about the inaccessibility of anthropological experts, in face of a perceived need for mediators who viewers feel are ignorant like them, yet willing learners who also interact easily with the audience.

When does a representation need a mediator to explain what is being represented? One answer of course is that it depends on the audience. Another is that it depends to some extent on the medium. As professionals, we share these issues of representation, but we communicate to fellow anthropologists in accepted genres, using academic codes, with special words, footnotes and referencing for authority. Given these genres, there's a well-known history of argument about the intrusion or inclusion of the researcher's personal voice.

Anthropologists value analysis - telling - over showing. I am struck at the difficulty of doing so when our subject is emotion. Appropriate anthropological models are always communicative tropes, designed to convince sceptics that an account is plausible. This is as true for kinship diagrams and statistical reports as for narrative forms or genres. Kinship specialists adapted European genealogical charts to help readers to understand specific social relationships. Evocation is not new, all anthropologists have to evoke, but emotions are specifically difficult to present for analysis because they do not have simple factual correlates. Quantitative models don't fit them, so we need to develop acceptable qualitative forms or useful models with which to explain them.

The researcher's own voice can be a mediator that evokes emotion. Here are three different discussions of fear, by Wendy James (1997), Karen Lysaght (2005), and Pilar Riaño-Alcalá (2008). How do they represent emotion? All three cite excerpts from interviews. Most of Lysaght's interviewees do not describe fear. Rather, tellers explained how they kept safe as they daily traversed the city of Belfast, which is largely divided into sectarianised territories. They calculated a choice of routes according to their background - Protestant, Catholic, paramilitary or 'non-combatant'. Such planning was a taken-for-granted strategy for staying alive, and Lysaght quotes from the detailed itineraries speakers gave, street by street. She analyses how these are chosen according to knowledge, built up from childhood with its assumptions of communal conflict, on rumours and on memories of past sectarian attacks. She gives instances of her own questions, too.

In formal terms, Lysaght's approach fits into a conventional anthropological genre of description and argument illustrated by quotation. Riaño-Alcalá's structure is similar, but her interviewees, displaced Colombians, graphically described their own terrors, evoked for the interviewers as flights through specific spaces, sometimes illustrated with explanatory sketches. Lysaght's interviewees by contrast seem matter-of-fact, almost banal. However, by showing how 'fear is normalised and routinised in a range of daily practices' (2005, p. 140), she opposes her findings methodologically to the standardised measures employed for Northern Ireland of degrees of risk and levels of 'reasonable' fear, themselves based on quantitative studies of 'levels of violence'. Lysaght concludes instead that we should see how these individuals' identities were formed in fearful and violent circumstances - a point also raised by James.

Riaño-Alcalá's account is contextualised with Colombia's history of organised terror to show that 'fear is expressed as embodied memory and narrative thread to remember the past' (Riaño-Alcalá, 2008, p. 11). Lysaght and James also summarise long histories of violence.

Readers of Lysaght's interviewees are left to imagine their fear, perhaps by evoking the contrast with their own routine journeys to work. If we try to communicate our or another's memory, we have to evoke it as a representation (re-presentation). Riaño-Alcalá's tellers try to evoke their terror, which we in turn must also try to imagine. Since formative encounters occur in time and are re-imagined over time, those temporalities too may have to be imagined by the researcher and then evoked so that the readers can imagine it for themselves.

A memory is both different from the event remembered and from any actualisation of it, whether as a picture or music or in speech or writing. David Buckle remembered his emotion but that emotion also had to be re-evoked so as to represent it in a memoir. Wendy James' article describes her own fear when she found herself an involuntary participant in a violent attack involving Uduk and Nuer refugees in Ethiopia, while accompanying a film crew for the Disappearing Worlds TV series. This account is consciously personal, and she also suggests that anthropologists should use the methods of the humanities, specifically in her case by considering the context and history of Uduk words for fear. In my terms, James's 'informality' registers a small anthropological shift in genre through narrating herself as a mediator and analysing her own fears so as to compare and evoke for us some Uduk and Nuer reactions. Thus, too, Vitebsky (2008) analyses a history of religious change through reporting on his emotionally charged dialogues with informants, whom he had revisited after a long gap.

James clearly felt she needed to justify discussing emotions. It is interesting that she did so by using a personal narrative and a call for a 'literary' approach. In *Mixed Emotions* (Milton & Svašek, 2005) we considered the historical antagonism to emotionality by anthropologists. Edward Sapir is one example, torn between exercising a scientific job and his yearning for art. Handler pointed out that 'perhaps Sapir's dilemma was that he was drawn to aesthetic phenomena (form) in an affective way ("what I most care for").' He was not alone at that time (Handler, 1983, p. 215). As James' article shows, using one's own emotions need not result in self-centred, 'confessional' indulgence.

As with all persuasive narratives, evoking emotion in an audience is achieved rhetorically. Sapir was falsely pressured to feel a dilemma since anthropological writers use rhetorical skills to present any work, but these skills, sullied by connections with political propaganda and advertising, still seem to be considered part of art, not social science, and when an anthropologist persuades us successfully, the audience is admiring, but does not think very analytically about the rhetorical skills through which they were so moved or amused.

In my final example, the mediating voice of the anthropologist (Josephides 2005) is used to introduce others' emotions in a narrative of 'sympathetic co-experiencing' to borrow Bakhtin's term (Bakhtin, 1990, pp. 81-87). Contrary to his own definition of this term, however, Josephides claims to share a community's emotions through empathy. She describes emotion so as to analyse it 'as such,' a feature constitutive of self. She remarks early on that 'when I think of the Kewa village in which I lived for varying periods over thirteen years, I become physically transported there' (2005, p. 72). Of course she actually

doesn't, but we understand that as she sees the village 'in her mind's eye', she remembers her own and others' feelings, and in this context may really re-evoke some of her own earlier emotions.

Josephides begins with a vivid evocation of a village evening, and this account contextualises the volatile words and behaviours of particular villagers that she goes on to describe. Her purpose, though, is not only to evoke a setting for the reader of the 'Imagine yourself set down' variety. She wants to argue that the villagers feel a strong emotion of resentment that shapes their sense of self. Besides evoking the social contexts of resentment, the author tries to convey her own sense of the villagers' emotional world through describing the bubbles of talk, the movement and energy in this closed-in, small environment. Her account thus forms a surrogate description for the emotions that villagers feel. All scene setting is a persuasive device, and there's a long literary convention in English of evoking emotion through accounts of weather and wider settings. (Classically, we can compare the Pathetic Fallacy). The familiarity that came through staying over the years in this community may justify Josephides' claim to empathetic understanding, which must be evoked for us by the persuasiveness of her descriptions.

Not all anthropologists manage to use descriptions in this way, and some may think it academically inappropriate to do so. Josephides comments that her earliest impression was how mercurial and contagious villagers' moods could be (2005, pp. 72-73), and a writer could find personalised commentary in such a generalisation. But in this case, I think the evocation of villagers' moods in their setting does not sit oddly with the later theorising, and the narrative examples ground the citations from philosophers quite well. It is an interesting attempt to represent emotion which, again, extends a little the rhetorical and formal conventions of the anthropological genre.

There is nothing new in such moves. Malinowski is considered a founding father of anthropological fieldwork. His was indeed a novel activity and – consciously or not – he created a narrative form to describe it. He modelled the process of fieldworking on the conventions of travel writing; including the travel writers' sequences of discovery, so that readers find themselves apparently learning about the Trobrianders along with the incoming researcher⁴.

It seems to me that new perspectives on emotions need not offer so much new ways of framing an argument as create new ways of rendering our evocations that will seem both convincing and academically acceptable. In other words, a new take on 'emotions in the field' may in turn require some changes in rhetoric. As I have already noted, anthropological models are communicative tropes and often have been borrowed from other disciplines and genres. 'Case studies' became used by Gluckman and his followers as foci for the analysis of situational politics; a form presumably derived from legal models, like Gluckman's reliance on the ideal type in law of 'the reasonable man'.

Anthropology remains an empirical discipline. I am presuming that emotions are real and have real consequences, so we need to render emotions descriptively just as we do for any kind of empirical event. Thus we will also want to find ways both of understanding the

⁴ This point derives from my contribution to the *Current Anthropology* discussion of Strathern (1987) who also followed Beer's insightful analysis of the means Darwin created to discuss evolution (Beer, 1983).

significance of emotions in our work and of communicating that significance. Imagination is needed, but that does not mean imaginative accounts are untrue. I have been reminding us that all researchers are inescapably imaginative, and creative. The difficulty is to remain empirically honest reporters who have to convince others by our representations of what we believe has happened.

A long line of social scientists, especially American behaviourist psychologists, recognised the problem and ‘solved’ it by ignoring ‘subjectivity’. Contemporary anthropologists reject this attitude. They may, however, feel challenged by some of the new neuroscience, but I think we can get support from its emphasis on memory, emotion and imagination as cognitively centred. We need, however, to remember that neuroscientists necessarily focus on limited questions. Brains appear as singular objects; neuroscientists do not necessarily deal with the co-existent realities of social interactivity, and of temporality, that characterise human beings. As social researchers, we do.

Insofar as all anthropology tries to understand human beings, who are a social species that talks, it also requires that the non-verbal must be verbalised, the intangible made convincing. If this means that the imaginative skills of fiction might be used to present fact, that does not of itself make them fictive. Michael Lambek remarked of religions that they are ‘embodied and imagined worlds, (not necessarily imaginary ones)’ (2000, p. 311). So are emotional truths. In Lambek’s terminology for religion, this is poesis (making, creating). And as he also argues, disciplines that don’t know their history are doomed to repeat them. I’d agree: disciplines which stick with models invented to fit earlier historical assumptions may not be able to show that there is anything new to explain. Our challenge is to show that there is.

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