DOING SENSORY ETHNOGRAPHY

SARAH PINK

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CONTENTS

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Doing Sensory Ethnography is the outcome of several years of research projects, reflections, discussions and, most recently, readings and experiences of the work of other academics and artists. Without the institutions, audiences, authors and practitioners who have supported my work, commented on presentations and articles, and produced their own theoretical arguments and ethnographic representations this book would have been impossible to write.

My first sensory ethnographies were produced through two projects developed with Unilever Research. It was through this collaboration that my interests in the senses were refined, leading to my book *Home Truths* (2004), which outlines the notion of the sensory home. Then, in my book *The Future of Visual Anthropology* (2006), some of the ideas expanded on here began to take shape. The case study of researching the sensory home discussed in The *Future of Visual Anthropology*, which I do not repeat here, was a starting point for several of the methodological themes developed in *Doing Sensory Ethnography*. In my next project, focusing on the development of the Cittàslow (Slow City) movement in the UK, I set out to use the senses as a starting point for thinking through questions relating to both the research context and participants *and* to understanding the approach of the movement itself. This research was generously funded initially by the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities at Loughborough University, and later through a Nuffield Foundation small grant. It has been through these two research projects that I have been able to work through my own experiences as an ethnographer to come to an idea of a *sensory ethnography*. Without the support of Unilever, the Nuffield Foundation or Loughborough University, this would not have been possible. Neither could the research have happened without the collaboration of the participants. Some are mentioned in this book, others have chosen to remain anonymous, but to all I am enormously grateful for their enthusiasm to be involved in my work. Many thanks are also due to the researchers and artists who have corresponded with me about their work and experiences. In particular I am grateful to Katrín Lund, Tom Rice, Justin Spinney and Tim Brennan.

Although this book has been written independently rather than being a compilation or re-publication of existing work, some of the ideas and case studies discussed in *Doing Sensory Ethnography* have been introduced in earlier articles. Earlier versions of the idea of ethnography as place-making have been developed in two articles 'Walking with video', published in *Visual Studies* (2007d) and 'An urban tour: the

sensory sociality of ethnographic place-making', published in *Ethnography* (2008b), and selected parts of the case studies central to these articles are also discussed here. However, I would recommend readers in these cases, as well as in the discussions of other people's work, to follow up their reading by referring to the more extensive and detailed discussions of these case studies as presented in their original sources.

I have presented parts of several of the chapters and case studies represented in *Doing Sensory Ethnography* at conferences and seminars. These include the Swedish Anthropological Association (SANT) conference in Falun, Sweden (2008), a seminar at the Open University, UK, focusing on issues around multimodality (2008) and at a seminar on 'Doing Sensory Ethnography' at the School of Education, University of Aarhus, Denmark (2008). These events offered particularly inspiring environments for discussing my ideas and I am very grateful to their organisers and participants. The ROAM walking arts weekend and following seminar, funded by Loughborough University (2008) and focusing on walking, arts and ethnography, also provided me with exciting sources of inspiration.

At a time when I needed some distance and feedback on the manuscript for *Doing Sensory Ethnography* Sage's anonymous readers provided me with invaluable and insightful comments which helped me to finish this book with renewed enthusiasm.

Finally, many thanks to Patrick Brindle for his enthusiasm for the idea of this book, and his support throughout the process of creating it.

INTRODUCTION: About Doing Sensory Ethnography

In *Doing Sensory Ethnography* I outline a way of thinking about and doing ethnography that takes as its starting point the multisensoriality of experience, perception, knowing and practice. By a 'sensory ethnography' I mean a process of doing ethnography that accounts for how this multisensoriality is integral both to the lives of people who participate in our research *and* to how we ethnographers practise our craft.

In recent years a number of ethnographers have begun to comment on the multisensoriality of the ethnographic process. As I was writing this book, interdisciplinary academic conferences, seminars and arts events were simultaneously building on other recent explorations of the senses in relation to a plethora of different aspects of individual social and cultural experiences. These and other explorations are being materialised into a new literature that accounts for the senses across the social sciences and humanities. *Doing Sensory Ethnography* responds to these new directions in scholarship and practice. Their discussions and proposals, along with my own experiences of doing domestic and urban ethnography with attention to the senses, invite the question of how a sensory approach to ethnography might be situated as a *methodology*. However, with a few exceptions, the existing texts that approach questions around this theme tend to be concerned with either *arguing* for the place of the senses in ethnographic practice or, through fine-grained and detailed ethnography, *demonstrating* that ethnographers really ought to attend to the senses.

My interest in methodology led me to ask what 'bigger picture' was emerging: How could these more established and newer bodies of existing literature and new forms of sensory representation be understood as an emergent field of sensory ethnography practice? What concerns, themes, theories, debates, moralities and more have united and divided the scholars working in this multi disciplinary field of practice? And how might *sensory ethnography* thus be defined? It is now, I believe, the moment in time at which an attempt to draw together contemporary scholarship and practice around the senses in ethnography is needed.

My starting point for this book is the anthropology of the senses. Indeed, social anthropology is the discipline in which most of the earlier 'sensory ethnographies', as well as my own work, is rooted. However *Doing Sensory Ethnography* is by no means simply a social anthropology book. Its theoretical commitments to place, memory and

imagination reach out to ideas and practices developed across the social sciences and humanities. Moreover, these theoretical themes consistently resonate though the work of scholars concerned with the senses. The research for this book has taken me through diverse 'ethnographic' scholarly disciplines and interdisciplinary areas of study. It has also introduced me to new academic, applied and arts practices. Through this review, the work of some scholars has emerged as outstanding examples of how sensory ethnography might be done, whose work I return to discuss in several chapters. At the same time I was often disappointed to find how little other ethnographers (whose work demonstrates so well the significance of the senses in culture and society) have written about the processes through which they came to these understandings. In this vein, I would urge contemporary ethnographers of the senses to be more explicit about the ways of experiencing and knowing that become central to their ethnographies, to share with others the senses of place they felt as they sought to occupy similar places to those of their research participants, and to acknowledge the processes through which their sensory knowing has become academic knowledge. This is not a call for an excess of reflexivity above the need for ethnographers to represent the findings of their research. Rather, in a context where interest in the senses is increasing across disciplines, it is more a question of sharing knowledge about practice.

When preparing this book I was faced with a choice. I could either approach sensory ethnography through an exploration of practice conceived as multisensorial and emplaced, or I might examine in turn how different sensory modalities might be engaged and/or attended to in the ethnographic process. The book is structured through a series of chapters that each addresses issues and questions relating to ethnographic approaches, practices and methods, rather than by discussing sensory categories chapter by chapter. The decision to develop the narrative in this way is based on both a theoretical commitment to understanding the senses as interconnected and a methodological focus on the role of subjectivity and experience in ethnography. This is in contrast to many recent ethnographic discussions of sensory experience (including my own – Pink 2004), the use of the senses in ethnography (Atkinson et al. 2007) and even a book series (*Sensory Formations*, Berg Publishers), which are structured through reference to different sensory modalities or categories.

Because researchers often focus on one or another sensory modality or category in their analyses, I in fact discuss plenty of examples of sensory ethnography practice concerned with mainly smell, taste, touch or vision. Indeed, in particular research contexts one sensory modality might be verbalised or otherwise referred to more frequently than others. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the experience the ethnographer is attending to is only related to that one category or to just one sense organ. Rather, the idea of a sensory ethnography advanced here is based on an understanding of the senses as interconnected and interrelated.

Doing Sensory Ethnography is presented through eight chapters. Chapter 1 defines sensory ethnography, situates it in relation to debates about how ethnography 'should' be done, and sets the interdisciplinary scene for the book. Here I explore the historical development of the focus on the senses in the key academic and applied disciplines where it is represented. This discussion identifies key debates, themes and convergences within and across these areas, providing a necessary backdrop against which to understand the developments discussed in later chapters, and in

particular through which to situate ethnographic case studies in relation to historical and disciplinary trajectories.

Chapter 2 establishes the principles of a sensory ethnography and the theoretical commitments of the book. It examines a set of key concepts that inform the idea of a sensory ethnography though a consideration of existing thought and debates concerning sensory experience, perception and knowing. These fundamental questions, which are embedded in debates that are themselves not totally resolved, inform not only how ethnographers comprehend the lives of others, but also how they understand their own research practices. Here I also propose understanding sensory ethnography through a theory of place and place-making, and outline the significance of memory and imagination in the ethnographic process. The conceptual tools presented in Chapter 2 inform the analytical strand of the following chapters.

Chapter 3 takes a necessarily more practical approach to the doing of sensory ethnography. Here I identify and discuss how ethnographers might prepare for and anticipate some of the issues and practices that are particular to an approach to ethnography that both seeks out knowledge about the senses and uses the senses as a route to knowledge. In doing so I explore the reflexivity demanded by this approach and argue for an appreciation of the subjectivity and intersubjectivity of the sensory ethnography process.

Chapters 4 and 5 follow conventional ethnographic methodology texts in that they are dedicated to 'participant observation' and 'ethnographic interviewing', respectively. However, in fact the purpose of these chapters is to challenge, revise and rethink both of these established ethnographic practices through the senses. In doing so I draw from my own work and a series of case studies from the work of other ethnographers who attend to the senses to both review the theoretical and practical concerns that have grown around these methods and to suggest reconceptualising them through sensory methodologies. Chapter 6 continues this revisionary vein. Drawing from my own and other existing work in visual ethnography, I ask what role visual methods and media might have in a multisensory approach to ethnography. Here, building on ideas initially developed in *The Future of Visual Anthropology* (Pink 2006), I extend the discussion to review how visual methods are being used to research sensory experience, knowledge and practice across the social sciences and humanities – and to examine their potential for the representation of multisensory experience. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 respond to and develop further the understanding of the relationship between ethnography and place introduced in Chapter 2.

Chapter 7 approaches the issue of analysis in sensory ethnography. This is a question that (given the messiness of the ethnographic process and the frequent impossibility of distinguishing analysis as a separate stage from research or representation) some would be forgiven for thinking might be rather redundant. Accounting for this problem, I suggest thinking of analysis as a way of making ethnographic places. Analysis might be variously situated in the ethnographic process and not always distinguishable from other activities. It is indeed as sensorial a process as the research itself: a context where sensory memories and imaginaries are at their full force as the ethnographer draws relationships between the experiential field of the research and the scholarly practices of academia.

Chapter 8 discusses how the multisensory realities of ethnographers' and research participants' lives might be represented. Here I explore how representations might be

developed to communicate something of the ethnographer's own experiences, and those of the people participating in the research, to their audiences, while simultaneously making a contribution to scholarship. This investigation both reviews existing sensory representation within academic contexts and goes beyond academia to explore sensory arts practice.

This book is programmatic in that it argues for, and indeed undertakes a systematic thinking through of, the theoretical, methodological and practical elements with which a sensory approach to ethnography might engage. Nevertheless, *Doing Sensory Ethnography* is not intended to be prescriptive. Rather, I suggest how a sensory ethnographic process might be understood and how it might be achieved, and in doing so discuss a wide range of examples of existing practice. I do not propose a 'how to' account of doing ethnography with the senses in mind, but a framework for a sensory ethnography that can serve as a reference point for future developments and creativity. Like any 'type' of ethnography, ultimately a sensory approach cannot simply be learnt from a book, but will be developed through the ethnographer's engagement with her or his environment. Therefore, at the end of this journey through the chapters, the reader should not expect to have learnt *how* to do a sensory ethnography. Instead, I hope that she or he will feel inspired to build on the exciting and innovative practice of others. The existing literature now offers a strong basis from which to reflect on the possibilities and opportunities afforded by an ethnographic methodology that attends to the senses in its epistemology and its practices of research, analysis and representation.

PART I
RETHINKING ETHNOGRAPHY THROUGH THE SENSES

1
SITUATING SENSORY ETHNOGRAPHY: From Academia to Intervention

Doing Sensory Ethnography investigates the possibilities afforded by attending to the senses in ethnographic research and representation. An acknowledgement that sensoriality is fundamental to how we learn about, understand and represent other people's lives is increasingly central to academic and applied practice in the social sciences and humanities. This appreciation, which David Howes has referred to as a 'sensorial turn' (2003: xii) has been couched in terms of an anthropology of the senses (Howes 1991a), sensuous scholarship (Stoller 1997), sensuous geography (Rodaway 1994), sociology of the senses (Simmel 1997 [1907]; Low 2005), the senses in communication and interaction (Finnegan 2002), the sensorium and arts practice (Zardini 2005; Jones 2006a), the sensoriality of film (MacDougall 1998, 2005; Marks 2000), a cultural history of the senses (Classen 1993, 1998), the sensuous nature of the 'tourist encounter' (Crouch and Desforges 2003) or of medical practice (Edvardsson and Street 2007; Hindmarsh and Pilnick 2007; Lammer 2007), sensory design and architecture (Malnar and Vodvarka 2004; Pallasmaa 2005), attention to the senses in material culture studies (e.g. Tilley 2006), 'brand sense' (Lindstrom 2005) in the 'multimodality' paradigm (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001), and within the notion of 'complex ethnography' (Atkinson et al. 2007).

Across these fields of study scholars are creating new paths in academic debate through the theoretical exploration of sensory experience, perception, sociality, knowing, knowledge, practice and culture (e.g. Ingold 2000; Thrift 2004; Howes 2005a). The debates and arguments inspired by these literatures are shaping empirical studies and real-world interventions over a broad range of substantive areas. They inform how researchers represent their findings in conventional written and audio-visual texts and in innovative forms designed to communicate about sensory experience. They also have implications for ethnographic methodology.

In this chapter, I situate sensory ethnography in two ways. First, I outline its continuities and departures from existing ethnographic methodologies. Second, I locate

it in relation to the intellectual trajectories of discipline-specific scholarship and applied research.

WHAT IS A SENSORY ETHNOGRAPHY?

Uses of the term 'ethnography' refer to a range of qualitative research practices, employed, with varying levels of theoretical engagement, in academic and applied research contexts. Ethnographic practice tends to include participant observation, ethnographic interviewing, and a range of other participatory research techniques that are often developed and adapted in context and as appropriate to the needs and possibilities afforded by specific research projects. There is now no standard way of doing ethnography that is universally practised. In this context, Paul Atkinson, Sara Delamont and William Housley have suggested that there has been a shift from the 'classic' emphasis on 'holism, context and similar ideas' to the increasing fragmentation of ethnographic research. Moreover, they claim that this has led to a situation where 'different authors adopt and promote specific approaches to the collection and analysis of data' and 'particular kinds of data become celebrated in the process' (2007: 33).

Sensory ethnography, as proposed in this book, is certainly not just another route in an increasingly fragmented map of approaches to ethnographic practice. Rather, it is a critical methodology, which, like my existing work on visual ethnography (Pink 2007a), departs from the classic observational approach promoted by Atkinson, Delamont and Housley (2007) to insist that ethnography is a reflexive and experiential process though which understanding, knowing and (academic) knowledge are produced. Indeed, as Regina Bendix has argued, to research 'sensory perception and reception' requires methods that 'are capable of grasping "the most profound type of knowledge [which] is not spoken of at all and thus inaccessible to ethnographic observation or interview" (Bloch 1998: 46)' (Bendix 2000: 41). Thus sensory ethnography discussed in the book does not privilege any one type of data or research method. Rather, it is open to multiple ways of knowing and to the exploration of and reflection on new routes to knowledge. Indeed, it would be erroneous to see sensory ethnography as a method for data collection at all: in this book I do not use the term 'data' to refer to the ways of knowing and understanding that are produced through ethnographic practice. To reiterate the definition of ethnography I have suggested elsewhere:

> ethnography is a process of creating and representing knowledge (about society, culture and individuals) that is based on ethnographers' own experiences. It does not claim to produce an objective or truthful account of reality, but should aim to offer versions of ethnographers' experiences of reality that are as loyal as possible to the context, negotiations and intersubjectivities through which the knowledge was produced. (Pink 2007a: 22)

Atkinson, Delamont and Housley have suggested that what they term 'postmodern' approaches to ethnography have 'devalued systematic analysis of action and representations, while privileging rather vague ideas of experience, evocation and personal engagement' (2007: 35). In my view, an acknowledgement of the importance of these experiential and evocative elements of ethnography is in fact essential, but a lack of

attention to the practices and material cultures of research participants is not its automatic corollary. Moreover, while the concept of experience has unquestionably become central to ethnographic practice, recent methodological approaches to experience in ethnography are far from vague. Rather, they have begun to interrogate this concept (see Throop 2003; Pink 2006, 2008c; Pickering 2008) to consider its relevance in social anthropology and cultural studies. These points are taken further in Chapter 2.

What ethnography actually entails in a more practical sense is best discerned by asking what ethnographers do. This means defining ethnography through its very practice rather than in prescriptive terms. For example, Karen O'Reilly, reviewing definitions of ethnography across different disciplines, has suggested a minimum definition as:

> iterative-inductive research (that evolves in design through the study), drawing on a family of methods, involving direct and sustained contact with human agents, within the context of their daily lives (and cultures), watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions, and producing a richly written account that respects the irreducibility of human experience, that acknowledges the role of theory as well as the researcher's own role and that views humans as part object/part subject. (2005: 3)

While in this book I will go beyond this definition to rethink ethnography through the senses, the principle of O'Reilly's approach is important. Her definition provides a basic sense of what an ethnographer might do, without prescribing exactly how this has to be done. Delamont, in contrast, is more prescriptive in her definition of 'proper ethnography' as being 'participant observation during fieldwork' (2004: 206) – something that she proposes is 'done by living with the people being studied, watching them work and play, thinking carefully about what is seen, interpreting it and talking to the actors to check the emerging interpretations' (2004: 206). Delamont's interpretation reflects what might be seen as the classic approach to ethnography as developed in social anthropology in the twentieth century.

While classic observational methods certainly produce valuable in-depth and often detailed descriptions of other people's lives, this type of fieldwork is often not viable in contemporary contexts. This might be because the research is focused in environments where it would be impractical and inappropriate for researchers to go and live for long periods with research participants, for instance, in a modern western home (see Pink 2004) or in a workplace to which the researcher has limited access (see Bust et al. 2008). Limitations might be also related to the types of practice the researcher seeks to understand, due to constraints of time and other practical issues impacting on the working lives of ethnographers as well as those of research participants. In applied research, other constraints can influence the amount of time available to spend on a project (see Pink 2005a). This has meant that innovative methods have been developed by ethnographers to provide routes into understanding other people's lives, experiences, values, social worlds and more that go beyond the classic observational approach. These are not shortcuts to the same materials that would be produced through the classic approach (see also Pink 2007e for a discussion of this). Indeed, they involve 'direct and sustained contact with human agents, within the context of their daily lives' (O'Reilly 2005: 3). Nevertheless they are alternative, and ultimately valid, ways of seeking to understand and engage with other people's worlds through sharing activities, practices and inviting new forms of expression. It is these emergent methods that are defining the new sensory

ethnography as it is practised. The mission of this book is not to argue for a single model of sensory ethnography. Rather, I understand sensory ethnography as a developing field of practice.

As the definitions discussed above indicate, a set of existing methods is already associated with ethnography, and usually covered in ethnographic methodology books. These methods include participant observation, interviewing, and other participatory approaches. Ethnography frequently involves the use of digital visual and audio technologies in the practice of such methods (Pink et al. 2004; Pink 2007a) and might also be conducted, at least in part, virtually or online (see Hine 2000), in addition to the ethnographer's physical engagements with the materiality and sensoriality of everyday and other contexts. Whereas participatory methods often entail ethnographers participating in, observing (or sensing) and learning how to do what the people participating in their research are already engaged in (and presumably would have been doing anyway) interviewing normally involves a collaborative process of exploring specific themes and topics with an interviewee. Other less conventional methods may entail more intentional interventions on the part of the researcher. For instance, these could include collaborations such as producing a film, writing a song or inventing a new recipe with one's research participants, or inviting them to reflexively engage in an everyday or designed activity. Doing sensory ethnography entails taking a series of conceptual and practical steps that allow the researcher to rethink both established and new participatory and collaborative ethnographic research techniques in terms of sensory perception, categories, meanings and values, ways of knowing and practices. It involves the researcher self-consciously and reflexively attending to the senses throughout the research process, that is during the planning, reviewing, fieldwork, analysis and representational processes of a project.

One might argue that sensory experience and perception has 'always' been central to the ethnographic encounter, and thus also to ethnographers' engagements with the sociality and materiality of research. This makes it all the more necessary to rethink ethnography to explicitly *account for* the senses. Indeed, when classic ethnographic case studies are reinterpreted through attention to sensory experience, new understandings might be developed (see Howes 2003). To some readers these dual arguments – that ethnography is already *necessarily* sensory and the call to rethink ethnography as sensory – may be reminiscent of earlier revisions. Around the end of the twentieth century it was proposed that all ethnographic practice should be reflexive, is gendered (e.g. Bell et al. 1993), embodied (e.g. Coffey 1999), and visual (e.g. Banks 2001; Pink 2007a). These perspectives were accompanied by powerful arguments for understanding ethnographic practice through new paradigms. A sensory ethnography methodology accounts for and expands this existing scholarship that rethought ethnography as gendered, embodied and more. In doing so it draws from theories of human perception and place to propose a framework for understanding the ethnographic process and the ethnographer's practice (this is developed in Chapter 2). Thus the idea of a sensory ethnography involves not only attending to the senses in ethnographic research and representation, but reaches out towards an altogether more sophisticated set of ideas through which to understand what ethnography itself entails.

The proposal for a sensory ethnography presented in this book draws from and responds to a series of existing discipline-specific intellectual and practice-oriented trajectories that already attend to the senses through theoretical, empirical or applied

engagements. In the remainder of this chapter I identify a set of themes and debates in the existing literature in relation to which a sensory ethnographic methodology is situated.

SENSORY ETHNOGRAPHY AND ACADEMIC PRACTICE

The approach to sensory ethnography advocated here does not need to be owned by any one academic discipline. However, sensory ethnographic practice has, to date, emerged through substantive (academic and applied) research projects that are located within particular academic disciplines – or that are at most interdisciplinary in that they might span two or three disciplines. The most influential disciplines in this field have been social and cultural anthropology, human geography and sociology, with noteworthy developments also in archaeology (e.g. Levy et al. 2004; Witmore 2004), history (Classen 1998; Cowan and Steward 2007) and in ethnographically oriented interdisciplines of tourism studies (Crouch and Desforges 2003), nursing studies (Edvardsson and Street 2007) and performance studies (Hahn 2007). Below, focusing on social/cultural anthropology, human geography and sociology, I chart the development of these discipline-specific trajectories and suggest how they might inform a sensory ethnography.

The Anthropology of the Senses and Its Critics

While there was intermittent anthropological interest in the senses earlier in the twentieth century (see Howes 2003: Chapter 1; Pink 2006: Chapter 1; Robben 2007 for analytical outlines of this history), the subdiscipline known as 'the anthropology of the senses' became established in the 1980s and 1990s, preceded by and related to existing work on embodiment (see Howes 2003: 29–32). Led by the work of scholars including David Howes (1991a), Paul Stoller (1989, 1997), Nadia Seremetakis (1994), Steven Feld (1982), and Feld and Keith Basso (1996a), this has involved the exploration of both the sensory experiences and classification systems of 'others' and of the ethnographer her or himself (see also Herzfeld 2001). These scholars played a key role in agenda-setting for anthropological studies of sensory experience, and their ideas continue to shape the work of contemporary ethnographers of the senses (e.g. Geurts 2002: 17; Hahn 2007: 3–4). However, Tim Ingold (2000) has proposed a critical and influential departure from the anthropology of the senses as it was developed by Howes and Classen, Stoller, Feld and others. These debates have played an important role in framing subsequent treatments of the senses in anthropology and other disciplines. Moreover, they raise critical issues for the principles of a sensory ethnography, as developed in Chapter 2.

The anthropology of the senses was to some extent a revisionary movement, calling for the rethinking of the discipline through attention to the senses. Howes' edited volume, *The Varieties of Sensory Experience* (1991a), laid out a programme for the subdiscipline. This was a project in cross-cultural comparison that Howes described as 'primarily concerned with how the patterning of sense experience varies from one culture to the next in accordance with the meaning and emphasis attached to each

of the modalities of perception' (1991b: 3). These concerns proposed an analytical route that sought to identify the role of the senses in producing different configurations across culture, as Howes put it, to trace 'the influence such variations have on forms of social organization, conceptions of self and cosmos, the regulation of the emotions, and other domains of cultural expression' (1991b: 3). This approach was focused on comparing how different cultures map out the senses. Based on the assumption that in all cultures the senses are organised hierarchically, one of the tasks of the sensory researcher would be to determine the 'sensory profile' (Howes and Classen 1991: 257) or sensory 'order' of the culture being studied. A good example of how this approach is put into practice can be found in Howes' (2003) work concerning Melanesian peoples.

While Howes' approach has opened up new avenues of investigation and scholarship, it has not escaped criticism. The ethnographic evidence certainly demonstrates that different cultures can be associated with the use of different sets of sensory categories and meanings (e.g. Geurts 2002; Pink 2004). Indeed, as I have argued elsewhere, the comparison of how sensory categories and moralities and practices associated with them are articulated and engaged in the constitution of identities across cultures is a viable proposition (Pink 2004, 2006). Nevertheless, taking cultural difference as the unit of comparison can be problematic when it shifts attention away from the immediacy of sensory experience as lived, and as such from the moment of perception. Ingold's critique of this dimension of Howes' approach argues that its focus on the 'incorporeal "ideas" and "beliefs" of a culture' treats 'sensory experience as but a vehicle for the expression of extra-sensory, cultural values' (Ingold 2000: 156). This, Ingold writes, 'reduces the body to a locus of objectified and enumerable sense whose one and only role is to carry the semantic load projected onto them by a collective, supersensory subject – namely society – and whose balance or ratio may be calculated according to the load borne by each' (2000: 284). Instead, Ingold has proposed a refocusing of research in the anthropology of the senses, away from 'the collective sensory consciousness of society' and towards the 'creative interweaving of experience in discourse and to the ways in which the resulting discursive constructions in turn affect people's perceptions of the world around them' (2000: 285). Howes has responded to the critique with a further insistence on the importance of undertaking 'an in-depth examination' of the 'social significance' of the 'sensory features of a society' (2003: 49). The disagreement between Howes and Ingold is based both in their different theoretical commitments and in their agendas for approaching the senses in culture and society. While Howes has recognised the importance of perception (2003: 40), he nevertheless seems to be calling for anthropologists of the senses to take cultural models as their starting point. This, like the classic approach to ethnography discussed above, focuses attention away from the specificity of individuals' practices and the experiential (see also Pink 2004). In contrast, Ingold places human perception at the centre of his analysis. In Chapter 2 I return to this debate to suggest how a sensory ethnography might account for both sensory perception and cultural difference.

A second strand in the work of Howes (1991a) and Stoller (1989) emphasised the commonly assumed dominance of vision, or occularcentrism, in modern western culture. Through cross-cultural comparison, a body of work emerged that suggested how in other cultures non-visual senses may play a more dominant role. A particularly striking example is presented in Constance Classen, Howes and Anthony

Synnott's work on smell, through their discussion of Pandaya's work on the Ongee people in the Andaman Islands. They describe how, for the Ongee, 'the identifying characteristic and life force of all living beings is thought to reside in their smell'. Indeed, they write: 'it is through catching a whiff of oneself, and being able to distinguish that scent from all the other odours that surround one, that one arrives at a sense of one's own identity in Ongee society' (Classen et al. 1994: 113). This and other ethnographic studies discussed by Classen et al. (1994) leave little doubt that in different cultures notions of self and more might be attributed verbally and/or gesturally to different sensory categories. Yet it does not follow from this that the embodied experience of the self, for instance, is necessarily perceived simply through one sensory modality. To deconstruct the argument that in different cultures different sensory modalities are dominant we need to separate out the idea of there being a hierarchically dominant sense on the one hand and, on the other, the ethnographic evidence that in specific cultural contexts people tend to use particular sensory categories to conceptualise aspects of their lives and identities. While the latter is well supported, the former is challenged in recent literature. This argument can be expanded with reference to the status of vision in modern western societies. Ingold argues that the assumption that vision is necessarily a dominant and objectifying sense is incorrect (2000: 287). He suggests this assumption was brought about because instead of asking, 'How do we see the environment around us?' (Gibson 1979: 1, cited by Ingold 2000: 286), instead 'philosophical critics of visualism' presuppose that 'to see is to reduce the environment to objects that are to be grasped and appropriated as representations in the mind' (Ingold 2000: 286). Based on theories that understand perception as multisensory, in that the senses are not separated out at the point of perception, but culturally defined, Ingold thus suggests understanding vision in terms of its interrelationship with other senses (in his own discussion through an analysis of the relationship between vision and hearing).

Following Ingold's critique, others have taken up questions related to vision (e.g. Grasseni 2007a; Willerslev 2007). Cristina Grasseni has proposed a 'rehabilitation of vision' not 'as an isolated given but within its interplay with the other senses' (2007a: 1). Grasseni argues that vision is 'not necessarily identifiable with "detached observation" and should not be opposed by definition to "the immediacy of fleeting sounds. Ineffable odours, confused emotions, and the flow of Time passing" ([Fabian 1983]: 108)'. Rather, she proposes the idea of '*skilled visions* [which] are embedded in multi-sensory practices, where look is coordinated with skilled movement, with rapidly changing points of view, or with other senses such as touch' (2007a: 4). Tom Rice, whose research has focused on sound, also questions the usefulness of what he calls 'anti-visualism'. Rice suggests that in the case of sound the effect of the anti-visualist argument is in 're-re-establishing the visual/auditory dichotomy that has pervaded anthropological thought on sensory experience' (2005: 201). My own research about the modern western 'sensory home' (Pink 2004) through a focus on categories of sound, vision, smell and touch likewise suggests that no sensory modality necessarily *dominates* how domestic environments or practices are experienced in any one culture. Rather, the home is an environment that is constituted, experienced, understood, evaluated and maintained through all the senses. For example, British and Spanish research participants decided whether or not they would clean their homes based on multisensory evaluations and knowledge that they verbalised in terms of how clothes, or sinks or floors look, smell

or feel under foot. The sensory modalities research participants cited as being those that mattered when they evaluated their homes varied both culturally and individually. However, this was not because their perceptions of cleanliness were dominated by one sensory modality but because they used sensory modalities as expressive categories through which to communicate about both cleanliness and self-identity (see Pink 2004). Drawing from this existing theoretical and ethnographic work, here I suggest an approach to sensory ethnography that recognises that vision does not dominate the way we experience our environments. Rather, I explore the relationship of vision, visual media and visual practices to those associated with other sensory modalities.

The 'reflexive turn' in social and cultural anthropology is usually attributed to the 'writing culture' debate and the emergence of a dialogical anthropology (e.g. Clifford and Marcus 1986; James et al. 1997). This highlighted, among other things, the constructedness of ethnographic texts, the importance of attending to the processes by which ethnographic knowledge is produced and the need to bring local voices into academic representations. The reflexivity that emerged from discussions in sensory anthropology was a critical response to this literature. Howes argued that the 'verbocentric' approach of dialogical anthropology was limited as it failed to account for the senses (1991b: 7–8), and Regina Bendix criticised 'its focus on the authorial self [which] shies away from seeking to understand the role of the senses and affect within as well as outside of the researcher-and-researched dynamic' (2000: 34). In the late 1980s, reflexive accounts of the roles played by the senses in anthropological fieldwork began to emerge in connection with both the issues raised by the 'writing culture' shift and the contemporary emphasis on embodiment. These works stressed the need for reflexive engagements with how ethnographic knowledge was produced and an acknowledgement of the importance of the body in human experience and in academic practice. Paul Stoller's *The Taste of Ethnographic Things* (1989), followed almost a decade later by his *Sensuous Scholarship* (1997), pushed this 'reflexive' and 'embodied' turn in social theory further. Stoller's work shows how anthropological practice is a corporeal process that involves the ethnographer engaging not only with the ideas of others, but in learning about their understandings through her or his own physical and sensorial experiences, such as tastes (e.g. 1989) or pain and illness (e.g. 1997, 2007). Likewise, Nadia Seremetakis (1994) and Judith Okely (1994) both used their own experiences as the basis for discussions that placed the ethnographer's sensing body at the centre of the analysis. As for any ethnographic process, reflexivity is central to sensory ethnography practice. In Chapter 3 I build on these existing works to outline how a sensory reflexivity and intersubjectivity might be understood and practised.

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century several book-length anthropological 'sensory ethnographies' as well as an increasing number of articles (e.g. in the journal *Senses and Society*) and book chapters have been published. The legacy of the earlier anthropology of the senses is evident in these ethnographies with their foci on, for instance, cross-cultural comparison (Geurts 2002; Pink 2004), apprenticeship (e.g. Downey 2005, 2007; Grasseni 2007c; Marchand 2007), memory and the senses (Sutton 2001; Desjarlais 2003), and commitment to reflexive interrogation. These new works also take the anthropology of the senses in important new directions. While the earlier sensory ethnographies focused almost exclusively on cultures that were strikingly different from that where the ethnographer had originated, more

recently anthropological studies that attend to the senses have been done 'at home', or at least in modern western cultures. This has included a focus on everyday practices such as housework (Pink 2004) and laundry (Pink 2005b), gardening (Tilley 2006), leisure practices such as walking and climbing (e.g. Lund 2005), clinical work practices (e.g. Rice 2006; Lammer 2007) and homelessness (Desjarlais 2005). Such sensory ethnographies both attend to and interpret the experiential, individual, idiosyncratic and contextual nature of research participants' sensory practices *and* also seek to comprehend the culturally specific categories, conventions, moralities and knowledge that informs how people understand their experiences.

To sum up, the anthropology of the senses is characterised by three main issues/debates. It explores the question of the relationship between sensory perception and culture, engages with questions concerning the status of vision and its relationship to the other senses, and demands a form of reflexivity that goes beyond the interrogation of how culture is 'written' to examine the sites of embodied knowing. Drawing from these debates I suggest that while ethnographers need to attempt to establish sets of reference points regarding collective or shared culturally-specific knowledge about sensory categories and meanings, such categories should be understood in terms of a model of culture as constantly being produced and thus as contingent. This, however, cannot be built independently of the study and analysis of actual sensory practices and experienced realities. To undertake this, a sensory ethnography must be informed by a theory of sensory perception. I expand on this in Chapter 2.

Sensuous Geographies, Ethnography and Spatial Theory

Theories of space, place and the experience of the environment are central concerns to human geographers. These theoretical strands, as well as recent ethnographic studies in human geography, are particularly relevant to a sensory ethnography that attends to both social and physical/material practices and relations.

As for social anthropology, a notable interest in sensory experience became evident in the latter part of the twentieth century. The geographer Yi-Fu Tuan stressed the role of the senses in his earlier work, proposing that 'An object or place achieves concrete reality when our experience of it is total, that is through all the senses as well as with the active and reflective mind' (1977: 18). Nevertheless, it was around the same time as the emergence of the anthropology of the senses that geographical approaches to the senses were articulated more fully. However, in contrast to the anthropological literature, this work did not explore sensory experience ethnographically, or cross-culturally, but tended to draw from existing social science studies, philosophy or literature. Also in common with the anthropology of the senses, in part this literature proposed a revision of dominant concepts in the discipline, through the senses. Thus in *Landscapes of the Mind* (1990), Douglas Porteous called for a rethinking of the centrality of landscape in geography through a focus on 'non-visual sensory modes' (1990: 5), resonating with contemporary work in anthropology (e.g. Howes 1991a). Indeed, in accordance with the approaches of his time, Porteus took an accusatory stance against vision. He proposed that '...vision drives out the other senses' and defined it as 'the ideal sense for an intellectualised, information-crazed species that has withdrawn from many areas of direct sensation' (1990: 5). In response, he set out notions of 'smellscape'

and 'soundscape' (1990: 23) to examine how these different modalities of sensory experience figure in the way people experience their environments. While Porteous's scapes tend to separate out different sensory modalities, Tuan stressed multisensoriality in his volume *Passing Strange and Wonderful* (1993). Within his wider task of exploring 'the importance of the aesthetic in our lives' (1993: 1) Tuan suggested understanding our experience of 'natural' or built environments as multisensory.

In *Sensuous Geographies* (1994), Paul Rodaway sought to take sensory geography in another direction. Rodaway aligned his work with a revival of humanistic geography and links between humanistic and postmodern geography that developed in the 1990s (e.g. in the work of Tuan) and phenomenological approaches (1994: 6–9). Rather than separating the 'physical, social, cultural and aesthetic dimensions of human experience' as Porteous and Tuan had, Rodaway, influenced by Gibson's ecological theory of perception (Rodaway 1994: ix), sought 'to offer a more integrated view of the role of the senses in geographical understanding: *the sense both as a relationship to a world and the senses as themselves a kind of structuring of space and defining of place*' (Rodaway 1994: 4, original italics). Of particular interest are the common threads his work shares with social anthropologists. Like his contemporary anthropologists, Rodaway noted that 'Everyday experience is multisensual, though one of more sense may be dominant in a given situation' (1994: 5). These earlier calls for attention to the senses sought to theorise key geographical concepts in relation to the multisensoriality of human experience, focusing on space, place and landscape. However, although they have undoubtedly been inspiring texts, neither individually nor collectively do they offer a satisfactory or complete framework for sensory analysis. While Porteous took the important step of turning academic attention to the non-visual elements of landscape, by situating his work as a response to visualism he limited its scope. The critiques of the anti-visualism thesis as it developed in anthropology (e.g. by Ingold 2000; Grasseni 2007a), discussed in the previous section, can equally be applied to this body of work in human geography.

More recently, geographers have continued to develop these core theoretical themes – of space, place and landscape – with attention to the senses. For example, Nigel Thrift has conceptualised space through a paradigm that recognises its sensual and affective dimensions (e.g. Thrift 2006). Other developments include theoretical discussions in the context of urban geography and future geographies. For instance, discussing collective culture and urban public space, Ash Amin discusses what he calls 'situated surplus', which is produced out of 'the entanglements of bodies in motion and the environmental conditions and physical architecture of a given space'. This, he suggests, drawing also from the work of other geographers (citing Pile 2005; Thrift 2005) and resonating in several ways with the work of contemporary anthropologists (e.g. Harris 2007a), is 'collectively experienced as a form of *tacit, neurological and sensory knowing*' (Amin 2008: 11, my italics). Moreover, Thrift has speculated about how 'new kinds of sensorium' (2004: 582) might develop in an emergent context of 'qualculative' space, where new ways of perceiving space and time would develop and our senses of (for example) touch and direction would be transformed.

Geographers who have recently taken ethnographic approaches to the senses include Divya P. Tolia-Kelly's collaborative work concerning migrants' perceptions of the Lake District in the UK (2007), Tim Edensor's writings on industrial ruins (e.g. 2007), Justin Spinney's mobile (2007) ethnography of urban cyclists and Lisa Law's (2005) analysis of how Filipina domestic workers negotiated their identities in

Hong Kong. Some of this ethnographic work examines the senses through the geographical paradigm of landscape. For instance, Law shows how, among other things, Filipina domestic workers produce their own sensory landscapes in public spaces of the city on their days off. Through this, she suggests that they evoke 'a sense of home', which 'incorporates elements of history and memory, of past and present times and spaces, helping to create a familiar place ...' (2005: 236). In the context of an existing lack of 'a methodology for researching sensory landscapes', Law suggests ethnographic research can make an important contribution (2005: 227). This and other work, such as the innovative collaborative arts practice-based methodologies developed by Tolia-Kelly in her work on migrants' experiences of landscape (2007), demonstrate the potential for ethnographic methodologies in human geography. By focusing on the sensory-experiencing body and exploring its interdependency with landscape (see Casey 2001), a sensory ethnography can reveal important insights into the constitution of self and the articulation of power relations.

The long-term interests in both spatial theory and the senses that have converged in the work of human geographers create a fertile intellectual trajectory from which a sensory approach to ethnography can draw. In Chapter 2 I take these connections further to suggest how geographical theories of place and space (Massey 2005) might, in combination with philosophical (Casey 1996) and anthropological (Ingold 2007, 2008) work on place and the phenomenology of perception, inform our understanding of sensory ethnography practice.

Sociology of the Senses: Interaction and Corporeality

An initial impulse towards a sociology of the senses was proposed by Georg Simmel in his 1907 essay 'Sociology of the senses' (Simmel 1997 [1907]). Simmel's agenda was not to establish a subdiscipline of a sociology of the senses. Rather, as part of an argument about the importance of a micro-sociology (1997 [1907]: 109), he focused on, as he puts it, 'the meanings that mutual sensory perception and influencing have for the social life of human beings, their coexistence, cooperation and opposition' (1997 [1907]: 110). He suggested that our sensory perception of others plays two key roles in human interaction. First, our 'sensory impression' of another person invokes emotional or physical responses in us. Second, 'sense impression' becomes 'a route of knowledge of the other' (1997 [1907]: 111). Although Simmel concluded by proposing that 'One will no longer be able to consider as unworthy of attention the delicate, invisible threads that are spun from one person to another' (1997 [1907]: 120), it is only a century later that sociologists are engaging in depth with this question. In part, Simmel's legacy has been to encourage sociologists to focus on a sensory sociology of human interaction. However, coinciding with my own rather frustrated search for sociological research about the senses, Kelvin Low has recently confirmed the earlier assessment of Gail Largey and Rod Watson (2006 [1972]: 39) in his observation that 'sociologists have seldom researched the senses' (Low 2005: 399). Nevertheless some significant sociological work on the senses has emerged.

Although Simmel saw the 'lower senses' to be of secondary sociological significance to vision and hearing (1997 [1907]: 117), he suggested that 'smelling a person's body odour is the most intimate perception of them' since 'they penetrate, so to

speak, in a gaseous form into our most sensory inner being' (1997 [1907]: 119). This interest in smell and social interaction has continued in the sociology of the senses. Largey and Watson's essay, entitled 'The sociology of odors' (2006 [1972]), also extends the sociological interest in social interaction to propose that 'Much moral symbolism relevant to interaction is expressed in terms of olfactory imagery' (2006 [1972]: 29). They stress the 'real' consequences that might follow from this (2006: [1972]: 30). For instance, they note how 'odors are often referred to as the insurmountable barrier to close interracial and/or interclass interaction' (2006 [1972]: 32) as well as being associated with intimacy among an 'in-group' (2006 [1972]: 34). Also with reference to social interaction, Largey and Watson see odour as a form of 'impression management' by which individuals try 'to avoid moral stigmatization' and present an appropriate/approved 'olfactory identity' (2006 [1972]: 35). Low, who proposes that this approach might be extended to other senses (2005: 411), also examines the role of smell in social interaction. He argues that 'smell functions as a social medium employed by social actors towards formulating constructions/judgements of race-d, class-ed and gender-ed others, operating on polemic/categorical constructions (and also, other nuances between polarities) which may involve a process of *othering*' (2005: 405, original italics). As such, he suggests that 'the differentiation of smell stands as that which involves not only an identification of "us" vs "them" or "you" vs "me", but, also, processes of judgement and ranking of social others' (2005: 405). Building on Simmel's ideas, Low's study of smell, which involved ethnographic research, 'attempts to move beyond "absolutely supra-individual total structures" (Simmel, 1997 [1907]: 110) towards individual, lived experiences where smell may be utilized as a social medium in the (re)construction of social realities' (Low 2005: 298).

Other sociological studies that attend to the senses have departed from Simmel's original impetus in two ways. On the one hand, Michael Bull's (2000) study of personal stereo users' experiences of urban environments takes the sociology of the senses in a new direction. Noting how 'Sound has remained an invisible presence in urban and media studies', Bull sets out 'an auditory epistemology of everyday life' (2001: 180). Using a phenomenological methodology, he demonstrates how this focus on sound allows us to understand not simply how urban soundscapes are experienced by personal stereo users, but also how practices and experiences of looking are produced in relation to this (2001: 191). Other developments in sociology have continued to focus on social interactions, but rather than focusing on one sensory modality or category, have stressed the multisensoriality and corporeality of these encounters. While not identified as a 'sociology of the senses', uses of the multimodality paradigm (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001) by sociologists have also allowed researchers undertaking observational studies of interaction to acknowledge the sensoriality of these contexts and processes (e.g. Dicks et al. 2006). The limits of the multimodality approach, with particular reference to the use of video, are assessed in Chapter 6.

However, of most interest for the development of a sensory ethnography is the work of Christina Lammer (e.g. 2007) and of Jon Hindmarsh and Alison Pilnick (2007), which involves the use of video methodologies and sociological approaches to understand the sociality and multisensoriality of interactions in clinical contexts. Hindmarsh and Pilnick's study of the interactions between members of the pre-operative anaesthetic team in a teaching hospital shows how what they call '*intercorporeal knowing* [...] underpins the team's ability to seamlessly coordinate emerging activities'. In this context they describe

how 'The sights, sounds and feel of colleagues are used to sense, anticipate, appreciate and respond to emerging tasks and activities' (2007: 1413), thus indicating the importance of multisensorial embodied ways of knowing in human interaction. Lammer's research about 'how radiological personnel perceive and define "contact" as it relates to their interaction with patients' has similar implications. Lammer set out to explore the 'sensual realities ... at work in a radiology unit' (Lammer 2007: 91), using video as part of her method of participant observation. She argued that in a context where patients tended to pass through the radiology department rapidly, 'a multisensual approach would encourage empathy and create a deeper sensibility amongst health professionals at a teaching hospital' (2007: 113). Collectively, these works draw our attention to the corporeality and multisensoriality of any social encounter or interaction – including not only the relationships between research participants but those between ethnographer and research participants. Building on this in Chapter 3, I suggest that understanding our interactions with others as multisensorial encounters necessitates a reflexive awareness of the sensory intersubjectivity that characterises such meetings.

SENSORY ETHNOGRAPHY AND APPLIED PRACTICE

The sensorial and aesthetic dimensions of our lives are certainly up for scrutiny and comment in domains beyond academia. The journalist Virginia Postrel's (2003) book *The Substance of Style* is significantly subtitled *How the Rise of Aesthetic Value is Remaking Commerce, Culture and Consciousness*. Postrel proposes that 'sensory appeals are becoming ever more prominent in our culture' (2003: xi) and we are living in what she calls 'the age of look and feel' (2003: 189). Postrel's ideas are very broadly congruent with changing approaches across the social sciences and humanities: it is generally agreed that it is time to attend to the senses. The use of ethnographic methods in applied research – whether or not this is led by academic practitioners – is widespread across a range of fields of applied research, including consumer research, marketing, product development, health, education, overseas development and more. In some of these fields, sensory analysis is also particularly important. In this section, by means of example, I reflect on consumer research and health studies.

In consumer research, a range of methods have long since been used to analyse people's sensory perceptions of products and brands to the point where now, in a context of consumer capitalism, 'tapping the subjective sensory preferences of the consumer and creating enticing "interfaces" has come to take precedence over conventional design principles' (Howes 2005c: 286–7). In 1999 and 2000 I developed two ethnographic studies with Unilever Research in which the multisensoriality of how people experience their homes, material cultures and domestic products and practices was essential to both the research questions and processes engaged in. Both projects were situated in the domestic sphere and involved using video and interviews to research and represent how cleaning and home decorating (Pink 2004, 2006) and laundry (Pink 2005b, 2007c) are part of everyday practice, identity and morality. An ethnographic approach to exploring people's multisensory relationships to the materialities and environments of their everyday lives, and to their feelings about them, offers a remarkably rich and informative source of knowledge for academic and applied researchers alike. However, in these contexts ethnography is not necessarily the dominant methodology. Indeed, in consumer and marketing research a range of sensory

research methods have been developed. Some of these are qualitative, for example Howes notes some, including 'body-storming' focus groups (see Bonapace 2002: 191), which aim to 'divine the most potent sensory channel, and within each channel the most potent sensory signal, through which to distinguish their products from those of their competitors and capture the attention of potential customers' (Howes 2005c: 288). While the utility of research that attends to the senses is often recognised in consumer studies, the use of sensory ethnography, as formulated in this book, appears not to be widespread.

In health research, the applied potential of sensory approaches to research is also becoming evident. Recent studies have focused on contexts of nursing (Edvardsson and Street 2007), interventional radiology (Lammer 2007) and anaesthesia (Hindmarsh and Plinick 2007). Located academically in sociology, some of this research focuses on the embodied and sensory nature of social interactions and environments in clinical contexts, often using visual methods. The importance of acknowledging the sensorial dimensions of biomedical practices is evident from Hindmarsh and Pilnick's (2007) study. David Edvardsson and Annette Street's work develops this in a slightly different way by providing a reflexive and 'insider' account of health contexts. They discuss the idea of 'the nurse as embodied ethnographer' (the subtitle of their article), suggesting that researchers should account 'for the embodied illness experience' *and* 'the sensate experience of the nurse as ethnographer', and thus 'open up nursing practice to phenomenological descriptions' (2007: 30). Although their work is clearly rooted in academic debates (drawing from the work of Stoller and Emily Martin), it has practical implications and Street has 'taken this idea further into teaching neophyte nurses to attend to their senses and their embodied responses, in order to better understand the lived experiences of patients and their families' (Edvardsson and Street 2007: 30). Lammer (2007) was also concerned to find ways to present her findings concerning the interactions between clinicians and patients (see above) to clinical staff, and as part of this produced a documentary video *Making Contact*. This and her later project *CORPO realities*, which also involves collaborations with artists, creates innovative links between arts and biomedical practice (Lammer n.d.).

Together these studies and forms of social intervention show that a sensory ethnography approach can have a key role to play in applied research. It draws out the everyday realities of people's experience and practice and provides insights about how to make these experiences and practices more pleasurable and effective – whether this means developing products that people will desire using, foods they will enjoy eating or making medical procedures and care contexts more comfortable.

SENSORY ETHNOGRAPHY AND ARTS PRACTICE

Parallel to, sometimes overlapping, and in some cases in collaboration with interest in the senses in ethnographic disciplines has been attention to the senses in arts practice (see, for example, Jones 2006a, 2006b and 2006c; Zardini 2005). It is not within the scope of this book – which is primarily focused on ethnographic practices – to undertake an art historical review of the senses. Rather, I am concerned with drawing out some of the most salient contemporary parallels and connections between academic and arts disciplines with specific reference to the senses.

There is already a growing literature concerning the relationship between anthropology and arts practice (Silva and Pink 2004; Schneider and Wright 2006; Ravetz 2007;

Schneider 2008), some of which places emphasis on sensoriality (Grimshaw and Ravetz 2005). However, most ethnographers of the senses have, to date, tended to represent their work in written texts. Exceptions include the work of the ethnographic filmmaker David MacDougall (see MacDougall 1998, 2005), discussed in later chapters, and the audiovisual practice of the sociologist Christina Lammer (e.g. 2007) discussed above. While the relationship between ethnography, the senses and film is more extensively documented (see also Pink 2006), connections have also been made between sound art and ethnographic representation. John Levack Drever has identified commonalities between theory and practice in ethnography and soundscape composition, suggesting they share a focus on: 'fieldwork through sensuous experience and the creation of an outward response to that experience from the inside'; 'a holistic approach to the environment and to its people'; and a concern with 'translating their findings into condensed itinerant forms' (2002: 24). Drever notes how some recent soundscape practice has drawn from ethnographic approaches, while in the anthropologist Steven Feld's CD *Voices of the Rainforest* (1991), he suggests 'we can observe the fertile blurring of ethnography, soundscape composition and soundscape studies' (Drever 2002: 25–6).

Specific connections tend to be less frequently made between ethnography, the senses and arts practices as developed in installation and performance art. Nevertheless, as I outline in the following chapters, there are interesting parallels between recent developments in sensory ethnographic methods and arts practice. Perhaps the clearest example is in forms of practice in each discipline that use walking as a method of researching (e.g. the arts practice of Sissel Tolaas (see Hand 2007) and the ethnographic practice of, for example, Katrín Lund (2005, 2008), Jo Lee Vergunst (2008) and others), representing or engaging audiences in other people's sensory experiences or in specific smell or soundscapes (e.g. the work of Jenny Martketou, discussed by Drobnik and Fisher (2008)). Some of these case studies are discussed in Chapters 4 and 8.

These discussions of arts practice and the sensory ways of knowing that are implied through them invite a consideration of how sensory ethnography practice might develop in relation to explorations in art. Drawing from this in Chapters 4, 6 and 8, I consider this relationship with reference to participatory research methods, visual methods and sensory ethnography representation respectively.

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY CONTEXT FOR SENSORY ETHNOGRAPHY

Since the early twenty-first century an increasingly interdisciplinary focus on the senses has emerged. This has been promoted through a series of edited volumes led by David Howes' *Empire of the Senses* (2005a). These collections unite the work of academics from a range of disciplines to explore sensory aspects of culture and society (Howes 2005a) using modern western categories of audition (Bull and Back 2003), smell (Drobnik 2006), taste (Korsmeyer 2005), touch (Classen 2005) and visual culture (Edwards and Bhaumik 2008). According to Howes, this increased focus on the senses represents a 'sensual revolution' – an ideological move that has turned 'the tables and recover(ed) a full-bodied understanding of culture and experience' as opposed to one that is modelled on linguistics (2005a: 1; see also Howes 2003). Although some would disagree that the revolution contra linguistics (e.g. Bendix 2005: 6) should be the central concern of a sensory approach to ethnography, Howes is certainly correct

that the senses have come to the fore in the work of many contemporary academics, as represented in the multiplicity of publications, conferences and seminars that are focusing on this very question in these early years of the twenty-first century. The extent to which this work will emerge in *interdisciplinary* projects that combine approaches from, say, anthropology, history and arts practice, rather than in the form of *multidisciplinary* edited readers and in the journal *Senses and Society*, still remains to be seen.

Nevertheless, as I have demonstrated in the previous sections, a sensory approach crosses and sometimes unites academic, applied and artistic concerns with theory and practices of research and representation. Through a focus on the senses and the experiential, academic and applied researchers and artists might potentially collaborate at the boundaries or intersections of their already interlinked fields of practice. A project in sensory ethnography might well produce a contribution to interdisciplinary theory-building, an applied intervention and an artwork. As such, it would have the potential to communicate to a range of different audiences, using different media, and creating different sensory strategies through which to invoke the experience of one person or persons to others.

SUMMING UP

In this chapter I have shown how an interest in the senses has extended across academic and applied disciplines that use ethnography and are concerned with understanding and representing human experience. Each of these existing bodies of literature offers important insights that I draw on in the following chapters to propose a sensory ethnographic methodology. I have suggested that a sensory ethnography can be of use not only in discipline-specific projects and in applied research, but also in projects that bridge the divide between applied and academic work, and in projects that develop and combine perspectives and aims of different disciplines in interdisciplinary analysis.

RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING

Howes, D. (2003) *Sensing Culture: Engaging the Senses in Culture and Social Theory*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

Howes, D. (ed.) (2005) *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader*. Oxford: Berg.

Ingold, T. (2000) *The Perception of the Environment*. London: Routledge.

Rodaway, P. (1994) *Sensuous Geographies: Body, Sense and Place*. London: Routledge.

Simmel, G. (1997 [1907]) 'Sociology of the senses', in D. Frisby and M. Featherstone (eds), *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings*. London: Sage.

Stoller, P. (1997) *Sensuous Scholarship*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

2
PRINCIPLES FOR SENSORY ETHNOGRAPHY: Perception, Place, Knowing, Memory and Imagination

In this chapter, I outline a set of principles for doing sensory ethnography through a focus on questions of perception, place, knowing, memory and imagination. Here I propose that one of the goals of the sensory ethnographer is to seek to know places in other people's worlds that are similar to the places and ways of knowing of those others. In attempting to achieve this, she or he would aim to come closer to understanding how those other people experience, remember and imagine. This perspective, while rooted in social anthropology, is interdisciplinary in that it also draws from theoretical approaches developed in human geography and philosophy. Thus I argue for a rethinking of the ethnographic process through a theory of place and space that can engage with both the phenomenology of place and the politics of space. Such an approach is particularly appropriate to and supportive of the formulation of a sensory ethnography. This is because it recognises the emplaced ethnographer as her or himself part of a social, sensory and material environment *and* acknowledges the political and ideological agendas and power relations integral to the contexts and circumstances of ethnographic processes.

ETHNOGRAPHY, SENSORY EXPERIENCE AND THE BODY

Existing scholarship about the senses reveals a strong interest in human experience. This has encompassed analysis of other people's sensory experiences of social interactions (e.g. Simmel 1997 [1907]; Howes 2003; Low 2005), their physical environments (e.g. Porteous 1990; Ingold 2000) and memory (Seremetakis 1994; Sutton 2001). Ethnographers have also been concerned with how their own sensory embodied

experiences might assist them in learning about other people's worlds (e.g. Okely 1994; Stoller 1997; Geurts 2002; Downey 2005). It has, moreover, been anticipated that novel forms of ethnographic writing (e.g. Stoller 1997) as well as filmmaking (e.g. MacDougall 1998, 2005) and the appropriation of techniques from arts practice might secure means of communicating academically framed representations of the sensory embodied experiences of one group of people and/or ethnographers themselves to (potentially diverse) target audiences. Given this focus on experience, to undertake sensory ethnographies researchers need to have a clear idea of what sensory and embodied experience involve.

This question has indeed been of concern throughout the last decades and across academic disciplines. In earlier discussions, sensory experience was often regarded as existing on two levels, tending to separate body and mind. Thus, for example, for the geographer Tuan this meant 'The one [level] is experienced by the body; the other is constructed by the mind' (1993: 165–6), the former being 'a fact of nature or an unplanned property of the built environment' and the latter a 'more or less a deliberative creation' (1993: 166). These ideas resonate with those developed contemporaneously in social anthropology. Victor Turner has argued that we should distinguish between 'mere experience' and 'an experience'. In this formulation 'mere experience' is the continuous flow of events that we passively accept, while 'an experience' is a defined and reflected on event that has a beginning and end (1986: 35). Turner's approach separated body and mind by allocating each distinct roles in the production of experience. The distinction between sensation and intellect that is implied by the idea that one might define a corporeal experience by reflecting on it and giving it meaning proffers a separation between body and mind and between doing (or practice) and knowing. This implies the objectification of the corporeal experience by the rational(ising) mind.

The notion of embodiment, which had a significant impact across the social sciences by the 1990s (see, for example, Schilling 1991, 2003), resolved this dichotomy to some extent. An important implication of the literature that emerged on this topic was to deconstruct the notion of a mind/body divide, to understand the body not simply as a source of experience and activity that would be rationalised and/or controlled by the mind, but itself as a source of knowledge and subsequently of agency. An approach that has informed subsequent sensory ethnography is set out by Thomas Csordas in his developments of the phenomenology of the philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (whom I discuss below) and practice theory as developed by the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Csordas argued that while 'on the level of perception it is not legitimate to distinguish between mind and body' (1990: 36), we might subsequently ask 'how our bodies may become objectified through processes of reflection' (1990: 36). This understanding enables us to think of the body as a site of knowing while recognising that we are capable of objectification through intellectual activity. However, more recently, Greg Downey has pointed out that embodied knowledge is not simply 'stored information' but that it involves biological processes. This involves taking two further steps in understanding embodiment. Downey first cites Ingold's point that 'the body *is* the human organism, as the process of embodiment is one and the same as the development of that organism in its environment' (Ingold 1998: 28, cited in Downey 2007: 223, original italics), thus bringing to the fore the idea of embodiment as a *process* that is integral to the relationship between humans and their environments.

Then, drawing on his own ethnographic work on Brazilian capoeira, Downey argues that to make the concept of embodiment fulfil its potential, we should reformulate the question to ask: 'How does the body come to "know", and what kind of *biological* changes might occur when learning a skill' (2007: 223, my italics). These points refigure the way embodiment might be understood in terms of an appreciation of the relationship with the environment and as a biological process.

The idea that ethnographic experiences are 'embodied' – in that the researcher learns and knows through her or his whole experiencing body – has been recognised in much existing methodological literature across the 'ethnographic disciplines'. In the 1990s, the gendered nature of ethnography was highlighted by anthropologists (e.g. Bell et al. 1993) and in some of this literature physical experience became central as relationships not only between minds but between bodies were brought to the fore, through, for example, Don Kulick and Margaret Willson's (1995) exploration of how sexual encounters between anthropologist and 'informant' might be productive of ethnographic knowledge. The sociologist Amanda Coffey summed up the centrality of the body to ethnographic fieldwork, writing that:

> Our bodies and the bodies of others are central to the practical accomplishment of fieldwork. We locate our physical being alongside those of others as we negotiate the spatial context of the field. We concern ourselves with the positioning, visibility and performance of our own embodied self as we undertake participant observation. (1999: 59)

Coffey argued that fieldwork was 'reliant on the analyses of body and body work' and that, as such, it should be situated 'alongside [what was at the time] contemporary scholarly interest in the body and the nature of embodiment' (1999: 59). While these discussions of the embodiment of the ethnographer were pertinent at the time, the revisions to the notion of embodiment itself – to account for the situatedness of the knowing body as in biological progress as part of a total (material, sensorial and more) environment – suggests attention beyond the limits of a body–mind relationship. Howes has suggested that 'While the paradigm of "embodiment" implies an integration of mind and body, the emergent paradigm of emplacement suggests the sensuous interrelationship of body–mind–environment' (2005b: 7). Indeed, in this formulation, the idea of emplacement supersedes that of embodiment. Here I use the term 'emplacement' to foreground the idea of the 'emplaced ethnographer' in relation to theories of place discussed later in this chapter. Thus, whereas Coffey (1999) has argued for an embodied ethnography, here I propose an emplaced ethnography that attends to the question of experience by accounting for the relationships between bodies, minds and the materiality and sensoriality of the environment. It is now frequently recognised that we need to investigate the emplacement of the people who participate in our ethnographic research. It is equally important for ethnographers to acknowledge their own emplacement as individuals in and as part of specific research contexts.

The experiencing, knowing and emplaced body is therefore central to the idea of a sensory ethnography. Ethnographic practice entails our multisensorial embodied engagements with others (perhaps through participation in activities, or exploring their understandings in part verbally) and with their social, material, discursive and sensory

environments. It also requires us to reflect on these engagements, to conceptualise their meanings theoretically and to seek ways to communicate the relatedness of experiential and intellectual meanings to others. In the next section I examine how theories of sensory perception can support an understanding of the sensory ethnographic process.

MULTISENSORIALITY AND THE INTERCONNECTED SENSES

That perception is fundamental to understanding the principles upon which a sensory approach to ethnography must depend would not be disputed. Howes has argued that 'perception' is central to 'good ethnography' (2003: 40), Rodaway suggested a theory of perception is needed to understand our 'sensuous encounter with the environment' (1994: 19) and Steven Feld proposes that 'emplacement always implicates the intertwined nature of sensual bodily presence and perceptual engagement' (1996: 94). However, the questions of what human perception involves, the interconnections between the senses, the relationship between perception and culture and the implications of this for sensory ethnography practice are debated issues. Before outlining the disagreements in this field I discuss how the ideas of the phenomenological philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty and the ecological psychologist James Gibson have influenced scholarship in this area. Although the deliberations of these theorists have been based mainly on discussions of vision, they have inspired work that stresses multisensoriality.

Although Merleau-Ponty's *The Phenomenology of Perception* was published in French in 1945 and in English in the 1960s, it is more recently that his work has become so central to the social sciences. Indeed, now 'his discussions of the 'intentionality of consciousness ... and of the role of the body in perception are recognised as important contributions to the understanding of these difficult topics' (Baldwin 2004: 6). Merleau-Ponty's ideas are relevant to the formulation of a sensory ethnography because he placed sensation at the centre of human perception. For Merleau-Ponty, sensation could only be realised in relation to other elements, therefore it could not be defined as 'pure impression' (2002 [1962]: 4). Indeed, 'pure sensation would amount to no sensation thus to not feeling at all' (2002 [1962]: 5). Thus he proposed that, for example, 'to see is to have colours or lights before one, to hear is to encounter sounds, to feel is to come up against qualities', that is sensations are produced through our encounters with 'sense-data' or the qualities which are the properties of objects (2002 [1962]: 4). But, he argued that to be realised sensation needs to be 'overlaid by a body of knowledge'; it cannot exist in a pure form (2002 [1962]: 5). Merleau-Ponty's approach has been influential among both social and visual anthropologists concerned with the body (e.g. Csordas 1990) and the senses, particularly in discussions concerning the relationships between different sensory modalities. Ingold has drawn from Merleau-Ponty's point that: '"My body", as Merleau-Ponty puts it, "is not a collection of adjacent organs but a synergic system, all of the functions of which are exercised and linked together in the general action of being in the world"' (1962: 234). Following this, Ingold argues that 'Sight and hearing, to the extent they can be distinguished at all, are but facets of this action' (Ingold 2000: 268). The anthropological filmmaker David MacDougall has similarly drawn from Merleau-Ponty's ideas to argue that 'although seeing and touching are

not the same, they originate in the same body and their objects overlap', they 'share an experiential field' and '[e]ach refers to a more general faculty' (1998: 51). Other anthropologists of the senses have developed more ethnographic applications of Merleau-Ponty's work. For example, Geurts (2002) follows Csordas's proposal that 'If our perception "ends in objects," the goal of a phenomenological anthropology of perception is to capture that moment of transcendence when perception begins, and *in the midst of arbitrariness and indeterminacy*, constitutes and is constituted by culture' (Csordas 1990: 9, emphasis added by Geurts 2002: 74). Applying this idea to her sensory ethnography of the Anlo-Ewe people, Geurts outlines the terminology the Anlo-Ewe use to categorise sensory experiences – a set of 'cultural categories or a scheme ... for organising experience'. However, she stresses that although these cultural patterns can be discerned, in fact from a phenomenological perspective 'or from the experiential standpoint of being-in-the-world, analytic categories of language, cognition, sensation, perception, culture and embodiment exist as a complex and sticky web' (2002: 74) – the 'arbitrariness and indeterminacy' that is referred to by Csordas.

Gibson's work on 'ecological psychology' has likewise been of continuing appeal to scholars exploring the senses, initially informing Rodaway's sensuous geography in the 1990s. Departing from earlier approaches to 'perception geography', Rodaway suggested Gibson's theory of perception was particularly relevant to geography because 'it not only gives importance to the environment itself in perception but also considers perception by a mobile observer' (Rodaway 1994: 19). He takes two key strands from Gibson's ecological theory of perception: the idea of the senses as perceptual systems which 'emphasises the interrelationships between the different senses ... in perception and the integration of sensory bodily and mental processes' (1994: 19–20); and the idea of ecological optics which 'emphasises the role of the environment itself in structuring optical (auditory, tactile, etc.) stimulation' whereby 'the environment becomes a source of *information*, not merely raw data' (1994: 20, original italics). Ingold's more recent development of Gibson's ideas has, however, been more influential in subsequent 'sensory ethnographies'. Ingold also takes up Gibson's understanding that 'Perception ... is not the achievement of a mind in a body, but of the organism as a whole in its environment, and is tantamount to the organism's own exploratory movement through the world'. This, he continues, makes 'mind' 'immanent in the network of sensory pathways that are set up by virtue of the perceiver's immersion in his or her environment' (Ingold 2000: 3). Also of particular interest for understanding the senses in ethnography, Ingold draws out the relevance of Gibson's understanding of the relationship between different modalities of sensory experience, summed up in that '... the perceptual systems not only overlap in their functions, but are also subsumed under a total system of bodily orientation ... Looking, listening and touching, therefore, are not separate activities, they are just different facets of the same activity: that of the whole organism in its environment' (Ingold 2000: 261). Gibson's ideas are becoming increasingly influential in ethnographic work that attends to the senses. This is particular evident in the writing of scholars in geography and anthropology who build on Ingold's developments in this area (e.g. Grasseni 2004b, 2007a; Strang 2005; Downey 2007; Spinney 2007).

Literature in neurobiology also offers interesting insights into the relationship between the senses that are broadly congruent with the ideas discussed above. Shinsuke Shimojo and Ladan Shams have reported that recent 'behavioral and brain imaging studies' have

challenged the conventional opinion in this field that perception was 'a modular function, with the different sensory modalities operating independently of each other'. Rather newer work proposes that 'cross-modal interactions are the rule and not the exception in perception, and that the cortical pathways previously thought to be sensory-specific are modulated by signals from other modalities' (Shimojo and Shams 2001: 505). Moreover, in a more recent article, Newell and Shams propose that: 'our phenomenological experience is not of disjointed sensory sensations but is instead of a coherent multisensory world, where sounds, smells, tastes, lights, and touches amalgamate. What we perceive or where we perceive it to be located in space is a product of inputs from different sensory modalities that combine, substitute, or integrate'. In doing so they also recognize that it is not simply the immediacy of experience that informs this process, in that 'these inputs are further modulated by learning and by more cognitive or top-down effects including previous knowledge, attention, and the task at hand' (Newell and Shams 2007: 1415).

There is, however, some disagreement among scholars of the senses regarding how phenomenological understandings might be employed. One of the most significant debates for the discussion here concerns the utility of theories of sensory perception for understanding everyday (and research) practices. Ingold draws on the ideas of Gibson and Merleau-Ponty to suggest (among other things) 'that the eyes and ears should not be understood as separate keyboards for the registration of sensation but as organs of the body as a whole, in whose movement, within an environment, the activity of perception consists' (Ingold 2000: 268). In contrast, Howes has argued that both thinkers are preoccupied with vision and oblivious 'to the senses in social context'. He suggests that researchers would be unwise to 'think they can derive grounding from the asocial contextless models of "perceptual systems" proposed by Western philosophers (e.g. Merleau-Ponty 2002 [1962]) and psychologists (e.g. Gibson 1966, 1979)'. Instead, Howes stresses the need for ethnographic researchers to 'elicit the sensory models of the people they are studying' (2003: 49-50). Indeed, Howes is particularly critical of Ingold's (2000) and Rodaway's (1994) use of Gibson's (1966, 1979) view of 'the environment as a set of "affordances"' and insists that 'Without some sense of how the senses are "culturally attuned", in Feld's terms, there is no telling what information the environment affords' (Howes 2005a: 144).

The work of neurobiologists (e.g. Shimojo and Shams 2001 and Newell and Shams 2007), combined with MacDougall's (1998) and Ingold's (2000) interpretations of the senses as interconnected and inseparable invites ethnographic researchers to comprehend our perception of social, material and intangible elements of our environments as being dominated by no one sensory modality (see Chapter 1). These notions of the interconnectedness of the senses also permit us to understand how, in different contexts, similar meanings might be expressed through different sensory modalities and media. This does not mean that Howes' (2003, 2005a) emphasis on culture and the social significance of sensory models and meanings is redundant. Indeed, it is essential that the sensory ethnographer appreciate the cultural and (biographical) specificity of the sensory meanings and modalities people call on and the sets of discourses through which they mobilise embodied ways of knowing in social contexts. However, at the same time, our sensory perception is inextricable from the cultural categories that we use to give meaning to sensory experiences in social and

material interactions (including when doing ethnography). Indeed, perception is integral to the very production of these categories: culture itself is not fixed. Rather, human beings are continuously and actively involved in the processes through which not only culture, but also the total environments in which they live are constituted, experienced, and change continually over time. In the next section I propose how a theory of place and space can enable us to understand both these processes and the emplacement of the ethnographer.

PLACE, SPACE AND ETHNOGRAPHY

Concepts of space and place have long since been the concern of geographers and have thus (along with theories of landscape) often framed discussions of the senses in the discipline (e.g. Porteous 1990; Tuan 1993; Rodaway 1994; Thrift 2004). Social anthropologists have also mobilised concepts of place in relation to the senses, notably demonstrating how attention to the senses in ethnography offers routes to analysing other people's place-making practices (e.g. Feld and Basso 1996a). Here, however, I go beyond this to suggest more than simply an affinity between the study of the senses and the study of place-making or place. I propose that a more abstract use of interdependent concepts of place and space offers a framework for rethinking the ethnographic process, and the situatedness of the ethnographer, as a multisensory concern. Below I interrogate recent critical anthropological, philosophical and geographical commentaries on existing treatments of space and place in ethnography and theory as a basis from which to develop such a framework. My starting point is the anthropological literature in which the critique of spatial assumptions is specifically directed to a rethinking of ethnographic practice and process. I then consider how the phenomenology of place contributes to understanding how these ethnographic practices are played out, before asking how 'grand' theories of space and place can situate ethnographic practice and process in its political context.

As Simon Coleman and Peter Collins point out, 'place' has been of continuing importance in the ethnographic practice of anthropology, in part because 'the process of demonstrating the physical connection of researcher and text with place has remained of prime importance to the discipline' (2006: 1). This connection has been a conventional means of establishing the 'authority' of the ethnographer and the authenticity of her or his work. Nevertheless, the question of place in ethnography has become increasingly problematised with 'challenges to the anthropologist as producer of text, and to place as a container of culture' (2006: 2). These challenges are set out in a volume edited by Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, known for its emphasis on the dislocation of a fixed role between culture and place. Gupta and Ferguson argue for 'a focus on social and political processes of place making' as in 'embodied practices that shape identities and enable resistances' (1997: 6). Indeed, anthropologists now normally do not consider their research as the study of closed cultures in circumscribed territorial places. This questioning of place in anthropology raises a set of theoretical and methodological issues for ethnographic researchers of any discipline. This can be expressed through two related questions. First, how can place be defined if it is something that is not fixed or enclosed, that is constituted as much through the

flows that link it to other locations, persons and things, as it is through what goes on 'inside' it? And second, given that places are continually constituted, rather than fixed, then how can we understand the role of the emplaced ethnographer as a participant in and eventually author of the places she or he studies? This question requires thinking about both the politics and power relations that global flows entail and attending to the detail of our everyday embodied and sensory engagements in our environments. As such, it requires that analytically we examine the politics and phenomenology of space and place. For this purpose, a coherent theory of space and place is needed. In what follows I consider three theoretical developments concerning place and space. First, I discuss the philosopher Edward Casey's phenomenological theory of place (1996), which is especially relevant for considering questions about the sensoriality of ethnographic practices and processes (see Basso 1996; Feld 1996), the emplacement of the ethnographer and the centrality of the body. Then I draw from the geographer, Doreen Massey's (2005) reformulation of the relationship between place and space, which brings our attention to the politics of space. Massey's understanding of place and space as 'open' offers a way to understand the situatedness of the ethnographer in relation to social relations and power structures. Finally, I consider the anthropologist, Ingold's rethinking of place in terms of 'entanglement' (2008). This critical response to the idea of place as bounded facilitates an understanding of ethnographic places as both based in human perception and open.

Casey's work responds to what he refers to as 'anthropological treatments of place as something supposedly made up from space – something factitious carved out of space or superimposed on space' (1996: 43). While it would seem to be (modern western) commonsense to assume that space exists 'out there' already and that places are thus made in it, for Casey, conversely place and our emplacement is the starting point for understanding the relationship between place and space. Because he (following Merleau-Ponty) understands perception as primary (1996: 17), and the first point in our ability to know place, through being 'in a place' (1996: 18), it follows that in Casey's argument space and time 'arise from the experience of place itself' (1996: 36). He argues that space and time are contained in place rather than *vice versa* (1996: 43–4). As such, it is place rather than space that is universal (but not pre-cultural) (1996: 46). This implies that, as ethnographers, our primary context for any piece of research is place. Indeed, Casey stresses that place is both central to what Merleau-Ponty has called our way of 'being in the world' in that we are always 'emplaced' (1996: 44). The 'lived body' (Casey 1996: 21) is central to Casey's understanding of place. Indeed, he argues that '*lived bodies belong to places* and help to constitute them' and '*places belong to lived bodies* and depend on them' (1996: 24, original italics), thus seeing the two as interdependent. Following Casey's formulation, we cannot escape from place, since it is simultaneously the context we inhabit and our site of investigation; it is what we are seeking to understand and it is where our sensory experiences are produced, defined and acted on. To understand the relevance of Casey's theory of place for the practice of a sensory ethnography there are two further key points. First, for Casey place is not static. Rather, he conceptualises place as 'event'. It is a continuous process and, as such, is constantly changing and subject to redefinition. Second, place is endowed with what Casey refers to as a 'gathering power' (1996: 44). He describes this in that: 'Minimally, places gather things in their midst – where "things" connote

various animate and inanimate entities. Places also gather experiences and histories, even languages and thoughts' (1996: 24). This is particularly significant for a sensory ethnography in that it allows us to conceptualise place as a domain where a set of different types of 'thing' come together. Casey presents place as a form of constantly changing event, but emphasises that it is not so contingent that it is elusive. He writes that 'Places are at once elastic – for example, in regard to their outer edges and internal paths – and yet sufficiently coherent for them to be considered as the *same* (hence to be remembered, returned to, etc.) as well as to be classified as places as certain *types* (e.g. home-place, workplace, visiting place)' (1996: 44). It is these *types* of place that most often become the locations for and subjects/objects of ethnography as researchers strive to understand how people's lives are lived out and felt and they inhabit and move through, for instance, the home, a city or a hospital.

While Casey redefines the relationship between space and place by suggesting that the latter is secondary to the former, Massey does so by countering what she identifies as a common and dominant conceptualisation of space as closed and abstract. In doing so, she also challenges the idea of the primacy of place represented in Casey's formulation. Her stated aim is to 'to uproot "space" from that constellation of concepts in which it has so unquestioningly so often been embedded (stasis; closure; representation) and to settle it among another set of ideas (heterogeneity; relationality; coevalness' (Massey 2005: 13). This suggests a way of understanding space as something more contingent and active. Massey proposes it should be understood through three main principles: as, first, 'the product of interrelations'; second, 'the sphere of the possibility of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality'; and third, 'always under construction' (2005: 9). Thus Massey invites us to rethink the idea that space might be something abstract that might be mapped out, flattened or occupied by places (2005: 13). Rather, she proposes that 'If space is ... a simultaneity of stories-so-far [rather than a 'surface'], then places are collections of those stories, articulations of the wider power-geometries of space' (2005: 130). As collections of the trajectories that run through space, places are always unique. Massey's conceptualisation of place recognises 'the specificity of place' and that places (which might range from, for example, a city, the countryside, to a family home) are '*spatio-temporal* events' (2005: 130, original italics). Indeed, for Massey, the 'event of place' involves 'the coming together of the previously unrelated, a constellation of processes rather than a thing' (2005: 141), which she conceptualises through the idea of the 'throwntogetherness of place' (2005: 140) which involves not only human but material elements. While in making this argument Massey (2005) does not elaborate on the phenomenology of place, in terms of how we might experience place, her idea is not exclusively an abstraction. She describes what it might mean to go from one place to another, using examples from her own experience, to suggest that: 'To travel between places is to move between collections of trajectories and to reinsert yourself in the ones to which you relate' (2005: 130). Massey's work offers an exciting paradigm for understanding the relationship between place and space through a focus on the politics of space. She acknowledges 'the ongoing and ever-specific project of the practices through which' the '*sociability* [of space] is to be configured' (2005: 195, my italics). However, while recognising the significance of the social, her starting

point is quite different from Casey's (1996) understanding of place as rooted in human perception. Yet, in a pluralistic conceptualisation of place in relation to space is there a reason to subordinate human perception to spatial politics and/or vice versa? Are they not both implicated in the same processes?

To some extent the arguments made by Casey (1996) and Massey (2005) coincide. They both refer to place as 'event', and as such recognise the fluidity of place. Whereas Casey writes about place as a 'gathering' process, Massey emphasises its 'throwntogetherness'. In these formulations they both acknowledge the human and non-human elements of place and suggest how place as event is constantly changing through social and material relations and practices. Yet I do not want to construct a false sense of compatibility between these two approaches. One of the key differences between Casey's rendering of place and that developed by Massey is his perspective on how places hold together. Casey understands places as having a capacity to '*gather* things in their midst' (my italics). Things include 'various animate and inanimate entities', 'experiences and histories, even languages and thoughts' (1996: 24). Part of this gathering capacity also involves having a 'hold' or 'mode of containment', which involves 'a holding *in* and a holding *out*' (1996: 25, original italics). As such, Casey suggests that 'gathering gives to a place its peculiar perduringness, allowing us to return it to again and again as *the same place*' (1996: 26, original italics). Massey conversely refers to places as 'open' and 'as woven together out of ongoing stories, as a moment within power-geometries, as a particular constellation within the wider topographies of space, and as in process, as unfinished business' (2005: 131). Indeed, Massey's disagreement is with Casey's assertion 'that "To live is to live locally, and to know is first of all to know the places one is in" (Casey 1996:18)' (Massey 2005: 183). Rather, Massey argues that both place *and* space are 'concrete, grounded, real, lived etc. etc.' (2005: 185) and the implication of this is that both are relevant to understanding the political, social, material and sensorial relationships and negotiations of ethnographic research. Nevertheless if both space and place are lived, then it would follow that we would need to account for human perception in the task of understanding either of them.

Ingold (2008) has proposed an alternative way of understanding not simply 'place' but the way we live in relation to an environment that offers a route to addressing these questions. He refigures the notion of environment to propose that 'The environment ... comprises not the surroundings of the organism but a zone of entanglement' (2008: 1797). While one might conceptualise such a zone of entanglement as a 'place', we do not live *in* such places. Rather, Ingold gives primacy to movement rather than to place. Thus he argues that places are produced from movement because 'there would be no places were it not for the comings and goings of human beings and other organisms to and from them, from and to places elsewhere' (2008: 1808). Significantly, in this formulation he sees places as unbounded. Ingold's work also provides a new way of conceptualising what Casey (1996) and Massey (2005) in their own ways refer to as place as event, in that he suggests that places do not exist so much as they '*occur*' (2008: 1808, original italics). In keeping with the idea of place as produced through movement, he proposes that places 'occur along the lifepaths of beings' as part of a 'meshwork of paths' (2008: 1808). Following this, we are always emplaced because we are always in

movement. Moreover, these ideas invite a solution to the emphases in both Casey's (1996) notion of place as involving 'gathering' and Massey's (2005) idea of the 'throwntogetherness' of place. Whereas the former might be seen to endow places themselves with an undue degree of agency *to gather*, the latter implies both a randomness and/or the role of external (possibly spatial) forces in determining the composition of places. If we see places as 'occurring' through the intersections and proximities of pathways as they are entangled, then they are events that are constituted neither internally nor externally but as varying intensities in what Ingold (2008) calls a 'meshwork'.

Ingold's approach could be used to suggest that a concept of space is hardly necessary since if we view the world through a notion of entanglement, it may be unnecessary to distinguish between space and place. However, keeping in mind that an approach to understanding people's everyday realities is needed, which will allow for both global power configurations and the immediacy of experience, here my suggestion is that Ingold's ideas can help us to moderate between concepts of place and space. Casey's (1996) writing on place is relevant to ethnographers because his understanding of place as event, constituted through lived bodies and things, offers a way of understanding the immediacy of perception and, as such, of our sensory engagements with material, social and power-imbued environments, as well as with the actual involvement of ethnographers in the production of the places they research. Indeed, place and our relationship to it cannot be understood without attention to precisely how we learn through, know and move in material and sensory environments. However, Massey's (2005) challenge to the primacy of the local, and indeed of the association of place with 'local', offers an important counterpoint that I suggest allows us to situate the sensory ethnographer further. Massey's ideas invite ethnographers to consider how the specificity of place can only be understood through recognition of its actual configurations being mutually contingent with those of space as she defines it. As such, the lived immediacy of the 'local' as constituted through the making of ethnographic places is inevitably interwoven, or entangled, with the 'global'. This is not a relationship that contemporary anthropologists are unaware of; the complexities of the relationship between local and global have been an explicit theme in anthropological discussions since at least the 1990s, and is dealt with in the work of Gupta and Ferguson (1997) discussed above. Yet conceptualising these relations through a theory of place and space provides a useful framework through which to understand the phenomenology of everyday encounters in relation to and as co-implicated with the complexity of global processes.

The focus on place developed in this book works as an analytical construct to conceptualise fundamental aspects of how both ethnographers and participants in ethnographic research are emplaced in social, sensory and material contexts, characterised by, and productive of, particular power configurations that they experience through their whole bodies and that are constantly changing (even if in very minor ways). This focus allows us to pursue the reflexive project of a sensory ethnography. The idea of place as lived but open invokes the inevitable question of how researchers themselves are entangled in, participate in the production of, and are co-present in the ethnographic places they share with research participants,

their materialities and power relations. These ethnographic places of course extend away from the intensity and immediacy of the local and are entangled with multiple trajectories.

LEARNING ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE'S EMPLACEMENT: SENSORY EMBODIED KNOWING, KNOWLEDGE AND ITS TRANSMISSION

The question of how sensory knowledge is transmitted between persons and/or generations has already become central to the work of a number of ethnographers who work on the senses. Indeed, scholars interested in the senses seem generally agreed that the transmission of knowledge should be seen as a social, participatory and embodied process (e.g. Ingold 2000; Geurts 2002; Downey 2007; Grasseni 2007b; Hahn 2007; Marchand 2007). Understanding how knowledge is transmitted is important for two reasons. First, because it should inform our understandings of how we as ethnographers might learn through our sensory embodied and emplaced experiences, and second, because it raises a research question: how do the people who participate in our research learn? In participatory methods, where the researcher learns through her or his own embodied or emplaced practices, the boundaries between these two questions can become blurred. If, as I have suggested in the previous sections, the sensory ethnographer is always emplaced and seeking to understand the emplacement of others, this raises the question of how we might understand the processes through which she or he can arrive at such an understanding. Put another way, how can we learn to occupy or imagine places and ways of perceiving and being that are similar, parallel to or indeed interrelated with and contingent on those engaged in by research participants?

Existing theories of learning offer a starting point for thinking about these questions. Etienne Wenger outlines the ideas of 'knowing in practice' (1998: 141) and 'the experience of knowing' (1998: 142). For Wenger, 'knowing is defined only in the context of specific practices, where it arises out of the combination of a regime of competence and an experience of meaning'. He conceptualises 'the experience of knowing' as one of 'participation' (1998: 142). This means that individuals themselves cannot be the source of knowing. Rather, knowing is contingent on its connectedness both historically and with others. Yet knowing is also specific, engaged, active and 'experiential' (1998: 141). As such, while the 'experience of knowing' is 'one of participation', it is simultaneously unique and constantly changing. The implication of understanding knowing as situated in practice is that it implies that to 'know' as others do, we need to engage in practices with them, making participation central to this task. The idea can be extended to seeing 'knowing in practice' as being an embodied and multisensorial way of knowing that is inextricable from our sensorial and material engagements with the environment and is as such an emplaced knowing. Although it is possible to speak or write about it, such knowing might be difficult to express in words. This is one of the challenges faced by the sensory ethnographer seeking to access and represent other people's emplacement. However, this should not preclude an understanding of talking with others as itself a form of practice through

which emplaced knowing might be acquired (as, for instance, in the ethnographic interview as conceptualised in Chapter 5).

The concept of knowing is becoming increasingly popular across academic disciplines, particularly in literatures concerned with questions of practice (e.g. Nicolini et al. 2003; Harris 2007a). The notion of knowing raises the question of the status of its companion concept of knowledge. According to Wenger, knowing might be used to emphasise experience or competence (1998: 140) of participating in a practice. He treats knowledge as inextricable from this, by seeing practice itself is a 'form of knowledge' (1998: 141). Harris likewise emphasises the specificity of knowledge in terms of its situatedness in 'a particular place and moment' and that 'it is inhabited by individual knowers and that it is always changing and emergent' (2007b: 4). Yet while knowledge is always produced and lived in situated specificity, it can be interpreted as having a different relationship from the directness of experience associated with a concept of emplaced knowing. Wenger qualifies his understanding of practice as knowledge (1998: 141) by acknowledging that knowledge is not *only* specific to or within practices because it is also attached to broader discourses and as such situates practices. He therefore suggests that 'knowing in practice involves an interaction between the local and the global' (1998: 141), thus offering a connection between the idea that our emplacement and direct relationship with a sensory, material and social environment is necessarily made meaningful in relationship with the politics of space, including the wider (global) discourses and power relations that are also entangled in the 'local' places where ethnographers know through their practice.

If one of the objectives of the ethnographer is to come to know as others do, then we need to account for the processes through which we, and the participants in our research, come to know. Wenger's 'social perspective on learning' (1998: 226–8) provides a good starting point for thinking about how we learn and establishes learning as primarily '*the ability to negotiate new meanings*' (1998: 226) and '*fundamentally experiential and fundamentally social*' (1998: 227, original italics). The experiential and social aspects of learning have been explored further through recent anthropological investigations concerning the transmission of knowledge. As a foundation for his understanding of the transmission of knowledge, Ingold argues for an ecological approach to what he calls 'skill'. For Ingold, skill is a property, not of an 'individual human body', but of 'the total field of relations constituted by the presence of the organism-person, indissolubly body and mind, in a richly structured environment' (2000: 353). He suggests that 'skilled practice cannot be reduced to a formula' and thus skills cannot be passed intergenerationally through the transmission of formulae (2000: 353). Instead, he proposes that rather than a generation passing on to the next 'a corpus of representations, or information', it introduces 'novices into contexts which afford selected opportunities for perception and action, and by providing the scaffolding that enables them to make use of these affordances'. Ingold argues that because practitioners develop an 'attentive engagement' with the material they work with 'rather than a mere mechanical coupling, that skilled activity carries its own intrinsic intentionality' (2000: 354). By requiring attention to the roles of perception and action, Ingold thus invites us to understand knowledge transmission as something that occurs through our emplaced engagements with persons and things. As ethnographers, we learn

through/in practice but in doing so we make this knowing our own rather than simply taking on that of others.

Several ethnographers of the senses have explored knowledge transmission in practice. Grasseni, like Ingold, locates the transmission of knowledge within an 'ecology of practice'. Her case study focuses on how cattle breeders' children play with toy cows which are modelled on the attributes that represent the 'ideal cow' by mimicking 'the ideal of good form that is found in cattle fair champions' (2007b: 61). Grasseni found that when the 10 year-old boy who features in her case study spoke of his toy cows, he was 'reproducing the discerning knowledge that breeders have of their cattle', but also linking this expertise to his actual experience of and actions in the real world with cattle. She identifies that he 'was engaging from very early on in what Jean Lave calls "legitimate peripheral participation" (Lave and Wenger 1991)' since 'Learning to be a breeder implies an education of attention that starts at an early age, a veritable apprenticeship in skilled vision' (2007b: 60). As Grasseni goes on to argue, the development of this skilled vision 'or the ways we see beauty, that we embody skill and enjoy participating in moral order ... does not happen solely as a result of the individual workings of the mind, or of the brain, or of the body of each of us, but rather through highly socialised means' (2007b: 63).

Other ethnographic studies likewise demonstrate that learning through practice involves not simply mimicking other's but creating one's own emplaced skill and knowing in ways that are acceptable to others. For example, in her interpretation of processes of learning in Japanese dance, Hahn writes: '... there is a struggle in learning. The transmission process is through physical imitation and sensory information, yet at a certain point we must embody the dance and instil our personal self through the strictures of the choreography and style, I believe this is where the body sensually situates movement to orient "self"' (2007: 49). Hahn understands this constitution of 'self' in the dance transmission process as being what follows from the dance student's 'enculturation of [dance] aesthetics via the body' (2007: 67). This produces an elusive state that she calls 'presence'. Presence is very different from the transmission processes in learning about dance that Hahn analyses as being visual, tactile and aural/oral processes. While, she writes, these processes involve 'an inward motion, a taking in of sensory information to train the body', presence emanates from the dancer: 'once apperception occurs, assimilation and realised embodiment, the very sensory paths that were the vehicles of transmission, now enhance presence' (2007: 163).

Geurts' discussion of a case study concerning the Anlo-Ewe people of Ghana has similar implications. Writing of the importance of learning to balance in Anlo-Ewe childrearing practices, Geurts emphasises how, among her research participants, 'balancing was described as one of the ultimate symbols for being human' (2002: 105). She notes how 'children were often placed on mats in the centre of our compound and encouraged to sit up, to crawl, and to begin trying to [balance]' (2002: 102). This was a stage prior to walking at which 'a baby mastered standing and *balancing* on his own two feet while the sibling let go of his hands' (2002: 103). Moreover, she notes how one of her research participants 'believed there was a fairly explicit connection between the physical practice of balancing and a temperamental quality of being level-headed and calm' (2002: 105). As Geurts points out, key values and ideologies are embedded in these socialisation processes. She suggests that 'the sensory order is reproduced

through sensory engagements in routine practices and the enactment of traditions'. But as she comments: 'these processes are neither automatic nor mechanically implanted into passive individuals. They are what constitutes the stuff of experience, the feelings that make up the micro-level of social interactions (or sensory engagements)'. She sees these processes as requiring 'some kind of agency and intentionality' (2002: 107).

These existing works on senses and transmission raise two key issues. The first is an emphasis on the social, material and sensorial practices and contexts of knowledge transmission. The second is the question of the location of the individual, the 'self', 'intentionality' and 'agency' in the transmission process. The former suggests that to understand the relevance of sensory experiences, categories and meanings in people's lives ethnographers need to research how these are known in practice within contexts of specific socialities and materialities. However, this does not preclude established forms of practice. The practical question of how researchers might access or understand these social and material relationships is explored in the later chapters.

The second issue refers to the idea that the transmission of knowledge does not simply involve the repetitive process of learning a template for action (e.g. Ingold 2000). Rather, it suggests that self and agency, intentionality and creativity are pivotal to the transmission process. Indeed, following Wenger, learning might change 'all at once who we are' (1998: 226–8) and, as Downey points out, can lead to 'perceptual, physiological and behavioural change' (2007: 236). Thus the ethnographer who is hoping that the sensory knowing of others will be transmitted to her or him might ask at what point there is a departure from the enculturation of this knowledge to its appropriation by the researcher. How might such sensory knowing, which is intimately related to the researchers' perception of her or his environment, sense of self and embodiment, be extracted from these processes into academic knowledge (if this indeed is what happens)? These questions are addressed in the final two chapters of this book. In the following two sections I continue the thread of this chapter by asking how, by seeking to share a similar place through forms of co-presence with research participants, ethnographers might endeavour to use their own imaginations to generate a sense of the pasts and futures of others, thus extending the idea of 'knowing in practice' (Wenger 1998) to one of 'imagining in practice'.

SENSORY MEMORIES

Recent literature that engages with the relationships between memory and the senses (e.g. Seremetakis 1994; Marks 2000; Sutton 2001) indicates two key themes that are of relevance to understanding sensory ethnography practice: sensory memory as an individual practice, for example in biographical research, and collective sensory memory, for example as invoked through, and invested in, ritual. These are of course not mutually exclusive categories.

The work of the historian Paul Connerton (1989) has been influential in discussions of collective memory. Connerton poses the question of 'how is the memory of groups conveyed and sustained?' to suggest we might understand this through a focus on 'recollection and bodies' (1989: 4). While not dismissing the analysis of texts, he thus argues that 'social memory' might be found in the performativity

of 'commemorative ceremonies' to which bodies are central (1989: 4–5). Connerton's approach has been particularly influential in the work of anthropologists of the senses, since, as David Sutton puts it, 'he draws our attention to the importance of these other types of memories that can be found sedimented in the body' (2001: 12). As Sutton's (2001) own work demonstrates, this approach is particularly relevant for understanding how, for instance, collective memories are invested in food practices. Nadia Seremetakis (1994) has taken a similar approach to the question of 'sensory memory'. Seremetakis suggests that the senses 'are a collective medium of communication' which is 'like language' but '*are not* reducible to language' (1994: 6, original italics). Thus she argues that 'The sensory landscape and its meaning-endowed objects bear within them emotional and historical sedimentation that can provoke and ignite gestures, discourses and acts' (1994: 7). However, the memories and meanings that might be sensorially invoked are not fixed. Rather, Seremetakis suggests that 'sensory memory or the mediation on the historical substance of experience is not mere repetition but transformation that brings the past into the present as a natal event' (1994: 7). These understandings of sensory memory as embodied, and continually reconstituted though practice, are particularly relevant to an ethnographic methodology that attends to the body and place. They imply that sensory memory is an inextricable element of how we know in practice, and indeed part of the processes through which ways of knowing are constituted.

While individual memories are related to collective memories, it is also worth considering the relationship of the senses and memory in the context of biographical research. This involves also accounting for how individual biographical past experiences are implicated in the constitution of place in the present. Connections between these concepts have been made explicit in the work of Stoller (1997) and Feld (1996). Reflecting on Seremetakis's ideas, Stoller notes how 'The human body is not principally a text; rather, it is consumed by a world filled with smells, textures, sights, sounds and tastes, all of which trigger cultural memories' (1997: 85). However, the body is not merely constituted, as Stoller describes, by its sensory environment, but rather our embodied practices also contribute to such emplaced memory processes. For instance, Feld also emphasises a relationship between memory and place, citing Casey's point that 'Moving in or through a given place, the body imports its own emplaced past into its present experience' (Casey 1987: 194, cited by Feld 1996: 93). Thus our experiences of place – and its social, physical and intangible components – are inextricable from the invocation, creation and reinvestment of memories.

These points imply three related roles for a theory of sensory memory in ethnography. First, to aid us in understanding the meanings and nature of the memories that research participants recount, enact, define or reflect on to researchers. Second, to help us to understand how ethnographers might generate insights into the ways other people remember through trying to share their emplacement. Third, to assist us to comprehend how ethnographers use their own memories in auto-ethnographic accounts (e.g. Seremetakis 1994; Okely 1996) or to reflexively reconstruct their fieldwork experiences. In the next section I suggest understanding the relationship between the senses and ways of imagining in a similar way. Ethnographers rely on both memory and imagination (and indeed the distinction between the two practices can become blurred to some extent) to create what we might call ethnographic places.

SENSORY IMAGINATIONS

The anthropologist Arjun Appadurai has argued that in contemporary modernity – what he calls the 'postelectronic world' – the imagination has 'a newly significant role' (1996: 5). He suggests that to understand the role of imagination in this contemporary context requires going beyond the idea that 'all societies' have transcended everyday life through mythologies and ritual, and that in dreams individuals 'might refigure their social lives, live out proscribed emotional states and sensations, and see things that have spilled over their sense of ordinary life' (1996: 5). In a contemporary context, Appadurai proposes first that the imagination is important because it has 'become a part of the quotidian mental work of ordinary people in many societies'. Imagination can thus be seen as a practice of everyday life (1996: 5). Second, he distinguishes between fantasy and imagination in that while fantasy might be 'divorced from projects and actions', 'the imagination, especially when collective, can become the fuel for action' (1996: 7). Third, Appadurai stresses the significance of 'collective imagination', through which groups of people might move from 'shared imagination to collective action' (1996: 8). This configuration of the role of imagination in contemporary social processes provides a compelling argument for our attending to the imagination in academic and applied research. Indeed, Appadurai himself suggests that because imagination has come to play such a central role in a world where mass media permeates many areas of people's lives, 'These complex, partly imagined lives must now form the bedrock of ethnography that wishes to retain a special voice in a transnational, deterritorialized world' (1996: 54). This work extends an important invitation to ethnographers to attend to how other people imagine. However, here I suggest two adaptations to the proposal. First, Appadurai's focus is on the deterritorialization that he theorises as part of processes of globalisation. Here my interest is different because rather than seeing imagination as something that becomes more prevalent or at least more significant in the context of *deterritorialization*, I suggest a focus on how imagination is implicated in everyday place-making practices. This does not mean dislocating such practices from political processes and spaces (in Massey's (2005) sense of the term). Rather, it means seeing imagination as integral to our everyday individual ways of being in the world in a more general sense and in some circumstances understanding imagination as a collective practice that operates in ways similar to those suggested for collective memory. Second, although Appadurai is clearly aware of the embodied and sensorial dimension of how we experience our environments (e.g. see Appadurai 1996: 1–2), his main focus is on the relationship between (media) representations and the imagination. Here, following Ingold's definition of imagination as 'the activity of a being whose puzzle-solving is carried on within the context of involvement in the real world of persons, objects and relations' (2000: 419), I take imagining to be a more emplaced everyday practice carried out in relation to the multisensoriality of our actual social and material relations. Indeed, the anthropologist Vincent Crapanzano has argued that imagination should be rethought, not as something that 'is dominated by the visual', but rather, he poses: 'Can we not "imagine" the beyond in musical terms? In tactile or even gustatory ones? In propriocentric ones? In varying combinations of these – and perhaps other senses' (2004: 23). Such multisensory imagining would be an embodied, rather than simply cognitive, practice.

Imagination is, of course, not simply about the future – it might concern imagining a past, another person's experience of the past or even of the present as it merges with the immediate past. Indeed, this is very much what ethnographers are in the business of doing when they engage in research practices aimed at imagining other people's immediate experiences and memories. As Crapanzano puts it, 'Ethnographies are themselves constructions of the hinterland' (2004: 23). They are, as such, dependent on practices of imagination. It is, moreover, equally important for the sensory ethnographer to attend to how others imagine as it is for her or him to understand how her or his own practices of imagination are implicated in the ethnographic process.

The idea of a collective imagination is itself tricky, especially if an ethnographer seeks to share it. It is impossible to directly access the imaginations of others, to know precisely if and how an imagined 'irreal' future is felt by an individual or shared by a 'collective', or to know if one has shared it oneself. A collectivity might collaborate to produce written documents, material objects and sensory environments. Nevertheless the sameness rests not in their imaginations, but in the material realities and discourses that inspire them to action and in the outcomes of this action. As Connerton has suggested, to understand collective memories, a focus on 'recollection and bodies' is required (1989: 4). A similar approach can be used to understand the idea of individual and collective imagination. This means directing the focus to how the 'irreal' (Crapanzano 2004) of the future (i.e. the imagined) is communicated both through verbal projections and through embodied practices.

If place is central to our way of being in the world and that we are thus always participating in places, the task of the reflexive ethnographer would be to consider how she or he is emplaced, or entangled, and her or his role in the constitution of that place. By attending to the sensoriality and materiality of other people's ways of being in the world, we cannot directly access or share their personal, individual, biographical, shared or 'collective' memories, experiences or imaginations (see also Okely 1994: 47; Desjarlais 2003: 6). However, we can, by aligning our bodies, rhythms, tastes, ways of seeing and more with theirs, begin to become involved in making places that are similar to theirs and thus feel that we are similarly emplaced (or following Massey (2005) try to insert ourselves into the trajectories to which *they* relate and thus attempt to relate similarly to them). This might enable us to do what Okely (1994) has referred to as to 'creatively construct correspondences' between our own and others' experiences. In doing so, we should be better enabled to understand how others remember and imagine (in ways that might not be articulated verbally) through their own immediate emplaced experiences.

SCHOLARLY KNOWING

Above I have suggested following the understanding that sensory knowing is produced through participation in the world. Following this idea, the self emerges from processes of sensory learning, being shaped through a person's engagement with the social, sensory and material environment of which she or he is a part. Similar understandings of 'ways of knowing' are current in anthropology. For instance, Mark Harris has pointed out that discussions of 'knowledge' have neglected the idea that 'knowing is always situated. He stresses that even very abstract forms of knowing

occur within specific environments, and in movement – in that a person does not '*stop* in order to know: she continues' (2007b: 1, original italics). As such, knowing is continuous and processual, it is situated and it is bound up with human engagement, participation and movement (Harris 2007b: 4). Sensory knowing might be understood both as an everyday process and as continuous throughout the life course. As Desjarlais has suggested, 'what people come to sense in their lives and how they are perceived, observed and talked about by others contribute to the making of selfhood and subjectivity' (2003: 342).

However, if we locate all meaningful knowledge in processes of active participation and engagement, the conundrum we are faced with is of how we might extract them to represent them as academic knowledge: how might we use them to contribute to academic scholarship? Ingold has pointed out that for academics 'our very activity, in thinking and writing, is underpinned by a belief in the absolute worth of disciplined, rational inquiry', itself defined through a modern western dichotomy (2000: 6). Such scholarship is indeed fundamental to the modern western academic project of intellectualising ethnographic happenings. Yet if we understand even abstract thought as an emplaced practice, then to a certain extent the problem is resolved. We might abstract, isolate or rationalise embodied knowing into written description through theoretical frames. Yet we remain embodied beings interacting with environments that might include discursive, sensory, material and social strands. We do not simply retreat into our minds to write theoretical texts, but we create discourses and narratives that are themselves entangled with the materiality and sensoriality of the moment and of memories and imaginaries.

There is nevertheless also a case for suggesting that a less intellectualised form of sensory knowing in practice might have a role to play in academia. Indeed, if we are to take a reflexive approach to the production of knowledge and to represent it accordingly, this ought to be the case. How, then, might the sensory intersubjectivity and corporeality of such knowing in practice (which, if the theories proposed above are to be taken seriously, is the source and origin of ethnographic knowledge) play a role in representing the substantive and theoretical findings of ethnographic research? Some have used styles of ethnographic writing designed specifically for this purpose (e.g. Stoller 1989, 1997, 2007). I am by no means suggesting that academic writing should be abandoned. However, as Throop (2003) has pointed out, there are many ways in which we can experience, reflect on and define experience. The same applies to the ways that we represent sensory experiences and the knowledge, memories and imaginations embedded in them. In more practical terms, this means there are possibilities other than academic writing (including appropriations of or collaboration with arts practice) and alternative ways of representing ethnographic experience. By pushing at the boundaries of the modern western paradigm that we are set in as academics we might integrate other ways of knowing, remembering and imagining into academic practice.

ETHNOGRAPHIC PLACES

The understanding of place that I have suggested in this chapter draws on the ideas of Casey (1996), Massey (2005) and Ingold (2008) to formulate place as a coming together and 'entanglement' of persons, things, trajectories, sensations, discourses, and more. As

events or occurrences, places are constantly changing and open. The suggestion that we, as ethnographers, and the people who participate in ethnographic research are always emplaced then invites the further question of how we might conceptualise the ethnographic representation of other people as emplaced persons. To facilitate this I propose the idea of 'ethnographic places'. Ethnographic places are thus not the same actual, real, experienced places ethnographers participate in when they do fieldwork. Rather, they are the places that we, as ethnographers, make when communicating about our research to others. Whatever medium is involved, ethnographic representation involves the combining, connecting and interweaving of theory, experience, reflection, discourse memory and imagination. It has a material and sensorial presence, be this in the form of a book, a film, an exhibition of scents, pictures, a musical composition, or a combination of these. Moreover, it can never be understood without accounting for how its meanings are constituted in relation to readers and audiences through *their* participation. Indeed, the task of the sensory ethnographer is in part to invite her or his reader or audience to imagine themselves into the places of both the ethnographer and the research participants represented.

The idea of ethnographic representation as an ethnographic place thus employs an abstract concept of place as a way of understanding these interrelationships. However, it differs slightly from the understanding of place developed above as it involves the ethnographer *intentionally pulling together* theory, experiential knowing, discourses, and more, into a unique configuration of trajectories. The challenge for ethnographers is to do this in such a way that invites our audiences to imagine themselves into the places of others, while simultaneously invoking theoretical and practical points of meaning and learning. While in most cases ethnographic representations become permanent texts – as in the case of written texts, films and sound compositions, they can still be understood as open to other places and to space in that their meanings will always be contingent on what is going on around them, that is, in relation to new findings, politics, theories, approaches and audiences. Some more innovative multimedia texts, which invite their users to reinvent narratives and reconfigure meanings, offer more obvious scope for the participation of their audiences. Thus the idea of ethnographic-place-as-event I am suggesting is one where representations are known in practice.

SUMMING UP

To conceptualise a sensory ethnography process requires an understanding that can account for both human perception and the political and power relations from which ethnographic research is inextricable. In this chapter I have suggested that a theory of place as experiential, open and in process – as 'event' or 'occurrence' – offers a way of thinking about the contexts of sensory ethnographic research and the processes through which ethnographic representations become meaningful. Moreover, it allows us to situate the emplaced ethnographer in relation to the sociality and materiality of the situations in which she or he becomes engaged and comes to know through

active participation in practice. I have then proposed that if ethnographers can come to occupy similar, parallel or related places to those people whose experiences, memories and imaginations they seek to understand, then this can provide a basis for the development of ways of knowing that will promote such understanding. Yet coming to know and imagine in ways similar to others involves not simply the ethnographer's imitation of other people's practices, but also a personal engagement and embodied knowing. One of the tasks of the reflexive sensory ethnographer is thus to develop an awareness of how she or he becomes involved in not only participating in 'other people's' practices, but also in anticipating her or his co-involvement in the constitution of places, and to identify the points of intervention of her or his own intentionality and subjectivity.

RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING

Casey, E. (1996) 'How to get from space to place in a fairly short stretch of time', in S. Feld and K. Basso (eds), *Senses of Place*. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press. pp.13–52.

Connerton, P. (1989) *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Crapanzano, V. (2004) *Imaginative Horizons*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Harris, M. (ed.) (2007) *Ways of Knowing: New Approaches in the Anthropology of Experience and Learning*. Oxford: Berghahn.

Ingold, T. (2000) *The Perception of the Environment*. London: Routledge.

Massey, D. (2005) *For Space*. London: Sage.

Pink, S. (2006) *The Future of Visual Anthropology: Engaging the Senses*. Oxford: Routledge.

Seremetakis, L. (1994) 'The memory of the senses: historical perception, commensal exchange, and modernity', in L. Taylor (ed.), *Visualizing Theory*. London: Routledge.

3
PREPARING FOR SENSORY RESEARCH: Practical and Orientation Issues

In this chapter I suggest how researchers might set about preparing themselves to be open and attentive to the sensory ways of knowing, categories, meanings, moralities and practices of others. This raises a series of questions originating in the approaches and perspectives discussed in previous chapters, and concerning what kinds of self-awareness, technologies and epistemologies might equip us well for this task. It involves asking: What is the sensory ethnographer seeking to find out? What are the implications of 'researcher subjectivity'? How does one choose a method? How might media figure in sensory ethnography? And is there a particular sensory approach to ethics? Moreover, preparation to do ethnography in a way that attends to the senses includes considering how one might use one's own body and senses alongside and in combination with both more classic and contemporary innovative digital research methods and technologies.

Before proceeding it is important to account for the impossibility of being completely prepared or knowing precisely how the ethnography will be conducted before starting. Many researchers who have undertaken ethnographies that attend to the senses have done so without any special preparation: the multisensoriality of the research context is often something that emerges though one's encounter with both people and the physical environment in which one is participating. It involves often unanticipated smells, tastes, sounds and textures, and unexpected ways of comprehending these. These lead to similarly unanticipated moments of realisation. This point is demonstrated in one of the earliest ethnographies to bring to the fore the importance of the non-visual senses. Steven Feld has described how during his long-term anthropological research in Papua New Guinea the Kaluli man working with him had 'blurted back' to one of Feld's questions regarding 'bird taximony and identification' to point out to him: '"Listen – to you they are birds, to me they are voices of the forest"'. Feld realised he had been imposing 'a method of knowledge construction ... onto a domain of experience that Kaluli do not isolate or reduce'. He explains that 'Birds are

"voices" because Kaluli *recognise and acknowledge their existence primarily through sound*, and because they are spirit reflections ... of deceased men and women' (1982: 45, my italics). For Feld, the methodological implication of this realisation led him to rebalance 'the empirical questioning and hypothesis-making activities ... with a less direct approach' (1982: 46). Such unforeseen realisations are quite characteristic of the way ethnographers learn during fieldwork. In some cases they might occur in ways that are quite subtle and over time. For instance, David Sutton describes how, when he was doing research in Kalymnos (Greece), local people repeatedly told him to "'Eat, in order to remember Kalymnos'" (Sutton 2001: 2). Over time he realised that, as he puts it: '*telling me to use the transitory and repetitive act of eating as a medium for the more enduring act of remembering, they were, in fact, telling me to act like a Kalymnian*' (2001: 2, original italics) since in this particular cultural context foods formed a fundamental part of local people's memories.

In other circumstances researchers might learn in more abrupt ways. The performer and scholar Hahn writes of what she calls the 'sensually extreme' in ethnography, suggesting that 'disorienting experiences' (2006: 94) in fieldwork create a type of liminality through which researchers might come to reflexive realisations. Hahn describes her own experiences of doing fieldwork at monster truck rallies as 'sensually more intense that I could have conjured: enormous trucks, deafening sounds, thick clouds of exhaust, and visions of extreme physical force as these 10,000-pound trucks flew into the air and crushed piles of cars or performed freestyle' (2006: 87–8). She proposes that 'The extreme pushes one to reorient sensibilities and consider the thresholds of what is sensually extreme from where we stand at the moment' (2006: 95). As Hahn points out, such 'disorienting' moments are unexpected (2006: 92) – and they somehow 'jolt' (Young and Goulet 1994: 20–1, cited by Hahn 2006: 94) us into a new level of understanding. This 'jolt' may be gradual, enjoyable, perhaps disturbing if the disorientation experienced leaves the ethnographer grasping out for points of familiarity, or it might be sudden. Whatever the nature of the experience, we cannot be prepared for the specificity of such jolting, disorientating or revelatory moments, but we can do our best to be open to them, and be prepared to engage reflexively and analytically with such experiences. We should be aware that even with extensive preparation, researchers' own sensory experiences will most likely still surprise them, sometimes giving them access to a new form of knowing.

THE RESEARCH QUESTION: WHAT IS THE SENSORY ETHNOGRAPHER TRYING TO FIND OUT?

The suggestions made in this chapter are based on the premise that the study of the senses would not normally be the sole and primary objective of research itself, but that it forms part of a methodology, part of an approach to understanding other people's experiences, values, identities and ways of life. A methodology based in and a commitment to understanding the senses provides a route to forms of knowledge and knowing not accounted for in conventional forms of ethnography. For example, in my own experience, in studying how self-identity is constituted in the home (see Pink 2004), I found the concept of the 'sensory home' to be an important route to

understanding people's everyday practices and decision-making about domestic work. I did not set out to simply identify the sensorial aspects of domestic material culture and everyday practices. Rather, I examined how people constitute their homes and self-identities through these practices. By exploring the sensory meanings and practices associated with domestic life and interpreting the different moralities people attached to them, I was able to draw conclusions about how my research participants defined themselves in relation to their homes. I take a similar approach in my research about the Cittàslow (Slow City) movement in Britain. There I use an analysis of the sensoriality of urban experience to develop the idea of the 'sensory city' (Pink 2007b) and to explore the role of sensorial experience in sustainable development (Pink 2008a). Again, I do not study the senses for the sake of defining the city as a sensory context, but treat the sensory city as a context for understanding people's actions in and concerning the urban environment.

In Chapters 1 and 2, I highlighted two key approaches to the senses in ethnography. One involves the ethnographic study of other people's systems of sensory categorisation and classification, and the meanings related to these, which developed as part of the earlier anthropology of the senses. For Howes and Classen (e.g. 1991), this approach would be a fundamental stage of any ethnography. The second approach entails thinking ethnographically about the senses from the starting point of the self-reflexive and experiencing body, thus regarding the sensorial in ethnography as embedded in the approach of the embodied ethnographer. Here, the priority is not so much a systematic survey of sensory categories and 'culture' but the use of the ethnographer's own sensorial experiences as a means of apprehending and comprehending other people's experiences, ways of knowing and sensory categories, meanings and practices.

Although at the time it was a highly innovative approach, Howes and Classen's (1991) idea of studying the sensory categories of any given culture resonates with conventional methods of investigating and documenting other cultures in twentieth-century anthropological practice. For example, for much of the twentieth century one of the first steps in doing anthropological research about another culture was to investigate and map out, diagrammatically, its kinship system (although towards the end of the twentieth century anthropologists became faced with questions about the validity of this approach – see, for example, Schweitzer 2000). Howes and Classen suggested another fundamental aspect of human culture should be given centrality – setting out an agenda for doing research that aims to elicit 'a given culture's "sensory profile" or way of "sensing the world"' (1991: 257). To do so they recommended attending to 'language', 'artefacts and aesthetics', 'body decoration', 'childrearing practices', 'alternative sensory modes' (i.e. when people of different categories use different 'sensory orders'), 'media of communication', 'natural and built environment', 'rituals', 'mythology' and 'cosmology' (1991: 262–85). Their list is very inclusive and the areas they cover have been represented in several subsequent ethnographies that attend to the senses. For example, Geurts (2002) undertakes detailed analyses of both the linguistic aspects of Anlo–Ewe sensory categories, practices surrounding birth and the care of children and ritual, and Grasseni (2007b) has focused on how children learn to see; in my own work I have focused on the built environment (Pink 2004, 2007b), rituals (2007b, 2008b) and what Howes and Classen (1991) call 'alternative sensory modes' (Pink 2004, 2005b); and Desjarlais (2003) has examined how a man and woman

interviewee used gender-specific sensory categories and metaphors to discuss their autobiographical experiences.

An understanding and mapping out of culturally specific sensory categories, the moralities attached to the senses, sensory practices and more provides an important resource for any ethnographer who tries to understand other people's experiences through the senses. However, I make this point with one disclaimer – that any 'sensory culture' should itself be defined as constantly shifting and modified, and itself constituted in relation to human perception and practice. In this sense the concepts of sensory cultures and sensory experience, knowing and practice are interdependent. Thus the second approach (demonstrated in the work of, for example, Geurts 2002; Downey 2005, 2007; Hahn 2007), which centres on using the ethnographer's own emplaced experience as a basis for comprehending how others experience, know and practice, would be inextricable from, rather than opposed to, the former.

Therefore, to answer the question of what the sensory ethnographer is trying to find out, we need to account for the context in which most ethnographic studies of the senses actually form part of research into other substantive questions. Thus, one response would be that the knowledge sought is always project-specific. However, more generally, it is fair to say that the sensory ethnographer is trying to access areas of embodied, emplaced knowing and to use these as a basis from which to understand human perception, experience, action and meaning and to situate this culturally and biographically.

REVIEWING THE EXISTING LITERATURE AND AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS WITH PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THE SENSES

Most good ethnographic research is concerned not only with the knowing produced through encounters with people and things and engagements with practices in fieldwork contexts. It is also dependent on existing related published ethnographic knowledge, local literatures (fictional and documentary), images and other texts (including online texts), and art forms that form part of the cultural knowledge that is inextricable from everyday practice and local ideologies. A review of such existing materials and materialities will help the researcher both reformulate her or his research question(s) and decide which methods are most appropriate for the task.

Howes and Classen (1991) suggest a systematic four-stage process for library-based research about the senses. This might involve working with an ethnographic text, a novel, a life-history or a film. They suggest the researcher should: first, 'Extract all the references to the sense of sensory phenomena from the source in question'; second, 'analyse the data pertaining to each modality individually'; third, 'Analyse the relations between the modalities with regard to how each sense contributes to the meaning of experience in the culture'; and finally, 'conclude with a statement of the hierarchy or order of the sense for the culture'. As they point out, this method only allows the researcher to analyse the *representation* of the senses that is offered by the producer of the text, which will also represent the sensory subjectivity of that author (1991: 261).

Howes and Classen propose a useful starting point for ethnographic research that attends to the senses. However, given that most ethnographic literature has not focused on these themes in any systematic way, it is likely that such literature reviews

will produce only very sparse outlines of culturally specific sensory meanings. In fact, existing discussions of the senses developed in architecture and design studies have often used both literary sources – fiction and poetry – as well as existing ethnographic description as sources to demonstrate the sensoriality of our experience of physical environments (e.g. Malnar and Vodvarka 2004). Although literary writings on the senses will, like ethnographies, be based in the sensory subjectivity of their own authors, they can offer insights into how sensory experiences are represented in terms of pleasure or disgust, given moral import, and form part of social relationships in specific cultural and historical contexts.

Other forms of writing and representation can also become key sources in a sensory approach to ethnography. In my experience, ethnographers always benefit from engaging analytically with fiction writing, film, other media representations, reportage and other literary statements connected with their topic. For example, in the case of my research about the Slow Food and Cittàslow movements, existing written materials about the aims and work of these movements has proved indispensable to my understanding of the role of the senses in the actual activities of their members. For instance, the Slow Food movement advocates and undertakes programmes of 'sensory education' (see Petrini 2001), by which it hopes to convince people of the benefits of its ideology by teaching them about the meaning and importance of consuming and knowing about local produce, through the medium of food. Carlo Petrini, the leader of Slow Food, proposes that 'Reappropriating the senses is the first step towards imagining a different system capable of respecting man as a worker of the land, as a producer, as a consumer of food and resources, and as a political and moral entity' and 'To reappropriate one's senses is to reappropriate one's own life ...' (2007: 99). The analysis of such texts cannot provide researchers with first-hand knowledge of how people actually experience and give meanings to food. Rather, it allows us to gain an understanding of the sensory categories the movement's literature constructs, the moralities and values that it gives to particular types of sensory experience, and the wider activist agendas in which they are embedded. As such, it provides a reference point from which to analyse the actual practices and meanings generated among research participants. For example, an appreciation of the Slow Food approach to the senses has helped me to analyse the ideological and activist strands of the sensory experiences that are structured into the composition of a Slow City Carnival (Pink 2007b) and in approaches to sustainable development in Slow Cities (Pink 2008a). Not all texts that discuss the senses have similarly explicit political or activist agendas to those that I have outlined above. For instance, other examples might be texts discussing clinical practice in biomedicine or alternative therapies, or cookery books. Such texts will nevertheless be identifiable as attached to specific world views and ideologies, and provide invaluable cultural resources for a sensory ethnographic study.

It is, moreover, not only written cultural *texts* that can offer researchers access to local discourses and representations of sensory experience. Sensory ethnographers should be open to other media and practices of representation. This includes viewing films and other audiovisual works in ways that are attentive to the senses. In Chapter 6 I discuss the importance of understanding and analysing local (audio)visual culture as multisensory media. Such materials most often are found during the research process. However, in many cases, documentary, ethnographic or feature films that represent themes related to the sensoriality of relationships, environments and materialities of one's future

research context might be found. Therefore, for example, before (or as part of) doing research about gardening in Britian, it would be useful to analyse how the embodied nature and sensoriality of gardening is represented in British film and television programmes about gardening, as well as in gardening books. In other cases, modes of communication, such as song, might be interrogated to gain an understanding of the way sensory experiences are framed by existing narratives. For example, Marina Roseman (2005) discusses the significance of song among the Temiar people of Kelantan, Malaysia. The Temiar are an indigenous forest-dwelling people whose world, Roseman writes, is impacted on by 'rainforest deforestation, land alienation and Islamic evangelism' (2005: 213). Roseman shows how, as she puts it, 'In musical genres ... Temiars map out their experiential universe, locating that which is Other within reach of the self' (2005: 218). Thus, to understand how discourses and sensory experiences are expressed and remembered in culturally meaningful ways, ethnographers can also benefit from looking beyond written and visual texts.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT METHODS

The discussions above have implied that the question of how close the ethnographer might get to 'sharing' the sensory embodied or emplaced experiences and the sensory subjectivity of their research participants might depend partly on the methods of investigation used. I should stress here that I do not mean to suggest that the method employed will determine the level of analytical *understanding* the researcher will arrive at, but rather that different methods take us into other people's worlds and ask them to reveal their experiences to us through different routes. In the following chapters I approach the question of what sorts of engagements are facilitated and what types of knowledge are produced through a series of different methods: participation; interviewing; and audiovisual methods. The choice of method should be matched to two key factors: the method should serve the research question – it should be the method that will best enable the researcher to explore the themes and issues and acquire the understandings that she or he is seeking; yet this first factor requires the proviso that the method must simultaneously be suitable for and amenable to the research participants in question. In some projects, the methods used will be predetermined and the participants in the research to a certain extent self-select in that they will only ever be those people who are happy to collaborate in knowledge production using the predetermined methods. However, in projects with a more flexible design, it might be that different participants in the same project collaborate more or less enthusiastically with different methods. Or even that the methods used are often determined not by the researcher's own prior decisions about practical approaches but by the research events and scenarios created by research participants (see, for example, Pink 2008b).

REFLEXIVITY IN SENSORY ETHNOGRAPHY

That reflexivity is fundamental to a sensory ethnography has already been recognised by some key contributors to the field. The anthropologist Geurts puts this particularly poignantly. Setting an agenda for a reflexive and sensory ethnography, she writes:

> We [ethnographers] often find ourselves drenched – not just in discourse and words, but in sensations, imaginations and emotions. ... And yet, if we have become drenched, those we work with may also be soaked through and through. Such moments open up space, or sound a call, to body forth fine-tuned accounts replete with an ethical aesthetics of relationships in the field. (2003: 386)

A sensory ethnography thus requires a form of reflexivity through which the ethnographer engages with how her or his own sensory experiences are produced through research encounters and how these might assist her or him in understanding those of others. The following chapters of this book reveal that there exists a growing body of academic and arts practice that suggests how this reflexivity has been engaged in practice. As Regina Bendix pointed out in 2005: 'how ethnographers are to acquire sensory reflexivity and, concomitantly sensory effectiveness in participant observation has thus far hardly been discussed, nor has there been much experimentation or explication as to how sensory ethnography might find its way back on the printed page' (2005: 8; see also Bendix 2000). Case studies published in Bendix and Donald Brenneis's (2006) co-edited volume and elsewhere (e.g. Geurts 2002; Lee and Ingold 2006) have begun this task. In the following section I also examine this question through a discussion of the sensory subjectivity and intersubjectivity of the ethnographic encounter.

Such reflexivity is essential to ethnographic research, as conceptualised here. It is a collaborative process through which shared understandings (to the extent that they can be shared) are produced. It involves sets of encounters that, when presented appropriately, can serve to represent in powerful ways the experiences of one group of people to another. The self-conscious and reflexive use of the senses in this process is an important and strategic act. By attempting to become similarly situated to one's research participants and by attending to the bodily sensations and culturally specific sensory categories (e.g. in the west, smell, touch, sound, vision, taste) through which these feelings are communicated and given value, ethnographers can come to know other people's lives in ways that are particularly intense. By making similarly reflexive and body-conscious uses of this sensory knowing in the representation of their work, ethnographers can hope to produce texts that can have a powerful impact on their readers or audiences. This might involve using the written word, yet recent discussions suggest the potential of (audio)visual and other sensorial media to invoke empathetic and possibly (if properly contextualised) intercultural understandings. Such processes can be engaged in both academic and applied research. The implication is that empathetic understandings might be produced through the engagement of decision-makers (whether policy-makers or in industry) with evocative multimedia and multisensory representations that seek to represent the embodied nature of other people's experiences and concerns. This implies the possibility that they might become reflexive audiences, self-conscious about their own subjectivities. Such empathetic and reflexive texts might convince in ways that cannot be achieved through (even if passionately conceived) arguments made in the bullet points of written reports based on questionnaire data.

FROM SENSORY BIAS TO SENSORY SUBJECTIVITY

An important step towards understanding other people's sensory categories and the way they use these to describe their experiences, knowledge, and practice lies in developing a reflexive appreciation of one's own sensorium. In much existing research methods literature produced originally in the English language the 'we' who do research are assumed to be modern western subjects, who divide the senses into vision, hearing, touch, taste and smell (along with the oft added mysterious sixth sense). Howes and Classen stress that '*Other cultures do not necessarily divide the sensorium as we do*' (1991: 257–8, original italics). They note how, for example, the Hausa have two senses and the Javanese five, and that these senses do not necessarily coincide with modern western ones. As Howes has later commented (for the modern western ethnographer), 'it is not easy to cultivate ... cross-sensory awareness because one of the defining characteristics of modernity is the cultural separation of the senses into self-contained fields' (2003: 47). Nevertheless, it is important for ethnographers to be aware of sensoria that differ from their own. As Geurts argues, the 'Western model of five senses is a folk model' (2002: 227) and, as such, it is one among others. For the modern western ethnographer, an awareness of the five-sense model provides a useful comparative apparatus that might be employed as a way of reflecting on cultural difference; it offers a ready-made reference point. However, it is also more deeply embedded in the practice of modern western scholarship since there the ethnographer, as a scholar or an applied researcher, is usually obliged to communicate her or his findings to audiences of modern western subjects who also understand the world through a five-sense sensorium. At the same time, not all ethnographers necessarily originate from cultures in which the five-sense model is used, which means there is no real justification for putting it at the centre of academic enterprise: it is a tool employed by ethnographers who use it in their everyday lives and in their research, but it is not the only possible model.

To understand what they call the 'sensory biases' of another culture, Howes and Classen recommend that a researcher must both develop an awareness of and 'overcome' her or his own 'sensory biases' (or as I discuss below 'sensory subjectivity') and then train 'oneself to be sensitive to a multiplicity of sensory expressions'. They suggest undertaking exercises in self-training, that might involve 'taking some object from one's environment and disengaging one's attention from the object itself so as to focus on how each of its sensory properties would impinge on one's consciousness were they not filtered in any way'. From this they recommend that researchers develop what they call 'the capacity to be "of two sensoria" about things'. This entails 'being able to operate with complete awareness in two perceptual systems of sensory orders simultaneously (the sensory order of one's own culture and that of the culture studied), and constantly comparing notes' (1991: 260). The process of seeking to apprehend one's own sensory situatedness might be begun before starting ethnographic fieldwork. Exercises such as those suggested by Howes and Classen can encourage us to break down an experience into sensory categories. The result of doing so would allow one to be aware of both the categories one uses and how one defines and gives meanings to different types of sensation.

The suggestion that the sensory ethnographer starts with a kind of auto-ethnography of her or his own sensory culture and of how she or he is situated in it proposes a stage of preparation for ethnographic fieldwork. This should equip the researcher with an awareness of how she or he uses (culturally and biographically specific) sensory categories to classify and represent multisensory embodied knowing. In addition, this involves accounting for her or his own sensory subjectivity, an ability to be reflexive about how this subjectivity might be implicated in the production of ethnographic knowledge, and an openness to learning how to participate in other sensory ways of knowing. It is also essential to recognise that there is significant variation within cultures, although people of the same culture might share certain sensory categories and classifications, they may use these in different ways or give different meanings to them. The sensory ethnographer needs to keep in mind that in any given culture any number of different ways of living out – for instance, gendered, ethnic, generational, professional or other – identities might be associated with different ways of practising, understanding, recalling and representing one's experiences sensorially. These insights need to be applied not only to the way we understand other people's culturally specific sensory worlds, but also to how we regard ourselves as being situated in and moving between different sensory cultures.

Researchers tend to begin their fieldwork from a wide range of different relationships to the subjects of their research. In some cases, a researcher may already be a specialist practitioner of the activity she or he is studying. Good examples include John Hockey's auto-ethnography analysis of the sensory experiences of long distance running (Hockey 2006) and Hahn's work on knowledge transmission in Japanese dance, having been a dancer before beginning the research (Hahn 2007). Other ethnographers who seek to learn about other people's experiences and meanings through the senses may not have such an established basis of specialist embodied knowledge. However, there are different degrees to which existing bodily knowing will be involved. This can depend on whether the researcher is doing fieldwork in her or his own culture. Ethnographers might research practices that are already part of their lives, but that might be experienced and understood differently by others. For example, in 2000 I worked on a study of everyday domestic laundry practices (see Pink 2005b, 2007c). I have been doing laundry myself for many years, yet I found that my own knowledge and embodied ways of knowing about laundry, and ways of interpreting the domestic environment in relation to laundry processes, differed – sometimes enormously – from those of the people who participated in my research. Their (varied) beliefs and values concerning how one should use one's senses to judge when and in what ways laundry was clean or dirty led me to a different consciousness about how I made my own subjective decisions about laundry. However, this self-reflexivity also allowed me to understand how the way one treats laundry is bound up with how one uses sensory categories and practices to create statements about one's self-identity. In this reflexive process, however, I did not attempt to deconstruct my own sensory knowledge about laundry *before* starting the research. Rather, the self-awareness it entailed was generated *during* the research process as I began to use my own sensory values and practices as a means of comparison and a reference point through which to situate the different approaches of my various research participants.

Likewise, in my study of the sensory home, this process of self-awareness was not an exercise that took place prior to the fieldwork, but developed relationally as I explored other people's sensory homes with them. In this instance I was doing research in two cultures, English and Spanish, in which I had lived my everyday life through fairly conventional and culturally specific routines. Before doing the research I had often noted how, for example, washing up was done differently in England and Spain, but I never reflected on how in either cultural context and material environment I had used my own sensory experiences and knowledge to make decisions about how and when to clean something in my home, or to pass judgements about other people. I had not realised how I also used sensory strategies as ways of defining my own self-identity. Now, almost ten years since I undertook my first project in the home, my own practices invoke a particular awareness of how I use embodied sensory knowing and categories – when determining if clothing can be worn or needs to be washed, when rooms need to be tidied, when the kitchen floor needs to be cleaned. These strategies are also identity practices through which I create a particular self and ascribe to culturally specific moralities through my decisions about the condition of my clothes and domestic surfaces.

To understand the complex ways in which we use sensory knowing and categories and develop sensory strategies in social interaction and self-representation, I suggest two concepts are needed. The first is the idea of *sensory subjectivity*, mentioned above. The idea that ethnographic research is by nature subjective, and requires the researcher to reflect on her or his own role in the production of ethnographic knowledge, is by now a widely accepted paradigm. The ways individuals use sensory knowledge and practice can be understood as a form of subjectivity – a way of understanding the world that is at once culturally specific, but that is also shaped through other influences. These might include experiences and ideologies originating beyond the local or might be concerned with how an individual is positioned in relation to social institutions and other individuals. A sensory subjectivity should also be understood in connection with any number of other identity markers (such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, age and generation) and more. However, rather than essentialising the individual as having just one subjectivity, we should recognise that people may shift between different subject positions, depending on the contexts in which they find themselves. Thus, building on the literatures and ideas discussed in Chapter 2, as our emplacement shifts and changes, we continuously move and learn (see Harris 2007b: 1) and our self-identities are continuously reconstituted. As our identities are continually completed in relation to place and our ways of embodied knowing and learning, this idea of sensory subjectivity is thus sensitive to the contingency of identity, and it is also inextricable from our relationship with our total environment.

The second concept implied by the idea of sensory subjectivity is that of *sensory intersubjectivity*. Indeed, if identity is continually being negotiated through our intersubjective relations with others and our material/sensory environments, we need a way of conceptualising how this works in practice during our research encounters. Our social interactions are certainly not based simply on verbal communications and visual impressions. Rather, they are fully embodied and multisensory events – even if actual physical contact does not take place. The sensory ethnographer needs to account for how the senses are bound up with her or his relationships both with research participants and between the people participating in the research themselves, and indeed how these shift and change.

OTHER PEOPLE'S SENSORY CATEGORIES AND SENSORY INTERSUBJECTIVITY

The way we live, understand and communicate through our senses involves *social* relationships. This means that through our participation in social and material environments our sensory practices, and indeed identities, are lived out. The type of sensory intersubjectivity that these social and material encounters involves invites three strands of discussion: the role of sensory perception in how we interpret and interact with others; the implications of sensory intersubjectivity for understanding the research encounter; and the ethnographer's quest to share sensory experiences with research participants, attempting to apprehend their experiences and seeking to communicate about them and with them through this sharing.

Sensory Intersubjectivity, Social Interaction and the Constitution of Identity

The self might be seen to be constituted through processes involving the transmission of sensory knowledge – as we enter into new ways of knowing in and engaging with our environments both our self-identities and understandings shift. Desjarlais proposes that 'Distinct types of sensory perception take effect at different times in people's lives'. Thus it is useful to look out for people's 'shifting orientations, and changes in time' (2003: 342). These shifts take place as a result of changes that occur throughout the life course, be they gradual, abrupt and occurring through a sudden realisation (e.g. Hahn 2006), or developed through a training or apprenticeship process (e.g. Grasseni 2004a, 2004b; Downey 2005; Hahn 2007). In part, such changes are related to our changing social environments and encounters – as such, to the intersubjectivity between persons and to the way that our notions of self are continuously negotiated and reconstituted through our intersubjective encounters with others. As Desjarlais notes:

> Sensory engagements are as much intersubjective processes as they are personal ones. They regularly emerge in the course of interactions among people. Any considerations of a person's sensory engagements in the world must therefore be considered within the frame of a person in reflective action among other persons and other consciousnesses. (2003: 342)

Desjarlais's points, of course, are equally applicable to the intersubjectivity that occurs between research participants to that between researcher and participants. He argues that 'The very substance of anthropological knowledge is founded on a sensory semiosis' (2003: 243). By this point, which can also be applied to ethnography as practised in other disciplines, Desjarlais is referring to a process of intersubjectivity. The researcher's actions are informed by their own sensory subjectivities while, simultaneously, their actions, and the meanings of these, are also 'shaped by local perspectives on sensory perception' (2003: 243).

Another perspective through which to consider how the senses figure in the relationships between people entails a sociological focus on social interaction, as outlined in Chapter 1 (Low 2005; Largey and Watson 2006 [1972]). This approach reminds us of the need to attend to how cultural norms are invested in sensory categories. Thus the way people judge others is informed by a sensuous morality. This is particularly relevant as one considers the importance of the senses to the research encounter in general and to the interpersonal relationships that researchers develop during ethnographic research in particular. However, the moralities and values associated with the sensoriality of human interaction should also be situated in relation to specific bodies and materialities. Christina Lammer's discussion of 'bodywork', through the case study of her research about 'how radiological personnel perceive and define "contact" as it relates to their interactions with patients' (2007: 91), brings these issues to the fore. Drawing from the phenomenological writings of Merleau-Ponty, as developed by MacDougall (1998), Lammer suggests that (as MacDougall proposes for anthropological filmmaking) in 'the biomedical practice of (interventional) radiology ... [b]odies are mutually interpenetrated, leaving deep though invisible somatic traces; filling perception with multisensual flesh' (Lammer 2007: 103). In the particular case of interventional radiology, touch is central (2007: 104), thus making the corporeality of human interaction all the more obvious. Nevertheless, although sensorial intersubjectivity need not involve actual physical touching, it should always be understood in terms of its corporeality and as occurring in relation to a material environment.

The Sensory Intersubjectivity of the Research Encounter

Above I have outlined three strands of thinking about how interpersonal relationships are lived out in everyday social encounters that might range from the seriousness and intentionality of a surgical intervention to the serendipity of a fleeting encounter in a supermarket while shopping. The first stresses that our self-identities are constantly renegotiated through these encounters as our own subjectivities become engaged with those of others. As (to take a modern western model) we see, touch, smell and hear others, and perhaps seek to modify their sensory experiences of our own bodies, we are continually resituating ourselves and remaking ourselves in relation to others. I have suggested that to acknowledge that sensory experience and perception form a part of these encounters allows us to understand the sociality that our emplacement involves. The second strand of thinking, emerging from sociological approaches to social interaction, reminds us of the way normative and/or deviant behaviours and values are instigated and interpreted through culturally specific sensory expectations and memories. Finally, Lammer's (2007) work invites us to reflect further on the corporeality and multisensoriality of human interaction. These points are no less relevant to our understanding of the relationships and encounters that take place between ethnographers and research participants.

Martin F. Manalansan IV's (2006) discussion of the notion of the 'smelly immigrant', through the case study of his research with Asian Americans in New York City, is a good example. Manalansan describes how one of the concerns of the Asian Americans who participated in his research was with the (lingering) smells of Asian

foods in their homes and on their clothing and bodies. He demonstrates how the culturally specific ways immigrants negotiate their identities through sensory strategies are set within political contexts and specific power configurations. Yet, Manalansan points out, his findings are not solely relevant for comprehending the sensoriality of immigrant lives. Rather, they are more generally applicable to the ethnographer. Reflecting on an excerpt from his field journal, which describes his visit to a Korean family home in the United States, he asks:

> In what ways were my own presuppositions about odors influencing my own actions, feelings and reactions in that domestic space? Was I – the anthropologist – authority figure, causing specific anxieties and emotions among members of the Park family? (2006: 51)

Manalansan's questions reinforce the importance of the ethnographer taking a reflexive approach to the relationships and encounters that she or he has with others, using this to situate and interpret both her or his own actions and reactions as well as those of research participants. Such a reflexive analysis should be part of any good ethnography. Incorporated into a sensory ethnographic methodology it involves: referring, first, to one's developing understanding of local sensory categories and meanings, how these are constituted, how they operate in everyday life, and the wider political and power configurations with which they are entangled; second, to one's own sensory subjectivity to understand how this is informed by particular values and thus lead us to categorise others in particular ways; and, finally, to how one's own sensory subjectivity shifts in the contexts of social and embodied encounters and negotiations with others, and how this in itself enables one to arrive at new levels of personal and ethnographic awareness and knowing.

MEDIA, METHODS AND SENSORY KNOWLEDGE

The significance of media for sensory experience and communication has been recognised in several areas of discussion. An early contribution was Marshall McLuhan's suggestion that 'our technical media, since writing and printing, are extensions of our senses' (2005 [1961]: 46). McLuhan argued that what he called the 'sense-ratio' shifts when different media are involved (2005 [1961]: 47). 'Sense-ratio' referred to 'the proportional elaboration of the senses within a particular cultural logic' (Howes 2005b: 23) and McLuhan proposed that 'any new medium alters the existing sense-ratios and proportions, just as over-all colors are modified by any local shift of pigment or component' (2005 [1961]: 47). Thus the 'latest' media of the time of his writing (television), he proposed, was 'an extension, not just of sight and sound but ... tangibility in its visual, contoured, sculptural mode' and thus a 'sudden extension of our sight-touch powers' that must have social effects (2005 [1961]: 46–7). Although, as Howes notes, there are problems with 'the technological determinism and implicit evolutionism of McLuhan's theoretical position' (Howes 2005b: 23), his work invites the important question of the relationship of different media to sensory evocation and communication.

Other theoretical explorations of media, the senses and society include Rodaway's attempt to explain the sensory context of postmodernity by drawing from Jean Baudrillard's notions of 'the orders of simulacra and the concept of hyper-reality' (Rodaway 1994: 9). Rodaway sought to explain the 'socio-historical development of styles of sensuous experience and the consequent changes in concepts of reality through the introduction of new social practices and the employment of new technologies' (1994: 9). While Rodaway's discussion is dated through its association with late twentieth-century conceptualisations of postmodernity, the questions he raises remain pertinent. Much social, sensory and material experience is mediated in multiple and diverse ways by (constantly changing and developing) media technologies. Thus, as Nick Couldry (2004) has suggested, we might understand much human practice as 'media orientated'. This invites a consideration of how our emplaced contact with media technologies and the mediation of experience might be conceptualised within a sensory ethnography.

There are several different levels at which media experience and practice might be analysed as sensorial and emplaced. First, through a focus on the materiality of technologies – this is, of course, a concern not only for their users but also for their producers: consumer researchers might attend to the user's corporeal and sensory experience of, for instance, actually manipulating a video camera, while an academic researcher might be interested in similar questions in order to theorise how relationships between humans and technologies are played out. A second focus would be on how media technologies might encourage the production of certain types of sensory strategy, experience and representation. For example, if one is audio-recording a conversation or interview, then sound will be a fundamental aspect of the experience that is represented in the recording. However, simultaneously, knowing that audio is the medium of recording and representation the use of other sensory metaphors and means of evoking, for example, smells, textures, tastes or images, might be used. In contrast, using video recording and/or photography might encourage different embodied, performative ways of communicating. Third, the ways in which different media might be experienced by their viewers can also be interpreted as sensorial forms of communication.

Contemporary ethnographic research frequently takes place in contexts from which a number of media are inextricable. By 'media', here I mean, for example, mass media such as radio, television, newspapers and magazines, and mass media uses of the internet, as well as what Richard Chalfen (2002) has called 'home media', including personal photography and its display and home movies, plus personal uses of the internet, telephone and other information and communication technologies. Moreover, these are also often contexts where much experience and knowing is itself mediated, or embedded in processes and practices that also involve digital as well as analogue media. It is crucial for the sensory ethnographer to recognise the specific nature of the media culture(s) in which she or he is researching as well as the mediated context in which the research is undertaken. This awareness is important not only to provide a contextual understanding of how media and the senses are implicated in local cultural knowledge and practice, but also because it is very likely that the ethnographer her or himself will be using digital media to undertake the research.

In the following chapters I identify how different media have been used in sensory ethnography research through examinations of how specific methods have been developed in different research projects and contexts. Initially, however, it is pertinent to keep in mind that there will not necessarily be any direct correlations between specific media and the analysis of particular sensory modalities. For example, it would be mistaken to identify the use of audio-recording only with research that attends to the oral/aural sense, or photography just with research that attends primarily to the visual sense. The case studies discussed in the following chapters demonstrate well that categories of visual experience might be very effectively explored through audio-recorded interviews, tactile experience through photography and olfactory experience through video.

ETHICS IN SENSORY ETHNOGRAPHY

Any research project needs to attend to the ethical codes of the academic discipline(s) in which it is located (these are normally developed by the professional associations of the discipline) and of the institutions with which they are involved. As I have discussed elsewhere (Pink 2007a), researchers doing ethnography need to account for the ethical issues that are raised by specific cultural contexts and the culturally and personally specific moralities of their research participants. In this general sense, ethical issues raised by a sensory ethnography need not vary from those of a visual ethnography (Pink 2007a) or applied ethnography (Pink 2005a, 2007b). Indeed, it is difficult to propose an ethics framework for an area of research practice that is already evidently cutting across academic disciplines and applied research agendas. Researchers working with different types of research question, participant and context will need to ensure that their ethical practices conform to those of their own professional associations and academic institutions. One of the keys to ensuring that research practice is ethical is to ensure that it is, as far as possible, collaborative. This means engaging the subjects of the research as participants in the project, rather than as the objects of an experiment. This is part of the collaborative and reflexive approach that is fundamental to sensory ethnography as it is conceived in this book. The idea behind this sensory ethnography is not so much to study other people's sensory values and behaviours, but to collaborate with them to explore and identify these. This is not to say that in some instances more experimental approaches are not interesting. However, generally, before considering intruding on the sensory consciousness of research participants, the ethical implications of doing this should be thoroughly considered. Indeed, Devon E. Hinton, Vuth Pich, Dava Chhean and Mark H. Pollard propose that 'Traumatic events are encoded into memory by auditory, olfactory and visual cues', all of which might be triggers or lead to flashbacks (2006: 68). Their report on psychiatric research into 'the phenomenology of olfactory panic attacks' among Cambodian refugees (2006: 69) is a powerful reminder that sensory memories do not always invoke the nostalgia of good times past.

Conventional approaches to research ethics quite rightly take an important pragmatic approach to setting out how we might best prevent our research causing any harm or disrespect to others. However, the existing literature also implies a further

role for a sensory ethnography, seeing a sensory approach itself as a moral perspective. Several writers have suggested that taking a sensory approach to understanding and intervening in the world might help to make it a better place. In Chapter 1, I argued that a sensory ethnography should be based in a collaborative and participatory approach to research, which respects research participants and recognises that ethnography might have a role in the real world as well as in academia. The idea of a sensory approach as a moral perspective also links in interesting ways to the conceptualisation of a collaborative and participatory sensory ethnography.

The idea of a sensory approach as a moral perspective was first noted in humanist geography where the practical and ethical elements are interlinked. Porteous insists on their being practical implications of his notions of 'smell-scape' and 'soundscape' for urban planning (e.g. 1990: 43–5, 62–5). He suggests that to 'live well', 'we need to improve the current imbalance of our sensory modalities, to moderate our current overemphasis on vision that distances us, and ultimately alienates us, from our surroundings' (1990: 200). His moral dimension is that 'The non-visual senses encourage us to be involved, and being involved, we may come to care' (1990: 200). Tuan's notion of aesthetics also has a moral message. He compares what he calls the 'Shadows' of 'Human Frailty and Evil' (Tuan 1993: 238–40) with the 'Light' of 'Moral beauty' (1993: 240–3). He sees the 'human story [as] one of progressive sensory and mental awareness', thus seeing culture as a 'moral-aesthetic venture to be judged ultimately by its moral beauty' (1993: 240). In a similar vein, the anthropologist Paul Stoller has also suggested that 'humility' should be at the foundation of a sensory ethnography. He closes his book *Sensuous Scholarship* by proposing that 'If we allow humility to work its wonders it can bring sensuousness to our practices and expression. It can enable us to live well in the world' (Stoller 1997: 137).

These approaches suggest that a heightened sensory awareness and a sensitivity to sensoriality in the way we both design and appreciate our physical environment and other people's ways of knowing also resonate with recent literature in architecture and design studies and outside academia. For example, the Slow Food movement also takes a similar view, suggesting that it is through the education of the senses that we might better appreciate our environments and create a better world (see Petrini 2001); the Finish architect Juhani Pallasmaa suggests that 'the city of the gaze passivates the body and the other senses' (2005 [1999]: 142–3); and the design theorists Joy Malnar and Frank Vodvarka (2004) argue that a multisensory approach should inform design (see Pink 2007b).

Thus a sensory ethnography has certain congruences with the ethics of those who hope to make the world a better place, seeing greater sensorial awareness as a route to achieving this. This does not mean that the sensory ethnographer is necessarily one who cares more. It does nevertheless imply that in applied research attention to the senses can lead to an appreciation of what is important to others.

SUMMING UP

In this chapter I have examined practical and ethical aspects of a sensory ethnography. I have stressed that doing sensory ethnography is an approach

that leads researchers to understandings of a wide range of aspects of other people's lives and experiences, rather than simply involving a substantive focus on the senses. To develop this approach, ethnographers might incorporate into their preparation for research attention to the following: examining their own sensory subjectivity (from both cultural and personal perspectives); an awareness of how sensory experience might be associated with media use and communication; reviews of existing writings, films and other representations of sensory experience and practice relating to the people with whom they plan to research; and (in addition to existing discipline-specific and institutional ethical codes) the specific ethical and moral concerns that have been associated with sensorial understandings in existing literature.

RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING

Desjarlais, R. (2003) *Sensory Biographies: Lives and Death among Nepal's Yolmo Buddhists*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Geurts, K. L. (2002) *Culture and the Senses: Bodily Ways of Knowing in an African Community*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Hahn, T. (2006) '"It's the RUSH ... that's what drives you to do it" – sites of the sensually extreme', *The Drama Review: the Journal of Performance Studies* 50(2): 87–97.

Howes, D. (ed.) (1991) *The Varieties of Sensory Experience: A Sourcebook in the Anthropology of the Senses*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

PART II
SENSORY ETHNOGRAPHY IN PRACTICE

4
RE-SENSING PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION: Sensory Emplaced Learning

The idea that ethnographers might become sensorially engaged through their participation in the environments and practices they share with others is increasingly acknowledged in discussions of ethnographic methods. In this chapter I draw on examples from my own and other ethnographers' research experiences to propose a rethinking of participant observation with particular attention to the multisensory and emplaced aspects of other people's (and the researcher's own) experience. Thus the notion of ethnography as a participatory practice is framed with ideas of learning as embodied, emplaced, sensorial and empathetic, rather than occurring simply through a mix of participation and observation. In Chapter 2 I outlined Wenger's (1998: 141) notion of 'knowing in practice' and Ingold's understanding of the acquisition of skill through 'attentive engagement' (2000: 354). Following these principles involves rethinking the ideas of participation and observation. Participation might be understood as producing multisensorial and emplaced ways of knowing whereby visual observation is not necessarily privileged. Given the centrality of experience to this methodology, ethnographic knowledge production is an essentially reflexive process.

Two main views concerning the aims and method of the participant observer who attends to the senses are represented in the existing literature. The first is posed by Howes and Classen, for whom: 'If one's field research involves participant observation, then the question to be addressed is this: Which senses are emphasized or repressed, and by wh*at means and to which ends*?' (1991: 259, original italics). They suggest investigating this on the levels of both the particular and the general. The former would involve questions such as: 'Is there a lot of touching or very little? Is there much concern over body odours? What is the range of tastes in foods and where do the preferences tend to centre?' The latter would include asking: 'Does the repression of a particular sense of sensory expression correspond to the repression of a particular group within society?' and 'how does the sensory order relate to the social and symbolic order?' (Howes and

Classen 1991: 259). This earlier methodology, which is part of Howes and Classen's agenda to uncover the 'sensory profile' of the culture being studied, is also represented in some contemporary work, such as Atkinson, Delamont and Housley's (2007) classic approach to ethnography. Arguing for attention to the senses in participant observation, their focus is on how sensory phenomena are 'culturally significant', thus 'how they are meaningful to a given group or category of social actor' (2007: 180). They thus identify the task of the ethnographer as to 'make sense of ... sensory codes and to recognize them within broader analyses of social organization' (2007: 204). These classic approaches to participant observation are focused on understanding cultural and social systems, of values, organisation and more. While they are concerned with relevant elements of culture and society, they are limited by their lack of attention to the experiential aspects of doing ethnography. In the work of Atkinson, Delamont and Housley, for whom 'there is no doubt, however, that the visual is the most important mode of understanding' (2007: 180), this neglect of experience leads to a stress on visual observation. In contrast, taking a phenomenological approach, we can understand experience as multisensorial and as such *neither* dominated by *nor* reducible to a visual mode of understanding (see Ingold 2000; Grasseni 2007a).

The questions posed in classic approaches to participant observation often cover central areas of human practice, sociality, social organisation and more. They certainly should not necessarily be dismissed as irrelevant. Nevertheless, taking the questions they pose seriously should not preclude actively engaging with the methodological strand which understands participation in sensory ethnography as a process of learning through the ethnographer's own multisensory, emplaced experiences. This approach means going further than interviewing and observing to entail what Okely describes as drawing 'on knowledge beyond language', where knowledge is 'embodied through sight, taste, sound, touch and smell' and '[b]odily movement, its vigour, stillness or unsteadiness ... [is] ... absorbed' (1994: 45). For Stoller, this begs that 'ethnographers open themselves up to others and absorb their worlds'. Indeed, he stresses how ethnographers can 'be consumed by the sensual world' (1997: 23). This approach involves not only ethnographers seeking out ways to share others' experiences, but also their situating their experiences within other people's places – or put another way, learning how to recognise their own emplacement in other people's worlds. Understood through a theory of place, the idea of ethnographer-participation implies that the ethnographer is co-participating in practices through which place is constituted with those who simultaneously participate in her or his research, and as such might become similarly emplaced. Indeed, she or he becomes at the same time a constituent of place (one of those things brought together through, or entangled in, a place-event) and an agent in its production.

This approach is in some ways akin to auto-ethnography, a method that allows ethnographers to use their own experiences as a route through which to produce academic knowledge. For instance, Hockey has used auto-ethnography to examine the sensoriality of the 'routine activity' of training in long-distance running. Hockey argues that in the case of his research: 'For the author and his co-researcher who wished to portray the relationship between the distance running "mind" (emotions, sensations, knowledge) and its embodied activity, [auto-ethnography] constituted the best means of accessing and depicting that relationship' (2006: 184). While such closeness to the

experiences one is seeking to understand might not always be possible, methods that require the ethnographer to draw on the similarities and continuities between her or his own experiences and those of others can lead to understandings of how it feels to be emplaced in particular ways. Thus the sensory ethnographer would not only observe and document other people's sensory categories and behaviours, but seek routes through which to develop experience-based empathetic understandings of what others might be experiencing and knowing.

Okely, who reflects on her research about 'the changing conditions and experience of the aged in rural France' (1994: 44), has shown how, through active participation, one can also find routes to knowledge and memories perhaps otherwise inaccessible. Okely used her contemporary sensory experiences as a way of understanding other people's biographical experiences. Through her experiences in environments similar to those in which her elderly research participants would have lived, worked and celebrated in the past, she found ways to 'create correspondences' with *their* past experiences and her own embodied experience. She writes: 'my residence in the villages, and work on a small farm similar to those the aged had once known, gave embodied knowledge of something of their past' (1994: 44). This was a two-way process. Okely not only learned something of the sensoriality of the aged's past experiences, but, having learnt in this way, provided a way for her ageing research participants to remember their own pasts and empathise with her experiences (1994: 45–6).

The scholars whose work I discuss in this chapter have variously been guided by either classic observational approaches or experiential methodologies. While a classic participant observer approach to other people's sensory experiences alone is limiting, as the discussions demonstrate it can provide useful insights. The methods and approaches of conventional participant observation benefit from being combined with the reflexive and emplaced methodology proposed in this book, and disassociated from the idea that vision is necessarily the dominant sense. In the following sections I discuss a set of themes and issues that form the basis of the 'participant sensing' of the sensory ethnographer.

THE SERENDIPITOUS SENSORY LEARNING OF 'BEING THERE'

In Chapter 3 I pointed out that often moments of sensory learning are not necessarily planned processes through which a particular research question is pursued in a structured way as it might be in the context of a survey or even a semi-structured interview. Rather, these are often unplanned instances whereby the researcher arrives at an understanding of other people's memories and meanings through their own embodied experiences and/or attending to other people's practices, subjectivities and explanations.

Long-term ethnographic research of the 'classic' kind that has dominated social anthropology (particularly in the past) provides researchers with some significant luxuries. It means they are able both to follow through the sensory routines and rhythms of life as lived on a daily, monthly and even annual basis and to follow through a sensory hint, hunch or moment of realisation by waiting to see how, over time, this occurrence or experience fits in and thus might be comprehended in relation to other

elements of knowing, yet to be experienced or understood. Donald Tuzin's discussion of his research with the Ilahita Araesh people of East Sepik Province in Papua New Guinea is a good example of how ethnographers might, by attending to an initial cue, piece together sensory meanings. Tuzin writes of how the 'first inkling that the people with whom I lived had (what by western standards must be) an exaggerated olfactory aesthetic, occurred early during my fieldwork' (2006: 62). During his fieldwork, Tuzin's cat had had kittens and when removing the family of cats from its original birthplace in his book box, he had accidentally left one kitten behind, only to discover its decomposing body a few days later. His local assistant was horrified by Tuzin's request that he dispose of the body. Evidently using his own sense of smell as a comparative measure, he noted that 'the stench seemed hardly sufficient to incapacitate' the assistant (2006: 62). It was at this point that he realised that smell held a particular significance for the Arapesh. This meaning unfolded during his ethnography and Tuzin provides a detailed discussion of how smell is implicated in a number of domains of Arapesh life. Significantly, he concludes that 'olfaction in Ilahita is the vehicle and vocabulary of moral reckoning'. There, 'One's moral character is formed by smells taken into the body, while the unavoidable constancy of inspiration means that one is always vulnerable to unwelcome changes in that character and in the existential contours of life itself' (2006: 66), thus explaining why his assistant had been so horrified by the idea of the smell of the dead kitten.

Long-term fieldwork also enables ethnographers to live in the same environment as their research participants, experiencing the sensory rhythms and material practices of that environment. The benefits of this are demonstrated clearly in Erik Cohen's (2006 [1988]) analysis of the olfactory context of 'the slum areas of a *soi* (lane) in Bangkok [Thailand]' where he 'lived for extensive periods of time between 1981 and 1984' (2006 [1988]: 120). Cohen's analysis unravels why these *soi* residents paid great attention to avoiding and morally judging body odours while they appeared oblivious to what Cohen describes as the 'stench of disintegrating refuse' in the *soi* (2006 [1988]: 120); like Tuzin (2006, discussed above) using his own sensory reactions and categories as a point of comparison. Based on his experience of living in one area, Cohen is able to report on the routines and cycles of garbage accumulation and removal, its smell (as he experienced it) and the activities that people engaged in adding cooking and food smells. Because local people did not complain about these odours, he concludes that they did not find such smells that 'are not of human origin' offensive. Contrasting this with the meticulous attention that the same people paid to their own and other people's body odour, Cohen raises the question of why they were so unconcerned with what he refers to as the 'stench' in the *soi*. His explanation, however, relies on his knowledge of another Thai environment. Cohen explains that most *soi* residents were migrants from rural Thailand where garbage is usually left to rot, burned, or used as fertilizer in the household compound (2006 [1988]: 122). Thus it decomposes as part of a normal cycle. In contrast, in the urban *soi* this ecological cycle is 'broken' (2006 [1988]: 125). He suggests that consequently there is a 'cultural lag' through which 'the stench of disintegrating garbage has not yet acquired a negative cultural connotation for the slum dwellers' (2006 [1988]: 125). Such insights about sensory meanings clearly depend on long-term engagements in specific cultural and environmental contexts. Those ethnographers who are able to relocate for sufficient time to benefit from the

possibility of undertaking comparative research will thus learn much from attending to how sensory understanding might be embedded in long-term routines and processes. It is clear from Tuzin's (2006) and Cohen's (2006 [1988]) discussions that they both used their own sensory experiences and reactions as a point of comparison with those of the people participating in their research. In doing so they take as analytical foci other people's sensory experiences and categories, and how these might be understood in relation to culturally specific moralities.

These classic approaches can be contrasted with more recent ethnographic practice which concentrates increasingly on the sensory and embodied nature of the ethnographer's own experience and demonstrates the essential contribution this can make to ethnographic understanding. Indeed, such practices reveal a further dimension to how the ethnographer's being there can produce knowledge. A good example is provided by the work of Edvardsson and Street (2007), developed in a health-care setting. In their discussion of the nurse-ethnographer as a 'sensate' researcher, Edvardsson and Street outline what they refer to as a series of 'epiphanies' that occurred while Edvardsson was doing research about how different environments affect ways of provision and an understanding of care. They define these epiphanies as 'sudden intuitive realizations that the use of his [the researcher's] senses in these environments was gradually changing the way he asked questions and conducted observations' (2007: 26). Edvardsson and Street describe six of these moments of realisation, each connected to different types of sensory experience: movement, sounds, smell, taste, touch and sight. As an example, here I briefly relate their discussion of walking – a theme that will be taken up again below. They write:

> While being at the ward as a participating observer, DE found that he instinctively joined in the brisk pace habitually used by the nurses as they moved around at the unit. ... He found that the brisk movement and sound of the hurried steps of staff prompted the sensation of wanting to move with the pace of the unit. ... [This] led him to understand they way that corridors where used in these units as spaces for passage and not for lingering or chance encounters. ... This epiphany stimulated his curiosity to explore further how people moved around the unit and what this movement might mean. (Edvardsson and Street 2007: 26)

Such forms of ethnographic learning are characteristic of 'participant sensing', where the ethnographer often simultaneously undergoes a series of unplanned everyday life experiences and is concerned with purposefully joining in with whatever is going on in order to become further involved in the practices of the research participants. When we participate in other people's worlds we often try to do things similar to those that they do (although we might not fully achieve this) or play roles in the events, activities or daily routines that they invite us to participate in. Such forms of participation do nevertheless usually involve us also participating in some 'ordinary' everyday practices, including eating, drinking, walking or other forms of movement or mobility that our research participants are also engaged in. This relates to participation in both actual practices and more generally participation through 'being there' in a shared physical environment.

In other circumstances, where long-term relocation of the researcher is not possible, ethnographers might learn by participating sporadically in events. For example, my

FIGURE 4.1 The Cittàslow Cake at the Diss Community Development partnership event, May 2007. As part of my participation in the event I laid out the biscuits on the plate and cut the cake around the snail logo to preserve this visual symbol during the event. I also participated in eating this food and in drinking the locally ground coffee served at the event. Photo © Sarah Pink 2007.

own research about the Cittàslow movement is multi-sited – spread across several British towns – and involves a series of return visits either to encounter specific individuals, activities or special events. In 2007 I attended a Community Partnership event organised in Diss, a Cittàslow town in Norfolk (England). Here I helped to lay out the food to be offered to visitors, including cutting the Cittàslow cake (Figure 4.1) and arranging the snail symbol biscuits, as well as helping to eat and hand out the food to visitors and passers-by later in the day. That food was central to this event was not surprising for two reasons: first, because food is often part of celebratory activities; and second, because food (with a focus on local produce and commensality) is a key theme in the work of Cittàslow, which is manifested in its close relationship to the Slow Food movement. Below I explain how, as an ethnographer, I was able to make my food and drink-related sensory experiences at the event meaningful both in terms of the Slow principles that were part of the event itself and in academic terms.

My experiences of handling, cutting, laying out and eating the food at this event were part of a wider complex of activities and experiences I was involved in. I also undertook some short interviews, photography and generally helped out where I could during the day. However, for the sensory ethnographer it is important to attend to the meanings of tastes, smells and textures and the significance of their presence. For instance, the cake was accompanied by freshly brewed coffee supplied by one of the local small shops that the Cittàslow movement strives to nurture. The striking aroma of the coffee itself signified its 'quality' and participating in its appreciation could be seen as a way of also participating in the articulation of the values

of the Slow Food movement as outlined by Petrini, its leader, who stresses that to be regarded as 'quality' food should be 'good, clean and fair' (Petrini 2007: 93). I was reminded of this still later as I did some shopping in the town and smelled the odour of fresh coffee coming from the doorway of the shop. At this Community Partnership event I thus found myself participating in the practices of the Cittàslow movement, while also producing ethnographic materials for my research. I was able to theorise how the visual, olfactory and gustatory effects of the foods and drinks in the hall formed part of the processes through which a place-event was constituted. The hall was transformed multisensorially through these practical engagements with Cittàslow principles. Analysed through modern western sensory categories, this could be said to happen visually (through stands and displays as well as the visualisations of the Cittàslow snail on the cake and biscuits), through olfaction (for example, through the smell of the coffee) and through tastes and textures (of the local produce and locally made foods on offer), thus offering visitors an embodied experience framed by Cittàslow principles. Situated as such, visitors to the event became emplaced, albeit temporarily, and participated in an environment both purposefully framed by Cittàslow's discourses and in which the movement's aims were explicitly verbalised in printed materials. Nevertheless, this sensory research experience alone was not enough. To make it meaningful as ethnographic knowledge involved my connecting my own experiences with the principles of slow living outlined in the texts produced by the movement's leaders, and theoretical understandings.

Collectively, the case studies discussed in this section demonstrate how attention to our own, and other people's, unanticipated sensory embodied, or emplaced, experiences can lead researchers to new routes to understanding. This might mean the ability to make connections with others and their experiences, or it may raise questions about the meaning of actions of others that create deliberate sensory effects, and can invite researchers to analyse from new perspectives what might, on the surface, seem to be standard and often familiar everyday practices.

THE ETHNOGRAPHER AS SENSORY APPRENTICE

The idea of the ethnographer playing a role of apprentice who learns about another culture by engaging and learning first-hand the practices and routines of local people has long since been part of the idea of participant observation. Greg Downey notes how, among others, 'Esther Goody (1989: 254-255) and Michael Coy (1989: 2) both suggest that apprenticeship is not only an excellent way to learn a skill: it is also an ideal way to *learn about* it, and to *learn how one learns*' (Downey 2005: 53, original italics). With more specific relevance to a sensory ethnography, Grasseni has argued that 'The call for "sensuality" in anthropological scholarship should ... contain recommendations to maintain close attention and discernment of the actual techniques and apprenticeships thanks to which embodied knowledge emerges' (2004b: 53). Harris has likewise drawn on a notion of apprenticeship to suggests that 'a "way of knowing" is the movement of a person from one context to another' and 'a path to knowledge in terms of an apprenticeship' which involves 'work, experience and time' (2007b: 1). As these and other ethnographers have come to focus more closely on the senses, the

idea of the ethnographer-apprentice learning to know as others know through embodied practice has become firmly embedded in existing literature. This focus has developed in tandem with a theoretical investigation of questions concerning learning and knowledge transmission (see Chapter 2).

Connections between the idea of a 'sensory scholarship' and the ethnographer as apprentice were introduced in the 1990s through Paul Stoller's excellent discussion of his own apprenticeship in Songhay (in Niger) sorcery, which is 'learnt through the body' (Stoller 1997: 14). In an essay entitled 'The Sorcerer's Body', Stoller describes how, having previously begun to learn about sorcery, when he returned to Niger for a research trip he became ill and was advised by several local people to return home. They told him he had been the victim of sorcery, since, as Stoller explains, once someone has, as he had, even 'taken only a few steps along sorcery's path' they are likely to be attacked by other sorcerers. The form of attack in this case was that sickness had been sent to him and he had been insufficiently protected to resist it. Stoller describes how once he had become an apprentice sorcerer he had joined a world where 'the sentient body is the arena of power' (Stoller 1997: 12–13). Stoller describes part of the sensorial experience of illness as follows: 'My head throbbed. In the morning I took a few more chloroquine tablets, but my condition didn't change. By the next day my eyes blazed with fever, I took two more chloroquine tablets. By noon my body was incandescent with fever' (1997: 10–11). He was diagnosed with Malaria. However, understood through the prism of Songhay sorcery rather than western biomedicine, as Stoller's discussion reveals, his illness can be understood as being embedded in a complex of local relationships and rivalries, in which he was also implicated.

More recently, the idea of a sensory apprenticeship has been developed further both theoretically and practically. Ingold has argued that technical skills are transmitted not through 'genetic replication' but through '*systems of apprenticeship*, constituted by the relationships between more and less experienced practitioners in hands-on contexts of activity' (2000: 37, original italics). Ingold gives the example of the 'novice hunter' who 'learns by accompanying more experienced hands in the woods'. Such a learning process would be as follows: 'As he goes about, he is instructed in what to look out for, and his attention is drawn to subtle clues that he might otherwise fail to notice. ... For example, he learns to register those qualities of surface texture that enable one to tell, merely from touch, how long ago an animal left its imprint in the snow, and how fast it was travelling' (2000: 37). This form of apprenticeship involves learning how to sense one's environment in a culturally specific way. However, Ingold insists the form of learning that occurs when the novice hunter becomes an apprentice should be understood as an 'education of attention'. Thus, drawing from Lave's (1990) work, he argues that culture cannot simply be transmitted to the apprentice, but rather 'the instructions the novice hunter receives – to watch out for this, attend to that, and so on – only take on meaning in the context of his engagement with the environment' (Ingold 2000: 37). Ingold's ideas have implications for the idea of the ethnographer as sensory apprentice: it is through actually engaging in the activities and environments we wish to learn about that we come to know them. On the basis of such participation, the ethnographer then has to unravel the academic implications of such learning and of the ways of knowing she or he has experienced.

Grasseni, following a similar analytical path to that set by Ingold, has discussed how she learnt about cattle through a 'master–apprentice' relationship with a high-ranking Italian cattle expert during her fieldwork with dairy breeders in the Italian Alps (2004b: 43). Grasseni describes the 'skilled vision' of the breeder as 'never detached from a certain amount of multisensoriality – especially from tactility' (2004b: 41). She followed the inspector as he toured cattle sheds collecting data on the cattle, describing how 'He positively directed my attention, with the aim of getting me to learn to see like he did, so that we could agree in our judgement of a cow' (2004b: 43–4). Learning to see was a long process. Grasseni relates that it was after touring around 50 stables accompanying a breed inspector, that she could identify, for instance, 'the "superior" look of my host's herd, of which they were particularly proud' (2004b: 45). She argues that on having learnt to see in this way one has 'access to a different quality of attention' and 'perceptive hue'. This way of seeing becomes a 'permanent sediment, an embodied way of accessing the world and of managing it – in other words an identity' (2004b: 45). To conceptualise how the ethnographer learns in this way through apprenticeship, Grasseni draws on her experiences to propose that 'Through participation in a practice, one eventually achieves flexibility, resonance with other practitioners and an attunement of the senses' (2004b: 53).

As other recent studies demonstrate, vision is not the only sensory practice that might be understood as a skill to be learnt through apprenticeship. Doing research about sound in a hospital setting, Tom Rice describes his methodology as '"stethoscopic" in itself' (personal communication). Learning to use the stethoscope became a part of his research. It facilitated his relationships with others, as he suggests 'Perhaps I could let the stethoscope provide a means of bringing me into contact with people? It would be a novel way of making connections' (Rice, personal communication). Rice describes one of the aspects of this methodology as learning 'to hear as doctor would myself'. As he puts it: 'I wanted to be able to hear with the doctors ears, and realised that training in auscultation would bring me closer to inhabiting the perceptual world of the doctor' (personal communication). In taking this approach, Rice moves beyond existing approaches to listening in ethnography. These, he notes, are exemplified in Clifford's (1986) focus on the multi-vocality of texts and Anthony Cohen and Nigel Rapport's (1995) treatment of the 'ethnographic ear', whereby speech is considered 'the expression of the speaker's consciousness' (Rice 2006). Instead, in common with the ethnographers whose work is discussed above, Rice writes: 'I anchor my fieldwork in the "apprenticeship" of student', in this case through 'his practical acquisition of listening skills'. The benefit of this 'Participant observation in "learning the ear"' was to enable Rice 'to understand how auditory knowledge was applied, reproduced and disseminated in the medical setting through gaining a grasp on the embodied nature of medical skill' (Rice 2006).

Greg Downey similarly acknowledges the role of 'the apprenticeship of hearing' in training for the art of capoeira (2005: 100), in this case suggesting that 'music can be a medium for educating the senses' (2005: 101). Brazilian Capoeira is 'an Afro-Brazilian art that combines dance, sport, and martial art' (2005: 7) and Downey's research was based partly in his own training in capoeira between 1992 and 2000 (2005: xi). His work demonstrates particularly well the embodied nature of physical fieldwork engagements, describing how his physical self was changed through this

training, in that: 'My muscles strengthened and stretched, I lost weight, and distinctive calluses formed on my palms, just below my middle finger.' (2005: 25). Thus Downey emphasises the relationship between the body and the senses in such apprenticeship since 'learning a physical skill requires that one develop both the necessary body techniques, robust and modifiable, and the sensory skills they depend on' (2005: 28). Learning to sense and make meanings as others do thus involves us not simply observing what they do, but learning how to use all our senses and to participate in *their* worlds, on the terms of their embodied understandings.

In some ethnographic projects researchers might find the step between becoming a participant in other people's ways of sensing the world and then analysing their practices and values to be relatively unhindered. However, Hahn, whose research also involved a form of apprenticeship, draws from her experiences to stress some of the difficulties of studying 'transmission' or 'the physical internalization of aesthetic practices' for the participant observer (2007: 59). Hahn's research involved her learning Japanese dance in the context of the relationship between herself the student and her dance teacher (2007: 67). She notes how 'as the practice unfolds a myriad of cultural patterns, these patterns become physically internalized and often seem less accessible on a conscious level' (2007: 59). However, as Hahn's analysis shows, she was able to interpret the sensory embodied experience of Japanese dance, and the learning process she was studying, first, in relation to the Japanese philosophy and aesthetics that informs it and, second, in terms of academic analysis *as* a transmission process.

Although, of course, there are variations in detail and across projects, this pattern of analysis should by now start to sound familiar to the reader: in my own research I interpreted my olfactory experiences in relation to the principles of the Slow Food movement; Stoller (1997) interpreted his sensory embodied experiences of illness through the prism of Songhay sorcery while showing that an alternative explanation was also offered by modern western biomedicine; Grasseni (2004b) understood the 'skilled vision' she learnt from the cattle breed inspector through the 'standards' of that particular 'community of practice'; and Hahn's (2007) experience of dance could be rendered meaningful through Japanese philosophy. Emplaced knowing is inevitably involved with, and thus open (in Massey's 2005 sense of the term) to, discourses that extend beyond the direct immediacy of actual practice.

Learning through apprenticeship requires an emplaced engagement with the practices and identities that one seeks to understand. This involves a reflexivity and self-consciousness about this learning process, establishing connections between sensory experience, specific sensory categories and philosophical, moral and other value-laden discourses (and the power relations and political processes to which they might be connected), and creating relationships between these and theoretical scholarship.

INTENTIONALLY JOINING OTHERS IN (NEAR) UNIVERSAL EMBODIED ACTIVITIES

The previous section focused on the idea of the ethnographer as apprentice. An apprentice usually works in close relation to a teacher in order to learn specialised skills. The apprentice thus takes on the ways of knowing and identities associated with this

skill. In this section I continue the discussion of how ethnographers learn through participation with a different focus, by concentrating on their engagements in the more common-place activities of eating and walking. Other everyday practices could be discussed in a similar way – such as talking, sitting, or cooking. I focus on eating and walking here because there are rich, albeit emergent, literatures on both these topics that have already started to illustrate the benefits of sharing such practices and experiences with research participants. The insights from these works might be transferred to imply the benefits of applying a similar approach to other practices of everyday life.

Eating Together or Commensality

Along with a general increasing academic interest in food, questions concerning the meanings of the tastes, textures, sights and smells of foods and the experience of sharing meals are becoming increasingly prevalent in the work of social scientists (e.g. Stoller 1989; Okely 1994; Seremetakis 1994; Sutton 2001; Law 2005; Walmsley 2005). Stoller's well-known example of how he was given a 'tasteless' or bad tasting sauce to eat during a research trip to Niger provides an insightful starting point. By situating the taste in relation to his understanding of the culture and the specific social relations in which the cook was living, Stoller interprets the sauce's taste as an expression of the cook's frustrations with her situation (Stoller 1989: 15–34). The practice of eating food prepared by people with whom one is doing research (or preparing food with and for them) is an obvious way to participate in their everyday lives. But in order to understand the tastes and meanings of different dishes and foodstuffs one needs to do more than simply eat and drink. Seremetakis has defined commensality '*as the exchange of sensory memories and emotions, and of substances and objects incarnating remembrance and feeling*' (1994: 37, original italics). This approach means going beyond the idea of commensality as simply 'the social organization of food and drink consumption and the rules that enforce social institutions at the level of consumption' (1994: 37). Indeed, it begs the ethnographer's own participation in eating with others and her or his engagement with eating as a way of knowing and remembering. Moreover, it requires a form of reflexivity that will allow her or him to acknowledge and communicate gustatory knowledge academically.

To demonstrate how food substances might be both shared and invested with memory, Seremetakis evocatively outlines examples of Greek food practices. For instance, she describes how the Greek grandmother would 'cook' a baby's food in her mouth using her own saliva: 'She takes a piece of crustless bread ... crumbles it with her fingers and puts a few crumbs in her toothless mouth. The tongue, rotating, moistens the bread with saliva till it becomes a paste, "clay." She molds the bread till its texture signals that it is ready for the child' and then places it in the child's mouth (1994: 26). Seremetakis suggests that 'the food is not only cooked by saliva, but also by emotions and memory'. In her interpretation, 'Cooking food in grandma's mouth with saliva imprints memory on the substance internalized by the child', leading her to assert that 'Memory is stored in substances that are shared, just as substances are stored in social memory which is sensory' (1994: 28). This relationship between food its tastes and textures and memory is significant to the sensory ethnographer in two ways. First, if

we are seeking to understand other people's memories, sharing the tastes in which these memories are embedded might serve as a starting point for this task. Second, taste memories form part of all of our biographies. Therefore, attending to gustatory memory is relevant for understanding not only how other people make memories and meanings through food-related practices, but also for the reflexivity that is integral to a sensory ethnography. As ethnographers, we are bound to interpret new taste experiences through comparison with our existing gustatory repertoires *in relation with* any instructions and verbal or other knowledge about these foods and tastes suggested to us by people with whom we eating, drinking and doing research.

The significance of my own biographical experiences emerged clearly to me one December morning as I sat drinking a cup of half-milk coffee in a temporary café set up in a Town Hall function room in Mold, the first Welsh town to become a Cittàslow member (see also Pink 2008b). As a child I had drunk half-milk coffee, made from instant coffee granules dissolved in a cup of hot milk combined with hot water. This is different from the other practice of boiling a kettle of hot water which is poured on to the instant coffee before milk is later added. I remembered us taking half-milk coffee on family picnics, kept warm in a flask – as the coffee I was served that day in the temporary café had been. Now living a life where instant coffee is much less mainstream and many cafés offer 'real' Italian-style coffees, retasting this coffee led me to two sets of insight. It evoked memories of picnics, the rug, the flask, and my own past. But as a comparative example it gave me a sense of something rather British that had been superseded by Italian-style coffees in many public spaces. By attending to this taste, linking it to my own biography and considering it comparatively, I was able to grasp what it was about the temporary café that led me to understand it through its cultural specificity. It was not simply the sociality of the context where local people could meet and have a drink, biscuit and chat. Rather, it was the practices by which the coffee was prepared, the way it was described as 'half-milk', its being served from the flask and its very taste that together facilitated that understanding. I was drawing from my own taste experiences in Britain to create a comparison. Our biographical taste experiences inevitably inform how, as ethnographers, we might interpret current ones.

Eating with others during their special or celebratory events might also bring to the fore the importance of food practices and specific tastes. For example, the geographer Lisa Law (2005) discusses her experiences of participating in Sunday meals in Hong Kong held by Filipino women domestic workers. Sunday was the women's weekly day off and they tended to spend it in a part of the city referred to as Little Manilla due to its occupation and transformation through the presence of Filipino migrant workers on this one day of the week. As part of her discussion, Law describes a birthday meal she attended, held outdoors, at which they consumed Filipino dishes rather than the Chinese food the women tended to eat with the families they worked for during the week. She writes:

> We were all provided with a paper plate and chopsticks and helped ourselves to the food. About halfway through the meal, however, I noticed that the chopsticks were quickly being replaced by thin plastic gloves that Deenah [the host] had also brought along. Deenah looked at me and queried 'You like?' Asserting my own cultural capital, I abandoned my clumsy attempts at chopstick etiquette and opted for these more pliable eating utensils. (Law 2005: 234)

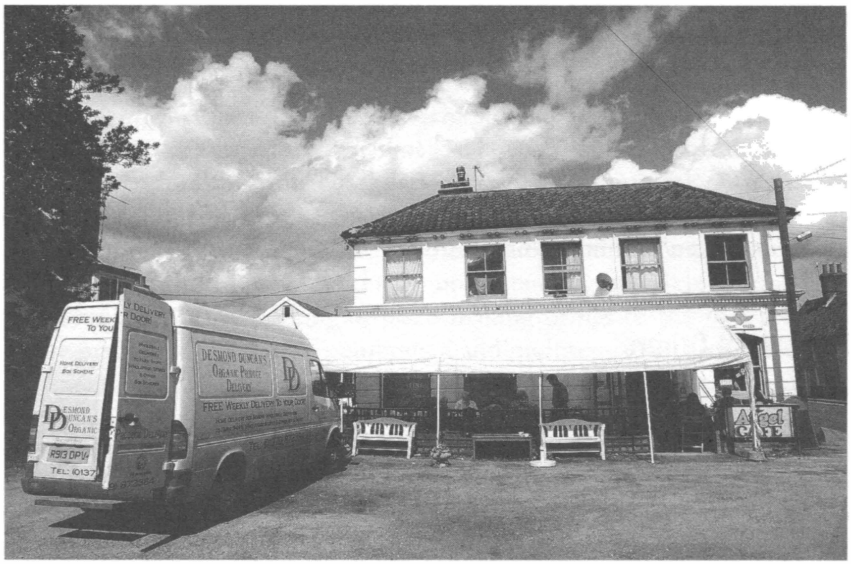

FIGURE 4.2 The Slow Food Brunch organised by the Waveney Valley Slow Food convivium. Held at the Angel Café on Fair Green in Diss (Norfolk, UK), the Slow Food Brunch was based on local organic produce delivered in the van on the left. The brunch offered a 'taste' of the sorts of social and sensory experiences that could be part of a local food network. As we arrived, the participants rearranged the seating from smaller settings into one long table, and as we ate local produce and spoke, we created a form of sensory sociality that contrasted with mass-production and individualised forms of consumption that often characterise contemporary modern western lifestyles. Photo © Sarah Pink 2006.

Law explains that Filipinos enjoy eating with their hands, but use the gloves because there are few places for washing their hands or utensils in Hong Kong's parks. In a context where few of the women ate Filipino food during the week, as they lived with Chinese families in Hong Kong, Law interprets their exchanging the chopsticks for the gloves as 'a moment of casting off Chinese customs to enjoy the *taste, aroma and texture* of home' (2005: 234, original italics).

As part of my own research about the Slow City movement, I have also eaten at several 'slow' meals with research participants, including celebratory Slow breakfasts and lunches (see Figure 4.2) (although the movement also holds other culinary events). I have attended the 'Big Slow Breakfast' held annually in Aylsham (Norfolk, England) twice. The breakfast is highly significant because it was first held in 2004 as an inaugural event to commemorate the town's acceptance as a member of Cittàslow. At the breakfast (which usually feeds 150 people in two sittings) local produce cooked by Slow Food members is served at long tables that engender forms of sociality that are consistent with the movement's commitment to the idea of the 'shared table' (see Parkins and Craig 2006: 113). The breakfast is thus conspicuously a memory event, but also one through which the movement's principles can be lived through the sensory sociality of the shared table – a table also shared by the ethnographer.

In different contexts we learn different things by eating with others. However, since the tastes people enjoy or dislike and the memories that are related to them are so inseparable from processes through which self-identities are constituted in the present, it is always likely that an ethnographer will learn *something* by sharing a meal with others. Thus sensory ethnographers can benefit from being attentive to the possibility of learning through the sensory sociality of eating with others, and recognising how the sharing of tastes, textures, eating practices and routines can bring otherwise unspoken meanings to the fore.

Walking With Others

The idea that walking with others – sharing their step, style and rhythm – creates an affinity, empathy or sense of belonging with them has long since been acknowledged by ethnographers. Examples of how ethnographers have walked or ran in harmony with research participants are found in some classic ethnographies of the twentieth century. For example, in his monograph *The Forest People* (1961), Colin Turnbull describes how his ability to walk through the forest in a way that corresponded with that practised by the Mbuti Pygmies could be understood in relation to their approval and acceptance of him (Turnbull 1961: 75-6). Likewise, Lee and Ingold highlight how in his *Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), Clifford Geertz describes how his having run away from a police raid on a cockfight *with* the local people changed his relationship with the villagers by enabling him to participate in their everyday lives (Lee and Ingold 2006: 67). More recently, both a more systematic interrogation of the role of walking in ethnography and a focus on the ethnography of walking have been developed (e.g. Ingold and Lee Vergunst 2008). This work, moreover, recognises the multisensoriality of walking.

In this section I explore how walking has been used in ethnographic practice. Above I have already noted uses of walking in the work of Edvardsson and Street (2007). In Chapter 7 I discuss the idea of walking with video and in Chapter 8 I reflect on the possibilities of walking in ethnographic representation. Before proceeding, however, this theme should be situated through two points. First, walking is not the only form of mobility that ethnographers can share with research participants. In fact, when working with people with disabilities and impairments walking may not be an appropriate form of mobility to share (Pink 2008e). In other cases, forms of (technologically mediated) mobility may present alternative forms of participation, through, for example, climbing (e.g. Lund 2005) or cycling (e.g. Spinney 2007). Second, a walking with others method should also entail a commitment to self-reflexivity. Just as our experiences of eating the same foods as others will always be subject to comparisons from our own biographies, the routes we walk and walking rhythms we share with others will always be shaded by the steps we have taken in the past.

Nevertheless, a focus on walking is instructive for two reasons: first, because a literature is developing around the possibilities of walking with others as a research methodology; second, because walking is a near-universal multisensorial activity that most ethnographers will engage in with their research participants, albeit only

for a few metres or a couple of steps, at some point in their research. Lee and Ingold's essay 'Fieldwork on foot: perceiving, routing, socializing' (2006, and see also Ingold and Lee Vergunst 2008) is a key starting point for any ethnographer interested in walking as a sensory ethnography methodology. Lee and Ingold outline both a 'series of resonances between walking and anthropological fieldwork', and discuss their experiences of fieldwork which 'involved participant observation in the form of sharing walks with a variety of people' (2006: 68). Of particular interest for the discussion here is their emphasis on 'the sociability that is engendered by walking *with* others' (original italics), and their understanding of walking routes as a form of place-making. Seeing walking as place-making brings to the fore the idea that places are made through people's embodied and multisensorial participation in their environments. In Lee and Ingold's understanding of the sociality of walking, the body and the senses are equally important. Referring back to Geertz's (1973) experiences (and as is also shown in Turnbull's (1961) commentary), they assert that 'Sharing or creating a walking rhythm with other people can lead to a very particular closeness and bond between the people involved' (2006: 69). Examples from their ethnography likewise show how shared walking produces 'closeness', demonstrating how 'social interaction during walking is a full bodily experience'. This, they point out, has implications for ethnographic practice in which 'This physical co-presence, emphasised by common movements, is also important ... as we attempt to live and move as others do' (2006: 69). Therefore, among other things, Lee and Ingold's approach opens up the possibility of seeing walking with others as a sensory ethnography method. It can bring ethnographers 'close' to the research participants with whom they share rhythms and routes, and can allow ethnographers to participate in the place-making practices of the people whose worlds they are learning about. Good examples of this are developed in the work of Katrín Lund, who has participated in both hill-walking in Scotland and in festive processions in Spain as part of her ethnographic research. Describing her experiences of hill-walking and climbing with a group of mountaineers in Scotland, Lund sees walking as 'a bodily movement that not only connects the body to the ground but also includes different postures, speeds and rhythms ... [that] ... shape the tactile interactions between the moving body and the ground, and play a fundamental part in how the surroundings are sensually experienced' (Lund 2005: 28). At the beginning of her (2005) article, Lund's descriptions of her own embodied experiences of hill-walking provide an entrance point into her discussion of the relationship between touch and vision in the way the moving body perceives its environment. This experience provides an important context through which the reader of Lund's article can understand the quotations from her research participants' discussions of their experiences later in the article. By walking with someone, it is thus possible to learn to inhabit a similar place to them, although, as I have pointed out for any 'shared' experience, here again similarity does not mean sameness. This impossibility is often recognised in existing writing (e.g. Okely 1994; Downey 2005). Thus while Lund (2005) does not describe the actual embodied experiences of the research participants, her descriptions of her own experiences offer us a route through which to imagine what such experiences would be like. In another publication, drawing on her research in southern Spain, Lund demonstrates how walking with others might

produce understandings of festive events through her discussion of an Andalusian religious procession. Here Lund's varying forms of participation and involvement in the event allowed her to understand its local significance. She suggests that '... in order to understand what is produced through and meant by the activity of walking with the patron saint, one needs to locate oneself within the ritual by taking part in the walking'. She continues, stressing the sensorial and corporeal aspects of this, to point out that: 'For participants in the performance, authenticity cannot be seen, but is imprinted in the sonic rhythm of synchronised movements' (Lund 2008: 97). By emphasising the experiential dimensions of both ethnographic practice and local ways of knowing, Lund's work shows how walking with others can bring ethnographers closer to the sensory and affective dimensions of other people's everyday, leisure or festive practices.

I have also developed ways of participating by walking with others and walking routes created by others. However, in contrast to those studies cited above, this has involved walking routes that have already been self-consciously created by others with the purpose of 'showing' an urban environment to an audience. As part of my fieldwork in the Cittàslow town, Diss, in Norfolk (UK), I have participated in locally designed walks around the town. One route involved my participating in a guided 'history walk' in the town with a group of others during the town's History Festival. With a group of walkers, including Bas, the local historian, I was led along a route that introduced me to buildings, historic carvings and pathways. Like the experiences described by Lee and Ingold (2006) and Lund (2006, 2008) this was a multisensorial event. We toured the town on foot, navigating its different surfaces at the same time as attending to the verbal commentary of our guide, the changing weather (we thought it might rain) and the visual and material environment that we were instructed (how to) see. In particular, we were invited to look at buildings, carvings, and more and to *see* their significance. For example, when we visited the church I initially looked at the windows admiring their patterns and colour. But it was when I was told what to look for that I learnt about their special characteristics, including words inscribed on them, possibly by the craftsmen who were involved in building the church. By participating in the history walk I had set myself the task of engaging with local 'ways of seeing' (Berger 1972) features of buildings that I would otherwise have looked at differently. However, I was not only seeing, but I was seeing in step with others, and as part of a route that had been predesigned. As we walked, we listened and looked – the narrative of the walk depended on the idea of learning about the town in movement.

In ethnographic practice where walking is intentionally used as a research method, other ethnographers have used walking methods that emphasise sound (although not to the exclusion of vision), inviting their participants to engage with aural environments while walking. Mags Adams and Neil Bruce have identified two research uses of the soundwalk. They describe how 'some have used it as a means through which the researcher immerses themselves into the urban soundscape while others have used it as a way of engaging others in to the practice of listening to and describing the city' (Adams and Bruce 2008: 553). Their own method entailed the researcher accompanying participants during urban soundwalks which followed a set route around Manchester. Adams and Bruce describe how, following

a brief interview, 'The soundwalk was conducted in silence and participants were asked to concentrate on what they could hear as they walked and to look at the urban environments they passed through ... in order to make connections between what they could see and what they could hear' (Adams and Bruce 2008: 556). However, during this process, the interview and soundwalk methods were combined, since at five locations during the walk participants were interviewed about aspects of that location and its soundscape, and the walk was concluded with a final interview. Adams and Bruce's soundwalk method differs from the idea of 'walking with' people along *their own* routes. Here the researchers intended to 'open up participants' ears to ... different soundscapes' along a pre-designed route, so that the participants would then discuss these new experiences. However, simultaneously, this method of mixing walking with research participants and location-specific interviews allows researchers to benefit from some of the sensory sociality and sharing that the writers discussed above emphasise. Adams and Bruce note that 'it was possible for the researchers and the participants to have a shared sensory experience of the urban environments' (2008: 557). As part of a mixed method this was also important because, as they continue, this enabled 'a deeper and more meaningful semi-structured interview to take place' (2008: 557).

While walking with research participants is, and has perhaps 'always' been, integral to ethnographic practice, in contemporary writing the theoretical and methodological implications of this are coming to the fore. It is, moreover, significant that this is occurring as part of the move towards elaborating sensory methodologies in ethnography.

SUMMING UP: EMPLACED AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

Both classic and experiential approaches to ethnography have been applied to research concerned with the senses. The being there of participating, observing, asking questions and interviewing involved in classic ethnographic practice can lead to analyses of culturally specific meanings of sensory categories and understandings of how people might operate these in everyday and ritual practices. However, this approach should be rethought through a paradigm that rejects the assumption that the visual would be the dominant or most important sense in either everyday life or research practice. An experiential approach does not preclude visual observation (although it would refigure this as a form of participation and a visual practice). Rather, it suggests a way of ethnographic learning and knowing by which the ethnographer seeks to participate in the emplaced activities of others through her or his own embodied engagements, thus offering an alternative route to ethnographic knowledge.

Therefore, the methodological developments discussed in this chapter indicate how a notion of *emplaced and active participation* can accommodate some of the characteristics of the classic approach while acknowledging that through our own emplaced experiences we can gain better insights into those of others. This means that all the senses need to be accounted for. By this I mean not only 'all the senses' in terms of modern

western sensory categories. Rather, in line with the argument that these are culturally constructed categories, I refer to all the sensory categories that are in play in the culturally specific context in which one is researching. Indeed, one of the tasks of the emplaced active participant ethnographer is to learn how to interpret her or his embodied sensory experiences through other people's cultural categories and discourses, and as such to participate not only in their emplaced practices but in their wider ways of knowing.

RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING

Downey, G. (2005) *Learning Capoeira: Lessons in Cunning from an Afro-Brazilian Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Grasseni, C. (2004) 'Skilled visions: an apprenticeship in breeding aesthetics', *Social Anthropology* 12: 41–55.

Lee, J. and Ingold, T. (2006) 'Fieldwork on foot: perceiving, routing, socializing', in S. Coleman and P. Collins (eds), *Locating the Field: Space, Place and Context in Anthropology*. Oxford: Berg. pp. 67–86.

Okely, J. (1994) 'Vicarious and sensory knowledge of chronology and change: ageing in rural France', in K. Hastrup and P. Hervik (eds), *Social Experience and Anthropological Knowledge*. London: Routledge.

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5
ARTICULATING EMPLACED KNOWLEDGE: Understanding Sensory Experiences Through Interviews

In the previous chapter I suggested rethinking participant observation through a sensory paradigm. In this chapter I take a similar approach to what is perhaps the most firmly embedded research method in contemporary qualitative research practice: the interview. My purpose here is to rethink the interview on two levels. First, I conceptualise the interview as a multisensory event and, as such, a context of emplaced knowing. Second, I suggest that it is a process through which we might learn (in multiple ways) about how research participants represent and categorise their experiences, values, moralities, other people and things (and more) by attending to *their* treatments of the senses.

The existing qualitative methods literature identifies several types of interview, each of which has its own epistemological foundations. Taking two extremes as examples, Clive Seale contrasts the classical and idealist approaches. In the '*classical* tradition of social survey work' interviewees' accounts 'are assessed according to how accurately they reflect' a supposed 'real social world' (Seale 1998: 202–3, original italics). In contrast to the '*realist* approach' of the classical tradition 'is an *idealist* one, ... in which interview data ... are seen as presenting but one of many possible worlds' (Seale 1998: 203, original italics). In practice, qualitative researchers often combine these approaches, which need not necessarily be incompatible. Thus one might understand the interview as a *representation* of an experienced reality rather than a realist or authentic account of an objective reality. However, simultaneously it would usually be reasonable to treat certain knowledge represented in its narrative as a reliable account of, for instance, events that happened and persons who existed.

In the qualitative methods literature two aspects of interviewing have been emphasised. First, the interview itself is often seen and analysed as a 'social event' (Seale 1998: 202), in which, as Tim Rapley puts it, 'two people, often relative strangers, sit down and talk about a specific topic' (2004: 15). Second, the interview is often described as a form of 'conversation'. Indeed, for some researchers this is why the interview as a method is so appealing. For instance, discussing a feminist approach to research, Ann Oakley has characterised in-depth interviews as 'the face-to-face' method *par excellence* and 'as such the chosen method for feminist researchers'. Oakley suggests that 'Interviews imitate conversations; they hold out the promise of mutual listening' (2000: 47). Indeed, some researchers treat interviews as conversation in a more formal sense by applying the method of conversation analysis to them (Rapley 2004).

Talking undeniably plays a central role in the interview. Yet a notion of the interview as simply an encounter that benefits from the intimacy of face-to-face conversation is insufficient. Rather, it is a social encounter – an event – that is inevitably both emplaced and productive of place. It has material and sensorial components. Interviewees refer to the sensoriality of their experiences not only verbally through metaphor, but through gesture, actual touching, sharing scents (e.g. perfumes, sprays and other products), sounds (e.g. playing music, demonstrating a creaking door), images (e.g. showing photographs) and even tastes (e.g. offering the researcher food or drink to try). An emphasis on 'talk' in discussions of what interviewing involves, and dependency on conversation analysis as a means of understanding the sorts of interactions that occur during interviews (e.g. Rapley 2004; Seale 1998) limits the ways interviews can be understood.

The focus on talk in conversation analysis has been extended by some. For instance, Charles Goodwin demonstrates the role played by 'the gaze' in human interaction (2001: 158) and researchers working within the 'multimodality' paradigm (e.g. Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001) stress the different modes through which communication takes place. In this formulation, modes are 'the abstract, non-material *resources* of meaning-making (obvious ones include writing, speech and images; less obvious ones include gesture, facial expression, texture, size and shape, even colour)', while media are 'the specific material forms in which modes are realized, including tools and materials' (Dicks et al. 2006: 82). This distinction is useful for thinking about the multisensoriality of the interview for two reasons: first, it reveals clearly the inadequacy of a dependence on talk in understanding human interactions; second, it stresses how multiple media come into play in these forms of 'meaning making'. However, the focus on the senses I am proposing here goes beyond the analysis of these observable aspects of human interaction. As I have stressed in the previous chapters, an understanding of research as *participation* is fundamental to a sensory ethnography methodology. Thus I suggest interview encounters should be understood as instances in which interviewer and interviewee together create a shared place. Interviewer and interviewee communicate as embodied and emplaced persons, sometimes using media technologies in this process. Refiguring the interview in this way opens up possibilities for understanding how and what we might learn about other people's worlds through the interview. Thus ethnographic interviewing might be rethought in terms of a sensory paradigm. Building on the reflexive approach to

sensory emplaced participation I outlined in Chapter 4, in this chapter I suggest treating the interview as a route to understanding other people's emplacement through collaborative and reflexive exploration.

THE SENSORIALITY OF THE ETHNOGRAPHIC INTERVIEW

In the context of an ethnographic research project interviews are not simply research events during which one person (the researcher) asks and audio-records a set of questions of another (the interviewee). Barbara Sherman-Heyl has defined 'ethnographic interviewing' as including projects 'in which researchers have established respectful, ongoing relationships with their interviewees, including enough rapport for these to be a genuine exchange of views and enough time and openness in the interviews for the interviewees to explore purposefully with the researcher the meanings they place on events in their worlds' (2001: 367). While Sherman-Heyl's definition involves certain methodological conditions, it is also suitably open to reflect O'Reilly's fundamental point that 'there is no normal within ethnography'. Rather, as O'Reilly stresses, the ethnographer might draw from a 'range of interviewing styles', but 'the key is to be flexible, and to be aware at every stage about why you are using that approach' (2005: 116). A sensory approach to the ethnographic interview coincides largely with these points. As will be evident from the case studies discussed later in this chapter, interviewing styles, narratives and experiences tend to be context-dependent. They are negotiated in relation to the research aims and through the relationship and particular style of sociality that develops between the researcher and the research participant.

A sensory approach to interviewing also has sympathies with a feminist approach which, as Rubin and Rubin describe it, 'humanizes both the researcher and the interviewee' and empowers the interviewee by '[a]llowing people to "talk back" (hooks 1989) [and thus] gives a voice through interviews to those who have been silenced' (Rubin and Rubin 2005: 26). This feminist approach also recognises the emotive nature of the interview, stressing the need for researchers to also be reflexive about *their* own emotions (2005: 26).

Building on these understandings, I see interviews as social, sensorial and emotive encounters. In some instances they entail the sorts of sensory sociality between researcher and research participant that I outlined in Chapter 4. Indeed, the similarities between participant observation and interviewing have been stressed in recent methodological discussions – as O'Reilly has pointed out for ethnographers, 'There might not be a clear distinction between doing participant observation and conducting an interview' (2005: 115). Atkinson and Coffey have made a similar point, arguing that observation and interviewing should not be seen as being in opposition to each other. They suggest that 'Actions are understandable because they can be talked about. Equally, accounts – including those derived from interviewing – are actions'. They thus propose that since 'Social life is performed and narrated we need to recognize the performative qualities of social life and talk' (2003: 110). These suggestions also support the point that interviews are not simply about talk. In emphasising the performative nature of talk, they imply the embodied nature of the interview. It is a short step from here to recognise that the talk of an interview is not simply performative and embodied, but that it

is more fully situated in that it is an emplaced activity that engages not only the performative body but the sensing body in relation to its total environment.

SITUATING THE INTERVIEW

It is not uncommon to find research projects that rely on interviewing as their main or sole source for ethnographic knowledge. However, even within more conventional discussions of qualitative interviewing, researchers have expressed the inadequacy of studies that depend solely on interviews for their 'data' to 'understand people's *lived, situated, practices*' (Rapley 2004: 29, original italics). Indeed, the relationship between what *is* verbalised in interviews and knowledge that is not articulated in this way is itself an interesting question. For example, summing up his analysis of the sensoriality of gardening, Chris Tilley points out that as an embodied activity gardening involves 'doing rather than saying' – it is in fact 'an escape from verbal discourse' (Tilley 2006: 328). His article contains numerous quotations from interviews with 62 Swedish and 65 English gardeners (2006: 313) that demonstrate his point that 'touch, sound and taste especially, were not sensory dimensions of the garden that were either usually verbalized or explicit'. Nevertheless, this is not to say that gardening is a predominantly visual practice. Indeed, Tilley stresses that for most gardeners 'touch, sound and taste, unlike sight or smell, remain part of the sensory unconscious of gardening ... rarely acknowledged, thought about or discussed' (2006: 314). Thus, the sensoriality of gardening cannot necessarily be directly accessed through verbal interviews. Gardening involves knowledge that is not verbal or articulated. Rather, as Tilley puts it, 'the intimacy of bodily contact through all the senses ... can be readily observed when you study the manner in which gardeners actually garden'. It is thus 'in their practice' (and not in their talk) that the senses are clearly significant (2006: 328).

In my own experience of doing anthropological research, interviewing tends to be developed in relation to other ways I have participated in the lives or cultural worlds of interviewees either during the same research episode or in the past. This combination of prior experience and combining interviews with the video tour method (discussed in Chapter 6) and sharing other activities with research participants was essential to my research about the sensory home (see Pink 2004, 2006). Likewise, several of the case studies discussed in Chapter 4 involved the combination of interviewing and forms of participation. The anthropologist Okely has stressed how her participation in similar practices that her elderly research participants had enjoyed before they lived in a residential home led her to better understand their interview conversations (Okely 1994). In other disciplines, interviews also form part of a multimethod approach. Adams and Bruce's (2008) soundwalk methodology combined 'walking with' and interviewing research participants. Other work by Adams and her colleagues has also involved uses of interviewing in a mixed method approach to researching sensorial experiences of the '24-hour city' (Adams et al. 2007). Working in another context, Camilla Rhyl's research shows how interviews may be combined with spatial tests – in this case to explore how people with sensory disabilities experience the architecture of housing (Rhyl n.d.)

THE INTERVIEW, PARTICIPATION AND PLACE

In Chapter 2, I suggested that sensory ethnography itself entails a form of learning about other people's emplacement and experiences through participation in specific practices and environments. Interviewing can be understood according to a similar phenomenological approach, although there are some obvious specificities in the ways one would be able to participate. In interviews, researchers participate or collaborate with research participants in the process of defining and representing their (past, present or imagined) emplacement and their sensory embodied experiences. If we situate the interview within a process through which experiences are constituted, it might be understood as a point in this process where multisensorial experience is verbalised through culturally constructed sensory categories and in the context of the intersubjective interaction between ethnographer and research participant. However, this definition might be taken still further. As I have stressed above, the interview is not simply a verbal conversation that can be audio-recorded. The interviewer and interviewee do not need to be sitting down, immobilised and simply speaking. Although it is an ordinary everyday practice to sit and talk, other examples include Spinney's practice of talking with cyclists while riding alongside them (Spinney 2006). Rather, throughout interviews, whether sitting, standing or moving, both ethnographers and research participants *continue to be* active participants in their environments, using their whole bodies, all their senses, available props and the ground under their feet, to narrate, perform, communicate and represent their experiences.

The sensoriality of these social encounters might be evident in the sharing of certain embodied experiences. For instance, in England, when I have arrived at people's houses to carry out an interview, they have almost always offered and prepared a cup of tea or coffee for us both. Sometimes interviews take place with the television or radio on as a 'background' soundscape (or in the case of Vokes' (2007) work discussed below, as a purposeful medium of elicitation). An interview might happen in a public context over a shared drink or meal. An ethnographer and interview participant might walk together to the physical stopping point where the interview is to be done, to the railway station after it has happened, or an interview might be done in movement – during a walk. Equally important is to note that an interview is not an exclusively aural encounter or event but one that also involves the materiality of the environment and of artefacts. While this is not a new point, it becomes particularly salient when rethinking the interview through the senses. Tracing the history of the interview in anthropological research, Richard Vokes shows how the role of material objects in the ethnographic interview has long since been recognised. Vokes points out that, now nearly 100 years ago, Bronislaw Malinowski wrote: 'my experience is that direct questioning of the native [*sic*] about a custom or belief never discloses their attitude of mind as thoroughly as the discussion of facts connected with the direct observation of a custom or with a concrete occurrence' (Malinowski 1915: 652). Significantly, Vokes goes on to note that Malinowski argued 'This effect was most easily achieved ... through the use of some object associated with that custom or occurrence' (Vokes 2007: 290).

In my experience it is not only the introduction of objects into interview situations by researchers that can invoke important narratives. Research participants themselves also use all resources available to communicate about their experiences,

and spoken words only represent one of these strategies. They might pass researchers objects to touch and hold, to look at, smell and listen to, or invite them to sense physical spaces (in my experience this has included photographs, cleaning products, cupboards, plants and more). They invite us to engage not only with what they are saying but with the material and sensorial qualities of the things they describe or actually interact with.

Thus interviews can invite ethnographers to participate in multiple sensory ways of knowing by incorporating a whole range of different embodied experiences and emotions into the narratives which are audio-recorded and taken away. In doing so this method offers routes to the forms of interviewee empowerment that the feminist approach to interviewing discussed above seeks to create. Engaging multisensorial communication and analysis can achieve this by allowing for the use of non-verbal types of communication and knowing. This might include socially marginalised forms of knowledge and communication. Finally, when research participants use words to describe their experiences, they are placing verbal definitions on sensory embodied experiences, and in doing so allocating these experiences to culturally specific sensory categories. Interviews can thus produce knowledge on different levels: through verbal definitions of sensory experiences; when the 'interviewee' introduces a range of other embodied ways of knowing into the interview process; and through the sensory sociality of the interview process and context itself. For the multisensory potential of the interview to be achieved researchers need to be open to these possibilities, to ensure that research participants know that they are not necessarily expected to simply sit still and talk, but rather to invite them to gather everything they need in order to communicate about their experiences.

Whereas some existing approaches to the interview have tended to treat it as a realist account, a conversation or a narrative, here I suggest an alternative sensory methodology. If we treat the interview as a phenomenological event it is more appropriate to use the idea of place-making as a metaphor through which to understand the interview process. The place created by an interview involves a process of movement, through a narrative. As the researcher and interviewee move though their route, they unavoidably verbalise, engage with and draw together a series of ideas, sensed embodied experiences, emotions, material objects and more. This is not so much the gathering of data that the researcher will take away to analyse, but rather it is a process of bringing together which involves the accumulation of emplaced ways of knowing generated not simply through verbal exchanges but through, for example, cups of tea and coffee, comfortable cushions, odours, textures, sounds and images. By sitting with another person in their living room, in *their* chair, drinking *their* coffee from one of *their* mugs, one begins in some small way to occupy the world in a way that is similar to them. As the interview progresses perhaps more material, emotional, discursive and other components are introduced, perhaps other people come in and out of the room. The interview itself creates a place-event, in which the researcher and interviewee are mutually emplaced in relation to its other elements as they move along its narrative. However, I suggest that in this context they interact in a way that is more intense that they would in everyday life. As such, the interview is productive of heightened reflections and new ways of knowing. Indeed, interviews are not only places where researchers come to understand other people's

experiences. They are also contexts where interviewees might arrive at new levels of awareness about their own lives and experiences. As researchers, we should be able to allow interviewees to communicate to us in multiple ways about their experiences, moralities and situatedness, in ways that allow us to use all our own resources of empathy and imagination to know about their ways of being and understanding.

THE INTERVIEW AS A ROUTE TO UNDERSTANDING OTHER PEOPLE'S SENSORY CATEGORIES

In Chapter 3 I outlined how, in some sensory ethnography studies, one of the first steps taken by the researcher has been to identify the sensory categories and meanings of the people participating in the research. In this section I discuss how interviewing has frequently and successfully been used for this purpose – sometimes in combination with other methods.

It is commonly recognised that interviews cannot bring researchers into direct contact with life as it is lived and experienced or with the routine and other practices that people engage in on a day-to-day basis. However, one of the advantages of interviews is that they allow people to discuss their lives, beliefs, values, opinions, experiences, practices and more in a focused way in collaboration with a researcher within a circumscribed time. The interview creates a place in which to reflect, define and communicate about experiences. It is indeed a creative place where representations and understandings of experience rather than objective truths about what has been experienced are intentionally produced (and, moreover, often audio-recorded for analysis). However creative the narratives and stories of interviews become, they are nevertheless framed by cultural and personal experiences, values and moralities. These in turn are represented through interviewees' personal interpretations and appropriations of culturally specific sensory categories, metaphors and meanings. The ways these sensory categories, metaphors and meanings are used by people to represent their lives, experiences, and opinions can often offer a key to understanding their self-identities – what is important to them, and why.

Nevertheless, it should not be assumed that in all research contexts simply asking people about, or discussing with them, the sensory categories they use and the meanings they attribute to certain experiences will provide the researcher with direct and comprehensible knowledge about local sensoria. In some cases, according to personal and cultural circumstances, research participants might find it easy and indeed interesting to reflect on how they, for instance, use smell or touch to make judgements about the status of particular artefacts they have in their homes, or about the personal hygiene of others. In other situations, however, they may find it impossible to articulate sensory categories and values. The following two cases, from quite different cultural contexts demonstrate this well.

The first example concerns my experience of doing research about the sensory meanings attached to domestic laundry. In 1999–2000 I collaborated with researchers from Unilever Research to undertake two projects focusing broadly on domestic practices of housework, home decoration and laundry (these are reported in more detail in Pink 2004, 2005b, 2006, 2007c). As part of the interviews about

laundry in the home I asked participants to describe how they evaluated their 'clean' laundry. At this point in the research I was interested not so much in asking people to reflect on how they *experienced* the laundry process and the emotive and memory processes this involved, but in the ways they discussed different sensory modalities and categories when evaluating and communicating about the cleanliness of their laundry:

Jane: Um, well, when it's got no marks on it basically and it looks clean and pressed. I can't sort of say the smell would influence me on whether it be clean, whether it's just sort of nice, no marks on it and nicely ironed.

Sarah: Yeah, yeah, and I mean in order for it to be clean what actually has to be done to it? What has to happen to it for you for it to be clean?

Jane: For it to be fed through that washing machine, Sarah, with some ... [laundry detergent] ... in it, because as I say, I generally do rely on the ... [laundry detergent] ..., and um, and as I say, and then I check it when I'm ironing it. Its nice if it, nice if its got a bit of ... [fabric conditioner] ... smell to it.

I was doing research in English homes, places in many ways very familiar to me. Nevertheless, as I learnt through the research process, the women who participated in the interviews had quite different experiences and knowledge about laundry from mine. They found it easy to articulate their knowledge and experience through the five-sense sensorium of modern western culture, commenting not only, like the participant quoted above, on the sight and smell of clean laundry, but also on, for instance, the feel of starchy shirts or soft towels. Later in this chapter I reflect further on these uses of sensory categories and their implications, and in Chapter 6 I discuss the second stage of this research, which involved video tours and performative representations.

Geurts' descriptions of doing research with Anlo-Ewe people in Ghana, a culture quite different from the North American culture she had come from, provides an interesting contrast. The experiences of interviewing about local sensory meanings and categories that she describes in this context were quite different from those I experienced in my own culture, and required different solutions. Geurts discusses how she was initially unable to find a local cultural category that was the equivalent of the modern western notion of the senses. She writes how: 'there seemed to be little consensus about a precise cultural category that we could map into our domain of the five senses. In fact, at one point in the middle of my research, I seemed to have nearly as many configurations of sense-data as the number of people I had interviewed' (Geurts 2002: 37). In search of the answers to her questions she interviewed a local expert on Anlo 'history and cultural traditions'. However, neither did this interview provide her with a direct route into local cultural knowledge that she was seeking. Geurts describes the encounter, noting how, on arrival, she presented her interviewee with a bag of oranges and 'he inhaled the fragrance from the bag'. Nevertheless, she continues: 'When I asked him a question about the senses, however, he emphatically replied "We don't have that in our culture"' (2002: 37), always insisting that 'Anlo–Ewe cultural traditions simply did not involve the cultivation of any kind of reified model of sensory systems that clearly spelled out a theory for *how we know what we know*'

(2002: 38, original italics). Thus, interviewing people about sensory experience is not a straightforward exercise. Interviews that seek to identify sensory categories or to use them as a way of discussing different aspects of experience or practice cannot necessarily be approached in the same ways across cultures – or even for different groups with some degree of shared cultural knowledge. In some research contexts, interviewing might turn out to be a less fruitful exercise in the search for knowledge that is better accessed through participatory and apprenticeship methods of the kind discussed in Chapter 4.

SITTING AND TALKING: SPOKEN NARRATIVES IN SENSORY ETHNOGRAPHY INTERVIEWS

Although much ethnography and certainly most ethnographic interviewing is done sitting down, little analytical attention has been paid to this (nearly) universal human practice. Yet sitting is no less a sensory embodied experience (for the interviewer and interviewee) than are walking and eating discussed in the previous chapter. Further reflection raises a whole series of questions. These include more commonly raised issues concerning whether the interviewee is sitting comfortably, in familiar circumstances, near enough to the microphone, etc. Even these issues, when thought through a sensory paradigm, begin to provide a basis through which to understand how the sitter is emplaced. What might she or he see from where she or he is seated? Is there a pleasant breeze or cold draft from the window? Is the chair the same one she or he sits in to watch TV, read the paper, relax, work, eat, have an afternoon nap? In what might on the surface seem to be a relatively straightforward interview situation, a new layer of complexity is introduced if we pause to consider the meanings that might be invoked through the material and sensorial environment. There are, moreover, good reasons why many interviews take place sitting and talking. These are not simply qualitative interview conventions but cultural practices, sometimes part of everyday routines or story telling and other oral narrative traditions. Thus, when undertaking 'sitting and talking' type interviews, it is useful to first gain some ideas about local cultural conventions regarding these practices – for instance, what does one *also* do (and not do) while sitting and talking/listening. This might indeed include eating, drinking, listening, tapping one's foot, and more.

The reflexive analysis of the sensoriality of the interview context aside, the key motive that researchers have to undertake interviews is to learn about, for instance, other people's experiences, understandings and values. Although there are limits to the extent to which we can access other people's embodied experiences through the interview, there are strong arguments for using this method. In this section I first discuss Robert Desjarlais's (2003) argument that biographical audio-recorded interviewing can serve as a phenomenological research method that provides insights into other people's sensory experiences through their own spoken narratives. I then demonstrate through a discussion of my own research materials how talk that uses sensory metaphor while also discussing sensory experience can provide insights into other people's worlds, everyday practices, values and moralities.

Desjarlais' *Sensory Biographies: Lives and Deaths among Nepal's Yolmo Buddhists* (2003) 'explores the life histories of two Yolmo elders, focusing on how particular sensory orientations and modalities have contributed to the making and telling of their lives' (back cover). While biographical interviewing is a common method for life history research (e.g. Plummer 2001), Desjarlais' approach demonstrates the significance of such interviews as multisensory processes. Although recorded conversations are central to his methods, Desjarlais points out that these were not undertaken in isolation from his wider involvement in the everyday lives of his research participants (2003: 18). While talk is the focus of his analysis, it is clearly set within a wider context of everyday and extraordinary individual and cultural practices that in turn inform the analysis. His descriptions bring to the fore not only words uttered, and linguistic meanings, but how the interview involves experiences and communication across different sensory modes. Thus, when discussing the interview context, Desjarlais comments on how, during an interview with Mheme, an 85 year-old man, 'his [Mheme's] daughter served us cup after cup of salt-butter tea' and how Mheme was 'usually relaxing cross-legged in the center of his bed with a cup of tea by his side'. Of particular interest is that Desjarlais remarks on how 'There were also occasions, especially when I visited Mheme on my own, that he looked at me in ways compared with that earlier gaze of his' (Desjarlais 2003: 23). The 'gaze' that Desjarlais refers to is, as he explains in a later chapter, an important form of communication among Yolmo people, for whom 'sustained, mutual visual rapport can involve moments of intimacy, affection, and concern'. Such 'shared consciousness or an agreement of minds' might be developed or sustained through 'eye contact in tandem with a host of linguistic practices' (2003: 60). Therefore, while Desjarlais has a declared interest in 'talk' (2003: 18), his approach goes clearly beyond those of Rapley (2004) and Seale (1998), who use conversation analysis as a basis from which to understand human interaction in interview contexts.

Desjarlais' work is also interesting because his analysis of the interviews reveals the importance of sensory metaphors as forms of expression both within and in structuring the narratives through which people tell stories about their lives. His study was centred around the life histories recorded with Mheme Lama, mentioned above, and Kisang Omu, an 88 year-old woman (2003: 1–3). He comments that as the interviews progressed:

> ... I realised that while Mheme's recounting of his life was dominated by motifs of vision and bodiliness, of knowing the world though visual means, and of acting and suffering through the medium of his visible body, Kisang Omu's accounts of her life largely entailed a theatre of voices: when narrating significant events in her life, she often invoked, in vivid, morally connative terms, the voicings of key actors in those events. (Desjarlais 2003: 3)

Desjarlais notes that this striking difference invites a further and more general question: 'How ... do a person's ways of sensing the world contribute to how that person lives and recollects her life?' (2003: 3). This question is applicable not only to Desjarlais' own research (readers interested in his analysis are recommended to his text), but alerts us to the point that individual, gendered, generational, ethnic, class-based and of

course culturally specific ways of sensing the world will inevitably impinge on how research participants recount their lives in any interview context. An analysis of their 'talk' contextualised, as recommended above (to incorporate also looking into other forms of sensing), offers routes into understanding how people situate themselves and their experiences through specific sets of moralities, relationships and more. Attention to the way they use sensory metaphors to express these experiences, comment on their own and other people's moralities, and the qualities of their social relationships can offer important insights. In the next section I demonstrate this further through a discussion of a case study of how sensory categories were used in interview talk about domestic practices.

CASE STUDY: TALKING ABOUT DIRT, CLEANLINESS AND 'FRESHNESS'

In this section I discuss one aspect of my research about domestic laundry, introduced above: the question of how the people who participated in my research talked about dirt. The research was structured into two parts, an initial in-depth interview, which explored questions that included themes about self-identity, lifestyle, home, the senses and notions of clean and dirty and the moral connotations of these. This was followed by a video-tour of the home (see Chapter 6). Here I reflect further on how, in one interview, the idea of dirt as something that was experienced and evaluated sensorially was discussed. The transcript below is an extract from an interview with a middle-aged woman who was responsible for most of the domestic work at home. In this extract we were discussing the question of how she knew when laundry items were clean and could be worn/used or needed to be washed.

Sarah: And what about clothes and things, if you had a little stain that just wouldn't come off?

Jane: It all depends where it would be. Em, I wouldn't discard it Sarah, I'd probably, I'd wear it sort of for every day, I would, but I wouldn't discard a thing if it had just a tiny stain on, no.

Sarah: Would you wear if sort of .... ?

Jane: Not for best,

Sarah: But if you could see it though, if you were going shopping would you wear it or would you ... ?

Jane: No, no, not if people could see it Sarah, but I mean, if it sort of meant like a little bit under the arm or, (pause) oh I don't know.

Sarah: Or if you could wear a jacket over it and it didn't show ... ?

Jane: That's right, yes, and probably get, and prob ... if I liked it enough Sarah, I probably would still utilise it, yeah.

Sarah: [Is that] because you think it would be clean?

Jane: Well I do, yes, as long as I say its gone through there [through the washing machine], even if its got a teeny little stain, and I couldn't get it out with the ... [laundry detergent], I mean but generally I've not got, no I don't think I've got anything like that ...

Sarah: ... and do things feel different when they're clean?
Jane: Ooh yes I think so definitely, yes, they do.
Sarah: How do they feel?
Jane: Um, they just feel, well as I say, nicely pressed they do, fresh and certainly fresher, yeah.
Sarah: What do you mean by fresher?
Jane: Um, just, well as I say when they are dirty and all that they've got that sweaty smell about them and grimy on the collar and everything, so as I say, just, they're just, they're nicer to put on.
Sarah: Yeah, and um how do you know if something is dirty? ... You said it might smell of something.
Jane: Its smelly! Its smelly! Because as I say I know when its dirty ... but if its white you cannot help but get a grimy colour. Ever so strange, so [with shirts] as I say, usually by the collar Sarah.

This part of the interview was guided by a part of my checklist that reminded me that I wanted to explore how participants in the research thought about different sensory modalities as ways of understanding cleanliness and dirt. In doing so I was specifically relating their experiences to the modern western five-sense sensorium. Therefore I consciously probed them to tell me about how vision, smell and touch figured in their understandings of their laundry. However, they also related sensory categories to me unprompted, for example, to stress how even if something might visually have a permanent stain on it, one might not know if it was actually dirty until it had been smelt. By prompting interviewees to introduce other sensory categories into their evaluations I was gradually able to build a picture of when different people thought that the smell, feel, and visual appearance of their laundry became an important signifier of its cleanliness. In the transcript above the research participant also introduces the concept of 'freshness', which she relates to the textures, smell and visual appearance of an item of clothing. The idea of 'freshness' being an ideal characteristic of laundry recurred throughout the interviews and tended to refer to the total experience of a laundry item, although smell was often used as an identifying feature. However, different people approach their laundry differently. They therefore use different sensory categories and experiences through which to discuss cleanliness, dirt and freshness. Therefore through the *variety* of their responses to these questions I was able to assess how different people constructed their self-identities through their approaches to the sensorial quality of their laundry. They also used these categories when making moral judgements about the visual and olfactory states of laundry done (and clothes worn) by others. The interviews thus provided me with a set of discourses about laundry, cleanliness, dirt and morality and the ways these are experienced. As the research went on, I began to self-evaluate my own clothing through the perspectives of different interviewees as I got ready to go to an appointment: would it be acceptable for me to wear a top that had a small 'permanent' olive oil stain on it, if this was under my jacket? What about it if I took my jacket off? How would the people I was interviewing judge me through my own laundry?

This full interview was an hour long and then followed by another hour of video tour interview. Thus the extract discussed here is only a fragment of the whole interview

encounter. It is a fragment on one level because it represents only a short period of time within a longer meeting. It is also just a fragment of an encounter that included a cup of coffee, the ring of the telephone, the visual context and the textures of the carpet and sofa in the living room where we sat to talk, and more. Taken as a whole, the interview can be seen as part of a place-making process. The interview and the video tour became a place-event, creating a self-identity and home through a series of verbal and sensorial engagements. I develop this idea further in Chapter 6 where I discuss the video tour of the home as a process of making place and self through the exploration of laundry.

SENSORY ELICITATION: THE INTERVIEW AS A RESPONSE TO SENSORY STIMULI

The use of material objects to elicit responses or evoke memories and areas of knowledge was and has long since (see Vokes 2007) been employed in anthropological research (see also, for example, Hoskins 1998). In my own research, both research participants and sometimes my own physical, olfactory, visual and tactile engagements with material objects were central to our explorations of the meanings of home (see Pink 2004). In Chapter 6, through a discussion of the video tour method, I examine such multisensorial engagements further. Here, I discuss how researchers have focused single modern western sensory categories as routes to knowledge in what we might call elicitation interviews. In contrast to situations where objects that are already present serendipitously become part of a research encounter, elicitation interviews involve the researcher intentionally presenting research participants with a series of objects or experiences. An early template for this method was developed in the practice of photo elicitation as presented by John Collier Jnr. (1967) (Vokes 2007: 292) and now a commonly used method across academic disciplines (see Harper 2002; Pink 2007a). Photo elicitation relies on the idea of the photograph becoming a visual text through which the subjectivities of researcher and research participant intersect. It can evoke memories, knowledge and more in the research participant which might otherwise have been inaccessible, while simultaneously allowing the researcher to compare her or his subjective interpretation of the image with that of the research participant. Moreover, the photographs shown are not simply *visual* images, but also material objects with sensory qualities, or when shown on a computer screen or other digital technology, invested with a different type of materiality. I discuss this method further in Chapter 6 which focuses on visual methods in sensory research.

Vokes has suggested extending the idea of elicitation to include not only the visual/material but sound, through a 'radio elicitation' method, which he has used in both an 'unstructured' and a more controlled form (2007: 295). In contrast to the interview methods discussed above, Vokes' 'radio elicitation' method is not designed to research local culturally specific sensoria. Rather, it is situated within his wider understanding of the role of radio in the local 'soundscape'. Before undertaking radio elicitation exercises he engaged in a series of 'radio walks' (similar to some soundwalk methods as reviewed by Adams and Bruce 2008), in which he 'moved around the village along a predetermined route of about three miles long' in order to 'build up a record of the village "soundscape", by noting down all the sounds that

could be heard along the way', with particular attention to radio sound (2007: 293). Thus this method uses elements of existing local soundscapes to elicit or inspire commentaries from people participating in his research. Vokes describes how, when carrying out 'unstructured radio elicitation', he gradually moved from a stance where he did 'little more than sitting with people as they listened to the radio as part of their normal daily routines' to one where he 'began to "take control" of the listening situation' by asking more and more questions and eventually began to use a note book (2007: 293). He then introduced a more structured method of '"radio elicitation" based on the classic focus-group model', by which he would invite a selected group of people to his house to listen to and then discuss a series of pre-recorded clips from radio shows. This method was particularly appropriate in the context of Vokes' research in rural Uganda where radios are 'a common part of the normal, everyday flow of social relations' (2007: 294). Although Vokes' focus is primarily on one sensory modality – sound – his work provides a useful counterbalance to the existing writing on photo elicitation, reminding us that interviews (either prestructured or those that bounce off the flow of everyday life) indeed occur in multisensory contexts.

Another example of the use of sound in group discussions is outlined by Stephen Feld. Feld describes how, during his research with Kaluli people in Papua New Guinea, he made audio-recordings of 'everyday sounds' and 'night time forest sounds' and then invited people to listen to these to 'identify and discuss all of them'. His intention was 'to create a pool of sensate material' on the basis of which he and Kaluli people could develop discussions, and thus lead him to better understand 'everyday Kaluli meanings and interpretations' of sound (Feld 2001b: 428). Whereas Vokes' audio elicitation method aimed to understand how people spoke about the issues he was researching, Feld's method involved using sound as a way of investigating the meanings of the sounds themselves. In common, these two case studies refer to the use of sound-recordings in elicitation methods. This, after the visual method of photo elicitation (see Pink 2007a), is perhaps the most obvious way to use sensory stimuli in research since, like visual images, sound is recordable. However, as demonstrated by the soundwalks Adams and Bruce (2008) produced as part of their urban soundscape research (discussed in Chapter 4), audio-recording does not necessarily form part of all sound elicitation methods. Adams and Bruce accompanied their research participants on predetermined urban routes before interviewing them about the soundscapes they experienced during these walks.

In contrast to sound and images, of which one can make permanent recordings, smell is much more elusive in that its temporality has different limits and cannot be controlled to the same extent. Although, as I discuss in Chapter 8, exhibitions and books of scents are possible, the incorporation of smell into ethnographic representation is more challenging. Yet smell has already been used as a form of elicitation in the sociologist Low's research into 'the role of smell in everyday life' (2005: 407). As I have noted above, interviewing is frequently used in combination with other methods – particularly in sensory ethnographies – and Low's work is no exception. He used narrative interviews in combination with what he calls 'breaching experiments' and 'participative observation' (2005: 407). Although experimental methods

are relatively uncommon in ethnographic research, Low's use of them is interestingly close to the impromptu or serendipitous type of interview that might occur during participant observation, although in this case it is of course planned. He describes how the breaching experiments were designed to elicit responses as follows: 'In the case of "gender-ed" smells, I wore fragrances that were commercially marketed for females, and sought to test how such scents may/may not provoke responses from those around me. In addition, I deliberately asked what others thought of the fragrance, in a bid to elicit any reflective evaluation or interpretation' (2005: 407). Once he had established these initial responses both through and to the olfactory sense, he then began to probe further, verbally to explore 'what social actors mean when and if they ascribe "race" or "gender" to certain scents that they pick up or have pointed out to them', and to ask people to define the meanings they intended when using terms such as 'pungent' and 'smelly'. Through this method Low claims he was able to uncover 'the sense-making/rationalizing processes as to how social actors orientate themselves in the construction of their social realities, with smell as an intermediary' (2005: 407). Low's work shows how, by approaching everyday life through one sense modality, researchers can begin to learn both about what is important to people and how that particular culturally constructed sensory category functions as a way of creating and understanding a social order.

Sensory elicitation interviews can offer researchers new and valuable routes to other people's experiences, knowledge and values. Each of the examples discussed above focuses on a specific modern western sensory modality as a route towards understanding. When working in this way it is important to remain aware of the conceptual issues raised in Chapter 2 and at the beginning of this chapter. This means keeping two points in mind: first, the interconnectedness of senses, and the capacity of audio-recording, for example, to communicate not only about sound; and second, the multisensoriality of the interview event itself, for example an interview centred on olfactory elicitation will inevitably also involve textures, vision and more.

SUMMING UP

In this chapter I have suggested rethinking the interview through a sensory paradigm. This means departing from the notion of interview as a type of special conversation, questioning an emphasis on talk, and going beyond the idea of the interview as part of a wider complex of communication and practices. Instead, I have suggested that the interview be understood through a theory of place. This involves understanding the narrative of the interview as a process through which verbal, experiential, emotional, sensory, material, social and other encounters are brought together. This process creates a place from which the researcher can better understand how the interviewee experiences her or his world. Abstracting the idea of an interview in this way offers a means of understanding the interview encounter as a place-event.

Within this place-event ethnographers have opportunities to learn about both others' embodied ways of knowing and their verbal narratives and ways of defining sensations, emotions, beliefs, moralities and more. In this chapter I have elaborated on a series of techniques that might be used to create these routes into other people's ways of knowing through both talk-based and sensory elicitation interviews.

RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING

Desjarlais, R. (2003) *Sensory Biographies: Lives and Death among Nepal's Yolmo Buddhists*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Feld, S. (2001) 'Dialogic editing: interpreting how Kaluli read sound and sentiment', in A. Robben and J.A. Sluka (eds), *Ethnographic Fieldwork*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Geurts, K.L. (2002) *Culture and the Senses: Bodily Ways of Knowing in an African Community*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Low, K. (2005) 'Ruminations on smell as a socio-cultural phenomenon', *Current Sociology*, 53(3): 397–417.

Vokes, R. (2007) '(Re)constructing the field through sound: actor-networks, ethnographic representation and "radio elicitation" in south-western Uganda', in E. Hallam and T. Ingold (eds), *Creativity and Cultural Improvisation*. Oxford: Berg.

6
VISUALISING EMPLACEMENT: Visual Methods for Multisensory Scholars

The use of visual and digital methods and media in ethnographic research is now common practice. Thus it is reasonable to assume that ethnographers with an interest in the senses will equally be using visual and digital technologies as part of their research practice. It has in fact been argued that visual methods and media can provide us with routes to privileged insights into human relationships to their material environments. This is not because (audio)visual media can directly record other sensory experiences. Rather, it is normally accounted for through the understandings of the senses as *interconnected* that I discussed in Chapter 2. Before discussing how visual media would support a sensory ethnographic focus, I first note some of the concerns that might be raised about such an exercise. For instance, an understandable doubt is expressed through the supposition that audiovisual research methods would unduly emphasise one sensory modality, or be unable to adequately record non-visual modalities of sensory experience. The question becomes, as the film theorist Laura Marks poses it:

> How can the audiovisual media of film and video represent non audiovisual experience? There are no technologies that reproduce the experiences of touch, smell, taste, and movement. There are technologies that attempt to simulate the effects of these experiences, such as virtual reality's audiovisual synthesis of movement or IMAX movies, whose disorienting audiovisual cues induce vertigo in viewers. But there is no way to mechanically reproduce the smell of a peach, the texture of concrete, or the feeling of falling off a cliff. (2000: 211)

Marks is, of course, not arguing that film and video are inadequate for representing 'non audiovisual experience'. As I discuss below, she offers an approach to understanding film as a multisensorial medium that is also applicable to understanding the use of video and photography in ethnographic research. Indeed, these concerns that an audiovisual medium cannot represent other sensory modalities of experience are

largely misguided. They can, as Marks (2000) and others have suggested, be resolved by taking an approach that acknowledges the interconnectedness of the senses and the embodied, emplaced nature of viewing video or photographs. As such, the approach I take in this chapter is not to suggest that the visual is a primary sense that can best investigate other sensory experience. Rather, given the availability and contemporary enthusiasm for using visual media in ethnographic research (see Pink 2006, 2007a), my objective in this chapter is to outline how and why (audio)visual technologies and practices might support the work of a sensory ethnographer, and to suggest how these practices might be understood within a theory of ethnography as place-making.

Attention to visual methods and media is particularly pertinent given that several researchers and scholars already working with visual and digital methods have extended their briefs to incorporate appreciation of the embodied and sensory nature of their practice. This shift is evident particularly in visual anthropology (e.g. MacDougall 1998, 2005; Pink 2004, 2006), visual sociology (e.g. Lammer 2007), video studies of interactions (e.g. Hindmarsh and Heath 2003; Hindmarsh and Pilnick 2007) and in the use of theories of multimodality in digital sociology (e.g. Dicks et al. 2006).

This chapter concerns not simply visual methods, but also the audiovisual. Digital media frequently unite the visual and aural. On the one hand, this is represented in technological innovations, where video cameras record audio, moving images and often also still images, stills cameras can record a few minutes of video and new models of audio-recorders are combined with stills cameras. On the other hand, these combinations are also represented in contemporary practice. For instance, when researchers audio-record and photograph in the course of an interview or other ethnographic encounter, in the production of digital soundwalks that invite their users to listen, look and also to sense their environments in other ways.

Therefore this chapter discusses the role that visual and digital methods and media can play in researching other people's sensory experiences. First, I examine the roles of the visual and vision in ethnographic research. This means situating the visual in relation to the other senses in the research process in order to reflect on the implications of using a medium that privileges vision (and when using video also sound) to investigate other categories of sensory experience and the practices and knowing associated with them. I then discuss recent case studies, which demonstrate how the methods discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 might be expanded through (audio)visual media.

(AUDIO)VISUAL MEDIA AND THE INTERCONNECTED SENSES

In Chapters 1 and 2 I outlined how a multisensory paradigm has developed across academic disciplines and suggested the ethnographic process might be theorised as a multisensorial place-making process. I proposed that we might understand the production of ethnographic knowledge in terms of the researcher's active participation in a social, material and sensorial environment. This emphasis on multisensoriality certainly invites us to underplay the importance of the visual in research. This is particularly so since, as I noted in Chapter 1, several commentators on this theme have situated their own sensory approaches as direct responses to what they claim has been the dominance of the visual in both modern western culture and society and in academic practice. Yet this

anti-visualist stance is foiled by two contemporary moves. On the one hand, the anthropological arguments of Ingold (2000) and Grasseni (2007a) suggest a rethinking of the visual, not as a necessarily dominant sense but as interconnected among other senses, and to be understood in practice. On the other hand, there is an increasing use of visual methods and media in ethnographic research and representation. Photographs are now widely used in publications, at least among visual sociologists and anthropologists, documentary videos are frequently made, and multimedia CD, DVD and online texts are an emergent representational form (Pink 2006, 2007a). In this chapter I discuss how these uses in research engage visual media and images, not as observational and objectifying tools, but as routes to multisensorial knowing.

In contemporary practice, academic writing has by no means been displaced as the main form of scholarly communication. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that visual images are playing an increasingly important role in ethnographic texts that is not paralleled by sound, scents, textures or tastes. There is one very practical reason for this, in that audio-recording, writing, drawing, photography and video all offer us permanent (or at least permanent enough) recordings of research activities, events, exercises or encounters. The question of representing (multi)sensory experience to audiences will be addressed in Chapter 8. In this chapter I am concerned with how (audio)visual methods might create routes to multisensory knowing within the research process and the research techniques through which this might be achieved.

Most existing discussion of questions relating (audio)visual media to sensory experience in ethnographic practice to date has focused on the use of media to *represent* sensory experience, rather than to *research* it (e.g. Stoller 1997; MacDougall 1998, 2005; Marks 2000; Grimshaw 2001). However, MacDougall has taken the debate further in his discussions of the sensoriality of the context of filmmaking in his writings on the making of a series of films about the Doon School (for boys) in India. MacDougall understands the school in terms of a 'social aesthetic'. By this, he stresses that he does 'not mean a system of signs and meanings encoded in school life'. Rather, he is interested in 'the creation of an aesthetic space or sensory structure' (2005: 105). To film this, he suggests such 'social aesthetics, as both the backdrop and product of everyday life, could only be approached obliquely, through the events and material objects in which it played a variety of roles'. This might include anything from 'simple hand gestures' to celebratory events (2005: 108).

MacDougall's work shows the benefits of using visual media to research social aesthetics very well. He suggests that to describe 'the phenomenological reality' of social aesthetics 'we may need a "language" closer to the multidimensionality of the subject itself – that is, a language operating in visual, aural, verbal, temporal, and even (through synesthetic association) tactile domains' (2005: 116). However, MacDougall's discussion is focused mainly on the practice of visual anthropology most involved in the making of audiovisual *representations* of other people's experience – anthropological film. In *The Future of Visual Anthropology* (Pink 2006), I have extended this discussion to connect it more explicitly with more conventional ethnographic research methods. There, using examples from my research about the 'sensory home', I demonstrate the evocative nature of video materials that both represent the research encounter and at the same time investigate sensory domestic practices. I also suggest that in fact there is a difference between how visual materials might be used to communicate about sensory

experience within the research process to their use in processes of representation. When the lone ethnographer is working with her or his own materials, these materials become meaningful in terms of the ethnographer's whole biographical experience of the research process. In this situation, the materials help to evoke the sensoriality of the research encounter itself (and concomitant memories and imaginaries), rather than just suggesting, for instance, textures and smells. In contrast, in representations such as ethnographic film, this biographical and cultural contextualisation is problematically missing. The viewer must grasp at her or his own experiences and memories and engage her or his imagination in trying to reach the sensory experiences of others (see Pink 2006 for a detailed discussion).

This gap between the experience of those represented in audiovisual materials, the experience of the ethnographer behind the camera, and that of the viewer also has implications for research that involves teamwork or data-sharing. It invites us to ask how an ethnographer might use her or his materials as a basis through which to share aspects of the research experience and knowledge with co-researchers. In this situation, the contextual 'being there', of having actually participated in the environment represented visually, would be absent for some of the co-researchers. Nevertheless, verbal explanation or annotation would support the evocative potential of the materials.

Existing literature centres on the relationship between the visual and the other senses as a key nexus for understanding how and why (audio)visual research methods and their ensuing video or photographic texts might enable us to probe, evoke, and represent other sensory experiences. For example, MacDougall takes the interconnectedness of the senses as his starting point. Drawing from the work of the neurologist Oliver Sacks and the philosopher Merleau-Ponty, he follows a similar analytical route to that discussed in Chapter 2, to offer an understanding of filmmaking. MacDougall stresses how 'Filmmaking requires interactions of the body with the world in registering qualities of texture and shape, which do not exist independently of such encounters'. He argues that 'The world is not apart from, but around and *within* the filmmaker and viewer' (1998: 50, original italics). The same can be said for the ethnographer who uses a camera, whether or not with the intent of making a film. These ideas can also be extended through the idea of ethnography as a place-making practice. We can see the camera as another aspect of the ethnographer's emplacement and, as such, as part of the entanglement (see Ingold 2008) of place. On the one hand, it is an element of the material environment in which the ethnographer is participating. Yet on the other hand, significantly, the camera is also essential to the ethnographer's forms of engagement in that environment, ways of experiencing and *mode* of participation. Moreover, it moves with, rather than independently from, the ethnographer as she or he moves.

In addition, because it is a recording device, the camera lends a further layer of complication to the analysis. In his later work MacDougall stresses how we 'see with our whole bodies, and any image we make carries the imprint of our bodies; that is to say of our being as well as the meanings we intend to convey' (2005: 3). Thus, what MacDougall calls 'corporeal images' can be seen as 'not just the images of other bodies; they are also images of the body behind the camera and its relations with the world'. These are 'inherently reflexive' – whether photographic images that 'refer back to the photographer at the moment of their creation' or filmic images where

'each successive scene further locates the author in relation to the subjects' (2005: 3). Therefore a research event, activity or encounter that is video recorded can be interpreted as place-making on a second level. In the first instance, place is made through the coming together of social, material and sensorial encounters that constitute the research event. However, additionally, place is simultaneously remade as it is recorded in the camera. As such it is remade as a representation of that phenomenological reality. Place can indeed be said to be remade on a third level when viewers of those (audio)visual recordings – including, of course, the ethnographer – use their imaginations to create personal/cultural understandings of the representation. Thus ethnographic uses of audiovisual media can be understood as both a research technique and as practices that become co-constituent of an ethnographic place.

In *Doing Visual Ethnography* (Pink 2007a), I have suggested seeing the camera as an integral part of the identity of the researcher and of the intersubjective relationship between her or him and the people participating in the research. Extending this through the idea of a sensory ethnography, to see the camera as part of the ethnographer's embodied mode of engagement and participation in her or his social, material and sensory environment suggests additional significance for visual methods. Using a camera provides ethnographers with the possibility of creating (audio)visual research materials that invoke not only the visual or verbal knowledge that might be produced through interviews or observations. Rather, it implies that such research materials might provide a route into the more complex multisensoriality of the experiences, activities and events we might be investigating. They do not *record* touch, taste, smell or emotion in the same way that they record images and sounds. Indeed, in this sense they provide an incomplete record. However, an understanding of the senses as essentially interconnected suggests how (audio)visual images and recordings can evoke, or invite memories of the multisensoriality of the research encounter. This potential might also, as I discuss in Chapters 7 and 8 respectively, be engaged in the processes of analysis and representation of ethnography.

VISUAL METHODS, THE SENSES AND THE 'MULTIMODALITY' PARADIGM

A second approach to the use of digital and visual media in ethnography that attends to different sensory modalities has been developed among researchers working in the 'multimodality' paradigm. Although this approach has a greater stress on observation than the agenda for a sensory methodology pursued in this book, it makes some significant connections with the discussion here, particularly as it has been developed by Dicks, Soyinka and Coffey (2006), whose work I discuss below.

The concept of 'multimodality' as developed by Gunter Kress and Theo van Leeuwen takes a semiotic approach (2001: 2). In Kress's earlier definition of multimodality the senses are fundamental to the way we perceive the world. Kress acknowledges that 'none of the senses ever operates in isolation from the others'. Indeed, it is this that he suggests 'guarantees the multimodality of our semiotic world' (2000: 184). Yet he sees 'sight, hearing, smell, taste and feel' as each 'attuned in a quite specific way to the natural environment, providing us with highly differentiated

information' (2000: 184). More explicitly, Kress and van Leeuwen propose that 'the sense of sight gives access to the world differently from the senses of touch, smell, taste' (2001: 127). This approach is clearly quite different from the phenomenological understanding of multisensoriality outlined in Chapter 2. It can, moreover, be directly contrasted to Ingold's assertion that 'that the eyes and ears should not be understood as separate keyboards for the registration of sensation but as organs of the body as a whole, in whose movement, within an environment, the activity of perception consists' (2000: 268). This is one of the fundamental differences between the multimodality paradigm and the approaches of phenomenological anthropology that inform a sensory ethnography. As I shall elaborate below, this is also, in my opinion, one of the limitations of the multimodality approach.

To reiterate the basic principles (see also Chapter 5), multimodality scholars define modes as 'the abstract, non-material resources of meaning-making' and include 'writing, speech, images ... gesture, facial expression, texture, size and shape ... colour' (Dicks et al. 2006: 82; and see Kress and van Leeuwen 2001: 27–9). In contrast, media are distinguished as 'the specific material forms in which modes are realized' (Dicks et al. 2006: 82). For those working in the multimodality paradigm, which is based in a linguistic semiotic approach, an essential difference between modes and media is that modes are abstract and unobservable grammars. As Dicks et al. put it, 'What we actually observe in the field are the various *media* in which these modes are produced – marks on the page, movements of the body, sounds of voices, pictures on the wall' (2006: 82). Dicks et al. (2006) have expanded these ideas to suggest that 'multimedia ethnography' is 'a new multi-semiotic form in which meaning is produced through the inter-relationships between and among different media and modes'. For them, data is defined as 'what we are able to perceive in the field' However, significantly, they stress that 'we perceive [data] through all of our senses, including sight, hearing, touch, smell and even taste'. Taking a broad definition of media, they then go on to suggest that data are actually 'composed of diverse media'. By this they mean that data 'are likely to include sounds, objects, visual designs, people's actions and bodies, etc.' and as such are 'intrinsically multimedia'. This, is where the problematic lies for Dicks et al. Having identified data as such as 'multimedia', they note the disjuncture between the multimedia nature of data and the 'restricted' media used in 'data-records' (2006: 78). Lamenting that 'analysis' is usually conducted in these 'data-records', they write:

> For data analysis purposes, we transform our observations of the phenomenal world into a separate set of materials that reduce it to permanent recordings (through media technologies such as fieldnotes, camera images, etc.). The media available to do this – from pen to video camera – are much more restricted than those occurring in the field. Video footage, for example, limits the information recorded to that amenable to audio-capture and camera-work. (Dicks et al. 2006: 78)

Indeed, Dicks et al. find themselves in a similar conundrum to those faced with the questions Marks (2000) identified (above), regarding the impossibility of directly recording the phenomenology of our participation in the world audiovisually. The route they seek out of this problem is based on the proposition that we should see

'the media produced by field researchers, whether these are images, sound or written records, not as themselves "data" but as ways of *representing* multimedia field data' (Dicks et al. 2006: 79, original italics). Their concern is thus with the relationship between the multimedia nature of field research and the reduced way in which this is represented in recording media.

The limit of their approach for the purposes of a sensory ethnography is that they are concerned with 'multimodality at two "stages" of the ethnographic research process: first, the ethnographer's observations of the field and, second, his/her recording of those observations' (2006: 93). Because this approach relies on observations and representations of what Dicks et al. refer to as a 'phenomenal world' that involves the perception of data 'through all of our senses' (2006: 78), it does not engage with other possibilities and routes through which we might use multiple media to investigate the sensory meanings of the worlds we inhabit. Indeed, the approach might be criticised as being over-dependent on the idea that 'culture' can be 'read' in a Geertzian way – if not as simply 'text', but as a multimedia complex (made up of human actions and material culture).

The difference between the multimodality paradigm and one derived from visual anthropology is made clear when we compare this with MacDougall's point that a social aesthetics does 'not mean a system of signs and meanings encoded in school life', but 'the creation of an aesthetic space or sensory structure' (2005: 105). While understanding communication as multimodal can itself yield useful research findings, the approach could be usefully supplemented by that of a sensory ethnography. Thus 'readings' of the meanings observable in video recordings of human actions and interactions would benefit from being accompanied by further analysis. This would involve understanding the experiential elements of the environment and aesthetics being researched and the way the sensory and emotional effects of these are given meaning by research participants. In the next section I discuss research that attends to some of these issues.

(AUDIO)VISUAL SENSORY APPRENTICESHIP

In Chapter 4 I discussed the idea of the sensory ethnographer as apprentice. In some cases I outlined there the form of apprenticeship had involved the ethnographer becoming involved in some type of performance, such as Japanese dance (Hahn 2007) or Brazilian Capoeira (Downey 2005). Using a handheld video or stills camera while performing would not be possible in most such scenarios. Yet, a tripod-held video camera was a crucial element of Hahn's research about Japanese dance, which I discuss further below. In a contrasting way Grasseni (2004a) used a hand-held video camera to keep a video diary as part of her apprenticeship which involved the task of learning to 'see' as Italian cattle inspectors did (discussed in Chapter 4). These two projects represent quite different practical ways of using video as part of a sensory apprenticeship.

Grasseni's work is a good example of how visual media might be used to understand embodied practices that are, by those who engage in them, couched in terms of visual knowledge – what Grasseni calls 'skilled vision' (2007a). Such practices are

not exclusively visual. As Grasseni herself acknowledges, they are 'never detached from a certain amount of multisensoriality' (2004b: 41) which might explicitly or implicitly also involve evaluation through touch, smell, and sound. Using audiovisual media, Grasseni was able to access, or attune herself to, the visual (multisensorial) practices of the people whose understandings she was seeking to participate in – in her words, to learn to share an 'aesthetic code' (2004b: 28).

Hahn's use of video in her ethnography of the transmission of dance knowledge demonstrates a different route to sensory knowledge. Hahn set up her camera on a tripod, leaving it to film during the dance classes. She describes how she developed this strategy in relation to her teacher and the other students. She writes:

> In my first week of fieldwork Iemoto [Hahn's dance teacher] directed me to come out from behind the camera and take lessons. Also I found that students behaved differently if I held or even sat near the video camera while shooting. Therefore I elected to leave the camera in one place and attended to it as little as possible. (2007: 87)

This use of the camera contrasts distinctly with Grasseni's practices, which involved following the gaze of cattle inspectors with her camera (2004a). While Grasseni was using her video camera as a more direct component of her learning about and embodied participation in the practices of the cattle experts, Hahn's embodied participation in Japanese dance was further removed from her video practices. This becomes clear when she discusses the role of the video tapes in her process of learning, from a position where she already had embodied knowledge of the experiences represented in the footage, writing that 'It seemed that the field tapes were reinforcing my physical understanding of movement/sound while my body also informed the analytical process' (Hahn 2007: 78). Hahn also recognises the limits of video for her particular research. For instance, reflecting on an occasion when she taped her dance teacher preparing for a performance, Hahn writes that: 'although I videotaped her making up and changing costume backstage, these were only surface features – the embodied transfiguration would not be captured through my lens. But the transformation occurred' (2007: 146). In contrast, Hahn's description of her own experience of this transfiguration, as it happened, is represented powerfully in writing in her book. Hahn writes:

> The color, smell, and textures of these objects [the make-up and accessories] were familiar to me. I moved so that I had a direct view of Iemoto's face reflected in the mirror. As I watched her put on a *habutai* (a purple silk fabric to cover the hair under a wig) and begin to apply layers of makeup, an empathetic sensation came over me, as if I could feel the makeup on my face too. (2007: 147)

Hahn's description brings us back to some of the questions raised at the beginning of this chapter: to what extent can such embodied experiences and practices – of the researcher or the research/video subjects/participants – be represented using (audio)visual media? Clearly, there are some aspects of sensory embodied experience, of researcher and of research/video participants that video does not necessarily reach. In the next section I reflect on some of my own research experiences, using video

to research sensory elements of homes and gardens to suggest contexts in which and specific uses of video that can support communication about sensory embodied experience.

SENSORY ETHNOGRAPHY IN MOVEMENT

In previous chapters I have stressed the multisensoriality of the environments in which ethnographers do research. Whether the ethnographer is doing a form of participant observation or interviewing, she or he is still participating in a material, sensorial and social environment. This invokes the question of how audiovisual media might become part of this process. The case studies I discuss below respond to this question in ways that link particularly to the methods of walking with research participants introduced in Chapter 4. However, the method might also be extended to be used to investigate other everyday practices, such as food preparation, as in the work of David Sutton (2006) discussed in Chapter 8.

The multisensory video tour involves the researcher and research participant collaborating to explore a particular environment using video. In my own work I have used a particular model for this encounter: the ethnographer video records while the research participant 'shows' or introduces this material and sensory environment and practices to the ethnographer (Pink 2004, 2006). I have introduced the idea of the video tour elsewhere as a visual and sensory methodology for researching housework and home decoration in the sensory home (Pink 2004, 2007c) and the earlier stages of a community garden development (Pink 2007d, 2008c); readers are recommended to review these texts for detailed discussions of the method in these contexts. There are two key benefits to this use of video. First, the use of a video camera encourages research participants to engage physically with their material and sensory environments to *show* the ethnographer their experiences *corporeally*. Second, the video camera, by recording the research encounter, introduces something of the reflexivity MacDougall refers to in that it records 'not just the images of other bodies; they are also images of the body behind the camera and its relations with the world' (2005: 3). Thus, such methods can be used to emphasise the embodiment or emplacement of both the researcher and the research participant.

The ways in which sensory experience is explored in a video tour will vary according to the research questions being addressed. For instance, in my book *The Future of Visual Anthropology* (2006), I describe how my research participants and I engaged with video to explore their home decoration and housework practices (see Pink 2006 for a detailed analysis). However, when using the same approach to research domestic laundry practices I was driven by different research questions and was interested quite specifically in people's sensory experiences and categorisations of the different textures, smells and sights of items that might potentially become laundry or that were actually being laundered. Thus this research event created a quite different ethnographic 'place' – even though the research encounters of both projects were in homes. This research was developed with Unilever Research as an applied study. With each research participant I first shared an interview (see Chapter 5)

and then collaborated to develop a 'laundry tour' (lasting about one hour), involving my following the research participant around her or his home from room to room recording with my camera and prompting from my check-list when necessary. We examined and discussed the laundry items in each room. However, since the home is actually made up of a great number of items that might potentially become laundry (curtains, rugs, cushion covers, towels, tea cloths, clothing, bed linen and more) this actually meant that we were exploring the sensory meanings of the domestic environment. We were also using these items as prompts through which to discuss the sensory *processes* that this environment went through, since doing laundry itself is a process through which the sensory qualities of domestic objects and environments are transformed. I was interested in finding out how my research participants evaluated these items, in terms of their sensory qualities, and what these sensory qualities meant to them. Therefore, for instance, when we examined towels I was interested in how people interpreted their textures, odours and visual appearance as indicating that they were clean, ready to be used, or needed to be washed immediately or in the near future. Using video in the research process was essential as a facilitating tool in that it allowed us to examine the material and sensory qualities of these items performatively. Thus some participants would *actually* stroke, feel, smell, visually show and as such engage sensorially with items in their homes as ways of expressing their sensory qualities while also verbally articulating their meanings and decision-making processes. Video encouraged research participants to use their whole bodies and material environments and communicate as such about the multisensoriality of their experiences through these performances (for discussions of the findings of this study see Pink 2005b, 2007c). The everyday practices through which the sensory environment of the home is created through laundry practices can be interpreted as part of the process through which places are made. Indeed, it is integral to how the material and identity constituting features of both home and self are created. On video, this process was emphasised as we moved from room to room and gathered or drew together (by recording them in the camera) examples, discussions and demonstrations relating to laundry items, laundry practices, and the decisions research participants made in this ongoing and continuous process. Indeed, because domestic items tend to differ in their laundry cycles, it was possible to gain a sense of how the different trajectories of each laundry item would mean that the sensory composition of the 'home as laundry' was always shifting. As such, the video recording itself can be seen as a research material, as a representation of a place-making encounter – involving the researcher (and thus imbued with the imprint of her presence), the research participant (inviting mimetic identification with her or his embodied practices), and the material/sensory environment. Simultaneously, it represents the idea of place as event or process, as constantly changing.

The laundry study, as well as my research about the sensory home (see Pink 2004, 2006), had as part of its brief an aim to understand how people used sensory categories to give meaning and make decisions about practices they engaged in at home. My later use of the video tour as part of a study of a community garden project took a different approach. In this case, although I was concerned with analysing how the sensoriality of the garden project was essential to the practices, socialities and activities the participants engaged in, I was not directly investigating the sensory categories they used.

Nevertheless, in common with the studies of the sensory home, the community garden study can be seen as an analysis of how sensory embodied practices are engaged in the constitution of place.

To understand the video tours of the community garden I have linked the idea of the video tour with the idea of walking with as a sensory research practice to discuss the idea of 'walking with video' (Pink 2007d). This idea of filming while walking with others is not at all new to social sciences; it has long since been an important technique in anthropological filmmaking, demonstrated well in David and Judith MacDougall's film *Lorang's Way* (1978) as well as other more recent films and in applied visual ethnography practice (Jhala 2007). The community garden was developed as part of the Cittàslow (Slow City) process in Aylsham, a town in Norfolk (UK). Between 2005 and 2007 I undertook several tours of the garden with David, the chairman of the project, some of which I recorded on video. I have discussed two of these tours, which examined the early and middle stages of the garden's development, elsewhere (Pink 2007d, 2008c). Here I reflect on the (to date) final video tour undertaken in 2007, at which point the garden was much more fully developed, although since such projects are always in a state of progress, it would not be proper to ever say it was absolutely complete. The video tours aimed to catch the garden project at certain moments in its development. This development can be seen as part of the process of the multisensorial transformation of the site, which developed from a piece of disused land to a beautiful garden with plants, trees, seats a path and more. The material transformation involved the production of textures, smells and sights, which in turn also involved new sounds, for instance of steps underfoot, and socialities.

Because the final tour was undertaken at a point that both signalled a stage of advanced development of the garden itself and a final stage in the funded period of my own research, this tour had something of a reflective and conclusive feel to it. As such, this tour was also in itself a memory practice – since it was used as a way of thinking through not only how the garden had most recently developed, but of differences between our previous tours and this tour. In the following case study I demonstrate how MacDougall's ideas about the relationship between touching and seeing can be understood as part of the use of video as a sensory research method. Indeed, MacDougall's notion of seeing as a form of touching (1998, 2005) extends beyond the idea of the physical sensation of touch, to the idea of touching the consciousness of others (1998: 51–2). These interpretations can enable the researcher to create routes into understanding how others inhabit and create their worlds, and the possibility of using video materials to communicate about aspects of these experiences to others.

As we walked into the garden David told me 'as you can see, there's a little bit of change now. That's the new garden, all the way down at the back there ... take a walk over, shall we?'. My camera followed David's gaze as he invited me to 'see' the new garden, and then followed him as we went off the brickweave path. We walked over the softer grass, towards the area that he had indicated, now 'in' the new garden, to experience it close-up and engage more intensely with its sensory qualities. This closeness meant attending to the colours and textures of the plants and the materiality of the garden. We approached the wooden surrounds that had been constructed around the big flower beds.

FIGURE 6.1 My camera followed David to gaze on the flower bed. Video still © Sarah Pink 2007.

FIGURE 6.2 As David restored the fallen sunflower to its former height I gained a sense of how it had stood tall, and of sadness that it had been destroyed by the bad weather. Video still © Sarah Pink 2007.

David said they had become overcrowded with flowers and pointed out the types of plants and their colour to me. However, this was not just a visual survey, since actually *in* the garden David was much more physically involved with the flowers, many of which he had planted and/or tended himself. He took me to where the unusual red sunflowers had fallen in the quite violent rains of that summer, now touching each flower as he showed them to me.

He raised one of the fallen sunflowers to its former height before it had been lost in the gales. In the now calm, quiet garden, the restoration of the plant in this way emphasised for me the physical power of the destructive gales. It also involved David's

own embodied and tactile engagement with the plants, a theme that continued throughout our tour of the garden as he touched each of the plants he led me to, seemingly bringing them forward to the camera and at the same time drawing the camera towards them. At times we used the plants as memory objects, to reminisce about when they had been planted, by whom they had been donated and more. Before video-recording the tour of the garden I did not plan to follow David's hands as he touched different flowers. Rather, what was striking about the experience of doing the tour was that the relationship between touching and seeing, which is stressed by MacDougall (1998: 4–52), was drawn out in significant ways. First, because we began by 'seeing' but soon proceeded to come close enough to the flowers for them to be touched. Second, because touching the flowers became a way of showing them to me and showing them for the video. Third, by touching the flowers David showed his relationship to them – it was he (with others) who planted and tended them. His very relationship with them was tactile and physical rather than simply as someone who would visually appreciate them from a distance as he walked through. Instead, David walked in the garden and inhabited it with the flowers. The physical activity and closeness this involved also had an affective aspect. The restoration of the red sunflowers to their former height was indeed a moment in which I felt sad for the effort that had been put into their planting and, more generally, for the garden having lost them. The garden itself can be understood through interweaving material and emotional narratives, and this represents one of these.

Elsewhere (Pink 2007b, 2008c) I have discussed the importance of the pathway that goes through this garden. Because the pathway was designed and commissioned by the committee of residents that is responsible for the garden's development, it has played an essential role in the production of the garden as a renewed sensory environment. It has changed the way that it is experienced under foot and the possibilities that people have for engagement with it and mobility through it. Now David began to show me how two new paths would be incorporated. To do this he walked the route of one of the planned paths across the grass, as it would divert from the main pathway. He stopped at its proposed end, where a bench would be placed. The positioning of the benches was important because, as David put it, 'lots of people sit on that bench there but ... it's under trees – look – and it's in permanent shade'. The new benches would mean that people could have an alternative sensory experience of sitting in the garden, in the sunlight. Plans for the garden, based on the sensory embodied experience of already being *in* and engaged with it over time, thus are intended to make possible imagined new sensory embodied experiences of it. The video tour of the garden presented this in terms of movement and of being there in the garden. It represented not simply how the garden would look different, but how it would *feel* different.

By the time this collaborative video tour of the garden was undertaken, the garden project had been up and running for over two years. As we stood at the entrance at the end of our tour, David compared the 'field' to how it used to be – 'bare' and 'muddy', a place that one could not walk through to the town on a wet day. He noted how it now had a path through it and was filled with flowers. These reflections are highly significant because they not only describe the sensory transformation of the 'field' into a garden, but they also refer back to our previous video tours.

We had visited the garden when it was 'muddy' and 'bare', we video-toured it in the rain, in the wet grass avoiding the mud on the ground (see Pink 2007d, 2008c). This time, in contrast, we had walked on the firm dry path. Before there had been no flower beds, now the garden is a place of flowers, as David's tactile tour of the flower beds brought to the fore – they are part of the way that he has both created and experiences being in the garden. Being there, in the garden, with the video camera, offers a way of accessing these sensorial aspects of the process of the development and experiences of it as well as some understanding of the memories and imaginaries associated with it. It does not offer the researcher a way of knowing how the participant(s) in the research experience the garden, but it does provide a route into using one's own experiences to imagine those of others. It allows research participants to use their whole bodies and senses to touch, show, smell, and verbalise what is important to them about the environments they make and inhabit. As such, it enables researchers to co-produce materials that offer rich opportunities for reflexive analysis. Ultimately, these video sequences might also be used to communicate something of these experiences to research audiences.

Walking with video demonstrates how phenomenological audiovisual research methods might serve a sensory ethnography that recognises the significance of movement. Other forms of mobility might also be engaged in and for audiovisual research. The geographer Spinney's (e.g. 2007) ethnographic research with London cyclists, discussed in the next section, is a good example. More generally, a sensory video-ethnography-in-movement approach thus offers exciting possibilities for ethnographers seeking to combine their empathetic co-presence with participants in movement *and* verbal reflection about participants' everyday practices.

IMAGE ELICITATION AND SENSORY PRACTICE

Above I have outlined a theoretical approach to the interconnectedness of the visual and other senses that indicates that when we view images that represent other people's sensory experiences, then we are better placed to imagine what these might be like. The same approach also lends itself to the idea of using images as a form of elicitation in sensory ethnography. In Chapter 5 I discussed how some researchers have used sound and olfactory elicitation in interviews. A similar use of photo elicitation might be used as a visual research practice in sensory ethnography. There are several options.

A conventional photo-elicitation practice would involve showing research participants images of other people or objects and to ask them to discuss aspects of these images in interviews (see also Chapter 5). In the context of a sensory ethnography, this might involve inviting people to interpret other people's embodied experiences, or to suggest what it might feel like to be involved in a particular activity, or to use a particular object. Such methods might indicate how research participants interpret and categorise other people's sensory experiences as well as inviting biographical and memory work regarding their own experiences. Another method involves showing research participants images of themselves engaged in particular activities and then exploring how they experienced

these activities verbally in interviews. This method is particularly useful if one is trying to understand physical practices and activities which it is difficult to interrupt when they are in progress, yet which are so embodied that it is also problematic to disengage the discussion of them from the practice of them.

For example, Spinney discusses how he used video as part of a 'mobile ethnography' (2008: 79) in which he sought to understand 'what people's experiences of cycling were, how it becomes meaningful to them, why they move in particular ways, and how these practices define and reproduce particular identities' (2008: 76). To achieve this, he combined cycling with and video-recording research participants with interviews, during which he showed them sections of video footage. Spinney highlights the 'kinaesthetic and embodied approach' to understanding riders' practices and talk that his method allowed (2008: 92). Using video in addition to riding with other cyclists, he was able to 'elicit embodied understandings from participants' through the playback of 'fleeting and ephemeral moments' (2008: 98). Through such research practices Spinney suggests that 'we begin to construct a vocabulary for the unspeakable and thus language can begin to play more of a role in how we understand and represent the embodied, the fleeting and the sensual' (2008: 101–2). Likewise, image elicitation provided a route to discussing often unspoken categories of knowing in a pilot study I developed with Phil Bust, involving interviewing construction workers about their understandings and practices regarding health and safety. It would have been impossible for us to interrupt the workers while they were actually working, since the procedures they were involved in required their full attention. However, by taking images of a worker earlier and then showing them to him during the interview we were able to bring the embodied work experience much more directly into the interview context (see Bust et al. 2008).

A further use of image elicitation involves inviting research participants themselves to produce images (see Pink 2007a for examples of this in the context of visual ethnography practice). Recent projects have applied similar principles to exploring sensory experience. Samantha Warren has developed this practice further in the context of what she refers to as a 'sensual methodology' in organisational aesthetics research. One of the concerns of this subdiscipline is with the feelings employees have about 'their organisational lives based especially on their sensory encounters with the world around them' (Warren 2008: 560). Warren's own research was based in an organisation that had been refurbished to create a more 'playful' and 'fun' environment (2008: 567). To explore research participants' feelings about their environment Warren combined three methods: 'semi-structured biographical interviews'; 'respondent-led photography'; and 'aesthetic ethnography', which involves using the researcher's own aesthetic experience to inform her or his understandings (2008: 568). Participants were invited to photograph their experiences of the department as they chose and the photographs were then discussed in interview. Warren notes how her own 'aesthetic experiences and judgements were useful "empathetic framing" of the experiences of others' and provided a comparative perspective when they differed (2008: 569). The photographs in turn, she reports, worked in three ways: 'as a window on participants aesthetic worlds'; 'evoking and "recreating" aesthetic experience during the interviews'; and as 'sites through which to explore the socially constructed nature of the participants' aesthetic judgements' (2008: 570–1). Using

photographs in this way, Warren was able to combine her own empathetic knowing with interviewees' representations of their own experiences and an analytical acknowledgement of the constructedness of the categories they would use to express this.

Although image elicitation often involves the use of photography, some interesting uses of participant-produced drawings and paintings have also been developed. In visual anthropology these include the work of Ian Edgar (e.g. 2004) and Gemma Orobitg (2004). The cultural geographer Divya P. Tolia-Kelly has also developed particularly interesting uses of participant image-making to explore sensory and affective experiences in collaboration with the artist Grahame Lowe. Tolia-Kelly discusses the 'Nurturing Ecologies' project, which investigated how the landscape of the Lake District National Park in England was experienced beyond the frame of a singular 'English sensibility' by working with migrants from Eastern Europe, India, Ireland and Scotland (Tolia-Kelly 2007: 329–31). Using drawing and painting, she suggests, offered a route to 'a set of affective registers that are normally not encountered in representations of this cultural landscape', thus aiming to 'make tangible a divergent set of sensory responses to this landscape and show how affect and emotion are experienced' (2007: 331). Tolia-Kelly's collaborative methodology is particularly interesting in terms of sensory ethnography practice because it links to several of the research practices already discussed in this book, including talking, the representation of embodied knowing, and walking. First, it involved biographical workshops, thus acknowledging the role of biography and memory. Second, in visual workshops participants were invited to produce collages to represent their own 'valued landscapes'. Finally, the groups took a walk through the Lake District after which the researchers asked them to 'record (using paint and paper) their responses to their experiences of the Lake District' (2007: 339). Tolia-Kelly demonstrates how this use of painting, connected to other collaborative methods, allowed new routes of expression creating 'alternative grammars that are not always encountered or expressible in oral interviews' (2007: 340). Her example invites us to consider how the sensory ethnographer might engage visual practices, combined with verbal discussion, to explore research participants' biographically situated encounters with material and social environments.

These case studies demonstrate how sensory ethnographic image-elicitation methods can have some key uses, including: offering research participants alternative media and frames through which to express their emplaced, sensory and emotional experiences and ways of knowing; inviting engagements with sensory memories; providing gateways through which research participants and researchers might imagine themselves once again engaged in an embodied practice or actual environment represented audiovisually; potentially evoking previous embodied experiences of such practices; enabling researchers to create empathetic connections to the experiences of research participants; and inviting verbal reflection along these themes. While image elicitation could be accused of privileging the visual, it would be erroneous to associate this method with merely the production of visual knowledge. Indeed, by recognising the role of visual images as a standard medium for communicating about and invoking other sensory experiences, ethnographers can engage its potential for representation and forms of communication across modern western sensory categories.

THE SENSORIALITY OF VISUAL CULTURES

Above I have stressed the interconnectedness of the senses, the impossibility of isolating the visual and the potential of visual images to invoke multisensory experiences. This does not only apply to the images produced by researchers or used in image-elicitation contexts. Rather, all images should be understood as being in some way multisensory, and this extends to the visual cultures of the people who participate in our research. In *Doing Visual Ethnography* (Pink 2007a), I recommend that the visual ethnographer should attend to the visual cultures of the people she or he is trying to understand. Such visual cultures are themselves always part of a wider sensory context and, as such, visual images can be identified as both multisensory objects and as being evocative of textures, smells, tastes, sounds and more. This idea can be applied to sensory ethnography on two levels: first, to the visual texts as materials that research participants use to communicate about sensory experiences or from which they acquire sensory ways of knowing; and second, as a way of understanding the sensory qualities of the materiality of visual texts. However, the emotional and sensory affects of visual texts will themselves have culturally and biographically specific meanings.

While ethnographers clearly need to attend to the multisensoriality as well as the visuality of the local visual cultures of their research participants, as yet this is an emergent form of analysis. Few published studies of the sensoriality of local visual cultures exist. However, some recent work is paving the way for a subfield in this area, in particular with reference to its connections to material culture studies. It is now generally recognised that ethnographers need to attend not only to the visual content of local visual cultures, but also to their materiality. More recently, the sensoriality of such material cultures has been brought to the fore in the work of Elizabeth Edwards, Chris Gosden and Ruth B. Phillips (2006). They suggest that 'A broader view of the senses, including the sensory integration of vision, not only brings with it a more holistic view of the role of material culture in human relations, but also extends our understanding of the integrated field of material as phenomenologically experienced' (2006: 4). Liam Buckley's (2006) work demonstrates particularly well how such a sensory approach might be applied to a local visual culture. He shows how sensory experiences and meanings are inseparable from Gambian studio photography, arguing that in this context 'The photography involved in this portraiture is not merely a visual process but also a phenomenological and nondiscursive position that links the visual to other sensory registers, including the embodied emotion of elegance' (Buckley 2006: 62).

In an earlier section of this chapter I drew from the work of MacDougall (1998, 2005) and Marks (2000) to suggest that researcher-produced audiovisual texts might be understood as evocative of the multisensoriality of experience. These ideas might equally be applied to researcher's interpretations of other people's audiovisual productions. Thus, by viewing other people's audiovisual representations of their experiences, lives or places, we are able to begin to imagine what it might feel like to be situated as they are. This might be through, as MacDougall has suggested, the imprint of the corporeality of the maker of the audiovisual text her or himself. Or it might involve empathising with what we understand the sensory embodied experience of a video

subject to be, following MacDougall's (1998) idea that there is a close connection between seeing and touching. As such, we might to some extent begin to imagine the sensorial and emotional affects of other people's visual cultures. However, again following the idea that such texts might not be fully interpreted without more specific cultural and often biographical knowledge (see Pink 2006), the analysis of such texts needs to be firmly located in relation to other methods of qualitative research, including, for instance, interviewing and participatory methods.

As part of my research about the Cittàslow movement I have begun to explore the multisensoriality of local visual culture in one Cittàslow town, Diss. Here local (audio)visual productions and performed/experiential activities involving visual texts and practices play an important role in the town's public representation to local people and outsiders. These representations include the production of documentary film, photographic exhibitions, illustrated guides to walks around the town, and guided tours of the town. In this and earlier chapters I have highlighted the multisensoriality of walking and of film/video or photography as research *practices* that are involved in the making of ethnographic places. These media are, however, at least in some modern western contexts, used by the people who participate in our research as ways of communicating to others and it is useful to analyse them with the same attention to the senses as we would research methods that engage similar practices. In my analysis of a printed leaflet, which uses drawings and written instructions to guide its user on a tour of Diss, I found that rather than simply being a way of 'seeing' the town, this leaflet invites the user to use all the senses to engage corporeally and imaginatively with the town's physical environment. Likewise, in analysing a documentary film made about Diss in the 1960s (*Something About Diss*, 1964), I have come to understand the uses of walking, movement, rhythm, close-up images and voiceover as communicating in such a way that suggest to the viewer a particular way of being in the town and invite her or him to imagine also being emplaced in this way (see Pink 2008e).

Attention to how local people use photography, art, drawing, video and other (audio)visual media to represent the private and public narratives and contexts of their lives can play an important role in any ethnographic study. Further attention to the sensoriality of these practices and of the contexts that they seek to represent can bring to the fore new insights into the experiences of the people researchers work with and the meanings these might have for them.

SUMMING UP

Within sensory approaches to ethnography there is an emergent set of research practices that use audiovisual and digital media to create routes to understanding other people's sensory experience. Although audiovisual media and representations cannot fully reproduce multisensory experience, as I have shown they can provide researchers with: ways of inviting research participants to use their whole bodies to communicate; reflexive texts that represent the emplacement of the researcher in the research context; and processes through which to share and collaborate in the production of an 'ethnographic place-event' with research participants.

RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING

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PART III
INTERPRETING AND REPRESENTING SENSORY KNOWING

7
INTERPRETING MULTISENSORY RESEARCH: The Place of Analysis in Sensory Ethnography

In Part 2, I suggested how the sensory ethnographer might go about understanding, knowing and producing knowledge in fieldwork contexts. This chapter moves on to a second level of knowing and knowledge production, through what is usually called analysis. However, the task of this chapter is not straightforward. In part this is because (with some of the exceptions discussed below) it is rare that ethnographers who work with the senses actually write in any detail about how they went about analysing their research materials and experiences. The authors of some earlier 'sensory ethnographies' were more explicit about their analytical processes. For example, in his monograph *Sound and Sentiment* (1982), Feld discusses how he combined structural (following Lévi-Strauss) and interpretive (following Geertz) approaches and makes his systematic structural analysis accessible diagrammatically in the text. However, the apparent lack of analytical explicitness, particularly in more recent work, is instructive. It implies that the analysis of experiential, imaginative, sensorial and emotional dimensions of ethnography is itself often an intuitive, messy and sometimes serendipitous task. Indeed, more generally, while ethnographers often write about their experiences of doing the research and their encounters with others, it is much less common for them to write about a stage of analysis. In fact, the idea that there are real rigid distinctions between fieldwork and analysis, making them separate stages of an ethnographic research process, would be misguiding. Some projects have distinct data collection and analysis stages, which are often marked out using spatial (i.e. the data collection takes place in one location and the analysis in another) and temporal (i.e. the data collection is completed first and the analysis is carried out later) metaphors. Yet even in these cases the seeds of analytical thought may start to germinate in the qualitative researcher's mind as soon as she or he begins the process of learning and knowing about other people's experiences.

Therefore an initial and fundamental way to situate analysis is to place it within the knowledge production process. In this formulation, analysis can be understood

as a way of knowing. However, the practice of analysis can also be conceptualised as points in the research where there are particularly intense and systematic treatments of research materials – interview transcripts, video, photographs, notes, and memories and imaginaries. This process often involves some degree of human intentionality in that the research might aim to impose an order on and deduce patterns within qualitative research materials. Such activities are often performed away (although not totally in isolation) from the location and relationships through which these materials were created.

In this chapter I review some examples discussed in existing literature, as well as my own experiences, to ask how an analytical process might attend to sensory categories and experiences. However, it is not my aim to create a method or template for sensory analysis, or for the analysis of materials specifically produced through a sensory methodology. It would be impossible to provide an answer to the question of 'how to' carry out a sensory ethnography analysis. Indeed, no standard procedure exists. Rather, what follows is an approach to analysis that accounts for and attends to the senses and a set of suggestions regarding how an analytical process might acknowledge sensory experience and knowing. As for any ethnographic process, the ways these approaches are incorporated in particular projects and used in relation to existing methods of analysis will depend on the creativity of individual researchers.

First, however, a key question needs to be addressed: what is analysis? Here I treat analysis as a process of abstraction, which serves to connect the phenomenology of experienced reality into academic debate or policy recommendations. The variation lies in the methods used in this process (and as discussed in Chapter 8, to represent its findings). In qualitative research these methods range from very systematic approaches to more intuitive forms of thinking through the meanings of ethnographic materials and experiences. At the same time, creating an analysis is not an activity that is itself isolated from 'experience' or from the researcher's embodied knowing. To some extent this is a process of re-insertion, through memory and imagination work. However, following Downey's point (2007) that embodied learning should be understood as involving physiological as well as cognitive and affective changes, analysis does not just happen in our heads, but involves all our corporeality. Thus, to borrow the concept of place, to understand analytical practice in ethnography involves understanding analysis as the process of bringing together a series of things in ways that make them mutually meaningful. Ethnographic places are events that involve the strange combination and interweaving of memory, imagination, embodied experience, socialities, theory, power relations and more. Massey's (2005) understanding of places as 'open' is important here since it allows us to conceptualise the places of *doing ethnography* and of *ethnographic analysis* as mutually open.

SITUATING ANALYSIS: A PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVE

The idea that fieldwork and analysis form different stages of the ethnographic process can create the misconception that after the fieldwork the remaining task of the ethnographer is simply to analyse the *content* of the research materials. While the analysis of the content of ethnographic materials can form part of the research

process, it is more beneficial to take a broader and more flexible approach to how, where and when analysis occurs and what it involves. Thus, analysis can be situated in two ways.

First, it would be unlikely that an ethnographer would be able to 'go native' to the point that she or he departed totally from any analytical thought about her or his experiences and became totally immersed in the sensorial and emotional ways of being and knowing lived by the people participating in the research. Indeed, to do so would be problematic since this would mean losing sight of the research question itself. This in turn would mean that the ethnographer's learning would be devoid of a researcher's intentionality. Therefore (as is clear from the case studies of interviewing and participant observation discussed in Chapters 4 and 5) analysis is implicit to the research process. Analysis is both a way of knowing engaged in by the researcher during the research and it is part of the reflexivity of the sensory ethnographer who seeks to understand other people's ways of being in the world but is simultaneously aware that her or his involvement is part of a process that will eventually abstract these experiences to produce academic knowledge. This continuous analysis, which forms and informs the research process, also influences the systems ethnographers use for organising their materials during research, and can influence the themes identified when systematic desk-based analyses are conducted with the materials.

Second, when research materials are analysed away from the context in which they were produced, a sensory ethnography approach explicitly seeks to maintain (or construct) connections between the materials and the ways of knowing associated with their production. Therefore the analysis itself should be situated *in relation to* the phenomenological context of the production of the materials. This means treating the materials themselves as texts that can be evocative of the processes through which they were produced. Research materials can be used as prompts that help to evoke the memories and imaginations of the research, thus enabling us to re-encounter the sensorial and emotional reality of research situations. Such bringing together of research materials creates the ethnographic place as a new event.

These uses do not preclude the rather more systematic analysis of the themes and content of research materials, which allows ethnographers to detect patterns and idiosyncracies in people's practices and in the details of how they discuss and represent themselves and the worlds they live in. Such systematic analysis might also focus on the ways in which research participants use particular sensory categories and corporeal actions to organise and communicate about sensory experience and knowledge.

In projects where one sole researcher is working with her or his own materials and experiences, this process is relatively simple. However, projects which are based on team research will require greater practical effort so that research materials might be shared. To situate the analysis in relation to the research context in these circumstances it is important to annotate research materials. This might involve providing written notes to go with (audio)visual texts, additional notes to describe the contexts of interviews, field notes etc., which might provide a 'way in' for other researchers attempting to comprehend something of the phenomenological reality of the way knowledge was produced through the research encounter, and of the non-verbal ways of knowing that the researcher experienced.

RESEARCH MATERIALS AS SENSORY TEXTS

In Chapter 6 I stressed the multisensoriality of the material and visual culture that might be part of an interview encounter. Ethnographers might treat the material culture of their own disciplines as being equally multisensorial – the note-books, photos, printed transcripts, computer screens, videos and so on. They are sensorial in that they are themselves material objects, embedded in their own biographies and memory objects that are connected to the research process. However, as in the analysis of photographs, the researcher is not only interested in the materiality and biographies of these objects, but also in their content in terms of what they *represent*. In the case of a sensory approach to ethnography one of the objectives must be to treat the content of the research materials – by which I mean the written words, the visual images, material objects, utterances, etc. – as evocative of the research encounter through which they were produced, and of the embodied knowing this involved. At the same time, there is a case for treating these materials as representations of knowledge that can be analysed systematically and thematically. In this section I attend to the idea of research materials as evocative of the sensoriality, and thus of the embodied, emplaced ways of knowing, that formed part of the research encounter. It is in discussions of visual ethnography that these ideas have been most fully developed to date. Therefore I first outline this area and then suggest how similar ideas might be applied to understanding other research materials.

In Chapter 6 I introduced David MacDougall's understandings of the role of the body and senses in ethnographic filmmaking. MacDougall's insights are also relevant to understanding how an ethnographer might view visual material produced as part of the research process. Although his comments are directed towards analysing how audiences view documentary film, in fact, if applied to the idea of the ethnographer as audience/analyst of her or his own video footage or photographs, they are instructive. MacDougall suggests that 'Our film experience relies upon our assuming the existence of a parallel sensory experience in others' (1998: 53) and, drawing from the work of Merleau-Ponty, he proposes that the 'resonance of bodies ... suggests a synchrony between viewer and viewed that recovers the prelinguistic, somatic relation to others of infancy, a capacity that still remains accessible to us in adulthood' (1998: 53). In MacDougall's analysis this process of resonance between bodies involves 'the viewer ... usually responding to not only the content of the images ... but also to the postural schema of the film itself, embodying the filmmaker' (1998: 53). However, if the viewer is the ethnographer her or himself who is viewing video footage or photographs that she or he has produced in collaboration with research participants, then the 'resonance of bodies' may be understood differently. This implies a much more direct resonance, a regaining of one's past experience and a retouching of relationships, textures and emotions. Indeed, the relationship between vision and touch has been particularly prominent in the discussions of some film theorists.

MacDougall emphasises the relationship between touching and seeing as particularly relevant to filmic representations. He writes that 'touch and vision do not become interchangeable but share an experiential field. Each refers to a more general faculty. I can touch with my eyes because my experience of surfaces includes both touching and seeing, each deriving qualities from the other' (1998: 51). The film

theorist Laura Marks also emphasises the connection between touch and vision in that 'if vision can be understood to be embodied, touch and other senses necessarily play a part in vision' (2000: 22). Applying this to film, she argues that 'since memory functions multisensorially, a work of cinema, though it only directly engages two senses, activates a memory that necessarily involves all the senses' (2000: 22). Marks' comments similarly have relevance to the process of a sensory ethnography since they imply a point of connection between the idea of sensory memory, as outlined in Chapter 2, and the evocation of such memories through audiovisual media. Although Marks's analysis (like MacDougall's) refers to completed films, her ideas are significant for the sensory ethnographer because they can inform our understanding of how the embodied and emplaced nature of ethnographic encounters and knowledge, which might be neither visual or verbal, might be invested in video-recordings or photographs produced as part of a sensory ethnography. Indeed, Hahn's discussion of how she analysed the video-recordings she made of Japanese dance confirms that ethnographers have already begun to attend to this potential of video as a research material. Hahn describes how:

> Analysis of my video documentation of [Japanese dance] lessons enabled me to focus on very small units of transmission and analyze the gradual embodiment of the artistic practice. From personal experience, I 'knew' how Iemoto taught dance. My body had been through the methodical repetitions of movements. Curiously, kinaesthetic sensations (the sense of motion and orientation) often fell over me when I observed the videotapes, and somehow guided me through the analysis. It seemed that the field tapes were reinforcing my physical understanding of movement/sound while my body also informed the analytical process. (2007: 78)

Hahn's experiences highlight the interconnectedness of corporeal experiences with the analytical process. Embodied and sensory memories of fieldwork likewise informed my own analysis of domestic video tours (see Pink 2004, 2006) and community garden tours. However, in contrast to the 'kinaesthetic sensations' Hahn (2007: 78) describes, my capacity to imagine myself into the corporeality represented by the video tapes was more specifically connected to my own research experiences. Whereas over an extended period of time Hahn had learnt the movements that she was viewing on video, my own tours of homes and gardens were more concerned with understanding research subjects' verbal and embodied commentary about and corporeal experience of particular physical environments. This nevertheless does not mean that my analytical process was any less corporeally informed, but that it was informed by a different type of corporeal engagement with the practices and environment inhabited by the research subjects. In each of my video tours of the sensory home, I accompanied and video-recorded the research participant around her or his home and while engaging in a cleaning task. When I came to analyse these materials I found myself concerned with the question of 'how to interpret these existing representations of my fieldwork experiences anthropologically'. In reflecting on this in *Home Truths*, I noted how 'I *had* been there and to a certain extent the videos along with my more general fieldnotes were evocative of that experience' (2004: 38, and see Pink 2006: Chapters 3 and 4). When reviewing the garden tours undertaken as part of my

research into the Cittàslow movement (2005–7) I was reminded of the importance of the sensations of being there in the garden, for example of the ground underfoot, and the weather. This embodied, sensorial and emotional engagement with the materials was crucial to my analysis. It helped me to imagine and feel my way back into the research encounter. This can be understood likewise as a route back into the embodied knowing that was part of that research experience. I suggest that using video in this way can offer ethnographers ways to reconnect with those non-verbalised ways of experiencing and knowing that form an integral part of the research encounter, and use these as part of the analysis. On one level, this process of revisiting the research encounter though prompting the memory and imagination in such a way provides a way of contextualising the systematic analysis of what is said, done and enacted on video. On another, however, it offers the ethnographer a corporeal route to the sensorial and emotional affects of that research encounter, which themselves are ways of ethnographic knowing. It also significantly provides the ethnographer with opportunities to self-consciously reflect on those experiences, and as such arrive at a new level of awareness about them.

The above discussion of how audiovisual materials might be used to make the research encounter present in the analysis are also suggestive of how other research materials might be used similarly. Indeed, it is not only visual images that might be memorable or evocative or the multisensoriality of a research encounter and of the researcher's emplacement. Thus MacDougall has suggested that 'voices have textures as though perceived tactilely and visually' (1998: 52), and within his notion of an 'acoustemology' Steven Feld has proposed that 'hearing and voicing link the felt sensations of sound and balance to those of physical and emotional presence' (2005: 184), arguing that 'the experience of place can always be potentially grounded in an acoustic dimension' (2005: 185). Desjarlais' work provides some insights into how audio-recorded materials and audio memories can create strong connections to the research encounter. For example, reflecting on the death of the elderly Kisang Omu, whose commentaries were central to his audio-recorded biographical research, Desjarlais writes how '... A life is impermanent. And yet I hear the tones of her voice still' (2003: 351). In discussing an interview with Mheme, with whom he often used an intermediary to help 'mediate the spatial, linguistic and cultural divides that separated us now and then', Desjarlais reflects on a moment when their communication became more direct. He writes: '... Mheme asked me directly when I would be returning to Nepal. When I listened to the section of the tape that registered the exchange that followed, I hear Mheme's voice and can recall seeing in his eyes a tone of relaxed amicableness' (2003: 337). The type of linguistic encounter that this conversation involved, Desjarlais tells us, 'usually coincides with a sustained "eye encounter"' which, as on that occasion, 'often hints at a wished for co-substantiality of thought and feeling among speakers' (2003: 337–8). Although his interviews were audio-recorded rather than video-recorded, Desjarlais emphasises the enduring importance of the visual aspects of this encounter. Significantly, he writes: 'This, then, is how I recall Mheme's "face," in dialogue with my own during my last visit to his home that year. It is the record of our engagement' (2003: 338). Understanding research materials and memories in this way brings to the fore the sensory and emotional affects of the research encounter, and the role of these aspects of experience in the making of memories,

knowledge and, ultimately academic meanings. Desjarlais' work provides an important example of how such an acknowledgement can allow the analysis of the materials to be understood as inextricable from the processes through which they are produced and made meaningful.

As these examples illustrate, the process of analysis is both embedded in the research encounter itself and involves forms of memory work and imagination that link the researcher in the present to moments in the past. These connections can be thought of as involving sensory and embodied memories, of perhaps a look, a feeling, a sound, a taste, or any combination of these.

WORKING WITH SENSORY CATEGORIES

Ethnographers focusing on the senses have both emphasised the interconnectedness of the senses and stressed the importance of seeking to understand other people's sensoria. Indeed, one of the tasks of the sensory ethnographer is often to identify the sets of culturally constituted sensory modalities that people associate with their physiologies and the categories that they use to express sensory experience.

One way to do this involves determining the different linguistic categories that the people one is doing research with use to describe sensory experience. The limitation of this approach is that if it is not appropriately combined with other forms of collaboration and experiential participation, it can give preference to spoken and written language above other ways of knowing and communicating. Nevertheless, it certainly offers important routes into understanding how other people's sensoria are constructed. This approach might be used to understand both the way sensory categories are used by people in the ethnographer's own culture, or to elucidate the sensorium of people in other cultures. Both of these exercises might involve forms of comparison, although the latter would entail a more obvious form of cross-cultural comparison.

Doing research in my own culture, when interviewing research participants for a project about domestic laundry, I was interested in how these participants used different sensory categories to refer to specific aspects of their laundry experiences and practices. I was also concerned with their ways of corporeal and sensory knowing and how they related these ways of knowing to specific sensory modalities. In the interview transcript discussed in Chapter 5, Jane, the research participant, is using established modern western sensory categories to describe how she *knows* that something is clean or dirty. She discusses visual stains, the tactile sense of pressed clothes, and the smell of dirty clothes. It becomes clear through her deliberations, however, that not just one of these sensory modalities could be relied on to determine if a laundry item was clean, since the visual evidence of a stain would not be enough to give a dirty classification. Rather, the feel and smell of an item might also be used to evaluate laundry. Jane and I were working with the same modern western sensorium, and it was a straightforward step for me to then undertake an analysis of her and the other research participants' interviews and video tapes, which examined how they understood their laundry in terms of vision, touch and smell. In developing my analysis I therefore opted to use the standard modern western sensorium to structure my understanding of 'the sensory home'. My analysis remains rooted in the idea that phenomenologically the senses are inextricably

interconnected. Yet to understand how people's self-identities and homes are mutually constituted, in terms of social and cultural practices, it is appropriate to separate the senses analytically. However, as I set out in my book *Home Truths* (2004), this false separation had another analytical objective. I was not simply interested in how the home was discussed in terms of the senses, but in how different individuals used their references to the sensory qualities of their experiences of home and their domestic practices, as ways of commenting on their own identities. Moreover, I was interested in how the actual living out of sensory domestic practices, and the engagements with the forms of sensory knowing embedded in them, became in itself a way of constituting specific gendered and generational self-identities through practice. The analysis revealed that different individuals would both refer verbally and demonstrate performatively how they would use different sensory modalities to evaluate the same areas of their homes, types of 'dirt' or the urgency of doing similar domestic tasks. In doing so, some participants used 'alternative' sensory categories to those used in what they understood as a housewifely approach to housework as ways of departing from 'conventional' housework practices and the identities that they implied.

Thus, the modern western five-sense sensorium can offer useful analytical categories that might lead us to understand embodied knowledge and practice. Several other scholars, whose work is discussed in earlier chapters, have similarly organised their discussions in sections or chapters focusing on various combinations of sight, sound, smell, taste, and texture. For example, Tilley's discussion of gardening in Britain and Sweden (2006), Hockey's auto-ethnography of long-distance running in Britain (2006), and Edvardsson and Street's exploration of the nurse as ethnographer in Sweden (2007), all based in modern western contexts, make use of these categories. In these works the sensory categories used are of specific relevance in the context of the research and relate to the understanding of the world expressed by research participants as well as serving as analytical categories. As the following examples demonstrate, the process of creating a relationship between the way sensory experience is categorised by research participants and the use of sensory categories in the analysis and, subsequently, representation of other people's experience and understanding leads to different project-specific forms of presentation.

Gediminas Lankauskas (2006) compares the ways that sight and taste are implicated in how people experience and remember socialism at Grūtas Statue Park in Lithuania. In his discussion of the way the Park is experienced, Lankauskas distinguishes between how sight and taste are activated 'as a means for memorializing socialism' (2006: 30). He describes how the 'park-museum' includes both exhibits and a café, to which the trail through its grounds leads visitors (2006: 39). Through a discussion of a tour of the Park and comments made by people experiencing it, he proposes that 'seeing socialism at Grūtas is not the same as savouring it' (2006: 45). Here the visual and the gustatory are associated with different types of memory, so that he writes:

> While for most of my informants beholding the dejected socialist icons constituted a distancing and hence dis-identifying experience, partaking of the recuperated 'Soviet' dishes and drinks at the café typically invoked sentiments of nostalgic longing

> and yearning – not for socialism as an oppressive system but for the quotidian sociability centred around kin and friends that that system inadvertently produced and perpetuated. (Lankauskas 2006: 45)

While I would qualify this discussion by stressing that both sight and taste are never actually experienced in isolation – they are indeed categories used to represent aspects of embodied experience – their use as analytical categories provides a revealing contrast of how memory is differentially bound up with specific ways of experiencing the materiality of the statues and cuisine of socialism. By focusing on visual and gustatory practices, Lankauskas provides an insightful analysis that goes beyond simply considering visual and gustatory meanings. Rather, this emphasis leads him to a more complex analysis of remembering in a post-socialist context.

Whereas some research brings to the fore existing modern western sensory categories and thus allows researchers to make the straightforward connection of presenting these as equally useful analytical categories, other ethnographic contexts demand that researchers seek new categories. Edvardsson and Street's (2007) discussion of an embodied and sensory approach to nursing studies, already discussed in Chapter 4, is a case in point. Edvardsson and Street divide their discussion of the experiences of the 'nurse as embodied ethnographer' into a set of sub-sections, each of which is referred to as an 'epiphany'. Each epiphany stands for one of the moments at which the researcher realised that using his senses in the care environment impacted on his research practice – his 'sudden intuitive realizations that the use of his senses in these environments was gradually changing the way that he asked questions and conducted observations' (2007: 26). While sub-sections 2–5 refer to epiphanies that are concerned respectively with 'Sounds', 'Smell', 'Taste', 'Touch' and 'Sight', the first sub-section is entitled 'Epiphany 1: Movement' (2007: 26). Thus, even when working in a modern western culture, the five-sense sensorium is not always sufficient to describe how we experience our social and material environments.

The ethnographies discussed above all involved the use of a selection of established modern western sensory categories (and in one case the addition of another category) as ways of classifying sets of embodied experiences. These examples also show that these categories might not be established at a post-fieldwork stage called 'analysis', but rather they begin to emerge through the researcher's culturally specific engagements as part of the research process. For the studies discussed above, the use of these modern western sensory categories seems appropriate. Yet the five-sense sensorium is not universal across all cultures. There is thus no reason why it should dictate the sensory categories used by ethnographers to structure their analyses. Indeed, Geurts' (2002) analysis of the Anlo-Ewe sensorium reveals the complexities that might be faced by ethnographers working in cultures where people understand sensory experience through categories quite different from their own. On finding that Anlo-Ewe did not have an explicit verbally articulated sensorium, Geurts drew on a linguistic approach to construct what she calls a 'kind of (provisional) inventory of [Anlo-Ewe] sensory fields' (2002: 40). This involved creating correspondences between the rather different ways of understanding experience in modern western and Anlo-Ewe epistemologies. In the absence of explicit categories and in a context where 'there are no ancient (written or recorded) texts that we could pursue for epistemological clues about their sensorium',

she investigated the question through 'combing through dictionaries, by listening to proverbs, and by scrutinizing conversations and notes from my observations of habitual forms of body practices' (2002: 39) as well as interviews. Geurts' 'inventory' is an excellent example of how, under these circumstances, a researcher might render complex indigenous sensory knowledge – in a way that is as loyal as possible to local epistemologies – accessible within the linguistic and conceptual categories that an academic readership will find meaningful.

Ethnographic analysis is never straightforward – whether or not it concerns the senses. It involves making connections between, on the one hand, complex phenomenological realities and the specificities of other people's ways of understanding these, and, on the other, scholarly categories and debates. This inevitably involves processes of condensing and translating as well as those of constructing a narrative and argument. As the examples above indicate, one option for the sensory ethnographer is to use modern western sensory categories, appropriately added to or perhaps embellished as a means of structuring an analysis. In cases where correspondences between the indigenous and western cultural categories used to classify multisensory experience are not obvious, then the ethnographer's task may be to seek to construct sets of categories, and ways of comprehending phenomenological realities, that both represent indigenous meanings and are accessible to an intended audience. In this entire process, attention to the experiential elements I discuss in earlier sections of this chapter as well as cultural/discursive elements should be maintained. Indeed, the cultural categories that might become part of the focus and structure of analysis are produced in relation to the multisensoriality of human perception.

INTERPRETING AND CONNECTING RESEARCH EXPERIENCES, MATERIALS AND TEXTS

Even when ethnographers who attend to the senses do not explicitly discuss the detail of how they have gone about their analysis this process may be represented in the ways their texts are constructed – for example, in the interweaving of description, theory, images and more. I discuss this question further in the next chapter. In my own experience, analysis in sensory ethnography usually involves a process that moves between different registers of engagement with a variety of research materials. Analysis is, moreover, as I pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, a continuous and incremental process rather than simply a stage in a research process. To demonstrate how these continuities might develop, below I discuss an example from my ethnography of the Cittàslow movement in one of the several British towns where I have been doing research – Aylsham in Norfolk.

In Aylsham, I have been researching events that take place annually in the town, including the town's carnival. I am especially interested in the sensoriality of this event and my research has involved a combination of attending committee meetings and taking written notes, audio-interviewing key people involved in their production and attending the events themselves, at which I have participated by eating, drinking, socialising and generally 'being there' with others, photographing and

video-recording. These mixed qualitative methods have provided me with a set of diverse research materials – written notes, committee papers, audio-recorded and transcribed interviews, photographs and video footage, including some video interviews. In terms of how these materials reconnect me to the research encounter(s), several elements come to the fore. For example, the material culture of committees, in the form of the committee agendas and other papers I have kept, become memory objects that aid me in remembering the sensoriality and sociality of committees and the importance of these qualities for my understandings of the way carnival is produced. The video footage represents the social encounters that I experienced with local people keen to comment on a photographic exhibition, the soundscape of the hall where tea and cakes were also served, and the visual content of the photographic exhibition. This footage allows me to engage reflexively with elements of the sociality of the exhibition and my own role in this. Outside in the square and streets where the stalls and processions were located, another soundscape and series of interviews and images are represented. One of my interests was in interpreting the town's carnival as an alternative sensescape that might be seen as offering sensory experiences that, following the principles of the Slow City movement, contrasted to those that formed part of global corporate capitalist consumption.

I took as a starting point for my analysis the idea of the town as a multisensory environment that I could interpret through the prism of a modern western sensorium. I was interested in analysing how the sensescape of the carnival had been imagined, planned or mapped out by the organisers, its materiality, sociality and sensoriality, and its relationship to the principles of the Slow City movement. To undertake this analysis involved my moving between different sets of research materials to make connections between the way the carnival was organised, the way it linked to the principles of Cittàslow and different ways it might be experienced. In contrast to the domestic laundry research I discussed earlier in this chapter, I was not so much interested in determining how local people used specific linguistic categories to define different aspects of carnival, but in understanding carnival as a modern western sensescape.

I first began to consider the way carnival was interwoven with the existing physical environment of the town, and how different sensations – for example tastes of locally produced foods offered on various stalls, the sounds of local musicians, the visual and material exhibition of photographs from past carnivals, and the corporeality of the carnival processions – were implicated in this. Having attended the carnival during the first year of my research, I viewed my video-recordings and associated memories of how the event was played out in the square and streets of the town. I began to remember my own routes through the carnival and the culinary, aural, visual and social experiences and encounters they entailed. I began to interpret these experiences as ways in which the sensescape of carnival might immerse its participants in alternative sensory realities that represented the principles of Cittàslow. This in turn involved an analysis of the Cittàslow criteria and literature, and attention to the global and national discourses and power relations within which these are interwoven. However, these materials did not answer all my questions about this multisensory event.

The following year I had opportunities to sit in on some of the committee meetings where carnival was planned. Here I began to understand not only the

sociality and sensoriality of committees (Pink 2008d), but also the ways in which people used their experience-based knowledge of the town to inform decisions about how carnival should be created in it. Not once at these meetings did I see anyone pull out a map and begin to plot where the carnival displays, culinary stalls, music and other elements should be located. Rather, committee members appeared to employ forms of knowing derived from their own embodied emplaced experiences of what it felt like to be in the town. They *knew* what it would sound and feel like if a particular sort of music was played at a particular location in the town and this tacit knowledge was crucial to the organisation of the event. By interpreting the carnival as a temporary alternative sensory environment I had been able to start thinking about how the event linked to the principles of the Slow movement, which, in its literature, puts significant emphasis on the sensorial qualities of localities and produce. However, by considering how the actual constitution of this alternative sensescape was produced through local people's tacit sensory emplaced knowing, I could interpret carnival as what Ingold calls a 'meshwork' (2008) of local and global elements.

Ethnographic research thus often entails long-term processes, perhaps through return visits, as was the case of the project described above. The research events and techniques used involve sensory engagements in different ways and on different levels. For the analytical process this might mean that interpreting one set of research materials will depend on the analysis of another set. In the above example from my own work, analysis entailed moving between different sets of research materials and memories to piece together abstractions of events and processes in such a way that they related the phenomenology of the research process to written academic debates.

SUMMING UP

Processes or methods for analysing sensory ethnography materials are as yet underrepresented in existing literature. This is perhaps unsurprising since processes for analysing ethnographic materials are generally infrequently formally defined. A potential way forward would be an engagement with existing methods of analysis, involving ethnographers rethinking these methods in ways that are attentive to the senses.

The cases discussed above indicate that there are certain issues that need to be accounted for when considering other people's sensoria, whether in one's own culture or in other cultures. First, ethnographers need to develop an awareness of how different types of research material might facilitate ways of being close to the non-verbal, tacit, emplaced knowledge that a sensory analysis seeks to identify. Second, it is crucial to recognise the constructedness of the modern western sensorium and the importance of understanding other people's worlds through their sensory categories. To understand the sensory categories that other people use involves being aware of one's own sensory categories and the moralities, and values one attaches to these, and seeking to identify how, when and why others both construct and employ these categories in culturally specific

and idiosyncratic and personal ways. Third, a sensory analysis will usually begin from the assumption that people inhabit multisensory environments, places which themselves are constantly being remade. To understand how such places are constituted, experienced and understood by others, ethnographers might need to employ mixed qualitative methods, analyse different sorts of research materials in different ways and make connections between the different levels of analysis and knowledge involved.

RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING

Desjarlais, R. (2003) *Sensory Biographies: Lives and Death among Nepal's Yolmo Buddhists*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Edvardsson, D. and Street, A. (2007) 'Sense or no-sense: the nurse as embodied ethnographer', *International Journal of Nursing Practice* 13: 24–32.

Geurts, K.L. (2002) *Culture and the Senses: Bodily Ways of Knowing in an African Community*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Pink, S. (2004) *Home Truths: Gender, Domestic Objects and Everyday Life*. Oxford: Berg.

8
BETWEEN EXPERIENCE AND SCHOLARSHIP: Representing Sensory Ethnography

The sensory ethnography approaches and methods advocated in the preceding chapters seek to bring researchers and their audiences close to other people's multisensory experiences, knowing, practice, memories and imaginations. They simultaneously acknowledge and attend to the cultural and biographical specificity and categories through which these are conceptualised. In the pursuit of their own project-specific research questions, the ethnographers whose work I have examined have developed a range of innovative research methods. These include ethnographies in movement, in dance, based on interviews, sound-recording, through audiovisual media and through apprenticeship relations. To represent the emplaced knowing that grows from such projects, most of these ethnographers have used established methods – predominantly academic writing. Others have produced ethnographic film or video and sound composition. In this chapter I discuss how these existing practices and other emergent and innovative ways of communicating ethnographic knowing might be mobilised to represent sensory ethnography.

Scholarly writing remains a central, and I believe crucial, medium for the description, evocation, argument and theoretical debating of ethnographic research that attends to the senses. Yet conventional scholarly practice is limited in its capacity to communicate about the directness of the sensory and affective elements of emplaced experience. Alternative routes to representing sensory knowing have been developed in arts practice and there are opportunities for these practices to both inform and be developed collaboratively with sensory approaches to ethnographic representation. Connections between artistic, scholarly and applied work are already made by a number of scholars in the social sciences. For example, the sociologist and cultural criminologist Maggie O'Neill, whose work involves collaborations with participants and different types of artists (2008: 4), argues that 'the role of the sociologist and artist as interpreters producing knowledge through interdisciplinary phenomenological

research and artistic re-presentations of lived experience can help to counter identity thinking, make critical interventions, and help us to get in touch with our social worlds' (O'Neill 2008: 53). O'Neill's points are relevant across the ethnographic disciplines. The anthropologist Arnd Schneider has specifically called for a further 'dialogue with the arts', to benefit both anthropologists and arts practitioners (2008: 172, see also Schneider and Wright 2006). Such engagements have been developed in the work of anthropologists/artists (e.g. Ravetz 2007) and in appropriations of arts practice techniques in geography (e.g. Butler 2006) and archaeology (e.g. Witmore 2004).

Yet meeting points between ethnography, scholarship, intervention and art can also raise questions concerning the nature of these engagements. For instance, should researchers harness arts for the production of scholarship and theoretically informed applied interventions *or* forsake the conventions of scholarship and established ethnographic epistemologies to produce ways of knowing that are more accessible through arts practice? (See Ravetz 2007 for a discussion of some of these issues.) However, seeing this as a binary, whereby a project either serves artistic or scholarly purposes, is a false dichotomy (as are dichotomies between applied and scholarly practice (Pink 2005a, 2007e)). Between different projects there will be variations in the types of argument and experience ethnographers seek to represent to different audiences. They will aim to contribute to specific types of discourse and debate, using the most appropriate media and methods for each task. Relationships and appropriations between scholarly research, arts practices and applied interventions will depend on the aims and frames of each unique project. They will also be contingent on the skills of individual researchers and types of collaboration they enter into.

Sensory ethnographers developing academic or applied interventions, who wish to situate their work within the existing trajectories of their discipline, are faced with two challenges. The first is to seek appropriate (perhaps new) ways to communicate about their own and other people's sensory knowing, emplacement and mobilisations of cultural categories, and more. The second entails involving these more experiential engagements in the production of work that is at once theoretical (in that they can make a contribution to scholarship and discussion) *and* substantive (in that they contribute to a body of academic knowledge about a particular theme), as well as possibly informing or serving as social interventions.

THINKING ABOUT SENSORY REPRESENTATION: INTIMACY, MEDIA AND PLACE

In this chapter I review a series of pertinent existing works to suggest how the task of representing sensory knowing has already been approached. I first address practices that are already established in ethnography (i.e. writing, film/video-making and soundscape composition), before considering those more commonly associated with arts practice (scent (re)production and walking). I do not propose a template for creating sensory ethnographic representations. Rather, drawing both from the works reviewed and the theoretical approach proposed in Chapter 2, I examine a series of themes and connections: the production of a sense of intimacy; relationships between

techniques and media in ethnographic and scholarly communication; and the idea of representation as ethnographic place. These themes and approaches, I suggest, might guide the production of sensory ethnography representations.

The possibility that ethnographic and artistic representations might create a sense of intimacy sufficiently powerful to invite empathetic understandings and communicate experiential knowing to audiences has been suggested across practices and media. The visual anthropologist Peter Biella has proposed that 'Ethnographic films that depict the intimate confidences between anthropologists and informants, and show intimacies among informants, offer viewers the vicarious experience and discovery of close personal revelations and vulnerabilities by people in other cultural worlds'. He suggests film offers a 'sense of *virtual intimacy*' which, because it does not require immediate reciprocation, 'is a safe first step into a world of increased awareness and compassion' (Biella 2009). Similar possibilities have been attributed to written text. Stoller has proposed that 'Using sensuous ethnography to bear witness to ... forms of social trauma, abuse, and repression ... has the potential to shock readers into newfound awareness, enabling them ... to think new thoughts or feel new feelings' (2004: 832). Likewise, particular capacities to produce new forms of awareness and of intimacy have been claimed for sound (e.g. Feld and Brenneis 2004) and smell (e.g. Arning 2006). These methods and media may provide routes through which ethnographers can communicate the sensory emplaced knowing of the research encounter and of participants to their audiences. However, this is not the only task of the sensory ethnographer.

There is no absolute agreement across (or within) disciplines regarding the ideal relationship between written scholarly communication and other media and techniques of ethnographic representation. While some have suggested that text-based scholarship might be challenged through alternative representations (e.g. MacDougall 1997), my own approach focuses more on seeking ways that writing and other methods might work together (see Pink 2006). Writing has already developed and maintained a central role and set of purposes in sensory ethnography representation. Significantly, it facilitates the contribution to existing scholarship that might be made through the kind of emplaced knowing with which the sensory ethnographer is concerned. Yet, while as Stoller (2004) suggests that written texts might propel readers to new levels of compassionate awareness, they cannot achieve the impression of a direct connection to experiential realities that is implied by sound or video-recordings or scents. Therefore it is pertinent that the use of alternative practices and media of representation to create a sense of intimacy and awareness should not be developed in isolation from a consideration of the relationship of these forms to established scholarship.

A number of the practitioners and scholars discussed below seek to represent the sensoriality and meanings of place. They are concerned with communicating aspects of how particular place-events were experienced. Here I suggest conceptualising such sensory representations as ethnographic places. Ethnographic places are abstractions. Using various narrative and technological practices and processes, they create routes to and bring together selected sensations, emotions, meanings, reflexivity, descriptions, arguments and theories. Ultimately, these components become

involved in new place-events as they become interwoven with the trajectories of audiences and readers.

PRINTED TEXT: SENSUAL WORDS AND IMAGES

Most of the ethnographers who have made significant contributions to sensory sub-field(s) (for instance, in anthropology, geography and sociology) have done so in published monographs, book chapters and journal articles. Some critics have suggested that ethnographic writing distracts us from the sensorial and experiential. For instance, MacDougall points to the 'potential incommensurablity of sensory experience and anthropological writing' (2005: 60) and Schneider and Wright have suggested that most 'sensual experiences involved in fieldwork normally disappear from anthropological writing' (2006: 13). Yet, existing literature demonstrates that writing can connect sensory experience and theoretical discussion in instructive ways (see also Howes 2005b: 4).

There are good reasons for writing. The written word is the most embedded and developed form of ethnographic representation, and a sophisticated technique for scholarly communication. It remains the dominant method of relating the findings, methodologies and theoretical implications of ethnographic studies generally, as well as those that attend to the senses. Written scholarship facilitates ethnographers' engagements in theoretical debate. Thus it allows academics to harness the sensory knowing of ethnographic experience to contribute to existing scholarship. There are many examples of this already discussed in earlier chapters. For example, in Chapter 2 among others, I have drawn from the work of Seremetakis (1994), whose evocative ethnographic descriptions are interwoven with theoretical considerations of sensory memories, and from Downey's (2007) text, where understandings of embodiment are developed in relation to his ethnographic experience.

In making these points I am not suggesting that writing is the superior or exclusive medium for ethnographic representation. Neither would I argue that the purpose of working with other media is simply to *support* written contributions. MacDougall has suggested that scholars look for a 'greater parity amongst modes of expression' by turning to 'the visual, auditory and textual modes of expression found in film' (2005: 60). This offers a way of thinking about written and other texts in relation to each other. Thus ethnographers need to account for the role of written narratives in making crucial connections between, on the one hand, alternative representations of knowing and arguments based on emplaced experience and, on the other, existing strands in scholarly and applied disciplines. Any call for greater attention to the senses in ethnographic writing should be accompanied by the need to develop relationships between sensual knowing, description and evocation (whatever medium this is represented through) and theoretical discussion.

It would be inappropriate to suggest that the writing of the 'sensory ethnography' monograph, chapter or article constitutes a genre in itself. While for the purposes of this book I have grouped a set of works together as sensory ethnographies, in fact when viewed from the perspectives of other subdisciplines these books, articles or chapters equally belong to and share concerns with those of, for example,

food studies (e.g. Sutton 2001, 2006), urban geography (e.g. Law 2005; Spinney 2007), the anthropology/sociology of the home (e.g. Pink 2004) or medical anthropology or sociology (e.g. Lammer 2007).

Along with the diversity in how sensory ethnographies are written, and are situated in relation to other literatures, there are some notable common concerns: first, the relationship or interweaving between descriptive and/or evocative text and theoretical and methodological discussion and argument; second, the question of how sensory classifications and categories might be most effectively employed (see Chapter 7); and third, how to engage readers with the text in ways that are sensual, empathetic and reflexive. In addition to this, ethnographic writing should generally incorporate a level of reflexivity and acknowledgement of the processes through which knowing and knowledge are produced, as well as the status of these.

The idea of interweaving theoretical and experiential narratives in sensory ethnography was initially highlighted by Stoller through his monograph *Sensuous Scholarship* (1997). Stoller describes the book as 'an attempt to reawaken profoundly the scholar's body by demonstrating how the fusion of the intelligible and the sensible can be applied to scholarly practices and representations' (Stoller 1997: xv). Through six chapters, he demonstrates how such essays might be composed to represent the embodied experiences of the ethnographer, of others and in the analysis of the sensorial evocation of film.

However, printed text often does not include just written words. Mirko Zardini's book *Sense of the City* (2005) uses a range of written and visual genres (including scholarly writing) to represent urban sensescapes. Among these are photographs that powerfully suggest the textures, smells, tastes, lightness and darkness, heat and cold of urban environments. While the images included in Zardini's text are not presented as part of an ethnographic project, they demonstrate the potential for photography in printed sensory ethnography representation. Photographs have the capacity to bring textures, surfaces and the sensory experiences they evoke right up close to the reader: they both invoke embodied reactions and offer routes by which, via our own memories and subjectivities, we might anticipate what it feels like to be in another place.

There is an increasing tendency for ethnographers to combine writing with still images in their publications. While they generally do not engage with the potential of photography that is demonstrated in Zardini's (2005) text, sensory ethnography monographs and journal articles are no exception (e.g. Sutton 2001; Geurts 2002), although recent edited readers focusing on the senses (Bull and Back 2003; Classen 2005; Howes 2005a; Drobnik 2006) are curiously devoid of photographs. In some cases there are good reasons for not including images – in my monograph *Home Truths* (Pink 2004), for reasons relating to the image quality of video stills and confidentiality, I restricted the representation to written words (see Pink 2004). Generally, however, a combination of written and visual representation can be beneficial in creating possibilities for engaging them in mutual meaning-making (see Pink 2007a for a detailed discussion). In the case of writing that seeks to represent the senses, this technique might be engaged to enable readers to encounter and comprehend the forms of intimacy and awareness of others' experiences that might be implied through this medium.

As yet no conventions or techniques for visual-textual sensory evocation in ethnographic texts are established. For example, Stoller includes photographs relevant to the themes discussed in each chapter (Stoller 1997); Geurts' photographs are grouped together with no explicit interweaving in relation to the written text (see Geurts 2002: pages between 84 and 85); and Sutton (2006) interweaves written texts with video stills. In Chapters 4 and 6, I have included images (Figures 4.1, 4.2, 6.1 and 6.2) from my research about the Cittàslow movement in the text. I use written captions to frame the objects or activities represented in the images, and to indicate the emplaced emotions and practices for which they stand. The images are intended to work in relation to, rather than as illustrations of, experiences discussed in writing, as such to communicate on a different register.

An example of how the interweaving of writing and images to represent the sensoriality of ethnographic experience descriptively and analytically is demonstrated in Sutton's anthropological work on modern cooking practices (Sutton 2006). Sutton's ethnography of cooking involved interviewing and filming research subjects 'as they go about cooking "ordinary" and "special dishes"', which he suggests 'allows us to develop a profile and also a sort of culinary biography of some of the key experiences and values that have led people to their current cooking practices' (2006: 102). Before discussing the ethnography, Sutton introduces a series of theoretical questions regarding skill and modernity. Thus he establishes that one of the tasks of his chapter is to respond to these issues. His presentation of the ethnographic detail is interesting in a number of ways. First, the analysis focuses on specific encounters that involved research participants engaging in activities on video and being interviewed. Sutton weaves together information about the participants, descriptions of their actual practices, quotations of participants' commentaries, discussions that link these to existing research and theory, and descriptively captioned video stills. The narrative moves between different registers (resonating to some extent with Stoller's call for ethnographic writing to move between the 'intelligible' and the 'sensible' (Stoller 1997)). Sutton's chapter conforms to some principles of conventional academic writing and debate. Yet it simultaneously engages possibilities for empathetic engagement with participants' experiences through words and video stills. For example Sutton's descriptions of one participant's cooking practices emphasise the visual and tactile aspects of her engagements with ingredients and tools. He writes:

> *In this recipe all but two ingredients were measured by sight. The two excluded from this were vinegar and an egg. Drawing her fingers together and pulling up slightly to create a cup of her right hand with her thumb forming the outer edge of the bowl by being crooked against her first finger, she poured the vinegar into her left hand to measure the correct amount. ...* (Sutton 2006: 103–4, original italics)

These descriptions are italicised, and related directly to the video stills which represent aspects of the processes described. The images offer the reader a route through which to imagine the tactile and visual senses of pouring, measuring, rolling out and other skilled material engagements that cooking involves. Thus the text becomes an ethnographic place where theoretical debate, written description, visual evocation

and more are intentionally brought together and interwoven. With the engagement of an audience these narratives become further entangled with other theoretical, biographical and imaginative threads brought by the reader/viewer.

Reading experiences are themselves sensorial, as Marks (2000) has argued for film (see below). The environments in which books are read and readers' corporeal responses to their narratives all contribute to the understandings that we gain from them. Another strategy shared by ethnographers who write about sensory experience entails inviting readers more directly to sensory engagements through exercises or activities. For example, in attempting to 'teach' her readers to be aware of their own sensory ways of knowing, Hahn presents readers with a series of 'orientation' exercises. In the first of these she asks readers to 'Imagine taking a drink of water from a glass *as* performance' (original italics), then to reflect on elements of this experience and describe it. Her point is that 'conveying lived experience is challenging, particularly if it is a performance practice you "know" in your own body but do not regularly transmit to someone else – either through demonstration or through writing' (Hahn 2007: 19–21). Noting how anthropologists 'struggle with representing the dynamics of social life in static textual form, and work with various strategies – multivocality, evocation, indeterminacy – to subvert the limits of our genre' in his monograph *Remembrance of Repasts* (2001), Sutton invites readers to experience Greek cooking. However, providing two written recipes that might be followed, he warns that it was unusual for research participants to give him recipes that could be transcribed. In fact he points out that there was part of one recipe that they 'could not articulate to me in written instructions' (2001: 156–7). Although the recipes Sutton relates were not initially presented to him in writing, in modern western cultures writing recipes down is a conventional practice. The recipes are not direct representations of tastes but offer routes to experience. Another non-textual experience that is nevertheless represented in written form is music. In the next section I discuss sound-recording and composition in ethnography, yet written text can also be harnessed for sonic representation. For example, in an essay concerned with the atmosphere and soundscapes of football matches, Les Back uses musical scores to represent the tonal quality of the songs, along with their words printed underneath (2003). This invites readers to new and embodied engagements with texts and sounds should they seek to reproduce the sounds themselves by reading/playing/singing the tones – in ways informed by Back's written discussions. Thus readers might imagine themselves into the sensory or affective worlds of others by singing their songs, with the written knowledge about these 'others' situatedness already in mind. Such engagements do not guarantee that readers will reconstitute the printed music as performed song in the way it was sung in the research context, and indeed require some musical skills. They nevertheless suggest a route to another way of knowing.

Participation in such exercises invites readers to their own experiences of elements of other people's worlds described in ethnographies. Moreover, it creates routes through which they may gain new levels of reflexive awareness of their own sensory subjectivities. The idea of the self-reflexive reader implies a reader whose awareness of her or his own subjectivity is constantly reconstituted. She or he is open to becoming aware of difference and uses her or his own experiences as routes to the

appreciation of the emplacement, memories and imaginations of others. Facilitating such forms of readership supports a scholarship that hopes to create cross-cultural understanding by producing senses of intimacy with 'others'.

None of these methods of communicating about sensory knowing discussed above provides readers with the same sensory experiences of the ethnographer or research participants discussed in such texts. They may, however, offer readers a basis from which to understand the experiences of both researcher and research participants and deeper reflexive understandings of their own sensory awareness.

AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA AND AESTHETIC EVOCATION

Visual ethnographers are increasingly developing audiovisual representations that are intended to invoke the sensorial, affective and aesthetic dimensions of the lives and environments of the participants in their research. Examples include MacDougall's Doon School project, in which he focuses on the 'social aesthetics' of the school (see MacDougall 2005: 94–119) and Lammer's *Making Contact* (2004), a video that represents the sensorial and affective world of interventional radiology: 'it engages all of the senses to tell a story: incorporating touch, taste and smell into a surreal, sterile yet fleshy audio-visual imagination' (Lammer 2007: 99). MacDougall suggests that social aesthetics might be filmed 'through the events and material objects in which it played a variety of roles' (2005: 108) and Lammer's *Making Contact* uses observational, artistic and playful techniques (see Lammer 2007: 98). In doing so, she succeeds in documenting a process of interventional radiology and evoking its sensorial and experiential dimensions. In Chapter 7, I drew on the work of MacDougall (1998, 2005) and Marks (2000) to suggest that film and video might offer ethnographers routes to feeling re-emplaced in fieldwork encounters. In this section, I apply these ideas, along with Marks' understanding of 'embodied viewing experience' (2000: 211), to consider video as a multisensory medium.

Marks describes the experience of viewing as embodied in that 'We take in many kinds of "extradiegetic" sensory information, information from outside a film's world, when we "watch" a film'. She invites us to compare different viewing contexts (2000: 211–2). For the purposes of the audiovisual representations that academic ethnographers are likely to produce, these might include a film theatre, a conference room, a living room, a seminar room, a lecture theatre or a library video screening room. Through collaborations outside academia, other performance and exhibition venues would also be probable. Thus viewing contexts are multisensory environments. They combine different tastes, smells, proximities to others, types of seating, levels of comfort and more. They are already evocative of sensory memories and imaginations.

Marks argues further, that 'the audiovisual image necessarily evokes other sense memories' (2000: 13). A straightforward way to understand this is through what Marks calls 'narrative identification':

> Characters are shown eating, making love, and so forth, and we viewers identify with their activity. We salivate or become aroused on verbal and visual cue. Beyond this it

> is common for cinema to evoke sense experience through intersensory links: sounds may evoke textures; sights may evoke smells (rising steam or smoke evokes smells of fire, incense, or cooking). (2000: 213)

While Marks refers to the fictional narratives of intercultural cinema, her points are applicable to ethnographic video or film representations. In her interpretation, such film experiences engage audiences as participants. She argues that 'Our experience of the world is fundamentally mimetic, a completing of the self in a sensory meeting with the world'. As 'a mimetic medium' cinema is 'capable of drawing us into sensory participation with its world' to an extent written language cannot (Marks 2000: 214). MacDougall has likewise proposed that the spectator's involvement in film is both psychological and corporeal. He suggests that films 'provide us with a series of perceptual clues' creating 'spaces analogous to those we experience in everyday life, as we sample visual and other sensory information' (2005: 25). In both everyday life and as spectators of film, we are urged to interpret and complete this information into a 'complete picture' (2005: 25). Thus, MacDougall proposes that for the spectator there is 'an almost continuous impetus towards convergence with the objects and bodies on the screen' (2005: 26) as well as with the body of the filmmaker in that 'The viewer's response [to film] is ... one of double synchrony with the film subject and the filmmaker' (MacDougall 1998: 53). These understandings, combined with Biella's argument that films offer a 'sense of *virtual intimacy*' and a 'step into a world of increased awareness and compassion' (Biella 2009, my italics), mean Marks' proposals become particularly pertinent. They imply that film and video offer ethnographers routes to communicate their own and participants' encounters and emplaced knowing to audiences.

If we are to understand ethnographers' and audiences' relationships with film and video as one of 'sensory participation', two related questions are implied. First, how might film represent place? Second, how might audiences (and individual viewers) be involved in the making of ethnographic places?

Films and videos can be understood through an appropriation and abstraction of the concept of place. Indeed, when MacDougall suggests that films create '*spaces* analogous to those we experience in everyday life' (2005: 25, my italics) his use of 'space' might be refigured through a concept of place. The making of an ethnographic documentary might be conceptualised as the intentional and/or serendipitous bringing together of a series of interconnected events involving encounters, objects, emotions, sensations, weather, persons and more, which together constitute place. These are edited/interwoven into a representation, a deliberate rendering of place, itself loaded with ideologies, theory and more. The viewing of the film, however, becomes another form of place, here through her or his 'sensory participation' (Marks 2000) with the film and through the sense of 'virtual intimacy' she or he feels (Biella 2009) the viewer becomes part of and engaged corporeally, affectively and intellectually in an ethnographic place. This would engage the viewer's own cultural, biographical and scholarly experience and knowing, enabling her or him to participate in the constitution of a renewed ethnographic place, and to arrive at a particular form of multisensory knowing (see Pink 2007d).

Thus film/video can be understood as a medium through which the specificity and experience of the ethnographic place-event might be represented to audiences. It

offers a sense of intimacy, a route to intercultural understandings and ways of knowing not available in the same direct way when represented through written words. These points create a strong argument for the role of video in sensory ethnography representation. However, while video can potentially communicate in the very ways that seem essential to sensory ethnography practice, it cannot directly participate in scholarly debates already developed in carefully crafted written theoretical discussions (see Pink 2006). It might nevertheless be engaged in such discussions when appropriate connections are made – often through written text. The two audiovisual works cited at the beginning of this section are both accompanied by written texts. MacDougall writes about his Doon School project and films in *The Corporeal Image* (2005) and Lammer's *Making Contact* (2004) is discussed in her written work, including a book chapter (Lammer 2007) and linked with other materials on her website (see Lammer n.d).

THE SOUND OF ETHNOGRAPHY

In common with ethnographic writing and video/filmmaking, sound-recording allows ethnographers and artists to create permanent edited recordings or compositions that might be disseminated to wide audiences. The publication of audio recordings is not widespread among ethnographers. Yet convincing texts and arguments advocate the possibilities of sound ethnography. Scholars and artists working in this area frequently cite the World Soundscapes Project led by Murray Schafer in the 1970s as a key influence in the movement towards both sound ethnography and art. This project involved Shafer recording acoustic enviroments/ecologies in diverse geographical locations. Of particular relevance to discussions developed in Chapter 4 and later in this chapter, he often used the method of recording soundwalks (Wrightson 2000; Adams and Bruce 2008).

Sound ethnography involves recording as a research practice and composition as a representational practice. The acousmatic music and soundscape composition artist Drever has suggested a series of congruences between ethnography and soundscape composition (see Chapter 1). Moreover, he proposes that 'soundscape composition practice perhaps can offer ethnographic practice alternative models of cultural poetics: that of the analytical and creative tools for grasping at the sound world'. Going further, he suggests that 'soundscape composition [could be] ... a pertinent substitute to writing an academic ethnographic report and *vice versa*' (Drever 2002: 25). While existing practice demonstrates that ethnographic experiences can be represented through soundscape composition, the idea these might replace an '*academic* ethnographic report' (2002: 25, my italics) is less viable. Indeed, direct substitutions across any media of ethnographic representation are difficult to achieve. To replace, or play the same role of, academic writing, a composition would have to explicitly contribute to scholarly theoretical and empirical discussions, which have been developed through sophisticated techniques of writing. It is more beneficial to probe the unique qualities of soundscape composition, and determine what these contribute to ethnographic representation that writing cannot.

Drever does not outline exactly what he has in mind. However, as an example he refers to the work of Feld, whose body of writing and sound art is informed by

(and informs) ethnographic and theoretical scholarship. Feld's practice is guided by the concept of 'acoustemology', which he defines as 'an exploration of sonic sensibilities, specifically of ways in which sound is central to making sense, to knowing, to experiential truth'. He also focuses theoretically and acoustemologically on place and suggests that 'the experience of place potentially can always be grounded in an acoustic dimension' (Feld 1996: 97). In Chapter 5 I discussed Feld's use of audio-recordings as a sonic elicitation method. His practice extends beyond this to include the production of sound ethnographies.

In an interview with Donald Brenneis (Feld and Brenneis 2004), Feld discusses his earlier work, including two LPs, *Music of the Kaluli* (1982) and *Kaluli Weeping and Song* (1985), that accompanied his monograph *Sound and Sentiment* (1982). The themes of *Music of the Kaluli*, as Feld describes them, are inextricable from central questions in the social sciences: 'the whole first side of the LP was about sociality in sound, acoustic co-presence and interaction – the relationship between the people, the forest, voice and sound' (Feld and Brenneis 2004: 464); and in this and his later CD, *Voices of the Rainforest* (Feld 1991), 'the idea was ... to have sound raise the question about the indexicality of voice and place, to provoke you to hear sound as place making'. Comparing the publication of a sound ethnography with written text, he proposes that 'when you hear the way birds overlap in the forest and you hear the way voices overlap in the forest, all of a sudden you can grasp something at a sensuous level that is considerably more abstract and difficult to convey in a written ethnography' (Brenneis and Feld 2004: 465).

The idea that sound recordings can represent a sense of intimacy is also represented in Feld's work. He describes how his *Voices of the Rainforest* (1991) CD is 'a 30-minute soundscape of 24 hours of sounds, a day in the forest with Kaluli people', which was edited using a 'compositional technique ... layering and overlapping different recordings from the 24-hour cycle' (Feld and Brenneis 2004: 465). Reflecting on the process through which this was created, he relates that: 'the tape recorder was always something I wore. I just went where people went. And the editing involved techniques that heightened and marked that sense of intimacy and spontaneity and contact between recorder and recorded, between listener and sounds' (Feld and Brenneis 2004: 465). Feld's concern with bringing this sense of intimacy to the forefront of the edited composition is noteworthy and is drawn out again later in the interview when he suggests: 'The recording takes you there, into that place, and you can have a very sensuous, affective, feeling relationship with voice and place by listening' (2004: 468). Returning to Biella's (2009) suggestion that the production of a sense of intimacy in ethnographic representation can contribute to a moral project of increasing intercultural awareness, this would imply that sound ethnographies likewise have the potential to work towards such goals.

Feld has continued to develop his practice in slightly different directions in his later work, including his CD *Rainforest Soundwalks* (2001a). In an interview with Carlos Palombini, Feld describes how each soundwalk occurs at a particular time of day and location in the forest. Yet he points out that each soundwalk is 'about *a way of listening* to and at the forest edge' thus 'The "soundwalk" takes place in *the head and the body, in the way of listening* in the attention to the surrounding/motional sound field' (Palombini n.d., my italics). Indeed, as Feld goes on to remark, the soundwalks are also constituted through his own twenty-five year 'history of listening and being taught to listen'.

Therefore soundscape compositions can be understood not as simply ways of representing what 'places' sound like, but as invitations to listen in particular embodied ways. Following this, we can better understand what might be learnt from listening to what Feld calls the 'sonic everyday' of others. With reference to his *Rainforest Soundwalks* (2001a), he relates: 'It is through and on the attentive listening to this world that Bosavi people built their songs and musical lives' (Palombini n.d.). Ethnographic soundscape representions might thus be designed to offer listeners a route through which to hear as others might. This, however, should involve not simply providing them with a composition, but also with some guidance on how to hear.

Feld's sound art offers academic researchers and others certain routes into his own and Bosavi experiences of sound. These are edited compositions, rather than simply real-time recordings of everyday life as it unfolds. Their production involves sophisticated ethnographic knowing and technical skills. Feld's work is not intended solely for academic audiences (see Palombini n.d.). Nevertheless, when situated through his written work, it facilitates a route through which such emplaced knowing can be engaged to contribute to scholarly debate. Feld's written texts (e.g. 1996) theorise the experiential, the intimacy and the sound as place-making practice.

Soundscape composition as ethnographic representation is a complex process and requires specialist skills and sensitivities. Some of these are technical, others relate to ethnographic experience. Paul Moore (2003) highlights some of the challenges through a consideration of his research about different (protestant and catholic) soundscapes in Northern Ireland. Some issues are unique to specific projects; to understand the challenges Moore discusses requires some knowledge of sound in the context of the Northern Irish conflict. He describes how 'the historical representations of the loyalist and nationalist communities resonate with opposing sounds and patterns' (2003: 268). Comparing protestant and catholic linguistic sounds, drumming and religious services, he suggests that these 'conflicting sectarian sounds ... dominate the aural soundscape in Northern Ireland'. Yet, simultaneously, Moore points out that both groups share a soundscape of 'violence' which includes gunfire, bombings, riots, sirens and the silence of funerals (2003: 274). He analyses these sounds as 'purveyors and indicators of cultural memory', which are 'echoes of the sacred, passed without words from generation to generation, underpinning the notion that for communities united under a perceived threat, hearing as well as seeing is believing' (2003: 274).

How might this auditory knowledge be represented to an audience unfamiliar with such ways of experiencing and knowing? Moore discusses the complexities of how an artificial soundscape composed from recorded sound might be produced for this purpose. He outlines that to achieve this would require a self-conscious and reflexive composer who 'constantly interrogates the soundscape composition'. This would involve addressing a set of issues, to include: ensuring that visual props do not distract attention from sound in installations; attending to the 'active listening position' of soundscape listeners; questions of perspective; the listeners 'point of listening' and understanding; and the potential cacophony of an edited soundscape that might lead it to become 'a meaningless jumble of indecipherable noise' (2003: 274–6). These are real concerns which, as Moore presents them, represent the beginnings of a check-list for ethnographers working in this area. More generally, however, they indicate that there would be a need for the education of both composers and listeners to facilitate means

of communicating about sonic knowing that can accommodate both scholarly and experiential understandings.

Sound is inevitable in ethnography and even silences are laden with meanings. Making sounds and silences explicit in the representation of ethnographic places and experiences can be an evocative route to multisensory ways of knowing. However, this also requires some degree of educating listeners in how to hear and, as such, how to engage in the aural ways of knowing of others, and of making embodied aural knowing meaningful in relation to scholarly understandings.

OLFACTION, ART AND POTENTIAL LESSONS FOR ETHNOGRAPHERS

It is perhaps most difficult to imagine how an ethnographer might represent olfactory experiences, let alone reproduce them. Indeed, writing in the catalogue for an exhibition entitled *Sensorium*, Bill Arning comments that 'To attempt to include smell-based work in a catalogue like this is to experience the inadequacy of both reproductive media and language', noting how 'In distributed smell technologies, the olfactory equivalent of a photographically illustrated text is barely on the horizon today' (Arning 2006: 98). Yet some olfactory artists have attempted to 'put smell to paper'. When I was writing this chapter a colleague forwarded to me a postcard announcing an event entitled *If There Ever Was: An Exhibition of Extinct and Impossible Smells* at the Reg Vardy Gallery (University of Sunderland, UK, 2008). As I handled the textured card I noticed a faint and unfamiliar smell, holding it closer to inhale confirmed that the card was scented and drew my attention to the written text which ends with the words '... This is what the sun smells like'. The back of the card acknowledges the creator of the odour (Geza Schön, International Flavours and Fragrances). The smell of the card was crucial in determining my relationship to its materiality, my experience of it, and its sensory agency as a reminder about the exhibition, as at odd moments I was drawn to it as I caught a whiff of its smell while writing at my desk.

The use of scents in arts and documentary practice are not new (and, as I noted in Chapter 1, have some parallels in business and marketing contexts). For instance, Marks describes how since the early twentieth century filmmakers have used smell to create part of a 'cinematic experience'. This has included burning incense during film screenings, scratch and sniff cards coordinated to correspond to the film narrative, the diffusion of smells into rooms during films, and following film screenings with 'recreations of the meals in the films at local restaurants' (see Marks 2000: 212 for details). However, Marks points out that while 'Such extradiegetic sense experience amplifies the multisensory appeal of a movie' there are also limits and possible problems associated with such practices. Indeed, one of the examples she cites led to a 'public panic'. This, she suggests, is because 'Associations with actual smells are so haphazard and individual that even the commonest odors incite reactions from relaxation to arousal, disgust or horror' (2000: 212; and see Hinton et al. 2006). While Marks's comments imply that there might be little certainty in how one might use scent to communicate with others and in particular across cultures, these characteristics are also part of its appeal. Indeed, Drobnik and Fisher suggest that in a contemporary context artists who are 'seeking to redefine aesthetic

experience' tend to be attracted to 'the distinctive qualities of scent – such as its ephemerality, evocativeness, intimacy, variability, intensity' (2008: 350).

The olfactory artist Sissel Tolaas researches and then recreates smells from a variety of lived contexts. Ceri Hand's description of a project Tolaas undertook in Liverpool (UK) outlines how: 'For her project OUSIDEIN Tolaas walked with Liverpudlians from the north, west, south and east of the city. Together they paced the city, using high-end technology to collect smells from streets and neighbourhoods and recording perceptions and feelings in response to their sense of smell' (Hand 2007: 41). Tolaas then recreates these scents chemically in her laboratory for public exhibition in gallery spaces. This short description of Tolaas's practices already begins to strike resonance with some of the sensory ethnography practices discussed in earlier chapters. Her practice of pacing the city with local people to 'collect smells' and record 'perceptions and feelings' corresponds with the ethnographic methods involving 'walking with' research participants discussed in Chapter 5. How, and what, then might smells communicate to audiences in gallery contexts? Arning, noting the impossibility of communicating about smell verbally, suggests that the audience for Tolaas's work is limited because 'scents cannot be conveyed beyond the first person sniffer'. He identifies a further limitation in that 'many exhibition visitors' are unwilling 'to put their noses on the line and sniff'. Smell can signify an intense form of intimacy with a person or object. Arning suggests that some 'refuse Tolaas's open invitation to conceptually dense olfactory experiences, as if to accept would forever compromise their personal security' (2006: 98), thus indicating indeed that opening oneself up to the intimacy of smell in a gallery context might invite a challenging way of knowing.

Our experiences of other people and places, including the home, inevitably involve smell. While domestic odours often escape the control of human agents, the intentional addition of scents, production and concealment of smells (e.g. of cooking, cleaning and more) is equally important to the constitution of place. My research about domestic life demonstrated how people engage in everyday practices aimed at creating specific olfactory environments in their homes, which are attached to identities, moralities and more. These involve considerations about the relationship between 'natural' outdoor smells, domestic cleaning or other products, cooking smells, and olfactory 'decoration' through the use of, for example, scented oils or candles (e.g. Pink 2004). In a review of an olfactory exhibition, Drobnik and Fisher discuss the work of artist Oswaldo Maciá, which represents domestic spaces *vis-à-vis* their odours. Maciá's installation *1 Woodchurch Road, London NW6 3PL*, draws on a building in which the artist once lived along with other people of diverse generations, nationalities and household compositions. The installation, consisting of five garbage cans is described as presenting 'a selection of smells that Maciá found most typical of the building's occupants' which where 'naftalin (mothballs), olive oil, Listerine, eucalyptus, and baby powder' (Drobnik and Fisher 2008: 350). Visitors to the exhibition lifted the lids of the garbage cans to inhale their scents. Drobnik and Fisher suggest that one of the effects of this is that 'Each sniff of the contents of the containers inspires reflection upon how a sense of community can develop from a heterogeneous mix of identities' (2008: 350–2). While I imagine the reflections actually inspired among diverse sniffers of the scents would vary, the connection that Drobnik and Fisher make between scents and identities is significant. As I noted above, odours play an important role in the processes through which homes

and self-identities are mutually constituted through domestic practice. Although the sensory home is much more than its odours (see also Pink 2004), discussions of arts practice, such as Maciá's, invite us to consider how olfactory installations might be mobilised to communicate about the relationship between, on the one hand, the materiality and multisensoriality of domestic (and other) practices and environments and, on the other, the identities and moralities that are lived and constituted through these. As scholarly communications, such representations of olfactory sensory knowing would benefit from being connected to theoretical strands, and arguably written discussions might play a role in this.

In fact, in existing practice scents are not only 'exhibited' but disseminated as part of printed texts. The extent to which this can be viable in academic publishing is questionable. Yet a recent example demonstrates some of the possibilities such experimentation might afford ethnographers. Robert Blackson's (2008) *If There Ever Was: A Book of Extinct and Impossible Smells* was published in connection with *If There Ever Was: An Exhibition of Extinct and Impossible Smells* (also 2008). The book provides an interesting example of the intimacies, empathies and challenges scents might invite. The scents commissioned for this exhibition were 'inspired by absence'. They represent historical 'stories', referring to things that in most cases no longer exist in material forms. Blackson describes each scent as 'a harmonious composition blending multiple notes and, like a story, have a beginning, middle and end' (Blackson 2008: 6). In the book each scent, which is represented on a piece of card that the reader must rub to release the smell, is guided by one of Blackson's written narratives printed on the facing page. 'These words' he writes, 'are not intended to direct interpretation, but to set a stage for the scent to fill' (2008: 6–7). The book provides an example of how text and scent together offer readers/smellers seductive resources through which to create routes into empathetic imaginaries about the material, sensorial and affective elements of other people's emplacement. These are not all comforting experiences, for instance Steven Pearce's scent represents the last meal of a man who was executed in the United States. Here, in particular, the written text frames the scent through a story that potentially creates sympathy between the reader and representation of the executed man: Blackson tells us that his conviction would probably have been overturned had evidence that became available later been forthcoming earlier. The prospect of smelling this meal invites the reader to imagine a level of intimacy and empathy that goes beyond the sympathetic engagement invoked through the written text, thus making it a difficult level of engagement since it offers the reader an olfactory route into imagining *his* emplacement and the material and affective aspects of this.

Other scents represent collective experiences, for example two scents by Christophe Laudamiel are inspired by 'the vibration of Hiroshima's atomic blast' (Blackson 2008: 16) and air of the middle ages (Blackson 2008: 32), and Sissel Tolaas created what is described as 'the smell of communism', characterised as 'the stale air of imposed uniformity' (Blackson 2008: 36). Rather differently, another text describes how in East Berlin the Stasi took samples of suspects' body odour on pieces of fabric, through the story of a young woman who was tried and cautioned by the Stasi (Blackson 2008: 20). Whether or not the accompanying scent by Maki Udea included on the page facing the narrative reproduces the sweat of this particular

woman, the sense of it being a personal odour produced under particular circumstances is what makes it compelling.

If There Ever Was affords a series of insights that are useful for considering the roles scent might play in sensory ethnography representation and that are broadly coherent with the themes of intimacy, place and the text/sense relationship explored in this chapter. The idea of sharing a scent that was experienced by other individuals or collectivities, historically or biographically, can be highly evocative of feelings of empathy and intimacy. Such scents do not necessarily allow us to share *the same* scents as others – positioned historically, socially or culturally differently to us. Moreover, the multisensoriality of the specific environments in which individual users of the book experience the scents means their sensing always takes 'place' in a new environment. Indeed, whether or not the chemically reproduced smells are identical to those experienced by others historically is less important than the point that they offer us sensory routes into imagining other people's material and emotional emplacement. Thus, using scent to create such routes, connections, intimacies and empathies offers sensory ethnographers a way to invite their audiences to sense the places occupied by others. As Blackson notes, 'To know something by its scent alone, as a pure "olfactory image" is a rare event' (2008: 7), and indeed for those who read the texts in his volume before rubbing and smelling the scents on their opposite pages, the olfactory experience is already set in relation to a series of other biographical and cultural frames that contribute to the sense that is made from it. Thus the written narratives play an important role in framing olfactory arts practice and making it accessible to its audience. Such combinations would be equally important in ethnographic representations that work with scent.

Olfactory reproduction on cards and in books, as exhibition installations, though emplaced practices, and more, hold exciting potential for sensory ethnography representation. Scents alone cannot contribute to scholarly debates or make theoretical arguments. However, their introduction into ethnographic representations can produce forms of intimacy and senses of place that draw audiences into new relationships to ethnographers and research participants.

THE PARTICIPATING AUDIENCE: WALKING ETHNOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION

Several experimental approaches that combine ethnography and performance – including theatre anthropology (Hastrup 1998; see also Barba 1995), ethno-mimesis (O'Neill 2008) and the film genre of ethno-fiction (originating in the work of the anthropological filmmaker Jean Rouch) have been developed. More recently, and with specific attention to the senses, there has been a growing interest in walking as a way of communicating about academic work. Such approaches include elements of documentary and performance, often through video and audio-recordings. In earlier chapters I discussed the research methods of walking with others and walking with video. Building on approaches and practices, the idea of walking as ethnographic representation offers a potential route to communicating about the emplaced

knowing of ethnographer and of research participants, using technologies designed to engage audiences through the senses.

The soundwalk method is well established in arts practice and increasingly so in ethnographic practice. Above I have discussed Feld's audio-recorded *Rainforest Soundwalks* (2001a) as a method of representing other people's emplacement through sound. Another approach to the soundwalk invites audiences to engage by not only listening but by simultaneously walking themselves. This method usually involves the participant wearing headphones through which she or he listens to and is guided by an audio narrative while walking predetermined routes designed by the artist. The soundwalk artist Janet Cardiff's work, which follows this principle, is generating significant interest among scholars concerned with the senses (e.g. Butler 2006; Witmore 2004; Rawes 2008). The multisensoriality of the experience of Cardiff's work has been characterised by Marjory Jacobson as follows:

> Instead of hearing the standard audioguide tape, the listener is immediately plunged into a discordant world where reality, reverie, and fiction coexist. Before long, 'Janet's' memories seem implanted into our consciousness. Our proprioceptive sense heightened, we're thinking, touching, and smelling in unison with our guide. (2006: 58)

Jacobson goes on to suggest that this feeling of unison can be disturbing in that 'As the synaesthetic aura becomes unbearably intense, the very notion of the self is called into question' (2006: 58). While the experiences Jacobson describes do not necessarily represent *the* universal experience of Cardiff's work, they resonate with the ideas of scholars discussed earlier in this book (see Chapter 2) that we might come to share other people's emplacement as a route to understanding how they experience their worlds; and that as one engages in new emplaced forms of knowing, the self is transformed. Thus the sound walk presents a medium and practice that might offer ethnographic audiences routes to understanding the emplacement of both researcher and research participants.

Scholar/practitioners have already begun to make these connections. For example, Toby Butler has suggested that 'experiments in combining walking, sound, memory and artistic practice could be useful tools for the geographer to research, apply and present site-specific cultural geography' (2006: 890). His work suggests that the soundwalk might be connected to both the sensoriality and sociality of place in that walks in which participants listen to the artist's guiding narrative through headphones can be understood as multisensorial experiences of place (with all the implications for invoking memories and imagination this holds), and soundwalks may create relationships between their participants and other elements of the environment – rather than isolating them through the dominance of the headphone audio track (2006: 298). Butler's oral history research involved recording 'experiences and memories of people at riverside locations' along the River Thames in London (2006: 901). From these materials he produced 'a carefully constructed three mile walk with 12 different sound points along the route, containing a total of an hour of memories from 14 people' (2006: 903). While soundwalks require their users to actually participate through walking, the presence of the ethnographer her or himself is represented through the audio-recording, which can

be disseminated digitally. In 2006, Butler reported that during a five-month period his soundwalk had been downloaded digitally (from the website www.memory scape.org.uk/) or purchased on CD by 600 people and at least 350 had participated in the walks (2006: 906). Butler's comments concerning how people experienced these walks are especially pertinent:

> The recordings slowed walkers down, gave people time to consider their surroundings and experience other people's memories in a more sensitised way. Hearing authentic voices from other people also seemed to make people empathise towards the community that they listened to, despite their prior assumptions or even antipathy towards, say, houseboat dwellers or West London bungalow owners. (Butler 2006: 904)

As I suggested above, alternative forms of representation might engender a sense of intimacy and a route to other people's experiences. Butler's work, along with his emphasis on the multisensoriality and sociality implied by the soundwalk, continues this theme.

In Chapter 6, I introduced the idea of walking with video (see also Pink 2007d), already an established technique in ethnographic film and visual ethnography practice. The associations between video, walking and place, and their capacity to invoke imaginations and memories that make this technique so effective in visual ethnography research, are also relevant to other emergent uses of walking with video which draw from arts practice. Christopher Witmore develops similar themes to explore the relationship between art and archaeology. Witmore is particularly concerned with place (a central concept in archaeology) and with sensory embodied experience (2004: 59). In seeking ways to communicate about place that go beyond 'documentation and inscription' (2004: 59–60), he proposes a process of 'mediation'. This 'mode of engagement', which goes beyond scholarly narrative (2004: 60), would permit ethnographers to, as Witmore puts it, 'attain richer and fuller translations of bodily experience and materiality that are located, multi-textured, reflexive, sensory and polysemous' (2004: 60).

Witmore also draws on Cardiff's practice, which, like Jacobson (2006), he suggests 'explores sensory evocation by creating moments of intimacy with the participant' (2004: 61). While Butler's (2006) developments built on Cardiff's audio-recorded soundwalk practice, Witmore draws on her video walks, whereby participants walk while viewing a pre-recorded walk on the screen of a digital video camera and listening with headphones. Witmore points out how 'Cardiff asks participants to synchronize their movements through the same locale with her pre-recorded journey by maintaining the same pace'. Thus the participant's body becomes engaged in the work of evoking Cardiff's experience. The potential of this practice for bringing audiences closer to elements of the emplacement of ethnographers and research participants is clear. Indeed, Witmore suggests that 'Throughout the walk the body of the participant (the listener-viewer) and the artist occupy the same space and perform the same movements' (2004: 61). For Witmore, such 'peripatetic video infuses aural and visual mediation into the corporeal activities of movement and interaction' (2004: 62). He proposes that when applied to the task of communicating about experience in archaeology, 'this form of media overlay constitutes a more fulfilling means

of interposing the lived experience of the archaeologist with that of the participant' (2004: 63–4). Through a discussion of a series of experiments with peripatetic video in archaeological field sites, Witmore's conclusions include two points that resonate strongly with the themes identified at the beginning of this chapter. He suggests that 'this form of mediation brings us to new levels of intimacy between archaeologists and their audience' and that 'disparities between different individuals' negotiations and interpretations of place are set in high relief when they themselves surrender to the experience of another' (2004: 68). Walking with 'peripatetic video' cannot reproduce exactly the past emplacement of others. Nevertheless, Witmore's discussion indicates how it might enable users to feel in some ways *similarly* emplaced and evoke a sense of another's 'being there'.

While the walks discussed above rely on pre-produced audio/visual digital media, other recent arts practice has engaged audiences/participants in different activities. In March 2008 as part of ROAM, a walking arts event developed by Loughborough University (UK), I participated in one of the artist Tim Brennan's walks. Brennan describes his walks as 'manoeuvres' that 'exist in a region between traditions of performance art, the historical tour, loco-descriptive poetry, pilgrimage, expanded notions of sculpture, curating and plain old pedestrianism' (www.mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk/manoeuvre/index.jhtml). The walk was based on careful planning and research. It was described as follows.

> Tim Brennan's new walk for Loughborough retraces the route taken by the town's Luddites on an infamous evening in June 1816. The route drops into a number of the pubs in which the Luddites drank, shoring up their nerve prior to their notorious night of machine wrecking.
>
> Using a broad range of quotations, which revisit or undermine historical facts, Tim Brennan's guided walks encourage new takes on historical events. (ROAM programme, Loughborough University, 2008)

Describing the process by which he creates the walks, Brennan told me 'There are two main aspects to each manoeuvre coming into being: the route and the quotations. I begin by walking around the area to which I have been invited and thinking through fields of cultural interest. ... Through this "scouting", I try and focus down on what it is that I want to hold as a primary object of study (so from the outset the manoeuvre is never encyclopaedic or random)'. In Loughborough, he 'discovered that the Luddites went on their own journey (a pub crawl/drinking spree) before raiding the mill and developed a spatialised/geographic relationship through a walking practice'. Once Brennan has determined a rough annotated route (which covers different types of pathway and terrain), he then works through an 'iterative method'. In his words: 'I go back and forth between route planning and sourcing texts. I treat this stage as if the work (the montage of quotes and sites) was a concrete poem. This leads to an editing of quotes which end up pasted into a journal/study book which is used on the walk. Sometimes quotes are placed in envelopes to be distributed or exist as a published guidebook' (Brennan, personal communication 2008).

Brennan's manoeuvres offer an example of how through an experiential performance-based way of making, and knowing, a place might be constituted and communicated

through a form of audience engagement. During the walk I participated in, Brennan's readings were largely historical as his route through Loughborough focused, among other things, on the town's Luddite history. I shared the Luddite's route through the town, traversed different terrains underfoot, listened to Brennan's readings, gazed on sculptures, houses, etc. The performance included a stop at a Loughborough pub where we bought drinks and socialised. In this sense the engagements that this walk offered were multisensory, and multimedia. It included sensing the town underfoot, through the rainy weather, through the tastes of the drinks in the pub, listening to and interacting with the readings, making a wish as I touched the toe of the statue in the market place. It also involved different sorts of engagement, from the intellectual task of thinking about the issues and debates that were raised by the readings and articulating questions about these verbally, to picking my way through the rubble surrounding a site where buildings had recently been demolished. The walk communicated effectively because it involved a process of learning through participation, and shared experience, thus offering participants an embodied way of knowing that went beyond what we were told verbally. It inspired me to think about how a multimedia, multisensorial academic presentation might be created.

Ethnographers now recognise the significance of walking as a practice of everyday life (e.g. Ingold and Lee-Vergunst 2008) and walking with others as a research method (see Chapter 4). This, combined with the developments in scholarly and arts practice discussed above in this section, suggest that walking offers a potentially rich medium for sensory ethnographic representation. Ethnographic filmmakers have already, for many years, represented their own walks with others (including walking with processions) in documentary film (see Pink 2007d for a discussion of this). The experienced walk, of course, only happens once. Therefore, walking as ethnographic representation would have a similar temporality to that of a performed conference paper. But it would differ in that it would entail a more participatory performance. If it was to be written up, then it would inevitably be flattened. If it were filmed, then it would create a new type of academic film genre which would offer its audience new possibilities for imagining (as outlined above with reference to ethnographic filmmaking).

Scholarly discussions of walking in common have established the idea of walking as a form of place-making (e.g. de Certeau 1984; Gray 2003; Lee and Ingold 2006). Walking as sensory ethnography representation can be understood in the same way. It offers walkers an opportunity to experience place in ways that are informed by the experiences of ethnographers and participants in their research. It might include walking over different terrains, consuming food or drink, sound and smellscapes, visual displays, sculptures, verbal lectures, distributing leaflets – a whole range of possible strategies that might be developed as ways of encouraging participants to engage with different ways of knowing about and feeling a sense of intimacy with the ethnographer's and research participants' experience of place. However, such a representation would simultaneously invite walkers to create their own places in relation to these representations. It is thus emblematic of the idea of a 'sensory ethnographic place' – that is, constituted through the practices of, and occupied by, the consumers of the ethnography.

THINKING ABOUT SENSORY AUDIENCES

At the beginning of this chapter I highlighted the inevitable falsity of separating out the senses in ethnographic representation. Yet, as the discussion above indicates, the practices of representation that are developing in arts and ethnographic practice – at least among those reported on in Europe and the United States – often follow the classifications set out by a modern western five-sense sensorium. Moreover, they often focus on one sensory modality as a route to knowing – as in, for example, the *sound*walk or *olfactory* art. The use of these categories is not surprising given that these works are largely developed for and presented in modern western cultures. A cross-cultural tour to review the sensory strategies and categories used in other arts cultures would surely reveal different practices and categories. Nevertheless, the existing practices of, for instance, soundscape composition (e.g. Drever 2002; Feld and Brenneis 2004), olfactory art works (e.g. Blackson 2008, Drobnik and Fisher 2008), not to mention audiovisual art, immediately invite at the least a qualification through the prism of multisensoriality, and at the most a critique. Most scholars who practise or write about sensory representation are aware that no one sense can truly be isolated from others. Moreover, often their practice is directed at the evocation of fuller embodied multisensory experience through a focus on one sensory modality.

How then might we understand audience encounters with these sensory representations? How might the audiences of a sensory ethnography 'make sense' of soundwalks or scapes, olfactory installations, audiovisual performances and more? Or, to put it another way, how are understandings of ethnographic representations bound up with human perception, the precise nature of our engagements and the power relations through which audiences are situated? In Chapter 2, I introduced a series of principles for a sensory ethnography through a focus on perception, place, knowing, memory and imagination. These ideas have informed my discussions of sensory ethnographic practice throughout this book and are equally relevant to an understanding of ethnographic representation. Thus, audience engagements with representations are, whether they are with an olfactory installation or a soundwalk, always multisensorial. For instance, an olfactory installation or scratch-and-sniff book are not experienced simply through the nose. The smells that are encountered as audiences engage with the material object from which they are released become, and are perceived as, part of a total environment, through sensing bodies. Indeed, a scratch-and-sniff book already implies the tactile experience of contact with the page and the visual experience of reading its pages. In such contexts, scents might be seen as the manufactured 'drivers' in the experience of a representation, in as far as they stand for the intentionality of the ethnographer/artist. However, a scent in isolation is neither the complete nor direct medium of communication, nor is it registered directly on the perceiving body as such. Likewise, our experiences of viewing films are not simply audiovisual and when we eat we do not simply taste, but engage with textures, visual impressions and smells. These are nevertheless the categories through which the experience is presented by the ethnographer/artist. They can thus be understood as categories and routes through which embodied ways of knowing are created.

Thus we might understand the potential for ethnographic representation to harness existing culturally specific sensory categories as contexts through which to produce

meanings, imaginaries and memories. In doing so, as I have outlined above, there are a good number of techniques through which ethnographers might go about inviting audiences to engage in the empathies, intimacies, self-reflexivity and intellectual/scholarly engagements that we would hope could bring them closer to imagining and comprehending the lives of others. We cannot know what audiences themselves will come to know through their encounters with representations. Nevertheless, a consideration of audience practices should also involve accounting for the memories, knowing, theoretical commitments and more that audiences bring to any ethnographic representation.

SUMMING UP

Ethnographic representation is a complex craft. It involves the creation of media through which the ethnographer seeks to lend audiences a sense of knowing as she or he and others have. It is, moreover, a strategic practice – the ethnographer's task is often not simply to *represent*, but to convince. She or he seeks to invite empathetic engagements and in doing so to invoke a sense of intimacy and sympathy in the viewer/reader/user. This task involves not only engaging audiences in ways that enable their sense of knowing, in some embodied way, about what it was like to be with – or even to be – the person(s) who participated in the research. It also involves a theoretical narrative through which this knowing informs a scholarly knowledge and that convinces an audience through an established form or method of intellectual argumentation.

A sensory ethnography invites new forms of ethnographic knowing and routes into other people's experiences. It provides us with ways of responding to research questions that involve focusing on forms of intimacy, sociality and emplacement, with which ethnographers who are not sensitive to the multisensoriality of our experiences and environments would not engage. The results are inspiring new layers of knowing, which, when interrogated theoretically, can challenge, contribute to and shift understandings conventional to written scholarship. Yet our exposure to and engagement with the multisensoriality of the places we encounter, share and make as ethnographers simultaneously complicates our task. It leads us to doubt the adequacy of the existing methods and genres of ethnographic representation for the task of communicating about these ways of knowing. As the examples and arguments discussed in this chapter demonstrate, this urge to seek forms of representation that can go beyond ethnographic writing has produced a series of recent innovations (as well as the established work of ethnographic filmmakers such as David MacDougall and sound artists such as Steven Feld). These doubts, and the explorations and innovations they are leading to, are of themselves an outcome of the 'sensory turn' in the social sciences and humanities. Accompanied by a strong interest in the senses among contemporary artists, this mix of more established and emergent ethnographic genres and styles and sensory arts practice offers ethnographers a series of inspiring models.

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