

PROBLEMY

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FEELINGS MATTER: HISTORIAN'S EMOTIONS

Abstract

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This paper aims to open the discussion about historian's emotions during the research process that has mostly been covered up. It does not pretend to be a thorough account of the topic but a modest essay that might encourage other researcher to reflect on their experiences. Firstly, we briefly describe the current situation in a few neighboring disciplines. Secondly, we explain how we understand emotions and use the terms emotion, feeling and sentiment. Thirdly, we discuss the reasons why most historians keep silent about their feelings. Fourthly, with two examples, we illustrate how historians have written about their emotions. Fifthly, we present a model of emotional phases of research by the Danish social psychologist Steinar Kvale and evaluate its relevance to historical research. Then we look at the causes and/or objects of feelings of students or beginning scholars in cultural history. Finally, we suggest some ways we historians could make our scholarly community emotionally a more supportive one. – It might be good to remember that our discussion concerns primarily the Finnish academic world, and the situation in other countries might be slightly different.

Key words: history, academic world, emotion, feeling, research in history

Słowa kluczowe: historia, świat akademicki, emocja, uczucie, badania historyczne

Emotion has only recently gotten a foot inside the academy and we still don't know whether we want to give it a seminar room, a lecture hall, or just a closet we can air out now and then.

(Ruth Behar 1996, 16)

[T]he ideal of dispassionate inquiry is an impossible dream...

(Alison M. Jaggard 1989, 163)

[Historians'] passions and their prejudices not only motivate but often accompany their writing.

(Scott W. Webster 1996, 200)

Having no emotional connection to the research endeavor, setting or people, is indicative of poorly executed project.

(Amanda Coffey 1999, 159)

INTRODUCTION

Research is an intellectual enterprise but every historian knows by experience that it also contains many, and sometimes totally unexpected feelings or emotions. For quite some time historians have accepted the feelings of the people in the past as a legitimate research topic.¹ However, they mostly have kept silent about their own sentiments and largely omitted the influence of emotions on the research process.² While more and more historians have admitted that the history they write is subjective and partial, they have as well adopted a reflexive approach to the effects of their position on their work, choosing the research topic and approach, formulating the problems, collecting the material, analyzing it, and presenting the interpretations. Gradually they have also begun to reflect upon the possible effects of their emotions.³

Philosophers and psychologists have traditionally included emotions into their field of investigation and scholars in other academic fields have also written about feelings for several decades. Anthropologists, feminist scholars, geographers, sociologists, and social psychologists have been most active in this discussion. Fieldwork and encountering other living persons and their sentiments have sensitized the research-

¹ See e.g. N. Elias, *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation: soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen, I-II* (1939); J. Delumeau, *La Peur en Occident (XIV^e-XVIII^e siècles): Une cité assiégée* (1978) and *La péché et la peur* (1983); E. Badinter, *L'amour en plus: Histoire de l'amour maternel (17^e-20^e siècles)* (1980); P. N. Stearns, C. Zisowitz Stearns, *Anger: The Struggle for Emotional Control in America's History* (1986); P. N. Stearns, *Jealousy: The Evolution of an Emotion in American History* (1989); A. Vincent-Buffault, *The History of Tears: Sensibility and Sentimentality in France* (1991); P. Stearns, *American Cool: Constructing a Twentieth Century Emotional Style* (1994); D. Ackerman, *A Natural History of Love* (1995); P. Dinzelsbacher, *Angst im Mittelalter: Teufels-, Todes- und Gotteserfahrung; Mentalitätsgeschichte und Ikonographie* (1996); W. G. Naphy, P. Roberts (eds.), *Fear in Early Modern Society* (1997); B. H. Rosenwein (ed.) *Anger's Past: Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages* (1998); C. S. Jaeger, *Ennobling Love: In Search of a Lost Sensibility* (1999); W. M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (2000); A. Scott, C. Kosso (eds.), *Fear and its Representations in the Middle Ages* (2002); K. Johannisson, *Nostalgia: En känslas historia* (2001); J. Bourke, *Fear: A Cultural History* (2006). Emotions have also been explored in works about family history, e.g. E. Shorter, *Making of the Modern Family* (1975); Ch. Lasch, *Haven in a Heartless World: The Family Besieged* (1977); L. Stone, *Family, Sex, and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (1977).

² In many scholarly fields discussing one's emotions has been illegitimate or irrelevant to academic debate but this attitude also has been heavily criticized. As early as in 1979, in their paper 'Feminist research: Feminist consciousness and experiences of sexism', the sociologists Liz Stanley and Sue Wise wrote that public accounts of research are 'frequently empty of any feeling of what the research process was actually like' (1979, 360). In 1993, Ruth Wilkins expressed her astonishment about 'the intellectual cover-up of emotion, intuition, and human relationships in the name of expert academic knowledge' in her enjoyable article "Taking it personally". Jack Barbalet expressed similar ideas in his article "Science and emotions" saying that 'emotions are typically excluded from considerations of science' (2002, 132). In geography the influence of the researcher's emotions has also been taken under discussion, e.g. by R. Widdowfield in her "The place of emotions in academic research" (2000).

³ Harris & Huntington 2001, 132; Leskelä-Kärki 2006, passim. While the discussion about emotions is almost non-existent within the discipline of history, we have found several publications in neighboring fields of research most relevant and inspiring.

ers to their own emotions as well.⁴ For anthropologists, feelings in other cultures have been a natural research topic,⁵ and they have included their own feelings in their research reports, albeit usually not in the ordinary text but in prefaces or appendixes.⁶ Yet, they have not systematically attempted to analyze emotions and their impact on the research process or on how the feelings could be used as an analytical tool. Feminist scholars have not done this either although they have written about their emotions from ontological or epistemological point of view.⁷ In sociology and social psychology the research of emotions has had an established position since the 1970,⁸ but even in these fields the scholars have accepted their own feelings as a matter of discussion rather late.

EMOTION, FEELING, SENSATION — THEIR CAUSES AND/OR OBJECTS

The English terms 'emotion', 'feeling' and 'sentiment' are not only used inconsistently by laypersons in their everyday language but also by scholars in different fields of research. Emotions and feelings as well as sentiments have been said both to have and not to have biological or physiological features.⁹ The meanings given to the term 'affect' in different disciplines are even more varied. In this paper we use 'emotion', 'feeling' and 'sentiment' synonymously. Neither the English words 'feel' and 'feeling' nor the French 'sentir' and 'sentiment' have the intellectual connotation of

⁴ E.g. Health sciences, social work, psychology, psychiatry, criminology are examples of extremely demanding fields of research. In her article "Personal agendas in emotionally demanding research" Anne Grineyer has written about the emotional impact of research on the researcher in health sciences (2005). In geography, where fieldwork has traditionally occupied a central part in the research process, the researchers have early contributed to the emotion discourse. See e.g. G. Rowles article "Reflections on Experimental Fieldwork" (1978).

⁵ See e.g. Lutz & White, *The anthropology of emotions* (1986); B. Kilborne, "Fields of Shame: Anthropologists Abroad" (1992); P. Spencer, "Automythologies and the reconstruction of ageing" (1992).

⁶ Oakley 1984, 31; Kleinman & Copp 1993; Hammersley & Atkinson 1995; Lofland & Lofland 1995; Coffey 1999, esp. 158–159. Bronislaw Malinowski's field diary, never intended for publication was, however, published years after his death under the title *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the term* (1989). Some criminologists have also acknowledged their feeling in the appendix. Bosworth 2001, 438. In feminist sociology the tendency is away from 'confessional' accounts towards an exploration of emotionality as central to the research process and understanding. Wilkins 1993, 94.

⁷ Jaggar 1989; Bosworth 2001, 438; Wincup 2001, 19, 20; see also Stanley 1979, 360; Maynard & Purvis 1994.

⁸ E.g. C. H. Osgood, W. H. May, M. S. Miron, *Cross-cultural Universals of Affective Lexicon*, 1975; D. D. Franks, D. E. McCarthy (eds.), *The Sociology of Emotions: Original essays and Research Papers* (1989); P. Thoits, "The sociology of emotions" (1989); see also articles in *Social Psychology Quarterly*.

⁹ About definitions of emotions see e.g. Kleinginna & Kleinginna 1981; McCarthy 1989; Kövecses & Palmer 1999; Korhonen 2002. Scholars in different fields have also used the concepts 'affect' and 'sensation' almost as synonyms to emotion. See e.g. K. R. Gilbert 2001a and 2001b.

'knowing' and 'knowledge' like the German words 'fühlen' and 'Führung' or Swedish words 'känna' and 'känsla' or Finnish words 'tuntea' and 'tunne'.¹⁰

With emotions or feelings or sentiments we understand human processes with biological, physiological, personal, cognitive, social, and cultural as well as historical dimensions. Feelings are based on bio-physiological reactions caused by outer or inner stimuli, and they are experienced or perceived as pleasant or unpleasant. Our memories and thoughts can also create sensations. Emotions are not only somatic experiences but they always have cognitive or intellectual features. Depending on 'the emotional climate' of our environment, we can learn to acknowledge feelings, make them conscious and express them or we can learn to repress or hide them. To be able to name a feeling one has to be aware of it. However, even repressed feelings don't disappear from the mind but keep affecting our lives. Emotions are personal in the sense that it is always the individual who experiences them, but she does it as a member of certain society and culture, in a certain material environment, in relation to other people, and at a certain time. The culture gives its members the tools to control others in experiencing, naming and expressing emotions. It also gives individuals better or worse means to control their own feelings. In various cultures there are different ideals for experiencing and expressing emotions, but they are not always achieved in practice.¹¹ Some feelings are short-lived but others last longer and they can be called 'moods' or 'attitudes'¹² but here we don't include those into our discussion. Besides, we exclude the feelings caused by events or persons in the researcher's private life although those sentiments could definitely have a serious effect on the individual's work in the academic field as well.

While doing research and teaching in cultural history, we have noticed that there are various factors that arouse feelings in the researcher. They can be divided in three, non-exclusive categories: research process, things and people. In the reality, emotions are intertwined with all of three factors and cannot be separated but for analytical purposes.

— *Research process*: Many kinds of emotions arise that are connected with the phases of research, discovering research topic, making research plan, formulating problems, choosing approach or theory, choosing methods and contexts, collecting sources, doing analysis, writing, publishing, receiving critique, etc.

— *Things*: During the research process many more or less material things cause feelings in the scholar, e.g. research topic, sources and their contents, archives

¹⁰ E.g. the Finnish philosopher Ilkka Niiniluoto has paid attention to the cognitive aspect of emotion words in different languages (1997a, 6–7).

¹¹ See e.g. Rosaldo 1984; Jaggar 1989; Lutz 1988; Burkitt 1997; Niiniluoto 1997b; Kövecses & Palmer 1999; Lyon 2005.

¹² According to Otto Friedrich von Bollnow emotions are focused upon an object, but moods by contrast do not have objects as such. However, emotions do build upon specific moods in the sense that moods constitute the frame of determining the possible emotions (1974, 35–37). Charlotte Bloch adds to this that the relationship between moods and emotions can operate the other way around. That is, an accumulation of certain emotions may also give rise to the development of specific moods. See Bloch 2001 and 2002, 128.

and archival collections, libraries, museums, equipment (e.g. computer, micro-film reader, tape and video recorder),¹³ Internet, as well as sponsors, etc.

— *People*: Persons, either present or absent, dead or alive, may arouse historian's emotions. She¹⁴ could target her feelings towards a number of people, e.g. the person(s) she studies, herself, research assistants or partners, interviewees, colleagues, supervisor, employer, reviewers, etc.

Naturally, historians are not the only scholars who experience various emotions. In any discipline the researchers could list numerous sentiments connected with their research process as well as things and people.

WHY HISTORIANS HAVE KEPT SILENT ABOUT THEIR FEELINGS?

So far, feelings have not been a part of the 'normal science'¹⁵ that is supposed to pursue objective investigations. Completed and published accounts of research written by emotionless scholars seem to be effortless and 'sterile'; they never register any difficulties the researcher might have experienced.¹⁶ Even the historians, who write in the first person singular and strive after transparency in their research, hide their feelings. In such restrained academic communities, students and young scholars get socialized into an insensitive environment and learn not to display their emotions. Still, as Alison M. Jaggard writes, the ideal of an impassionate research is an impossible dream or a myth that has exerted enormous influence on Western epistemology.¹⁷ The reasons among historians why they have kept silent about their emotions are basically the same as those of scholars in any field. On the basis of literature as well as our own experiences, we can list several reasons, why historians have mostly kept quiet about their feelings in public:

— In the mainstream or 'malestream'¹⁸ research and scholarly community, there exists a male rationality that separates mind and body, reason and emotion. Because they are considered to belong to the (hu)man's natural and animal part, the feelings must be controlled and not even talked about. Emotions are implicitly linked with non-academic life, femininity and weakness.¹⁹ The common 'eti-

¹³ We thank our colleague Petri Paju for reminding us of personal computer. Like other electronic equipments, cameras, audio or videotape recorders, it may arouse positive feelings or anxiety, fear, shame, embarrassment, aggression, frustration and stress. *Altonen 2004*.

¹⁴ For the sake of clarity, we use the feminine form of the third person singular 'she' when we speak about historians in general.

¹⁵ Th. S. Kuhn introduced the term 'normal science' in his book *Structure of Scientific Revolution* in 1970.

¹⁶ *Bosworth 2001, 438; Wincup 2001, 18*.

¹⁷ In her article "Love and Knowledge: Emotion in Feministic Epistemology" (1989) Alison M. Jaggard argues that the Western tradition has tended to obscure the vital role of emotion in the construction of knowledge. In the form of ideology it fulfils certain social and political functions.

¹⁸ Instead of 'mainstream' research several feminist scholars use the term 'malestream'. See e.g. *Wilkins 1993, 94*.

¹⁹ *Jaggard 1989, 151, 161–163; Wincup 2001, 18; Bloch 2002, 123*. The Finnish philosophers Sara Heinämaa and Martina Reuter have written a philosophical essay about women's sentimentality and the emotional rationality (1997).

- quette' or 'feeling rules'²⁰ in the scholarly community determine the code of manners. Emotions are not part of good scholarly behavior — neither expressed nor spoken about.²¹ One could even speak about an 'invisible code'²² the researchers follow. The female historian also has to be 'a good fellow' to be able to succeed, to get grants or tenure, to gain fame and fortune, and to break the 'glass ceiling' that is said to prevent women from advancing in their career.²³
- Historians have tried to prove that they can do 'proper research' by imitating natural scientists that appreciate objectivity and neutrality.²⁴ Thus emotions must be wiped off from the research.
 - Historians have pursued the acceptance of their colleagues with their quasi-objective and quasi-neutral accounts of the past. They have not been able to look at things in a new light or dared to change their old practices.
 - It is not easy to convert one's feeling into words despite one acknowledges them.²⁵
 - Researcher has feelings but she conceals them. She may totally deny them for herself and/or repress them so that others cannot see them either. Another possibility is that she acknowledges her feelings but does not express them in a commonly recognizable way.²⁶
 - The scholar is totally emotionless. More probable is that she represses or hides her feelings.
 - A community hostile to emotions may stigmatize an expressive person as 'womanish' and thus incompetent.²⁷ In such a place it is difficult to talk about or express one's feelings.

²⁰ Arlie Russell Hochschild uses the term 'feeling rules' in her seminal book *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feelings* (1983). The rules tell us where and how we should feel, and it is mainly the authorities who are the keepers of the rules.

²¹ E.g. Jaggar 1989, 151; Newton 1997, 75; Harris & Huntington 2001, 135.

²² We have taken the term 'invisible code' from W. M. Reddy, *Invisible Code: Honor and Sentiment in Postrevolutionary France, 1814–1848* (1997) and also find it very apt when speaking about researcher's feelings.

²³ About the glass ceiling see e.g. L. Wirth, *Breaking Through the Glass Ceiling: Women in Management* (2000).

²⁴ Lewis Wolpert and Alison Richards tell in their book *Passionate Minds: The Inner World of Scientists* (1997) how many famous scientists have admitted the importance of emotions for their success in research. They refer to feelings wonder, joy, sorrow, hope, fear and love. They understand that emotions are necessary to motivate research. Scientific workers, and also scholarly and academic workers, tend to tolerate relatively lower wage and poorer employment conditions than comparable workers because of the positive sentiments associated with knowledge production in general, in which a significant component is in the form of emotional satisfactions and the discharging of emotional commitment. Jack Barbalet has also paid attention to the scientists' feelings in his article "Science and emotions" (2002). The authors do not, however, mention the lack of emotions in the final publications.

²⁵ See e.g. Rowles 1978, 188; Widdowfield 2000, 201.

²⁶ Jaggar 1989, 161; Widdowfield 2000, 199; Wincup 2001, 18.

²⁷ Newton 1997, 75: When interviewing women for her dissertation *Construction of Femininity in Academic Women* (1994), the Finnish sociologist Maarit Wager observed and experienced very strong

HOW HISTORIANS WRITE ABOUT THEIR FEELINGS

There are not many historians who have publicly written about their emotions. Here, we present two researchers who have described their feelings in their publications. It is worth noticing that both are female scholars. The first of them is British social historian Mary Bosworth. Her article shows how difficult it is to abandon the traditional distancing style in scholarly presentation; it is safer to write as 'we' than 'I' when one discusses emotions. The other one, Finnish cultural historian Maarit Leskelä-Kärki writes openly in first person singular. Both authors have, however, an empathic attitude towards their research objects. In their publications they have described emotions connected with the research process, things and institutions as well as people. Bosworth, who has studied history of criminology in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, writes:

As a result, after the original optimism dwindles, the researcher of early modern punishment may find the combined effect of trails running cold, illegible documents, restricted opening hours, cool and even resistant librarians and archivists, incomplete, inconsistent catalogues, and the task of sifting the infrequent, useful documents from the mass, discouraging. The researcher may, in other words, wonder why he/she decided to abandon the present, and look to the past: prison visiting and ethnographic research seemed easy by comparison.²⁸

Undoubtedly she describes her own experiences and feelings when Bosworth mentions the emotion words: 'frustrating', 'disorienting', 'draining', and 'troubling'. However, she writes in general terms about emotionally demanding historical work. A few lines later she adds:

First, the limitations of source material mentioned earlier are frustrating. Second, the paradoxical manner in which the past is both familiar and very different can be disorienting. Finally, studying crime and punishment is draining since they both cause human suffering. Such harm, whether committed by an individual or by the state is troubling...²⁹

When she returns to the fragmentary sources Bosworth only refers to the 'reader' without mentioning herself although it must have been she who actually read the documents and experienced the feelings mentioned. She uses such words as 'upsetting', 'trouble', and 'poignant'.

For example, fragments of letters written by women in the seventeenth century, begging for their release from indefinite sentences of confinement under letters du cachet are replete with a suffering immune to the passing of time. The women's disempowerment is especially upsetting. [...] Accounts of rape, poverty, sum-

emotions connected with researching as well as with private life but could not include them into her publication. Only later on, she wrote a separate article about researcher's emotions, but only in Finnish: "Tutkijuus ja tunteet" (1999).

²⁸ Bosworth 2001, 434–435.

²⁹ Bosworth 2001, 427.

mary trials and executions, however brief, trouble the reader no matter that they occurred in another era. To read that individuals could be branded or confined for life for minor crimes such as domestic theft or illicit sexual behaviour is equally poignant.³⁰

Continuing her account Bosworth admits that the subject matter of criminology is profoundly affective enterprise. Still, it is difficult for the researchers to acknowledge any feelings, since they are not supposed to appear in the scientific debate. Bosworth challenges her colleagues by asking, "Yet, by not admitting to the queries and feelings we have about our own research, how can we expect society to acknowledge the contingent, problematic and disturbing effects of punishment and crime?"³¹ She thus suggests that to be able to convince her readers the researcher must be able to encounter her own sentiments and to deal with them.

Maarit Leskelä-Kärki describes researcher's emotions in personal tones and tells not only about negative feelings but about positive ones as well. Compared with Bosworth, she has studied completely different women, three literary sisters in the Krohn intellectual family in Finland since the end of the 19th century who continuously expressed their feelings in their private letters. Touching an important ethical question she asks if historians have the right to penetrate the privacy of people in the past filled with such feelings as e.g. depression, envy, sadness and bitterness.³² She also asks if her own feelings have an effect on her approach and suggests that even negative feelings and difficulty to understand may create a fruitful dialogue between the scholar and her research object. In two publications Leskelä-Kärki comes up with the idea of 'hermeneutics of emotions' that could deal with encountering the emotions of historical people, about the ways they arouse feeling in us and how the feelings affect our research problems and approach. Unfortunately she has not developed the idea further. Writing about the emotions of the three sisters might have made it easier for Leskelä-Kärki to express her own feelings in her publications. She admits that the research has been an agonizing process because she had been forced to make choices, leave out material and interpretations. She also reveals, that "I feel joy of discovery and success, I feel that I have a Mission."³³ Even the short statements about researcher's feelings convince the reader that emotions cannot be neglected in historical or any other scholarly work.

³⁰ Bosworth 2001, 437–438.

³¹ Bosworth 2001, 438.

³² In her article "On Writing Other People's Lives: Self-Analytic Reflections of a Narrative researcher" (1996, 65, 69) the psychotherapist Ruthellen Josselson says that studying human lives, the researcher can experience anxiety, fear, guilt and shame for entering their privacy and exploiting them. Amia Lieblich and Melvin E. Miller have also noticed that researcher using oral history material can feel her/himself as an intruder. See Lieblich, "Some Unforeseen Outcomes of Conducting Narrative Research With People of One's Own Culture" (1996, 177) and Miller, "Ethics and Understanding Through Interrelationship: I and Thou in Dialogue" (1996, 130–131.)

³³ Maarit Leskelä-Kärki published her dissertation about the three sisters Krohn *Kirjoittajan maailmassa: Krohnin sisaret ja kirjallinen elämä* (*Writing in the World: The Sisters Krohn and Literary Life*) in 2006. Earlier, in 2004 she had written an article "Tutkija ja kolme sisarta" (Researcher and three sisters) also describing her feelings as a historian.

STEINAR KVALE: EMOTIONAL PHASES IN INTERVIEW RESEARCH

The one and only model for emotional phases in research we have found so far, is the “Emotional Dynamics of an Interview Study” by the Danish social psychologist Steinar Kvale presented in his book *InterView* (1996).³⁴ We have chosen it here because it could possibly be applied to oral history. Kvale divides the qualitative research process into five emotional phases that can be encountered in interview studies as most distinct.³⁵ — Here we have printed the emotional phases next to the corresponding stages in research process.

I. <i>Antipositivist Enthusiasm Phase</i>	1. Thematising, 2. Designing
II. <i>The Interview-Quoting Phase</i>	3. Interviewing
III. <i>The Working Phase of Silence</i>	4. Transcribing, 5. Analyzing
IV. <i>The Aggressive Phase of Silence</i>	5. Analyzing, [6. Verifying]
V. <i>The Final Phase of Exhaustion</i>	7. Reporting

I. *Antipositivist Enthusiasm Phase*. An interview project usually starts with enthusiasm and commitment. This phase coincides with thematising (1) and designing (2) the research. — Regardless of her methods, historian is also ardent in the beginning of research, but in our view historian's excitement is more *for* something than against. Besides, the controversy between positivism and antipositivism is supposedly passé in most history departments.

II. *The Interview-Quoting Phase*. When the researcher has started the interviews (3 phase in the research process) she is intensively engaged in the interviews and the narratives of the interviewees. She wants to share her experiences with the colleagues who get tired rather quickly. — In oral history, this phase exist, too. In traditional historical investigation where she uses traditional archival or other materials the researcher can also discover exciting facts. Official and personal documents, letters and diaries, contemporary literature and newspaper articles, they all can provoke strong feelings in the scholar, although she does not confront the subjects face-to-face as interviewer does. Interviews have, however, brought into historical research the same kinds of problems of interaction that social scientists have long been familiar with.

III. *The Working Phase of Silence*. During the transcribing (4) and analysis (5) phase the researcher works soberly and patiently. She no longer bothers the colleagues with research issues and only answers laconically if asked about the project: “The interviews are transcribed” or “The analysis has just started.” — Correspondingly historian continues working diligently in silence when she has began analyzing her material.

IV. *The Aggressive Phase of Silence*. When she continues with the analysis (5) but no results are presented, the researcher may meet an inquisitive colleague with distinct annoyance: “It's none of your business”. This ‘mid-project crisis’ is char-

³⁴ Kvalés empirical base involves observations from his colleagues' and students' studies as well as his own recollections.

³⁵ The emotional phases of qualitative research are presented in K v a l e 1996, 85–89.

acterized by exceeded time limits, chaos, and stress.³⁶ — Historian who proceeds in her research encounters a similar phase and does not want to be disturbed either. Of course, anxiety builds up easily if she cannot finish the analysis and exceeds deadlines.

V. *The Final Phase of Exhaustion*. Fatigue dominates the reporting stage (7). The project may finally become so overwhelming that there is no time or energy left for reporting the findings. Hundreds of transcribed pages remain in the files, or the researcher conjures up some entertaining lectures, but postpones the final report. Or she may be able to edit and publish the interviews as isolated quotations without any kind of analysis. In cases where a more systematic “final report” does appear, the researcher may feel resigned because she has not succeeded in passing on to the readers in a methodologically justifiable way the work required by collecting and analyzing the source material. In some cases, even careful pre-calculations might fail. — The quantity of historian’s sources is often huge and the quality is varied. The wide-ranging material could easily feel insurmountable and impossible to master. Exhaustion could be close without accurate planning and reasonable realization.

As all models do, Kvale’s model simplifies the research process but it describes quite well the investigation in which rich interview material is created and analyzed. In history, neither the phases of research nor the emotional phases can be so clearly separated from each other. Therefore the range of emotions is wider throughout the process. Having presented his model, Kvale hopefully writes that with many qualitative research courses and with an abundance of method literature, the novice researcher will get through the emotional stages of an interview research.³⁷ — As cultural historians, we doubt that qualitative methodological courses and books are enough to help the beginners to manage their emotions in a constructive way, but the more experienced colleagues have to create an open and tolerant discussing atmosphere where it is possible to safely express one’s feelings, as we later suggest.

EMOTIONS OF NOVICE RESEARCHERS IN CULTURAL HISTORY

A seasoned scholar can recognize the feelings she has experienced and manage them better than a student or novice researcher. Master’s thesis may be demanding partly because teachers don’t pay enough or any attention to the emotional aspect of research. Students are well aware of the scholarly requirements, but they don’t know what to do with the emotions that arise during the research process. Here we look at the feelings our students in cultural history discussed about in seminar sessions at the University of Turku, Finland.³⁸ We also utilize our own experiences from other

³⁶ According to Kvale, in qualitative research the verification stage (6), ascertaining the generalizability, reliability and validity of the interview findings, is often skipped. In the study of history these are skipped, too. Kvale 88, 89.

³⁷ Kvale 1996, 89.

³⁸ We want to thank our students in the seminars of urban history and oral history for their insight into the emotional dynamics of research and openness and willingness to share their experiences as well as the permission to use their experiences in this article.

occasions. Some of the feelings are pleasant and others are unpleasant. Beginning the thesis may arouse many kinds of feelings:

- The students in cultural history have traditionally been encouraged to discover their research topics independently and according to their own interests. This is not always easy but may cause lack of confidence, even despair in the individual. The student cannot be sure if she has chosen a worthy topic.³⁹
- Discovering the topic may, on the other hand, bring about insight, joy and satisfaction. But no matter what the topic, one can never be sure in the beginning, if it is 'good' or 'stupid'. At the same time the student might wonder: Where do I find sources? Can I find them? Do I find enough material? Do I find relevant research literature? Will this ever work?
- If the student must for one reason or other change her topic it makes her disappointed, frustrated and/or angry. She may feel herself totally incompetent and badly failed. If she has to change the topic in a later phase that might cause much stronger feelings, indeed depression.
- Presenting her topic and research plan to the supervisor and other students in seminars may cause anxiety and fear: What will they say?

When the research topic has been officially accepted and turns out to be feasible the student can continue her work but emotions do not disappear. More and more feelings rise linked both with the present process and the past to be studied.

- Feelings of uncertainty and incompetence frequently rise into mind: How should I approach this particular problem? How can I find a suitable theory? Which methods should I use? What are the appropriate contexts for my research?
- While the supervisor urges her to start collecting the material and writing the account at the same time, anxiety might overcome the student: How can I write if I don't know what to write? While we in our department have very flexible schedules for graduate students, they very easily find excuses for postponing the writing: I have to read more publications, I have to collect more material, etc. 'Horror of the white page' gets worse and worse the longer one postpones the commencement.
- Usually, at a certain point, writing becomes easy and the thesis fills the student's whole life. It can be like a new lover with whom one wants to spend days and nights. The ideas 'cook' slowly in the brains both consciously and unconsciously.
- Now writing flows, now it gets stuck. Delight and enjoyment might alternate with anguish and despair.
- When the research seems to steal too much of her life the student may, without noticing it, begin to do strange things only to get away from the hard work and to gain counterbalance in new pastimes.
- Loneliness is a regular guest to every scholar and to the student, too. Writing her thesis the student might feel that there is nobody she can talk to about her

³⁹ Emotional problems, but different ones, could also rise if the professor dictates the topic and/or the title of the thesis. However, the topic given by the supervisor usually guarantees a mediocre thesis, at least.

research in general or her difficulties in particular, let alone her emotions. Anxiety builds up when nobody seems to understand what writing a thesis really means. It is not always quite clear to the student either.

- If she cannot talk about her feelings to the fellow-students or to the teachers the individual student might feel that she is somehow deviant and strange while all the others seem to be calm and balanced.

ENCOUNTERING THE SOURCE MATERIAL AND PEOPLE OF THE PAST

Historians who have written about their emotions connected with the research process have usually mentioned the sentiments caused by documents or individuals in the past. Autobiographical material, letters, diaries, and memoirs in particular, easily touch the scholar in any field of research, but almost any source might cause an unexpected tempest in the scholar's mind.⁴⁰ The student also experiences various feelings when she works with her research material.

- The amount of material often feels overwhelming and the student gets confused: Am I competent at all to do historical research if I cannot make sense of the mass or put it in any reasonable order?
- Insufficient and fragmentary source material might make the student anxious or even worried: Do I have enough documents? Is it the right kind of material? How can I find more?
- Getting acquainted with various documents and persons of the past might cause real emotional storms in the student's mind. She might leave the archives in rage or disgust or admiration and respect, even love. The targets of the positive feelings are usually easy to identify and they don't necessarily ring a warning bell in the researcher. On the other hand, negative emotions that have no explicit cause or object might make the student feel guilty: Am I a poor researcher because of my 'inappropriate' feelings, or feelings in general? Is it normal to get upset reading old papers in the archives? Am I angry with the historical persons or myself?
- If the material forces the student to admit that history has not taught anything neither in the past or today she may get frustrated and hopeless. Her anger is not aimed at the past but at the present society where the wrongdoings continue.⁴¹
- Powerlessness might discourage and depress the student, even stop her work. Albeit committed with and enthusiastic about her topic, she may feel that her research is useless and nobody cares about it, especially if the supervisor does not regularly meet the student and give feedback.

⁴⁰ See e.g. Bosworth 2001; Wincup 2001; Leskelä-Kärki 2004 and 2006.

⁴¹ See also Wincup 2001.

- Learning about the accidents or losses her subjects have gone through the student probably feels sympathy for them. On the other hand, achievements and success could make her feel happy and proud.⁴²
- Intellectually challenging as they are, the sources also give pleasure and satisfaction to the student if the analysis and interpretation succeed.
- Occasionally, the sources give unexpected delight: issues that in the past were regarded as important and grave might seem childish and amusing to the student today who cannot help but giggle or burst in laughter — and get wondering looks from others in the archives or library.

Naturally, historian cannot accept all that the people in the past have done. Still, her duty is not to accuse them for their deeds but to treat them respectfully and do them justice. She has to do her best to understand, interpret and explain past events, phenomena, and human behavior in the context of their lives, time, culture and society. In certain cases even understanding can be difficult. Regardless of her values and feelings the student is supposed to be as non-partial as possible or at least to be aware of her partiality and subjectivity.

FINISHING THE THESIS AND ENCOUNTERING COLLEAGUES

When writing approaches the final stop the thesis may become oppressive. The student might tire even before she has revised the text and wants to get rid of it as soon as possible no matter if the results are well grounded and how she has succeeded in presenting them. Naturally, at a certain point, she has to stop writing, if she ever wants to graduate.⁴³ Letting go might be difficult for several reasons:

- Research is fun and by writing one can create something material, at least printed pages.
- The student might feel that she has not yet said all that is essential. More and more interesting and necessary details tend to appear.
- Since the Master's thesis is usually the first larger academic text she has ever written the student might doubt if her style is scholarly enough or if it has all the necessary references and notes correctly formulated.
- She might not have worried about the grade earlier but towards the end the student could begin to worry about it: Could I get a better mark, if I add this or that detail or if I write ten more pages?
- Writing the last full stop scares; thereafter one cannot improve the thesis any more.
- The student gets afraid of leaving the safe world academy and happy student life. It feels scary to enter the 'real world'.

Finally, when the thesis is finished and the pages are bound in black buckram covers the student experiences still more emotions.

⁴² See also Bloch 2002, 122.

⁴³ At the Finnish universities there are many disciplines in which the study schedule is very flexible; there is no absolute time limit for finishing the thesis.

- The student might feel joy, pride and pleasure: After all, I did it! She is satisfied and happy after a long effort. The work looks valuable on the bookshelf and anybody can read it in the library and cite in their publications.
- If the thesis gets a good grade the student might feel self-satisfaction or downright euphoria, and on the other, a sloppy work and low grade might create discontentment, sadness, shame, anger, envy, or depression.
- No matter what the grade is the student could be so fed up with the work that she does not want to see it in a while or ever. In the worst case, she hates the thesis so much that she destroys it.

If we compare the feelings our students have told about with Steinar Kvale's emotional model presented earlier we can see that there are certain feelings that are comparable but in general the experienced emotions don't quite match with the phases of the model. The 'real life' is more complicated and the emotions linked with the successive stages of research process are more divergent than in the model. Besides, neither the emotional stages nor the stages of the research process are less clearly distinguishable in practice than in theory.

No matter how informal and relaxed the atmosphere in the department is the graduate student is not a member of the scholarly community. In case, she continues her post-graduate studies the student might for a long time cherish an illusion of the scholarly community as a harmonious, supporting and encouraging team. Therefore when she gets more involved with the departmental life the student may get badly surprised when she realizes what kind of a place it is emotionally. Colleagues seems to compete with each other, apply for the same jobs and court for the favors of the superiors. Everybody tries to write better and more publications than others. Everybody applies for the same grants and writes applications, one better than the other, but only a few can win. It is not easy to be friendly and meet the competitor face-to-face who received the grant you so badly needed.⁴⁴ Could you be happy about the success of others when you have failed and feel disappointed and envious? In addition to competition, researchers are each other's judges and critics as peer reviewers who exercise more or less power over each other. Still, they expect respect and recognition from the same persons.⁴⁵

WHAT TO DO WITH THE EMOTIONS?

In this article, we have written about historian's feelings mostly from the point of view of a student writing her Master's Thesis or a novice researcher. Traditionally historians have kept silent about their emotions but it seems reasonable to take the

⁴⁴ See e.g. Bloch 2002.

⁴⁵ In "Managing the emotions of competition and recognition in Academia" sociologist Charlotte Bloch writes about feelings in academic world. She refers frequently to Pierre Bourdieu and talks critically about peer-group judgments. Bloch 2002, 114–115; Bourdieu 1975, 19. Warren O. Hagstrom has studied the academic peer-review or peer-group judgment already in his article "Gift-giving as an Organizing Principle in Science" (1972) and Tony Blecher & Paul R. Trowler have written about the same academic institution in their book *Academic tribes and territories* (2001).

scholar's sentiments seriously and do something about them. If emotions are regarded as weaknesses, with suitable approach, we might possibly be able to turn them into strengths. But how could and should it be done?

In her book about management of emotions in organizations the sociologist Arlie R. Hochschild says very aptly: 'Managing emotions is an art fundamental to civilized living,'⁴⁶ and it holds true in academic world as well. The term 'emotional intelligence' that Daniel Goleman has introduced also deals with the ability to know and manage one's emotions, to recognize and handle emotions in others.⁴⁷ Instead of accepting 'the feeling culture of Academia' that has been a silencing and controlling one,⁴⁸ we could learn a new more tolerant culture. Naturally, to be able to work together we historians have to manage our emotions⁴⁹ or to learn to express them in a constructive way. This could be done by recognizing and acknowledging our emotions and including them in the scholarly discussion, even though, in order to prevent confrontations, it might seem an attractive alternative to push them aside. But how should we vent our sentiments, at departmental coffee table or in separate articles or in the prefaces and appendixes of our books?

Writing reflexively about one's emotions might be personally helpful but much more could be done for the whole scholarly community. It is possible to make the academic world and socialization into the historian's profession smoother. Instead of staying dispassionate and neutral, we could discuss our feelings, not only between colleagues but also with our students. We could start the 'emotional (dis)course' in the first methodological classes and reopen it later whenever it would be practical and useful, for example, in graduate and post-graduate seminars. On the other hand, for the experienced researchers it might be fruitful to speak about emotions in special methodological discussions and symposiums. However, we should never try to force anybody to reveal her emotions if she does not want to.

Borrowing from Jennifer Harris and Annie Huntington we suggest that emotions could deepen the whole research process. If we speak about the impact of our feelings and the possible ways to deal with them in our community, then anyone who has experienced puzzling emotions during her research could see that she is not abnormal, but on the contrary. We all have feelings and they are part and parcel of researching, as they are of any other profession. According to Harris and Huntington the researcher who has actively reflected her emotions can use them in the analysis or enrich her publications. She could discover important points in the material and better understand them.⁵⁰ Several other scholars have expressed same kind of ideas.⁵¹ Besides, qualitative methods in which the researcher encounters the research ob-

⁴⁶ Hochschild 1983, 21.

⁴⁷ Goleman has published two bestsellers of the topic: *Emotional Intelligence* (1995) and *Working with Emotional Intelligence* (1998). See also Gilbert 2001b, 11.

⁴⁸ Bloch 2002, 122.

⁴⁹ For emotional management, feeling rules and expression rules see e.g. Hochschild (1983).

⁵⁰ Harris & Huntington 2001, 135, 137–138, 140–141.

⁵¹ Jaggar 1989; Wilkins 1993; Widdowfield 1999; Gilbert 2001; Rosenblatt 2001.

jects or other narrators in person tend to sensitize the researcher for her feelings as well as for those of others.⁵² Therefore oral historians who create their research material in interviews together with the interviewees could have the head start in making the atmosphere in their working communities an accepting, encouraging, empathic, open hearted, and cooperative one. Feelings matter!

⁵² See e.g. R. Widdowfields, "The Place of emotions in academic research" (2000) and E. Wincups, "Feminist research with women awaiting trial: the effects on participants in the qualitative research process" (2001).