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## Embodied ekphrasis of experience: Bodily rhetoric in mediating affect in interaction

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**Abstract:** The article investigates the rhetorical means of mediating affective experience in occasioned storytelling.<sup>1</sup> We are interested in the forms and aspects of bodily action in signifying and communicating a “para-factual experience” that was triggered by a real-life incident, but in fact only took place in a person’s imagination. We explore the case of a TV interview in which an American living in Finland narrates a personal, disturbing experience related to the news about 9/11. The story presents a visual scenario of the teller’s affective reaction towards two Muslim women in a grocery store. What is interesting in the story are its involuntary dimensions: the scenario portrays a picture of the teller that he finds unrecognizable and detached from his sense of self as a person. Even if the act was never actually realized, to the teller it felt real and compelling, as is manifest in the way he translates the scenario into a bodily performance. The teller not only uses his body to tell the story but momentarily turns the surrounding setting into a scene in the storyworld in which he plays the unidentified me. We call this physical performance of the imagined scene *the embodied ekphrasis of experience*.<sup>2</sup> Deploying research on multimodal interaction and intermediality, our empirical analysis explicates how the teller’s body, and not just words, build action, convey affective meaning, and resemiotize and mobilize a physical enactment of the past hypothetical scene.

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2 In *Semiotica*, the rhetorical device of ekphrasis has appeared before (see Frosh 2003; Hopkins 2015; Nesselroth 2016; Sarapik 2009) from such literary and linguistic perspectives, as well as through the lens of media research and cultural studies, to which our application will add from the viewpoint of ethnomethodology and the social sciences.

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## 1 Multimodality and mediation of experience

Studies of multimodal interaction (Goodwin 2000) are based on an ethnomethodological framework that scrutinizes how actions and practices are accomplished in situated human interaction. Multimodal analysis argues against building a dichotomy between text and context. It proposes an extended approach to the analysis of human interaction that takes into account the simultaneous use of multiple semiotic resources (such as the linguistic, bodily, spatial, and material) to build meaning in action. Actions are understood as a process in which different kinds of sign phenomena, instantiated in diverse media, are juxtaposed in a way that enables them to mutually elaborate each other. The concept of *contextual configuration* refers to a particular array of semiotic fields that the participants locally and demonstrably deploy and orient to in the situation at hand (Goodwin 2000: 1490). Ethnomethodologically, a semiotic field is not a static structure of signs, but semiotic fields are seen as medium-bound communicative platforms that participants in interaction actively use in managing and maintaining their intersubjective understanding of the ongoing activities. Language is one semiotic field. Bodily markers (postures, gestures, facial expressions), spatial organization of the setting, the use material artefacts and technological affordances are others which “provide a rich infrastructure for the co-operative constitution of relevant meaning through combinatorial semiosis within action” (Goodwin 2018: 344). For the analysis of bodily action, the concept of contextual configuration provides a systematic frame to investigate the public visibility of the body as a dynamically and temporally unfolding, interactively organized locus for the production and display of meaning. We will use the concept to highlight the entanglement of resources available for mediating experience (see Raudaskoski 2010, 2011) and communicating emotions in interaction (Rautajoki 2014).

In this article, our task is to find connections and interrelations between the domains of semiotic multimodality and aesthetic intermediality in mediating an affective experience in storytelling. We will pay analytical attention to the emergence of *what* is told (the tellability of the story) and *how* it is told (the tools for mediation). Experience to be shared is conceptualized as an actor being exposed to a breach in situational expectations (Hyvärinen 2017). We will scrutinize how affectivity *in situ* is transformed into affectivity objectified in the story and affectivity deployed in the telling. Experientiality, the mediation of experience, is not seen as a cognitive mechanism between two consciousnesses (cf. Fludernik 1996), but rather as an active process determined by reflexive intentionalities of the actors

in interaction (Rautajoki 2018). Our analysis combines elements from cognitive narratology, discursive psychology, and the rhetorical tradition to see how bodily actions are used as a rhetorical tool comprising various contextual elements and resources.

In the data extract we will focus on, the interviewee represents a bodily-augmented, affectively tense visualization of a scene in which he portrays an unidentifiable “paranormal me” acting in an everyday “para-factual” social setting. The setting is para-factual in the sense that the scene is rooted in and triggered by actual happenings but the events unfolding in the story did not take place in reality. They remained on the level of thought only. He represents the scenario in his imagination in an objectified fashion from an outside perspective. Authorially, there is a reactive tone in describing the events the narrator himself is involved in, almost as if he was possessed by a ‘paranormal me’ rather than being agentive in the way things proceed. Events are put out in the form of an outcast scene with specific ‘alienated’ characters and lines of talk. Even if the setting is mundane in our case, the sense of surprise and alienation is mediated to others with similar strategies that actors have used in accounting for paranormal experiences (Wooffitt 1992) – the memory formulation is designed to emphasize a sudden interruption in the everydayness. Another remarkable difference is that, in our data, the teller uses the tools in reverse fashion. He does not factualize something unimaginable yet real, but actualizes imagination instead – that is, he factualizes something unreal but yet imaginable! What, in fact, is happening rhetorically in the teller’s choice of action? We argue that the reverse use of the tools (the social construction of *unreality*) highlights the social functioning of affectivity and the relevance of the immaterial body in communication. The story, emerging in imagination, is outspoken and communicated to others in the way that deploys audience engagement. Visualization of the affective reaction is mobilized first by triggering the setting with what we will call *hypotypotic cues*, and then by playing out the events as an ekphrastic objectified act in the realm of the storyworld.

In our analysis, we will take into account the two modes of communicating feeling in the storytelling:

1. Emotions topicalized in talk (discourse analytic verbal description) – What is said about feeling in terms of emotional labels?
2. The stream of affectivity (its multimodal realization) – How is the feeling displayed and communicated physically in the interaction?

Whereas emotions and affects can be understood, from the semiotic point of view, as mutually complementary resources, drawing the above difference between the two modes brings into focus their verbal and non-verbal qualities that, at times,

may be at odds with each other. What is said may not always be in full accord with other means of communication, and so the verbalized emotion may either be found lacking or in tension with the embodied affect (See Gregg and Seigworth 2010; Wetherell 2012.). Our primary focus is on the latter mode, as we will explicate in detail how the locally relevant contextual configurations relate to the rhetorical devices of hypotyposis and ekphrasis in narration, and scrutinize how they are worked to mediate affective experience in the combination of verbal and embodied acts.

## 2 Ekphrasis and hypotyposis: Ancient rhetorical devices in embodied use

Ekphrasis is a rhetorical device with a long history of developing use. Today, it is commonly understood as “the verbal representation of a visual representation” (Heffernan 1993; Mitchell 1994), the putting of something seen through the eye, either real or imagined, into words. In the antiquity, as Ruth Webb has argued, the purpose of the device was to engage the audience as effectively as possible, and it was its “impact on the listener” (Webb 2009: 7) that mattered most, not the object or event described. According to Claire Preston, the emphasis in the use of ekphrasis began to shift towards the early modern period. In drawing attention to a figure of speech in a literary text, authors such as Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare, would apply ekphrasis as “a subtle, insinuating instrument of narratorial patterning, authorial control, and psychological insight” (Preston 2007: 129). The *meaning* of the particular figure of speech was of primary importance, whereas the effect on the reader made up for an additional bonus. In this sense, the history of ekphrasis can be paraphrased as a story of the tension between the interpretation of an object or event (“what is it?,” the meaning) and the experience of an object or event (“how does it feel like?,” the effect). The contemporary understandings of the device have not done away with the divide either. In 1994, when W. J. T. Mitchell described ekphrasis as a “black hole” (Mitchell 1994: 158) – an absence of images that words attempted to mask – he produced a figure of speech that definitely had an impact on the reader but just as well demanded deciphering of what he meant by it.

In how ekphrasis can be used, concurrent combinations of interpretation and experience are thus by no means out of the ordinary, as the multidisciplinary analysis of our data will also prove. After critics such as Claus Clüver and Tamar Yacobi expanded the range of ekphrasis in the late 1990s, it became possible to understand the phenomena involved as going beyond the verbal and the visual, as

well as traditional art forms and genres. In Clüver's semiotic definition, ekphrasis was "the verbal representation of a real or fictitious text composed in a non-verbal sign system" (Clüver 1997: 26). Yacobi construed it as a figure of speech that concerned not only artworks represented as a whole in another medium, but as identified in "instances" that came "down to a single element in a single work" and found "in all genres of literature and in all modes of figuration" (Yacobi 1997: 35). Our use of ekphrasis is based on this perspective.

The televisual data under analysis presents to the audience the actions of an interviewee who attempts to make sense of an incident to which only he used to be privy. In the process, the teller makes use of several resources both to get his point across ("what happened?") and to represent his experience ("how did it feel like?") successfully. In terms of ekphrasis, the means by which he carries out the latter action are intriguing. The scene consists of David (name altered) recalling a sequence of events during which he imagines doing something that never eventually happened. For ekphrasis to be applicable, the data must involve two distinct representations occurring in two different media. In his research, Toikkanen (2017) has identified three levels of mediality. First, there are the sensory means (sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste) that convey physical stimuli that result in perceptions. Second, there are the ways of presenting perceptions of the environment (speech, writing, gesture, and, in a different manner, the variety of art forms and media formats). Third, there are the broad conceptualizations of mediatization, mass media and media culture. In our analysis, the first level of mediality is that of David's visual imagination – how does he remember what happened to him a few days ago, and what is the scenario he had imagined? The second level is that of David's bodily performance of the scenario in the TV interview – how does he piece his story together and which rhetorical means does he employ to engage the audience? We are especially interested in this instance of ekphrastic figuration.

Before going into a detailed analysis of the scene, the rhetorical device of hypotyposis must be introduced too, in a way that explains its usefulness in mediating experience and its distinction from ekphrasis. In handbooks, definitions of the two devices may appear interchangeable. Quintilian's classical version was to understand hypotyposis as "any representation of facts which is made in such vivid language that they appeal to the eye rather than the ear" (*Institutio oratoria*). However, as the use of ekphrasis began to develop in the interpretive direction in the early modern period, hypotyposis did not follow suit. Instead, as argued by Toikkanen (2013), it maintained its function as vested in the impact of the vivid "representation of facts" rather than what those facts might have been. In other words, whereas ekphrasis can today be defined as geared towards the meaning of the image produced, hypotyposis stresses the image as such – its task is one "of presenting in words a visual sensation that is not yet meaningful but evokes the

prospect” (2013: 41). In David’s case, the challenge will be to demonstrate how the two devices mediate affective experience differently within the contextual configuration of the storytelling situation, as he combines verbal expressions with bodily gestures and actions. On the one hand, we will claim that there are some cues in his performance that can be qualified as having little significance in and of themselves, but that are necessary for triggering the imagined scene and keeping it going. These instances we will call hypotypotic cues. On the other hand, expressions and actions that require interpreting so that David’s story can be understood we will call instances of ekphrastic figuration.

Our aim is firstly to demonstrate the value of hypotyposis and ekphrasis in explicating the contextual configuration of narration, and secondly the value of contextual perspective in understanding the functionality of these rhetorical devices in use. To grasp the dynamics between them, one needs to view them in the light of contemporary affect theory. As we focus on interviewee’s bodily gestures and actions, and the visual imagination that they represent, the significance of affective intensity in the scene becomes evident. We take it that this does not stem from the interviewee merely expressing a gut reaction to an unpleasant experience. Instead, we argue, he is actively employing resources that effectively advance his telling of the story. In affect theory, and specifically in its new materialist forms, the intentional rhetorical design of such performances often assumes secondary importance, as weight is placed on the primacy of the bodily response. Lisa Blackman has challenged this view endorsed by critics like Brian Massumi as all too reductive. Massumi examines closely “the non-conscious and imperceptible vital force that traverses between and distributes human and non-human actors within a field of potential,” and the role of the body is to provide “a ‘conversion channel’ or transducer that can modulate or amplify this intensive force through a kind of sensing feel, rather than a conscious calculation” (Blackman 2012: 95). If David’s actions were understood in this fashion, it would make little sense to analyze them as ekphrastic, because the doubly representational element that defines the device would be missing. It would just be the body acting out the sensation without the further interpretive value of minds involved in the process. Blackman seeks to uphold this very cognitive dimension:

“[Affect theory is to be] set within the context of increasing evidence that suggests that bodies cannot be reduced to materiality and that the body’s potential for psychic or psychological attunement – what I am terming ‘immateriality’ – is one that the turn to affect must adequately theorize” (Blackman 2012: xxv).

Blackman’s effort to salvage the experiencing subject from being turned into the physical body alone is useful in analyzing interviewee’s activities from the ekphrastic perspective, as applied in this article. It also helps in realigning what



**Figure 1:** The interview setup.

she is calling the immaterial (“psychic or psychological”) body with the representational and rhetorical resources of the material body (See Figure 1).

### 3 Embodied ekphrasis and affectivity in occasioned storytelling

The data is from a weekly Finnish television discussion program in which two established journalists (J1 and J2) have several guests invited in the studio to discuss together a current socio-political topic (See the Appendix for list of transcription symbols). The program lasts around 60 min and this time it is titled “Heading to war against terrorism?”. The discussion in focus was broadcast six days after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the USA in 2001, and its overall angle is rather critical towards the American reactions in the aftermath of the event. This extract is from the very beginning of the discussion after the entrance of the first guest, David (DVD), an American citizen living in Finland and speaking second-language Finnish in the discussion. One of the journalists has only shortly presented the topic to the audience and the other is starting an interview with the first guest, asking him about his



very first thoughts after hearing and seeing a horrible event like this being targeted at his home country. The interviewee (on the left in the picture) first mentions the sense of shock and then continues with describing the sense of incomprehension. The sequence starts out calmly before the affective and physical escalation of the interviewee's account. The outset for the exchange is laid by the journalist's

### Extract 1

- 1 DVD: >se mun< (0.2) silmät näkee toi (1.0) world trade centerin tapahtuman  
> it my < (0.2) eyes see the (1.0) world trade center's incident

- 2 ja \*h >mutta< (.) se ei mene sisään toi aivoon.  
and \*h >but< (.) it doesn't get in the brain.  
((gaze to J2))  
((gaze in front))  
((tiny circles with fingers))

- 3 (0.2) se oli (.) ↑bthiu (.) \*hh uskomatonta:h.=  
(0.2) it was (.) ↑bthiu (.) \*hh unbelie:vableh.=  
((stable fingers)) ((fingers sideways with fast movement)) ((gaze on J2))

- 4 J2: =mmm, \*thh ensimmäinen reaktio <shokki> (.) nyt on: (0.2)  
=mmm, \*thh the first reaction <a shock> (.) now it has: (0.2)

- 5 DVD: yes.

- 6 J2: k- kohta kulunut >huomenna tulee< viikko h <tästä> \*hhh  
s- soon been >tomorrow will be< one week h since <this> \*hhh  
((slight fast head nod))

- 7 shokista <ja järkytyksestä> \*hh ~m~ ~m~ miten ajattelet  
shock <and dismay> \*hh ~m~ ~m~ what do you think

- 8 DVD: ((glance down))

- 9 J2: ↑nyt.  
↑now.

question on the respondent's current thoughts, formulated by making a temporal distinction between now and then, between the respondent's current thoughts and his very first thoughts after the attack. It puts the shock and dismay in the past and proceeds towards inviting cognitive processing on a more reflective level. Journalist repeats DVD's prior formulation (line 1) of the division between the world and mind as "shock" (line 4), and adds a synonym to shock, "dismay" (line 7), with a slow pace, which emphasizes the feeling. She then asks DVD to report on his present thinking (line 7), a verb that can be seen to appeal to DVD's rationality.

The respondent starts from explicating his current state of mind, sadness (line 11), and formulates the strong feeling with his heart almost dying, accompanied with a gesture that could refer to the sinking feeling (line 13). There is indeed a reflective tone in dealing with the succession of prevalent emotions after the news. After explicating sadness, the respondent pauses and backs up to formulate a trajectory

## Extract 2

10 (0.2)

11 DVD: mt' \*h h h h nyt h h m ä o o n i h a n s u r u l l i n e n (.) e t t ä  
 mt' .h h h h now h h I a m j u s t s a d (.) t h a t  
 ((gaze in front, middle distance))

12 (.) t ä ä o n t a p a h t u n u t j a : (.) ~ m ä o ~ (.) m u n > s y d ä n < (.) s e o n  
 -(.) this has happened a : n d (.) ~ I a ~ (.) my heart (.) it is  
 -((head turn: gaze on J2)) -((eyes away from J2)) -((eyes back to J2))

13 i h a n (0.4) m t' (.) m e l k e i n k u o l i . \* h h h  
 j u s t -(0.4) m t' (.) a l m o s t d i e d . \* h h h

-((eyes closed; nods))  
 14 < j a > (0.4) t o i s h o k i n j ä l k e e n t u l e e t o i u s k o m a t o n t a h h  
 ~ < a n d > (0.4) a f t e r t h e s h o c k c o m e s t h e u n b e l i e v a b l e h h

-((gaze in middle front)) -((head turn/gaze on J2))  
 15 < m ä e n u s k o . > (t' t') w a u e i . \* h h h m u t t a  
 < I d o n ' t b e l i e v e . > -(t' t') w o w n o . \* h h h b u t

-((gaze away from J2)) -((head turned to right))  
 16 (.) s i t t e n (.) t u l e e v - v i h a ° i n e n ° .  
 -(.) - t h e n (.) c o m e s a n - a n g ° r y ° .  
 -((gaze in front)) -((gaze on J2 with slight nods))

17 J2: v i h a .  
 ~ a n g e r .  
 -((nod down/twd DVD; raised eyebrows))

18 DVD: v i h a . (.) t o s i v i h a . = m ä o o n i h a n (.) @ a i h t o s i v i h a @ .  
 ~ a n g e r . (.) r e a l a n g e r . = I a m j u s t (.) @ a i h r e a l l y a n g e r @ .  
 -((eyes closed; head turns)) -((hands to home position))

of emotions from shock to dismay and then anger. In fact, the way he refers to anger, starting with the contrastive “but then” and slowly punctuating the utterance, with his head turned away from the journalist (line 15–16), already implies that he is not done with the reply. The journalist contributes to this intensification

of account by making a correction to the word that directs more attention to the emotion and offers the respondent room to continue with the reply. In Finnish, this can be heard as a grammatical correction (from adjective *vihainen* – to a noun *viha*). However, the correction also entails an intensification, whereby the English equivalent would be closer to switching the word “angry” to the word “hate.” The formulation serves the agenda of the journalist as it turns out later on in the interview. J2 nods towards the interviewee, with raised eyebrows, indicating interest in what DVD just has said. DVD repeats the emotional label “anger” in its correct form and then upgrades the description to “really anger” (i.e., an ungrammatical formulation, left uncorrected). He closes his eyes, turning his head slowly to the side, and so demonstrates non-verbally the depth of the feeling of anger. After this verbal and embodied upgrading, the respondent lingers with the feeling and livens up his account from an abstract category to the level of a personal sense of feeling. He depicts the account by making a strong physical gesture with his body at the same time. While saying “I am just,” with a little pause he

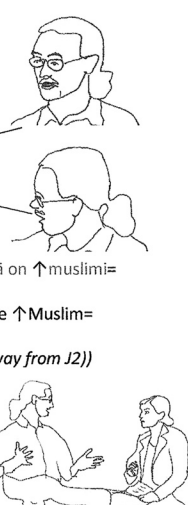
### Extract 3

- 19 DVD: \*hh ja (0.3) se oli ((slight headshakes)) tosi isompi  
 \*hh and (0.3) it was ((slight headshakes)) quite a bigger  
 ((gaze in front))
- 20 (.) reaktointi että ↑mä en ↑ymmärrä  
 (.) reaction that ↑I don't ↑understand  
 ((head slightly twd J2)) ((gaze/head turn to J2))
- 21 \*h koska mä oon normaali ihan ↓rauhallinen mies ja  
 \*h because I am normal quite a ↓calm man and  
 ((gaze/small head turn away from J2)) ((gaze back on J2))
- 22 \*hh ei (.) ~e~ ↓mä oon opettaja? ja (.) opiskelijan kanssa  
 \*hh not (.) ~f~ ↓I am a tea<sup>h</sup>cher? and (.) with the students  
 ((gaze away))
- 23 J2: ((two deep, several small head nods))
- 24 DVD: ↑ei yhtään kertaa tule vihainen \*hhh mä oon (.) ihan (.) rauhaa ja  
 ↑not one time get angry \*hhh I am (.) just (.) in peace and,  
 ((gaze: front)) ((gaze on J2)) ((slight head turn; gaze to right))
- 25 \*h mutta sitten vihan tuli ja \*hhh toi (.) yx esimersiksi  
 \*h but then the anger came and \*hhh that (.) one example  
 ((head turn/gaze to J2)) ((head turn slowly to front))

aggressively hits the palm of his left hand with his right fist and makes an angry grin with his face and a mimicked expression of pain “aih” (line 18). For the mediation of the experience, this personalized account and the bodily gesture serves as a hypotypotic cue that creates a glimpse of the tone and strength of the affectivity to follow.

The respondent gets to keep the floor (with “and,” line 19) and elaborate the account further. He starts by foregrounding an account of his strong sentiment of anger that unraveled in his imagination in the middle of a casual everyday routine event (cf. Wooffitt 1992), that is, going shopping. He prefaces the telling by describing the strong feeling of anger as a reaction that he still has difficulties understanding (line 20). He distances himself from the feeling by talking about it analytically as “it” (instead of “my”) and “bigger reaction.” He also accentuates the difficulty of understanding this kind of reaction by contrasting it to his typical ability to stay calm in any situation. He brings up his occupation as a teacher (line 22). Belonging to the category of a teacher seems to cast the speaker morally and consolidate the description of his personality and temper (see Rautajoki 2012). Conventionally, teacher’s nerves tend to be tested by the students all the time, but

#### Extract 4

- 26 DVD: mä oon kaupassa (.) sinne- (.) normaali ruokakauppa  
 I am in a store (.) there- (.) a normal grocery store  
 ((fast head/gaze turn back to J2; raised eyebrows))
- 27 ostoksille? \*mhh mt' ja: (0.2) mä (.) istun sinne ja  
 to go shopping? \*mhh mt' a:nd (0.2) I (.) step in there and  
 ((head turn/gaze away from J2 in front)) ((gaze to his right))
- 28 kattoo toi pa- (.) yx paprika ja \*hh mä ↑näin (.) siellä  
 look at that b- (.) one bell pepper and \*hh I ↑saw (.) there  
 (('pointing' movements with right hand))
- 29 oli pari (0.6) ↓musliminaiset. (.) \*h mä tiedän että on ↑muslimi=  
 were a couple of (0.6) ↓Muslim women. (.) \*h I know that are ↑Muslim=  
 ((turns back to J2)) [ ] ((head turn/gaze away from J2))
- 30 =se on (.) muslimin vaatteita ja kaikkii \*hhhh  
 that is (.) Muslim clothes and all \*hhhh  
 ((sweeping gesture with both hands against body and up, down))
- 

yet he has been able to stay calm and not get angry in any situation. This tendency is contrasted with the preface “but” and describing the compelling sensation of anger as it came about after the news event (line 25). This contrast serves as an abstract to the story. The sequentially structured story about the succeeding events comes next, being explicitly labeled as an example of the exceptional prevalence of anger. The interviewer seems to appreciate the account with her nodding behavior (line 23).

David describes the setting in the present tense, inviting the listener into the story. He starts his narrative by placing himself, and the listeners, in a shop. By his description of the “normal grocery store” and the everyday activity of shopping where gazing around (seeing a bell pepper) is part of accountable (and expected) behavior, DVD not only sets the scene as something else than looking for people to hate, but he also helps the listener/viewer to visualize the place where the action starts. DVD describes several visual perceptions out of which the bell pepper works as a hypotypotic cue in the casual scene. We could say that he is activating a perspective of bodily consciousness; he is giving a phenomenological account. DVD’s placement of himself is not only language-based storytelling: The embodied (head movement; gaze direction, pointing finger) account of noticing Muslim




### Extract 5

- 31 DVD: sitten mä haluan mennä ihan suoraan san’ et  
 then I want to go  
 straight up and say- that  
 ((both arms up starts approaching J2))
- 32 @MIKS sä te(i)hnyt.@ (0.6) @minkä sä tehnyt@ MIKSI sä tehnyt sen.  
 @WHY have you done.@ (0.6) @what have you done@ WHY have you done it.
- 33 @\*hhh mutta mä (.) oon vaan (0.4) mt’ mielen (0.5) toi (.) oma mieli  
 @\*hhh but I (.) just was (0.4) mt’ in mind (0.5) in (.) my own mind
- 34 mutta e- (.) en mä tehnyt. ja mä oon i- (.) iloinen et mä en tehnyt.=  
 but n- (.) did not do. and I am gl- (.) glad that I did not do.=  
 ((hand down; gaze to J2; small head shake on ‘did not’))
- 35 =mutta-  
 =but-  
 ((gaze away))
-

women in the shop adds to the detailed description of “what happened” and thus to the factuality of it (Potter 1996). Interestingly, the gestures take place from the viewpoint of a character in the story, incorporating the speaker’s body into the gesture space (McNeill 1992). Objective observable accounts of the world typically minimize the role of the teller; s/he is just a vehicle that describes the seen and the heard and DVD’s embodied visualization of the scene adds to its believability. He paves the way to the climax of the story. However, what follows is not taking place in the shop *realis*, it is an *irrealis* thought, and treated as dubious.

David puts out the imagined vision of the improper act and its accountable reflection. His story is grounded by an occasioned will to do something unexpected. The teller senses an anger-driven urge to go to the Muslim women and demand answers from them. The urge triggers an imagined scenario which never materialized in real life, but which involves a very realistic description of sequentially unfolding events, visualized with para-factual characters and specific lines of talk (cf. person hearing voices, Ratcliffe 2006). Reporting on the imagined talk and action contributes to the “air of objectivity” (Holt 1996) in the same way as

#### Extract 6

- 36 J2: (>ni<) sä et menny etkä kysyny \*tätä°.  
{>so<} you didn’t go and ask \*this°.
- 37 DVD: {(sharp glance at J2)} \*hhhh e:n  
\*hhhh no:
- 38 DVD: menny kysyny.=mutta se oli (0.5) mä näin itte (.)  
didn’t go and ask.=but it was (0.5) I saw myself (.)
- 39 että mä oon mennyt. (0.2) mut mä en oikeesti mennyt. \*hh  
that I had gone. (0.2) but I did not really go. \*hh  
{(slight head nods)}
- 40 se oli niin (0.2) mt’ \*hhhhhhh niin- (0.7) real (.) situation.  
it was so (0.2) mt’ \*hhhhhhh so- (0.7) -real (.) situation.  
{(Americ. accent)}
- 41 J2: mm
- 
- 
- 

using reported speech from a real occurrence would. Interestingly, the imagined scene of “going straight up and saying” (line 31) is resemiotized (Iedema 2000) bodily in the situation in the form of an embodied ekphrasis. For a moment, the teller physically plays the role of unidentified me in the vision and ascribes the journalist the role of a Muslim woman he is shaking on the shoulders and addressing the questions to (line 32). After the bodily performance of the scenario, the speaker snaps out of the realm of the storyworld and returns back to the roles and setting of the ongoing activity framework. To get toward closing his story, he explicates the end result of events, that is, restraining the urge in the factual reality. He turns his gaze away from the interviewer, emphasizing the imaginary aspect of the situation by referring to the “mind” verbally and bodily through pointing with a moving index finger (line 33). In addition, the refraining is evaluated positively, as the proper thing to do in the situation. At this point, his gaze goes back to J2 as if looking for a response to confirm the moral value of his refrainment.

The journalist takes on the story in overlap with the tellers turn, posing a specifying question about the end result of the factual events, treating the performed scenario as “asking” (line 36), instead, for example, “attacking.” There is no evaluation and no kind of reference to the unexceptionality of the anger in the imagination just visualized. The lack of empathy could be explained by the institutional setting, but the teller is still oriented to it as an incomplete response. While the interviewer concentrates on the ‘what happened’ as a *realis* question, for the interviewee this triggers a retelling, which underlines the tellability of the (*irrealis*) story. The interviewee accentuates the sense of seeing himself do the act by doing a quick hand movement near his eyes (line 38). He then turns to the interviewee, recycling her words about “not going,” with an intense look on his face and finishing his turn with a word search that ends up with an English expression (it felt like a “real situation”). The whisking of the hand near the body (line 40) highlights the emotional unease with the imagined scenario, something David has difficulties finding a verbal expression for, at least in Finnish.

In general, an empathetic response, even in mitigated form, is expected after narrating an affective experience, which can even be seen on the level of teller’s neurophysiological reactions. Having no confirmation for the tellability of the story arouses physical stress in the teller (Peräkylä et al. 2016). Retelling is not successful in this respect. The story is sidelined with an overlapping minimal response token (line 41), after which the journalist moves on in the agenda and formulates the next question.

The moment of exceptional sense of anger is sidelined in the reception of the story and this undermining uptake continues with the preface of the next question.

## Extract 7

- 42 J2: \*h sä sanoit että: (.) ~et~ (.) enään et ole niinkään vihainen vaan surullinen  
 \*h you said that: (.) ~that~ (.) you no-longer are so much **angry** but **sad**  
 ((hand beat)) ((h. beat)) ((h. beat))
- 43 J2: hh-hhh *movement*  
 44 DVD: ei se meni ↑ohi. ((exhale through nose))  
 no it passed ↑by. ((exhale through nose))  
 ((head/gaze turn in front and back to J2))
- 45 J2: ↑mi- (.) mistä (.) ↑mistä johtuu se että (.) ~ää~ kuitenkin  
 ↑wh- (.) why (.) ↑why is it that (.) ~er~ nevertheless
- 46 (.) tuolla kotimaassasi tuntuu että tuo viha ei mene ohi.  
 (.) over there in your-home country it feels like the anger won't pass.  
 ((head nod on 'home' and 'feels', shake on 'anger'))
- 47 (.) siellä (.) edelleenkin (.) suru (0.3) ei näytä olevan  
 there (.) still (.) sorrow (0.3) doesn't-seem to be
- 48 DVD: nii  
 yeah
- 49 J2: (.) \*h >es'mers ↑kyselyjen mukaan<  
 (.) .h >fr'instance according to the ↑polls<
- 50 DVD: ((gaze/head to J2))
- 51 J2: päällimmäinen tunne vaan edelleen päällimmäinen tunne  
 the uppermost feeling but still the uppermost feeling
- 52 J2: on-  
 is-
- 53 DVD: ihmisillä on vielä viha.  
 among people is-still anger.
- 54 J2: viha.  
 anger.
- 55 J2: (0.2) ((quick head nod))
- 56 DVD: mt' \*hhhh (.) nohhh t' (.) mä oon (.) epäilly että se on toi (.) media.  
 mt' .hhhh (.) wellhh t' (.) I have (.) suspected that it is the (.) media.  
 ((head/gaze to front)) ((gaze/head: J2))

The sense of anger is acknowledged as a topic but, as extra emphasis is put on the words “no longer,” “angry” and “sad,” it is situated in the past reality with no relevance to the current state of affairs. The respondent settles for this and goes on playing along with the script. He confirms the formulation, after which the journalist makes a morally challenging why-question on the continuing prevalence of anger among the majority of Americans living in America. She uses the respondent's story as a way to move from the private feelings of the American interviewee to the general atmosphere of hate in the US – the nation has not



proceeded to the next stage after the traumatic experience. Thus, even though anger keeps being topicalized, it is detached from the level of personal relevance, generalized to concern the whole nation of Americans, and thrown back at the respondent to explain and account for (see Rautajoki 2012). In the frame of storying an affective personal ordeal and getting an attentive response to it, the mediation of experience fails in this extract (Rautajoki 2018; Stivers 2008).

Our analytical target has been to illustrate the multiple resources the teller deploys to cross through and mediate the imaginary scenario that he felt so compelling and personally disturbing. It is not only what happened but also how it felt like that he is addressing in the telling. The contextual configuration of the narration makes use of hypotypotic cues and embodied ekphrastic performance. It is the affectivity of material body that the teller actively uses to engage the audience and enact the moment of anger arising, taking over his usual character and unraveling into an imagined sequence of events. To conclude, we will ponder how the immaterial relevancies of affectivity and experience are manifest in the extract.

## 4 Conclusions and discussion on the threshold of affectivity

The piece of data we have analyzed demonstrates how the experiential point of the story can be intermedially constructed by deploying hypotypotic cues and embodied ekphrasis of experience in the telling. Our multimodal interaction analysis approach matches Lisa Blackman's thoughts on affectivity in that 1) embodiment is inseparable from affect, 2) in how relevant the immaterial body is in having an experience in the first place, 3) and how the resources of the material body can be worked to mediate it. The three-tier model of mediality (Toikkanen 2017) is helpful in pointing out the levels that constitute the mix of experiencing something and representing the experience to someone else. Experience, as we understand it, derives from the actor facing the unexpected in the stream of action, which is directly linked to the tellability of that occasion (Hyvärinen 2017). Then again, the concept of contextual configuration, deeply rooted in occasioned activities, has its strength in focusing on actors' orientations in the intersubjective realm, demonstrably accessible to the other participants and the investigator as well. It helps in getting a grasp what the mediation of experience in situated storytelling consists of.

In telling the scene, David both speaks and acts out the imagination in the form of bodily gestures and actions, and both the speaking and the acting out can be

understood as ekphrastic means of representation that are afforded by the televisual environment. Following this definition, two particular figures of speech and action draw the watcher's attention. One of them is, as noted, when David hits the palm of his left hand with his right fist to accentuate his feeling of anger in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. It happens just before getting into the story. In relation to the story itself, the expression seems disconnected, but it does bring alive the core emotion around which the story evolves. It is a hypotypotic cue, a rhetorical device that works bodily to activate the affective tone and intensity, and which foregrounds the story and leads the way to the events unfolding in the scenario. In terms of conversational storytelling practices (Sacks 1974), the gesture actually functions as the preface of the story, highlighting the point of the story to be told and guiding the anticipated response to it.

The other instance of enactment occurs when David starts telling the story of the scenario he sees himself in. He recalls walking into a grocery store and seeing a bell pepper he is picking on the shelf, when his eyes suddenly catch two Muslim women across the room. He gets stuck in his place but imagines approaching them and shaking one the shoulders, demanding answers for the attack. The key feature of the latter figure of action is the fact that, at this point of his account, not only does he get intensely affective and uses direct quotation in talk, but casts the interviewer into a role in the scene and grasps her by the shoulders and shakes her. Momentarily, the distanced scene, staged by his mind takes over and penetrates the ongoing activity setting, evolving into a bodily performance of the scenario.

From the rhetorical perspective, as the audience has no direct access to David's mind, they will have to take him for his words and actions. In terms of the visual imagery presented, it is firstly the bell pepper that brings about the image of the Muslim women. Whereas the vegetable as such is irrelevant to the interpretation of David's experience – it could have been anything else in the store instead – the bell pepper is the triggering visual cue without which the sequence would not unfold. It is another hypotypotic cue that is required for the ekphrastic representation of the scene to take place. This image invites audience to step inside the scene and identify with it. The random item of a bell pepper foregrounds the experience to be told, and triggers the setting for it. As David's recollection of his experience culminates in shaking the interviewer on the shoulders, the figure of action he performs is to represent bodily the past event that he had visually imagined to happen. It is literally an embodied ekphrasis geared towards convincing the audience of the power and liveliness of the experience.

One might claim that David is only trying to replicate an imagined past action, intentionally or not, and that his performance has no interpretive or experiential value because it is only mimicry. Thus, if the significance of the situated action

(acting as a respondent in public TV interview) is eliminated, the ekphrastic figuration of the sequence is lost too, and David's actions in his environment become as random as the bell pepper in the grocery store. We contend they are not random at all – David's performance, acted bodily, is a purposeful representation, not mimicry. The gap between private imagination and intersubjective communication necessitates a process of translation between different media. We argue that David's act is thoroughly rhetorical and targeted at engaging his audience in the experience.

The contextual configuration of narration captures the overall composition of embodied action aimed at scaffolding the experiential tellability of the story with the help of ekphrastic and hypotypotic devices. These devices serve to make sense of and communicate what happened and what it felt like. Bodily performance of the scene, the embodied ekphrasis of experience, functions as a persuasive rhetorical tool. It is like an extreme case bodily formulation in representing the disturbing scene. Besides contributing to the how-question, it does imply what is told as well, of the affect comprising the experience as it arose in the first place. From this perspective, mind cannot be seen as a private realm or frontier, separate from the body and the rest of the outer world. Enacting a disturbing parafactual scenario and translating it into an embodied ekphrasis in the telling, demonstrates how affectivity works as a vehicle trafficking through the threshold of mind, body and social reality.

We support Lisa Blackman's view in that affectivity is thoroughly relational, and we conclude that it functions in both reactive and proactive forms. In David's story, the affective body is an object, however one of which reactions bear immaterial relevancies and are thus psychically and psychologically attuned. Yet, affective body is also a subject, taking the lead in mediating the experience and actively deploying the resources of the material body to deliver its case. It is in the threshold, transporting between the self and other, inside and outside, material and immaterial, disclosing the sociality of immaterial body and our fundamental connectedness to each other (Blackman 2012: 20–21). Sociologically, affectivity is the glue that ties people together, across the encounters of social communication and through the stages in the theaters of individual minds.

## Appendix – Transcription symbols

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ok.	falling (concluding) intonation
ok?	rising intonation
(.)	short pause
(2.6)	pause timed in seconds
[	overlapping talk or action
*hh	in-breath
hh	out-breath
↑word, ↓word	onset of pitch rise or fall in talk
wo(h)rd	“laughter” bubbling within a word
wor-	utterance cut-off
wo:rd	stretched sound
word=word	no pause between turns or words
word	stressed syllables
WORD	louder voice
°word°	quieter voice
~word~	creaky voice
>word<	faster speech
<word>	slower speech
@word@	animated speech
(words)	heard unclearly in transcription
()	unheard talk
((sniff))	analyst’s comments (for example nonverbal happenings)
grey text	the original soundtrack

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