

**Up Close and Personal:
Relationships and Emotions *Within* and *Through* Research**

Edited by Susie Weller and Chamion Caballero

With contributions from Jeffrey Weeks, Janet Holland, Shaminder Takhar,
Yvonne Robinson, Daniel Briggs and Lisa Pine

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Families & Social Capital Research Group
London South Bank University
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London SE1 0AA

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**UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL:
RELATIONSHIPS AND EMOTIONS *WITHIN* AND *THROUGH* RESEARCH**

Contributors		3
Foreword	Charting the Emotions Jeffrey Weeks	5
SECTION I: EMOTIONS AND RESEARCH		
Chapter 1:	Getting Up Close and Personal: Relationships and Emotions <i>within</i> and <i>through</i> Research Susie Weller and Chamion Caballero	8
Chapter 2:	Emotions and Research: Some General and Personal Thoughts Janet Holland	11
SECTION II: EMOTIONAL AND EMOTIVE IDENTITIES		
Chapter 3:	'Mixed Emotions': Reflections on Researching 'Mixing' and 'Mixedness' Chamion Caballero	24
Chapter 4:	Covering Up and Revealing: Reflecting on Emotions in Research with South Asian Women Shaminder Takhar	32
SECTION III: EMOTIONAL PLACES		
Chapter 5:	Mapping Emotions in Different Spaces of Research and Dissemination Susie Weller	43
Chapter 6:	The Place of Emotions: Negotiating Contexts of Home, School and Street in Research with Challenging Pupils Yvonne Robinson	56
SECTION IV: FEAR AND TRAUMA		
Chapter 7:	Facing Fear in the Field: Visual Ethnographic Methods in Drug-Using Locations Daniel Briggs	64
Chapter 8:	Researching the Holocaust and its Impact on the Researcher Lisa Pine	81

CONTRIBUTORS

Daniel Briggs is Senior Lecturer in Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of East London. Daniel's interests concern processes of social exclusion; often the result of structural violence, various forms of stigma and/or social oppression. His work initially examined crime, criminal justice, drug users and prisons but, more broadly, his work has also come to examine social suffering and marginalisation and how these experiences merge with the potential for deviancy and crime. His PhD, which examined the social and structural barriers for crack users in accessing crack services, was based on nine months of ethnographic fieldwork with street drug users. His most recent work was based on ethnographic fieldwork with excluded school pupils in south London.

Chamion Caballero is a Senior Research Fellow in the Families & Social Capital Research Group at London South Bank University. Her research interests include racial and ethnic identity, particularly concepts of 'mixed race' identity in the UK and USA and she has contributed to numerous reports and articles in this area, including 'Understanding the Educational Needs of Mixed Heritage Children' (DfES, 2004) and 'Parenting 'Mixed' Children: Negotiating Difference and Belonging in Mixed Racial, Ethnic and Faith Families' (JRF, 2008). She is currently working on ESRC and Nuffield-funded projects looking at the experiences of lone mothers with mixed racial and ethnic children.

Janet Holland is Professor of Social Research at London South Bank University. She is co-director of *Timescapes: Changing Relationships and Identities through the Life Course*, a multi-university, large-scale qualitative longitudinal study. Her research interests include youth, education, gender, sexuality and family life, and methodology, and she has published widely in these areas. Examples include: *Feminist Methodology* (Sage, 2002 with Caroline Ramazanoglu); *Sexualities and Society* (Polity Press, 2003 edited with Jeffrey Weeks and Matthew Waites); and *Inventing Adulthoods* (Sage 2007, with Sheila Henderson, Sheena McGrellis, Sue Sharpe and Rachel Thomson).

Lisa Pine is Senior Lecturer in History at London South Bank University. She is author of *Nazi Family Policy, 1933-1945* (Oxford, 1997) and *Hitler's "National Community": Society and Culture in Nazi Germany* (London, 2007), as well as numerous articles on aspects of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust. She is currently completing a new book on *Education and the Socialisation of Youth in Nazi Germany* for publication next year.

Yvonne Robinson is a Senior Research Fellow in the Families and Social Capital Group at London South Bank University. Her background is in Human Geography and her broad research interests are in race, ethnicity and youth studies, education and the arts. She is currently working with Dr Val Gillies on the ESRC funded project 'Disruptive Behaviour in the Classroom: Exploring the Social Subjectivity of Disaffection 2007-2010', which focuses on the experiences, social interactions and meaning making of disruptive pupils in mainstream education.

Shaminder Takhar is Senior Lecturer in Sociology at London South Bank University. She teaches across a range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Her research interests and publications are centred around race, ethnicity, gender and sexualities. At London South Bank University she is the Convenor of the Gender Research Forum and a member of the Families and Social Capital Research Group. Currently she is an Associate Board member of the British Sociological Association Journal 'Sociology' and is working on her book that examines South Asian women's construction of political identity.

Jeffrey Weeks is Emeritus Professor of Sociology at London South Bank University. He is the author of over twenty books, and over 100 articles, chiefly on the history and social organisation of sexuality and intimate life. Key publications include *Coming Out* (1977), *Sex, Politics and Society* (1981), *Sexuality and its Discontents* (1985), *Invented Moralities* (1995), *Making Sexual History* (2000), *Same Sex Intimacies: Families of Choice and other Life Experiments* (with Brian Heaphy and Catherine Donovan,

2001), *Sexualities and Society* (with Janet Holland and Matthew Waites, 2003), and a 3rd edition of *Sexuality* (2009). *The World We Have Won: The Remaking of Erotic and Intimate Life*, was published by Routledge in June 2007. He is a regular broadcaster on radio and television.

Susie Weller is a Senior Research Fellow in the Families & Social Capital Research Group at London South Bank University. Her research interests include: Geographies of childhood and youth; citizenship and participation; family relationships; and social networks. Susie is author of *Teenagers' Citizenship: Experiences and Education* (Routledge, 2007), as well as numerous book chapters and articles on young people's participation and social capital, sibling relationships and friendship, and 'children-centred' research methods. She is currently working on a Qualitative Longitudinal study exploring the changing nature of children's lateral relationships, which forms part of the ESRC Timescapes programme.

Foreword

CHARTING THE EMOTIONS

Jeffrey Weeks

'Up Close and Personal' was an apt title for a seminar series that charted a crucial shift in the preoccupations of many social scientists. Without in any sense losing sight of structural determinants, social and policy research at London South Bank University has tended to focus in recent years on changing patterns of relationships and emotional life within complex social and historical contexts, and in this it reflects wider moves in a range of disciplines, from sociology and social policy to psychology and geography. The emotions, as Janet Holland (this volume) remarks, are in danger of becoming fashionable within the social sciences.

There is a substantial tradition within sociology which has explored the historical shaping of emotional life. The work of Norbert Elias and his followers, in tracing the evolution of the 'civilizing process', has as its focus the 'sociogenesis' and 'psychogenesis' of emotional control and controlled release, and this has been influential much more widely than is often recognised. Anthony Giddens's *The Transformation of Intimacy* shows clear evidence of his encounter with Elias early in his career (he was a student and young lecturer at Leicester University, where Elias taught). But the 'emotional turn' has been much wider than can be explained by a specific social scientific tradition. It represents a belated recognition, strongly influenced by feminism, that for too long the social sciences ignored the felt specificities of everyday life, and the crucial role they play in shaping action and reaction in the social world.

The result has been an enormously creative explosion of work on a range of issues around relationships and feeling. There has been especially a focus on family and intimate life, relationality, sexuality, gendered life, and embodiment, and a strong recognition that these are mediated in extremely complex ways through class, gender, race and ethnicity, heteronormativity, identity, age, life course, place and commercialization. All of these preoccupations can be seen in the papers offered in this collection.

What is crucial to these intersecting personal and social relations is that they generate strong feelings - love, desire, closeness, warmth, empathy, jealousy, dislike, hope, despair, joy, fear, loss, memory and forgetfulness – emotions which are critical to the ways we live our lives, but often so intangible and elusive that they can easily escape the research process. Yet though these emotions are felt as intensely personal, peculiar to the individual, they are simultaneously social processes, and therefore legitimately the subject of social research.

But the necessary research methodologies for what is often by nature a delicate and sensitive experience pose difficult issues for the researcher and the researched alike. Feminist writers have rightly exposed the fraught power relationships, and potential emotional violence, inherent in the sort of encounters common 'in the field', whether in interviews or a range of ethnographic approaches, traditional and experimental. But there are also acute issues relating to the experiences of the researchers themselves, as Janet Holland outlines in her contribution. The 'reflexive turn' in social research is precisely about a recognition that the researcher is not a distant, neutral observer, but a living, breathing, emotionally engaged participant whose experiences are often shared with the other research participants.

The papers in this collection provide vivid examples of the range of experiential and ethical issues that arise. There are the complex emotions aroused by the long traditions of pathologisation of the other, and the sharp differences evoked by 'mixedness' in contemporary culture, that Chamion Caballero vividly analyses. Shaminder Takhar powerfully evokes the 'suffocation' she felt in interview situations with South Asian women who defend use of the veil, and the necessary 'deceit' required in hiding her own feelings. Both Susie Weller and Yvonne Robinson explore the different spaces of home and school and their links to a sense of self amongst young people who are more than simply school children or teenagers but social actors in their own right. Daniel Briggs simultaneously reports on the radical implications of visual ethnography, and powerfully brings to life a research encounter with drug users where research detachment is both necessary and all but impossible. Finally, Lisa Pine discusses the 'vicarious traumatization' experienced in researching the Holocaust.

The emotions experienced by the researchers are not excessive or superfluous. They are an essential part of the living texture of the research process. But in the end they also honour the feelings of those who have agreed to participate in the research itself. For, of course, the sympathy, empathy, and engagement of the researcher is in the end all about exploring and genuinely understanding the emotions of those we seek to research. It is indeed about finding the right ways of being up close and personal, and in the process respecting the complex lives of diverse others, in their full humanity.

SECTION I: EMOTIONS AND RESEARCH

Chapter 1

GETTING UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL: RELATIONSHIPS AND EMOTIONS *WITHIN AND THROUGH* RESEARCH

Susie Weller and Chamion Caballero

Introduction

What emotions and relationships are researchers at London South Bank University (LSBU) currently exploring as part of their work? How does conducting research of a sensitive nature affect researchers, respondents and research findings? Does embarking on or engaging with new research directions, methodologies and technologies produce emotional and relational challenges for researchers?

This Working Paper represents the outcome of a Seminar Series which took place from January 2008 – January 2009 with the aim of showcasing current research at LSBU which focused, either directly or implicitly, on emotions within and through the research process.

The issues we research and the process by which our work is conducted often provokes a range of emotions, both for researchers and respondents. Yet discussion of the 'emotionality' produced not only by the substantive focus of the research, but also by the process itself is a relatively neglected area. Indeed, whilst some of the broader feelings, passions and concerns that emerge from research can frequently form an integral part of research findings, those that might be considered more 'everyday emotions' – such as anger, fear, despondency and anxiety – may often be sidelined or disregarded as unimportant, despite the central role both play within the topics we study and within the research process. The 'Up Close and Personal' Seminar Series was an attempt to explore these issues through providing researchers at LSBU with the opportunity to share and discuss their experiences of 'emotionality' as encountered within and through their research.

Background

Funded originally in 2002 by the Economic and Social Research Council as a five-year programme of work, the Families & Social Capital Research Group (Families Group, hereafter) at LSBU has been concerned since its inception with the inter-relationship between the dynamics of family change and social resource processes. Taking an interdisciplinary and critical approach, researchers in the Families Group have produced a wide variety of studies exploring aspects of family life and social capital, particularly in relation to ethnicity, education and employment, parenting and family relationships and adoption and fostering.¹

In 2007, Families Group researchers began to reflect upon the key themes uniting the group, as well as new areas of commonality. One theme in particular emerged as a point of focus and interest: the place of 'emotionality' within and through research. With the realisation that although this topic was often so central to the research experience it was frequently overlooked in the more formal means of research discussion and dissemination, it seemed timely to explore

¹ For more details on the Families Group, see www.lsbu.ac.uk/families/index.shtml

exactly what emotionality meant and how it was experienced by researchers. As such, we were invited by Jeffrey Weeks - then Head of the Social Policy and Urban Regeneration Unit to which the Families Group was affiliated - and Rosalind Edwards – co-director of the Families Group - to develop a seminar series around this issue.

The aims of the seminar series were three-fold. Firstly, we planned to showcase research within LSBU that focused, either directly or implicitly, upon emotions and relationships. Secondly, we wanted to explore how relationships and emotions *within* and *through* the research process can have a significant bearing on researchers, respondents and the research itself. Finally, we hoped the series would promote knowledge of other research at LSBU and act as a stepping-stone for internal dialogue and future collaboration.

Getting 'Up Close and Personal'

The seminars themselves were relatively 'Up Close and Personal' attended by an average of 15 people ranging from doctoral students to long-established academics. The Series attracted regular contributors from an eclectic range of disciplines including Cultural Studies, Criminology, Digital Arts, Education, Geography, Health, History, Media Studies, Sociology and Social Work, perhaps reflecting the burgeoning growth in interest in emotionality across many disciplines. Although the series was established to promote internal dialogue within the University, it attracted external attention and the inclusion of those from different institutions and disciplinary backgrounds contributed to the sense that we were entering into a timely and relevant debate.

We feel a key strength of the series has been its 'up close' focus on researchers' practice. This Working Paper responds to observations concerning the reluctance of many researchers to publish their own emotional reflections (Bondi 2005). We feel the strength of this collection, and indeed the discussion that emerged from the seminar series, is the in-depth engagement by researchers in the field with their emotional encounters.

This Working Paper presents a selection of paper from the seminar series:

Jeffrey Weeks opened the series with his paper on *The Importance of Being Ordinary* (see also Weeks 2008), which, through a focus on changing attitudes to sexuality, discussed the ways in which aspects of everyday life that were once considered abnormal are now considered mundane or commonplace, in both the social sciences and beyond.

Session two was concerned with *Emotional and Emotive Identities*. Chamion Caballero and Shaminder Takhar continued the sessions with a focus on exploring emotional and emotive identities in relation to race and faith. Chamion's paper *'Mixed Emotions': Reflections on Researching Mixing and Mixedness* examines the politics and sensitivities of researching mixed racial identities, whilst Shaminder's paper *Covering-up and Revealing: Reflecting on Emotions in Research with South Asian Women* is both a critical reflection on how emotions filter into the research process and an exploration of how the researcher and researched decide how much to hide or to reveal.

Introducing a spatial perspective, the third seminar explored *Emotional and Emotive Places* and the experiences of participants and researchers within those settings. Through their work with young people, Yvonne Robinson and Susie Weller each examined the diverse ways in which research participants expressed emotions *in* and *about* spaces such as homes, schools,

neighbourhoods and cyberspace. They also highlighted the often entangled emotional encounters researchers experience in such places.

Session Four contended with *Fear and Trauma*. Daniel Briggs and Lisa Pine discussed the effects of conducting research which could put the researcher in dangerous or emotionally demanding spaces. Daniel's paper *Facing Fear in the Field: Visual Ethnographic Methods in Drug-Using Locations* reflected on the emotions he and his participants experienced during his ethnographic study of crack cocaine users, whilst Lisa's paper *Researching the Holocaust and its Impact on the Researcher* highlighted the intensity of emotion that involved in researching traumatic subject matter.

The penultimate seminar examined *New Technologies and E-motions*. Tahera Aziz explored *Sound, Narrative and Audience Interaction: Towards a Recontextualisation of the Stephen Lawrence case* drawing on her experiences of developing a sound installation to examine audience response. Anna Reading's presentation focused on *Using New Technologies in Memory Work*. She reflected on the use of mobile phone camera technology to document and disseminate images/memories of events such as the terrorist attacks in London in July 2007.

The final session focused on *Intimacy and Emotions in Policy*. Helen Easton and Janet Holland raised the place of emotions in relation to policymaking and practice. Helen's paper *Researching vulnerable women involved in and exiting prostitution - ethical and methodological considerations* focused on the emotional processes involved not only in working with participants who had experienced difficult circumstances, but also in disseminating the findings of such research, whilst Janet Holland's paper *Emotions and Research - some general and personal thoughts* discussed the ways that emotion can and does come into the research process and the difficulty of reflecting this in policymaking.

The multidisciplinary perspectives contributed to an incredibly stimulating and thought-provoking series of discussions and we would like to thank those chairing the sessions in particular for their additional contributions.

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Please note papers in this collection include language and graphic images of drug taking that some might find offensive or disturbing.

Chapter 2

EMOTIONS AND RESEARCH: SOME GENERAL AND PERSONAL THOUGHTS

Janet Holland

Introduction

A recent referee of one of my papers gently chided me for using the term 'fashion' to describe the wholesale use of the concept of social capital in sociology and related academic fields. In reviewing material on emotions and research, I am afraid the word crept into my head again. Everybody seems to be doing it, including of course me. And a considerable amount of the material treads the same ground. Although not, I hasten to say, the papers here, which focus in particular on researchers' experiences.

What I would like to do in this paper is to reflect on the different ways that emotion can and does come into the research process at all stages, and how it is used in research, drawing on the work and experience of myself and others. I will touch upon the sociology of the emotions, memory work, Walkerdine and her colleagues psycho-social approach, some feminist perspectives and ethical issues, and emotions in the field.

Debates about emotions and Sociology of Emotions

Research is a quest for knowledge and feminists have raised questions about such knowledge, whose it is and who is it for? Alison Jagger (1989) argues for the centrality of emotion to knowledge:

...rather than repressing emotion in epistemology it is necessary to rethink the relation between knowledge and emotion and construct conceptual models that demonstrate the mutually constitutive rather than oppositional relations between reason and emotions. Far from precluding the possibility of reliable knowledge, emotion as well as value must be shown as necessary to such knowledge (1989: 156 -157).

This leads us into debates around knowledge in the social sciences, throwing doubt upon the possibility of the detached researcher on a scientific quest for objectivity and truth. It suggests feminist arguments about the importance of women's experience in the construction of knowledge, and a questioning of the dualisms upon which much of western thought has been based, the separation of mind from body, nature from culture, reason from emotion, public from private. The sociology of the emotions sets up its stall on this site, seeing the dead hand of these Cartesian dualisms leading to an absence of the emotions in sociological study and understanding, at least prior to their sub-disciplinary emergence in the 1970s and 80s, and growth spurt in the UK in the 1990s. Sociologists of emotion do not speak with one voice and can vary in their theoretical perspective even on what emotions are (from biological to social) but in general regard the understanding of emotions as essential to the pursuit of knowledge. Williams and Bendelow (1996) map the field of the sociology of emotions onto the concerns of sociology:

...emotions have fundamental implications for a range of pertinent sociological themes and issues including social action, agency and identity; social structure; gender, sexuality and intimacy; the embodiment of emotions across the life-course (from childhood to old age); health and illness; and the social organisation of emotions in the workplace (formal and informal) (1996: 145-153).

Ann Game (1997) who shares Jagger's concern with the role of emotion in the development of human thought, fears that the sociology of knowledge will lead to the objectification of emotion, that it will pursue studies with systematic 'emotion-free' methodologies. For Game, drawing like others on phenomenology, emotion is a way of knowing the world, emotions are the means by which we make sense of and relate to our physical, natural and social world, we can only 'know' through our emotions and not simply our cognition or intellect. This theme underlies a number of the positions taken in this area of work, particularly feminist. Denzin (1984) has spelled it out in terms of embodiment. Emotions are embodied experiences, so that the 'emotions body' becomes 'a moving feeling complex of sensible feelings, feelings of the lived body, intentional value feelings, and feelings of the self and moral person' (1984:128). And Burkitt (1997) stresses complexity and relationality:

... emotions are multi-dimensional and cannot be reduced to biology, relations, or discourse alone, but belong to all these dimensions as they are constituted in ongoing relational practices. As such, the objects of our study in the sociology of emotions cannot be understood as 'things' but are complexes composed of different dimensions of embodied, interdependent human existence (1997: 42).

An important figure in the field is Arlie Hochschild who sees emotion as our most important sense, but crucially as linked both to action and to cognition. Hochschild has introduced into the field very influential concepts about the management of emotions. These include emotion management (an effort by any means, conscious or not, to change one's feeling or emotion), where we try to shape and reshape our feelings to fit our 'inner cultural guidelines' (Hochschild, 1998: 9). There are 'feeling rules' which guide our 'emotion work' of management. She says that 'In managing feeling, we partly create it...We can see the very act of managing emotion as part of what the emotion becomes' (1998: 11). Hochschild has been particularly interested in the commercialisation of emotion work in her research on flight attendants and other workers, and in gender differences in emotion work. She says:

Th[e] specialisation of emotional labor in the marketplace rests on the different childhood training of the heart that is given to girls and to boys ... Moreover, each specialization presents men and women with different emotional tasks. Women are more likely to be presented with the task of mastering anger and aggression in the service of 'being nice'. To men, the socially assigned task of aggressing against those that break rules of various sorts creates the private task of mastering fear and vulnerability (1983: 163).

I will now talk about two types of research where emotions are central, memory work and psychosocial research.

Memory work

June Crawford and her colleagues (1992) have developed an approach to the investigation of emotions to which I have something of an emotional attachment myself, memory work. I have been part of research teams that have used the method in various ways for many years. We

have used it to aid an understanding of the research we were undertaking, to produce ideas for use in the research or the analysis, and to explore our feelings in relation to our research topics and participants (Gordon *et al.* 2000: 55, Thomson *et al.* 2003, Thomson and Holland 2005). The method was developed by the German feminist and scholar Frigga Haug (1987) and is integral to Haug's theory of how people become selves and the part they play themselves in that construction. In the case of Haug and Crawford and colleagues the method was being used by research teams who would meet regularly, and so it was with us. Each person writes a memory to a trigger word, some examples we used in our study *Inventing Adulthoods*² for example were difference/being different, leaving, good, bad, right/wrong, trust, tell. As the study progressed triggers arose from and informed our emergent analysis of the data, and were sometimes posed to facilitate ideas and analysis for writing. Each person writes a memory of a particular episode, action or event in the third person in as much detail as possible, but without interpretation, explanation or biography. We used an early memory and one at the age of our participants (teen years). The group then discuss the memories, looking for similarities and differences, identifying clichés, generalisations, contradiction, metaphors, silences. After this process Crawford *et al.* (1992) suggest rewriting the memories in the light of discussion, but we did not. An important part of memory work, after collective analysis of the memory, is to relate it to social theories and the broader social and historical context. We used our insights and ideas from the discussions in the development of the study design, implementation, analysis, and interpretation over time.

For Crawford (and Haug) the memories describe what was subjectively significant, and it is expected that what is remembered is remembered because it is perhaps problematic, unfamiliar or in need of review (Crawford *et al.* 1992). The episodes are remembered since they remain significant and the engagement with the past in the present represents a continuing search for intelligibility and understanding. We found that the memories could evoke considerable emotion. And as Crawford *et al.* point out, memory work is:

... a method par excellence for exploring the process of the construction of the self and understanding the ways in which emotions, motives, actions, choices, moral judgements, play their part in that construction. It gives insight into the way people appropriate the social world and in so doing transform themselves and it (1992: 41).

Here is a memory written in 1997 to the trigger 'difference':

She was wearing a dress with blue and white stripes, and a pair of white plimsolls. The plimsolls did not have laces, but a T strap and a button at the side. The dress she wore was one of two she had. Each was washed overnight and ironed so that she wore a clean dress each day. The plimsolls were the only shoes she had. It was a bit of a problem when it rained. She walked to school as usual, and sat very quietly in the class as usual. The teacher was a stiff, stern woman, who rarely seemed to smile and had her hair in two longish plaits, but bound into buns around her ears. She always seemed to be dressed in brown, with long sleeves and high neck, but dusty, where chalk dust fell on

² The Inventing Adulthoods Study is a qualitative longitudinal investigation of young people's journeys into adulthood running since 1996 with the core research team: Sheila Henderson, Janet Holland, Sheena McGrellis, Sue Sharpe and Rachel Thomson. Funding has been from the Economic and Social Research Council on a series of programs of research, (L129251020, L134251008, M570255001). Currently part of Timescapes: Changing relationships and identities through the life course, RES-347-25-0003. See www.lsbu.ac.uk/inventingadulthoods; www.timescapes.leeds.ac.uk.

her. The teacher berated a boy for being dirty - having dirty clothes. He might even have been the boy that the other children did not want to sit next to because he smelled of pee. Added onto her criticism of him was a comment about the girl 'Look at her, she's only got two frocks but she's always clean'.

Using emotions in the research process

Valerie Walkerdine and her colleagues (Walkerdine *et al.* 2001, 2002, Lucey *et al.* 2003) take a psychosocial approach in investigating the experiences of a group of young women whom they have repeatedly visited to interview for many years. In their book *Growing Up Girl* they describe their approach to two interviews one year apart, when the young women were 21. They also interviewed other family members at the time. Crucially they are looking at the issue of the place of their own subjectivity in the research process, and within that the issue of emotion and unconscious processes.

Valerie and her colleagues are trying to research the social, cultural and psychic together, and to develop methodologies that respond to the demand for inseparability at the level of explanation (2001: 88). To do this, and to attempt to understand and overcome some of the complexities and difficulties of the research process and to work towards an engagement with the unconscious, they show how they applied psychoanalytic concepts to the generation and analysis of research data, and to the relationship between the researcher and the researched. The psychoanalytic concepts they discuss are transference, counter-transference, projection and projective identification, and denial. Anxiety is a central concept in psychoanalytic theorisation about the emotional development of the individual, and they see denial as a core psychic process in the management of anxiety. They say:

Denial involves a refusal to recognise or appreciate the inner significance of an experience, and like other unconscious processes it is linked to the management and regulation of anxiety (2001: 91).

They engage in three levels of analysis of their interview data: At the first they attend to the face value of the individual narratives to ascertain the overall plot, the story that is being told. At the second level they problematise the narrative through exploring the unconscious projections, introjections, and transferences at play, paying attention to words, images and metaphors, inconsistencies and contradictions, omissions and silences. At the third level the researcher is introduced as a subject and they take into account the feelings that the researcher had and any omissions and silences in the responses of the researcher and the young women, which were recorded in field notes at the time. The research team reflect as a team on their individual responses to and interpretations of cases in an effort to shed light on 'unconscious to unconscious' communication. Here a lot of weight is being given to the researchers' emotional responses both in and to the interview through the later transcription and analysis. They emphasise that it is not just the interviewee who puts up resistance to difficult feelings, but that the researcher also tries to defend against such feelings. As in other forms of research, particularly perhaps ethnography, here the researcher is an instrument of the research, but more particularly here, their emotions, memories, subjectivity play a huge role in their analysis and understanding of what was going on in the interview. There are some terrific examples of the process in their book *Growing Up Girl* (Walkerdine *et al.* 2001).

As you might imagine, using their own emotions and reactions in the analysis led to disagreement about interpretation, but the team was not seeking that kind of closure of an agreed interpretation. They comment on the process:

We attempted to go beyond both classical and existential methods and used a psychoanalytic framework to explore some of the issues between the researcher and the subject and the implications of this for the production of knowledge, and then put this together with post-structural and cultural approaches. It was in this final stage of the research that we were able to bring some of these ideas together to analyse the data from within a psycho-social perspective (2001: 101).

The challenge for those who talk about gender and class is being aware of the emotional dynamics within their own lives and finding some way of accounting for themselves, for their own subjective position (2001: 107).

The team argue that to be able to examine other people's unconscious processes you must be willing and able to engage with your own, so this is not a method for everybody. But the method dramatically engages the emotions in the process of research and analysis.

Memory work and psychosocial approaches are two rather intense ways of researching the emotions, or bringing emotions into the research, which might raise particular ethical issues. Some feminists have been concerned about the ethics of certain practices in close personal methods of data generation, such as the face-to-face depth interview or ethnography, and I will go on to this now.

The ethics of empathy

There is a considerable literature about the dangers of women researching women, and the need to recognise power relations in those close personal methods of data, where connection and emotion are central characteristics (Oakley 1981, Ribbens 1989, Cotterill 1992, Duncombe and Jessop 2002). Ann Oakley started the ball rolling by criticising the traditional social science interview as a male paradigm, arguing that the feminist interview should be non-hierarchical, and the interviewer must invest their personal identity in the exchange, even becoming friends with the interviewee. Although not unique in its position, this was an influential article and led to many heart-searching documents on power, hierarchy, empathy, and ethics on women interviewing women.

One of the issues raised is the possibility of exploiting the women interviewed by virtue of the rapport achieved, persuading them to reveal more of themselves than they would have wished. Duncombe and Jessop pursue this argument in a fascinating article 'Doing rapport and the ethics of faking friendship', raising 'some of the ethical, feminist, emotional and methodological issues associated with how rapport is gained, maintained, and used in qualitative interviews' (2002: 107). They felt in their own interviews that they needed to consciously exercise interviewing skills in doing rapport to get the interviewees to talk freely, and felt discomfort in recognising that even feminist interviewing could be seen as a job, with instrumental motives. They recalled Hochschild's work:

Hochschild has argued that the spread of jobs where women are paid to simulate empathy represents the 'commercialisation' of human feeling, and those who do such

work run the risk of feeling, and indeed actually becoming, 'phoney' and 'inauthentic' (2002: 107).

Duncombe and Jessop identify two recent trends in research: First the expansion of consumer research and other interviewing jobs in commerce and government that highlight the value of methods that lead to more disclosure, so that doing rapport by faking friendship has become a set of professional and marketable skills. The second trend is occurring within feminism, where the earlier relatively uncritical acceptance of feminist claims for special rapport between women is challenged by a sceptical debate concerned with the limits and ethical problems of 'feminist' qualitative research methods. The book their chapter appears in represents that trend. Jean Duncombe gives an example from her own experience, talking about interviewing couples about their relationship, and being torn when they begin to argue about their grievances. She felt satisfaction to have gained such revealing data, but guilt that it was her presence that fuelled the conflict. She felt that she should have tried to smooth things over, or silence the emotions.

The concern here has been with exploitation of the participants through the research skills of the interviewer, and there is broad concern for the participants of research in much of the debate on research ethics. But more recently concern has been emerging for the researcher and the dangers of emotional engagement, or the emotion management work required in qualitative research, particularly from a feminist reflexive perspective. I will turn now to emotions and researchers in the field.

The researcher, emotions and the field

Emotions play an important part in the field at a number of levels. It is important to realise that the researcher's identity and experiences shape the ideas with which they go into the field, their political and ideological stance, and there is an analytic cost if this interplay of person and research is not taken into consideration. The researcher takes assumptions and emotions into and generates emotions in the field about the researched. Kleinman and Copp (1993) suggest that if a researcher experiences negative emotions about their participants they would prefer to ignore, or repress (or in Walkerdine's terms deny) those feelings, since to admit them might constitute a threat to their professional and personal identity. But these can be the very feelings (anger and disappointment perhaps) that could help the researcher to understand their own assumptions, and those of their participants.

There are many examples in the literature where feelings and emotions affect the course of the research, and contribute to understanding and interpretation, sensitising us to the meanings and behaviours of others (Wilkins 1993). Sherryl Kleinman, for example, had negative feelings of anger and distance towards the women she was researching in a counter culture organisation, which led her to put off interviewing them for a year, playing the role of the objective observer in that time. As time passed, influenced by certain feminist writers, she became more sympathetic to the women, and found that her previous anger towards them had served as an 'inequality detector' enabling her to recognise inequality between men and women in the organisation. It was only through recognising her own experience of anger and facing what it meant for her 'my worst fear, that I was unempathic' (i.e. to the women in the group) that she was able to reach an interpretation of what was going on in the organisation, and explain why it fit the data better than another perspective (Kleinman and Copp 1993: 51/52). Years later, the experience still resonates, and Kleinman revisits it, this time drawing out feelings as analytic tools, and bringing into the picture an awareness of her own

biographical status at the time as a new member of a male dominated academic department (Kleinman 2002).

Hubbard and her colleagues (2001) think that, although considerable emphasis is put on risks for participants in research, not enough attention is paid to the emotional effects of the research process on researchers. In talking about their experiences, the team became aware of the emotional dangers in undertaking qualitative work ranging from discomfort to trauma, and that it could have an effect on future involvement in such research. Like many who follow this theme, Hubbard and her colleagues are concerned with emotional labour, but also the role of 'emotionally-sensed knowledge' in the research process. They lay out the relationship between emotion and data:

1. Participants' emotions may be used as data
2. The emotionality of an interview might influence how a researcher manages emotion in subsequent interviews
3. A researcher's own emotional response to a respondent's experience can be used to interpret data and may be a necessary part of the reflexive process.
4. Emotional experiences in fieldwork can have an impact on a researcher's professional and personal identity.

Risks to researchers

Michael Bloor and his colleagues have written extensively about risk and well being in relation to qualitative researchers (Bloor *et al.* 2007, Sampson *et al.* 2008), and generated a series of recommendations for their safety. Their recommendations are drawn from the code of practice of the Social Research Association, which they highly recommend. They also introduced me to the concept of edgework, where researchers, particularly ethnographers, intentionally put themselves into risky, dangerous situations in order to experience what the participants experience.

Hamm (Ferrell and Hamm 1998) and Lyng (1998) have developed the methodological framework for 'edgework' studies. Both of these researchers have undertaken ethnographic studies of what they call 'marginal' populations where activities are at the edges of conventional acceptability, be they 'criminal', 'irresponsible' or 'dangerous' (Bloor *et al.* 2007: 18/19). And Vail adds:

Edgework is, in short, activity that tests the physical, emotional and intellectual limits of the edgeworker (2001: 719).

This also relates to a macho approach to fieldwork, found in some disciplines. But in Bloor and colleagues' extensive literature review, and their website inquiry into qualitative researchers' experiences, the largest category in each addressed the issue of the emotional impact of undertaking qualitative research on the researcher. They say:

There are many examples of studies where researchers have had to cope with emotionally disturbing data. Research projects involving interviews with victims of sexual abuse, cancer patients and bereaved children have all been discussed in terms of the impact on the researcher (Burr 1996; Scott 1998, Cannon 1989, Rowling 1999, Grinyer 2004, 2005, Campbell 2004, Rager 2005). The face-to-face proximity of the researchers to people whose stories are heavy with sorrow, loss, disappointment or grief make it

easy to understand that there will be an emotional cost to undertaking these kinds of studies (Bloor et al. 2007: 25).

University employers and research managers have in the past paid very little attention to this aspect of the work, nor indeed to the safety and risk factors involved in qualitative fieldwork at all. Recommendations are that they very much should do so, right from the planning and design stage, including costing in provision for safety measures (paired research, mobiles, taxis etc.), and counselling for researchers affected by emotional reactions. Managers and supervisors of research should be aware of these issues and make sure that sufficient support is given to researchers and that all possible institutional support is provided.

From their research Bloor and colleagues also draw out the gendered nature of fieldwork experiences. Women researchers are seen as more vulnerable to, for example sexual harassment, and to the emotional demands of fieldwork, and indeed required to do considerable emotional labour and emotion management in the context of qualitative research. Emotion work can be undertaken by both male and female researchers, but it seems to be undertaken more by women, and Bloor and colleagues think this is related to the value that feminist methods place on close and trusting relationships with participants, and partly due to the gendered expectations of research participants, expecting female researchers to be sympathetic, interested and concerned confidantes. As a result they can offer time, sympathy and support to a draining degree. Dickson-Swift *et al.* (2006) note that this emotional labour can lead to physical and mental symptoms – insomnia, nightmares, exhaustion, depression, headaches, and gastrointestinal problems – and indeed emotional stress and difficulties which might affect their relationships outside the field. Watts (2008) too points to the potential for emotion deluge and fatigue on the part of the researcher and the consequent need to establish self-care strategies. The literature suggests that women are more vulnerable to these reactions given the emotion work involved.

Sampson *et al.* drawing particularly on their website inquiry into qualitative researcher experiences, argue that women, feminists in particular, might be vulnerable to emotional risk in qualitative research owing to the contribution that feminism has made to qualitative research methods. The feminist approach has led researchers to become more reflexive, more conscious of power relationships and responsibilities, and more sensitive to the way that knowledge is created, endorsed or identified (Sampson *et al.* 2008: 921). Given this orientation, moral dilemmas become more acute; researchers can suffer role conflict, as student, researcher, and/or moral actor.

Karen Ramsay (1996) gives an example. She was undertaking 'empathic ethnography', where the goal is to see the world from an insider's perspective, and attempt to represent this as clearly as possible. But she was working in two engineering departments to discover how the organisational culture of particular academic disciplines affects the type of equality strategies employed in the departments. She found the attempt totally exhausting and disturbing, feeling the need to engage in surface and deep acting (Hochschild 1983), managing her impression at a deep, emotional level, conscious of herself as a woman and a feminist talking to men, and the object of the male gaze at all times. She had not realised the effect that gendered power relations would have on her interactions in the field. She had used a method designed to empower the interviewees, but felt that she was in need of empowerment, given the power and techniques of control exercised by the men she was researching and interviewed.

Some examples of complex emotional interactions and experiences of male researchers in the field are given by Blackman (2007) and Down *et al.* (2006). Blackman revisits various ethnographic episodes in his research career to uncover the 'hidden ethnography', that which is not written up for a variety of reasons. It creates a silence at the heart of ethnographic accounts which in his view is about the place of emotion in such work. His descriptions show 'how powerful feelings of emotions from love to hate grip both the researcher and the researched' (2007:711). Crucially he argues that 'The hidden ethnography plays a key role in the development and elaboration of knowledge production, and it also reveals that existing explanations of how qualitative research is undertaken contain an absence' (2007: 771).

Down and colleagues are also interested in these absences and in how reflexivity can help to understand and perhaps include some aspects of them. Following Pillow they advocate not "comfortable reflexivity" but rather 'uncomfortable reflexivity... a continuous grappling with the difficult questions, an often uncomfortable task of leaving what is unfamiliar, unfamiliar' (Pillow 2003: 177). The team of two men and a woman were undertaking ethnographic research in a steelworks, and found that positive and negative emotions played a big part in the experience both for them and the participants. They reviewed their data, fieldnotes and experiences together. Karin Garrety noted one emotional exchange between a male researcher and participants in a management meeting. She realised that she had not recognised the degree of emotion when present and taking notes at the meeting, and when recognising it in their joint review, realised the amount of emotion work she was doing in order not to show emotion, and the cost in terms of the type of data generated:

Overall, I think my approach to the ethnographic research was in keeping with a 'traditional' approach – detached and 'objective', at least as far as the notes and my degree of social involvement are concerned. Though I felt a lot of emotion, I didn't write about it or show or talk about it (also 'traditional'). This was not a conscious choice, but more an outcome of the context and my personality. As a result, I didn't get as much rich data as you two, who were more socially involved and emotionally expressive (at least it seems so to me).

The team argue that the inherent irony and covertness of the research situation and its moral ambiguity creates emotional dissonances that we try to dissipate through identity work, such as the mask of academic objectivity that Karin refers to above, which can potentially generate difficult questions for the research, forcing the researcher to accommodate different, perhaps contradictory perspectives. An example from one of the male researchers is his abandoned working class background in relation to the life chances of the working class male participants. And that this can lead to critical reflection on the research process and on substantive issues (Down *et al.* 2006: 25) which is of value in analysis and interpretation. They also see the processes involved as the emotional labour of research.

Some final thoughts

I will now pull together a few of the strands emerging from this consideration of researcher's experiences and thoughts about emotions in research, some of which resonate with earlier parts of my discussion:

1. Emotions are very important in fieldwork, both those of the participants and of the researchers. More concern has generally been given to the participants, through ethical considerations.

2. The researcher's emotions can have effects at the personal and professional levels, in relation to their understanding of their self and identity, and their capacity to perform in a fashion that they would themselves regard as professional. These effects can be long term.
3. A considerable amount of emotion work is called for in qualitative research, and often the dangers consequent on this are not recognised. In some instances researchers have been made quite ill (physically or emotionally) through their experiences of denying, ignoring or managing emotions.
4. The emotions experienced by respondents in the field are data and need to be drawn into analysis and interpretation.
5. Emotions are important in the production of knowledge. In most cases, despite some unpleasant experiences, researchers value the extra power in understanding, analysis and interpretation that the emotions they experience in the field can bring to the research.

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SECTION II: EMOTIONAL AND EMOTIVE IDENTITIES

Chapter 3

'MIXED EMOTIONS': REFLECTIONS ON RESEARCHING 'MIXING' AND 'MIXEDNESS'

Chamion Caballero

Introduction

Researching racial and ethnic issues can involve entering a highly emotive terrain and the subject of 'mixed race' is no exception. The growing collection of contemporary accounts of those who are mixing or are of mixed race and ethnicity highlight the often intensive emotions involved in crossing perceived boundaries of colour and culture (e.g. Camper 1994, Gaskins 1995, Ifwekwunigwe 1998, Alibhai-Brown 2001, Olumide 2002, Dewan 2008). Yet, whilst discussions of the sensitivities and politics facing those who are mixing or of mixed race or ethnicity form the backbone of much research into the subject, much less is said about these issues in relation to the researcher. Such reflections, however, are important not only for making sense of the frequent intensity of emotion that emerges from such research but also as regards constructing, conducting and disseminating it. Drawing on a number of research projects, this paper will discuss some of the emotive issues involved in researching mixed race and their implications for the researcher as well as the researched.

Pathologisation and 'Ordinariness'

Over the last two decades, mixed racial and ethnic identities have increasingly become topics of academic interest in the UK. Much of the work of this 'new wave' (Caballero 2005) has challenged commonplace perceptions of mixed identities and relationships, in both the context of the individual or the family, as being inherently marginal, tragic or deviant (e.g. Wilson 1987, Katz 1996, Olumide 2002, Tizard and Phoenix 2002, Ali 2003, Barrett *et al.* 2006, Song *et al.* work-in-progress). Furthermore, emerging research is also questioning the notion that earlier experiences of mixing and mixedness – such as those occurring in early to mid 20th century Britain – were as uncommon, and consequently difficult – as has popularly been imagined (Caballero and Aspinall forthcoming).

On numerous levels, however, unearthing accounts which indicate the everyday, even ordinary nature of 'mixedness' for many in the earlier parts of the last century is as surprising as it is fascinating. Whilst over the past few decades, people and couples from mixed racial backgrounds in Britain have become increasingly visible in the public eye, there is still a tendency to herald their presence as part of a new multicultural phenomenon – what has been dubbed the rise of 'Beige' or 'Brown Britain'. Yet, mixed race people and couples have a long and widespread presence in Britain, one which, unsurprisingly, coincides with the equally extensive history of minority ethnic settlement in the country. British port cities such as London, Liverpool, Bristol and Cardiff have long hosted communities which experienced a great deal of mixing and mixedness, with some areas during the early to mid-20th century renowned locally or even nationally for their 'interracialism' (Sollors 2000), such as 'Draughtboard Alley' in London's Canning Town or Cardiff's 'Tiger Bay'. But mixed racial and ethnic relationships and populations also occurred or appeared in places in which one wouldn't necessarily expect to find them, such as rural communities in the Welsh Valleys or Devon and Dorset (Caballero and Aspinall forthcoming).

Perhaps most interesting of all is the fact that many of the firsthand accounts which are slowly being unearthed from this period tell of a rarely spoken experience of racial mixing during these times, one in which being in or a product of a mixed racial relationship is not automatically steeped in tragedy but is simply an 'ordinary' feature of everyday life, sometimes good, sometimes bad and sometimes just simply unremarkable (see Caballero and Aspinall forthcoming). This is not to deny the existence of tragic or painful experiences for many mixing or of mixed race during these periods or to negate their emotional effects – for certainly, then, as indeed now, racial prejudice and hatred affected the lives of mixed couples or peoples in extremely unpleasant and difficult ways. Indeed, what is remarkable is the ordinariness of some experiences in a social climate where 'official' attitudes towards mixing and mixedness were firmly ones of dislike, disapproval and discouragement. Even the briefest glance at commentaries by academics, politicians, policymakers and other institutional contemporary forces during the early to mid 20th century reveals the widespread nature of the moral concern and condemnation of mixedness by these forces. Whilst it is not overly surprising that members of the Eugenics Society– founded in 1907 with the purpose of promoting awareness of hereditary qualities and encouraging social responsibility to improving the human race by these ends (Mazumdar 1991) – were highly concerned about the effects of the offspring of interracial relationships on society [Marie Stopes, the family planning pioneer, advocated that all 'half castes' should be sterilised at birth (Caballero and Aspinall forthcoming)], such sentiments also ran clearly through officialdom. Throughout the early to mid-20th century, British MPs and academics constantly voiced concerns about the detrimental social effects of racial mixing on children and local communities (Rich 1986), whilst the media did what certain parts of it has always done best and whipped up moral panic and outrage at the crossing of racial boundaries which, they were horrified to report, was often done by white British women (Bland 2005, Caballero and Aspinall forthcoming). Meanwhile, despite such condemnation, racial boundaries were habitually and frequently crossed, enacted by all manner of people and received in all manner of ways.

The complex relationship between the vehement official censure of racial mixing, the disparate social attitudes of those observing it and the everyday lives of those experiencing it needs much further exploration, particularly, as has been noted, in relation to uncovering the voices of those for whom it was often just another part of their daily lives (Bland 2005, Caballero and Aspinall forthcoming). But while we work to understand better the subtleties of the perceptions and the interactions involved in earlier occurrences of racial mixing in Britain, what is clear at this moment is the emotive backdrop against which research on mixing and mixedness takes place. The long history of moral condemnation of racial mixing continues to hang over the contemporary field; the persistent and pervasive nature of stereotypes and assumptions around mixing and mixedness has left its legacy not only for the researched but also for the researcher. Drawing on a number of recent projects looking at mixed racial identities and families over the past five years,³ the rest of this paper will discuss some of the theoretical and methodological implications that are produced by the emotive nature of research on mixing and mixedness.

³ *Understanding the Educational Needs of Mixed Heritage Pupils*, 2004, Department for Schools and Education (with Leon Tikly, Jo Haynes and John Hill); *Parenting 'Mixed' Children: Negotiating Difference and Belonging in Mixed Race, Ethnicity and Faith Families*, 2008, Joseph Rowntree Foundation (with Rosalind Edwards and Shuby Puthussery); *The Era of Moral Condemnation: Mixed Race People in Britain, 1920-1950*, 2008, The British Academy (with Peter Aspinall); *'Lone Mothers of Mixed Race Children: A Case Study'*, ongoing, London South Bank University Research Opportunities Fund and the Nuffield Foundation.

Access

One of the first encounters with the emotional and emotive nature of working in the area of mixing and mixedness for researchers is frequently through the process of accessing participants. The methodological challenges of trying to recruit participants for studies focusing on mixed racial or ethnic issues remains a recurrent, but informal, discussion topic amongst researchers although, interestingly, it is seldom discussed at length in the literature. For the most part, written reflections tend to focus on the particular methodological challenges of sample identification, as illustrated by Maria Root's insightful consideration of the matter (Root 1992, 2002). Though Root's discussion of the restriction of sampling in the American context – i.e. over concentration of focus on participants snowballed from college backgrounds who thus tend to be academically educated, middle-class females who are usually aware of debates around 'multiracial' identity or involved in 'multiracial' organisations - the issues that Root raises are also applicable in other research contexts. How, for example, do you identify people belonging to a group which, by the very nature of its mixedness, is not fixed and where membership differs according to whom you are speaking? Furthermore, if you do succeed in defining this group, where do you find those whose identities are often ambiguous and fluid, and who are not necessarily to be found congregated in the forms of traditional geographically rooted communities?

Since Root's original discussion, the inclusion of 'mixed' or 'multiracial' options in recent UK and US Censuses in 2001 and 2000 respectively – flawed as they may be – has nevertheless created wider sampling possibilities as researchers are now able to investigate different sampling frameworks, such as those based on population-linked criteria (e.g. Tikly *et al.* 2004, Caballero *et al.* 2008, Song *et al.* work-in-progress), rather than relying primarily on snowballing or membership lists of mixed race organisations. Yet, though seldom discussed formally, there may be other issues underlying the difficulties in gaining access to 'mixed' groups beyond sample identification.

The first is linked to the idea of 'ordinariness' as previously raised in this paper and as written on by Weeks (2008), who has highlighted the ways in which aspects of social life which were once seen as extraordinary are now considered to be commonplace (or as increasingly appears to be the case in relation to mixedness in Britain, have often had their 'ordinariness' overlooked). Across the course of all the projects drawn on for this paper, on mixing and mixedness, it has been interesting to observe how many mixed racial or ethnic families or people were surprised at being approached to take part in research focusing on their mixedness because they felt that this mixedness was not particularly noteworthy. During interviews with those who ended up being participants, a significant number commented that they thought their stories would be too 'boring' or mundane to be of any interest and, in the case of young people in particular, were often quite bemused at being the focus of a research study as they felt that their mixedness was 'no big deal'. It would, of course, be slightly over-reaching to suggest that a sense of 'ordinariness', is a key factor in explaining why people may not wish to participate in research on mixedness generally, but with a feeling of everydayness running through the accounts of so many actual participants, it would at least seem one that should not be entirely overlooked.

What is, however, much more certain – and emotive – as an issue in relation to recruitment and access beyond sampling difficulties is the long history in Britain (and indeed elsewhere) of pathologising mixing and mixedness, particularly within the social sciences. Whilst this history has a long and virulent past (as exemplified, for example, by the kind of 19th century scientific

racism that excitedly speculated on 'mulattoes'⁴ in the West Indies having arms that were so short for their long-legged bodies that they were unable to pick things up from the ground (Caballero 2005), it is the socio-psychological research accounts of the 20th century which still resonate today. With the interwar period seeing a sustained settlement of sailors, soldiers and other workers from minority ethnic backgrounds into Britain and a simultaneous dispersal of the majority male population, the 1920s and 1930s were times of particular moral concern as regards racial mixing. Social scientists, many of whom were heavily influenced by the eugenicist tradition, were at the vanguard of investigations into this and other issues resulting from the country's colour problem (Rich 1987, Bland 2007). The findings of a study of 'half castes' in Britain by Rachel Fleming in the early 1920s, which concluded that racial mixing produced not only 'disharmony of physical traits but disharmony of mental characteristics' (in Ifekwunigwe 2004: 75), fuelled the production of a study in the latter years of that decade into the welfare of 'half castes' in the Liverpool area entitled *Report on an Investigation into the Colour Problem in Liverpool and other Parts* by Muriel Fletcher (Rich 1986). Similarly to Fleming, Fletcher also implied the undesirability of racial mixing through a focus on the plight of the children; her report concluded that the off-spring of interracial 'alliances' not only suffered from physical and mental defects, but were also socially outcast and isolated. As Christian so insightfully demonstrates, the report written by Fletcher was both methodologically flawed and analytically compromised; even if able to excuse the ideological bias of her time, one which posited the supposed superiority of whites over other races, Fletcher not only drew on skewed samples, but employed dubious pseudo-scientific methods of analysis, such as categorising the 'half castes' in her study by their physical appearance and phenotype (Christian 2008).

Although this highly prejudiced and damaging account of mixedness in Liverpool was heavily condemned by those within the community in which it had been conducted – who understandably were outraged by the way in which their trust had been breached [in fact, Christian reports that Fletcher was 'stabbed and run out of the city' after its publication (Christian 2008: p222)] – beyond Liverpool the report was not only well received but profoundly influential. The Fletcher report spawned a host of similar social scientific 'investigations' into mixedness throughout the rest of the 20th century – whilst some were more sympathetic to the experiences of racial minorities than others, all started from the same premise as Fletcher – that racial mixing was problematic – and all ignored or patronised the voices of those who were mixed or mixing. It is only with the shift to 'insider-led' research in the late 1980s that the social scientific paradigm on mixedness has included, rather than excluded, the voices of mixing or of mixed race and ethnicity. Nevertheless, the influence of the pathology model since Fletcher, which crystallised populist, common stereotypes about racial mixing into objective and unbiased 'fact' (Christian 2008) still resonates today - whilst those outside of the social science community may not necessarily be aware of the particular historical details and content of the research on mixedness conducted within the field, there is nevertheless an awareness of the legacy of pathologisation to which academia has contributed. Through conducting work on mixedness, it has become clear that although many people are enthusiastic to participate in research which will challenge these longstanding stereotypes about themselves or their families, due to suspicion or scepticism of the aims of research, a great many others do not. As such, researchers working in this field may find that they are frequently required to prove their credentials as 'good' social scientists who are not looking to pathologise families further, but to portray them realistically and fairly. One of the ways in which the abilities of social scientists who are working in the area of mixedness currently seems to be tested is through the showing

⁴ 'Mulatto' derives from a Spanish term and denotes a person with one black and one white parent. It existed as an official Census category in the United States until it was removed in 1930 and is now largely considered a pejorative term.

of their own mixed racial or ethnic 'passes', that is through providing biographical accounts of mixedness as a means of bolstering academic links – demonstrating that researchers are part of the group they are writing about, with the implication that they are less likely to denigrate a group to which they belong. In fact, it would appear that the 'insider' researcher is now so prevalent that it is less likely that such work is conducted by those who aren't personally mixing or of mixed race or ethnicity. Whilst this has worked to challenge the field in incredibly necessary and insightful ways, as Mahtani points out, it also raises important methodological issues. For example, with indications that the majority of research on mixedness is increasingly being conducted by women from mixed racial and ethnic backgrounds how, she asks, might our own racialized and gendered identity influence our acquisition of data and our own subconscious desires, experiences, and needs influence the stories we feel compelled to tell about mixedness?⁵ There are obviously many interesting and important discussions to be had around interviewer matching in relation to this field but lacking the space to do them justice here, rather I want to turn to focus on another emotive issue that repeatedly emerges from interviews on mixedness as it is one which also has critical implications for dissemination and conceptual thinking: and this is the subject of the terminology of mixedness.

Terminology

Due to the way in which mixed race has been conceptualised in the UK - as predominantly about blackness and whiteness – it was not unusual for emotive debates to occur around whether identifying or acknowledging the concept of 'mixed race' represented a splintering off from the black community in order to create a 'new coloured people' (Spencer 1997). Whilst such lines of questioning may still arise, they appear to do so less frequently. Rather, as has been highlighted by a number of authors, the question of terminology frequently proves to be one of the most theoretically challenging aspects of researching people from mixed racial and ethnic backgrounds (e.g. Ifekwunigwe 1998, Ali 2003, Aspinall 2003, Tikly *et al.* 2004, Caballero 2005, Barn and Harman 2006). Depending on both cultural context and personal preference, people of mixed racial and ethnic backgrounds may refer to themselves, and be referred to by others, by drawing on a variety of terms – from those which emphasise a monoracial identity (such as 'Black' or 'Asian', etc.) to those which highlight a racially or ethnically mixed background (such as 'mixed', 'mixed race', 'dual heritage', 'mixed heritage', 'dual parentage', 'biracial', etc). Consequently, whilst certain terms may be more acceptable or familiar than others, there is no general consensus or standardisation of terms in this area. Indeed, as preferred choices of terms tap into a number of political and ideological debates around racial and ethnic construction and identification, what Ifekwunigwe calls 'the terminology of 'mixedness'' (Ifekwunigwe 1998) is often heavily, and heatedly, contested. As the long process of discarding terms such as 'Negro' and 'Coloured' in favour of those such as 'African-American' and 'Black British' has demonstrated, self-naming is an important step to empowerment (Root 1992). Yet, although many older derogatory terms to label mixedness have been challenged by contemporary research in the quest for empowerment, the pathological tradition remains reflected in the terms commonly used to describe people of mixed backgrounds. Ultimately, all labels utilised to describe mixedness fundamentally demonstrate essentialist and bipolar thinking (Phoenix and Owen 1996), since the notion of mixedness itself emerges from and largely inhabits an essentialist and bipolar state.

⁵ Paper presented at *Thinking About Mixedness and Mixing: International and Interdisciplinary Dialogue* conference, ESRC Seminar Series, London South Bank University, 26 March 2009: <http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/families/mixedness/>

The Catch 22 nature of the terminology of mixedness can make it a highly emotive area – what may be preferred or acceptable labels to some are highly offensive to others, both researched and researcher. How to categorise and refer to families and people from mixed racial, ethnic and faith backgrounds is then a critical part of the research process, not only as regards the coherent design and comfortable conduct of participant interviews but also as regards the implications and ramifications of disseminating findings. It would rightly appear that the majority of researchers now ensure that the terminology used to describe mixedness forms part of their discussion with participants – not only to be able to conduct the interview in terms that are acceptable to participants, but also to gather data on the types of terms preferred by those mixing and of mixed race and ethnicity in 21st century Britain. Interestingly, however, there appears to be a disjuncture between the terms that are continually identified as being in popular and acceptable usage by participants – such as ‘mixed race’ or ‘mixed’ – and those that are preferred by practitioners and policymakers – such as ‘mixed heritage’, ‘dual parentage’, ‘multiple heritage’, etc. Such disjuncture presents many important points of reflection, namely in relation to questions of the construction and policing of language. Despite the increasing indications that people mixing or of mixed racial and ethnic backgrounds – particularly young people – do not tend to use, like or are even familiar with terminology that stresses the words ‘heritage’ or ‘parentage’ finding them too ‘official’ or ‘politically correct’, such terms are endlessly prioritised amongst practitioners and professionals. Moreover, the preferred terms of those mixing or of mixed racial and ethnic backgrounds are not only generally absent in practitioner or professional dialogue but frequently dismissed as inappropriate or unacceptable, even when justification for their usage is given. Interestingly, in the parenting project,⁶ we found that not only did extremely few of the parents or people in the study use these terms but, generally, those who did noted that they were practitioners who had got into the habit of using these terms through pressure from their workplace to use ‘appropriate’ and ‘inoffensive’ language, even though this language was what they, as families from mixed racial and ethnic backgrounds, preferred.

The ‘policing’ of the terminology of mixedness is extremely interesting in terms of reflecting on questions of authority and ownership in relation to ‘mixed’ identities; such issues are increasingly unavoidable for researchers, not only in terms of theorising mixedness generally, but also in terms of disseminating work on it. At a recent dissemination event at a University in the north west of England, the poster for our research which talked about parenting in ‘mixed’ families (a term which was used by many of the families interviewed in the study and which was chosen for specific reasons to be explained in the presentation) – attracted telephone calls to the university before the event even took place, complaining that our language was ‘wrong’. Rather, the callers insisted, the ‘correct’ terms that should have been used were ‘mixed’ or ‘dual heritage’. Discussions on mixedness, whether inside or outside of academia can, it seems, disintegrate very quickly into heated arguments about terminological preference which often block more insightful theoretical discussions about constructions, perceptions and implications of mixedness as well as more productive discussions about the experiences of those mixing or of mixed racial and ethnic backgrounds and the types of actions that might be useful to support those who are in need of support. In the project which looked at the educational experiences of pupils from mixed racial backgrounds, we found that the fear that some teachers had about using the ‘wrong’ term to refer to pupils could contribute to their needs not being discussed at all (Tikly *et. al.* 2004). Whilst debates around terminology are important, they shouldn’t hinder discussion on families and people from mixed racial, ethnic

⁶ Parenting ‘Mixed’ Children: Negotiating Difference and Belonging in Families from Mixed Racial and Ethnic Backgrounds, Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

and faith backgrounds more generally, particularly around issues of how to address the subject of prejudice and inequality.

Conclusions

Conducting research which can incite heated reactions and may often be construed as controversial, particularly where you have a personal tie or belonging through being both the researcher and part of the researched group, can certainly provoke 'mixed emotions'. On the one hand, there is the challenge and reward of driving the field forwards and being involved in work that questions and pushes assumptions and taken-for-granted ideas on how certain identities and subjects can be understood. On the other, there is the apprehension and concern of readdressing stereotypes and representing voices fairly but realistically, as well as facing negative or hostile receptions to your work that can all too easily move from the abstract to the personal. The legacy of the pathologised terrain is an emotional and emotive one, for both researched and researcher, and whilst we have made great strides in challenging it, there remains a host of critical, methodological and theoretical issues that need to be addressed in order to chase further from the field the 'ghost of Muriel Fletcher' (Nassy Brown 2005; Christian 2008) which, as this paper has attempted to highlight, lingers over us in more ways than one.

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Chapter 4

COVERING UP AND REVEALING: REFLECTING ON EMOTIONS IN RESEARCH WITH SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN

Shaminder Takhar

Introduction

Emotions rarely feature in the accounts given by researchers despite the many ways in which emotions filter into the research process. It is with this in mind that the paper presents a reflection on how emotions are an integral part of qualitative research. The paper explores the process of emotional entanglement between the researcher and the researched. Through the lens of reflexivity the paper demonstrates that decisions are made by both on how much to hide or reveal within the context of in-depth interviews. The paper draws on research carried out with thirty five South Asian women with reference to political agency and experiences of higher education. The research took place in organisations for South Asian women and a higher education institute. The first part of the paper demonstrates briefly how emotions and knowledge production are related. I then highlight the significance of reflexivity before focusing on experiences of emotions in research with South Asian women.

Emotions and knowledge production

Emotions have been seen as subjective superfluous feelings that have no place in the production of reliable knowledge. Instead reason, rationality, science and objectivity have been central to positivist methods that produce unquestionable facts (Williams 1998, 749). It is the separation between the mind and body that assumes a rationalist approach to research and as a result, although we recognise that emotions play a large part in our lives, we fail to acknowledge them in qualitative research. However, it has been argued that emotions are inextricably entwined with the deployment of reason and knowledge production (Jagger 1989, Damasio 1994). Although reason is intimately connected to emotions, in western epistemology this has been repressed. According to Jagger 'emotion as well as value must be shown as necessary to such knowledge' (Jagger 1989, 157).

It has been argued that research which is considered as valid is precisely when emotions have been controlled or removed from the process (Ellis 1991). However, the removal or repression of emotions does not guarantee that their impact will not be felt (Jagger 1992, Kleinman and Copp 1993). Thus we need to recognise the importance and benefit of emotions in qualitative research especially issues that are emotive and require empathy from the researcher (Jagger 1992, Hornsby-Smith 1993). Therefore, emotions are part of research and research itself can be regarded as involving 'emotional labour' (Hochschild 1983, James 1989). Within qualitative research reflexivity provides an opportunity for the researcher to reflect on emotional encounters within research (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983, Dale *et al.* 1988). The next section therefore looks at the importance of reflexivity and how it can be used to deal with such challenges.

Reflexivity and the importance of locating the researcher in the research process

We are often reminded that one of the dangers of including emotions in research is the association of emotions with women and a way of avoiding this is to place emphasis on reflexivity in the research process. Reflecting on research provides an opportunity for the researcher to look at emotional encounters with the participants and to utilise them for data analysis (Kleinman and Copp 1993). Therefore reflection on and recording responses to research are crucial components that can provide valuable insight for data analysis (Cook and Fonow 1990).

Reflexivity forms an important part of an ethical research process and within the idea of what constitutes 'good research', in particular for those committed to feminist research methods, it signifies writing the researcher into the research. It is an approach that emphasises critical reflection on the influence of the researcher on the research process. Researchers are implicated in their research as we cannot perceive ourselves simply as 'objective observers' thus our own biographies and subjective experiences, i.e. our histories, are connected to the research process (Stanley and Wise 1993). Reflexivity is a kind of 'seeing the unseen' that helps us to view those things which are seemingly too close to us to be visible in the research process. Methodologically, reflexivity involves making explicit the positionality of the researcher. Thus writing in the researcher allows a deeper and contextual understanding of the research, as Stanley and Wise note:

All human attributes are brought into the research situation by researchers [...] 'in the field' [...] It is this which we argue must be made explicit within feminist research. We believe that the way to do it is to make 'the researcher' and her consciousness the central focus of the research experience. We refer to it as the 'research experience' because we see it as an experience like any other, not as something different, special or separated-off through the adoption of special techniques such as 'objectivity' (1993: 59).

The interviews that I did are not only research experience as described above but 'partial encounters' in which I needed to consider the influence of my own subjectivity and interpretation of the data generated. Through writing myself into the research process, i.e. to write an account and to be accountable with reference to the interaction between myself and the women interviewed, allowed for a more personal, rather than a distant observational account. Thus the narratives of the women interviewed construct a version of the social world in which I am implicated. It is a product of the *interaction* between the researched and the researcher. I therefore have contributed in this construction. Far from the narratives representing a 'truth', the interviews provide data which allow an insight into the experiences ('partial' encounters) of people (Silverman 1993).

Although 'the lives, loves and tragedies that fieldwork informants share with a researcher are ultimately data – grist for the ethnographic mill' (Stacey 1991:113), some researchers will often avoid difficult emotional responses, by making them peripheral to their final account (Kleinman and Copp 1993). However in qualitative research there will inevitably be a level of 'emotional entanglement' between the researcher and researched. The emotional entanglement in the interviews with South Asian women was in the context of them disclosing intimate information to me, how I processed it and what I wrote about it. The intention was that with this kind of reflection I was able to provide a deeper analysis of the interviews.

Regarding the disclosure of intimate information, one aspect that I was not prepared for was the stress encountered during interviews and through the process of transcribing, i.e. listening to the women describing their pain. This is usually associated with interviewing traumatised women. Reinharz (1992) identified how researchers relived the pain of the participants and as a result wished to escape or avoid it in future research. In the same way I often found myself in interviews with women who would disclose intimate details of their lives concerning physical and mental abuse from families, death of a parent, being the main carer for a parent or being told to leave the family home. One of the participants cried during the interview but it was not clear why she had. Even towards the end of the interview and after I had asked her she did not disclose the reason except that it was in the context of violence against women. With experience of such encounters with women I realised that emotional entanglement is something which happens in research and it is also difficult to theorise. In fact, during the process of transcribing the interviews I experienced sadness and tears when I listened to their stories - 'I could see the woman's face and hear her exclamations and pain' (Thompson in Reinharz 1992: 35). Reinharz comments on the researchers' reactions:

All of these stressful reactions occur, I believe, because feminist researchers discover there is more pain in the interviewees' lives than they suspected. The interview process gives the researcher an intimate view of this pain and the shock of discovery may eventually force her to confront her own vulnerability (1992:36).

Therefore, it is not surprising that researchers' final accounts relocate emotions to the periphery or they avoid research that requires 'emotional labour'. The next section therefore looks at some reflections on interviews carried out with South Asian women that show 'covering up' on the part of the researcher and the effect of participants 'revealing too much'.

Reflecting on experiences of emotions in research

The politics of 'covering up'

Denying information is not the monopoly of the researched, for example, on some occasions I did not reveal to the participant that I knew people and places they referred to during the interview. It would not have been considered diplomatic to reveal information that may have inhibited a response as it was possible for me to gauge the animosity between the people and organisations within a particular London borough. The negative response given in this interview towards the woman in question was covered up because I had interviewed her previously. In this particular interview with the founder of a Muslim women's organisation, the participant was surprised to discover that I lived in the borough as she had divulged a great deal of information about other women in different organisations and local male politicians' attitudes towards women. Had she known, her response may not have been so forthcoming. In her professional dealings with men early in her career, she described that although Muslim male councillors would often disapprove of her westernised dress sense, she refused to comply with their demands.

I regarded this interview as emotionally satisfying through managing it well and because it allowed an understanding of the political power struggles within the South Asian community from a decade earlier. This participant had given me more information than I had expected and my disclosure at the end of the interview that I lived locally surprised her and may have increased her vulnerability. When women reveal themselves it invites vulnerability especially in the case of this interview where rapport had been established. Despite all good intentions there is always the danger that power will be implicated in the research process especially when

much more is revealed than expected (Cotterill 1992, Finch 1993, Oakley 1995). Revealing too much may be interpreted as exploitative and in this interview in order to establish rapport I had intentionally not revealed information (Stacey 1991). Ethical questions have been raised over rapport and feminist methodology which gives participants a false sense of security resulting in them divulging more information than they perhaps should. Rapport is an aspect of emotional labour and it is debatable whether genuine or false rapport facilitates a good interview with the generation of interview data. It is precisely the 'emotional labour' of the researcher that goes unnoticed (Kleinmann and Copp 1993) and although this constitutes investment in the research, as feminists we have to be mindful of the ethics of research and conduct it responsibly (Skeggs 2001).

An aspect of the interview process mentioned above is related to concealment by the researcher with reference to personal opinions that are in direct conflict with the participant. To reveal conflicting arguments would not have allowed the research to take place. This is discussed in Donna Luff's (1999) work in which she comments on the difficulties of interviewing women whose views are radically different from her own. Although the women, described as 'anti-feminist' (Luff 1999) had welcomed her and she had established a relationship of trust, she states:

[...] in my research the whole area of 'deceit' became quite intense and complex. Listening to views, nodding or saying simple 'ums' or 'I see', to views that you strongly disagree with or, ordinarily, would strive to challenge, may be true to a methodology that aims to listen seriously to the views and experiences of others but can feel personally very difficult and lead to a questioning of the whole research agenda (p. 698)

In my experience of interviewing I had not questioned the research agenda and although I had felt uncomfortable with certain responses from some of the participants it had not prevented me from seeking out viewpoints which differed from mine considerably. However similar to Luff's experience, I found that when I interviewed some women, from religious based organisations, I also nodded or commented with 'right' and 'okay'. This was particularly evident on the question of modesty in connection with dress and attire of Muslim women. The women interviewed positioned themselves as dressing with dignity in comparison to Western women who dress provocatively, often according to them, paying the consequences, i.e. rape or sexual assault, as Mumtaz discussed:

Women invited the men by wearing a mini-skirt and this is why there are so many rapes in society. The women invite them (Mumtaz, Muslim Women's Organisation).

The above response showed that she had identified with my Asianness and was under the impression that I would understand what she meant. Far from identifying with these women on the basis of being South Asian, I had distanced myself from such a position. I left this interview agitated as I had not expected such statements to be made and neither had I responded to them. Had they expected me to agree with them? I felt my feminist principles were compromised and wondered why I had endured it. I had not responded to them and could only justify my lack of response on the basis that I had to take notes in a different language to the one being spoken. I had also made a judgment on the need to acquire data. Therefore, I could not be 'honest' during the interview. I had 'covered up' my own emotional responses to the content of the interview until later. When I left the venue, I felt an enormous weight lifting off my shoulders because during the interview I had felt suffocated. Later I had questioned why I had

felt like this - I was reacting to Mumtaz's attire, she wore a black *chador*⁷ whilst most of the other women did not. I felt 'unfree' for her as I observed her being consumed in the rhetoric of Islam and equality of men and women. However, I needed to build up a relationship of trust which involved being non-judgemental, thus as Luff points out regarding 'rapport' in an interview, it does not necessarily have to be in the classical sense of the word:

I would argue that rapport can be experienced as challenging and provocative in certain situations, and can act as a stimulus to new thoughts about the research process and the emerging issues. In particular, my fieldwork experiences reflect the ways in which the researcher, as much as the participant, draws on her own conflicting, often contradictory aspects of identity as resources in the interaction (1999: 697).

Indeed, rapport may be based on a shared identity, i.e. class or 'race'. Luff's experience in her research indicates aspects that are not usually considered in research, for example, dress. In a similar way, I had preconceptions of orthodox Muslim women before meeting Mumtaz. Retrospectively, I was unable to overcome my own negative reaction to the *chador* or her provocative views. But I had managed to maintain a level of rapport to facilitate the interview. Ann Phoenix captures this type of emotional reaction and its manageability in the following statement:

Since the whole point of interviews is to evoke respondents' accounts rather than hear one's own discourses reflected back, I would argue that this [through non-identification] is usually interesting data rather than upsetting and that it is manageable within the interview context (1994:57).

Interviewing religious women had not been my concern during the research design. However, it had become more apparent during the course of the research that this was an aspect of identity and agency that I would have to consider. Through interviewing Mumtaz and other Muslim women, it can be argued 'that 'rapport' can be experienced as challenging and provocative in certain research situations, and can act as a stimulus to new thoughts about the research process and the emerging issues' (Luff 1999, pp696-697). This is an example of not identifying with a group of women which can result in a 'second distancing', i.e. a kind of emotional distancing of the researcher from the researched, resulting in the inscription of the 'Other' (Holland and Ramazanoglu 1994). In my research I realise that I have, to a certain extent, made these women the 'Other'. It is as a result of identifying more with women who did not use religion as a means to claim equality. Instead their appeal was made on the grounds of emancipatory feminism, although these are not the words the women would use to describe their involvement. Researching across dimensions of difference had however, provided different and richer data (Luff 1999). The emotional difficulties I experienced in the interview with Mumtaz were contradictory to my political and personal beliefs. They compromised and challenged my feminist approach to the research and therefore, I had done 'emotion work' by ignoring my feelings (Hochschild 1983). However, the power of interpretation of her words lay with me and my emotional responses contributed to how the data was interpreted (Wolf 1996, Hubbard *et al.* 2001).

⁷ *Chador* refers to the material covering the head and body of Muslim women.

Emotional responses to 'revealing too much': Sexual abuse and violence

If researchers have experience of challenging projects they sometimes avoid projects in the future that will cause distress. However, we cannot always be assured that this will not occur in other research deemed by ourselves to be 'safe'. Thus when participants divulge information which is intimate and personal *and* not related directly to the research, it can come as a shock. In research I conducted with South Asian women, I was unprepared for two participants who revealed that as young girls they had traumatic experiences of sexual abuse and violence from family members. One of the participants, Samia, had also had been denied education. She conveyed her story to me:

I've attempted suicide a couple of times [...] I didn't talk to him [brother] because he beat me up so much one day. He wanted me to wear a headscarf and I wouldn't wear it outside. "He said, "That's against our religion." I said, "I'm not doing it" (Samia, Asian Women's Centre).

Samia stood up to the abuse from her family, in particular her brother. In doing so she had gained a level of respect from her family as a woman with agency, although her mother justified it by telling her that "your ways are wrong" and that she is "mad" to opt for the freedom to enjoy travel, education and work. The other example is of a student who was self-harming as a result of sexual abuse. The self-harm she inflicted on her body was not in the traditional sense but through (un)conscious attempts, i.e. not caring for herself and not wearing suitable clothing or footwear in the winter that resulted in her contracting pneumonia. Hubbard *et al.* (2001) argue that researchers are affected by data collected in interviews and retrospectively in the interviews with both of the women above, the shock must have registered on my face. After the interview and during transcribing I felt revulsion and anger. In both interviews due to the revelations, I found myself in a situation where 'emotional support for the respondent is called for' (Hubbard *et al.* 2001, p121). I was in a position to offer some immediate therapeutic intervention but the danger of doing this or counselling implies that researchers have the ability to help and to manage highly sensitive information. Retrospectively I would recommend training in preparation for such an emotional encounter. It has been suggested that at the emotional level, some people may benefit from participation in research. For these two women I was also able to guide them to organisations that could help. Hubbard *et al.* (2001) argue that such experiences can impact on the data collected in future research by avoidance of these issues by researchers.

Emotional responses to 'covering up'

The two examples used to illustrate 'covering up' involve sexuality and 'race' as issues and demonstrate that the two participants carried out 'emotion work'. This is known as a 'participant resource' rather than only as an analytical category i.e. an 'analyst resource' (Hochschild, 1983, Frith and Kitzinger 1998). In the two exchanges I had with the two participants 'emotion work' was done on the part of the participant and the researcher. Firstly, sexuality and lesbianism within the South Asian communities is still regarded as a taboo subject. This is something one of the women in my research, Pardeep, took care to relate to me:

I think [pause] I think [pause] I don't have the right words actually, I think the Asian community still needs to have its awareness raised on the issue of domestic violence particularly taboo subjects like sexual abuse, men and women's sexual identity as well. Subjects like that are rarely ever discussed and if there is the slightest hint of a rumour

or you know, anything, it is very quickly brushed under the carpet. Anything that doesn't, anything that Asian people in general do not like to see. That would be a threat on their culture. You know there are so many women who for example, are lesbians but the community won't know about it and they are forced to live secret lives. You know you read about people who sort of marry and they are really unhappy, and they have only done it to please their parents (Pardeep, Asian Women's Project).

From the above statement it is evident that South Asian women take care of their families' emotions through the non-expression and hiding of their true sexuality. There is an internal process of the management of emotions which is expressed within the interview although this may be uncomfortable for them, they realise that they are being provided a space for self-expression within the context of research that looks at the concept of agency. The management of emotions confirms Kawale's (2003) argument that due to constant surveillance of South Asian women, their sexuality is increasingly difficult but essential to maintain. Some lesbian women therefore may lead secret lives as suggested above, however there are some spaces being created where women can express their sexuality more freely (emotional freedom). These spaces are limited and often cater for a younger age group. Sometimes due to the expectation that South Asian women will marry, some participants commented on the doubts raised about their sexuality by the community, if they did not secure a marriage by a certain age. Because of the taboo nature of the subject this participant was hesitant in giving information and she deliberately avoided saying anything that would indicate her sexual orientation. In fact emotional freedom to speak about such matters restricted how she expressed herself.

Conformity, expectations and how the world is structured impose themselves in many ways on women and the expression of sexuality is one. Within a patriarchal society, women are often denied self-expression and it usually involves a level of self-sacrifice for the good of the family. This is not something that is specifically in relation to South Asian women who are subjected to notions of honour and shame but in society where the expression of sexuality is antithesis to conformity and respectability. This is something which I could relate to in the interview above and similarly in the next interview I had an understanding of another taboo subject. Both cases highlight 'internalised oppression' i.e. how society operates to restrict expression of some forms of sexuality and sexual relations with other races (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983).

'Covering up': Race

Before I began the research I had assumed that as a South Asian woman, I would gain unlimited access to South Asian women. The following is an example of my 'Asianness' or being the same 'race' prevented one interviewee from expressing herself on the assumption that 'I would understand' what she meant after the information she gave me about her husband. This example also illustrates that 'race' in the research process continues to be central to the debate of whether those sharing a 'race' can produce 'better or more authentic' data (Edwards 1990, 1993, Bhavnani 1993, Phoenix 1994, Bhopal 1997). 'Authenticity' is problematic because the data produced is more likely to represent the interactions and relationship between the researcher and researched during the time of the interview. Interviews do not give us the full picture and involve positioning within discourses and locations in society and the dynamic between researcher and researched. Narratives given in interviews can also differ according to the 'race' of the interviewer (Phoenix 1994).

In this encounter the understanding between the researcher and researched is based on prejudices within the Asian community about African-Caribbean partners who are not considered to be appropriate choices for both women and men. The question posed to the interviewee is in the context of her talking freely about her relationship with her family and why she had not seen them for a long period of time. It transpired that it had been a painful experience because her parents had not accepted her choice of partner resulting in an acrimonious relationship. This participant's father had died and she had not been invited to attend his funeral, instead she had watched from afar. Her parents thought that she had defiled the honour of the family and as a consequence she had been ostracised. At the point of asking I did not know her partner's heritage. Thus when she disclosed personal information stating that her husband was African-Caribbean, she became reluctant to speak further. It was almost as if she expected a negative reaction from me, perhaps with hindsight it is safe to say that she had conditioned herself to a negative reaction from Asians because it is regarded as a taboo subject. I then talked about stereotypical representations of black men in the media and the South Asian acceptance of such ideas. I noticed that once I had set the wheels in motion, she responded and started to talk. Emotionally in this exchange there was an assumption on her part that I would understand what she meant as soon as she had revealed that she had an African-Caribbean partner resulting in her reluctance to reveal this information for fear of prejudice. Although I had understood exactly what she meant (understanding of Asian prejudice) I did not want to appear to be making an assumption. Therefore I deliberately prompted her to answer and although there was some initial hesitancy, it encouraged an interesting response that included comments on the Hindu understanding of purity/pollution and the caste system. In other words she stopped covering up and said:

They [parents] were prejudiced towards black people and the African-Caribbean community. Anything bad that has happened to them, it would be by the African-Caribbean community. So in that respect the media didn't help, it kind of perpetuated that to a great extent. So [pause] they weren't very happy about it all. I think if he had been white, you know, they may have, kind of [been happy]. It wouldn't have been so [difficult] (Sonya, Youth Project for Asian Girls).

This part of the interview also demonstrates that an assumed commonality such as 'race' and cultural understanding prevented Sonya from expressing her feelings regarding the extent of racial prejudice amongst the South Asian community against African-Caribbean men. It was assumed and put into a questioning statement, "you tell me", i.e. "as an Asian woman you should know and understand the negative reactions of parents." As I admitted earlier also, I did know but wanted her to tell me, to give her explanation or her side of the story. Covering up therefore can be regarded as a method of self-preservation, i.e. not talking about things that make us unhappy or angry or judged by others.

Refusing to answer questions also raises the question of power relations within an interview situation. LaFrance and Henley suggest that 'power is sustained, in part, through the exercise of apparent composure and concealment' (LaFrance and Henley 1994, p293). Thus the participant above, in comparison to those who had been forthcoming in disclosing information, assumed a position of power in the interview. However the research relationship can be shaped through changing imbalances of power, even when there are no observable power differentials. Thus there can be moments when the interviewer can assume a position of 'structural domination' and 'structural subordination' (Bhavnani 1993, p101) even if I accept the power that lies with me to interpret information.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the paper has implied that the role of emotions is important in qualitative research. Emotions are firmly linked to knowledge production and recognition of this is vital to the understanding of people's lives. The paper has focused on research carried out with South Asian women and has brought to attention issues related to rapport and the management of emotions in situations when intimate information is revealed. The paper reminds us that reflexivity is important and that the researcher is implicated in the process. Reflecting on research allows us to look at emotional encounters and to use them in the analysis of data. Yet we have to be mindful of the researcher's subjectivity and interpretation of the data. The paper has highlighted how emotions are managed and the importance of recognising that emotions have epistemological value in research (Hubbard *et al.* 2001, Holland 2007).

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SECTION III: EMOTIONAL PLACES

Chapter 5

MAPPING EMOTIONS IN DIFFERENT SPACES OF RESEARCH AND DISSEMINATION

Susie Weller

Introduction

From feelings or recollections of belonging and/or attachment through to exclusion and/or displacement, our encounters with/in different spaces undoubtedly rouse countless emotions. Within the context of research, participants (or indeed researchers) may discuss with passion or anger, feelings of belonging, exclusion and ambivalence towards different spatial arenas. At the same time, the different spaces in which fieldwork is undertaken or research findings disseminated may prove more or less conducive to the expression and/or acceptance of different emotional responses. From a geographical perspective, emotions are relational between people, but also between people and places. This paper seeks to map emotions *within* and *through* research in order to understand the emotional significance of space.

Emotional Geographies

Adopting a spatial perspective has become increasingly popular in contemporary social research proving fundamental in understanding the social world (Allen *et al.* 1999, Gordon *et al.* 2000). As John F Freie (1998) argues:

Place affects social interaction, just as social interaction leads to the construction of particular types of space (p. 36).

Space and place are not, however, synonymous. Johnston *et al.* (2000) define 'place' as a unit of space in which social relations occur and identities develop. Place may, therefore, be regarded as space to which meaning is attached. The places examined in this paper are not necessarily physical entities 'real' and 'out there' but include a range of manifestations, from real to imagined and from physical to abstract (Weller 2007). Moreover, spaces are not static but dynamic and evolving and so emotions expressed *within* them and *about* them are subject to change over time (Massey 2005, Urry 2005).

Not unlike other social science disciplines, emotions have largely formed an implicit (and in some cases absent) feature of geographical thought (Bondi, Davidson and Smith 2005, Davidson *et al.* 2008). Rather, advocates of objective research frown upon the subjectivity of emotions resulting in what Kay Anderson and Susan Smith (2001) describe as the "*silencing of emotion in both social research and public life*" (p.7). Until recently, emotions only formed an explicit focus of fields such as cultural and feminist geographies (Widdowfield 2000, Anderson and Smith 2001). Alongside a growth in interest in other disciplines, from 2000 onwards geography experienced what is commonly referred to as the 'emotional turn'. Accordingly, emotions were brought to the fore by authors such as Rebekah Widdowfield (2000) who explored the *place* of emotions in academic research. More recently, Joyce Davidson, Liz Bondi and Mick Smith's (2005) edited collection *Emotional Geographies*, argues for a focus on

the spatiality and temporality of emotions, highlighting emotional relationality between people and places. As they suggest:

An emotional geography, then, attempts to understand emotion – experientially and conceptually – in terms of its socio-spatial mediation and articulation rather than as entirely interiorised subjective mental states (p. 3).

Increased attention to the spatiality of emotion and affect were further confounded in Smith, Davidson, Cameron and Bondi's (2009) sequel *Emotion, Place and Culture* and by the introduction of the inter-disciplinary journal *Emotion, Space and Society* in 2008. Today, emotionality has become a more explicit feature of a wide range of geographical studies including fields such as education, health and well-being, economic issues and concerns about exclusion in a variety of spatial contexts such as homes, neighbourhoods, organisations and schools.

Inherently, research is conducted within many spatial arenas. In 2003, John Barker and I examined the geography of methodological issues in research with children (Barker and Weller 2003). In taking a nuanced and reflexive approach to exploring the spatiality of research we constructed a three-fold typology comprising:

- i. *Researched spaces* that form the substantive focus of a study, such as a neighbourhood, community organisation or school.
- ii. *Spaces of research* in which data are collected, for example, a participant's home, classroom or street.
- iii. *Spaces of dissemination* that include platforms such as seminars, policy briefings and academic journals.

Drawing on this three-fold typology, this paper seeks to map emotions *within* and *through* research. Particular emphasis is placed on emotions associated with a sense of belonging or feelings of being 'out of place'. In doing so, the paper explores both the significance of space in shaping emotional relations and the ways in which emotions shape different research spaces.

The Studies

This paper reflects on encounters and journeys experienced during three UK-based studies undertaken with children and teenagers over the past nine years. Uniting these projects is an approach to research that regards children and teenagers as competent social actors worthy of study in their own right (James, Jenks and Prout 1998, Holloway and Valentine 2000).

Study One

*Teenage citizenship geographies*⁸ explored the spatiality of teenagers' participation and/or exclusion within rural areas. Adopting the Isle of Wight, UK as a rural research site, the study charted teenagers' opportunities for meaningful participation in the lives of their school and communities. The views of around 600 teenagers aged between 13 and 16 were gathered using a range of techniques designed to be 'teenage-centred' including questionnaires, diaries, photography, individual and group discussions, a radio phone-in debate and web-based dialogue. Participants were actively involved throughout the research. Project outcomes were disseminated via: a radio phone-in; reports and dialogue with the case-study school; reports

⁸ Completed in 2004, the project comprised my doctoral research funded by Brunel University.

and discussions with local councillors and national policy-makers in the *Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs* and the *Ministry of Justice*; and academic and practitioner-oriented publications.

Study Two

*Locality, school and social capital*⁹ explored the ways in which parents and children utilise social capital during the transition to secondary school. The study was conducted in five locations where access to well-resourced schools was limited: two inner-city areas of London; one inner-suburb in central England; one new town in southern England; and one affluent outer-London suburb. The study adopted a mixed method approach comprising questionnaires, interviews, focus groups and activity sheets to track the experiences of families from a range of backgrounds. Findings from the project were disseminated via: collaborative work with the *Family & Parenting Institute*; meetings with policy-makers in the *Prime Minister's Strategy Unit/Department for Children, Schools and Families*; radio interviews and newspaper articles; and academic and practitioner-oriented publications.

Study Three

*Siblings and friends*¹⁰ is a Qualitative Longitudinal study that seeks to document the meanings, experiences and flows of children's prescribed (sibling) and chosen (friendship) relationships. Exploring the lives of 52 young people, living in a diverse range of circumstances across the UK, the study tracks how such relationships relate to young people's sense of self as their individual and family biographies unfold. Data has been collected in three waves in 2002/03, 2007 and 2009 using in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted either with individual young people or small sibling groups, dependent on participant's preferences. A range of 'children-friendly' research tools were used during the interviews including network maps, timelines, diaries, vignettes and photography. To date, findings from the study have been disseminated via: ongoing dialogue with academic and practitioner audiences; and public-oriented events/exhibitions.

Researched spaces

The connections between space and emotionality are none more so apparent than in discussions surrounding belonging/attachment or exclusion/displacement. Whilst space may not always feature as an explicit element of a research project, mapping the relational nature of emotions between people and places can prove insightful. What is the emotional significance of space in research? How do participants articulate and perceive of an emotional attachment to, or exclusion from, different spaces? Here I draw upon two examples where a 'sense of place' was used as a vehicle *about* and *through* which a range of emotions were expressed.

Neighbourhoods as emotional places

Neighbourhoods and communities, in all their multifarious guises, are important sites *about* and *within* which a diverse range of emotions are expressed. For young people in particular, neighbourhoods increasingly represent spaces in which their behaviour is stereotyped, monitored and controlled (Pain 2003). *Study one*, for example, focused on participants' sense of belonging as a precursor to exploring their lived experiences of citizenship. I spent the first 19 years of my life in the research area and so had my own emotional attachment to the place

⁹ The study was conducted with Professor Irene Bruegel and formed part of the Families & Social Capital ESRC Research Group programme of work based at London South Bank University.

¹⁰ The project is currently being conducted with Prof Rosalind Edwards at London South Bank University. For further information about the ESRC Timescapes programme please see: www.timescapes.leeds.ac.uk

that had ultimately shifted over time. On one level I felt a sense of abandonment as I no longer lived there. The period of time away from the area had reshaped my conceptualisations of the place, as well as distorting my childhood memories. Whilst the majority of participants, enjoyed living in their communities (63%; n=425), only 34 per cent felt a sense of belonging. Many participants (40%) were either undecided or ambivalent.

A sense of belonging was often complex or difficult to define beyond conjecture and could have negative connotations (Relph 1976). Loki's story from *study one* provides a pertinent example. Loki, a white working-class boy, lives on a disadvantaged housing estate in a rural town. He was interviewed in school with two friends. Their narrative was peppered with stories of exclusion from spaces in their neighbourhoods. As 13 year-olds they were deemed too old to attend youth clubs, they faced regular surveillance in shops and discussed the dangers presented by local 'perverts' and drug users:

She [Loki's mother] don't like me up chalk pit way because of the geezer that hangs around there ... You go up there and instead of like walking through he chases yer... and says 'come back' ... He's a pervert. He scares me.

Other residents often instructed Loki and his friends to disperse and their presence and activities were rarely seen as legitimate uses of the space:

... that's [pointing to a photograph] where I play football sometimes but I hit the cars and, by accident, ... then people come out and tell us to 'F' off ... Point to my house and say 'that's where I live' and he goes 'bog off up that way then ... a bit more', and that's it ... They tell you to move ... go down there. So you go down there and then there's more old people who tell yer to 'F' off. They don't say 'please could you go', they say 'Fuck off' .

Whilst Loki surmised that he and his friends were not welcome in many areas of their neighbourhood, they also struggled to stay out of trouble.

For Loki, his neighbourhood comprised a series of overlapping spaces which conjured up a range of emotions including frustration, anger and fear. At the same time, he also revelled in detailing some of the trouble he had been in, expressing joy, pride and nerve. Loki's story represents just one of a number of similar highly poignant descriptions detailing feelings of being 'out of place'. Not only did he articulate his emotional geographies in response to my line of questioning but also different spaces were used as vehicles *about* and *through* which a range of emotions were expressed. As a former resident I was able to identify my own emotional attachments with the places he described. At times my responses were ambivalent. I delighted in his openness and my gut reaction was often to be amused by his escapades but also concerned by some of his encounters. Equally, I was conscious of the setting and my relationship with gatekeepers at the school and so, at times, felt I ought to exhibit a greater degree of disapproval than I felt. This example demonstrates not only the participant's vivid accounts of emotion and space but also my responses to what Liz Bondi (2005) terms '*feeling rules*' or the ways in which we think we ought to feel in different situations.

Emotional encounters in/with schools

Like neighbourhoods, schools are also highly emotional and emotive places for many children and their families (see also Robinson, this volume). *Study two* focused on children's and parents' experiences of secondary school transition, a time widely documented as stressful and challenging with many families struggling to negotiate the jungle that is school choice and

allocation. Parents often expressed feeling betrayed by the government rhetoric of choice, confused by the information they acquired, and beleaguered by not having either the economic resources or time 'to do their best' for their child. Indeed, 59 per cent (n=76) explicitly stated that they felt they did not really have a choice.

Ashia's story from *study two* provides a telling illustration. In 2004, I interviewed Ashia, an East African Muslim woman, about her experiences of finding a secondary school place for her eldest son. She was then living with her husband and three children in a flat on a disadvantaged estate in inner-city London. Ashia, originally from Somalia, did not wish for me to record the interview as she lacked confidence in her language skills. Instead I took notes and in doing so her expressions of emotion were often cast in my own words. Nonetheless, 'place' featured centrally in her narrative. Ashia arrived in the UK in the late 1980s as an asylum seeker, having fled civil war in Africa. She was proud to live in Britain but had faced prejudice and racism within her neighbourhood and sons' school. For Ashia, schools comprised a series of overlapping spaces encompassing a range of emotions including hope and fear, anger and pride apparent at different spatial scales.

At the micro-level, Ashia's life was, at the time, consumed by the secondary school transfer process. When I interviewed her three weeks before the start of the new school year she was still unsure which school her son would attend. She had encouraged him to work hard at primary school then felt despondent to learn that he had not been allocated a place at any of the schools they had chosen. Ashia spoke with fervour of the apprehension, pain, fear and frustration that she had felt throughout the process, as well as, her son's own emotional anguish. Much of her emotion was bound up in hopes and fears about imagined spaces. Ashia desired her son to be educated in a supportive and constructive environment but feared that such a place would not be provided by the school he had been allocated. She appeared distraught when expressing anxieties about the street spaces in which he might engage should he fall in with the 'wrong crowd' at this school. At the heart of her narrative laid concerns and, indeed the anticipation of disappointment, that her son might be negatively stereotyped should he be educated in such a place.

At the macro-level, other educational spaces also appeared discriminatory and exclusive. Ashia spoke of what she saw as racial and class-based prejudice within the education system, drawing on the experiences of acquaintances to argue that the system disadvantaged Black, Muslim boys. At one school appeal, a member of the panel told her that '*she did not have a choice*' to which she described feeling powerless and frustrated. During the course of the interview she doggedly searched for evidence of her emotional struggles, for example, copies of letters she had written to her local MP and details of education conferences she had attended. Ashia not only expressed a raft of emotions about her struggles within a particular policy arena but about the places in which such anguish occurred and I was often at odds to note down and articulate her emotions as meticulously as possible.

Again, emotionality was not an explicit element of *study two*. Nonetheless, inherently spatial notions of belonging and exclusion were foremost in Ashia's narrative. I too felt a wide range of emotions as we engaged in dialogue, not least the guilt that, whilst I could offer an outlet for her thoughts and opinions, in reality I could do very little to help her personally. Simultaneously and perhaps, problematically, I was excited about the contribution the interview would make to our study.

Whilst it is important to note that in both examples the emotions expressed *within* and *about* different places are dynamic, feelings of engrained prejudice and exclusion are likely to be enduring. In both examples, different places were used as vehicles *through* which a range of emotions, primarily relating to feelings of belonging or exclusion, were articulated.

Spaces of research

Spaces are represented and conceived by researchers in different ways (Barker and Weller 2003). The spaces in which fieldwork is conducted shape the emotions expressed *within* and *about* them. In turn, emotional responses to people and places help to (re)define spaces of research and our own positioning within them. How do we construct spaces of research in response to our emotions? How does a researcher's own 'sense of place' mould the research encounter? Here I draw upon three journeys/encounters to reflect on the role space plays in shaping the emotional dynamics inherent in *Spaces of Research*.

The journeys

Fieldwork is analogous to a journey comprising the negotiation of a terrain of complex and sometimes entangled emotions, some of which may be challenging to acknowledge, understand and/or document (Bondi 2005). The first spaces I wish to explore are the journeys to and from fieldwork sites, for they often represent the arenas in which much emotional preparation and reflection occurs. Participants' homes form the key setting for fieldwork in *study three*. The young people involved live in a diverse range of urban, suburban and rural locations spread across the UK. During the research I have, therefore, spent much time travelling. In some instances I have moved in quick succession from deprived households to much more affluent settings, which undoubtedly conjure up a range of powerful emotions. Different emotions ebb and flow throughout the research process, from initial anticipations through to emotional exhaustion.

Prior to the interview, and particularly the first few interviews in any given project, I feel the pressure and stress of preparation; emotions include anxiety and excitement about the places and people I will be visiting; uncertainty as to whether participants will remember the arrangement and in my own abilities; and concerns about acceptance. The journey there is also a time of ambivalence where feelings of excitement and anticipation intermingle with 'spatial angst' or concerns about the practicalities of getting there, on time, with everything I need, safely. I primarily travel by public transport and my recent work has taken me to some very remote and isolated places. A great deal of emotional work is, therefore, conducted prior to reaching the fieldwork site and our past experiences, imaginings and perceptions ultimately shape how we anticipate, respond to and feel about different places. John Urry (2005) talks of places of pleasure and I often experience feelings of excitement and wonder; a geographer enjoying the freedom of mobility and on a personal voyage of discovery not only exploring places but also my own emotional responses *to* and *within* them.

The journey home is the space in which I begin to offload my emotions by writing field notes often struggling to ensure that I record every detail. Once written I am pleased and relieved. Spaces and people at home and in the office provide the opportunity for further offloading and sharing of both joy and anxieties (see Bondi 2005). Furthermore, during the process of analysis I often 'travel back' as recollections of the space reignite memories about interactions and emotions experienced during the encounter.

A family intrusion

My main concerns prior to visiting a participant's home revolve around '*feeling rules*' and more specifically the desire to be accepted, albeit momentarily. Whilst acceptance may be bound up in different aspects of identity, class is perhaps of greatest significance to me. Coming from a working-class background, I have often felt 'out of place' in what I perceive to be middle-class spaces. Nonetheless, over time emotions *within* and *about* spaces shift by virtue of interactions with participants and their families, as the following example from *study three* highlights.

Nikki, a white, middle-class girl, lives in an affluent London suburb. I first met Nikki in 2007 having spent a great deal of time attempting to organise an interview. I persevered and finally managed to speak to her father who appeared domineering. The interview was eventually arranged but on arrival, it was apparent that Nikki was delayed. I was invited in by her brothers, who duly ignored me. Her mother arrived home and proceeded to call Nikki to find out where she was. I felt awkward. The layout and décor of the house reinforced my perceptions of middle-class values with seemingly expensive furnishings, a centrally located kitchen with large dining table and small television room. It was not easy to fully comprehend my emotions but I felt uncomfortable in the setting. I was then invited to sit with Nikki's mother whilst I waited. She was extremely friendly and very engaged in the study. Our discussion proved to be an enjoyable experience and slowly I became more comfortable in the space. This positive encounter helped to shape my feelings towards the space to the extent that I did not feel so 'out of place' by the time Nikki arrived.

Two years later I returned to Nikki's home to interview her again. My second encounter proved very different. I arrived around 10 minutes early and was left waiting at the door for some time until Nikki's father answered. He immediately appeared unfriendly, asserting that he was running late. I offered to return a little later but he begrudgingly invited me in. I felt awkward, unwelcome and instantly 'out of place'. I followed him through to the kitchen whilst I waited for Nikki to appear, constantly willing her to come downstairs to relieve me from the tense situation. She did not appear. Her father proceeded to interrogate me about the research asking aggressively about our findings and seemingly wanting statistical facts. He was disparaging of social research, questioning its purpose. He continued by offering unfounded explanations for our findings. To me, he was pompous and arrogant. I felt angry and wanted to retort but felt helpless to do so in the context of 'his space'.

When Nikki finally arrived she argued with her father about the timing and location of the interview. I was left feeling uncomfortable and impatient. Finally, Nikki and I relocated to the seemingly marginal space of the television room, out of the way of everyday family life. Deciding on a suitable space for the interview appeared problematic even though it was a spacious home. The encounter spoke volumes about the feelings of worth Nikki's father ascribed to the research. My feelings appeared to be of no consequence. The negative encounter shaped the interview experience as I could not help feeling defensive about my presence. Furthermore, the suppression of my own emotions within that space was hard to accept and the negative experience stayed with me for some time.

A family occasion

In Qualitative Longitudinal work, relationships with places and the emotions that flow from those relationships change over time as the unfamiliar becomes known and experienced in new ways (see also Urry 2005). In *study three*, for example, research relationships have been sustained over time to the extent that I have emotional attachments to the spaces of research. For some, my visits appear to constitute something akin to a family occasion in which, rather

than being marginalised, the interview is afforded a prominent place within the household. The following example from *study three* illustrates more positive feelings of belonging and the influence of cultural norms and expectations in spaces of research.

Jasmin, a working-class British Asian girl, lives in social housing in London. I have visited her home on three occasions, each time having received a warm welcome. In a stark contrast to my experience in Nikki's home, my presence has never felt like an intrusion. Whilst the house is not small, Jasmin has a large family. She does not have her own room, but a desk on the landing and a temporary bed in the lounge. Space is, therefore, at a premium but the family have never hesitated in relinquishing what appears to be the heart of the home, the lounge, to the interview. For example, during my second visit Jasmin had been delayed at school. Her mother immediately invited me and showed me through to the lounge. It was a busy space with lots of chairs and desks. We chatted about the research and education more generally. After a while she left the room to make some tea and I was joined firstly by one of Jasmin's brothers and then by her older sister. I talked to her sister for some time and we established much common ground. Jasmin's mother brought me refreshments and a selection of sweets and biscuits. I felt at ease within the setting and overwhelmed by the hospitality.

Once Jasmin arrived we commenced the interview and immediately it felt almost like old friends chatting. In front of us was a small table on which all the sweets, biscuits and refreshments were arranged. During the course of the interview Jasmin's mother entered the room bringing more biscuits and on one occasion to wipe some tea from my saucer. She was attentive but did not intrude nor wish to contribute to the interview. Jasmin was not distracted by her mother's presence and appeared relaxed with what I imagined was common practice. After the interview Jasmin's mother enquired whether I had liked the sweets and biscuits and then duly went off to the kitchen to prepare several boxes of things for me to take home. I felt a range of emotions about the encounter from familiarity and comfort within the setting, to delight and reassurance with the hospitality, but also guilt that a far from affluent family had offered me food to take home.

In this encounter, the interview was afforded a central position both within the home and also within the family's everyday life. Whilst Jasmin and I have different cultural backgrounds, our shared class positioning and, perhaps, expectations of hospitality created a stronger sense of belonging within her household. Whilst seeking to map emotions *within* and *through* research it is important to reflect upon and learn from positive encounters (Bondi 2005). Interestingly, articulating the positive emotions experienced in this place proved more challenging than those apparent in negative encounters.

Spaces of dissemination

Dissemination and knowledge transfer forms an increasingly integral element of the research process. It is, perhaps, in this arena that emotionality is most often concealed as we strive to be 'taken seriously' by practitioners and policy-makers. What of the 'place' of emotions in policy? Are particular spaces more conducive to the dissemination of certain emotions? How might the emotions of participants and, indeed, researchers be meaningfully represented? Here I draw upon three examples to explore emotional encounters within *Spaces of Dissemination*.

Emotional responses in policy

Study one was essentially concerned with teenagers' exclusion and participation. In an attempt to uphold the philosophies of advocacy geographers, who from the late 1960s sought to

become the link between research participants and policy-makers (see Philo 1997), my overriding aim was to gather and promote teenagers' often unheard voices. During the course of the study it became apparent that the majority of participants felt frustrated by negative stereotypes. Few had been afforded opportunities to participate in local decision-making, and where avenues had been provided the methods of consultation used were limited and rarely meaningful. It was, therefore, paramount that my own research did not simply replicate such experiences. Many participants expressed a real desire for their views to be disseminated to local decision-makers. In response I developed several strategies for dissemination including a short report for local councillors, which addressed teenagers' participation, their lack of a sense of belonging and their feelings of frustration at not being listened to, as well as, examples of the positive contributions many had made. The first response I received incited initial laughter, followed by much anger and frustration. Not only had the councillor not spent time considering the report, but he also reinforced all the feelings of mistrust and disengagement that many participants felt. He wrote:

Thank you for your booklet on the activities of the teenager's behaviour, I find it quite informative. Thankfully we, on the Island, are not subject to any prolonged acts of misbehaviour but I suppose we must always be vigilant, ready to take action when and how it occurs.

Whilst such a reply and, indeed, a lack of response from other councillors were undoubtedly frustrating, the experience enabled me to empathise with the feelings of many participants.

Although *study one* was completed in 2004, I continued to seek out opportunities to disseminate the research. In 2008, having stumbled across a report by the *Youth Citizenship Commission*, I summoned up the courage to inform them of my work. I wrote with passion about the study and after some correspondence was invited to meet with a representative at the *Ministry of Justice*. The discussion took place in the café of a municipal building in Westminster; a space that exuded importance and grandeur. I had not expected to feel a sense of belonging but, unlike my previous encounters, the interaction within the space suggested the research was considered worthy and valuable. The dialogue was filled with enthusiasm and zeal in which both parties shared similar motivations and common sympathies. As a result of the discussion I was invited to write a briefing paper for the *Youth Citizenship Commission*; an invitation that simultaneously filled me with pride, excitement and anxiety. Whilst the space and the interaction within that space was undoubtedly more positive, it must be considered within the context of a shifting policy terrain in which there is a growing acceptance and mainstreaming of young people's perspectives. These examples not only demonstrate researchers' and policy-makers' emotional responses to research but also highlight the significance of broader shifts over time.

Participants' emotional responses to feedback

The critical geography movement places emphasis on dissemination practices that are accessible and far reaching (Hoggart *et al.* 2002). Across all three studies I attempted to uphold the importance of relaying outcomes of the research to participants. The longitudinal nature of *study three* in particular has provided the time and space for continual reflection and dialogue. The following example explores participants' emotional responses in the making public of emotions conveyed in the enclosed space of an interview. Florence and Isobel have been involved in *study three* since 2003 when they were interviewed by a colleague. The white,

upper working-class sisters live on a modern housing estate in a village in central England. I visited Florence and Isobel¹¹ in 2007 for their second interview.

Before we started I showed the sisters examples of books and journal articles produced from the previous round of fieldwork. Both were particularly keen to find extracts from their interview and excitedly browsed the publications shouting, “*You can see where we are!*” The girls were particularly intrigued, especially the eldest Florence, that they had been included in the ‘masculinities and femininities’ section of one of the books (Edwards *et al.* 2006). In the first interview they had enjoyed role-play with Isobel, the younger sister, always taking on very feminine roles such as the princess. The analysis, completed by other researchers, centred on the siblings’ gendered identities concerning power and femininity. When their mother and stepfather entered the room they were keen to show their inclusion in the book. Isobel did not seem fazed by what had been written but Florence was really intrigued, excited and reflective. It later transpired that a recent incident at school, where she had acquired the nickname ‘bisexual’, had led Florence to publicly question and explore her identity and particularly her sexuality. Her reaction to their inclusion in the ‘masculinities and femininities’ section of one of the books resulted in the expression of a range of emotions from excitement to seemingly experiencing a sense of reassurance.

On several occasions I felt anxious and awkward about their reactions especially when they questioned how their lives had been interpreted:

What's going on here? [referring to text in published material] ... I don't actually remember that! I'm going on about how Florence is being a bit fat and a bit chubbier ... I don't remember that (Isobel, Florence did remember!)

Denial or rejection of some aspects of their previous accounts was apparent in other interviews, illustrating a temporal dimension to the mapping of emotions. Such feedback occurred within the girls’ home and with family members in the immediate vicinity. The girls were undoubtedly proud and very open about their inclusion in the books and journals. For me, it was invaluable to experience their reactions to the ways their lives and relationships had been interpreted and relayed to them in their own space. Unlike many (public) policy spheres the (private) home, for numerous participants, represents an arena in which reflection over emotionality is deemed acceptable and even appropriate.

The language of emotions

Researchers do not simply make interpretations of participants’ lives but also reconstruct them textually (Hoggart *et al.* 2002). The language used to represent participants’ emotions, particularly with respect to knowledge transfer endeavours, can prove rife with challenges and dilemmas. In *study two*, Ashia did not feel confident enough with her English language skills for her interview to be recorded and her words used verbatim. I, therefore, had to take notes that not only captured the substance of her narrative but also went some way to document her emotional responses, as well as, balancing my own (emotional) participation in the interview. Such an example highlights the challenges faced not only by researchers but also by participants in constructing a language for what may represent intangible and complex emotions.

¹¹ The girls have changed their pseudonym during each wave of fieldwork. I have used their most recent pseudonyms for clarity.

During *study one* I faced a *crisis of representation* (see Murphy and Dingwall 2001). A minority of participants used discriminatory language to articulate their emotions. Academic journals, quite rightly, stipulate the use of non-discriminatory language and such parameters ultimately determine which voices (and the language of emotions used) are afforded space within such publications. Whilst I would not tolerate discriminatory language within everyday conversation with peers or students, the interview setting often poses dilemmas surrounding the suppression of researchers' own emotions and views, particularly when in a participant's own space. At no point did I correct or challenge participants but rather, in line with the epistemological stance of the study, encouraged free communication, even though at times I felt anger, disapproval and awkwardness; emotions that I did not verbalise but are likely to have been conveyed through facial expressions, body language and shifts in questioning. This proved particularly challenging given my feminist approach to research, whereby the interview is seen as more akin to a conversation in which interaction and reciprocity are advocated. In these terms some of my own emotions were, again, silenced during fieldwork (see also Takhar, this volume).

The language of emotions used by some participants is also curbed in dissemination. Whilst homophobic, sexist and racist language has been relatively rare in my experience, the use of 'bad' language has been more common. In much the same way that Sally Holland (2001) noted the often greater credence given to the voice of a 'sensible' child, I was determined not to exclude teenagers' voices on the basis of such language. The aforementioned example from *study one* in which Loki spoke openly about his social exclusion using narrative peppered with emotive language provides a case in point. Some journals have been more willing than others to publish text of this nature, thus raising many questions about the effective representation of emotions in research. Moreover, the inclusion of such language has the potential to alienate key gatekeepers in the research process, and the research may fail to be taken seriously by policy-makers. This has obvious implications for the representation of participants who choose *not* to use 'bad' language (Barker and Weller 2003). It is therefore apparent that different spaces of dissemination often require distinct considerations of the language of emotions.

Kay Anderson and Susan J Smith (2001) argue that in public policy private emotions are rarely considered. As the examples illustrate, different spaces of dissemination enable or prevent different emotional encounters and responses from participants, practitioners, policy-makers and researchers.

Conclusions

This paper has attempted to map emotions in different spaces of research and dissemination. Focusing in particular on a spectrum of emotions relating to senses of belonging and feelings of being 'out of place', the emotional significance of space in different aspects of research has been apparent. Equally, the ways in which we construct and perceive of places in response to our own emotional research encounters has also been evident. Emotional geographies are complex, entangled, perhaps intangible, as well as challenging to identify, articulate and represent. Furthermore, as Doreen Massey (2005) argues, space is continuously under construction, never complete. Emotions expressed *within* and *about* space and place are by virtue endless, evolving and subject to change over time. Whilst we can begin to grapple with emotional geographies *within* and *through* research there remains the challenge of effectively re-presenting participants' emotions in different spaces of policy and practice.

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Chapter 6

THE PLACE OF EMOTIONS: NEGOTIATING CONTEXTS OF HOME, SCHOOL AND STREET IN RESEARCH WITH CHALLENGING PUPILS

Yvonne Robinson

Introduction

We often talk about emotions and academic research in different breaths, as if they can or should somehow be divorced from each other. In geography, this has been characterised by a nervous handling of the personal and the reluctance on the part of geographers to integrate the emotional into the broader framework of geography. However, growing interest in emotions, embodied in talk of the 'emotional turn in geography' (Bondi, Davidson and Smith 2005), suggests that things are beginning to change and that geographers are becoming more sensitive to the way that feelings shape and define geographical research. How we feel clearly matters for academic research. Often though, how we feel may be difficult to represent in the writing of field notes which may be subsequently used for archive or in the writing up of research more generally, which must be within academic discourse.

I want to use this working paper as an opportunity to talk about the personal. More specifically I will be turning to an ethnographic study of pupils with challenging behaviour to consider the emotional contexts of home, school and street encountered as part of field research. My aim is to highlight the range of feelings provoked in negotiating the everyday social spaces of the research, and to consider how an awareness of emotions can inform all stages of the research process.

The research project

The examples in this paper are drawn from a 3 year ESRC funded project undertaken with my colleague, Val Gillies, at London South Bank University. The aim of the study, which is nearing completion, is to investigate the experiences, social interactions and meaning-making of pupils at risk from exclusion. In particular our study seeks to explore how challenging young people make sense of their own actions and the social context that frames it. Disruptive pupil behaviour is a highly emotive subject, fuelled by policy and media concerns about youth disorder, but also by anxieties about rising levels of crime and anti-social behaviour. Behavioural Support Units (BSUs) grew up around the desire to manage and improve behaviour in schools, to provide teaching and support programmes for challenging pupils, and to locate disruptive, emotional behaviour in separate often secluded spaces (Barker *et al.* forthcoming). In formulating the research, we decided to base ourselves within the BSUs of 3 inner-city London schools, two co-educational (Halingbrooke and Headway) and one all girls' school (Meedham Girls). Observational work has been carried out in each of the schools' BSUs as well as group activity work with specific BSU attendees. Interviews with parents have also been conducted in pupils' homes. This paper describes a series of emotional instances occurring in this context of fieldwork. I suggest that the different spaces of research can be seen as emotional landscapes which offer insights for the study of challenging behaviour in particular and the research process more generally.

Emotional displays in school

Schools, like all social spaces, are gendered (Holloway and Valentine 2000), sexed (Valentine 2001), and raced (Banks 2005). Consistent with the production of these spaces, I suggest that schools are also emotional places (Davidson and Milligan 2004, Hemming 2007), spaces of uncertainty and confidence, places of imagination and control, spaces of pantomime and performance. An early entry from my field diary reveals the often fraught and delicate environments of schools by describing a typical incident occurring in a classroom in Halingbrooke:

Today I overheard a teacher demanding to know, 'who was refusing to work'? The classroom, which had previously been filled with laughter and the sound of young people cussing and taunting each other, suddenly became silent. The teacher, whose voice seemed to be getting louder and louder, demanded once more that 'who ever was refusing to work should put their hands up'. I took from the silence that the pupils were well versed in the use of rhetorical questions and that no one had dared to put their hands up. The teacher continued: He said 'If he heard anymore of this, he would call the pupils' parents at home or at work, and he would also call social services if need be'. As I stood outside the classroom, the teacher bolted out of the door, his face all screwed up and weirdly contorted - and in an ordinary way, I began to feel a little nervous myself, in anticipation that the teacher would suddenly demand to know what I was doing in the mainstream school and outside the confines of the BSU. But instead, and as if coming out of the final stages of metamorphosis, the teacher fixed up his face and released his hunched shoulders. Now sensing my presence, the teacher turned to me with a big grin and said: 'It's all a performance!', and disappeared down the corridor.

Incidents like this, which were common place in all our schools, offer an insight into day to day school life and the unregulated feelings often engendered in classrooms. Our time within BSUs revealed similar insights. Designed to address issues around conduct and prevent the need for school exclusion, pupils spend varying amounts of time in BSUs before being re-integrated into mainstream classes. The vast majority of pupils in our research attended BSUs because their behaviour had been deemed too disruptive for the mainstream school context. Needless to say the units were often highly charged and dominated by expressions of staff and pupil emotion. The broader context to this was the commitment, in all three schools, to the ideals of emotional literacy. In this, classroom activities were supportive of an emotional process in which pupils were given the opportunity to express and share their feelings with staff and other pupils. Such activities seemed to be structured by unspoken boundaries which limited the feelings and thoughts pupils were permitted to share. Only certain forms of emotional expression were sanctioned and these were monitored carefully by the teacher. If boundaries were breached, an opportunity would be taken to expose the inappropriateness of a feeling or thought and an effort made to inculcate a more suitable response. For example, an entry in my field diary illustrates how discussion within a circle time activity on the topic of 'My favourite possession' was highly regulated:

Joseph, went first, "My most favourite possession, well I haven't got it yet, but it's gonna be my car which I'm gonna get when I'm sixteen. And I'm gonna drive around with my jack (gun) and prang, prang, prang (i.e., shoot) up the place". Of course, Mr Sterling had much to say about this admission, why it wasn't a sensible thing to say, the fact that a number of pupils in the class had been in trouble with the police and this was not where they should be heading etc. Mr Sterling's words seemed to have effect, if only

momentarily, as Joseph looked a little ashamed as it sunk in that this really wasn't a cool thing to have said. In fact, when he said it, one of the other pupils (namely Zoe the only girl in the class) shook her head disapprovingly.

As the example demonstrates, the focus of the forum was not to explore the feelings driving Joseph's violent fantasy but to reinforce their unacceptable nature. Such strategies are part of a broader school approach to managing disruptive behaviour and highlighting inappropriate disruptive emotional display. In seeking to discipline challenging pupils, the idea is that such strategies will secure improvements in their behaviour as well as their successful re-integration to the mainstream school.

While functioning as a space of discipline for pupils, it was clear that the BSUs also served as a 'safe' space where pupils could interact, work and just 'be' themselves. Furthermore, the representational spaces of BSUs were made to say something about the pupils that used the space. In this way, posters depicting images of elsewhere, of Jamaica, Turkey and other notable places that pupils come from, as well as more 'feel good' posters promoting self empowerment and anger management, line the walls of BSUs. Observational work within BSUs has meant that it has also been possible to see how such imagery generates an atmosphere of understanding about challenging behaviour and how the identities of the pupils themselves are embedded and therefore valued in the concrete spaces of the unit.

In contrast to the welcoming environment of BSUs, the wider spaces of the mainstream schools were uninviting. In this sense, pupils have discussed their perceptions of being 'highly visible' and 'out of place', and under far greater scrutiny from teachers than their mainstream peers as the following exchange, recorded as part of a group activity session with pupils from Headway school reveals:

Marcus: *Someone's phone got robbed yeah, next minute we're the suspects. Half of these people that are here yeah, searched their bags.*

Shane: *There were two year 7s fighting right in front of him [i.e., the head teacher] and it was me, I think I was running somewhere...and he's [i.e., the head's] like, "Oye!"; he saw me from all the way over there and they [i.e., the year 7 pupils] were fighting right in front of him but he was like: "Let me see your report". I showed him my report and he said "You know your time is very limited in this school".*

BSU attendees at Meedham Girls' School similarly communicated feeling highly conspicuous and unable, for instance, to blend in with other pupils in the playground or school cafeteria. The girls also described encountering a range of hostile responses from teachers and there being a sense in which they were seen as the 'BSU girls'. This surveillance of pupils was not merely restricted to the likes of teachers and in fact, BSU attendees were also the subject of unwanted attention from other pupils. In following diary excerpt, I describe an incident occurring just outside the BSU in Halingbrooke, involving a mentor, BSU attendees and pupils from the mainstream school.

Glen [a mentor] and a number of mainstream pupils were waiting outside the BSU. Some of the pupils were there because they had been sent out of their drama class, but also around was Shae, who had been sent out of the BSU. This was easy to imagine: Shae was in a particularly lively mood this morning and seemed to be getting involved in

everyone's conversations. This did not go unnoticed by the other pupils who I overheard asking Glen 'what was wrong with Shae'? I could see Glen was trying to mouth something to the pupils discretely (that is, without Shae seeing) but I couldn't make out what it was. That is until one of the pupils blurted out 'who's got ADHD, who's got ADHD'?! An obviously very embarrassed (but at the same time not sure why he should be embarrassed) Shae replied: "I've got ADHD" and then, as if to illustrate exactly what that means, ran straight out the door, ranting and shouting at the stop of his lungs. I felt really bad for Shae and annoyed with Glen, who by now had realised that he should not have told the pupils and certainly not in the way he'd chosen to do so.

As this example demonstrates, pupils from the BSU are perceived as highly visible and different from other pupils in the school. The mentor's inappropriate handling of the question posed by the mainstream pupil, and the pupils' subsequent 'outing' of Shae leads to Shae's defiant, but frenetic performance of identity. The emotions framing the incident, embarrassment, shame, discomfort, annoyance, are clear and also give a hint of the emotions regularly encountered in the context of conducting our research.

From the outset, we had anticipated encountering a range of difficult feelings during the course of the research, those of our own as well as those of staff, pupils and parents. And it's true that the research has from time to time felt a bit like a Greek tragedy - a performance containing highs and lows as well as some tragic action. Group work with pupils has been grounded in this level of emotionality, with sessions being based around the interests and themes raised by the young people themselves. We were surprised at how quickly we were able to build good relationships with the pupils, despite their reputation as anti-social and 'hard to reach'. Even young people with a record of serious aggression and disorder have conveyed a sense of appreciation and respect for particular teachers, classroom assistants and mentors. This is not to downplay or trivialise their often extremely disruptive behaviour, just to note their ability to establish strong emotional connections.

Though our efforts to spend time with the pupils and get to know them were generally received positively, they were inevitably punctuated with flare ups. We found ourselves breaking up fights, physically preventing dangerous behaviour such as climbing on cupboards and letting off fire extinguishers, and temporarily removing pupils from sessions. The freewheeling emotions generated through encouraging pupils to express themselves have been challenging at times, and while we've often been uplifted or entertained by pupils' stories, we have sometimes been extremely moved by what we have heard. For example, on one occasion a pupil described being so hungry that he caught and killed a pigeon on the way home from school to eat at home that evening. While we struggled to cope with the pupil's admission, we were also struck by his enthusiasm and keenness to explain how he had learnt to catch pigeons and how this had been part of his tribal duties back in his 'home' country. As the pupil whistled and made bird imitation sounds to show us his bird catching technique, he seemed to really come alive and for a brief moment we were able to forget the basis of his original disclosure.

Pupils' accounts of their lives could arouse in us feelings of deep sadness, frustration and anger, and have reinforced that our research has been as much about managing our own feelings as it has been about handling the raw emotions of pupils. Acknowledgement of such emotions and the extent to which they are implicated in the building of academic knowledge, should be a vital part of the research process and its outcomes. The remainder of the paper continues to critically reflect on the personal by exploring the range of emotions experienced in negotiating contexts of home and street.

Placing emotions in home and street

During my initial visits to pupils' homes to interview parents my eyes were opened to the consideration that, despite my wanting to detach myself from the personal, I had developed many preconceived notions about the kinds of places where disadvantaged young people live. My understanding of such places was partially abstracted from media images but also academic writing on youth and public space (Skelton and Valentine 1998, Gelder 2005). While such preconceptions were reinforced through time spent working with young people and through them telling us about the violent and hazardous environments they were forced to navigate on a day to day basis, stereotypical notions of place have been dismantled by way of me having to navigate and walk through these spaces myself.

It follows that negotiating landscapes of street and home has been an emotional experience. Sometimes on the street I have feared for my own personal safety when the location of pupils' homes has taken me into spaces I would normally deem as 'unsafe' for me to be in. I can remember feeling really uneasy when walking through one of the estates to visit a parent. Walking through the estate, I noticed that literally every other window I passed was decked out in the Union Jack or the flag of St George. As a black female researcher in her early thirties, I was well versed in the idea of localism, where negative attachments to place most visible in working class areas, worked to exclude 'others'. My uneasiness was further compounded by the fact that I remembered the pupil whose home I was going to visit had made a racist comment in one of our sessions. On other occasions, my walk to pupils' homes has found me navigating complex and difficult environments, dimly lit under paths and darkened alley ways.

Often then, negative perceptions of place and my preconceptions of where the young people might live were confirmed. That is until actually walking into the pupils' homes. Inside the young peoples' homes were often parents going about their daily lives, trying to raise their families and taking pride in their homes. In interviews with parents I have sometimes been moved to the point of tears as they, frequently being at the end of their tethers, express love and deep concern for their children in a context of feeling powerless to help them. Dawn, mother of 15 year old Marcus, spoke about her fears for her son in the context of his activities on the street in the local area:

It is really horrible and it's is scary. I'm just scared for my son because Marcus is a very, he's not scared of anything, you know. If there's a fight going on, if you wanna fight Marcus, Marcus will fight you....And that's what scares me. That is what scares me about him ... I get a phone call 'Dawn, Marcus is down the road. He's with a group of boys' and I'll be there in two minutes. I'll get in my car and go. Two minutes, I'm there. He doesn't like that because he thinks 'oh what your doing here mum? I can look after myself'. I don't want to bury you. And the kids today do not understand, and they don't care. And I don't want him to go to jail 'because your friend has given you a knife, and without you thinking you've stabbed somebody or something'.

As Dawn communicated her anxieties about Marcus' possible involvement in gangs and the lengths she would go to protect her son, I was rendered silent. I was struck not only by the level of Dawn's devotion but by the rawness of the emotions she displayed. Many other accounts from parents revealed similar levels of feeling. Blossom, whose son at the time of our interview was at risk from being permanently excluded from school, described a period in which she had been very unwell and admitted into hospital for five weeks. As Blossom reflected on the

positive aspects of her son's personality, she told me that her son visited her every day in hospital before going to school to make sure she was okay. He also wrote her note, which said: "Nothing is greater than god and we can overcome anything with god on our side".

I have been quite taken aback by the strength of feeling uncovered in the context of interviewing parents. Parents have described their feelings of loss in dealing with family bereavement or being separated from a loved one who has been deported to another country; they have also described the mental and physical trauma of domestic abuse, feeling powerless to provide adequate support for their special children, and difficult feelings of anger in the face of social injustice. Emotional moments like these are often difficult to represent in the writing up of research but they provide important insights into the wider emotional context of pupils with challenging behaviour. It is important to understand how such feelings shape both the process of doing research and the (geographical) knowledges that are produced.

Concluding comments

In this paper, I have drawn attention to the way emotions are intimately tied to place by showing how the different ethnographic contexts of home, school and street were imbued with emotional meaning. I began the paper by focusing on the everyday social spaces of school. What has become clear is that emotions play an integral role in day to day school life. BSU attendees have experienced a range of emotions including embarrassment, anger, shame, discomfort, and have felt marginalised and conspicuous in mainstream spaces. BSUs can counter the wider exclusionary spaces of schools by offering inclusionary and supportive environments, yet, as I have suggested, also work to manage inappropriate emotional behaviour in ways which may ultimately constrain the thoughts and feelings disruptive pupils are permitted to share. This paper has also stressed the extent to which the theme of emotionality defined the substantive topic and shaped the research process itself. Perceptions of place and the different senses mobilised by being in a particular place strongly affect the researcher's readings or interpretations of a situation. This in turn has implications for the formation of research relationships and the building of geographic knowledge. I hope I have shown how critical reflection on the emotional can contribute greatly to producing a rigorous ethnography.

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SECTION IV: FEAR AND TRAUMA

Chapter 7

FACING FEAR IN THE FIELD: VISUAL ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS IN DRUG-USING LOCATIONS

Daniel Briggs

This paper includes images of drug injecting which some may find disturbing.

Introduction

This paper will discuss the methodological, emotional, practical and ethical dilemmas of using visual ethnographic methods in drug-using locations. It will begin by suggesting that researcher emotions rarely figure in research texts and will introduce the concept of visual ethnographic methods. A brief historical overview of visual ethnography and its application within the field of drug use studies will follow. The following section will outline the aims of a research project funded by the National Treatment Agency (NTA). Some attention will be offered to the practical and ethical issues of the research before discussing the tensions of relationships with participants when repositioning ethnography within 'visual ethnography' to fit the remit of a qualitative research project. I will argue that the methodological, emotional, ethical, and pragmatic characteristics of ethnography become 'magnified' in the process of capturing data. Furthermore, I will suggest that many of the 'everyday' interactional faculties available to ethnographers are difficult to maintain when using such methods in drug-using locations because awareness of those dynamics are 'amplified'. Using both interview and observation data, I will exemplify this through two case study 'scenes' which follow the narrative of "Blood".¹² I will conclude by offering critical reflections on the practicalities of the research method.

Emotions in field research

The focus of qualitative research tends to be on narrative, story-telling and personal reflection as the primary means of generating description about behaviour and context (Bourgois 1995, Lambert and McKeivitt 2002, Rhodes and Fitzgerald 2006). However, there is a growing awareness that undertaking qualitative research can have emotional consequences for the researcher (Dickson-Swift *et al.* 2008). Indeed, Coffey (1999: 1) has noted:

It has become increasingly fashionable for individual researchers to 'personalise' their accounts of fieldwork. But there has been little systematic attempt to reflect upon their experiences and emotions that are reported in any overarching collective or epistemological sense.

Emotional needs or responses do not simply disappear as one declares oneself a 'researcher' (Stoler 2002). Therefore accepting one's emotional disposition and understanding the emotional involvement in the field can be beneficial to how research is written up and designed for future work (Ridge *et al.* 1999). While a few authors point to showing emotion in the field

¹² All names have been anonymised to protect participants' identities.

(Burr 1995, Campbell 2002), and others reflect on the consequences of sensitive fieldwork (Hochschild 1983, Roberts 2007), there is little reflexive attention to emotions in the field, especially using visual ethnographic methods in drug-using locations.

Visual ethnography: New adventures in data collection

Qualitative research tends to rely predominantly on the interview. Indeed, such a method which makes use of 'images' has been considered a neglected source of data in the field (Silverman 1997). What we see, Silverman suggests, is taken for granted and our first thought tends to associate social research with what we can read (text, statistics) or hear (interviews, conversations). In a qualitative research arena, where the dominant feature of data collection is the 'interview', visual ethnographic methods stand in contrast. As Denzin suggests, it allows the, "*voices of the other, the voices of the researcher, [to] come alive and interact with each other*" (Denzin 1997: 33). It "*promises to capture the detail and nuance of social interactions in context more intensely than audio or written description*" (Rhodes and Fitzgerald 2006: 351).

With this method, the symbolic meaning of visual codes, such as bodily appearance/language, gesture, tone of voice, timing of interaction and aspects of the physical environment, are brought to life. Disaggregating these codes involves an element of understanding how meaning is embedded in context-based interaction (Lambert and McKeivitt 2002, Shaw *et al.* 2003, Fitzgerald *et al.* 2004). Thus visual ethnography, as a model for the acquisition of cultural production (and reproduction), corresponds with 'life as it is lived', documenting it as a narrative 'as it happens' and making it available for 'playback and analysis' (Erickson 1992, Plummer 2001). For this reason, new types of visual media have increasingly become incorporated into the work of ethnographers (Denzin 1997, Pink 2006, Rhodes and Fitzgerald 2006).

Visual ethnography's roots lie firmly in anthropology and early forms were considered ahead of their time (Harper 1998, Mason 2005). For example, Mead and Bateson (1942) used the photograph to examine Balinese culture: the 759 photos were not only a visual supplementation to the field notes, but were given methodological significance in their own right. In 1968, Gardner and Heider used film to examine daily cultural practices of families and ritualistic warfare between tribes of Dani in New Guinea. This work has placed the Dani as central to the global perception about 'primitive' populations. Cancian's portrayal of Mexican peasant culture in 1974 showed the Zinacantecos in a more human and less noble perspective than had earlier been documented. Michaels (1985) worked with Australian aborigines in participant-authored TV in an effort to explore the cultural and social impact of this medium among them, and also facilitated their responses to it. This was the first work of its kind.

Visual ethnography has also influenced academics in the sphere of cultural studies: most notably, McRobbie's (1991) research on girl's magazines. Her work identified an ideology of 'romantic individualism' which effectively organised and normalised female teenage cultural expectations through the construction of feelings, emotions and experience as private and individual rather than socially determined. Hall (1993) used visual examples to demonstrate how the media, and especially visual media, has become the key participant in the process of modern 'story telling'. More recently, video has been employed through Holliday's examination of sexual identities through video diaries (2000). Her work elucidated on how identities and meaning were 'performed' in relation to clothing and fashion.

Visual ethnography and drug-use studies

The method has also been used within the field of drug use and has proved critical in the description of health-risk practices associated with drug injecting (Koester 1996, Grund *et al.* 1992, Rhodes *et al.* 2006, Rhodes *et al.* 2007); the environments in which injecting takes place and the social interaction between participants (Koester 1996, Fitzgerald 2002, Taylor *et al.* 2004, Rhodes *et al.* 2006); and how interaction is shaped by social relations, especially by environment (Heath 2004; Pink 2006). Despite a strong North American tradition in ethnographic accounts of drug use (Bourgois 2002, Curtis 2002), there is an absence of truly ethnographic research on injecting drug use in the UK (Taylor 1993). This lack of systematic observational work has been combined with an over emphasis on interview-based methods and a tendency to conflate 'ethnographic' with 'qualitative' interview-based research (see Power *et al.* 1996, Moore 2002). In this 'interview age', which predominates over naturally-occurring visual data (Stimson 1995, Silverman 1997), an ethnographic study of injecting-drug use, with an emphasis on visual data, in the UK is timely. This, in part, forms the rationale for the project and in the next section the background to the study will be contextualised.

Methodology

The rationale for the project

Public health concerns provided the impetus for this study. There was an urgent need for ethnographic research focusing on poly-heroin and -crack use in the UK because of recent and rapid shifts in patterns of poly-drug injection (Hunter *et al.* 1995, Carlson 1998); because of an increased risk of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and Hepatitis C among crack injectors (Clatts *et al.* 2002; Nyamathi *et al.* 2002, McCoy *et al.*, 2004); and as a result of little understanding of the effective treatment of poly-drug use and crack use/injection in the UK. The project was a four-month feasibility study on drug-injecting practices of heroin and crack users funded by the NTA. The main aims were: to explore the feasibility of using video-camera techniques with drug-using populations; identify the key 'risk moments' occurring during injecting; describe the perceptions of risk and strategies of risk management; and to describe the immediate social and physical 'risk environment' and how this affected drug consumption and risk practices. The resulting work produced a report with recommendations and a DVD for drug practitioners about drug-injecting environments.

Location and access

Access was gleaned through existing drug-injecting networks in South London and Bristol and additional participants were recruited through 'snowballing': getting one participant to vouch for another. I had known some participants in South London for five months during other ethnographic research examining crack users and crack houses. Fieldwork was undertaken from December 2004 to April 2005. All my filming sessions were undertaken at locations such as flats, car parks, parks, and crack houses in South London.¹³

¹³ The pilot produced approximately 20 hours of unedited video footage comprising fourteen separate cases, of which ten were selected. The complete edited film was approximately 2h 20 min. Greg Holloway and Steve Jones were also involved in the filming. A total of 55 days were spent in the field between the researchers. Consent forms were signed prior to filming and data was stored in a secure location on a university campus. For more details on the methodology see Rhodes *et al.* (2005) *A visual assessment of injecting drug use*, London: National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse Research Briefing 13.

Many participants were part of a large network of transient drug injectors who had unpredictable lifestyles, and were heavily stigmatised by crime-control dynamics such as recent anti-social behaviour drives, increased crack house raids and begging initiatives. These structural pressures had put immense pressure on drug-using spaces. Therefore the heavily monitored and policed space which they occupied was characterised by mistrust, caution and fear. Their fast-moving lifestyle and structural exclusion meant drug-injecting environments were hidden, risk orientated, and prone to intrusion. This was reflected in their attitudes, perceptions, behaviour, actions, discourses, and also their drug-injecting practices. This means they were under constant pressure to inject drugs which adds to the atmosphere of fear and paranoia. For these reasons, and others, there were a number of ethical and practical dilemmas in undertaking the fieldwork. The next section will examine this in more detail.

Ethical and practical dilemmas

Among the many ethical considerations which the research team endeavoured to account for prior to the fieldwork, there was little which could prepare us for the complexity of the situations in which we were about to participate. Becker (1965: 602) reminds us that with ethnography “*no matter how carefully one plans in advance the research is designed in the course of its execution*”. ‘Dilemmas’ are often thrown up as the researcher confronts the myriad social processes that affect everyday research practice (Robert and Sanders 2005). Thus, ethical considerations were explorative and open-minded, and reflexively revisited throughout and after the fieldwork period. Similarly, this was the approach with our emotions – both during and after fieldwork. This was because a number of features affected the research arena: the environmental conditions; unpredictable socio-situational dynamics; confidentiality; and researcher safety.

To help participants feel more comfortable and to sideline researcher presence, empathy, compassion, and understanding were demonstrated with participants (Jupp *et al.* 2000). While this went some way to securing ‘trust’ in situational contexts, it also meant researchers were ‘playing a part’ in the scene. It must be acknowledged that when using the ethnographic method that the investigator is to some extent involved in the cultural and social projects of those under investigation. Much of Agar’s work is pivotal in placing my experiences in context. According to Agar (1986: 12), “*Such work requires an intensive personal involvement, an abandonment of traditional scientific control, an improvisational style to meet situations not of the researcher’s making*”. Therefore, at times, actions and emotions were ‘moulded’ to the momentum of the scene: to meet the needs of interaction; to ease the way in which it could be captured; and to convey our understanding and empathy.

Several measures were taken to alleviate the danger of working in drug-using locations including wearing thick clothing; contacting the office before and after filming the event with an estimate of the duration of filming; and, when possible, working in pairs. In practice, the latter was disruptive to drug-using dynamics and was done on few occasions. Generally, filming as individual researchers was more advantageous because participants felt less threatened and less ‘on show’. There were, however, risks of participants damaging themselves; scattered paraphernalia; unpredictable social dynamics; the potential for intrusion of the police or members of the public; or interruption from other drug users. Researchers could only acknowledge the possibility that this may happen and be strategic in where they positioned themselves, by considering that ‘anything’ could happen.

While considering the aims of the project, researchers acknowledged that ‘everything could not be captured’ so it was agreed that injecting activity would be the focus for filming and researchers would ‘document’ other events through field notes. There were also practical dilemmas of camcorder use which affected the quantity and quality of the scenes. In some locations, lighting was poor and the camcorder not only facilitated light for drug injection but also acted as a safety guide among paraphernalia-strewn environments. The quality of these scenes was substantially lower and any abrupt movement of the camcorder resulted in a blurred picture until the focus could regain control. Camcorders had viewfinders which allowed researchers to a) use a bigger screen, b) be able to zoom in and out more efficiently, and c) observe other activity in the scene. Spare tapes and batteries were also taken on field days.

There now follows two examples in which the narratives of Blood are followed. I had known Blood for five months prior to filming; he was eighteen years of age at the time of research. Of African origin, he had been in the UK since he was 14 having moved here for a better life, away from the civil war which was tormenting his home country. He had no experience of alcohol or drugs in Africa. He first lived with his aunt in 2000 and joined the Territorial Army (TA). After two years in the TA, aged 16, he left his aunt’s after a dispute. He then moved in with his sister but with no qualifications or work experience, he struggled to find money to pay rent. He managed to put himself into hostel accommodation while awaiting a flat. There he met Flick who introduced him to heroin and crack. When Flick received accommodation, Blood got impatient and left the hostel and, consequently, the housing waiting list. Their history, our relationship and the structural conditions of injecting drugs had important implications for how the scene was to progress.

Blood’s early injecting experiences: Introducing the camcorder into relationships

There was blood on the floor, dilapidated furniture, dusty carpets, and a bloodstained broken sink. The living area was scattered with crack pipes, tissues and loose needles. This was Flick’s crack house. While it was some consolation that I would be filming within a familiar environment, I realised that the scene would be different because I hadn’t seen Blood and Flick for a few weeks. In addition, a police raid the week before, which Blood was perceived to have brought about, added to the tension and pressure of ‘capturing the data’. Flick was nervous at my sudden re-emergence and became cautious of me again:

Flick: *“I tell you what he said, Mohammed said...well it was like you were coming up here practically every day, then we didn’t see you over Christmas, and I bumped into Mohammed and he said ‘you have given him too many pipes’”.*

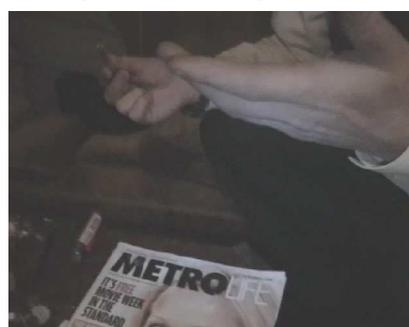
Blood: *“Ah football’s on. What team do you support?”*

Dan: [laughs] *Norwich.*

Flick: [accusingly] *How comes you grew up in Kennington but you support Norwich?*

Dan: [Feeling cautious but holding nerves] *“Well my family moved to Norwich when I was about six, then I came back to live here.”*

Figure 1 – Talking with Flick



Blood returned with a score of two crack and one heroin and came into the living area where he prepared a crack pipe. Knowing that there were needles on the floor and in the sofa, I perched

on a stool which faced the sofa where he was preparing crack pipes. At first, the camcorder focus struggled to adjust to the dim light.

Figure 2 – Sitting over the table preparing crack pipes



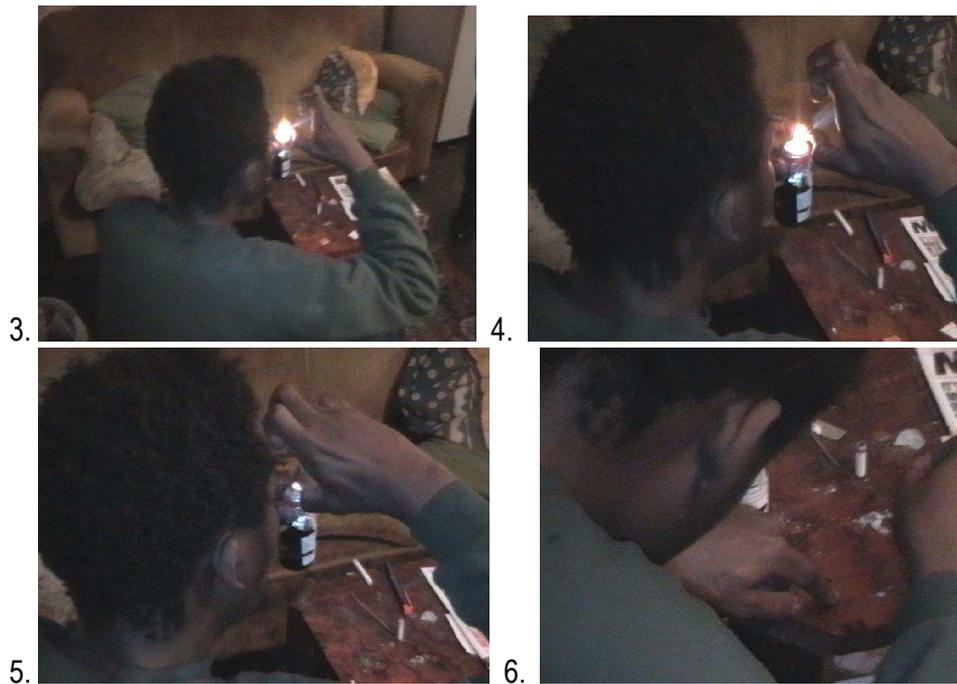
I felt there were limitations to what I could film as they started to prepare crack pipes. The strain on their relationship became evident and I could feel the tension between them. A timely line was used to reduce the social pressure: *“better not send this to’ You’ve Been Framed”*¹⁴ I said. It was received well and some positive interaction began between the two. Nevertheless, I remained nervous but tried not to show this in my disposition to limit affecting the social dynamics.

Blood had two pipes in quick succession. Meanwhile Flick proceeded to smoke one pipe, and, stimulated by the high, he started to move around and talk. This required my attention while maintaining the dialogue with Blood. As Flick moved around, my confidence started to grow with the scene and I experimented with the light features of the camcorder but could not improve the quality. I did, however, develop a comfortable zoom speed so to not throw the image out of sync. As Flick stuttered around the room, moving things from place to place, I felt this gave me licence to also ‘move around’. *“Can I film behind you”* I asked Blood as he was about to put pipe to lips, *“yeah, yeah, whatever”* he responded. These six stills of Blood smoking a crack pipe are taken from 25 seconds of filming, as I moved behind Blood while managing to respond to Flicks incessant talking with intermittent glances at him and periodic retorts:

Figure 3 – 25-second smoking crack sequence with zoom



¹⁴ *“You’ve Been Framed”* is a British television show, where home viewers send in humorous home videos.



Unlike the role of ethnographer, where judgements could be made on personal space and the fluidity of interaction, new judgements were required on ‘what was intrusive’ with the camcorder. Although editing facilities were available, I didn’t want to break the sequence of the event because it would have ruined the aesthetics of the scene. Equally, I didn’t want to capture Blood’s face. Fortunately, the viewfinder enabled me to make eye contact at key moments when interaction appeared to require a response. In these moments, thoughts, actions, speech and movement were clustered together in a split second.

At the end of this sequence, I resumed my place by the table, while still maintaining conversation with Flick. He then came back to the table to prepare heroin ‘on the foil’ while Blood started his painstaking crack-pipe cleaning process. I was feeling brave. Some minutes passed and I asked to hold Blood’s crack pipe. This extended the interplay to physically include me in the scene, thus uniting my voice and body with the machinery of the scene. The result was that Blood started to interact more with the camcorder and offered to show how he unblocked crack pipe residue.

Figure 4 – Holding Blood’s crack pipe



Figure 5 – Blood showing me how the holes of the crack pipe got blocked



Blood loaded the pipe, took it to his lips, exhaled, then spat in the bin. Flick's anxiety and cautiousness of the scene, however, started to become apparent as he was assembling a crack pipe:

Flick: "Does this have sound, Dan?"

Dan: "Yeah".

Flick: "Can it hear what we're saying?"

Dan: "I can take it off if you want..."

Flick: "You got facilities to narrate over it?"

Dan: "Oh, yeah, yeah. Don't worry about that."

After this reassurance, Flick allowed me to film over his shoulder while he smoked a crack pipe. They remained seated while I moved to film Flick but this changed the dynamics of the scene and I suddenly realised I felt uncomfortable standing over both of them. After ten seconds of filming Flick, I returned to the table and focused the camcorder on the table so not exhaust their involvement in the scene. There needed to be a balance between capturing the data and simply following their every move just to capture every detail of practice.

Figure 6 – The kitchen

Blood moved over to the kitchen to prepare a heroin injection. I slowly followed. With several traumatic street-injecting experiences, most of which had been 'skin pops' (jabbing the needle into skin without locating a vein) and 'dirty hits' (a contaminated injection, which results in illness, and can lead to hospitalisation), Blood did not seem confident in preparing heroin. This had not deterred Flick from continuing his discussion from across the room. Then, clearly still unsatisfied about the names on tape, Flick shouted:



Flick: "Dan, does that make any difference to say the names on it and it will record them on tape?"

Dan: "Don't worry about the names. It doesn't matter...ultimately, no one knows who you are..."

Flick: "I didn't even think of it until half way through." [although we talked about this before the scene]

Dan: "Nevermind."

[Pause]

Flick: "Voice experts you mean?"

Dan: "Yeah, they will do all that."

As Blood was preparing the heroin, I noticed some differences in the preparation. "You didn't use swabs the other day," I said. "Yes, I did," Blood responded and looked into my eyes. Mixing visual data collection with the potential for researcher-led examples of irony and contradiction from past events could have led to Blood feeling betrayed on camera. In the ethnographic role, this exchange would have held less significance but we were involved in the visual construction of an event which would be seen by others and would personally reflect on him. I concluded

that this was not the forum for the discussion to continue. Downplaying my observation, I replied, “Oh ok” and he continued.

Figure 7 – Blood clearing the bubbles from the syringe



Rather than leave awkward silences and respecting the fact that Flick had invited me here to capture the scene, I felt obligated to continue to respond to Flick across the room while continue as best I could to capture the ‘cooking-up process’. Unfortunately, because Flick had been smoking crack, he was talking in some detail which required thought in my responses. To my relief, (and pain at holding the camcorder with one hand for 50 minutes), Blood

moved from the kitchen to the living area. This feeling was temporary because as they settled and prepared the tourniquet, Flick started to question our five-month relationship after he cursed himself for forgetting our bogus names:

Flick: *“I fucked it up already didn’t I because the names are on.”*

Dan: *“Don’t worry about it, we can put no sound over it.”*

Flick: [to Blood] *“You were going on saying I was worried...”*

Blood: *“Yeah, well I was feeling like...”*

Flick: *“Because we were going to be filming and the person who told me who you are, I trust Mohammed, so I trust you”*

Dan: *“Again, I do reassure you that...”*

Flick: [to Blood] *“Put the thing on...”*

Flick instructed Blood to tighten his grip as he approached with the needle. Blood grew increasingly nervous at the prospect of Flick’s injecting technique:

Blood: *“Go down again, down.”*

Flick: *“You off?”*

Blood: *“Yeah”*

Flick: *“I have to block it off there or it will go to far”*

Blood: *“Ow, pull it back. Shit”*

Flick: *“It’s in. I want to press down so it goes in...”*

Blood: *“Go on then...It’s still hurting, Flick, shit, nah man.”*

Flick: *“It’s in”*

Blood: *“It’s still hurting – I don’t trust that thing.”*

Some seconds later, Flick found the vein and made the injection, and, to my relief, many of the concerns I was having seemed to deflate. The scene was finally captured after 65 minutes of filming. Such experiences had become the norm for me over the months I had spent with Flick and Blood but because we were exploring new boundaries of data collection, our relationships were tested and this had implications for my emotions in the field. These discourses, field notes and images also give the reader and audience an understanding into the tense atmosphere, the complex nature of their relationships, and some idea of the lived experience of drug injection under these circumstances.

Blood's refuge: Compromising camcorder and researcher space

One month on, Blood was injecting more frequently and had spent more nights on the streets. Between stints at Flick's flat, he sought refuge in the basement of a hospital. In this scene, he was with two of his drug-using associates who agreed to be filmed in this location. We met outside the underground station and I was feeling confident, however, this quickly diminished as we negotiated hospital security staff to gain access to the hospital grounds. Although I had already been to the hospital squat a few times, my awareness of people had multiplied because I was to be filming in this space. In fact, this only amplified feelings of paranoia – who would be there? If, so, how many? What might they say? Now I suddenly felt the gaze of the security guards, the glance of domestic cleaners and the fleeting look from hospital staff. This time, because of the filming, I somehow expected intrusion to be imminent from other drug users.

We came to a set of stairs. Blood (B) settled half way down some stairs behind where I (R) was filming, Tattoo (T) sat collapsed in the corner while Irish (I) started preparing the heroin and crack on a piece of cardboard (see Figure 8 for positions). Had drug users entered the location, the dynamics would have shifted dramatically. I was facing Irish and Tattoo and had my back turned to Blood. I was particularly close to Irish and Tattoo because it seemed like the most natural place to position myself so I could firstly have a view for filming, could see behind me to where Blood was and down towards the locked door, and also importantly, see up the stairs where hospital staff were passing (see Figure 8). Therefore for much of the scene, Blood was not in sight and we only occasionally communicated.

Figure 8 – Position of participants and researcher

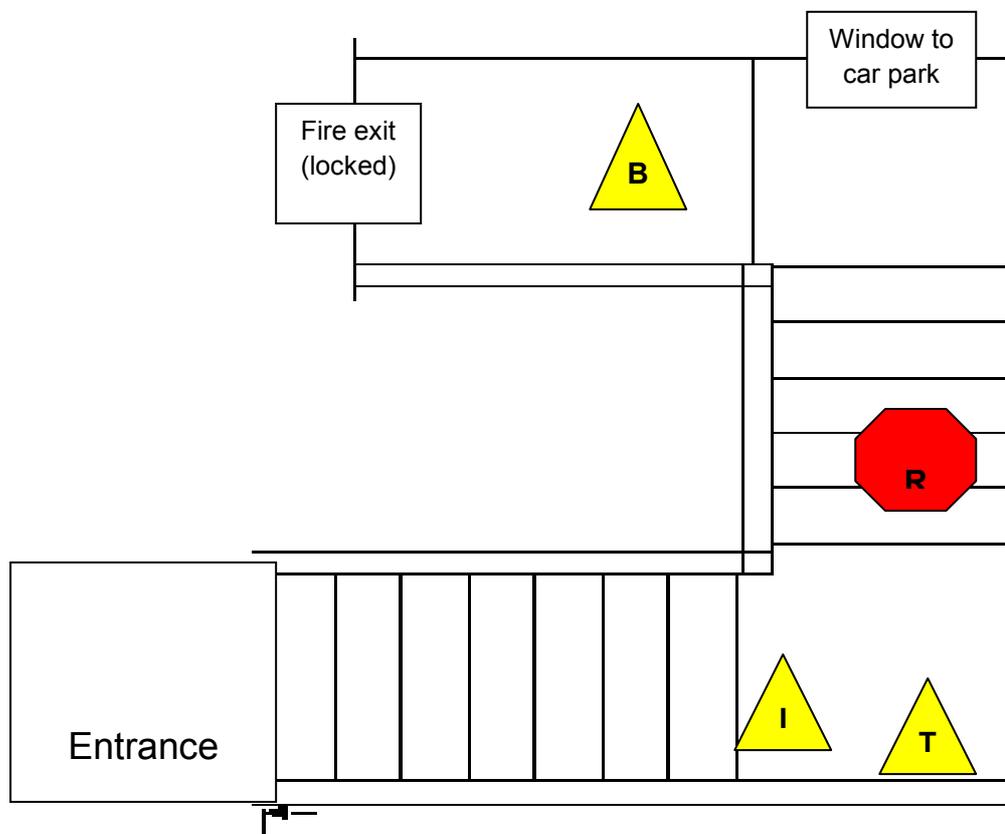


Figure 9 – Views from my position (from left to right): down to my immediate right; above and behind my head; and round to the right, up the stairs.



These spatial tensions, however, compromised my ability to interact within the group. As an ethnographer my physical positioning would have been 'freer' if I would have been able to crouch with my back to the wall thereby projecting my view over the whole scene. I was, however, limited in where I could be because of the camcorder and was also vulnerable to activity behind me down the stairs. Moreover, my role was torn between maintaining an interview discourse and showing empathy in my responses. The lighting was particularly poor which meant sudden movement appeared blurred on the camcorder. Moreover, the constant use of the light used more battery power. This added to my growing anxiety of capturing the scene.

Tattoo took his coat off and the smell was very bad. It wasn't a body odour smell. The stairs were strewn with needles, syringes and crack pipes. Irish had set the cardboard on the first set of stairs which directly faced the windows up ahead where staff could see down. To the left of us, someone had squirted their blood up against the wall. This didn't make me feel very confident. The environment and its possibilities were starting to challenge my mind. [Field notes]

Figure 10 – Irish preparing the heroin and crack



I started to feel as if we were 'on show' to those passing at the top of the stairs. Regulation of potential intrusion rested with me, as Irish and Tattoo seemed undisturbed at the potential - these circumstances were clearly normal for them. Blood started to smoke crack and heroin behind me on the stairs, which prompted me to make regular checks up and down the stairs with the camcorder. While doing this I became distracted from the preparation process and the camcorder strayed away from the scene: "*Hey, watch this*" Irish said reminding me of my duties.

Figure 11 – Irish revealing his lower stomach

In the ethnographic role, the environment and its possibilities appeared familiar yet filming seemed to produce an infinite sequence of potential scenarios. After five-minutes of heroin and crack preparation, in which Irish smuggled an extra rock into his mixture as Tattoo was privy to his chemistry, Irish attempted an injection. After



three attempts in his leg, and to his frustration, the syringe filled with blood.

My anxiety levels increased when he squirted blood over my shoulder: “*Easy man, careful of the stuff,*” I said. After nine attempts in the leg, he stood up in full view of the doorway (Figure 11). We had been filming for 20 minutes. Unsure of whether my actions would be seen, I stood up with him to follow the action and he instructed me to position the camcorder light on to his stomach. I was now also convinced that the light from the camcorder was also making us more visible in the doorway above. After another attempt in the leg, Irish finally moved to his arm where, after several more attempts, he injected in the arm.

The focus of the camcorder immediately shifted to Tattoo, who was sitting with his trousers around his legs. Out of courtesy for the scene, he had waited for 40 minutes while Irish injected himself. His one-handed injection in his upper leg, with a rolled up cigarette in his hand, was effortless and over in a matter of seconds (Figure 12):

Figure 12 – Tattoo injecting in the upper leg

Blood was still going about his business on the stairs and he was fussing over finding a lighter to smoke a pipe. Tattoo was still in vision of the windows at the top. He rolled down the left leg of the trousers to reveal the DVT, gangrene and septicaemia in his left leg. The whole left leg was twice the size of the right. He suddenly spoke with a very deep voice talking about how he had jumped over a fence and cut the back of his leg. Without tetanus, he left it and gangrene set in. He was already injecting in the groin on that side so DVT had developed as well because the “*crack crystallises in your veins*”. [Field notes]



Figure 13 – Tattoo's leg with gangrene and DVT



While Irish put his clothes back on, Tattoo invited me explore areas of his redundant leg (Figure 13). After 48 minutes, the scene was captured and some minutes later, after we had packed away the equipment, three other drug users entered down the stairs to use the same space. I was even more relieved to be leaving this time. The role of ethnographer seemed like a ‘walk in the park’ compared to this form of data collection.

Discussion

Critical reflections

These scenes would not have been possible without an improvisational style on my part (Agar 1986) given that interactive-based fieldwork in alien environments hold uncomfortable prospects for the qualitative researcher (Bourgois 2002, Curtis 2002). The emotional investment was clearly arduous and these reflections serve to complement other research

which has considered emotions in the field (Hochschild 1983, Burr 1995, Campbell 2002, Roberts 2007). While there appears to be no blueprint to deal with emotions in the research field, it is clear from this paper that any guidance must recommend critical reflections on how the researcher, their verbal responses, emotions and body language interplays with the social dynamics of the scene. In the context of drug-using locations, the mere fact that the data was being recorded was enough to stimulate additional emotional commitment and awareness. The introduction of the video camera, however, 'amplified' and opened up new channels of fear and possibility. Not only were there greater fears of safety and intrusion but also an increased fear of the environment as my social faculties were distracted and tensions arose on where to 'direct attention'.

For this, and I am sure other commentators would agree, elements of ethical uncertainty about the involvement of the researcher are undoubtedly part of the process of using visual ethnographic methods in drug-using locations: that, without using the camcorder to interact with the players in the scene; without being flexible and improvisational; without being sensitive in a number of capacities, it would ultimately have jeopardised the scene and produced a visual narrative absent of the cultural and social discourses of their actions. It would also ignore the potential to learn about the meaning crack and heroin users attribute to cultural products and practices in more detail (see Koester 1996, Pink 2006, Rhodes *et al.* 2006).

While it was anticipated that all the potential ethical and practicalities would be clear from the outset, having researched in these environments, my role as ethnographer became blurred, and new navigation was needed through new possibilities of capturing the data. In my ethnographic role, I would have been able to maintain some control over discourse and social interaction but using visual ethnographic methods limited my capacity to apply all my faculties of social interaction (body language, eye contact) and restricted spatial freedom in the research arena. My previous relationships could not be maintained in the same context when using the camcorder as, at times, suspicion, caution and paranoia temporarily underpinned the nature of those relationships. Here, social interaction required constant stability while thinking about where and what to film as well as simultaneously selecting the appropriate moments for research questions and pinpointing the correct moments to respond according to the scene.

In particular, I have outlined how this methodological model crosses conventional data-gathering and role-related boundaries and the presence of the lens only serves to magnify the uncertainties. It also created new parameters for the confidentiality of participants. The level of paranoia is evident in the discourse. Flick made constant reference to "*names on the camcorder*", and despite my assurance, he proceeded to seek reassurance. Indeed, this continued up until the injecting scene when he, despite months of fieldwork, questioned the foundation of our relationship and my identity. It is clear in this scene that the notion of the camcorder, as well as a period of absence in the flat on my part and crack smoking partly prompted these feelings. The perceived interruption of crime-controlling dynamics, however, also contributed to the context of the scene, thus blurring the relationships between researcher and participant.

Conversely, I have highlighted how participants can act normatively, without apparent emotion in the face of being captured, and the concern and paranoia can be more on the part of the researcher than the researched. In example two, my anxieties dominated my thoughts and affected how the scene was captured: the visibility of the location; the perceived greater potential for intrusion; my vulnerable positioning in the research arena; the use of the light which blurred quick movement; and the dilemma of losing battery power because of the

constant use of the light. In both examples, however, my relief to capture both scenes was quite clearly evident.

Equally, there were considerations of whether the scene could be documented within 90 minutes (a standard length of tape). While spare tapes and batteries were available, making a change would have disrupted the momentum and aesthetic of the scenes. In addition, there was little discussion made before the research about zooming or focusing techniques so this had to be learnt in the field or experienced first hand (Adler and Adler 1994). It was most beneficial to hold the camcorder at arms length, using the zoom in to carefully pinpoint precise moments. This gave me more freedom to support other social interaction and make frequent glances at other activity, which informed judgements on whether to capture other events.

As the scenes evolved, however, some experimentation, under the very specific conditions of each scene, permitted some time to prepare the camcorder to capture the scene. This was especially apparent in the first scene in a reasonably stable flat environment as there was time to 'gain confidence' with the camcorder. There was less time, however, in the second scene, when there was a time limit to the injecting event and the pressure to act with events at a quicker pace, while accounting for possible intrusion.

Conclusion

Visual ethnography combines audio recording, observation, human interaction, and emotion to form a visual picture of the event. For example, tape recordings preserve audible data not available in the most carefully annotated transcripts: timbre, the music of a voice, inflection, intonation, grunts and groans, pace, and space convey meanings that can be easily misunderstood but not easily gleaned from written words alone. But by opening another channel of information, visual ethnographic methods preserve more information: the raised eyebrow, the wave of a hand, the blink of an eye might, for instance, convert the apparent meaning of words into their opposite, and convey irony, sarcasm, or contradiction. So, regardless of how we analyse the data or what we do with the visual record, we can use camcorders to record and preserve data of sociological or criminological interest so it can be studied in detail from a range of perspectives.

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Chapter 8

RESEARCHING THE HOLOCAUST AND ITS IMPACT ON THE RESEARCHER

Lisa Pine

Introduction

This particular piece of research developed from the researcher's interests in the social history of the Third Reich (Pine 1997, Pine 2007). But, of course, a study of the Third Reich cannot preclude analysis of aspects of Nazi anti-Semitism and the Holocaust, because this was an intrinsic part of what Nazism was about and the consequences of its government. The researcher used survivor testimonies from Yad Vashem in Jerusalem and the Leo Baeck Institute in New York as important sources of primary evidence. Her subsequent work on 'Gender and the Family' in *The Historiography of the Holocaust* discussed the academic literature in the field of Holocaust Studies (Pine, 2004). The perspectives of gender, children and the family are now established within the broader field of Holocaust studies, adding an entirely new dimension to the historiography and to our understanding of the subject as a whole.

Researching the Holocaust

Research on 'Gender and Holocaust Victims' involves an analysis of the differing experiences of women and men as Jewish victims of National Socialism in relation to gender and constructions of gendered identity using selective evidence drawn from memoir accounts and testimonies (Pine 2008). In particular, the research discusses the structural sources of gender differences in relation to the Holocaust, addressing the pre-war roles of Jewish men and women, their differing responses to Nazi persecution and their survival strategies. It is very important to try to understand the enormity of the Holocaust and looking at survivor memoirs and testimonies helps us to do this. Whilst memoirs and testimonies are invaluable historical sources, nevertheless, we must acknowledge the fact that survivors, male or female, are unable to bear witness to the suffering of the six million Jewish victims of Nazi policy who did not survive. As Primo Levi has written: 'we, the survivors, are not the true witnesses' (Levi 1988, p83-4). This point is underlined in the memoir of Henry Wermuth, who wrote: 'How could I even attempt to describe all the wretched misery, the death cries of millions of innocent people? ... Being in these camps does not, contrary to the assumptions of many, imply that I knew all and everything there was to know about them' (Wermuth 1993, p1; p39). Each and every aspect was different or experienced differently or remembered differently. In the end, the examples that historians and other scholars use from memoirs and testimonies are illustrative, not comprehensive.

Having been trained as a historian, feeling my way around a more subjective approach does not come naturally to me. My academic discipline has trained me to analyse documents and other sources, and to approach them from a standpoint of objectivity. So in a sense, I am stepping out of my usual frame of reference in terms of my approach to this research paper, because I am coming to this from an angle that I do not usually take.

Gender and the Holocaust

How did Jewish men and women differ in their responses to Nazi persecution? Although Jewish families suffered as collective units during the Nazi regime, an analysis of testimonies demonstrates significant differences in the impact of Nazi persecution upon men, women and children. Much of the testimony given by men initially focussed upon feelings of being betrayed by their fatherland, and then described the pressures placed upon them trying to support their families under increasingly difficult financial circumstances. In contrast to that of men, the testimony of women often highlighted their unselfish feelings of concern and worry for the welfare of their children and husbands, particularly at times of physical separation, for example when men were taken to concentration camps or children sent to safe havens abroad. Women also described in more detail the impact of the physical destruction of their homes. Both men and women recounted feelings of despair at the worsening situation and its impact upon their children, in particular. Men who lost their businesses and jobs, their financial security and their ability to provide for their families, experienced a loss in their status and dignity. They were unable to fulfil their traditional roles and became demoralised and depressed. Women faced an increased physical workload and psychological duty to compensate for this. They did not blame the men, but tried to help them. Women in both the Warsaw and the Lodz ghettos, for example, found ways of feeding their families, displaying great courage and resourcefulness. They traded, bartered and smuggled, many tried to keep their children alive by giving them their own inadequate food rations. At the Skarzysko labour camp, women continued to pay attention to personal hygiene and to mend their clothes, whilst many men stopped washing and shaving (Karay 1998, p305).

The testimony of survivors and the early stages of research on the subject suggest that ways of resisting and surviving were, in fact, differentiated by gender. Women had different work, roles, relationships and capacities for survival than men. The memoir of Charlotte Delbo, a survivor of Auschwitz attests to this, suggesting that even though women's conditions at Auschwitz were worse than those of men, women survived better. She attributed this mainly to the ways in which women bonded with each other (Delbo 1995).

Research on survival patterns inside the camps after 1939 also points to specific behaviour patterns among women in their responses to Nazi persecution. Sybil Milton has argued that 'women's specific forms of survival included doing housework as a kind of practical therapy... bonding and networks, religious or political convictions, the use of inconspicuousness, and possibly even sex' (Milton 1984, p311). Milton suggested women's traditional gender roles 'aided them under conditions of extreme duress'. Women exchanged recipes. They cleaned in order to prevent the spread of disease, but also as a way of gaining control over their own space. The memoirs of female survivors have indicated that women responded to overcrowded and unsanitary conditions 'with cleaning, scrubbing and orderliness' (Schramm 1977, p88). Some women also tried to repair their clothes and groom themselves, despite the unavailability of water for washing. Milton argues that 'this imitation of normal behaviour was a conscious and rational attempt at survival' (Milton 1984, p315). One survivor recalls her friend who 'everyday... placed a doily on the board from which she ate her little piece of bread or her tin can of soup' (Choko *et al.* 2005, p49). Hence, trying to engage in familiar routines was a distinctively female response to conditions in the Nazi camps.

Women at Theresienstadt tried to make their bunks feel like a 'surrogate home', by covering the mattress with a coloured sheet and hanging photographs on the wall. At Auschwitz too,

'only a day after their arrival, the differences between the sexes was already striking. The men, in hats with cut-off brims and in trousers and coats thrown to them at random – too short, too long, too wide, too small – looked like sad black storks. The women, also wearing garments that had been distributed to them at random, had somehow succeeded in only twenty-four hours in adjusting them to their bodies and sewing up the holes, using needles made out of wooden splinters and threads pulled out of the one blanket located to them.' (Bondy 1998, p323). Isabelle Choko describes feeling a need to hide her shaved head and tie up her dress which was much too large: 'I ripped a piece from the bottom of my pale pink shirt to tie around my head like a turban and another piece to roll into a belt. My mother helped me since I had no mirror.... Other women, too, were trying to "look human" again' (Choko et al. 2005, pp48-9).

At Auschwitz, women used different strategies to cope with their situation, such as the formation of surrogate families and 'camp sister' relationships, the sharing of recipes, cooking methods and memories of Sabbath and Festival meals. Homemaking skills were adapted into lifesaving skills, such as sewing a pocket in which to save bread. Goldenberg argues that the sharing of recipes and cooking tips was significant psychologically because it indicated a commitment to the future (Goldenberg 1998, p335). Kitchen memories also reminded women of their former position in their families and communities and reaffirmed their own sense of value. They reminded them of their strengths as nurturers, homemakers and cooks. Furthermore, by describing the food they once cooked to another inmate, 'they shared a familiar experience and connected to another person' (Goldenberg 2003, p171).

Social bonding, in groups of two or more, helped women to keep up their struggle to survive. Such surrogate families cared for each other, sustaining life. Goldenberg points to the adoption of 'camp sisters' as improving women's chances of survival. The formation of surrogate families was described by one survivor as 'the best way to survive' (Goldenberg 1998, p337). Lucie Adelsberger describes her camp family in which her 'daughters' provided her with clothing and food whenever they could. She states that members of such families often put their own lives at risk and that even for those who did not survive 'the friendship and love of a camp family eased the horror of their miserable end' (Adelsberger 1996, pp98-100). This kind of bonding was not exclusive to women, but appears to have been much more prevalent among women. This view is also expressed by S. Lillian Kremer (1999, p18), who notes that 'in male Holocaust writing, interdependence is exceptional rather than commonplace'. In addition, Judith Baumel has demonstrated that gender socialisation contributed greatly to the degree and manner of mutual assistance in the ghettos and the camps. Her case study of Plaszow shows that women's mutual help was motivated both by gender and by religious belief. Women followed the teachings of both the Torah and the Talmud to the effect that Jews are responsible for each other's lives (Baumel 1995, p65).

Women were able to 'transform their habits of raising children or their experience of nurturing into the care of the non-biological family' (Ringelheim 1985, p747). As isolation and the separation of families was deliberately imposed by the camp system, the creation of new 'families' helped inmates by giving them a system of mutual support and a source of material and psychological strength in place of their real families (Pine 1997, p178). For example, in the twins' block at Auschwitz, where children were separated from their parents, older girls became 'mothers' to smaller children (Dwork 1991, p230). However, it was not only women who participated in mutual support frameworks in the camps. Richard Glazar, who survived the Treblinka death camp, recalls: 'My friend Karl Unger and I were always together. We were like twins. In this camp you could not survive an hour without someone supporting you and vice versa. We knew that we were destined to die... No individual could make it alone.... I and my

friend Karl survived because we supported each other constantly. We divided absolutely everything, even a small piece of bread' (cited in Tec 2003, pp188-9). Of course, on their own, such support groups in themselves could not avert death, but where they existed, they were in some ways life promoting, as Glazar's experience shows.

Women had to deal with a number of problems that affected them specifically in relation to their gender. One of these was the SS camp ritual of shaving the heads of inmates on their arrival. Having their heads shaved was a much more traumatic experience for women than for men. Whilst all prisoners were deeply shamed by this measure, for women this was a blow to their feelings of femininity and to their sexual identity. Isabelle Choko relates that, at Auschwitz, 'at the precise moment my head was shaved, I ceased to exist as a human being' (Choko 2005, p42). Menstruation was a biological problem that women had to face in the concentration camps. When they menstruated, they had no way of stopping the flow of blood, which was extremely difficult and humiliating. Over time, in the abnormal circumstances in which they were living, women stopped menstruating. Whilst this removed the problem of humiliation, the cessation of menstruation created other problems for many women. Some felt a loss of their identity as women, whilst others feared they would never be able to have children. These biological and psychological issues relating to menstruation and its cessation were specifically faced by female inmates as women (Tec 2003, p168-9).

Primo Levi commented on the aim of the Nazi camps to 'reduce us to beasts'. But, he said, 'we must not become beasts; that even in this place one can survive, and therefore one must want to survive, to tell the story, to bear witness; and that to survive we must force ourselves to save at least the skeleton, the scaffolding, the form of civilisation' (Levi 2000, p58). His desire to survive was thus underpinned by his desire to bear witness. It is impossible to put the entire picture together, but each of these fragments tells us something that enhances our understanding of the whole. In the final analysis, all Jews were equally destined for death, but there were differences on the road to that destination for men and women.

The death marches at the end of the war have been described in many memoirs and testimonies as driving Holocaust victims to increasingly desperate behaviour. Hans Winterfeld recalled the death march from Auschwitz: 'Normally, one could talk to the other prisoners, but when food was distributed, they began to look and act like lunatics: their eyes stared rigidly at the ladle or at the arm that distributed the bread. When they received their ration, they constantly watched other prisoners to check that nobody had been given more. It was completely irrelevant what kind of person it was: uneducated and primitive, or educated and intellectually superior. I often wondered how cultivated human beings could behave like animals' (cited in Kolinsky 2004, p27).

Women and men were affected differently by the conditions imposed upon them during the Holocaust and they coped in different ways. From early on, physical attacks on men established responses on the part of the Jewish community. Fear for men because of their traditional garb and especially circumcision, meant that it was women who went out. Men were humiliated and unable to fulfil their traditional roles as providers and protectors. This was an attack upon their dignity and their identity. Women filled the void left by this change. They tried to adjust and adapt to changing circumstances. They fulfilled their families' needs through their resourcefulness, making homes and cleaning to control their space, later on establishing ersatz families. There was a need for cooperation in extreme circumstances and self-preservation through mutual help, which has been highlighted in many survivor testimonies. However, women had to face additional, distinctive problems relating to their gender and sexuality -

specifically, issues relating to having their heads shaved, menstruating, pregnancy and childbirth. Jewish newborn infants, babies and young children were completely expendable to the Nazi rulers, and so too were their mothers. Women's and men's experiences of the Holocaust were not the same, but as Goldenberg has described aptly, they were 'different horrors' within the 'same hell' (Goldenberg 1990, pp150-66).

Impacts on the researcher

What is the impact of researching this 'hell' upon the researcher? It is quite harrowing work to read survivor memoirs and testimonies, especially when a researcher is going about the business of reading many of them over a sustained amount of time and becomes immersed in the world of the concentration camps and the death camps. The mind of the researcher is in the ghettos and the camps. The researcher becomes dissociated from the normal, the routine and the everyday. Researching a subject like this certainly puts the researcher's routine concerns and problems into context – such things seem very trivial by comparison. It is a very difficult experience to read the details of victims' experiences. Accounts of the barbarity and the brutality can be very graphic and disturbing. Furthermore, accounts of betrayal and unkindness on the part of fellow victims towards each other - even former friends or family members - make unpleasant reading. What are the lessons to be learnt about human nature? The human capacity for cruelty, violence and betrayal is still shocking, however many accounts are read. The same is true, of course, for testimonies and eyewitness accounts of events in the Rwandan genocide of 1994 or other genocidal moments. Or for researchers working in the field of childhood abuse and interviewing victims; or the victims of rape. Psychologists have worked on the subject of the impact on researchers of interviewing the survivors of 9/11 (Silke 2004, pp. 518-21).

There has been very little written about emotions and stress on researchers of traumatic subjects. Yet, exposure to the traumatic experiences of victims can have a profound impact upon the researcher. The researcher can be quite deeply psychologically affected by the research. This is known as vicarious traumatization: the psychological process of becoming traumatised as a consequence of empathetic engagement with survivors and their traumatic stories. The symptomology of vicarious traumatization is similar to that of post-traumatic stress disorder, as described by Hafkenschied and Lerias and Byrne (Hafkenschied 2005; Lerias and Byrne 2003). For example, through recurrent recollections of survivors' stories, the researcher becomes emotionally involved in the subject. A researcher in the process of reading such accounts over a period of days or weeks in order to research a traumatic subject has nightmares associated with the subject.

How can researchers cope with vicarious traumatization? Psychologists Saakvitne and Pearlman have outlined three coping mechanisms: awareness, balance and connection (1996). Awareness involves identifying the personal signs of vicarious traumatization, employing methods of self-care and involvement in self-nurturing activities. For example, the practice of yoga. This holistic form of exercise and relaxation, which includes meditation, is very helpful, as it empties the mind of troubling thoughts. Balance emphasises establishing healthy boundaries between work and life, engaging in activities that are separate from work and distant from pain. Demarcation of boundaries can be quite difficult, particularly when researchers write at home, rather than in an office environment. Sometimes it can be hard to make a separation, therefore, between work and home life. This usually takes a concerted and conscious decision. Connection with others is used as an antidote to the isolation experienced by vicarious traumatization. Peer groups can facilitate connections with colleagues. Indeed, Lerias and

Byrne have found that social support has enhanced readjustment by reducing distress experienced by exposure to vicarious trauma. Interaction with colleagues researching on similar or related types of subjects can be very helpful.

Conclusions

In conclusion, as little has been written about the experience of vicarious trauma in researchers, coping strategies for researchers of trauma are often not considered. Vicarious trauma in researchers needs to be discussed and studied more widely so that coping mechanisms are implemented, both at the individual and organisational level, in research investigations into traumatic subjects. It would be useful to be able to discuss the emotional impact of traumatic research with other colleagues engaged in researching the same area or similar types of topics. A sense of shared experience could help researchers feel less isolated by and in their work.

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