In Between External and Internal worlds: Imagination in Transitional Space

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Abstract

This article explores a kind of thinking based on emotional experience and imagination. Donald Winnicott, British psychoanalyst, locates creative thinking in an *intermediate* area. This idea of 'in between' offers the possibility of thinking beyond a set of troublesome binaries that concern psycho-social researchers: external and internal, objectivity and subjectivity, social and personal, positioning and agency, construction and reality. Taking the idea of an intermediate area between inner reality and external life, I use a few short extracts from one participant in a study on processes of becoming a mother to address two questions. How does 'Jenny' imagine her possible futures within the limits of her material and social circumstances when she discovers that she is pregnant? How can researchers use the fact that we are *affected* by our participants and by the data in order to enhance and not distort our understanding?

Key words: emotional experience, imagination, reality, intermediate area, pregnancy, transitional space, young mother.

Introduction

During a period when I am writing about the identity transition involved in becoming a mother, I find myself preoccupied with the questions that this special issue poses: representing the complexity and multi-dimensionality of the women's changing lives and doing justice to the intensity of their experiences, in my methods, analysis and the registers in which I communicate to my audiences. In this paper, I select an example from one case in the participant group of 19 first-time mothers, to demonstrate a way of communicating case data that conveys an alive emotional experience of the participant and to illustrate Winnicott's concept of 'intermediate area' or 'transitional space'[1] (1971/2005; 1951) which provides a way of thinking about creative imagination and an alternative epistemological position for research knowing. Reality and imagination are often treated as binary terms with connotations of external and internal worlds, characterised by objectivity and subjectivity respectively. Winnicott goes beyond the limitations of the inner and outer reality binary as follows:

> 'My claim is that if there is a need for this double statement [individuals with an inside and an outside], there is also need for a triple one: the third part of the life of a human being, a part that we cannot ignore, is an intermediate area of **experiencing**, to which inner reality and external life both contribute. It is an area that is not challenged, because no claim is made on its behalf except that it shall exist as a resting-place for the individual engaged in the perpetual human task of keeping inner and outer reality separate yet interrelated' (Winnicott 1971/2005: 3, original emphasis).

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To explore the space in between is therefore a fruitful way of thinking about creativity that does not imply a departure into the realms of fiction that would misrepresent social scientific data.

(Re)presenting Jenny to an audience

The conceptual tools and methodological conventions that researchers use to represent data in our analyses have, not surprisingly, reflected the central trope of difference in social theory and social research. When several years ago I first summarised Jenny's case in what I called 'pen portrait' form, I started as follows:

> *Jenny is black British, of African Caribbean heritage, and lives with her parents and three younger brothers in a council flat. When she discovered that she was pregnant, she was 17 and about to start studying social sciences at sixth form college.*

This contains useful information but it exudes the underlying paradigmatic emphasis on social identity categories: straight away we learn that Jenny is young, black and working class and this information frames the presentation of her pregnancy and it risks closing down prematurely the researcher's and readers' understanding of Jenny's material.

On the other hand, the turn to reflexivity in qualitative social science (Henwood 2008) means that we use social identity categories to render visible the differences between researchers and participants that may have implications for the knowledge researchers produce. Both the interviewer, who met Jenny three times over the course of one year, and the observer who visited her weekly, were white, middle class professional women of middle age. I did not meet Jenny face to face, but I met her through the data and so also have a responsibility to reflect on the effect of my social positions (see Hollway and Froggett, forthcoming). But is this a sufficient way to avoid misrecognising Jenny? How do I come to understand her, through the lenses of available paradigms?

As I became more critical of the flatness of the above categorical portrayal of Jenny, I experimented with compositions based on a 'scenic'[2] principle, using a visual modality to bring more vitality to a key moment in Jenny's story (Hollway 2011). Here is how I wrote the beginning of a more 'scenic' introduction to Jenny:

> *Jenny waits tensely in her bedroom. Clothes on hangers bulge from the top rail of the bunk beds; around the room are various soft toys and on the wall a couple of Bob Marley posters. In the sitting room, her family's social worker, who she has known all her life, tells her parents the news: Jenny is pregnant.*

The information that helped me describe the scene was derived from the observer who used a psychoanalytically-informed method called 'infant observation' (Urwin 2007; Urwin and Sternberg 2012). Without this, or some equivalent ethnographic style of writing detailed fieldnotes, a scenic representation would have been impossible. Learning about infant observation through its use in our research (see Urwin 2007 for a full account) had, I think, sensitised me to the need to gather data in a way that recorded sensory, embodied, affective, material and environmental dimensions of the field setting. The scene requires an act of imagination through which it tells each reader something about Jenny. For example, we get information about Jenny's age without being told it or knowing it exactly: it comes across multi-dimensionally from the objects in her bedroom and the fact that she is so worried about telling her parents, with whom she still lives, that she enlists the help of the social worker to tell them that she is pregnant. The scene hopefully leaves us wondering about some features: the existence of the social worker, the significance of the Bob Marley posters. These provide openings for future learning about Jenny, fuelled by imagination. Some of what we imagine will only later be tested by further evidence, until which time we must try to remain open to what these details mean.

Donald Winnicott's concept of transitional space opens out ideas about imagination, developed first as a way of understanding children's capacities for creative play and how these mental capacities are fundamental to creativity in adults too:

> *'The precariousness of play belongs to the fact that it is always on the theoretical line between the subjective and that which is objectively perceived (…) This area of playing is not inner psychic reality. It is outside the individual, but it is not the external world' (Winnicott 1971/2005: 68 & 69).*

Creativity emerges in the 'intermediate area of experience to which inner reality and external life both contribute' (1971/2005: 3). It is based on imagination which enables humans to apprehend something 'as if' (as if it might be different from now). This capacity is basic to symbolisation because symbols always involve changing – re-presenting – an object.

Reality and imagination work in tandem. As Jill Gentile phrases it, exploring Winnicott's treatment of the psychological relation to external realities:

> *'the material world is critical to our construction of subjectivity … we simultaneously impose our weight upon it and surrender to its unyielding aspects' (Gentile 2008: 549).*

This integration of material reality is a dynamic ongoing process in all meaning making, always being actively elaborated and organised. Winnicott believed that

> *'the task of reality acceptance is never completed, that no human being is free from the strain of relating inner and outer reality, and that relief from this strain is provided by an intermediate area of experience which is not challenged' (1971/2005, p. 18).*

I develop this in two ways: a substantive question concerning Jenny's imagination and its relation to reality and its implications for methodology and questions of validity.

Jenny's relation to difficult reality

Below, I quote a passage that develops the scenic introduction of Jenny, as cited earlier, using information derived from the observer's notes, which quote directly some of Jenny's phrases and paraphrase others. I emphasise in bold two phrases that form the core of my analysis, which first focuses on containment and second on facing reality: in practice they are parts of the same psychological process, separated for heuristic purposes. Writing this passage was itself an exercise in 'as if': a representation of the actual encounter, multiply mediated through Jenny's telling the story to the observer, her notes and my reorganisation of the information for the very specific purposes of this article. This exercise itself is, therefore, an example of the everyday encounter between reality and imagination and the intermediate area in which they can come together creatively and require similar imaginative work of readers.

> *Jenny hasn't plucked up the courage to tell her parents direct and so the social worker, about to go on two weeks' leave, has suggested that they are told now, so that there is an **adult around who knows**. (…) Jenny had got the test result by phone and so the woman didn't know **she was just some young girl** as she delivered the news. She is called in to the living room. Her parents are not angry but disappointed, which is almost worse because it makes her feel so bad. They are worried about her studies and she reassures them of her intention to continue. She realises that this means they accept that she keeps the baby.*

Depending on our own beliefs, we – readers of this extract – might be relieved at the social worker's suggestion (and that Jenny took it up) or critical of it. Certain discourses (or ideologies) suggest certain discursive positions, providing a way of reading the data that affects a researcher's meaning making. For example, the 'new sociology of childhood' that took up the cause of empowering children constructed an image of the rational autonomous child/youth who did not need adults' help in order to know what to do (James, Jenks and Prout 1998; King 2007). The personal use of any such position involves some kind of emotional investment. In this discursive light, the social worker might seem, to the reader or researcher, patronising and in danger of positioning Jenny as unable to cope. The 'strain' involved in disinterested data analysis is to suspend one's preferences and discover, as best we can and without guessing, what Jenny's

relationship is to the social worker's intervention. If we proceed with data analysis primarily on the basis of our conceptual repertoire for interpretation, we may not notice the discordance when the reality of the data bumps into our theoretical and personal commitments. Haralan Alexandrov explores the danger of 'quick insights' in the field where the questions beg the answers we already know:

> 'One has to learn to ward off these kinds of easy answers and the comfort they bring, to bracket the available knowledge for the time being, and to remain with the uncertainty of unanswered questions and fragile hypotheses long enough to give the new knowledge a chance to emerge out of the anxiety of not knowing' (Alexandrov 2009: 45).

But how do we ward off these easy answers? First we have to learn how to notice our emotional investments. Psychoanalytically-informed data analytic methods recommend an initial approach to a data extract through the emotional responses that accompany one's encounter with participants through the data (or in the field where possible). Lorenzer in the German hermeneutic tradition suggests using what provokes or irritates (Bereswill, Morgenroth and Redman, 2010: 223; Hollway and Froggett forthcoming). Urwin, in the infant observation tradition, recommends using shock or surprise (2007: 245; 2011)[3]. This principle is central to the method of psychoanalytic observation:

> 'knowledge, theory etc are set aside during the acts of observing and recording in favour of allowing the experience to make its impact ... a new concept of the observer is being employed ... here the truths which interest us are emotional truths. The observer cannot register them without being stirred ... correctly grasped, the emotional factor is an indispensable tool to be used in the service of greater understanding' (Miller et al 1989: 2).

This guiding principle is relevant to the pursuit of a 'bottom up' approach to data analysis. As well as the data analytic technique involved, a state of mind is cultivated; one that tolerates uncertainty and resists temptations to pin down the meaning of a participant's story, to tidy it up and substitute the necessary complexity and open-endedness with certainty. The psychoanalytic ('infant') observation method includes several layers to help turn the emotional experience into thinking, including the resource of others. The training helps to cultivate the requisite epistemological uncertainty during the observation hours themselves. The subsequent note writing provides a further opportunity for reflection. The observation method is also combined with a weekly seminar, in which the group of observers meets, led by an experienced psychoanalytically-trained observer, to process together the impact of the developing observation. Likewise, the seminars that formed a part of our use of infant observation as a research method 'were deliberately devoid of theoretical discussion, both to avoid the tendency for theory to lead or blind observation and because of the assumption that new theory may be required' (Urwin 2007: 249).

The group's task is to use members' subjective responses to the case, which the group can then reflect upon together. This helps the processing of observers' experiences. An example of the group's help in metabolising a difficult experience is when one observer who was treated in inconsistent and careless ways by the mother she was observing,

> 'through the support of the group ... was able to process my hurt and angry feelings and to think about them as belonging to Azra and as reflecting her way of communicating them' (Layton, 2007: 260).

But, to return to Jenny. It was because I noticed with surprise Jenny's seemingly uncomplicated acceptance of the 'young girl' positioning that I chose the above extracts. Once I noticed this surprise and reflected on it, it helped me to suspend one-sided judgements: for example, that Jenny was quite capable of sorting this out herself – adult enough – or she was too young to cope on her own. Thinking in this way helped me to cultivate a situated process of objectivity to ask what did Jenny do and what is conveyed in the data about how she felt and thought? In this way evidence is used to objectify intuition (Urwin 2007: 245). This way of thinking is an example of what Winnicott called 'outside the area of projection', by which he meant outside the area of

experience upon which we impose our wishes at the expense of reality because sometimes the acceptance of an unyielding external reality is too frustrating, painful or simply easy and comfortable to avoid.

My example of the one-sided judgements that I needed to avoid if I were to be an objective data analyst show how projected stuff is not *either* personal *or* cultural (as if the two existed in binary relation), but an expression of cultural material as it has been made use of by a particular person to make sense of their real world encounters and organised into their own self identity. In other words, the content that requires processing is always already socio-cultural, but in idiosyncratic - personal - ways. Jenny's relation to being a young mother provides an example.

My thinking about the social worker's intervention is as follows. Jenny had not been able to tell her parents on her own, but she evidently did choose to tell the family social worker. The social worker's intervention was helpful: together with her parents they were able to think about Jenny's future, which – as Jenny then came to realise – could include the baby. Jenny's anxieties that made it difficult to think about the coming baby were conveyed to the social worker, who picked up the problem, thought about it at a time when Jenny was unable to because of the enormity of the news, and turned it into a practical suggestion. Consequently the parents were told, who likewise did their thinking about Jenny's pregnancy (painful though this reality must have been), helping her to process her emotional experience, become able to think about, and therefore prepare for ('as if'), keeping/having a baby.

Thinking and the processing of affect

By the time of writing - for the purposes of the present article - my understanding of Jenny's coming to terms with being pregnant and telling her parents is explicitly informed by theory, notably via the idea of containment. In Wilfred Bion's theory of thinking, emotional experience plays an essential part (Bion 1962; Ogden 2009). Unlike dualistic theories that create a binary between thinking and feeling, for Bion, the capacity to think is precipitated by raw experience and its affective charge. This transcendence of the binary that characterises thinking and feeling in Western thought is rendered even more radical by Bion's account of its origins in the early intersubjectivity of baby and mother (1962). He describes a container-contained relationship where, in early life, a mother receives her baby's potentially overwhelming raw experience, which she does through affective channels. If she can think about it (the baby has not yet the capacities to do so), she can return the experience in a detoxified form, through her emotional communications and her actions, for example picking up the crying infant and working out what is wrong, rather than shaking it or leaving the room. Bion refers to this kind of thinking as 'reverie', distinguishing it from conscious cognitive-analytic thinking. It has a great deal in common with Winnicott's intermediate area. In time and in good enough circumstances, the baby will internalise the capacity to think, inseparable from a capacity to contain its own emotional states. Throughout life these unconscious intersubjective dynamics apply. We see above the social worker picking up Jenny's dilemma and processing it, enabling Jenny to do so. We then see how the parents' containment of the reality (not angry with her, worried about her studies) enabled Jenny to imagine keeping the baby.

The point of summarising the concept of containment here is because it goes beyond the idea, now widely accepted, that affect is a vital aspect of meaning making; it adds the crucial component of the ability to process affect into open-ended thinking. Thinking does not just follow mechanically from affects; rather it requires the kind of processing that contains the anxieties involved in affects (positive as well as negative). The key characteristic of raw experience is that we do not know where thinking about it might lead and so there is an accompanying fear that can result in closing down the experience and, in consequence, not being able to think about what is happening. Avoiding thinking can be necessary as a way of coping with potentially overwhelming reality, but what happens when faced with what Gentile, above, called reality's unyielding aspects?

Thinking about reality

Facing the reality of pregnancy is not the same as passively accepting a given outcome: thinking about it, in all its emotional magnitude, means that Jenny could imaginatively consider various futures. For example, she could envisage being still at her family home with the baby and what it would be like to continue her studies. After this, she talked about it with her boyfriend in a different way, eventually telling him that she was going to have the baby (not have an abortion) despite his reluctance on the grounds that they were both too young. So he told his mother, Jenny went over and discussed it with his family and came away with his mother's support as well. At the next scan, she took her boyfriend's mother. In other words, the thinking could then be extended, turned into action and further imagining of the future through the support she was able to recruit.

For Jenny, at first it was hard to face the reality: as she tells the interviewer, 'it was almost like it weren't real', but she started getting pains; her period did not come. This is an example of the intransigence of reality, what Gentile calls 'matter's unyielding in-itselfness' (2007: 578). Margaret Archer, a critical realist sociologist, echoes this claim about reality which she contrasts with the social constructionist tradition that has been so influential in British qualitative social science: 'The realist insists that what is the case places limits upon how we can construe it' (Archer 1998: 195). I am interested not only in those limits but in the room they leave for agency. For Jenny, thinking about what was the case - that she was pregnant - was not a simple matter of a logical thought process leading to an accepted conclusion. This is where we need an emotional theory of thinking. For several days after she got the test result and told her boyfriend, they did not talk about it at all: he was not able to help her think about it, but rather the reverse. His immediate reaction (before the avoidance that lasted several days) was 'now I know I am fertile', as if the other meanings of this knowledge, the difficult ones, could be banished and replaced by one that made him feel proud. It is through processes of thinking and avoiding thinking (Bion designates these +K and −K), that psychological reality gradually emerges. It is not about the cognitive analytic process of logical deduction, leading to the conclusion 'I am pregnant'; it is a different kind of thinking, one that Bion insisted was a process of being changed by an emotional experience that can be thought about. For example, an early scan (before any of the adults knew) helped Jenny to symbolise the knowledge of her pregnancy; after that she decided, as she tells the interviewer, 'I can't get rid of it now'.

Critical realism makes a distinction between intransitive and transitive objects. Intransitive objects are 'those things which exist and act independently of our description of them' (Bhaskar 1998: 198), for example, the baby grows in Jenny's womb and if she did not want it to be there, she would have to have an abortion. I have given a psychological dimension to the concept of intransitivity by showing that not all external world facts can be easily thought about: whether they can depends on how emotionally neutral or loaded they are. The processing of emotional experience takes time because it changes the thinker. By the time she sees the second scan, at eight weeks (accompanied by her boyfriend's mother), Jenny seems able to think about both these realities and imaginatively perceives 'a little kiddy growing … so tiny but the heart is beating really fast': an encounter with the knowledge of having a baby that, in Winnicott's terms, above, was experienced creatively in an 'intermediate area of experience to which inner reality and external life both contribute'.

Transitive objects are concept dependent (Bhaskar 1998: 198) and these can point in my analysis to the way that social construction is part of Jenny's challenge in thinking about her pregnancy. An example of a transitive object is Jenny as a 'young mother' (where the combined facts of her age and her status as pregnant produce a socially loaded category that affects the way she is seen and to some extent, therefore, the way she feels about that status). As we saw above, Jenny was treated as rather young to be pregnant. The example of the receptionist at the health centre who gave her the test result over the phone, not knowing her age, demonstrates the category of young mother working in the absence of current external positioning: 'I rang and she said oh yeah the test came back positive, and obviously she didn't know I was just some young girl so she was just normal' (interview 1, late pregnancy). The unyielding materiality of her pregnant condition is shown to be overlaid by a powerful social construct, which contributes to the task that Jenny is faced with in coming to terms with a difficult reality: she imagines briefly the potentially judgemental voice of this woman had she known Jenny's status as 'just some young girl'. Here again we see the work of imagination encountering a

reality (the phone call with the pregnancy test result) and resulting in thinking that involved the use of cultural understanding. (The researcher draws on a very similar cultural understanding in this regard to make sense of Jenny's account.)

This does not mean, however, that internalisation 'positions' Jenny in the sense of constructing her subjectivity, as positioning theory often argues. The determinism of this baldly social constructionist version of position has been frequently criticised. The process of internalisation can be conceptualised in detail and leave room for agency. For Enid Balint 'external reality can in any case only exist for the individual if it is introjected, identified with *and then imaginatively perceived'* (1993: 95, my emphasis). Jenny's creative thinking involves both material and social phenomena. Whereas material realities are intransitive, impervious to the meanings attached to them (Sayer 1992), social phenomena are concept dependent and affected not only by social beliefs but by their imaginative internalisation.

Jenny does not reject the 'young girl' positioning: she does see herself as a young girl. She makes use of the category in understanding that she gets the support she needs: this is part of the contribution of her imaginative work when confronted with her reality. She puts it into words to the interviewer when, just after her son's first birthday, she reflects that it has been an advantage to be so young because she has had masses of support, whereas if she had been older, people would have expected her to manage on her own. It is as if she accepts a reality of being a young girl/young mother without accepting the negative positioning that accompanies it. This is an everyday example of agency. After I first listened to the interviews with Jenny, I wrote in a note of initial impressions that I admired the way that she faced a difficult reality. She tells the interviewer 'I'm a person who thinks about things a lot'. The connection between these two facets of Jenny is in the relation between thinking and processing emotional experience (or affect)[4]. The link between processes involved in thinking and the idea of intermediate or transitional space is expressed in the following quote from a psychoanalyst in the object relations tradition, Christopher Bollas: 'real experience simultaneously slips beyond omnipotent fantasy and beyond a fixed is-what-it-is subjectivity and reality, creating an intermediate space that both enlivens our reality and gives reality to our life (Bollas 1992: 265, cited in Gentile 2007: 574).

Conclusions

In this article I have tried to describe the use of imagination in qualitative research, engaging it with the issue of reality. It is an issue of both ontological and methodological importance to qualitative researchers. My purpose in using data examples from Jenny is to illustrate a theoretical exploration of how qualitative research method can draw not only on cognitive analytic thinking but on the kind of thinking based on emotional experience and still come to valid conclusions. The central theme running through this argument is that without emotion (or affect), meaning making is impossible. This was the message I found in the inspired title of the two conferences called 'Vital Signs'; this is the message whose epistemological implications I have sought to follow through here.

Through material from Jenny's case, I have illustrated a claim about human experience drawn from the British object relations tradition within psychoanalysis, namely about the processing of affect through thinking and the availability of an intermediate area that enables a different, non-cognitive kind of thinking where imagination can emerge and still conjure with reality. The same principle applies to researchers as we strive for an objective understanding of our data: my emphasis allows me also to ask what enables the researcher to use her imagination to get in touch with the realities of the participant as she encounters them in the field and conversely what works against it?

I moved to a scenic representation of case data in order to preserve the vitality of knowledge. If data continue to be emotionally meaningful and this vitality is not ignored in the research process, our meaning making is affected less by our own concerns and more by those communicated from participants. For example, in the original scene, we feel some tension that helps convey the real tensions that Jenny faced when she found out she was pregnant. As readers we are affected and, because we are affected, we are more likely to 'feel with' Jenny (com-passion) as the case unfolds. Conventionally researchers were trained to avoid being affected – it

tainted judgement, objectivity – but in doing so we stifled a key element of research knowing, the emotional quality of meaning, its vitality.

However, the suspicion of affect ('subjectivity' in the traditional sense, meaning lack of objectivity) had a point. We know from research experience that there are many ways in which our own emotional responses can produce blind spots in understanding participants' lives. Qualitative psycho-social method has developed several ways of working that recognise and use these to 'unblind' them[5]. The psychoanalytic observation method starts from the principle of emotional knowing and then builds in supports for the processing of observers' experience that may be hard to think. For the more theoretical purposes of addressing objectivity and validity, we need an account that can differentiate between imagination that is illusory, perhaps delusional, and imagination in the service of reality. I used Winnicott's idea of whether imagination is inside or outside the 'area of projection' to focus on the processes involved in being affected by participants and their data and to consider when these might compromise our objectivity, in the sense of impartiality with regard to evidence and fairness in our representation of what actually was the case.

A central part of my theoretical purpose was to use the idea of an intermediate area as a concept that goes beyond an interconnected set of binaries that have dogged social science and preoccupied psycho-social studies. Most obviously this intermediate area goes beyond a simple treatment of inner and outer while recognising the psychological realities of human bodies that are encapsulated by skin that forms a boundary of inner and outer (Bick 1968; Anzieu 1989). I gave two examples where clearly 'inner' was not confined to 'personal' (and by extension, 'outer' to 'socio-cultural'). The first applied to researchers: the ways that in data analysis we draw, in our thinking, on social science discourses that we may identify with in ways that blind us to the unfolding of meaning in the data. The second applied to Jenny's internalised knowledge of a critical discourse concerning young mothers. I showed how it was possible to go beyond a rather mechanical version of internalisation or positioning, which generally fails to explain agency, through conceptualising the part played by creative imagination in Jenny's relation to the idea of being 'just some young girl' who had got pregnant. Theorising agency raises questions about the role of constraining external conditions. Here the critical realist distinction was useful to clarify the difference between intransitive and transitive. I illustrated this through Jenny's thinking about her pregnancy, which involved both. Thus it was possible to go beyond the binary between reality and construction.

Finally, transcending the binary between thinking and feeling was central to my argument, made possible epistemologically by Bion's theory of thinking and methodologically by infant observation methodology and a move to scenic representation of data. Saddled as we are in Social Science by the history of positivism, it is particularly difficult to shrug off the binary between subjectivity and objectivity. It became apparent that it is closely supported by the association with feeling and thinking, so can be dislodged by systematically adopting an epistemology that values emotional as well as intellectual knowing and establishes procedures consistent with this starting point. As regards Jenny's capacity to face reality objectively, she used an intermediate area to imagine a future, impressively free of the binaries that hinder research!

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Author biography

Wendy Hollway is Emeritus Professor in Psychology at the Open University. She is interested in applying psycho-social principles to empirical research on identity, as illustrated in two books on research methods and identity theory respectively: *Doing Qualitative Research Differently: Free Association, Narrative and the Interview Method* (2012, 2nd edition) (with Tony Jefferson), London: Sage and *The Capacity to Care: Gender and Ethical Subjectivity* (2006) London: Routledge. She was principal researcher on a three-year ESRC-funded project on the transition to maternal identity in first-time mothers, followed by an ESRC writing Fellowship to continue work on maternal identity.

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[1] Despite Winnicott's use of spatial terminology – area, zone, space – it is clear that he is talking about processes that are ongoing through time and that time – including respite from the experience of ongoing time – is part of his analysis.

[2] According to Alfred Lorenzer, German cultural and psychoanalyst, the 'scene' refers to an area in between fantasy and concrete reality (see Redman, Bereswill and Morgenroth 2010; also Froggett and Hollway (2010) and Hollway and Froggett, (forthcoming), for uses of this idea in psycho-social data analysis.

[3] In a recent group data analysis where cultural difference was central, we used our responses of *confusion* to help reflect upon the becoming a mother of one Bangladeshi heritage, London-born new mother (Urwin, Moe, Haavind and Hollway forthcoming).

[4] In this article, I use the terms affect and emotional experience interchangeably; my purpose being to make links with ideas that are being developed in fields that tend to use one or other. While I recognise that it can be useful to make distinctions between these concepts, in this context I think it is unnecessary. Since affect usually refers to something

more embodied and less symbolised (whereas emotion is symbolised), Bion's idea of raw emotional experience is more familiar within an affect paradigm.

[5] See Hollway (2008) for an overview of these and Elliott, Hollway and Ryan (2011) for some case examples of using supervision to enhance thinking through the data.