



GAUGING THE MOOD: OPERATIONALIZING EMOTION THROUGH ETHNOGRAPHY

BRIAN CALLAN

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY

Abstract

This paper illustrates a case-study of an ethnographic research project in order to highlight the processes by which the project thesis emerged, the form of the knowledge on which it is based, and the relationship of that form of knowledge to other disciplines. The case-study is part of a larger ethnographic research project based in Jerusalem area between 2011 and 2012 on the sociality and affective processes involved in what is normally referred to as pro-Palestinian activism. Current anthropological concerns and debates are highlighted and discussed by following the ethnographic process from the development of a proposal based on a perceptual model of affect (Damasio, 2000), to 'learning with people' to the fieldwork phase (Ingold, 2008), to the analysis, interpretation of findings through the intersubjective faculty of judging (Arendt, 1968). Specifically, this work aims to clarify the form and validity of knowledge produced by an ethnographic engagement with phenomenological theory. Using an extract from field notes, from which I developed a thesis on role of weirdness in dissent, I highlight the intersubjective and emergent nature of knowledge production in ethnography through the development of trusting relationships with participants and the generative tensions and possibilities of being a researcher while also becoming an activist. In this process, the knowledge produced represents neither the participants' nor the researcher's understandings of the world but resides in what Arendt called a 'third position'. Such a method of knowledge production should also be apposite to interdisciplinary exchanges within academia.

Keywords

ethnography, phenomenology, affect, Israel, Palestine

Corresponding author:

Brian Callan, Email: b.callan@lboro.ac.uk

The author acknowledge the financial support for the researcher presented in this manuscript from Loughborough University

The author wishes to thank Dr. Daniel Chernilo and Prof. Sarah Pink for their supervision and assistance in developing the ideas presented here.

This paper takes the form of a case-study of an ethnographic research project in order to highlight the processes by which the project thesis emerged, the form of the knowledge on which it is based, and the relationship of that form of knowledge to other disciplines. The case in question is my ethnographic research project based in Jerusalem area between 2011 and 2012 on the sociality and affective processes involved in what is normally referred to as pro-Palestinian activism. In this article, I attempt to clarify how the production of ethnographic knowledge is an emergent and negotiated process in which the researcher is engaged in an attempt to understand the worlds of others through what Hannah Arendt (1968) defined as the intersubjective faculty of judging. The main argument of this paper follows a roughly chronological path beginning with the formulation of a research proposal, followed by an outline of the fieldwork phase and its methods, and concluding with a discussion of how the engagement of ethnography and phenomenology produces knowledge. The thesis which situates the discussion and which I draw from the knowledge produced in the field deals with Weiridness and its relations to the emergence of dissent. I do not develop this thesis here but rather focus on certain methodological issues which lead to its formulation. Beginning with the pre-fieldwork phase I outline how the object and field of analysis were qualified and also the issue of objectivity and ‘engaged ethnography’. This is followed by a discussion of the fieldwork period, the ‘sampling’ of research participants, the role of qualitative interviews and their segue into participant observation.

The final section on analysis and interpretation ties together various elements of phenomenological theory, from affect as a form of perception, to the importance of sensual experiences of the world, to Arendt’s faculty of judging and Ingold’s (2008) notion of ethnography as learning with people. In this section, I suggest that the knowledge produced through ethnography represents neither the participants’ nor the researcher’s understandings of the world but resides in what Arendt called a ‘third position’. This third position is a product of the researcher-participant attempt to know each other through the ethnographic experience. I conclude that the intersubjective ethnographic experience reflects how people ordinarily attempt to understand each in a complex and ambiguous world. In sketching out this case I aim to facilitate a greater understanding of the phenomenological-anthropological approach, so that in turn new forms of knowledge may emerge and be negotiating upon through interdisciplinary exchanges across the social sciences, in ongoing iterations of knowledge of this third position.

It must be noted that the theoretical framework and methodologies presented here are not a definitive account of anthropology and ethnography, for there is none. Nor were the methods of knowledge production fixed in situ by the time I entered the field. As I learned with my participants how to be and feel as an activist might feel and be, I was also learning what it was to be and feel like an ethnographer. As such the practical and theoretical issues in this paper are a product of pre-fieldwork research, the practice of ethnography and the practice of dissent, and the attempt to situate my post-fieldwork feelings and analyses in contemporary social science. The principal theoretical perspectives I took to the field, constructivism and phenomenology, were roughly honed and uncertain in my understanding and my research question uncomfortably loose.

More than anything, I was interested in and guided by a desire to bring the work of cognitive neurologist Antonio Damasio and philosopher Jesse J. Prinz into the field. These authors propose a bio-deterministic model of affect as a form of perception and the essence of morality which infers an underlying universalism to core human processes as described in the theory section (Damasio, 2000; Prinz, 2004; 2007). Only a few decades ago this foregrounding of the individual and bio-determinism in an anthropological project could have exposed the scholar to the ‘denigrating label of being ethnocentric’ (Marranci, 2006, p. 158). However this work

is a contribution to the growing body of work engaging with cognitive models adopted from elsewhere to approach topics such as the subjective interior, sensuality and embodiment in social experience (Ingold, 2000, 2010; Irving, 2011; Marranci, 2006; Pink, 2011).

As is common in anthropology today the aim of the research project was not to describe what a dissenter is or why they do what they do, but to understand the processes of how they understand and make sense of their complex world. To situate this effort I will begin with a short extract from my field notes, which has been edited for readability. This represents an ordinary day's work but one whose experience brought me to theorise about the role of weirdness in embodied judgments and emergence of dissent. Pseudonyms have been used for individuals named in the text.

Field Note Extract: 20/1/2012 Al Ma'asara, Occupied Palestinian Territories

I'm in a car with Rose an Israeli activist, her father Edward and a young woman I've never met before. We drive East around the large settlement of Efrata just south of Jerusalem and get to the entrance of the Palestinian village of Al Ma'asara. Israeli soldiers are gathered around a few jeeps but no one stops us going in, even though I'm told later the entire village is a 'closed military zone'. Though Rose has been here before she's not sure of the way to the meeting point. Sightings of a few non-Palestinians walking down the road shows us we're going in the right direction. We get to the meeting and there are about ten others here already. One car load of Israelis have locked their keys in the car and I strike up a conversation about their dilemma with Edo, the car's owner. People are looking for Rose by name. A man with Dubai plates on his car has been waiting and we follow him to a building. I see a man popping his head out from a window, shouting 'Rose' and hiding again. Another man, Fesal greets her and is delighted to meet her father. She seems well loved here.

...

The protest march begins. It's about twenty people, not moving as a block, but in small groups of two-to-five strung-out over fifty metres. Rose explains to us what will happen; 'We'll march down to the road and the army will stop us and we'll shout at them for a bit'. Edward is cold in the weak winter sun and loves complaining in jest; 'I came here to drill a few holes in the wall!', he jokes referring to his daughter's apartment as opposed to the separation barrier. I exchange background stories with him as we walk unhindered back to the entrance of the village. He's been on marches before in his youth and tells me a few stories about Greenpeace but this is his first time at a demo in the West Bank. We come to the line of soldiers waiting for us at the entrance of the village. They are ready and blocking the width of the road in a line, riot shields held-up in close formation. They stop the march from passing the junction. Across the road is a Palestinian quarry works and not much else. It is the local men who are at the front of the march. 'We want to get to our land' shouts Fesal in English, 'Yallah Shebab!'. There's a push forward against the line of soldiers and some scuffles. I see Gill, an Israeli, standing behind the soldiers. There's obviously some lee-way in who can move beyond the line. The scuffles stop and chanting ensues for a while.

...

Time passes with no movement, and then a call goes up from Fesal to move and the protest group jogs down the road to our right. I'm perplexed by the sight of the soldiers running and stumbling across the clay field just below the road we're on. They must get to

the other entrance to the village before we do. The protest is not a threatening or violent group but the soldiers are determined that we don't reach the main road. It's farcical to watch but they make it to the junction before us and stop us again. Not that the protest leaders seemed to be in much of a hurry to get there before them. Edward can't understand either. 'It's very formulaic, where's the wall supposed to be going up?'. Rose doesn't know. 'This is just bizarre, Kafkaesque', he keeps saying. I ask Rose what will happen or why they won't let us go to the other side of the road. 'I don't know. Let's ask them [the soldiers]', she says but gets no answer. After about an hour Fesal calls the protest to a halt we turn and stroll back into the village. Soldiers fire few gas canisters our way, a few stones are thrown towards them.

...

I meet Edo back at his car. They'd called a lock-smith who came from one of the near-by settlements and got them in, much to their amusement. 'I'm surprised they [the soldiers] let him in to the village', laughed Edo. After tea at Fesal's we drive back out of the village, past the soldiers who are still hanging around the entrance. They pay us no heed.

On Hypothetical Concerns: Prep and Prejudice in the Proposal

To situate my anthropological project in relation to other disciplines we may use Robson's three-fold classification model of purpose, strategy and form of research. The purpose of enquiry in my research is exploratory, rather than descriptive or explanatory. This is not to say that I neither describe nor attempt to explain forms of protest in Israel and Palestine and indeed any project may be concerned with more than one purpose. However, from the outset the purpose was to explore the possible manifestations and role of the perceptual dimension of affect in field without presupposing what those might be. In contrast to the research strategies of survey or experiment commonly employed in sociology and psychology respectively, anthropological strategy is normally a case study. Finally the form of enquiry is qualitative and aims to be 'naturalistic'. Naturalistic enquiry, for Robson, is one in which researcher and participants are the primary data-gathering instruments in a real-world setting, where tacit or intuitive knowledge is legitimate, the research design and analysis is emergent, inductive and negotiated and final interpretation is ideographic and tentative (Robson, 1993).

It is rare then for an ethnographic project to begin with a hypothesis, collect data and analyze the results with a view to supporting or refuting the initial statement and it is almost unheard of for a project to generate testable hypotheses (Dilley, 2010). This alone runs contrary to the classic approach of Fisherian designs which have been so influential in the positivist tradition (Fisher & Wishart, 1930; Fisher, 1951). There are though sound reasons for using this trajectory to produce knowledge. Firstly and in relation to purpose, an exploration of the how of social processes is difficult to frame as a testable proposition and the great strength of exploratory research is to loosen the constraints of prior supposition so as to seek new insights. Secondly as a strategy, ethnographic fieldwork occurs in a relatively uncontrollable social situation and one is almost certain to encounter an unexpected social reality. In my particular case, the large and vibrant Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity protests I wished to join in East Jerusalem were called to a halt the week before I began fieldwork. Finally, given the naturalistic form of ethnography where intersubjective relationships are fostered over the course of a year or more and in which the researcher learns with participants, the emergent, inductive and negotiated nature of knowledge produced is itself a product of the social relations in which it is embedded (Ingold, 2008). I shall return to Ingold's notion and elaborate on it further in the later sections however, lest it seem that the ethnographer

just walks naked into the wilderness to see what happens, I shall give a little detail on my own pre-field preparations. Like most any research project one must answer what, where and why questions before asking how.

What is to be Explored?

The general object of analysis are emotional processes relating to social movements. Affect is a complex, contested and incompletely understood phenomenon. Communicating on concerns of mind, body, consciousness, cognition, affect and reason are all the more difficult since they are loosely defined and differently understood in various disciplines and everyday conversation. In anthropology and sociology affect has been variously seen as a mode of interpersonal exploitation and status acquisition, a culturally shaped code of behaviour, and a mechanism to reinforce identity control or produce collectivity. Underlying these various perspectives are often competing assumptions on the nature of humans and society. There are maximizing individuals and cultural constructs, analyses which proceed from the subjective or from social structure, deterministic experimenters and irreducible phenomenologists (Briggs, 1970; Durkheim, 1912; Gould, 2009; Hochschild, 1979, 1983; Lawler, 2001; Levy, 1973, 1984; Rodgers, 2010; Stewart, 2007).

In this project I utilize a model of affect drawn largely from the works of Antonio Damasio and Jesse Prinz, in which affect is a form of perception, a 'wordless knowledge' and an 'embodied judgment' on our relationship to the environment as we encounter it (Damasio, 2000; Prinz, 2004, 2007). Situating this model within the social sciences literature I do not attempt a totalizing definition of affect, rather I hoped to observe manifestations of its perceptual quality. Though this formal operationalizing of the object of analysis may seem reasonable to many disciplines, I concede that skilled phenomenologists may find such an abstraction to be reductive (see Stewart, 2007).

Qualifying the Research Field

The specific social field in which I wished to examine affect centred around pro-Palestinian activism in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories of the West Bank. Having found a both a spectrum of activities and historical continuity of peaceful resistance in the literature review, I chose to not to limit the project to a particular organization, form of practice, or particular hoped for outcomes with regard to the Israel-Palestine conflict. Furthermore having been trained in the transnational dimension of contemporary sociality I did not limit myself to working solely with Israelis or Palestinians. I allowed the research population to include anyone who was, or had been in some way involved in agitating against the discourse that violence and coercion are legitimate means to maintain, promote or resolve the regional conflict. I refer to this categorical imposition as transnational dissent. To understand the contours of dissent one must also relate to the discourses and practices which it opposes. Because the Israeli state and society are major producers and consumers of those discourses and the primary agents of their practice, it was also important to include – when possible – the beliefs and practices of non-dissenting and consenting agents. Given my personal and familial connections in Israel, the local dimension of the transnational field would be weighed towards the Jewish-Israeli population. Moreover, at the time of proposal I had an interest in the tension between Israeli activists and their relationships to friends and family members who did not share their views. As such the research field was to include Palestinian, Israeli and international activists as well as 'non-aligned' Israelis. To actually conduct fieldwork I moved to a predominantly Jewish neighbourhood in West Jerusalem along with my Jewish-Israeli wife and two children, a research context which would have been radically

different had I lived as a single man in Ramallah.

Why this Field?

There are other major methodological concerns of ethnography, particularly relating to the reliability, validity and interpretation of data and findings which I will be discuss in the later sections. However, before moving on I wish to address the general issue of objectivity in research and the notion of ‘engaged ethnography’. The idea that academic research should be applicable to wider society is not unique to anthropology. Acknowledging the overt political orientation of social protest Bevington and Dixon have called for the production of ‘movement relevant theory’ to go beyond the traditional concerns of social movement theory, such as the deconstruction of framing processes or the identification of political opportunity (Bevington & Dixon, 2005; see also Goodwin & Jasper, 1999).

The debate revolves around whether this is best achieved through the discovery of objective truth or through some system of ethics. Probably the best known early proponent of the ethical school is Nancy Scheper-Hughes who proposed a ‘militant anthropology’ based on values (D’Andre, 1995; Scheper-Hughes, 1995). Again, there is no consensus on this position but given the tradition of working with sub-altern populations, and its history of radical critique many anthropologists are open to her call to ‘speak truth to power’. The anthropology of social movements in particular has seen an increasing number of researchers taking an engaged stance, through cultural critiques of power structures, participation in protest actions and in some cases organizational input in struggles (see Graeber, 2004; Hale, 2006, 2008; Juris & Khasnabish, 2013; Juris, 2008; Postill, 2013).

However, movement relevant theory requires a critical examination of the field not a fawning retelling of its ideals. Despite this sympathetic bias and the effort at full immersion in ethnography, the awareness of the researcher-participant power relationship is not just crucial, it’s also hard to forget. Between the related practices of participation and observation exists an ‘unnatural’ tension which the critically trained researcher should find productive. Despite the difficulties in inherent in such an overtly aligned approach, which I myself subscribe to, its potential lies in ‘research outcomes that are both troubled and deeply enriched by direct engagement with the complexities of political contention’ (Hale, 2006, p. 96).

Into the Field: Learning with People

Sampling and Participation

I began fieldwork on a sunny Friday afternoon in September 2011 by walking down to Kikar Paris in Jerusalem city centre where the Women in Black have been holding a weekly silent vigil against the occupation for over twenty-five years. I handed out project information sheets and introduced myself to as many people as I could, a task facilitated by my friendship with one of the women who is my wife’s aunt. Later that day I joined the weekly Sheikh Jarrah protest in East Jerusalem, handing out more info sheets, hoping to find some key participants and wondering what else I should be doing. There is no formal method for finding participants, as Philippe Bourgois would say ‘you just go up and ask people’ (Bourgois & Schonberg, 2009). Conventionally ethnography was long associated with immersion in a single-site and a rich ethnography could have be drawn by living in a contested neighbourhood like Sheikh Jarrah. However, I choose to follow Jean-Klein’s (2003) ‘lateral approach’ in which my participants would lead me through the field. In this way I travelled the city and beyond to locations and events throughout Israel and the occupied territories. This then is a multi-sited ethnography (Marcus, 1995) not for the sake of

comparison but because it reflects the ordinary movements of my participants.

From tentative introductions my 'sample' of participants snowballed and the project names just over sixty individuals in my contacts list. The dissenting population are highly heterogeneous along significant indexable axes of analysis: age, background, occupation, degree of radicalism, dissent practice, history or intensity of participation, political ideology, cultural background etc. The duration and intensity of participation in the research project is also highly diverse. People come and go and over the course of a year the frequency and depth of participation depended on both my interpersonal relationships with participants and the ordinary constraints of busy lives. Eleven of the participants became 'key' intimate acquaintances who invested considerable time and reflection in the development of the research. Others are familiar with the project and have contributed directly in an informal and intermittent fashion. Some are once off encounters or people who I see regularly but have never exchanged more than a polite greeting. It must be stressed that the aggregation of research participants cannot be said to be 'representative' in the sense of the term used in quantitative or experimental approaches. It is too small and too heterogeneous to be of statistical significance. However, the purpose of the research is not to represent a group but to understand the role of certain processes in the sociality of dissent. More importantly participants cannot be said to have been sampled, in the sense that they are objectively selected from a given population. The inverse is closer to reality, for it is the participants that invite the ethnographer into their world of practice.

Beginnings with Interviews

Given the decades long conflict the Israeli-Palestinian the field of dissent is familiar with journalists, researchers, fact-finding missions and other visitors eager to understand the situation. The first consequence of this is an expectation that research is about interviews. The qualitative interview, which has many well developed forms, is commonly seen as a key method for unearthing qualitative meaning (Kvale, 1996; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Seidman, 2006; Skinner, 2013). I too prepared an interview schedule to guide me through my early encounters. However, I soon discovered a second consequence of long running dissent was that the various causes, possible solutions and means of resolution have been heard, extensively discussed and contested by most every dissenter. As such, although I never felt deceived or manipulated, respondents' answers often seemed automatic or worse - offered with 'here-we-go-again' fatigue. This sense that I was asking hackneyed questions was reinforced when in casual conversation about my work at a demo, Guri an experienced dissenter told me:

'I thought about putting a list of standard answers on the [movements] web-site. So people could find the answers they wanted. They could click on - 'How does your family feel about this?' - and find what they wanted.

This particular question was a key concern of mine which I had brought into the field. I decided not to ask him about his family. An ethnographer has time to hone her interview skills and learn the situational complexities, so schedules and delivery can be revised in an effort to bypass the automatic answer and draw out the deeper process of the subjective and the social. However, sit-down interviews became a form of introduction, a way of fulfilling participants' expectations and their genuine desire to provide useful information. More fruitful discussions came later in situations not defined or organized by the researcher but which emerged through the development of trusting relationships. Perhaps more than anything it is through trust that the validity of ethnographic data is based.

Such unscheduled interactions occurred not only during tactical or instrumental dissenting practices such as protests, vigils, meetings and events but also in the social movements and moments attendant to such performances; travelling to and from cars and buses and unofficial debriefings in homes, bars, and cafés. There were also a high degree of sociality not defined by the ‘struggle’ itself but by the friendships and obligations defined by the relationships of the dissenters and I realised that social gatherings, birthdays and dinner parties are also part of the performance of dissent. These exchanges known as ‘informal conversation interviews’ (Skinner, 2013) were controlled by me only to the extent that topics specific to the research interests might be raised by individuals curious as to what I was doing.

In the field of dissent, where debate, reflection and critique are part and parcel of everyday social practice, such informal conversations are routine and such conversations became very much a part of my participant observation. Indeed, this is part of the intersubjective process of knowledge production in dissent where discourses and frames informally disseminate and evolve. There was always a flow of new-comers through the field, particularly international activists and ‘fact-finding missions’ and of course other researchers. Quite often I was not the only person with much to learn about the unfolding stagnation of the situation. As time went by I found that I was being asked for my own appraisals and interpretations, particularly by the international visitors. I was becoming knowledgeable, experienced, trusted and engaged.

The significance of these exchanges and the insights offered by participants lay not only in their routine nature but also in that the issues raised were often dimensions I had not previously considered. At the protest in al-Maasara sketched out above, Edward openly expressed his confusion, not particularly to me but as much to himself, to his daughter, perhaps even to the world-out-of-kilter around him. His daughter, normally certain and knowledgeable was unable to offer a coherent answer and suggested ironically that the soldiers might know. Though I too had been confused by the protest performance I had been tempering my confusion with the detachment of a professional observer. As an ethnographer I was expecting and expected to find the field strange and so failed to consider that confusion stemming from strangeness might also be an affective perception that my participants were also engaging with. I was thinking like a researcher, not an activist. Once I had been enlightened by Edward I could turn to my participants and admit that I found it all a bit weird and so began a process of discussions with dissent practitioners and affect theory through which a thesis on weirdness emerged. This was no longer interviewing but participation, observation and the building of theory by a researcher with his fellow activists. Such is the kind of knowledge that emerges through the lived-experience of being in the field and building genuine and ordinarily complex relationships with ordinarily complex people, the methodology known as participant observation.

Participant Observation

The building of trust, the lines of enquiry and the discovery of insights described above came not from coding the texts of recordings transcribed but through participant observation. For Ingold (2008) this is not a tactic to learn from or about people, it is the practice of learning with people. I joined protesters in whatever activities I could, whenever I was invited. This included holding signs, joining chants, standing in the heat in the rain, receiving abuse, facing soldiers, running from tear gas and stun grenades, being variously unsure, tired, afraid, bored or depressed by the practice of dissent. I also provided transport to and from events when possible – a coveted instrumental resource with which I affected the field and an excellent environment to have and to hear informal conversation.

While protests and prayer groups are what Victor Turner (1988) called ‘performances’

of dissent, they are intermittent and short lived expressions of the social practice. For most of the week people are not engaged with such activities and there is no dissenting village or neighbourhood in which the researcher can live and observe and participate in their daily rituals. Dissenters are dispersed within a society that is at best apathetic to their distress and at worst hostile to the point of aggressive vitriol. Part of my participant observation included simply living in West Jerusalem, going to the shops, to Hebrew lessons, reading the paper, collecting kids from nursery, taking the bus to town or going to celebrate family occasions. This too formed part of my understanding and empathy with being a dissenter in this particular place.

One need not be at a protest to be actively engaged in dissent. My participants all spoke of seeing the occupation and inequality everywhere, in the Jerusalem Arabs on construction sites and pumping your gas most of whom are non-citizens of the state they are born in, in the apparent ease with which others ignore the situation. These are the ordinary affects of dissent (Stewart, 2007). Far from the rush and fear and retching at protests in the occupied territories, lives are also shaped the mundane encounters and experiences that would be almost banal were they not so difficult for the dissenter to accommodate. I too began to feel the isolation they spoke of within the flowing crowd of the city where almost no one feels the same way as you - at least that's how it feels. I learnt that my tongue is sometimes best held and felt the relief and small joy when I met a fellow dissenter on the street. For a moment the griminess of the situation is freely expressed and laughed off before we'd continue on your separate ways. Aside from protests I found myself at dinner-parties, birthdays, evenings out, holiday celebrations, sharing foods, laughs, backgrounds, reflections and hopes. These rich social exchanges are the stuff of ordinary sociality and are also always fully sensual experiences. The parching heat of the sun, the coolness of a breeze, the smell of jasmine or tear-gas, the steepness of the hill or the sharpness of a cold beer were all elements in which we participated together and reflected upon, part of what Pink calls the 'emplaced sociality' which shape our moods, emotions (Amit & Rapport, 2002; Ingold, 2010; Pink, 2008; Stewart, 2007; Wallman, 1998).

Such experiences were recorded and reflected upon in field-notes and daily journals. Being an exercise of memory and interpretation refracted through my personal and professional perspectives, such notes are an imperfect analogue of the actual. However, there is nothing unnatural about partial recall or skewed interpretations. This is how people commonly learn and become. More than any other method it is through participant observation of even the banal and the tedious that I came to feel and to be recognized as belonging to the research field. This is the long process of learning with that leads to a certain kind of knowing, one which for research purposes is relatively close to the ordinary and fluid (un)certainly of living. The purpose is to become intimately and experientially acquainted with being and becoming part of the field of inquiry (Anna Odland Portisch, 2010; Venkatesan, 2010).

No one is born a dissenter, one goes through a process whose outcome is not predetermined. You don't have to be a researcher to go through the process of learning with other people. Observing and engaging with other practitioners is how people become dissenters or indeed how one becomes a researcher. What Herzfeld refers to as the fostering of 'cultural intimacy' is not just the art of national hegemony and local practice, it is also the aim of the ethnographer. It is not just learning what to say in local etiquette but also how react emotionally to certain situations and how to legitimately express or even manipulate those emotions. It is about becoming to belong to the research field (Herzfeld, 1997). The participant observer merely does it with an awareness of her academic worldview. This leads one to reflect upon dissenting practices in particular ways and the daily routine of needing to observe, remember, record, to write journal reflections and supervision reports maintains a critical tension between participation and observation. So it was

that I didn't just enjoy and take comfort from the sociality produced by dissent, I also began to develop a thesis around its social processes and the role emotions play in shaping those processes.

Analysis and Interpretation of Phenomena

On the Emotions of Others

Clearly the analysis of the field began with issues and experiences that emerged in that field and the process of interpretation is not separate from but overlaps with data collection. Repeated encounters with a phenomenon begin to shape the line of inquiry. The researcher begins to discuss these issues with participants; do they see or experience these phenomena in the same way as the researcher? Do they feel these are significant experiences and what meaning do they assign to them? In this process the inputs of key participants are – well, key. I openly began to discuss my thoughts on weirdness both with individuals and in groups where my intuition that this was a significant dimension of affect was reinforced. As one participant said to me, 'If you're looking into weirdness you've come to the right place'. There comes a point though when data-collection comes to an end and sense must be made of the fieldwork experience. Can such a dataset, drawn from multiple sources, methods and in a way produced by multiple authors who are emotionally engaged with the issues at hand, be consistently and objectively analyzed, interpreted and represented? Furthermore, can such an embodied and subjective experience as affect be recorded, analyzed, interpreted and represented with academic rigour and validity?

We can say that much of the dataset are textual accounts; transcripts of interviews, journal entries, electronic communications and activist publications. There is also detailed information on participants' backgrounds and occupations, their various relationships to other people in the field and the frequency and locations of their observed or reported interactions. Emotions may also be included in this same dataset, for they too are expressed in various ways and can be observed and textually recorded. Firstly, though experienced in the body and mind, people may also express their feelings verbally as well. Ricoeur (1991) has pointed to the 'derivative character of linguistic meaning' and for Heidegger such textuality not only represents but 'discloses' Dasein, the process of being and becoming in the world (Csordas, 1994, p. 42). To say 'this is bizarre' or 'it's just not normal' are genuine linguistic components of affective phenomenon. This is not to say that people do not hide or manipulate the affective meanings they 'report' to the researcher (Hochschild, 1979). The long-term nature of ethnography fosters an intimacy which helps overcome this in two ways. Firstly, there is interpersonal intimacy with key participants from which genuinely reflective and honest exchanges proceed. Secondly, there is cultural intimacy where one learns the 'emotional culture' of the field, its affective structures as it were. As the researcher participates in being and becoming a dissenter she also feels the uncertainty, fear, anger, dejection, and fatigue. She laughs at the ironic in-jokes and looks forward to seeing her fellow dissenters next weekend. I came to understand the subtleties of the field and see the unvoiced emotions in the faces and bodies of people I knew. And they of course also read me. With a growing intimacy comes the capacity to empathize. This is true for any social field, indeed any sense of belonging or attempt to understand another necessitates the attempt to empathise (Arendt, 1968; Berezin, 2001; Hollan, 2008).

Analytic Deconstruction and Phenomenology

So emotions of others whether overtly expressed, clearly seen or half-sensed can be recorded and transcribed by the researcher with a relatively high degree of reliability. This is eminently

codifiable qualitative data and there are numerous systematic methods which can be applied to its analysis and anthropology has various intricate and robust variations of semiotics, discourse, network or situational analyses and other modes of analysis which may be applied to data-sets. However, as Ingold (2008) points out analyzing data and representing processes in such a fashion would be to deconstruct the whole in order to rebuild an abstraction and Jackson argues that the subjugation of 'the bodily to the semantic is empirically untenable' (Jackson, 1989, p. 122). My own analysis of being a dissenter builds upon the works of these and other authors in the phenomenological tradition on the basis that it is both eminently suited to the study of affect, the ethnographic methods described above and because it reflects the way in which meaning is made and remade through intersubjective experiences, in what Arendt (1968) referred to as the 'third position'. It is not the discursive products of meaning but the processes of learning with people which lies at the heart of phenomenological anthropology and ethnographic methods.

In the first instance Damasio and Prinz's models of affect as a form of perception are inherently phenomenological in that they establish the embodied essence of human consciousness emerging from the 'organism-environment' relationship and the awareness or feeling that the organism has been changed by that relationship. This is the notion of intentionality in which consciousness is always directed towards particular objects of experience. Affect is an unavoidable consequence of that unavoidable relationship and part of the process by which we experience and make sense of the world so that 'even our most basic experiences of physical objects both evidence and entail a foundational intersubjectivity' (Desjarlais & Jason Throop, 2011, p. 91). The 'wordless knowledge' gained in the immediacy of experience in Damasio's (2000) model is essentially phenomenological, relating to the emergence of consciousness through intentionality. Prinz (2007) calls such feelings 'embodied judgments' and in the case of dissent I suggest that the feeling or experience of weirdness is an affective judgement that the world as we have just encountered is not the world as we were told to expect. Weirdness is an emotional encounter with our own ignorance. This emergence of doubt can lead to dissent – the feeling that something is wrong. Secondly, in relation engaging with another person rather than an object, Arendt (1968) distinguished between thinking, willing and judging as a triad of the mind in which judging is the most social and most intersubjective experience. This form of judging is much more wilful and complex than an embodied judgment. Jackson develops on this stating that to realise the 'eventfulness of being' is to discover that what emerges in the course of human interaction confounds discursive labels such as male or female, Israeli or Palestinian and that the faculty of judging requires 'distance from subjective private conditions...through imaginative displacement – reconsidering one's own world from the standpoint of another' (Jackson, 2009, p. 237). Despite the wilful act of imaginative displacement which occurs when we try to understand the worldview of another, we do not lose our own being nor can we suppose to know the minds of others. Rather our thoughts are influenced by the thoughts of others and so judging for Arendt implies a third position in which knowledge is produced, 'reducible to neither one's own nor the other's: a view from in-between, from within the shared space of intersubjectivity itself' (ibid, p. 238).

Clearly judging in this form is neither easy nor is it exercised with frequency or universality. However, it is a practice clearly evinced in the field of transnational solidarity protest in Israel and Palestine. In the movement towards each other in the field of solidarity protest Palestinians, Israelis and international visitors are forced to imagine and create the third position in which discursive prejudices such as oppressor and oppressed cease to have certainty. This movement may be experienced at first as confusing or weird as the patina of illusions start to flake and we being to

acknowledge the validity of the radical other. Not only is Arendt's notion of judgment apparent in the practices observed in the field, it is as Jackson points out the essence the 'creatively estranged attitude' of the ethnographer and so the form of knowledge the methodology produces is also in the third position between participant and researcher. As Throop (2010) argues, ethnography is most often a thoroughly intersubjective affair, usually involving misunderstandings and 'generative forms of self-estrangement' in which the researcher confronts unrecognized aspects of their received assumptions and so the research methodology reflects the ordinary and extraordinary practices of participants in the field of transnational solidarity activism.

Ultimately though as an academic it must be asked; on what basis can I claim reliability, validity and any form of objectivity of my representations on the affective lives of my participants? The simple answer is from participant observation. The development of participant observation in anthropology is perhaps the best method by which phenomenological processes may become 'known' to the researcher. Ingold describes it thus:

that this world is not just what we think *about* but what we think *with* [is what] makes the enterprise anthropological and, by the same token, radically different from positivist science ...to ground knowing in being, in the world rather than the armchair, means that any study *of* human beings must also be a study *with* them

Ingold, 2008, p. 83 orig. emphasis

In this the positivist 'flaw' of reflexivity is inverted and it is the researcher who is affected by the field. Through the process of learning with people, tempered by an intimacy with academic critique and refined by participant intervention, knowledge emerges and is negotiated upon with participants - and perhaps a little of what Edmund Leach (1961) called 'inspired guesswork' is included. Ethnography thus produces a particular kind of knowledge which cannot claim scientific objectivity and must acknowledge its interpretive nature. But such is the ordinary ambiguity of the lived experience where being, knowing and meaning are always emergent and negotiated in a world which we share with many others.

Conclusion

I have attempted here to demonstrate the utility and validity of ethnographic knowledge though a discussion of my own engagement with its methods, the participants I learned from and phenomenological and anthropological theory. The observations, analysis and intuitions presented are not conceived to represent sociological determinants but to highlight the fluidity of possible sociological outcomes generated in the complexity of contemporary life. Generalization of a given ethnographic interpretation must be tentative and my thesis are particular to the their case. Clifford Geertz' admission is still relevant here: 'Ethnographies are not scientifically tested and approved hypotheses. They are interpretations, or misinterpretations, like any others, arrived at in the same way as any others, and the attempt to invest them with the authority of physical experimentation is but methodological sleight of hand' (Geertz, 1973, p. 23). The knotty problem of interpretation is not exclusive to ethnography and all knowledge production is a social practice and subject to a wondrous array of structures, traditions and agencies. In any scientific endeavour and particularly in the social sciences, objectivity and interpretation are relative terms and as aspirations they are never fully achieved. Critical assessment is at the core of the scientific method and must apply both to methodologies, underlying assumptions and published interpretations.

As Ingold (2008) points out this must be done with reference to and comparison of other cases and other knowledge, so that we may proceed from the ideographic to the nomothetic and the general concepts of human behaviour and sociality. Without doubt this should not only be an intradisciplinary but also an interdisciplinary endeavour. In order for the varied disciplines of the social sciences and humanities to critically assess and judge each others' forms of knowledge we must understand their process of production and this paper is an attempt to foster such understanding. The generative possibilities of such understanding do not entail the loss of one discipline or its merger with another but lie within the shared space of intersubjective judging.

References

- Amit, V., & Rapport, N. (2002). *The trouble with community: anthropological reflections on movement, identity and collectivity*. London: Pluto.
- Anna Odland Portisch. (2010). The craft of skilful learning: Kazakh women's everyday craft practices in western Mongolia. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 16, S62–S79.
- Arendt, H. (1968). *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*. New York: Viking.
- Berezin, M. (2001). Emotions and Political Identity: Mobilizing Affection for the Polity. In J. Goodwin, J. M. Jasper, & F. Polletta (Eds.), *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements* (pp. 83–98). London: University of Chicago Press.
- Bevington, D., & Dixon, C. (2005). Movement-relevant Theory: Rethinking Social Movement Scholarship and Activism. *Social Movement Studies*, 4(3), 185–208.
- Bourgeois, P. I., & Schonberg, J. (2009). *Righteous Dopefiend*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Briggs, J. L. (1970). *Never in Anger: Portrait of an Eskimo Family*. Cambridge MA; London: Harvard University Press.
- Csordas, T. J. (1994). *Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Damasio, A. R. (2000). *The Feeling of What Happens: Body, Emotion and the Making of Consciousness*. London: Vintage.
- Desjarlais, R., & Jason Throop, C. (2011). Phenomenological Approaches in Anthropology. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 40(1), 87–102. doi:10.1146/annurev-anthro-092010-153345
- Dilley, R. (2010). Reflections on knowledge practices and the problem of ignorance. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 16, S176–S192.
- Durkheim, É. (1912). *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. (C. Cosman & M. S. Cladis, Trans.) (2006th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fisher, S. R. A. (1951). *The Design of Experiments*. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd.
- Fisher, S. R. A., & Wishart, J. (1930). *The arrangement of field experiments and the statistical reduction of the results*. Published by His Majesty's Stationery Office.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.
- Goodwin, J., & Jasper, J. M. (1999). Caught in a Winding, Snarling Vine: The Structural Bias of Political Process Theory. *Ann*, 14(1), 27–54.
- Gould, D. B. (2009). *Moving politics emotion and act up's fight against AIDS*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Graeber, D. (2004). *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*. Chicago : Prickly Paradigm Press, LLC.
- Hale, C. R. (2006). Activist Research v. Cultural Critique: Indigenous Land Rights and the Contradictions of Politically Engaged Anthropology. *Cultural Anthropology*, 21(1), 96–120.
- Hale, C. R. (Ed.). (2008). *Engaging contradictions: theory, politics, and methods of activist scholarship*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Herzfeld, M. (1997). *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics and the Nation-State* (2005th ed.). London: Routledge.
- Hochschild, A. R. (1979). Emotion work, feeling rules, and social structure. *American Journal of Sociology*, 85, 551–575.

- Hochschild, A. R. (1983). *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hollan, D. (2008). Being There: On the Imaginative Aspects of Understanding Others and Being Understood. *Ethos*, 36(4), 475–489.
- Ingold, T. (2008). Anthropology is NOT Ethnography. *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 154, 69–92.
- Ingold, T. (2010). Footprints through the weather-world: walking, breathing, knowing. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 16(s1), S121–S139.
- Jackson, M. (1989). *Paths Toward a Clearing: Radical Empiricism and Ethnographic Inquiry*. Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- Jackson, M. D. (2009). Where thought belongs An anthropological critique of the project of philosophy. *Anthropological Theory*, 9(3), 235–251.
- Jean-Klein, I. (2003). Into committees, out of the house? Familiar forms in the organization of Palestinian committee activism during the first Intifada. *American Ethnologist*, 30(4), 556 – 577.
- Juris, J. S. (2008). *Networking Futures: The Movements against Corporate Globalization*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Juris, J. S., & Khasnabish, A. (Eds.). (2013). *Insurgent Encounters: Transnational activism, Ethnography, & the Political* (Kindle). Durham and London: Duke University Press Books.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. London: Sage.
- Lawler, E. J. (2001). An Affect Theory of Social Exchange. *American Journal of Sociology*, 107(2), 321–352.
- Leach, E. R. (1961). *Rethinking Anthropology* (1966th ed.). Oxford: Berg.
- Levy, R. I. (1973). *Tabitiens: Mind and Experience in the Society Island*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Levy, R. I. (1984). Emotion, knowing and culture. In R. A. Shweder & R. A. LeVine (Eds.), *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self, and Emotion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Marcus, G. E. (1995). Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 24(1), 95–117.
- Pink, S. (2008). Re-thinking Contemporary Activism: From Community to Emplaced Sociality. *Ethnos*, 73(2), 163–188.
- Postill, J. (2013). Digital Politics and Political Engagement. In H. A. Horst & D. Miller (Eds.), *Digital Anthropology* (pp. 165–184). London: Berg.
- Prinz, J. J. (2004). *Gut Reactions: A perceptual theory of emotions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Prinz, J. J. (2007). *The emotional construction of morals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ricoeur, P. (1991). *From Text to Action*. Illinois: Northwestern University Press.
- Robson, C. (1993). *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Rodgers, K. (2010). “Anger is Why We’re All Here”: Mobilizing and Managing Emotions in a Professional Activist Organization. *Social Movement Studies*, 9(3), 273–291.
- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. (1995). *Qualitative interviewing: the art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing As Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education And the Social Sciences*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Skinner, J. (2013). *The Interview: An Ethnographic Approach*. London & New York: Berg.
- Stewart, K. (2007). *Ordinary Affects* (Kindle). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Throop, C. J. (2010). *Suffering and sentiment exploring the vicissitudes of experience and pain in Yap*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Turner, V. (1988). *The anthropology of performance*. New York: PAJ Publications.
- Venkatesan, S. (2010). Learning to weave; weaving to learn ... what? *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 16, S158–S175.
- Wallman, S. (1998). New Identities and the Local Factor - or When is Home in Town a Good move? In N. Rapport & A. Dawson (Eds.), *Migrants of Identity: Perceptions of Home in a World of Movement* (pp. 181 – 205). Oxford: Berg.