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Routes to Interiorities: Art Therapy and Knowing in Anthropology

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In this article we explore the relationship between feminist art therapy and anthropology. We suggest that there is a series of congruities between a feminist approach to art therapy and strands of contemporary anthropological practice concerned with understanding other people's interior thoughts and the potential of art to make critical interventions. To examine these issues we position feminist art therapy approaches at an interface between existing explorations that have created intersections between anthropology and both arts and therapeutic practices. In this context we will suggest that the application of the methodologies developed in feminist art therapy can combine the potential suggested by both of these approaches, to offer anthropologists routes to understanding interiorities and interventions in conventional narrative forms of representation.

In this article we explore the relationship between feminist art therapy and the emergent anthropological focus on interiority—inspired by a question posed by Andrew Irving and Nigel Rapport[1] concerning the importance of interior dialogue, mood, reverie and imagination in anthropology. What ontological status, they asked, should we afford to inner dialogue, imaginative worlds and emotional reverie "without turning them into reified states or static properties"? Here we will approach this question through a methodological exploration rather than through an empirical case study. Our discussion focuses on such (unfixed) interior states *as ways of knowing and experiencing*. It is based on the premise that their ontological status needs to be understood in terms of the routes to knowing (about them) that are involved in the research encounter. Thus in this article we postulate how feminist art therapy might be understood as a route to anthropological knowing, and to communicating, about shifting interior states.

In its most simple form, making an artwork and reflecting upon it can involve for the participant moments of inner dialogue, the experience of fleeting urges,

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moods, visceral embodied emotions stimulated sometimes by the tactile qualities of the materials. These are fluid states rather than reified ones. In art therapy, we are precisely concerned with issues surrounding knowing about, and bringing to a ''surface,'' interior feelings. As a taster, and to give readers with no knowledge of art therapy a stronger sense of the kinds of process we are referring to, we begin with an example from Susan Hogan's own practice. Here Hogan is describing her experience as a facilitator of an art therapy group; as she demonstrates, it is sometimes the pictorial *struggle* which can be revealing, and can lead to reflections on and awareness of one's own interiority:

> At the group's invitation I did make one artwork. I painted a picture of myself breast-feeding. However, I struggled with the piece. I had wanted the quality of the paint to be very watery creating an image like a reflection on a pond. Whilst painting it I became aware of the fact that I wanted to depict my baby both inside and outside of my body simultaneously. I imagined her suckling one breast whilst stroking the other with her little hand. But I was not able to achieve a satisfactory result with the materials and I spent the session working and reworking the image—struggling with the boundaries. The finished artwork, unresolved though it was, embodied my experience of merger and separateness. The act of painting brought to awareness and illustrated my feelings of conflict and ambivalence about these processes—my emotional struggle. Indeed, my *inability to resolve the image pictorially* was highly revealing. I had not experienced through conversation the full force of these conflicting emotions. Participating in the group reminded me of the power and poignancy of the art therapy process which yields the possibility for the articulation of powerful embodied feelings and responses which cannot necessarily be experienced or evoked through a verbal exchange alone. [Hogan 2003: 168]

Thus the way the artwork is constructed, re-worked—areas obliterated and reshaped—can be deeply revealing, giving immediate access to areas of inner-conflict and ambivalence. How the work is subsequently handled or destroyed can also become relevant, as it is an object embodied with emotions. Art therapy is a powerful and immediate method. There is also the possibility of exhibition, and though much art therapy work remains confidential, for some women the revealing image being revealed can be both cathartic and empowering. As a woman said to Hogan recently, ''I feel heard.'' Before elaborating further on art therapy practice, however, we first situate our discussion in relation to existing anthropological interests in art and in therapy.

Our discussion is informed by two existing strands that have related anthropology to on the one hand arts practice, and on the other to therapeutic practice. In the next sections we outline some key points from these literatures to expand the context through which the contribution of a feminist art therapy can be understood.

ART, ETHNOGRAPHY AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL PRACTICE

The making of connections between contemporary arts practice and ethnography is becoming increasingly popular [e.g., Pink, Kurti, and Afonso 2004; Grimshaw and Ravetz 2004; Schneider and Wright 2006; Schneider 2008; Pink,

Hubbard, O'Neill, and Radley, in press]. In qualitative research practice more generally the use of participant-produced photography [e.g., Radley and Taylor 2003; Irving 2007], drawing and other arts practices [e.g., Tolia-Kelly 2007; O'Neill 2008] is also becoming more and more popular as a research method; this is particularly within social science research that seeks to explore experiences relating to health, movement, and feelings of exclusion. While we cannot review this broader literature fully here, it is pertinent to note that these approaches are part of a trend in social science and humanities research that focuses on the experiential, the sensory, and ways of knowing, being and remembering that cannot necessarily be articulated in words. Linked with a wider emphasis on the concept of ''knowing'' across anthropology [e.g., Harris 2007; Halstead 2008], these developments are also congruent with the concerns with the senses in ethnography and a move beyond written text [Pink 2009].

Within this literature concerned with knowing and arts practice, Amanda Ravetz's comments on the relationship between anthropology and contemporary art are particularly pertinent for our discussion. She suggests that anthropology and contemporary art involve different ways of knowing [2007: 269]. Focusing in particular on ''modes of contemporary art where ways of knowing are not about producing certainties'' [2007: 271], Ravetz proposes that ''There are certain situations when opening up a space for *interrupting the certainty of knowledge* is appropriate; and that contemporary art's expertise in 'modes of interruption' provides an important challenge to the search for certainties that underpin much anthropological knowledge'' [2007: 271, original italics]. While the dichotomy that Ravetz sets up between the ''certainties'' of anthropological knowledge and the ''interruption'' of art is perhaps overly stark, her understandings of art as a mode of knowing characterized by uncertainties is important. The knowing that art therapy practice is concerned with is also uncertain, and as implied through the example from Hogan's practice with which we opened this article, shifting, perhaps contradictory and multiple.

Thus the act of art making can be a moment of ontological uncertainty, and potentially liberating. Consequently art making can become a route through which interiority might be considered not simply as something that comes to the surface and is recorded as a static event, or crystallized and *made static,* but rather, and importantly, it offers ways of understanding interiority through an anthropological paradigm that views inner states as being in progress, rather than ever static. Such understandings are also congruent with the understanding of art therapy that we advance here. Art in art therapy is of significance not only as a representation of the feelings of the individual at a particular moment in time—an inner ''snapshot,'' if you like. Indeed, the art therapy approach we outline does not regard her (the client) as ''paranoid'' or ''neurotic,'' or as arrested at an early phase of development. The self of art therapy does not become crystallized anywhere. Rather, in social art therapy, images are understood as containing multiple and contradictory selves, at odds with essentialist notions of unitary selfhood. A feminist art therapy sees images as producing and being produced through a ''self in process.''

To qualify our own distinction between the knowing of anthropology and feminist art therapy practice, we would however suggest that anthropological

knowing is also rather precarious, subject to revision, and rarely holds the certainties that its convincing written narratives might imply. Anthropological research is usefully understood as a process of seeking routes to reflexively and self-consciously comprehending other people's ''ways of knowing'' and making these meaningful in scholarly ways. Indeed, it is more appropriate to see anthropology itself as a way of knowing that is equally subject to transformation and shifts. However, returning to Ravetz's [2007] point, the concepts of uncertainty or interruption coincide with our understanding of art therapy as a route to understanding interiorities. Indeed, they offer the possibility of doing so precisely as Irving and Rapport suggested—''without turning them into reified states or static properties.'' It also enables us to think through questions relating to the communication of such ways of knowing especially, as we elaborate below, in terms of seeking to resolve the relationship between the uncertainty and the contingency of knowing and the use of narrative in anthropological representation. First, however, we consider how image-related therapeutic approaches have already been developed in anthropology.

ANTHROPOLOGY AND THERAPEUTIC METHODOLOGIES

The idea that visual methods drawing on therapeutic practices might assist us in understanding other people's interiority is not completely new. In his book *Imagework* [2004a], the anthropologist Iain Edgar argues for the use of imaginative research methods based on transpersonal psychology and the work of the psychotherapist Carl G. Jung in particular. Edgar makes a strong case for our imaginative worlds to receive scholarly attention, pointing out that, ''Though we regularly translate some of the perceived imagery into conceptual thought and subsequent action, the use of the imaginative senses could be more extensively used across the full range of social science research'' [2004a: 1]. Moreover, Edgar suggests, ''the mind's inner imagery'' can be manifested in a number of external visual forms, such as artwork [2004b: 95]. Edgar's work has played a critical role in bringing the fields of anthropology and art therapy together, and in this section we consider the main contributions he has made to this area, and outline how feminist approaches to art therapy depart from these.

Edgar's term ''imagework'' describes a range of techniques which encompass the technique of creative visualization and involve ''imagination-based research methodologies'' [2004b: 90]. His method is based on a therapeutic model used in ''experiential groupwork'' [2004b: 90], which he describes as ''an active process in which the person 'actively imagining' lets go of the mind's train of thoughts and images and goes with a sequence of imagery that arises spontaneously from the unconscious'' [2004b: 91]. This is what the Surrealists called ''pure psychic automatism''—a technique that sought to uncover the spontaneous nature of thought ''without any conscious control exercised by reason, outside of all moral preoccupations''—quite a tall order, we might think! [Breton 1962 (1924), cited in Hogan 2001: 94]. Modern Western subjects might themselves also understand therapeutic experiences in terms of this model of ''letting go.'' This is indeed

the case for domestic housework practitioners, who, for example, might say that they ''don't think about anything'' when they are doing the washing-up. Nevertheless, their washing-up practices are actually informed by sets of moral principles and cultural categories [Pink 2004]. Put this way, the implication is that while there is a modern Western commonsense assumption that we can ''think about nothing'' or ''let the mind go,'' anthropologists and art therapists might more usefully conceptualize this idea rather differently—that modern Western research and in-therapy subjects do not actually engage in practices of *doing* or *thinking* in ways that are uninformed by moralities, values and existing categories. Therefore separating out thought and ''reason'' or ''moral preoccupations'' can be problematic; and below we suggest that such processes might be better understood through phenomenological notions of knowing. There are nevertheless a series of commonalities between Edgar's Imagework and feminist art therapy. Below we consider Edgar's categories of ''memory,'' ''spontaneous'' and ''dream'' imagework, before discussing how feminist art therapy departs from these.

''Memory imagework'' involves guiding respondents into their memory of earlier events. Edgar suggests that this technique could be useful as part of an oral-history approach. An exercise that leads respondents through their early memories can be used ''as a way of picturing forgotten or little-considered aspects of their childhood awareness. Remembering and (re)picturing . . .'' [Edgar 2004: 23]. For example, Edgar uses the following exercise to examine household change across two generations and, in particular, ''changing Western domestic symbolism.'' This involves the research subjects remembering a house from childhood in their imagination. Respondents are then asked to ''fast forward'' to their current house to ''imagine the symbolic value of their chosen activity'' [Edgar 2004: 25]. Again, he suggests that ''a brief felt-tip picture of their imaginings'' can be produced which can be discussed in the group or in pairs. The group ''can then make a meta-analysis of the emerging themes.'' This is very similar to the group-interactive approach to art therapy in which a ''meta-analysis'' might also be produced in therapeutic group work though as a way of reiterating and consolidating dominant themes [Hogan in press a]. For example, the theme of loss might come to the fore following some particularly moving disclosure from an individual. This might then lead other participants to reflect on their own sense of loss, to articulate feelings about their losses verbally and pictorially. The echoing of common themes through artworks is referred to as ''group resonance'' in art therapy literature, and can take obvious or subtle forms. The facilitator might attempt to articulate or summarize emerging themes and issues. Commonly this is done at the beginning of the session (relating to what had happened in the group the previous week).

What Edgar identifies as ''spontaneous imagework'' involves using the Jungian active imagination technique ''which facilitates a spontaneous journey into the imagination'' [2004: 10]. Art therapists refer to this as ''guided fantasy.'' Edgar elaborates the technique thus:

> A classical form of this is to start the journey in a meadow and to lead participants over an obstacle and up a hill to a house on a hill where they meet a wise person who they can talk

> to about any questions they have . . . . For qualitative research purposes, this kind of exercise can be refocused to gain data concerning the subject on an enquiry. So, for example, if the researcher wished to gain data about respondents' views on any aspect of family life or social life, they would be asked to ''carry'' the question in mind to their ''wise old person'' about the subject. [Edgar 2004: 31]

The important difference is that in art therapy practice the client is free to ask her own question.

Edgar's technique of ''dream imagework'' is described as ''the use of dreams for diagnosis and healing.'' Respondents recount a dream or believe themselves led by dreams. The analytical processing of the work is first descriptive, in that respondents are asked to ''tell their story"; then follows ''analysis by the participants of the personal meaning of their experience of the symbols used'' [2004: 10]. This is the same as in art therapy. Dreams may be recounted and reflected upon; for example, this is what a young woman who usually dreamt of herself as white was able to reflect: ''Guess what? I had a dream and I was black in my dream. And the people in my dream were black and that was OK. I was so happy'' [Campbell and Gaga 1997: 216]. Clearly the dream in this case was significant in pointing to the young woman's sense of increasing self-acceptance, and shedding of internalized racism. To give another example, Huet reflects on an art therapy client's acknowledgement of her therapeutic alliance in a dream in what had been a difficult relationship, and this then prompted a group reflection:

> Lynn had drawn one of her dreams: she had been walking in the park and had needed to get into a building to which the only access was a ladder. Being afraid of heights, she was hesitating when I appeared in her dream, and urged her to carry on, assuring her it was safe to do so. The group discussed the image, relating it to the task of therapy, how scary it sometimes was, and acknowledged that some good things were coming out of it. [Huet 1997: 181]

Edgar also adds two further stages, which are the ''analysis of the models used to inform their imagery; fourth, the comparative stage, when respondents compare their imagework with that of others in the group,'' though the latter sometimes happens spontaneously in art therapy groups too [2004: 10–11]. Dream imagework can also be developed into spontaneous imagework in what Edgar promotes as a ''communicative'' approach that is interested in ''the psychodynamics of the social setting and the interpretative framework of the participants'' [2004: 49–50]. Clearly there is a strong similarity between this approach and group-interactive therapy, but with differing aims, because Edgar is interested in exploring research questions whereas art therapy is focused on the experiential learning and personal self-reflection of participants.

Above we highlighted the question of narrative, indicating that a feminist art therapy approach brings into relief differences between the ''uncertain,'' shifting and contingent ways of knowing that emerge from therapeutic (and anthropological) encounters and the narrative form of anthropological writing that seeks to convince. In relation to this, it is pertinent to note that Edgar argues that ''imagework'' is compatible with any social science research paradigm that ''seeks to account for the outcome of human cognition, imagination, emotion and intuition,

within the narratively rendered orderings of group processes and cultural context'' [2004a: 19]. The emphasis on narrative is worth emphasizing, for although Edgar employs techniques similar to those used in ''arts-based'' research, and will ask respondents to draw, paint or enact an imagined image, these other products are then *translated* into words: ''Arts-based inquiry typically results in some form of artistic performance while imagework does not'' [2004a: 18]. Indeed, he judges a language-based approach as being normative, asserting that imagework research strategies lead ''to normative scholarly and academic outcomes'' [2004a: 17]. This is one of the crucial points at which feminist art therapy departs from imagework. In doing so, it both invites a challenge to the text-based normative scholarly outcomes and the narrative of academic discourse, more akin to the challenge posed by contemporary art practice suggested by Ravetz [2007]. Below we return to this question of narrative. First, however, we digress for a section to outline why, for the phenomenological anthropologist, these issues might be important.

KNOWING AND NARRATIVE IN ANTHROPOLOGY

Anthropologists, especially those with an interest in phenomenology, are always faced with a problem: while we might aim to empathize with, understand, interpret and represent other people's experiences, imaginations and memories, their sensory and affective qualities are only accessible to us in limited ways. As Irving expresses it, ''The problem facing anthropologists during fieldwork, especially given the centrality of memory, reverie, and imagination to ethnographic practice, is how to bring events from the past into life when there is no independent access to people's consciousness, memories, or the past'' [2007: 186]. In his own collaborative research practice, Irving has invited participants in his work to walk around urban contexts while narrating and photographing their memories of pivotal moments in their lives. This has created a powerful medium for learning about other people's experiences. It also provides a route to communicating about them in printed text through visual and written narratives that do not reduce the experience of others to what Irving refers to as ''the static types and social categories that are often required in conventional social scientific and anthropological analyses'' [2007: 204–205).

Concepts of ''knowing'' are increasingly fashionable across the social sciences and humanities, with writers describing knowing rather than knowledge. In part this follows the practice approach developed by Wenger [1998], for whom knowing is inextricable from practice. Such ideas are becoming increasingly important in anthropology [e.g., Harris 2007, Halstead *et al*. 2008] as well as across other disciplines. Theoretical developments in anthropology offer us a range of ways of understanding knowing and its relationship to knowledge, some of which are akin to Wenger's ideas and invite us to think of knowing as something that happens when we are ''doing''; that is, in practice. In Wenger's formulation, knowing, as he puts it, ''is always too big, too rich, too ancient, and too connected for us to be the source of it individually . . . [and] . . . too engaged, too precise, too tailored, too active, too experiential for it to be just of a generic size'' [1998:

141–142]. Thus the concept of knowing offers us a way of thinking about the relationship of the individual to the social.

There are various means by which anthropologists might *attempt to* gain some kind of empathetic access to other people's knowing. Pink [2009] discusses the idea of becoming ''emplaced'' in ways similar to the research participants through participating in similar activities or imagining oneself into another person's place. Much recent work has (re)focused on the idea of the anthropologist as apprentice [e.g., Downey 2007; Grasseni 2007; Marchand 2007]. Techniques of accessing other people's knowing, whether through the anthropologist's own actual embodied practice or through research participants' representations of *their* own practice, involve not only the body, imaginative and memory practices of the anthropologist, but also the research participant's own attempts to articulate to the anthropologist what her experiences, memories, imaginations and inner conflicts might involve.

The question we address in this article moves away from (but hopes to be complementary to) the recent focus on apprenticeship in anthropological methodology to address one aspect of this problem: how anthropologists might better facilitate the process through which research participants themselves get access to and articulate their inner thoughts and feelings, and in so doing communicate these to anthropologists. This does not suggest that participants would simply reify their interior feelings and communicate them to an anthropologist through an art therapy process. Rather it would indicate that the process of art therapy is one in which a research participant might engage in her or his own way of knowing through (art) practice, while the anthropologist/therapist is inevitably implicated in ''knowing with'' the participant through the practice of art-therapy-as-anthropology.

Putting this another way, we are asking how might anthropologists enable participants themselves to reflect on their own interiority through media and practices that simultaneously provide the anthropologist a route to knowing. But, as we have highlighted above, these ways of knowing not only confirm the anthropologists' conviction that certainty is not accessible, but make this point an explicit and obvious condition to the ways of knowing and understanding that emerge from feminist-art-therapy-as-anthropological-research. They likewise pose what might be seen as challenges to the conventional anthropological method of communicating, written narrative. Indeed, following Pink's [2007] argument for a *visual* ethnography, we would suggest that they actually invite exciting possibilities for creating new relationships between the ways of knowing that scholarly writing involves and the uncertainty implied by the shifting meanings that are integral to the research encounter. We are suggesting that anthropology and art therapy might be co-implicated in this process. In the next section we elaborate this through a more detailed discussion of the principles and practices of art therapy and their relevance to this task.

LINKING FEMINIST ART THERAPY AND RESEARCH

Social art therapy and phototherapy encompass a range of practices, but in all cases participants are concerned with self-exploration and self-expression

through art or photographic materials. In her formulation of a feminist art therapy Hogan has criticized approaches to art therapy in which therapists interpret clients' art according to pre-existing models, and instead she argues for a focus on ''individuality.'' Resonating with Irving's [2007] vision for an anthropology that does not reduce other people's experiences into existing theoretical structures, Hogan has proposed that a ''focus on the individual (as the site of suffering and distress) liberates art therapy from developing an over-reliance on, and rigid adherence to, set theories and *a priori* categories of meaning inherent in theoretical orthodoxy, which can obscure as much as illuminate human suffering'' [Hogan 1997; 37]. Feminist art therapy thus does not focus on interior states and the transforming self in isolation but, like social anthropology, understands individuals as *situated* in institutional, social, cultural and power-imbued contexts. Indeed, a ''social art therapy'' can challenge dominant discourses (in ways that resonate with the issues of global inequalities made clear through Irving's [2007] work). Art therapy can act as a space in which to rehearse and explore strategies of resistance, as well as to explore and reconcile contradictory discourses (contradictions that create stress and ''dis-ease''). Thus in art therapy we cannot undo discriminatory practices that exist outside the art therapy arena, but we can actively interrogate them, and explore our multiple and often contradictory selves—and the tension between these.

Indeed there is already a fertile (if less well documented in anthropological literature) borderline between social science research and personal therapy, represented by both social art therapy and phototherapy. The latter is best exemplified by the collaborative work of Rosie Martin and Jo Spence [1955, 1988, 1991] and also by Boffin and Frazer, whose work *Stolen Glances: Lesbians Take Photographs* [1991] sought to explore and represent a previously adumbrated area of social existence. Martin and Spence's collaborations included Spence documenting her experience of being a cancer patient, highlighting inhumane medical practices but using the camera as a tool to fight for a sense of self in the context of becoming a medical *object*. This was a critique of medical discourses which also served as a tool for personal empowerment, and catharsis. Thus one of the premises of feminist art therapy [Hogan 1997, in press b] is that while dominance, subjugation, and oppression are very real, power is not monolithic and is ''always exercised in relation to resistance.'' As Henriques *et al.* put it: ''The 'system' we describe is riddled with sites of resistance and conflict. Contingent process is possible in such sites, which can thus act as points of possible transformation'' [1984: 115].

Likewise, social art therapy will sometimes employ photographs (pre-existing for collage or newly taken) and might involve a simultaneous research process. An example of this is a project developed by Hogan [2003, 2008], who provided art materials in support groups for pregnant women and new mothers, to enable them to explore their changed sense of self-identity and sexuality as a result of pregnancy and motherhood [Hogan 1997, 2003, 2008, in press b]. This resulted in a critique of discourses as well as change on a personal level for the participants. In some senses this research did result in what Edgar calls ''normative scholarly and academic outcomes'' [Edgar 2004a: 17], resulting in an elucidation of the issues and concerns faced by pregnant women and new mothers; however,

the images themselves also supply another discourse on the subject (and have their own ''unpredictable'' affects). Sometimes, as in Edgar's work, the respondent narrated an image already imagined in her head which she might subsequently talk about (the participant might be asked to imagine herself in a particular situation), but in other instances the discourse is supplied by the image and there is actually little relation between what is said and depicted, or the image is iconoclastic in the way what is said isn't. This later use of images to move beyond spoken discourse deserves a place in social science research methods—as it is possible to say things in images that it is hard or impossible to articulate verbally [Figure 1].

Surely, for example, to translate this image as ''I felt violated by my birth experience'' or ''motherhood is destroying my sexuality'' is reductive? The image has power—the shock of seeing a baby bottle about to plunge into a vagina—the sense of violence about it—is hard to translate into words, and thus the image is saying something which really supplements what is written. (Hogan taped and transcribed the women's spoken discourse and has quoted participants in a number of publications.) While it is true that for the academic art therapist researcher it is necessary to produce (some) normative written outcomes (i.e., books and articles) for academic career progression if nothing else, that Edgar feels obliged to translate his outcomes into words represents a missed opportunity in some senses, as explored above.

However, the processes through which knowledge is produced in Edgar's imagework and art therapy as a research technique have much in common. Edgar's comment about imagework is equally true of art therapy as a research method:

> What an experiential research method such as imagework offers, is the opportunity to reach levels and forms of knowledge not immediately apprehensible by the respondent in interview or through their participation in a focus group. The researcher, then, is involved in the production of experience as well as its recording and analysis. [Edgar 2004a: 12–13]

Figure 1 *Untitled.* A Tasty Drop of Dragon's Blood Series, *1997.*

In both methods the facilitator is active in the production of knowledge. This approach is also congruent with current practice in visual ethnography, for which Pink has pointed out that

> . . . reflexivity is not simply a mechanism that neutralises ethnographers' subjectivity as collectors of data through an engagement with how their presence may have affected the reality observed and the data collected. Indeed, the assumption that a reflexive approach will aid ethnographers to produce objective data represents only a token and cosmetic engagement with reflexivity that wrongly supposes subjectivity could (or should) be avoided or eradicated. Instead, subjectivity should be engaged with as a central aspect of ethnographic knowledge, interpretation and representation. [Pink 2007: 23]

Likewise, in a reflexive social art therapy the art therapist is constantly alert to her embodied responses, and her role, however tangential, in the creation of meaning within the art therapy encounter. There are differences in style, but some art therapists actively participate in making artwork and reflecting on that process.

Edgar sees the researcher as the ''co-creator'' of the object of study. ''The researcher influences the data produced, particularly through the facilitation of the reflective process'' [Edgar 2004: 13], as does the social art therapist. Goulet and Young [1994: 305] describe the ''experiential method'' in anthropology as the ''inclusion of the ethnographer'' in the work, anthropologists making themselves ''experimental subjects'' and treating their own experiences as primary data. Edgar is passionate about the benefits of such an approach, exclaiming that experiential methods can be used to ''reframe the continuing concerns involved in the inherent subjectivities of qualitative research'' and that furthermore ''valid and even profound data through the researcher's involvement in the co-production of felt, imagined, portrayed and articulated perceptions by respondents'' [Edgar 2004: 13]. Both imagework and feminist art therapy methods have in common this experiential dimension in which the researcher is active in the production of knowledge and must be able to acknowledge, through reflexive analysis, his contribution. The particular benefits of imagework and ''experiential'' research methods such as social art therapy are eloquently described by Edgar as able to achieve ''the articulation of respondents as yet dimly perceived but emotionally present aspects of self and world'' [Edgar 2004: 21]. This would seem a particular merit of these approaches. Imagework and its amplification through the production of artworks or drama can, asserts Edgar, ''evoke both significant insights into psycho-social situations and *even change personal and group orientations*, so becoming applicable in action-research settings'' [Edgar 2004: 21, italics added]. Like imagework, social art therapy is interested in changing personal orientations, producing social critique and research outcomes.

There are however some further differences between social art therapy and methods and imagework. As noted above; art therapy as a research tool, and mode of social critique (i.e., social art therapy), retains the artwork to provide a supplementary discourse which may confirm or indeed contradict the spoken word on occasions. It is important to think about the importance of working with ''contradiction'' in narrative. Condor's [2000] analysis of ''resistances'' in interviews, for example, has yielded interesting information about contradictory or

problematic beliefs, or the recognition and resistance of certain discourses. Cameron [2001] notes that many interview respondents give a contradictory account of an event or of their views. Furthermore, she asserts that ''normal'' understandings *are* multiple and shifting rather than unitary and fixed, and should be taken into account [Cameron 2001: 157]. Responding to the ideas of Ravetz [2007], it feels important that there is an opportunity for synergy between the image and the textual accompaniment, which can also include the researcher's written and visual reflections on the process, and does not discard what the image has to contribute.

Our discussion has indicated how contemporary art [Ravetz 2007] and art therapy can both challenge the normative [Edgar 2004a] narrative of written anthropology—and the ''certainties'' [Ravetz 2007] implied by it. In the next and final stage of our exploration we consider precisely how an approach informed by art therapy might respond to the ''problem'' of narrative in anthropological representation. In doing so we suggest that it also offers routes through which we might *represent* the ''uncertainties'' and shifting unresolved nature of the transforming self of art therapy, *and* as such suggests alternatives for anthropological representations of other people's interiority.

ART THERAPY AS A RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEM OF NARRATIVE

A narrative described by Kerby is ''the recounting of a series of temporal events so that a meaningful sequence is portrayed'' [1991: 39]. Cohen and Rapport suggest that ''It may be expressed verbally or in gesture and in behaviour. It is the individuals' routine *modus vivendi* on which he or she reflects self-consciously.'' They go on to assert that ''This regular reflection may be regarded as a condition of our conscious being-in-the-world'' [1995: 5]. The idea of narrative then, they conclude, ''is that lasting if selective chronicle of the temporal course of experience, fixed in memory.'' This is perhaps too neat a definition, in our view, as memory is certainly constructive, and shifting rather than fixed. Indeed, narrative is very complex and not linear. Kirsten Hastrup suggests that ''narrative punctuates experience, awareness constantly arrests the flow of consciousness—to make room for action, as it were'' [1995: 184]. However, this perhaps represents a false separation between the different components in this process since, as Crang and Cook [2007] point out, the action is linked to flows of narrative and memory. Indeed, if we are (as is the case for the work of feminist art therapy) concerned with narrative in the context of the exploration of identity, this raises a further issue. We should understand identity as being a complex assemblage of thoughts, ways of doing things, relationship to possessions, feelings, memories, obligations, which for many of us is ''always a compromise, always pragmatic, always in flux...'' [Crang and Cook 2007: 10]. Our selves are also reflected in our relationships with others, ''memories may be evoked by various belongings or locales associated with different facets of people's identities'' [Rowles 1983; Crang and Cook 2007: 10]. It is also important to emphasize that people live out their lives between different locales which emphasize different aspects of their identities, produce different ways of thinking, and stimulate different

memories [Crang and Cook 2007, Valentine 1993, Van der Ploeg 1986]. Ways in which we make sense of ourselves and our worlds result in interaction with different groups. As Crang and Cook express it, events are interpreted through

> . . . discussions and debates with different groups of people as events are reported and interpreted socially through hearing about them from others, or even thinking about what someone else has said or would say about them. Reverie is part of these processes. Therefore, not only is the place where the researcher and her/his 'subjects' meet important to any study, but also the social relations of research that are (re)arranged there. [Crang and Cook 2007: 10]

How far this complexity can be captured in interview is open to question, but it would seem fair to ask questions to draw out the importance of different milieu in creating a subject's ideas and reflections, but to be willing to acknowledge contradictions and incongruities. In social art therapy these complexities can be explored pictorially.

Indeed, an art therapy approach enables us to go beyond the dichotomous formulations that have framed some earlier anthropological approaches to bringing interiority to the fore. For instance, Kirsten Hastrup has suggested that

> The process of making memory explicit, of foregrounding it from the archive of implicit recollection and habituated knowledge, has a parallel in the transformation of mere experience into *an* experience—this transformation is made by way of narrative expression; by telling we carve out units of experience and meaning from the continuity of life. [Hastrup 1995: 183–84]

Whilst this foregrounding of certain experiences can take place in art therapy, the dichotomy is too simple. It is more fruitful to look at multiple ways of knowing and reflecting on experience *in practice* (and art being one of these, as the moment of manipulating the material is a moment of ontological uncertainty). We are all subject to contradictory discourses and the wrenching between these is something that can be explored in art therapy. Thus we might think of art therapy as a way of "knowing in practice" and involving a way of knowing that only comes about through and is simultaneously articulated through drawing—i.e., a knowing that cannot be expressed in words or that can only be expressed at the interface between drawing, talking and the encounter between participant/client and anthropologist/therapist. An idea may be depicted pictorially and arguably become reified—fixed, but because of the pliability of the medium, whether it be clay, or paint, it can be changed; it is malleable. Understandings which *are* multiple and shifting *can* be depicted and explored. Contractions can be viewed and ambivalence can be interrogated. Therefore art therapy invites us to participate in ways of knowing in practice, acknowledging that such knowing will only be found in practice, but that even so it has the power to impact on things that are outside that actual moment of knowing and of practice.

If we think of humans as active agents in the production of their subjectivity through a process of *assujettissement*,[2] then a fluidity of selfhood may be recognized, an intermediacy of being explored, reflection, imagination, reverie are part of this active process. The question of how to bring such *assujettissement* and the

ways of knowing that are integral to it into the narrative of anthropological representation is indeed a challenge. However, as we have shown in the previous section, the art of art therapy has, if the uncertainty of its meaning is acknowledged, an important role to play.

CONCLUSION

To summarize, anthropologists and art therapists are both interested in subjects' inner lives. These are complex: gender, power, class and ethnicity are all difficult and mutable notions, and accessing how these are implicated in our interior worlds is not a simple task. But considering that the word cannot explain everything, and that art is a powerful medium, we propose that innovative, arts-based methods offer new routes to these interiorities. Our work is not entirely novel: we situate our ideas as part of a small, emerging group of theorists and practitioners who are interested in the inner life. However we hope to have pushed a bit further at the boundaries of what might be anthropological practice and to have contributed a step further to those already made by others seeking to draw both arts and therapeutic practices together with anthropological practice.

Our aim in this article has been to initiate an exploration of the relationship between feminist art therapy and anthropological interest in inner dialogue, imaginative worlds and emotional reverie. This task has taken us on a short journey through arts practice, imagework, knowing in anthropology, feminist art therapy practice, and the problem of narrative. In each of these domains, we have identified meeting points through which feminist art therapy practices offers routes to interiority that allow the shifting, contingent, and transformative nature of the self to become known to the anthropologist and/or to be represented through alternative narrative forms.

Our conclusion is not however intended to be definitive. Indeed, our second objective is to invite further discussion of, and practical engagement with, this relationship and its potential.

NOTES

1. Irving and Rapport posed this question as part of a call for a conference panel at the ASA 2009 conference. While we were unable to attend the conference we were nevertheless inspired to follow through on this question. (Online at http://www.nomadit.co.uk/asa/asa09/panels.php5?PanelID=551, accessed December 19, 2009.)
2. The French have a word which Henriques *et al.* [1984: 1] suggest encapsulates an active and complex subjectivity that acknowledges the individual as an active agent in the production of their subjectivity through a process of *assujettissement*. There is no English equivalent; however, the reflexive verb which means "to make subject" or to "produce subjectivity" as well as to "submit" or "subjugate" is perhaps rather negative with respect to subjugation. It is conceivably a more neutral term that is needed to encapsulate our coming into being—being made and making simultaneously. The lack of a suitable word for this process illustrates an entrenched dichotomy between self and society and a conceptual "hole" in post-structuralist theory.

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