

Some provisional guidelines:

- the ethnographer tries to understand others in their own terms and to provide an account of how this understanding has eventually been achieved; but contingency is also part of this process and understanding how others understand themselves takes into account not only the meaning of the terms used but also the context of their usage (recall for instance the different kinds of transcripts associated to different social and political settings); moreover the categories that organise others' experience may have been destroyed and what one encounters are not "cultural systems" but "broken frameworks" or moments of inarticulacy; ethnography then is more like an archaeologist who tries to reconstruct a whole out of bits and pieces; the ethnographic procedure is going to be metonymical (indexicality; contiguity; part-whole relation).
- the movement from fieldwork to the paper has been called by some a process of mapping a semantic space that can accommodate those notions or categories in terms of which others understand themselves and organize their experience; this is what in a previous note I called a "conceptual maze", but then I realise this could have been a misleading phrasing.
- in this and the next seminar the focus will be on post-war Angola as a situation of communication, mutual understanding, and research
 - o I will try to answer some questions that have been raised: if anthropology is more like art (narrative), what about its 'scientificity'; the question of an emerging Chinese perspective on Angola as holistic and unbiased by Eurocentric colonialist attitudes to Africa, and what about Angolans who see themselves in this optic; and how does ethnography relate to "globalization" (and its "shadows").
 - o the focus of the ethnographic inquiry is constructed in the process of research (by this I mean that the research questions or topic you bring with you may undergo change and become rethought in terms of local requirements: I began my research on the role of children accused of witchcraft among Bakongo returnees at the end of the war in Angola, to have my attention shifted to the history of social and religious change in the hinterland of Luanda as a former centre of the slave trade and then a periphery of the colonial state as the context in which people had to make cultural life projects).
 - o creating trust in a post-war society, and putting things on paper in a society with a colonial history in which writing has been used as an instrument of power (tax collection, labour recruitment, enforcing certain categories of identity).