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## **The Emotionalization of Reflexivity**

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Biography: Mary Holmes is a senior lecturer in sociology at Flinders University in Australia. She has published various articles relating to her empirical work on distance relationships and to her other research interests in the sociology of the body and in social movements and emotions. She has recently published *The Representation of Feminists as Political Actors* (VDM, 2008) *What is Gender?* (Sage, 2008) and *Gender in Everyday Life* (Routledge, 2007).

## The Emotionalization of Reflexivity

### Abstract

Reflexivity refers to the practices of altering one's life as a response to knowledge about one's circumstances. Whilst theories of reflexivity have not entirely ignored emotions, attention to them has been insufficient. These theories need emotionalising and this paper proposes that emotions have become central to a subjectivity and sociality that is relationally constructed. The emotionalization of reflexivity refers not just to a theoretical endeavour but is a phrase used to begin to explore whether individuals are increasingly drawing on emotions in assessing themselves and their lives. It is argued that dislocation from tradition produces a reflexivity that can be very dependent on comparing experiences and can move others to reflect and reorder their own relations to self and others. Thus emotions are crucial to how the social is reproduced and to enduring within a complex social world.

Key words: detraditionalization, emotions, reflexivity, routine action, symbolic interaction

### Introduction

The argument that follows is made in an unemotional and non-reflexive mode. Much sociology of emotions seems to similarly lack emotionality. Applying the highly rational register required by academic convention may not inevitably stifle emotional expression in writing, but it is very difficult to write academically and emotionally about emotions. Why this may be so requires another paper, but I begin with an apology for the lack of emotionality in this paper because it is an absence I would like the reader to keep in mind. What I have done is try to be clear, and it is perhaps that very effort at clarity which has washed away the flavour of the feelings which attend all our thinking, and which I here argue are crucial in making the social world within reflexive modernity.

Reflexivity is a capacity via which individual and social lives are produced and changed as people react to their circumstances in ways no longer governed by tradition (Giddens, 1990). There has been considerable debate within sociology about the meaning and importance of reflexivity within the contemporary social world (e.g. Archer, 2007; Beck, 1992; Beck et al., 1994; Giddens, 1990). These debates have built upon philosophical engagements with the Cartesian dichotomization of reason and emotion. Despite this history, efforts to consider the emotional component of reflexivity have been limited. Highlighting reflexive emotionality will rescue definitions and explications of reflexivity from their over-focus on the cognitive and the individual. Instead I propose defining reflexivity as an emotional, embodied *and* cognitive process in which social actors have feelings about and try to understand and alter their lives in relation to their social and natural environment and to others. Emotions are understood not in terms of some that may retard reflection and some that may enhance it; rather reflexivity is thought to be more than reflection and to include bodies, practices and emotions. The first section establishes a starting point for this argument by showing how theories of reflexivity focused around detraditionalization and risk (Beck, 1992; 1994; Giddens, 1990; 1992) have

pessimistically highlighted fear as a response to the difficulties of making calculated choices within the uncertainty of modernity. Uncertainty renders habitual action unfeasible, but a wide range of emotions are drawn on to feed reflexive practices which continue to connect most individuals to each other (Archer, 2003; 2007). The emotional and relational component of reflexivity are outlined in the second section, where it is suggested that symbolic interactionism offers ways forward in thinking and researching. The final section sets out some initial steps toward understanding the emotionalization of reflexivity as crucial in current processes of self and social (re)production. Comprehending emotionalization is vital to examining how contemporary subjects reflexively produce a sense of feeling, thinking and being in the world which relies on others.

### **Reflexivity, Risk, Routine Action and Trust**

Theories of reflexivity do not adequately attend to emotions. One of the most influential of those theories has argued that a proliferation of risk has driven people towards reflexivity (e.g. Beck, 1992; 1994), but recognising a fear of risk is insufficient. Beck distinguishes between reflection as about knowledge, and implicitly rational choices, and reflexivity as the way people are forced into self-confrontation by social processes such as modernisation and individualisation. For Beck reflexivity is closely associated with risk assessment as individuals try to deal with risks, like the high risk of relationship break-up, which they cannot protect themselves against. However, fear is only one emotion attached to reflexivity and to what extent people are risk assessors in all areas of their lives is open to question (Elliott, 2002a: 300).

A more humanly emotional view, going beyond the stark calculability associated with risk, can be generated by examining how reflexivity is positioned between the reproduction of self and of society (Elliott, 2002a: 300-301). Such a view can challenge Beck's (1994) claim that reflection is about knowing, and not to be confused with reflexivity, which involves self-dissolution. For him reflexivity describes a reflection free reproduction and alteration of society via modernisation. This can make people reflect on the threats to self, but it does not inevitably do so. People have to modify their lives because of what is happening at the social level, but as Anthony Elliott (2002a: 302) argues that this may be more a 'reflex' than a result of reflection. Like Elliott, I doubt the distinction between reflection and reflexivity, suggesting that 'reflection-free forms of societal self-dissolution' (2002a: 302) cannot be separated from the individual's ability to reflect. Social processes may have unintended consequences, but this does not mean that the reproduction of the social involves no reflection. Elliott's work assists in establishing that thinking feeling (not just fearing) agents play a part in social reproduction but the relationship between reflective and routine actions requires further investigation.

Detraditionalization describes the shift away from tradition as a guide to life (Giddens 1990); and while not total (Adkins, 2000; Gross, 2005; Thompson, 1995) it means that people deal frequently with unfamiliar situations in which they cannot rely on calculation nor on habitual nor routine actions. Uncertainty is thus intrinsic to modernity and makes rational choices based on the probability of certain outcomes unfeasible. When there are so many unknown factors in play, it is almost impossible to predict what is likely to be the 'best' outcome. Additionally the pace of change

means that practices cannot be passed down, for example children show their parents how to operate computers. The complex division of labour also makes people reliant on experts to translate and evaluate knowledge claims. Some of the key work on reflexivity, has thus called into question Bourdieu's (e.g. 1987) claims about the centrality of habitus in the reproduction of the social, but with little to say on emotions. Margaret Archer (2003, see also 1993), for example is supportive, in theoretical terms, of Beck and Giddens in so far as they highlight the demise of routine action. Archer claims that routine action cannot be resorted to except for a reduced number of tasks like cleaning one's teeth or crossing the road. However, this relies on a definition of habit as not conscious cognition. Current understandings of neural processes indicate that decisions might be made and stored to be acted on later using reflexes (Elder-Vass, 2007). This indicates the need to rethink what constitutes routine action by blurring the demarcation between conscious reflection and supposedly sub or unconscious habitual reflexes. The complex implications of this for non-essentialist understandings of bodies and emotions can only be hinted at here, under the rubric of agency.

To consider reflexivity as emotional and bodily is a step towards rethinking agency without rational/emotional dualism. For this purpose Archer's ideas about agency are helpful in relocating it as a practice of actual human beings living together in the world. This requires departing from Beck, Giddens and associated theorists (see Beck et al., 1994), who conflate structural effects with the powers of individual agents. For example, Archer (2007) argues that in *Reflexive Modernisation* Beck et al. (1994) are deceptive in seeming at first to attribute reflexivity to systems, but later say that systems cannot be reflexive, only people. For Archer (2007) reflexivity is the mental capacity of people to consider themselves in relation to their social contexts and their social contexts in relation to themselves. This position allows that Beck, Giddens and Lash do have a compelling argument about growing reflexivity, but she finds them unable to deal adequately with reflexivity as a phenomenon. The most useful aspect of Archer's criticism is her attempt to replace their vision of individual subjectivity as capricious, a constant reinvention in which uncertainty means that people cannot react rationally in relation to the potential consequences of actions. The problem with her solution is that evoking 'rational' reactions is limiting in allowing for a more emotional, yet not capricious, vision of agency. In illuminating the 'internal conversation' as mediating between structure and agency, Archer does suggest that such a conversation entails emotions. Most particularly, she argues that the 'long-running internal conversation that shapes our life projects' is one that is 'an emotional matter of finding the particular project attractive enough to see it through and to bear the costs of subordinating other interests to it'. She is adamant that it would be 'a serious error' to see the internal conversation as 'purely cognitive' (Archer, 2003: 101-2). Nevertheless, in making central the cognitive deliberations that she regards as crucial to that conversation, the part that emotions play remains less well elaborated. The nod towards emotions is also somewhat obscured by her insistence that we are talking to ourselves and not, as Mead suggests, to society in the form of some generalized other. Such a position means that she considers the most important relations to be 'those that obtain between the mind and the world' (Archer, 2003: 94). Her criticism of Mead relies on reading his theory of the generalized other as over-socialised in portraying this other as an internalised version of societal expectations. However, Mead can be read as offering a version of self as continually shaped in and through actual, as well as imagined, interaction with others - including versions of our

self. It is not only conversations with and about 'others' that are crucial, but embodied practices and feelings. The reflexive self is formed by emotional relations to others and thus emotions play a more complex part in deliberations than helping us form and maintain commitments to our projects.

The position taken here envisages reflexivity as involving a kind of emotional agency that is relational and therefore involves issues of trust. According to Giddens (1990: 30) reflexivity extends to all areas of social life and is 'deeply unsettling' because knowledge is constantly being revised and there is no certitude on which to base actions. Giddens (1990) argues that trust has become essential to sociality because of the disembedding mechanisms of modernity and the uncertainty they produce. However, he maintains that trust becomes invested in abstract capacities rather than people. This does not account for the fact that in many situations we are forced to make decisions in the face of conflicting truth claims from a variety of experts. Trust may often be a matter of putting faith in one person rather than another. This is a kind of emotion work (Hochschild, 1983) based around trust. Trust in the contemporary world is often necessarily based largely on emotions, on feelings about things and activities, or an aesthetic: a liking for a person, persons or thing.

The concept of aesthetic reflexivity can be extended to better comprehend reflexivity as emotionalised. Lash's (1993; see also Beck et al., 1994; Lash and Urry, 1994) conceptualisation of aesthetic reflexivity is a more embodied version of reflexivity than Beck and Giddens's, involving the interpretation of aesthetic symbols (Lash and Urry, 1994: 112). This theory examines the conditions under which aesthetic reflexivity arises and how the consumption of cultural objects under those conditions is often likely to produce isolated individuals rather than individualised reflexive subjects. This assumes that relations to others are disrupted by the dominance of feelings for things, but human relations –even poor ones, must be maintained within a social world. If an aesthetic includes the liking and disliking of other people (as Bourdieu and followers suggest) then those human relations can be seen as central to reflexive practices.

### **Reflexivity, Emotion and Relationality**

Relationality is the key phenomenon to explore in order to grasp whether there has been an emotionalization of reflexivity and what this might mean. Reflexivity is an achievement that describes the mediatory process via which people react to the situations they find themselves in. Through this process people attempt to find ways through the world and a place in it. They hope that within that place they might be able to exercise some control and to be the kind of person that they want to be, within the roles available to them. These reflexive processes involve relational struggles. How and why people feel committed to their concerns is a matter of emotional relations to other things and people (Archer, 2003; 2007)<sup>1</sup>.

Feelings about and connections to others are crucial to reflexive practices, even within a climate of individualisation. Reflexive commitment to projects fundamentally involves how we relate to others, as Archer (2003) has shown. These relations do not inevitably necessitate individual ego mastery as Giddens has proposed, but can be

understood in terms of the subject as split and as fundamentally a product of intersubjectivity (Elliott, 2002b). However, this psychoanalytic tradition tends to perceive emotion as 'raw material' (Elliott, 2002b: 106) to be processed into thoughts. Intersubjectivity is a promising notion but full appreciation of sociality is lost because of the implication that emotions are an interior property of individuals.

Emotions are social, but countering perceptions of emotions as interior requires sociological attention to the interactional nature of the self as set out in symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism is a way of thinking about how our selves and social worlds are formed via the meanings we give to them and to the actions of others, and Mead is typically defined as the key founder (see Plummer, 1991). Emotional versions of the constitution of self and the social can be traced in developments of Mead (1962). Denzin (1984) is of the Meadian tradition, drawing together social, philosophical, psychological and sociological attempts to understand emotion as self-feeling. He proposes that '[a]ll emotions are relational phenomena' (Denzin, 1984:52). Even if they do not originate in the self, emotions refer back to it. This makes sense within the Meadian view of the self as constructed through interaction with others. However, Denzin's version of this view also draws heavily on Jean-Paul Sartre and thus centres consciousness in its understanding of self and emotion:

*Emotional* is the term to be given to a particular mode of consciousness and of being-in-the-world. It is not a term to be applied to the sensations one attributes to interior bodily states and feelings. Emotion must be studied from within consciousness, not in terms of physiological processes or unconscious mechanisms. The study of emotion must be located in the interaction process, for all forms of emotionality arise from the interactions the person has with himself and others in the world (Denzin, 1984: 48).

Although the importance of the relational is clear in much sociology of emotions<sup>2</sup> it often places too much emphasis on the cognitive and conscious aspects of emotionality.

Symbolic interactionism offers a model of a feeling self that is socially embedded, but it needs developing. The social construction of emotions has been established within social psychological traditions akin to symbolic interactionism (see Harré and Parrott, 1996). Key scholars like James Averill (e.g. 1996: 217, 224) have shown that emotions cannot be definitively linked to physiological states and that 'most standard emotional reactions are social constructions'. Arlie Hochschild has been largely responsible for developing such ideas within a sociological framework. She is heavily influenced by symbolic interactionism and her concept of emotion work can provide some purchase in establishing the importance of emotions in reflexive practices that are relational (Hochschild, 1983). The problem is that she departs from symbolic interactionism in her evocation of a real self. This limits exploration of the emotional component of relationality and the relational component of emotionality. For Hochschild, emotions are not 'naturally' occurring physiological events, but are sensations that we manage according to socially determined rules about emotional expression. 'Feeling rules' set out the norms of emotional behaviour in various situations; for example, we are expected to feel sad at funerals and will work on our emotions until we do. Her ideas about feeling rules provide a valuable way to think

about how emotions are shaped, and in fact constructed, by social conditions. She goes on to argue that within capitalism emotion work has become increasingly commercialized (see also Hochschild, 2003) as emotional labour, which is emotion work done in exchange for a wage (Hochschild, 1983). Both in emotion work and in emotional labour some individuals will use 'surface acting' to conform to feeling rules, but most will opt for 'deep acting', whereby they convince themselves that they feel a certain way. Hochschild's concern is that by deep acting to follow social rules for emotional expression, people will lose touch with their own emotions and become alienated. She worries about the effects of current social conditions on 'relations to the "real self"' (Hochschild, 1990: 119). This evoking of a 'real self' loses one of the most potentially helpful insights from symbolic interactionism. For Mead (1962: 142), and the majority of those following in this tradition, there are 'all sorts of different selves answering to all sorts of different social reactions' Such a fragmented model of self can better capture the contemporary struggles of individuals in shaping their lives in accordance with others.

As social productions, fragmented selves engage with changing and contested emotional styles. There have been debates about whether social change has brought an 'emotional cooling' (Hochschild, 2003; Stearns, 1994) to social life or whether there has been a shift toward more informal and perhaps 'warmer' emotional styles since the 1960s (Wouters, 2004). However, people must reflexively engage or disengage with shifting rules as they relate to others within different contexts. Important questions remain about what kinds of people might be better able to use feeling rules effectively, whatever the dominant style. In pursuing these questions Mead's approach can be drawn on to break down dualist oppositions of cognitive reason versus bodily emotions. This enables a conception of emotions as complexes with bodily, discursive and relational elements (Burkitt, 1997). The notion of 'reflexive embodiment' (Crossley, 2007), also usefully employs ideas from symbolic interactionism to theorise how we reflect and work upon our bodies; but again emotions need more attention. Burkitt (1997: 41) rightly argues that in considering emotions it is important to avoid a common sense division often fallen into by sociologists, between emotions as inner individual events that are then socially expressed or managed. Emotions are produced within relationships and their associated social and linguistic practices. This is a model of emotions as 'learned bodily responses or dispositions' (Burkitt, 1997: 43), with feeling and thought arising simultaneously. Emotions are felt and done within relations to other people and things. Emotional interactions are not necessarily irrational and are open to interpretation. However, emotions are not simply managed, but can emerge in ways that are overwhelming. Reflection may follow, but can also produce, emotional reflexes. Reflexivity is therefore not just an 'internal conversation', in the way Archer (2003) proposes in her development of Mead, it is a juggling of emotions within imagined and real interactions, in which interpretation can be difficult.

It is difficult to measure empirically whether interpretation of other's and one's own emotions has become more crucial within people's reflexive practices, and more research is needed. People may often be unaware of or unable to articulate the sometimes tangled emotions that fuel and emerge from everyday interactions. In developing methods of researching an emotionalization of reflexivity it should be noted that the epistemological/methodological usage of 'reflexivity' has a slightly different emphasis than when theoretically employed. Within sociological



methodology reflexivity is usually characterised as attention to the ‘problem’ of how researchers are related to those they study (see Denzin, 1994; Mauthner and Doucet, 2003). However, reflexivity is not simply a consideration of relationality, but about how the social is reproduced. Although relations are absolutely central in that reproduction, methodology often oversimplifies, over-rationalizes and over-personalises those relations. Mauthner and Doucet (2003) note that what is reflected upon is simply researcher-participant power relations within the interview or ethnographic encounter; little attention is given to the relations of analysis. The point about analysis may be valid, but many ethnographies and other methodological accounts may now attach too much, rather than not enough, importance to evaluating the researcher’s emotional responses to participants and in considering his or her institutional and interpersonal contexts as informing that analysis. Research accounts do not de-centre the researcher as much as could be fruitful and often little is said about the (emotional) reflexivity of the participants.

There is some empirical evidence that interpreting emotions is important for reflexivity, which hints at people’s varying competence in acquiring emotional reflexivity. Debra King (2006) has investigated the teaching of emotional reflexivity within social movements because it is thought crucial in enabling political actors to bring change. She has also looked at organisational encouragement of people’s emotional skills (King, 2007). For instance, there was a fad at the turn of the twenty-first century for encouraging managers to learn ‘emotional intelligence’ (see Goleman, 1996) to help them understand the needs of their staff and manage in a more caring fashion (e.g. Ryback, 1997). The supposedly gendered distribution of emotional expertise (Parsons and Bales, 1956) is being disrupted and migration of the ‘expressive’ private into the ‘instrumental’ world of work is recommended. Yet the instrumental is also invading the intimate sphere, whilst women remain not so much valued for emotional skills but overloaded with emotion work and labour (Hochschild, 2003). That doing emotions ‘well’ is a matter of work, not just a socialised skill, is an important insight from Hochschild (Lutz, 1996: 162). However, people come to emotion work differently prepared and this is perhaps some indication that ‘emotional capital’ may be more and more vital to maintaining or achieving privilege. Helga Nowotny (1981) developed sociological usage of ‘emotional capital’ as a concept and Reay (2004: 60) explains that it is a variant of social capital ‘generally confined within the bounds of affective relationships of family and friends and encompasses the emotional resources you hand on to those you care about’. Bev Skeggs (1997; 2005) has provided highly compelling illustrations of how emotions are not just resources employed in the private sphere, but used and felt within the often very public reproduction of class, gender and whiteness. Forming a valued self is often emotionally painful for white working class women given the disrespect to which they are routinely subjected; yet this is but one example of the emotionality and relationality of reflexive processes. It is clear that understanding social and self reproduction can benefit from attention to emotions. Notably, Bourdieu’s work has been central to many of these empirical attempts to see how emotions may be involved in this reflexive reproduction. It is compelling work but the reliance on Bourdieu raises the problems already noted of dealing with the fact that habituated forms of action have limited significance within reflexive modernity. Again symbolic interactionism offers some promising alternative ideas.

In examining the emotionalization of reflexivity as relational Mead's concept of the generalized other has potential. Holdsworth and Morgan (2007) propose making more use of it to do sociology within the 'ethical turn'. They argue that the generalized other is a process by which people incorporate notions of what others say, think and do into their judgements. If this is extended to include what others feel, it could be highly useful for the sociology of emotion. Fundamentally the self is constantly constructed and reconstructed in ongoing relations to others. The next section sets out some initial steps towards a model of reflexivity as emotionalised within these relations to others.

### **The Emotionalization of Reflexivity**

Emotions are core to reflexive processes. They are integral to reasoning and reasoning involves invoking and engaging with embodied and abstract versions of a generalized other. Tradition may retain some role in people making sense of themselves and their lives (Adkins, 2000; Gross, 2005; Thompson, 1995) but much reflexivity is guided by real and imagined dialogue with what others think, do and feel. The reproduction of the social is always incomplete in that it is never exact. Alteration occurs and spaces for the new emerge. Yet at the individual level it is difficult to assess to what extent changes are 'reflex' responses to the impact of social conditions or choices made having reflected upon those conditions.

Changing social conditions impact across various social spheres and although people draw upon tradition they sometimes face novelty with feelings of excitement and possibility, not just a fear of risk. This is arguably most evident within intimate life; the sphere in which reflexivity has been expected to involve emotions and concern for others (see Hochschild, 2003), but now within a framework of individual choice (Giddens, 1992). Amongst this seeming contradiction it is possible to begin to tease out whether and how the interpretation of emotions is central to a reflexivity which shapes connected selves and the social world. As intimate lives diversify relations even to those closest cannot be taken for granted and must be made (Budgeon and Roseneil, 2004; Roseneil, 2005; Weeks et al., 2001). The emotional and relational element of reflexive practices is most obvious when they are concerned with love and care, but is evident in work (Hochschild, 2003), class relations (Skeggs, 1997; 2005), political activism (King, 2006), education (Reay, 2005) and no doubt other arenas. Quite how emotions are involved needs further thought.

Those moved or compelled beyond traditional blueprints for living are forced to be more reflexive in ways requiring assessment of and responses to emotions if they are to maintain relations to others. In particular, increased geographical mobility can bring fragility to human bonds (Bauman, 2003). For many individuals frequent moves are brought about by globalized economies that rely on individualised mobile workers (see Gerstel and Gross, 1984; Green, 1997). For those who shift away from familiar places and people there is likely to be an especial awareness of the lack of opportunity for emotional intimacy with others (see Baldassar et al., 2007; Holmes, 2004). However people are often creative in dealing with this lack. They conduct 'life experiments' (Weeks at al., 2001), described by those involved as often difficult but also as playful, exciting and/or liberating in many ways (e.g. Budgeon and Roseneil,

2004; Gross and Simmons, 2002; Holmes, 2004; Levin, 2004). Not only within intimate life, but in other spheres people do not always quickly move on to new loves, jobs, ideas, or ways of living if currently experiencing dissatisfactions. Often there is perseverance and the development of new ways of interacting which are in some cases more emotionally satisfying (see for example King, 2006; Reay, 2005). Reflexivity is not simply a rational calculation of the amount of satisfaction an aspect or way of life brings, but infused with feelings about how it fits (or does not) with others and what they think, feel and do. Reflexivity is emotional and comparative and relies on interpreting emotions.

Not everyone is equally competent or 'successful' in their emotional practices, but developing Mead's ideas about selves as constituted in relation to others is potentially more useful than the Bourdieusian inspired concept of emotional capital. Reflexivity, if thought of in emotional terms, can change participants' relations with others and change how they feel. The exigencies of lives within modernity often create confusion and guilt. If connection to others is a matter for design, not tradition, then there are many possibilities but few guidelines. Making one's own life comprehensible and meaningful is achieved to some degree through comparison to others. Where some equanimity is achieved by those doing things differently it is reached partly via critical attitudes to normalised traditional ways of living, and partly by recognition of fellow trailblazers. Whilst aware of the limitations of new forms of living, those in them do not appear to see them as inevitably disconnected and tragic (e.g. Budgeon and Roseneil, 2004; Weeks et al., 2001). Yet more work is needed in order to understand how emotions are involved in reflexivity. The more people reflexively question their actions and depart from tradition, the more difficult it is for sociologists to "measure" and discuss the resulting diversity, ambivalence and complexity<sup>3</sup>. This does not mean that nothing can be done, but that the conceptual and empirical tools for looking at emotional life need honing.

Emotions have sensational aspects not always easy to translate into discourse, even – or perhaps especially- for those experiencing them. Knowing about and making sense of other people's feelings is also far from straightforward if it is assumed that people are engaged in surface and/or deep acting as Hochschild suggests. This problem is somewhat eased by avoiding the idea of a 'real' self and 'real' emotions which must be uncovered. Then the issue is more one of capturing and interpreting expressions of emotion in a phenomenological fashion (see Denzin, 1984), but this may give only a partial picture of what is conscious and cognitive. In emotional reflexivity affectivity occurs within conditions in which cognitive reasoning is still highly valued. Individuals are expected to account for their actions, but emotional self-accounting is arguably more recent and less sophisticated. Within actual therapy and popular environments like talk shows or reality television, people confess/express their shame, anger and love. Foucault (1990/1978) argues that the confessional has a long history, but that history illustrates that the interpretation of feelings has been considered something that requires help from an 'expert'. Some of the empirical work noted suggests that a shift is occurring such that people are expected to skill themselves in emotional reflexivity. Now individuals are expected to know and articulate how they feel. If they turn to 'experts' on emotions, there are a bewildering variety from which to choose. Most experts regard emotions as something to be managed by individuals, rather than as interactional productions. Yet reflexivity is ever more likely to require, as well as evoke, interpretations of others' emotions as well as one's own.

The ability to interpret one's own and others emotions 'successfully' is not about recognizing authentic versus managed emotions but about being able to engage in meaningful ways with the emotional ups and downs of living within a complex and uncertain world. Whether and which types of individuals are equipped to deal with this emotionalization of reflexivity, how they might go about it, and its consequences are in urgent need of further theoretical and empirical attention.

## **Concluding Reflections**

Detraditionalization, even if limited in some areas, has led to less reliance on routine action and a turn to reflexivity. Yet reflexivity remains unsettling because arising from uncertainty. Individuals are forced to rely on trust, not just in the abstract capacities of systems, but in people making knowledge claims. The difficulty is that the specialisation of knowledge makes deciding between competing knowledge claims difficult. Within a complex world a person does not usually have the knowledge required to make a fully reasoned decision. Not only does this make their deliberations fallible (Archer, 2003) but they often have to rely on feelings. Feelings of trust or liking or pleasure, or their opposites, frequently guide reflexive practices.

Thus emotions have become crucial in the reproduction of selves within/as the social. However, it is difficult to know and study the emotional dynamics involved in evaluating self relative to others within the diversity arising from detraditionalization. Emotional reflexivity may be increasingly necessary to the formation of self and sociality, but to what extent and how various social groups are engaged in emotional evaluation is open to further question.

To recognize reflexivity as emotionalised is to see that interpreting one's own and others emotions is increasingly necessary. Being good at emotion work does not automatically bring social success, because emotional reflexivity is not simply a matter of individuals exercising skills. Emotions are done in interaction with others, they involve bodies, thought, talk and action. Feelings make embodied social selves and selves and lives are made within the social constraints of place and time. It is crucial to attempt to better understand these emotional reflexive practices within a sociological context. There is further work needed on how reflexivity is emotionalised in order for sociologists to make sense of how and why some people are better able to feel their way in a rapidly changing world.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Archer (2003) does explore varying degrees of the importance of relations to others in forming certain individuals' reflexive modes. She outlines four different reflexive types: communicative, autonomous, meta, and fractured reflexives. Communicative reflexives are described as most connected to (proximate) others in their projects of self and social creation and fractured reflexives least connected. However relation to others is a matter of degree, and an air of mystery remains around why individuals with similar backgrounds might adopt more or less 'distant' relational reflexive modes. More attention to emotionality can potentially provide further clarity.
- <sup>2</sup> Theodore Kemper (e.g. 1978) also has a relational view of emotions, but within structuralist rather than microsociological traditions, and arguably less helpful in a consideration of reflexivity. Kemper argues that emotions are created via social relations of power and status between actors. His Weberian definition of power as 'the ability to realize one's will even over the opposition of others' (Kemper 1990: 211) is limited for addressing the complexities of agency within reflexive modernity. Conceptualisations of power as a quantity have been rejected by poststructuralists such as Foucault (e.g. 1990). Foucault suggests that power is not simply held or lacked by people but is productive of them as subjects, and of the relations between them. Power is not a thing, but a process and there is always resistance. Kemper's work is important in seeing how emotions are externally imposed; but does not consider that emotions may determine or change relations.
- <sup>3</sup> The usual quantitative tools, in particular, are designed for a reality which does not always correspond to people's lives. For instance, research in the UK, US and Australia on different forms of geographical mobility shows that most professional couples spend time living away from their partner at some point (Bell, 2001; Green, 1997: 646; Guldner, 2003). However, there are a paucity of good statistics on couples who live apart together (LATs) (although see Guldner, 2003; Haskey, 2005; Levin, 2004). Many large surveys have only recently included questions about whether people have a relationship with someone in another household (Ermisch, 2000). Even where these surveys do include such questions the results are not easy to interpret. For example, the latest Australian Survey of Social Attitudes includes the question: "Do you live together with a partner?" It might be expected that those who answered no to this, but gave their marital status as married or de facto (not separated or divorced), might have partners living in other households. However, later there is a question asking people to list the other members of their household, and over eighty per cent of those who said they did not live together with a partner gave "partner" as the second person in their household (Wilson et al., 2006). It may be that these are distance relationships in which the partner commutes to work away during the week, or for longer periods. When people say they do not live with their partner, they may mean they do not *usually* live with them. When asked who else is in their household they include their partner, even if their partner is often elsewhere. However, it is also possible that people have not filled in the questionnaire properly. Thus it cannot be said for certain whether these are LATs, but it does raise interesting questions

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about whether many household surveys fail to capture the complexity of people's living arrangements, especially if they are non-conventional. It also raises questions about the reflexive processes that people go through in trying to report on and make their intimate, emotional lives.

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