

**DOING
SENSORY
ETHNOGRAPHY**

TWO

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. 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 how they are known by those people. In doing so we aim to come closer to understanding how other people experience, remember and imagine. This perspective, while rooted in social anthropology, is interdisciplinary since it also draws from theoretical approaches developed in human geography and philosophy and provides a theoretical focus for design ethnography. To frame this perspective I outline a re-thinking of the ethnographic process through theories of the phenomenology of place and the politics of space. This approach 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.

INTRODUCTION: ETHNOGRAPHY, SENSORY EXPERIENCE AND THE BODY

Experience

Existing scholarship about the senses reveals a strong interest in human experience. This includes analysis of other people's sensory experiences of social interactions (e.g. Simmel, 1997 [1907]; Howes, 2003; Low, 2005; Vannini et al., 2012), their physical environments (e.g. Porteous, 1990; Ingold, 2000, 2010) and memory (Seremetakis, 1994; Sutton, 2001; Irving, 2010). 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, 2003; Downey, 2005; Marchand, 2010). It has moreover been anticipated that novel forms of ethnographic writing (e.g. Stoller, 1997), filmmaking (e.g. MacDougall, 1998, 2005) and using techniques from arts practice might communicate theoretically sensitive representations of the sensory embodied experiences of one group of people and/or ethnographers themselves to (potentially diverse) target audiences (e.g. Lammer, 2012; O'Neill, 2012). Given this focus on experience, to undertake sensory ethnographies researchers need to have a clear idea of what sensory and embodied experience involves.

I first set this question in its historical context, since it has 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' (Tuan, 1993: 165–6). The former was 'a fact of nature or an unplanned property of the built environment' and the latter 'more or less a deliberative creation' (1993: 166). These ideas resonate with those developed contemporaneously in social anthropology. Victor Turner had argued that we should distinguish between 'mere experience' (the continuous flow of events that we passively accept) and 'an experience' (a defined and reflected on event that has a beginning and an 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 implied by the idea that one might define a corporeal experience by reflecting on it and giving it meaning, however, implies 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.

Embodiment

The notion of embodiment, which had a significant impact across the social sciences by the 1990s (see, for example, Shilling, 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 informed subsequent sensory ethnography was set out by Thomas Csordas in his developments of the phenomenology of the philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (who I discuss below) and the practice theory of 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 the anthropologist 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 cited 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), 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 ethnographic work on Brazilian Capoeira), Downey argued that to make the concept of embodiment fulfil its potential, we should re-formulate 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.

Embodied ethnography

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. (Coffey, 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’ (Coffey, 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 – suggest 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, there 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) argued for an embodied ethnography, 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 both the emplacement of the people who participate in our ethnographic research and ethnographers’ 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 moreover 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. Next, I examine how theories of sensory perception can support an understanding of the sensory ethnographic process.

MULTISENSORIALITY AND THE INTERCONNECTED SENSES

Phenomenological approaches to the 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 that a theory of perception is needed to understand our ‘sensuous encounter with the environment’ (1994: 19) and Steven Feld proposed 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 his work has more recently become important 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 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' since it cannot exist in a pure form (2002 [1962]: 5). Merleau-Ponty's approach has been influential amongst 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 (2000) 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 argued 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 'Each 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 (2003) followed Csordas' 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, 2003: 74)

Applying this idea to her sensory ethnography of the Anlo Ewe people, Geurts outlined the terminology the Anlo Ewe used to categorise sensory experiences – a set of 'cultural categories or a scheme ... for organising experience'. However, she stressed that although these cultural patterns could be discerned, 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' (2003: 74) – the 'arbitrariness and indeterminacy' that were referred to by Csordas.

Ecological psychology and the senses

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' (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). 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 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: 'the perceptual systems not only overlap in their functions, but are also subsumed under a total system of bodily orientation', therefore 'Looking, listening and touching ... 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 increasingly influential in ethnographic work that attends to the senses. This is particularly evident in the writing of scholars in geography and anthropology who have built on Ingold's developments in this area (e.g. Grasseni, 2004b, 2011; 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, and also, as discussed later in this chapter, that are coherent with theories of place. For instance, in 2001 Shinsuke Shimojo and Ladan Shams reported that 'behavioral and brain imaging studies' had challenged the conventional opinion in this field that perception was 'a modular function, with the different sensory modalities operating independently of each other'. The newer work they discussed proposed 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). Newell and Shams also later proposed 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. (Newell and Shams, 2007: 1415)

In doing so they also recognised 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’ (2007: 1415).

Debates about perception

There is disagreement amongst scholars of the senses regarding how phenomenological understandings might be employed, and how they might be engaged in relation to the findings of neuroscience. One of the most significant debates 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 (amongst 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 pre-occupied 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)’ (2003: 49–50). Instead, Howes stresses the need for ethnographic researchers to ‘elicit the sensory models of the people they are studying’ (2003: 49–50). He 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). More recently Howes and Classen have pursued their argument further, opening their book *Ways of Sensing* with the claim that ‘The ways we use our senses, and the ways we create and understand the sensory world, are shaped by culture. Perception is informed not only by the personal meaning a particular sensation has for us, but also by the social values it carries’ (Howes and Classen, 2014: 1). The ‘culturalist’ approach adopted by Howes and Classen offers an analytical route that connects with an intellectual trajectory, which spans across anthropology, media and cultural studies and other disciplines. Its focus is on the cultural and the representational, even though it has an interest in the senses (see Pink, 2014). This approach often (co)exists in debate with that of non-representational theorists, as outlined in Chapter 1.

The work of neurobiologists (e.g. Shimojo and Shams, 2001; 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' (Howes, 2003, 2005a; Howes and Classen, 2014) emphasis on culture and the social significance of sensory models and meanings is redundant. There are ways that an analysis that attends to the level of culture and uses representational categories as its units of analysis can offer useful understandings of the world (see Pink, 2012). Indeed, it is essential that the sensory ethnographer appreciates 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, simultaneously, 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 rather 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

Thinking through place and space

Concepts of space and place have long since been the concerns of geographers and have (along with theories of landscape) often framed discussions of the senses in the discipline (e.g. Porteous, 1990; Tuan, 1993; Rodaway, 1994; Thrift, 2004). Connections between understandings of place in human geography, environmental psychology and neuroscience have been discussed by Charis Lengen and Thomas Kistemann in their review of literature in this field. They conclude that 'Neuroscience has provided evidence that place constitutes a very specific, distinct dimension in neuronal processing. This reinforces the phenomenological argumentation of human geographers and environmental psychologists' (Lengen and Kistemann, 2012: 1169). 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, 1996b). Place is moreover an important concept for other

disciplines for which the senses are particularly relevant, including design theory and practice (e.g. Silberg, 2013).

Building on this, I suggest going beyond a focus on the affinity between the study of the senses and of place-making or place, to consider how the concepts of place and space offer a framework for rethinking the ethnographic process, and the situatedness of the ethnographer. A focus on space and place also enables us to re-think the temporality of the ethnographic process in ways that connect it more closely with the future-oriented approach of design research, which in turn invites new ways of opening up ethnographic practice to applied and change-making agendas. Below I interrogate recent critical anthropological, philosophical and geographical commentaries on existing treatments of space and place in ethnography and theory in order to develop such a framework. My starting point is the anthropological literature in which the critique of spatial assumptions is 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 universal theories of space and place can situate ethnographic practice and process in its political context.

As Simon Coleman and Peter Collins have pointed 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 were 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 argued for 'a focus on social and political processes of place making' as in 'embodied practices that shape identities and enable resistances' (2001: 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) discussion 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 re-thinking of place in terms of 'entanglement' (2008, 2010). This critical response to the idea of place as bounded facilitates an understanding of ethnographic places as both based in human perception and open.

The 'gathering power' of place (Edward Casey)

Casey's earlier work responded 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 would be the starting point for understanding the relationship between place and space. Because he (following Merleau-Ponty) understood 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 argued 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's work stresses that place is 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, manifested in his argument 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, 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, place is not static, rather he has conceptualised it as an 'event' that is in process, constantly changing and subject to redefinition; second, place is endowed with what he called a 'gathering power' (Casey, 1996: 44) by which '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, writing 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.

Place as ‘open’ (Doreen Massey)

While Casey redefined the relationship between space and place by suggesting that the latter is secondary to the former, Massey has critiqued 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 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 that 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 re-think 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 on-going 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 Casey and Massey 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 Casey's 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). As such Casey suggests that 'gathering gives to a place its peculiar perduringness, allowing us to return to it 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 need to account for human perception in the task of understanding either of them.

'Entanglement' and 'meshwork' (Tim Ingold)

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. These ideas moreover 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'.

Place for sensory ethnography

Ingold's approach could be used to suggest that a concept of space is hardly necessary for the sensory ethnographer, since if we view the world through a notion of entanglement it may be unnecessary to distinguish between space and place. However, because an approach to understanding people's everyday realities is needed that will allow for both global power configurations and the immediacy of experience I suggest 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 are dealt with in the work of Gupta and Ferguson (2001) 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 here 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). In doing so it 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 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 'transmission' of knowledge

The question of how sensory knowledge is transmitted, flows or is learned between persons and/or generations has been debated extensively in the existing literature. Moreover, the terminology used to discuss this question is contested, with some preferring to speak of transmission (Marchand, 2010) while others opt for the notion of learning, arguing that knowledge cannot as such be 'transmitted' between persons (see Fors et al., 2013). In this section I use both terms as they have been engaged in recent literatures, acknowledging the need to assess how the terms are used rather than to take for granted that specific meanings and

processes are universally attributed to them. For instance, Trevor Marchand (2010) uses 'transmission' to refer to different processes in a way that makes the work of scholars who take different approaches comparable. Therefore, he comments on 'cultural transmission' in the work of Maurice Bloch (Marchand, 2010: S10), while writing of 'individual strategies of transmission and enskillment' in the work of Greg Downey (Marchand, 2010: S13) along with Ingold's idea that "knowledge" is an ongoing activity rather than an object or definable entity' (Marchand, 2010: S14). Scholars interested in the senses seem generally agreed that the transmission or learning of knowledge should be seen as a social, participatory and embodied process (e.g. Ingold, 2000; Geurts, 2003; Downey, 2007; Grasseni, 2007b; Hahn, 2007; Marchand, 2007). As Marchand puts it, reflecting on articles included in a journal issue which explored 'anthropology's thinking about human knowledge through exploration of the interdependence of nurture with nature', although the contributors took different perspectives on this, 'there is mutual recognition that knowledge-making is a dynamic process arising directly from the indissoluble relations that exist between minds, bodies, and environment' (2010: S2).

Understanding how knowledge is transmitted or learned is important for at least 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 and know? 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 to, parallel to or indeed inter-related with and contingent on those engaged in by research participants?

Learning and knowing

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, engaged 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 engaged across academic disciplines, particularly in literatures concerned with questions of practice (e.g. Nicolini et al., 2003; Harris, 2007). 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 the experience or competence (1998: 140) of participating in a practice. He treats knowledge as inextricable from this, by seeing practice itself as 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' (2007: 4). Yet while knowledge is always produced and lived in situated specificity it can be interpreted as having a different relationship to 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 thus suggests that 'knowing in practice involves an interaction between the local and the global' (1998: 141). Thus he offers 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 calls 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 assuming that of others.

Examples of learning, knowing and transmission

Several ethnographers of the senses have explored knowledge transmission in practice. Grasseni, like Ingold, locates the transmission of knowledge within an ‘ecology of practice’. She discusses 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 founding cattle fair champions’ (2007b: 61). Grasseni found that when the ten-year-old boy who features in her research 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). Grasseni argues that 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 others’ but creating one’s own emplaced skill and knowing in ways that are acceptable to others. For example, about learning 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 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 amongst her research participants 'balancing was described as one of the ultimate symbols for being human' (2003: 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]' (2003: 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' (2003: 103). 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' (2003: 105). Geurts points out how values and ideologies are embedded in these socialisation processes. She suggests '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' (2003: 107).

Transmission, knowing, learning: issues for sensory ethnography

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 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, 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 how such sensory knowing, which is intimately related to the researcher's perception of her or his environment, sense of self and embodiment, might lead to academic knowledge (if this indeed is what happens). I pursue this question in Chapter 7. In the following two sections I ask 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 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 not mutually exclusive categories.

The work of the historian Paul Connerton (1989) has been influential in discussions of collective memory. Connerton asks 'how is the memory of groups conveyed and sustained?' and suggests we might understand this through a focus on 'recollection and bodies' (1989: 4). He thus suggests 'social memory' might be found in the performativity of 'commemorative ceremonies' to which bodies are central (1989: 4–5). Connerton's approach has been influential in the work of anthropologists of the senses, since, as David Sutton puts it, 'he draws our attention to the importance of these of types of memories that can be found sedimented in the body' (2001: 12). As Sutton's (2001) work demonstrates, this approach is 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). 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'. 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 through 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 (1994) and Feld (1996). Reflecting on Seremetakis' 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' (1994: 119). However, the body is not merely constituted as Stoller describes by its sensory environment, but our embodied practices also contribute to such emplaced memory processes. For instance, Feld 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). Indeed, the question of embodied knowing and remembering can also be seen as part of our everyday life experiences as we go about ordinary mundane tasks. These memories (and moments of improvisation) are not necessarily things we speak about or discuss with others but ways of knowing and remembering that are embedded in our habitual physical movements as part of particular environments (Pink and Leder Mackley, 2014). Thus our experiences of place – and its social, physical and intangible components – are inextricable from the invocation, creation and re-investment of memories.

These points imply three related roles for a theory of sensory memory in ethnography. The first is to aid us in understanding the meanings and nature of the memories that research participants recount, enact, define or reflect on for researchers. The second is to help us to understand how ethnographers might generate insights into the ways other people remember through trying to share their emplacement. The third is 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 can become blurred) 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’. He suggests that understanding 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. 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 deterritorialisation 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 deterritorialisation, I suggest a focus on how imagination is implicated in everyday place-making practices. This does not mean dislocating imagination 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 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.

The anthropologist Vincent Crapanzano has argued that imagination should be re-thought, 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 proprioceptive ones? In varying combinations of these – and perhaps other senses' (2004: 23). Such multisensory imagining would be an embodied, rather than simply cognitive practice. Indeed, taking the question of how such everyday imagining emerges as part of the way in which people go about living in the world – as part of the way we do ethnography – opens the sensory ethnographer to the possibility that the temporality of everyday actions is often referential to possible futures and memories of the past – both of which might be thought of as ways of imagining.

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 – of past and future – 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 embodied practices.

If place is central to our way of being in the world and 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 attuning our bodies, rhythms, tastes, ways of seeing and more to 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. Such an approach might also help us to develop ethnographies with a future orientation, for instance what have been called ‘ethnographies of the possible’ (Halse, 2013). A sensory ethnography approach invites us to use our own experiences to seek to imagine how other people ‘feel’ their futures, and imagine their futures through their bodies, as much as the ways in which they talk about them.

SCHOLARLY KNOWING AND NOT KNOWING

Above I have suggested working with the idea 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’ (2007: 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, 2007: 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 that 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. Therefore, a less intellectualised form of sensory knowing in practice also has a role to play in academia and in academic representation. As Throop (2003) has pointed out, there are many ways in which we can experience and 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. I continue the discussion of this in Chapter 8.

Finally, a future orientation to sensory ethnography, which is implied by its association with imagination, opens up the possibility of also engaging with not knowing. Not knowing is important because our awareness of it enables us to acknowledge the gaps and voids and significantly the *uncertainties* that are part of the way that life is lived. For any approach to ethnography such acknowledgements are very important. Yet for a sensory ethnography they are particularly pertinent in terms of interrogating not only what is not known but the ways in which not knowing is experienced, perhaps unsaid, but felt, as a form of anxiety, uncertainty or optimism. However, the unknown and uncertain should not be seen as negative ghosts that haunt the way we live in the present, but rather as the very things that we should harness as part of the openness of a world that a future-oriented applied ethnography might engage with.

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, moreover they do not end. 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. 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. It moreover 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. Yet, as we know, these places are not static, they are not places we can 'go back to' or places that we can reconstruct; indeed they are places that we make because we are participating in them.

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 and then taking them with her or him as she or he moves forward and comes to know and understand in new ways. The challenge for ethnographers is to do this in such a way that also invites our audiences to imagine themselves into the places of others, while simultaneously invoking theoretical and practical points of meaning and learning, and be self-conscious about their own learning. While usually 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, as they move on temporally and in the imaginations of their viewers and readers. Some more innovative multimedia texts which offer their users opportunities to re-invent narratives and reconfigure meanings offer more obvious scope for the participation and forward movement of their audiences. Thus the idea of ethnographic-place-as-event I am suggesting is one where representations are known in practice.

The notion of the ethnographic place also offers us another opportunity, that is, to connect with the future orientation that is part of the commitment of design research to make change. As I have argued elsewhere:

By connecting this [the notion of the ethnographic place] to the future oriented approach of design we can think of an ethnographic place that will continue to move forward, and envision our role in this, thus we can see the future as *part of* rather than as *after* ethnography. (Pink, 2014: 422)

Summing up

To conceptualise a sensory ethnography process we need to 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

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of sensory ethnographic research and the processes through which ethnographic representations become meaningful and will continue to emerge as meaningful as they become entangled in future and as yet unknown configurations. It moreover 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 (of the past or future) 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 to develop an awareness of how she or he becomes involved not only in participating in 'other people's' practices. Rather, she or he needs to go further than this to anticipate her or his co-involvement in the constitution of places, and to as such identify the points of intervention of her or his own intentionality and subjectivity and how this might change over time.

Recommended further reading

- Connerton, P. (1989) *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crapanzano, V. (2004) *Imaginative Horizons*. London: University of Chicago Press.
- Harris, M. (ed.) (2007) *Ways of Knowing: new approaches in the anthropology of experience and learning*. Oxford: Berghahn.
- Ingold, T. (2010) *Being Alive*. London: Routledge.
- Massey, D. (2005) *For Space*. London: Sage.
- Pink, S. (2014) 'Digital-visual-sensory-design anthropology: ethnography, imagination and intervention', *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 13(4): 412-27.