



McConn-Palfreyman, W., Mangan, A., & McInnes, P. (2022).
Sensuous intoxication: Learning from bodies in organisational
ethnography. *Management Learning*, 53(4), 675-696.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/13505076221112653>

Peer reviewed version

Link to published version (if available):
[10.1177/13505076221112653](https://doi.org/10.1177/13505076221112653)

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Management Learning

Sensuous Intoxication: Learning from bodies in organisational ethnography

Journal:	<i>Management Learning</i>
Manuscript ID	MLQ-20-0270.R5
Manuscript Type:	Special Issue: The Senses in Management Research and Education
Keywords:	Ethnography, Sensory, Body, Rugby, Merleau-Ponty, corporeality
Abstract:	<p>An increasing number of management articles have focused on embodied ethnography in terms of either understanding other bodies at work or how our own bodies as researchers informs knowledge. In advancing this latter approach we argue for an embodiment that sensually intoxicates our bodies, enabling new forms of learning to emerge. To grow this understanding, we draw on Maurice Merleau-Ponty's concept 'le schéma corporel', a shared physiognomy of the senses. This concept informs a corporeal methodology which details three organisational depictions that emerge from a season long immersion in a professional rugby team. We illustrate how the first author was corporeally apprenticed in this setting through an understanding of the body as situated, emotional and physical. The article concludes by suggesting it is the researcher's own body that is the site of learning, providing a sense to the reader of the pain, touch and sound of professional rugby.</p>

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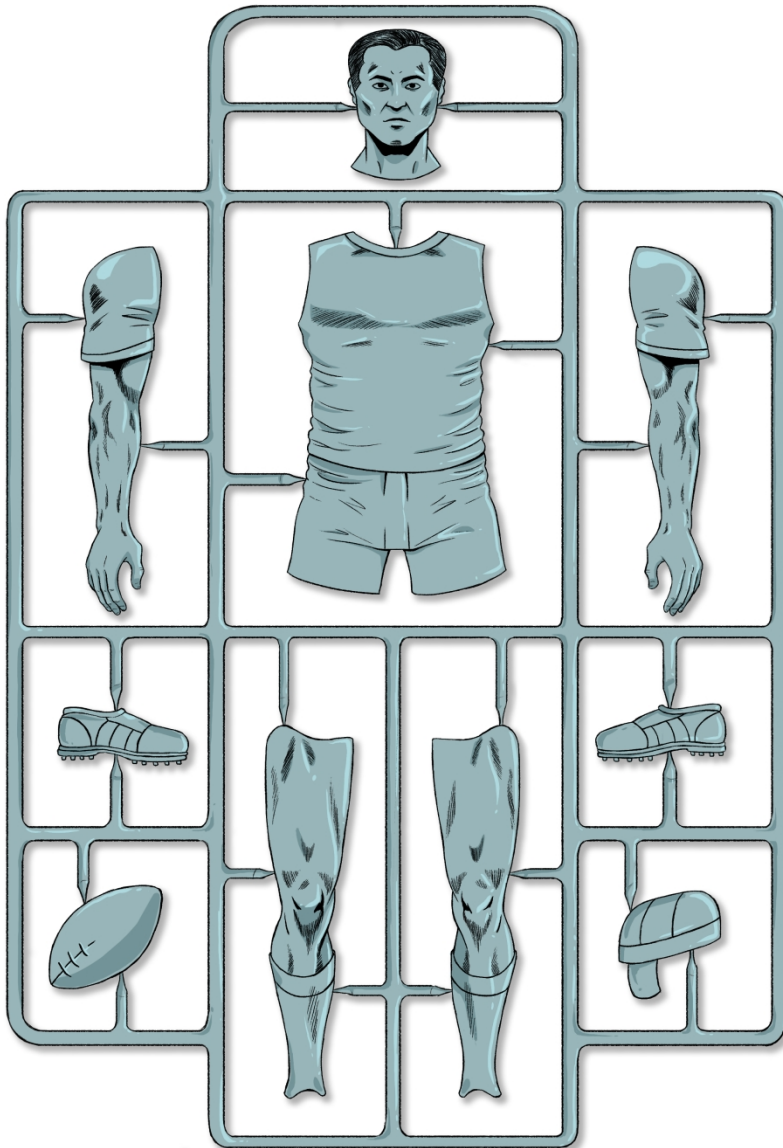


Figure 1

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Sensuous intoxication: Learning from bodies in organisational ethnography

For Peer Review

Abstract

An increasing number of management articles have focused on embodied ethnography in terms of either understanding other bodies at work or how our own bodies as researchers informs knowledge. In advancing this latter approach we argue for an embodiment that sensually intoxicates our bodies, enabling new forms of learning to emerge. To grow this understanding, we draw on Maurice Merleau-Ponty's concept 'le schéma corporel', a shared physiognomy of the senses. This concept informs a corporeal methodology which details three organisational depictions that emerge from a season long immersion in a professional rugby team. We illustrate how the first author was corporeally apprenticed in this setting through an understanding of the body as situated, emotional and physical. The article concludes by suggesting it is the researcher's own body that is the site of learning, providing a sense to the reader of the pain, touch and sound of professional rugby.

Keywords: ethnography, sensory, body, rugby, corporeality, Merleau-Ponty

Introduction - what is a body?

‘Like one walking alone in the dark...I took sufficient time carefully to satisfy the general nature of the task I was setting myself and ascertain the true method by which to arrive at the knowledge’ (Descartes, 2017: p. 39)

Descartes is often painted as a villainous *bête noire* for his dualism of mind and body (Todes, 2001). Yet, as the quote suggests, this schism was not Descartes’ direct attempt to undermine the body, but rather that his search for a method of inquiry underpinned the dismembering process (Shotter, 2011). The analogy of careful walking illustrates an ambition for a precise method that would reveal a generalised ‘truth’. Unfortunately, the assumption that such methodological steps can be performed in a static ‘mind’ devoid of the body hampers Descartes’ search (Shotter, 2011). Dreyfus (1993: p. xxvii) refers to such mental steps as a ‘comforting illusion’ that our world can be broken down into ‘general principles’, but one that fails to materialise in practice. Furthermore, Descartes’ method has resulted in many dualisms, not simply the mind-body, but also that of the body and world, ‘a 350 year old wound’, between what is inside (*cogito*) our bodies and outside (‘darkness’ or materiality) (Sheets-Johnstone, 2009: p. 2). Within the last 30 years the corporeal turn has helped to ‘bring the body back in’ theoretically within the social sciences (e.g. Crossley, 1995; Williams and Bendelow, 1998). Similarly organisational studies have sought to embrace such a turn alongside exploring the role of the researcher’s body in the creation of sensual knowledge (Gärtner, 2013; Willems, 2018; Harding, Gilmore et al., 2021). This paper’s contribution to this existing turn is to theoretically underpin, via the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, a corporeal methodology that aims to speak from *our* body rather than about others’ bodies (Shotter, 2000; Chadwick, 2017).

We argue that one of the main barriers to this fleshier methodology resolves around the definition of the term embodiment. This term is often used in management studies, with a presumed relation ‘of’ or ‘to’ the body, but its precise definition can remain ambiguous (Knights, 2015; Sheets-Johnstone,

1
2 2015). We think that within such uncertainty there is the danger of reproducing the notion of
3
4 containment in which our body philosophically ‘ends at the skin, or include at best, other beings
5
6 encapsulated by the skin’ (Haraway, 1991: p. 178). When the term embodiment is deployed it may
7
8 inadvertently reproduce a philosophically bounded body, a concrete schism between what is ‘inside’
9
10 our bodies and ‘outside’ in the world, referred to as the inside/outside (I/O) dualism (Dreyfus and
11
12 Taylor, 2015). Methodologically, embodiment therefore can either come to represent solely an
13
14 idealist position of thoughts, emotions and so forth, or, the material world around us of physical place
15
16 and objects (Pink, 2011a). Our aim therefore is not to dismiss embodiment but to further define it
17
18 philosophically in order to expand its methodological potential and harness the senses within
19
20 management research (Shotter, 2000). Specifically, we embrace Merleau-Ponty’s reflection that in
21
22 the *practice* of research, theory and method become difficult to neatly splice and separate, with
23
24 researchers seeking to make sense of what is occurring *as they go* (Merleau-Ponty, 1964a).
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32 Following Wacquant’s suggestion to plunge into organisational life in order to detail the ‘sensory
33
34 rhythms’ at work, we suggest that embodiment should be a process of ‘intoxication’, acknowledging
35
36 fully our senses as a ‘tool of inquiry and vector of knowledge’ (Wacquant, 2004: p. viii). A focus on
37
38 embodiment therefore is not simply of interest to corporeal scholars, but offers the opportunity for all
39
40 researchers to reflect on how they can squeeze further learning from emplaced scholarship within an
41
42 organisation (Seremetakis, 1994). While we agree, however, with Wacquant’s (2015: p. 5) argument
43
44 that, ‘close-up observation by means of pragmatic involvement’ is needed to add metaphorical flesh
45
46 on the bones, we think that he does not define intoxication enough to overcome the I/O dualism. It is
47
48 for this reason that we turn to ‘the ‘phenomenologist of the body’ Maurice Merleau-Ponty (Van
49
50 Manen, 2014: p. 304). He is defined as such owing to his explicit focus on the body, compared to
51
52 other phenomenologists who mainly in their careers addressed areas like consciousness, temporality
53
54 and so forth (Dreyfus, 1993; Sheets-Johnstone, 2009). Of particular interest for us, is Merleau-Ponty’s
55
56 concept of ‘le schéma corporel’, defined as a shared physiognomy we all inhabit (Merleau-Ponty,
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1
2 1968). This schema provides a philosophical base not to perceive bodies as disjointed objectified
3
4 assemblages (as depicted in figure 1), but for researchers to utilise their own ‘flesh’, ‘expressed in
5
6 our bodily attitude’, to methodologically grasp the situation (Merleau-Ponty, 1964a: p. 53).
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14 *[Insert Figure 1. here]*

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16 Figure 1.
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20 We suggest that the notion of sensuous intoxication is an invitation to go beyond distant, rationalist
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22 approaches to research and embrace patterns of knowing gleaned from the senses such as touch,
23
24 sounds, smell and pain. Such intoxication therefore is potentially insightful, but we argue it is
25
26 methodologically hampered by a philosophically ill-defined understanding of embodiment. Without
27
28 such a robust definition we as scholars may position ourselves outside the contextual construction of
29
30 knowledge, cutting off potential new avenues of sensuous understanding. In order to harness this
31
32 potential, we lay out the paper in four sections. First, we look at how a dualist view of embodiment
33
34 may inadvertently create a decorporealised analysis within ethnography. Second, in order to clarify
35
36 how bodies may be theoretically conceived to inform intoxication, we turn to Merleau-Ponty’s
37
38 schema which underpins a ‘sensuous scholarship’ by re-orienting the scholar’s body to the ‘smells,
39
40 tastes, textures and sensations of ethnographic work’ (Stoller, 1997: p. xv). Third, we draw on the
41
42 first author’s ethnographic study of a professional rugby team to illustrate a corporeal methodology
43
44 and depictions that centre the body as the site of knowledge rather than a mechanical transmitter of
45
46 information (Wacquant, 2004). Finally, in the discussion we use the notion of the researchers’ ‘three
47
48 bodies’ to illustrate how [first author’s] corporeality helped influence the intoxication process and
49
50 thus the knowledge that was accrued in the study (Valtonen et al., 2017).
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Comprehending decorporealised analysis

1
2 Embodied management studies now involves both a focus on the other body of the worker (e.g.
3
4 Courpasson and Monties, 2017; Best and Hindmarsh, 2019), and a growing appreciation of the role
5
6 of the researcher's own body in constituting knowledge (Dale and Latham, 2015; Chadwick, 2017;
7
8 Bispo and Gherardi, 2019). In order to add to this latter element, an overt refinement of embodiment
9
10 beyond an I/O dualism is required. Such a dualism is predicated on 'parts' of the body, like
11
12 observation, resulting in a decorporealised perception, or 'disembodied organisational analysis', that
13
14 ignores the wider contribution of the body (Hassard et al., 2000). Küpers (2015: p. 252) suggests 'a
15
16 shift from theorizing about or of bodies in a disembodied, objectifying or subjectifying way, towards
17
18 a mode of inquiry that makes sense while thinking from and with lived bodies'. This positions
19
20 embodiment as research from within, as inside the organisation but also through our own bodies as
21
22 researchers with personal histories (Shotter, 2010). The old trope of 'being there' is insufficient to
23
24 elucidate how we feel in organisations, resulting in dispassionately analysing topics which leaves us
25
26 emotionally or physically unmoved by what we encounter (Chadwick, 2017). The ethnographic turn
27
28 within organisational studies has cited the importance of spatial, emotional, bodily, and multi site
29
30 forms of knowing (Rouleau et al., 2014). Addressing the ontological implications around embodiment
31
32 therefore may help advance the corporeal understanding that is taking place in ethnographic research
33
34 (Sheets-Johnstone, 2009).
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43 In order to advance this turn, it is worth detailing three markers of an I/O philosophy that may become
44
45 evident in the practices of embodied ethnography. First, the use of bloodless language which results
46
47 in cold, dispassionate accounts may reflect research that lacks feeling either in tactility or emotion
48
49 (Strati, 2007). A second signifier may be researchers speaking of 'other' bodies but not their own via
50
51 a reliance on description. This positioning is referred to as the god-trick (Haraway, 1991) or God's
52
53 eye view (Dreyfus and Taylor, 2015) in which we believe we can stand outside our bodies as some
54
55 detached 'observer'. This view of embodiment also can fall prey to behaviourist notions in which
56
57 materiality is the sole determinant of how bodies are moved or shaped (Best and Hindmarsh, 2019).
58
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60

1
2 Finally, as an I/O conceived view of embodiment is based around parts, not processes, there can be a
3
4 tendency towards reductionism, in which one part of our body is selected as the cause of the action
5
6 (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). This reduction may privilege the 'eyes' via observation, but also exists in
7
8 contemporary studies with emotions or 'affective' experience (Burkitt, 2014). Emotions here become
9
10 an idealist 'backdoor', reducing experience to some 'pilot in the ship' or homunculus at work in the
11
12 'mind' at the expense of materiality (Todes, 2001). The I/O dualist ontology therefore can manifest
13
14 itself in a number of covert ways through embodied research.
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20 **Sensuous Scholarship - re-orientating the scholar's body**

21
22 Embodiment, however, does not need to blindly follow I/O ontological assumptions. Instead there is
23
24 an opportunity to articulate a philosophy in which the researcher's body is intertwined, rather than
25
26 'cut away', from the world. Anthropologists have already articulated the need, within ethnography,
27
28 for researchers to 'come to our senses' to avoid decorporealised analysis (Seremetakis, 1993). They
29
30 argue a reorientation of embodiment enables a 'sensuous scholarship' that can 'reawaken profoundly
31
32 the scholar's body' by focusing on the senses (Stoller, 1997: p. xv). Such scholarship goes beyond a
33
34 bounded body of psychologised insides, or social outsides, to an embedded notion of embodiment
35
36 (Pink, 2011a). Here, Merleau-Ponty's 'le schéma corporel' is particularly useful. He defines it as a
37
38 'bodily point of view', best captured in the French pronoun of 'On' ('We' or 'One') as in 'One blinks
39
40 every few seconds' or 'We breath through our noses' (Merleau-Ponty, 1964b: p. 176; Carman, 2008).
41
42 Merleau-Ponty suggests this schéma is built on a common physiognomy, a shared 'we-ness' of our
43
44 senses (Leder, 1990). We overcome an understanding of embodiment predicated on a dualistic
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46 position, therefore, by returning to how we communally 'grasp' the world around us (Merleau-Ponty,
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48 1964b).
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56
57 The conceptual contribution of this 'schéma' goes beyond the shared minds of intersubjectivity, or
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59 the 'a priori' causal notion of thought as first conceived through representations. Merleau-Ponty
60

1
2 (1964b: p. 174) instead advises ‘the constitution of others does not come after that of the body’, with
3
4 the only ‘severance’ of corporeality our own representations. He illustrates this idea of a shared
5
6 schéma through the example of a handshake, arguing ‘the reason why I have evidence of the other
7
8 man (sic) being-there when I shake his hand is that his hand is substituted for my left hand...my two
9
10 hands ‘coexist’ as...one single body’s hands’ (1964b: p. 168). Bodies in this way have a reflective
11
12 nature, co-creating each other’s experiencing through a shared expression (Küpers, 2020). Merleau-
13
14 Ponty concludes by suggesting we do not perceive others as ‘mannequins’ but rather as flesh and
15
16 blood ‘organs of a single intercorporeality’. Our actions therefore are not in a vacuum but are
17
18 constantly (re)created in relation to others through our shared schema, or ‘intercorporeal’ nature. He
19
20 uses the handshake to illustrate there are no insides or outsides but only a fleshy, shared, ‘sensitive
21
22 space’, with others (Cataldi, 1993). The ‘le schéma corporel’, or corporeal schema, dissolves an I/O
23
24 distinction by illustrating how we are always ‘woven corporeally’ into the ongoing fabric of the world
25
26 which is devoid of any boundaries (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). Importantly, as researchers, it illustrates
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28 that when we step into organisational ‘worlds’ we contribute to their ongoing construction rather than
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30 stand apart from them in some form of corporeal vacuum (Küpers 2020).
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39 As well as providing a philosophical foundation for an unbounded embodiment, ‘le schéma corporel’
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41 also reorientates research inquiry in three ways. Initially, there is a perceptual reorientation, for
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43 ‘perception has everything to do with it, the ‘it’ being good ethnography’ (Howes, 2006: p. 40). Sight
44
45 is often privileged in Western research, but vision is no more ‘objective’ than any other sense (Stoller,
46
47 1989). Furthermore, Hall (1966[1990]: p. 2) suggest ‘people from different cultures...inhabit
48
49 different sensory words’. Specifically, we should not rule out how researchers construct knowledge
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51 sensually, or how such faculties inform localised forms of knowing (Küpers, 2015). Second, there is
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53 a moral reorientation in which researchers bear witness, enabling readers ‘to think new thoughts or
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55 feel new feelings’ (Stoller, 2004: p. 832). The corporeal overlap helps emotionally ‘give voice’ to
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57 participants, rather than indulge in research that renders pain and feelings inferior or ‘silent’ to
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1
2 rationalistic ‘thinking’ (Feldman, 1994). Embracing the sensuous ensures we explore how our ‘gut’,
3
4 as well as our ‘heads’, inform accounts (Bispo and Gherardi, 2019). Finally, a practical reorientation
5
6 avoids seeking generalised ‘truths’ by viewing those in the organisation as ‘common denominator
7
8 people’ or valorising ‘heroic events’ (Marcus and Cushman, 1982; Cunliffe and Coupland, 2012).
9
10 Instead, there is a desire to embrace the ‘everyday muddle’, or mundanity, of daily practice, charting
11
12 how such organising shapes us as researchers (Czarniawska, 1997). Merleau-Ponty’s schéma
13
14 therefore helps provide signposts to how we may epistemologically grasp a sensuous form of
15
16 embodiment, paving the way for an immersive organisational intoxication to occur.
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22 **A Corporeal Methodology**

23 ***Folding the corporeal into embodiment***

24
25 In order to further develop embodiment predicated on Merleau-Ponty’s notion of corporeality, we
26
27 draw on Van Maanen’s (2011a) four markers of ethnographic research (Observed; the Observer; the
28
29 Tale; the Audience) to frame our ethnographic study of a professional rugby team. It is important to
30
31 note that these markers are a methodological resource to help tailor a corporeal position *rather* than
32
33 acting as a theoretical lens on to the body itself (see also *Authors 2019*). Initially, in relation to the
34
35 first marker, there is an increased focus on articulating immersion with participants, whether sitting,
36
37 eating or standing with them through emotional challenges to strive to feel what they feel (Küpers,
38
39 2020). Second, we felt it was useful to become a ‘sensory apprentice’, subjecting oneself as much as
40
41 possible to the daily schedule, or sensory rhythms of the players’ work (Wacquant, 2005a). Third,
42
43 rather than striving to detail an everlasting ‘truth’, our intertwined collection of stories is an overt
44
45 admission that the account is a shared (re)construction of what occurred (Wacquant, 1995). Finally,
46
47 a corporeal informed methodology seeks to tell a story ‘with dignity and respect’, continually asking
48
49 ourselves why do we write and for whom (Stoller, 1997: p. 42). To try and articulate this reflective
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51 stance, within this methodology and discussion, we utilise the third person pronoun to frame the
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53 writing i.e. [first author or first author’s] body. Within the rugby depictions however, the first person
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1
2 singular is deployed i.e. 'I'. Van Maanen's markers overall provide touch points to stay within the
3
4 ethnography, while simultaneously embracing a corporeal perspective that reflects our sensuous
5
6 schemas (Merleau-Ponty, 1968).
7

8 ***Hibernia***

9
10 Although rugby is a particular form of physical capital, it was not selected specifically as a unique or
11
12 unusual case. We as authors viewed the team's activity simply as another form of body work in which
13
14 the players worked on *their* bodies, rather than the bodies of others, for social and financial
15
16 remuneration (Wacquant, 2002; Wolkowitz, 2006). In order to avoid therefore any unnecessary
17
18 romanticism of sport, and embrace the mundane daily work of those involved, we have avoided
19
20 labelling such body work as unique (Shilling, 2005). The team in question here is Hibernia
21
22 (pseudonym), a professional men's rugby team who play in European cup competitions and the
23
24 United Rugby Championship, a league including teams from Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Italy and
25
26 South Africa¹. At the start of the 2015/16² season, Hibernia contained 53 players, fluctuating during
27
28 the season owing to injuries and international duty, of which 23 were selected for a match day
29
30 competition and 15 of those formed the starting team. Alongside the players, there is a team of
31
32 performance staff (e.g. Head Coach, Performance Analysis etc.), a medical team (doctor and
33
34 physiotherapists) and a broader staff base dedicated to operations. The team's season runs from
35
36 roughly September to May. Their stadium ('Athletic Park'³) holds about 10,000 seats and consists of:
37
38 a 4G artificial playing pitch; a ground floor with a gym, changing rooms, kitchen, and a physiotherapy
39
40 clinic; a second floor which is mainly made up of the 'Machine Room' containing the performance
41
42 staff; and a top floor with marketing and communication offices and a large 'Reception Room' where
43
44 team meetings and lunch occurs. There is also an upper deck to the stadium which includes a
45
46 hospitality deck for corporations, VIPs, and fans willing to avail of such services.
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58 ¹ For an explanation of rugby terms and positions, the World Rugby website offers a comprehensive beginner's guide. See:
59 <https://passport.worldrugby.org/index.php?page=beginners&p=3> (last accessed 14 August 2021).

60 ² The season and the yearly dates have been changed to help increase masking and anonymity.

³ All names are pseudonyms, including people, teams and buildings.

Recording the Action

[First author] gained access to Hibernia through Ruari, or ‘Big Ru’ owing to his 6 foot 8 inch, 19 stone frame, a former captain of Hibernia and current player mentor. Ru provided informal sponsorship, helping ‘sell’ [first author] to the players and gatekeepers. Overall, formal recording involved three approaches. First, field-notes were collected consisting of daily, hand written jottings converted into typed notes of personal reflections, as well as daily and weekly summaries. Second, recorded continual conversations and interviews were conducted with 12 senior players, Ru, and a selected number of other staff. Importantly, these unstructured interviews explored what the interviewee deemed important in the twists and turns of the season (Heyl, 2001) and were situated within the daily sensual work of the players (Pink, 2011a). For example, in the dugout, bodies are pressed close ensuring all present are involved in the conversation, whether you like it or not. Moreover, players literally sweat on you in this tight space informing the collective sense of intimacy (Stoller, 1989) (see figure 2). Finally, artefacts were detailed to illustrate how bodies and material world afford each other (Merleau-Ponty, 1964a). These objects included dugouts and pitches but also other forms such as emails and documents (Pink, 2012). Some of these objects are directly mentioned within the depictions (e.g the symbolic Tunnel) while others helped orientate and inform [First author’s]](re)construction of events (e.g. weekly timetables).

[Insert Figure 2. here]

Figure 2.

Sensual Analysis

The sensual approach taken here reflects that analysis starts the moment we enter the field (on-site) rather than solely at a later, disconnected, stage (off-site) (Seremetakis, 1993). The on-site ‘attending to the senses’ encompassed two phases (Stoller, 1997: p. 38). First, exploring the sensory aesthetics of the players’ daily work by both detailing their actions but also querying their use of rugby bodily knowledge (Leder Mackley and Pink, 2013). Second, [first author] also tried to capture his own sensorial reactions through reflective commentaries detailing how his body was emotionally and

1
2 morally apprenticed into Hibernia's practices (Pink, 2011b). Off-site sensitisation also involved two
3
4 further stages. Initially, continual re-reading, re-listening and note taking allowed [first author] to
5
6 viscerally immerse himself in the information (Seremetakis, 1994). Second, post immersion, he
7
8 identified common sensory categories (Pink, 2015). As the players narrated their experiences, [first
9
10 author] kept a sensorial log that noted specific mentions of the body (Wacquant, 1995). This log was
11
12 later cross-referenced against the recorded conversations to construct these categories. Such
13
14 categories are no 'truth' on Hibernia, but rather act as epiphanies on taken for granted rugby practices
15
16 (Pink, 2015). Further sense-making occurred as the other authors acted as a first Audience (Van
17
18 Maanen, 2011). Within the depictions, alongside text and photos, there are also drawings
19
20 commissioned through a Dundee (Scotland) based artist company called Ink Pot. These drawings are
21
22 to help the reader connect with the ethnography beyond simply the textual form (Leder Mackley and
23
24 Pink, 2013). Finally, it must be reiterated that although analysis is located as a separate section here,
25
26 the practice of the research, with theory and method intermingling, did not occur in the field through
27
28 such defined cuts or sections.
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36 **Three corporeal depictions of rugby**

37
38 The result of the sensual analysis process is three sensorial depictions of professional rugby. Three
39
40 were chosen to express practices in relation to: nociception (pain), haptic (touch) and auditory
41
42 (hearing) modalities. This is not because others were absent, rather they reflect the prominent
43
44 sensorial dimensions of the context (Howes, 2006).
45
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48 ***Depiction 1: Putting your body on the line (Nociception)***

49
50 Rugby is a highly physical game, with player injuries common throughout the season. A sense of
51
52 pain, or nociception, in which the nervous system detects harm or physical damage around the body,
53
54 is pervasive within the sport. For example, a well liked stalwart of the Hibernia team John Vacca
55
56 (known as 'JV'), was back for his first game after missing over 12 months of playing through injuries:
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1
2 JV started the game out of position but was doing well. Early in the game though, as a high
3
4 ball in flight came in to him, he caught it and then was challenged by an opposing player
5
6 (what James, the head coach, later referred to the media as an ‘innocuous’ tackle). However
7
8 JV did not get up after the challenge. There was an eerie silence around the stands as the
9
10 stretcher and physiotherapists rushed onto the field. As he was stretchered off the fans rose
11
12 and applauded him for a long time. He too seemed to come around and applauded them as he
13
14 was carried and you could feel the emotions between both sets of hands clapping. Robbie,
15
16 seated next to me, reflected that “that may be it for him”. Now I got it - JV was unsure of
17
18 whether he would continue in rugby after the summer as his contract with Hibernia was up.
19
20 He was a very loyal servant for them over 7 years but in recent times his injuries had
21
22 diminished his contractual value. Just like that, one ‘innocuous’ tackle and that may be the
23
24 last pro rugby he ever will play. I felt desperately sad for him, but knew that all the players
25
26 were aware that this was the nature of the sport. Brutal was not a strong enough word (see
27
28 Figure 3).
29
30
31
32
33
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41
42

[Insert Figure 3. here]

Figure 3.

43
44 This instance of physicality highlights that pain and injury are a common currency in terms of the
45
46 potential sensual realms the players draw on to express themselves. Even the equipment is designed
47
48 to replicated or pay homage to such pain, as the scrum machine attests (see figure 4). This machine
49
50 reproduces the scrum of interlocking bodies that occurs during a competition game, replicating the
51
52 resistance of opposing players. During training, the players push the machine through their shoulders
53
54 which is 177 kg at its lowest weight.
55
56
57
58
59
60

[Insert Figure 4. here]

Figure 4.

A good way to understand this physical endurance was through the physiotherapists' work:

I sat in the physio room watching Amanda, one of the physiotherapists cutting out a 'donut' from some padding and wrapping tape around it. It was then taped to the shoulder of a young academy player, to act as a 'cushion' for bruising against further tackles. The young player had a baby face but heavily muscular body and was telling Amanda about his University studies. As Amanda continued I looked down at the two beds to my right in which a player sat, or lay, on each, and also were getting strapped in various ways to protect against injuries. It was a strange sight seeing the physios, all female, strapping up these young men - it harked back to first world war photos I once saw in which nurses had been strapping up young men for battle. The players seemed happy and content to let the physios do their job by the expressions on their face, but said little during it.

A rugby team then is built around this physicality, perhaps best stated by assistant coach Pat that some of the players' job was 'to smash shit and it's important you do that'. In that way, pain and physicality are an integral part of the practice of rugby: the degradation of the bodily, meaty, flesh in order to enact organisational work. It is perhaps unsurprising then a sense of pain can enable the expression of 'good rugby', particularly through the sacrificing of one's body:

I guess the key point is the sacrifice aspect of it. It's not hard work until your are hurting from it, pushing yourself... what I mean here is hard work, kind of that aspect of running when it's sore, or when it's painful. When it's tough to keep running, to keep running... and putting your body on the line for your team (Calum, player).

This idea of physically going 'over and above', and its valorisation, was deemed necessary to be denoted as a 'good team mate'. For example, after each game the players receive symbolic artefacts to represent if they have performed outstandingly in a certain area. In relation to a game against an Italian team, Ben, one of the leaders received a symbolic '12 gauge' artefact, that looked like a small

1
2 replica shotgun, to represent giving the opposition ‘both barrels’ for he had spent a night in hospital
3
4 after peeing blood as a result of the numerous tackles he made.
5
6
7

8
9 Ben was well known for taking a large amount of physical damage and would go on to receive the
10
11 ‘Leadership Award’ at the end of season Awards Night. As a former boxer, I [first author] recalled
12
13 an image from my own past of coughing up blood into a toilet after a fight - red specks flecked against
14
15 a white backdrop. I particularly remember lying on the bathroom floor wheezing intermittently
16
17 between the coughing. These are moments of pride at your dedication but also fear of what you are
18
19 doing to your body. In particular, in that moment on the floor, the dread flooded me that such personal
20
21 bodily sacrifice was not going to lead to validation, but rather long term physical harm. Sport,
22
23 however, can entail various narratives and practices that allow athletes to commit their bodies to the
24
25 competitive cause with good conscience. Specifically these enactments act as a form of cultural
26
27 ‘anaesthetisation’ that enables participants to morally, emotionally, and practically ‘plunge’
28
29 themselves into their athletic profession.
30
31
32

33 34 ***Depiction 2: Press the Flesh (Haptic)*** 35

36
37 I was sitting with Ru (the former captain) in the local coffee shop where the leaders met, away from
38
39 the public glare of Athletic Park. We were talking about how to make vague concepts like ‘leadership’
40
41 tangible in players’ daily actions. He paused, as if searching for a specific example for me:
42

43
44 I was always a big fan of a huddle....Alex Maguire was the coach when I was captain. We
45
46 used to wind him up how much we used the huddle, 'cus he'd rather we were training. But
47
48 the sooner you come together like that...and you're linked-arms and everybody's tight, and
49
50 it's an unbreakable circle. That for me is as close to being tangible as you'll get.
51

52
53 Ru continued by reflecting that the ‘touchy feely’ nature of rugby perhaps was most important after
54
55 a loss. Such tactility was also part of an early morning greeting ritual of sorts:
56

57
58 It was noticeable when the players met the coaches how important the handshake was - it
59
60 took a bit of time for them all to get around each other. As I stood there looking at this

1
2 interaction I was a little bit overawed by it. Each player or coach made sure to shake every
3
4 one's hand. The whole process took a couple of minutes within a tight group of around 25
5
6 people in the middle of the park. I discussed later this interaction with one of the leaders,
7
8 Calum. He remarked that it was weird at first, for maybe even a year or so, but then you got
9
10 used to it each day. It was easy when things weren't going well to forget to acknowledge
11
12 others around you, so every day it set that standard of mutual respect (see figure 5.).
13
14
15
16
17

18 *[Insert Figure 5. here]*

19
20
21 Figure 5.
22
23
24

25 Likewise, for myself, the handshake took some getting used to. Essentially on meeting anyone at the
26
27 club every day you greeted by shaking hands with them. Some players and staff, like the female
28
29 physiotherapists, preferred a fist pump or hand slap and the handshake itself could vary considerably.
30
31 However, this daily acknowledgement of others as flesh and blood, and worthy of respect, was
32
33 omnipresent.
34
35
36
37

38
39 Turning meaningful associations for the club and team into tangible forms was not limited to the
40
41 mutual touching of flesh. For example, the Hibernia players had put in place an 8 foot tall, 10 foot
42
43 long, white, free standing 'Tunnel' that stood as an entrance to the training field. It was adorned with
44
45 the club colours and crest. Inside the tunnel contained all the player's signatures alongside a personal
46
47 word or phrase. So, for example, one of players, Dylan, had used the word 'Honoured'. During
48
49 training, players run through the tunnel as a reminder to themselves of why they play the game:
50
51

52 ...being a professional athlete, you can get tired sometimes, be a bit arsey. And at training,
53
54 when you are feeling a bit down, it's always trying to remind yourself that you are setting an
55
56 example to others and we are doing this because we enjoy it...that's a massive thing you
57
58 know, and I think our tunnel helps us with that. When we walk out to train, the Tunnel
59
60

1
2 contains a sign saying 'whatever it takes' and when you come back in, it says 'fortunate to
3
4 play' which just helps remind you I think (Séan, senior player).
5

6 Later, Séan returned to the importance of the Tunnel and of touch:
7

8 Alluding back to the Tunnel, once you go over the white lines of the pitch, whatever happens
9 in there, stays in there. It's the same with the opposition, you go in wanting to rip a guy's
10 head off, but you shake hands after the game. And it is a weird one, the whole week building
11 up this feeling of animosity, and you are wanting to fucking kill somebody and afterwards
12 you are like "good game, how are you doing?"
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21

22 There is no doubt rugby is a 'touchy-feely' sport but it goes beyond the physical nature of the game.
23 For myself [first author], I was stepping into a world that was dominated by external validation and
24 judgement that could move swiftly from high anxiety to the ecstasy of the win. Certainly, I felt it hard
25 to step off this rollercoaster of emotion as a researcher, and at times I drove home from the stadium
26 drained at every level. Within such a heavily male environment therefore, I understood that feelings
27 *inside* were often expressed in the tactility of the working environment. Without buying into the
28 visceral touch-feely element of slaps, handshakes and hugs that were rooted in localised working
29 practices, I knew I would struggle to regulate my own emotions when needed.
30
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41 ***Depiction 3: Coach doesn't love me (Auditory)*** 42

43 A sense of hearing refers to how the working practices of Hibernia were expressed through an
44 openness of conversation. Such openness suggested that all players could voice their thoughts on
45 everyday, working, matters. Such an inclusive principle was an imperfect process and required a
46 number of trade offs. For example, Ru suggested one such trade off was that players would need to
47 have 'skin six inches thick'. At the time, I thought he was referring to how players can, sporadically,
48 receive blunt feedback from coaches and their peers as well as a necessary ability to take and give
49 comedic 'banter' to those around you. However, the idea of 'skin six inches thick' referred to an
50 ability to build relations with others. Ru was pointing to the manner in which such relations are formed
51
52
53
54
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56
57
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59
60

1
2 at Hibernia. Such forms were not necessarily through harmonious exchanges, but could be expressed
3
4 as confrontation, with such encounters part of the daily ‘work’ of rugby as I observed:
5

6 The players were participating in some small sides games on the training pitch. At this stage
7
8 of the season these games carry little contact owing to players’ lack of fitness. However,
9
10 winger Federico, the new, young, Italian signing put in a heavy challenge on Craig, an
11
12 international player. Craig picked himself up off the turf and with a roar grabbed Federico by
13
14 the throat, his face red with anger as he shouted. Other players around me barely
15
16 acknowledged the confrontation, and I am not sure if it was Craig ‘disciplining’ a young
17
18 player into how things are done, or a reflection of his concern over getting injured as a result
19
20 of the zealously of a young new signing.
21
22
23

24
25 Aggression between team mates on the training ground was not uncommon with Ru once remarking
26
27 that it was part of the training process to prepare for such confrontation within competitive games.
28

29 Confrontation was continually present as I experienced through an encounter with James (Head
30
31 Coach). To provide some background, often team meetings could be quite monotonous affairs for
32
33 me. The classroom in which they were held was large and dark, a lot of technical language was used
34
35 that I could not understand, and it was very coach-led with the players sometimes just listening for
36
37 large periods (see figure 6).
38
39

40
41 *[Insert Figure 6. here]*
42

43 Figure 6.
44
45
46
47

48 On one occasion however, the team meeting felt anything but pedestrian. I was sitting in amongst the
49
50 players and coaches, when the players were asked to split into units of five to discuss particular roles
51
52 for the upcoming game:
53

54 I approached the back five and asked them if it was okay to sit in “No problem” said Dru “we
55
56 are the best group anyway!”. I smiled and said “no doubt” and took a seat. As the players
57
58 began their goals, James called me over [first author]. I jumped up and came across thinking
59
60

1
2 he wanted to show me something or suggest an idea - he looked at me sternly and intently,
3
4 stating “I would rather you left the players to this. In these meetings its best if you sit down
5
6 the back. If you want to sit in on anything tactical come and ask me first”. I was a bit surprised,
7
8 and embarrassed, but said I understood - I walked back to the group, collected my book and
9
10 pushed the chair in and walked over to where Keith, the assistant coach, was sitting notably
11
12 away from the groups.
13
14

15
16 I certainly felt confronted in that moment, unprepared for the sudden change of pace to the team
17
18 meeting. Though James did not raise his voice, there was an abrasiveness to his tone. The players
19
20 remarked that such encounters, or ‘honest conversations’ as they called them, were required at times.
21
22 The encounter left its mark on me emotionally and physically. The sense of embarrassment in a
23
24 dressing down from James, in front of the players, ensured I knew *where* to put my body in future
25
26 meetings. Yet, it also signalled I was beginning to become like any-body in the environment - fair
27
28 game for scrutiny, the defining of boundaries, and the application of power.
29
30
31

32
33
34 The leathery, toughness, that the players needed to acquire was also evident in terms of team selection.
35
36 For example, within Hibernia, like most rugby teams, the head coach makes the final call on the team
37
38 selection. Sometimes players were understandably disappointed with being omitted, as was conveyed
39
40 by a young player called Fintan:
41
42

43 I was sitting next to Dan Bothwell in the dugout, an international coach there to observe
44
45 Hibernia, as we both looked out onto the players training. Fintan jogged up shaking my hand
46
47 and Dan’s and stood in front of us idly for a moment - “you on for this weekend?” Dan asked
48
49 Fintan in reference to the upcoming game. Fintan shook his head and looked at Dan saying,
50
51 “the coach doesn't love me today...”. Dan asked if he had got any feedback. Fintan stared at
52
53 his feet. Dan looked hard at him, “better you get game time somewhere else than none
54
55 here...you could go to a second tier English team maybe?”. Fintan looked up at him -
56
57 “yeah...I was there at a club for a month before and I did enjoy it’. He paused and looked
58
59
60

1
2 across the pitch, ‘but the level of rugby is not good enough. If you are a forward yeah, but as
3
4 a back, no’. There seemed to be no answer to it.’ (see Figure 7)
5
6
7

8
9 *[Insert Figure 7. here]*

10
11 Figure 7.
12
13
14

15
16 Feedback was viewed as essential for Hibernia’s players both for ongoing development and also to
17
18 know where they fitted into the wider team structure. Seemingly, hearing nothing at all was the most
19
20 adverse place to be. Such positioning does not mean that the players and staff always liked what was
21
22 being said, but the silence was a more concerning position. The ability to gain a voice in Hibernia
23
24 was certainly an imperfect process. The important element however was how all those in the club felt
25
26 they could articulate themselves openly, with everyone aware that it was the ability to speak freely,
27
28 rather than getting the desired outcome, that helped bring the team to life.
29
30
31
32
33

34 **Discussion - The Researcher’s Three Bodies**

35 *The Process of Sensuous Intoxication*

36
37 Although a powerful mode of depiction, descriptions alone do not necessarily draw in the sensual
38
39 body of the researcher (Howes, 2006). To grasp the expression of any phenomena, like professional
40
41 rugby, requires an enhanced corporeal sensitivity to recount localised meaning (Stoller, 1997).
42
43 Specifically, within embodied organisational research there is an ontological need to mobilise the
44
45 whole person of the researcher including their situated, emotional and material presence (Merleau-
46
47 Ponty, 1964a). The aim then is not to reduce embodiment down to the senses, but rather explore how
48
49 we can maximise as much sensory knowledge as possible. The paper therefore seeks to delve into our
50
51 senses in order to garner further organisational insight. Essentially, if our senses could speak, we ask,
52
53 what would they tell us about our research (Stoller, 1989; Küpers, 2015)? For our corporeal schema
54
55 acknowledges how bodies are ‘always-already’ within the thick of practice, theoretically and
56
57
58
59
60

1
2 methodologically, the moment we enter an organisation (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). Sensuous
3
4 intoxication therefore openly embraces a corporeal view of research which is not simply on or of the
5
6 body but is informed from bodies (Williams and Bendelow, 1998; Küpers, 2020). Here we discuss
7
8 how such corporeality helps shape how things are constructed using three ‘bodies’, or lenses, as a
9
10 heuristic tool to make sense of the process of sensuous intoxication: within - the situated body; depth
11
12 - the emotional body; dust - the physical body.
13
14

15 16 ***1. Within - The Situated Body***

17
18 The first ‘body’ is an acknowledgement of ‘knowledge-from-within’, both from a particular locale as
19
20 well as from ‘us’ as researchers (Shotter, 2010b). Bodies are always situated, for only once we are in
21
22 place do we get a feel for what might be occurring around us (Pink and Leder Mackley, 2014). Sport,
23
24 with its structured legislative nature, provides a good example of ‘bodies as parts of places’ (Pink,
25
26 2011a: p. 347). The punches deemed legitimate within the space of a boxing ring, or similarly the
27
28 tackles on a rugby field, would get an athlete arrested elsewhere (e.g the throat grab in Depiction 3).
29
30 Within Hibernia, such rules are always present, albeit not overtly enshrined in any Queensbury form⁴.
31
32 Instead, we learn through an optimum distance within such places, informed by how they bend, twist,
33
34 rotate and pivot our corporeal being (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). It is through such contortion therefore
35
36 we begin to grasp the methodological feel of a ‘space’. In essence, there were two ways such
37
38 entanglement of place and the first author’s body informed knowledge.
39
40
41
42
43
44

45
46 First, the process of continually re-orientating ourselves from place to place helps us get a feel for
47
48 what is occurring. As Merleau-Ponty (1967: p. 168-169) states: ‘each manoeuvre undertaken by the
49
50 player modifies the character of the field and establishes in it new lines of force in which the action
51
52 in turn unfolds’. [First author’s] bodily ‘manoeuvres’ around the stadium therefore helped him to get
53
54 a better understanding of Hibernia. For example, in Depiction 2, the pitch, for all its lines and rules,
55
56
57
58
59

60 ⁴ The traditional rules of boxing as endorsed by the Marquess of Queensbury.

1 provides an expressive space for the players, not simply in playing rugby but also communicating
2 through touch, laughter and banter (Ingold, 2011). In contrast, in Depiction 3 the classroom feel of
3
4 team meetings, created a tight, passive response from all involved as they were constrained by
5
6 furniture and other bodies. One space therefore enabled, and the other inhibited players, with certain
7
8 spaces enabling a richer form of expression to play out (Best and Hindmarsh, 2019).
9
10
11
12
13
14

15
16 Second, some places within Hibernia ‘fitted’ better from a sensual perspective. Dreyfus and Kelly
17
18 (2011: p. 10) point out that its through the repeated exposure to a place ‘you develop a sense of where
19
20 you are’. For example, within the management’s Machine Room, [first author] always felt
21
22 uncomfortable, as did many employees who suggested it was a stressful space. It was the only key-
23
24 coded room and conversations here always guarded and restricted (Küpers, 2011). Another example
25
26 is the stands, somewhere [first author] enjoyed being when he began the ethnography but grew wary
27
28 of (see Depiction 1). Fandom is premised on a spectacle, but rugby’s brutal physicality only remains
29
30 voyeuristic through an other-ing of the players, but on dissolving the fan-athlete boundary by
31
32 personally knowing the players, the stands are a less comfortable viewing location (Daskalaki et al.,
33
34 2016). In contrast, on first entering the physiotherapists’ room, [first author] felt very uncomfortable
35
36 because of its medical paraphernalia. However he grew increasingly relaxed there and began to
37
38 embrace it as a serene, caring, place as it was for many of the players. Overall, during the ethnography
39
40 certain places and [first author’s] body ‘mingled’ helping him become more physically attuned. His
41
42 senses therefore provided a portal on how others also felt in such places and what localised forms of
43
44 expressions were deemed acceptable (Merleau-Ponty, 1964b). The situated body therefore is to be
45
46 able to sense the players where they are to gain an understanding of the daily rhythms on offer.
47
48
49
50
51

52 ***2. Depth - The Emotional Body***

53
54 The idea of depth refers to an emotional richness in the research in which we come to be moved by
55
56 what we experience (Leder, 1990). In order to methodologically grasp the ‘hearts and minds’ of those
57
58 involved, we need to reject academic distance in favour of a sensitive response. Specifically, emotions
59
60

1
2 are not some form of ‘psychic, internal, fact’ but rather they emerge from our relations with others as
3
4 articulated through a ‘bodily attitude’ (Merleau-Ponty, 1964a: p. 53). Deep, emotional, experiences
5
6 do not happen solely ‘inside’ us therefore, but through our social and material relations we are ‘in
7
8 deep’ (Cataldi, 1993). Depth then refers to the ‘dance of emotions’, for we are the ones inside these
9
10 ‘relational performances’ which are only intelligible from social, rather than private, use (Burkitt,
11
12 2014). Furthermore, it is through the ‘dance not the dancers’ of emotion that we are solicited to move
13
14 in various ways (Shotter, 2011). Once again, two examples of this emotional dance are evident.
15
16
17
18
19

20 Initially, ‘paying one’s dues’ is a bedrock of sensory ethnography (Stoller, 2005), seeking to tune in
21
22 to what others are feeling by cultivating or educating ourselves sensually (Howes, 2006). In Hibernia,
23
24 this ‘tuning’ involved investing emotionally rather than acting as a disinterested instrument to harvest
25
26 information (Gherardi, 2019). For example, in ‘Depiction 1’ [first author] illustrates his sadness when
27
28 Robbie utters ‘that may be it’ for the injured player John Vucca. Like others in the club, [first author]
29
30 admired John for his humour and intelligence, but such sadness contained a cultural meaning shared
31
32 by him, Robbie, and others (Hahn, 2006). This affective response illustrated [first author’s] ongoing,
33
34 emotional, conversion into practice at Hibernia (Wacquant, 2004). Similarly, in ‘Depiction 1’, [first
35
36 author] illustrates how player Ben’s peeing blood evoked his own memories of coughing up blood
37
38 (Okely, 2007). Such memories provide a somatic ‘as if’ quality tuning us into others’ experiences,
39
40 and potentially changing our own perspectives on what we encounter (Seremetakis, 1994).
41
42 Organisations therefore ‘mould’ us emotionally over time through our investment in others and the
43
44 evocative experiences on offer (Wacquant, 2005a).
45
46
47
48
49
50
51

52 Second, our emotional demands also influence our perceptions (Merleau-Ponty, 1964a) for our bodies
53
54 are emotionally entangled in our particular epistemological view (Dreyfus and Taylor, 2015). For
55
56 example in Depiction 3 when Fintan feels he may have to move on, [first author] had empathy for
57
58 him. Ethnographers, however, are also ‘suffering beings of flesh and blood’, potentially questioning
59
60

1
2 whose sadness [first author] was experiencing as he listened to Fintan (Wacquant, 2005a: p. 467).
3
4 The conversation occurred towards the end of the season, a time [first author] was acutely aware of
5
6 in terms of the research ending. It was potentially his own emotions then that ‘leaked out’ onto the
7
8 scene he perceived (Todes, 2001). Such a ‘sensitive’, emotional body therefore can guide our
9
10 empirical inquiries and curiosities (Leder, 1990). An example of this guidance is in ‘Depiction 2’,
11
12 when Séan refers to the physical touching of the Tunnel this also touched [first author] emotionally
13
14 (Pink, 2011b). This emotion guided his subsequent conversation with Séan about the tunnel’s
15
16 meaning. Striving to feel what others do can direct and misdirect us, but either way it provokes us to
17
18 methodologically interrogate what we perceptually feel we know.
19
20
21

22 **3. *Dust - The Physical Body***

23
24 Within some viewpoints there can be the concern that raising the ‘dust’ of our reflexivity may ‘blind’
25
26 us to what we come to see (Weick, 2011). A sensual, corporeal position however suggests research
27
28 requires a ‘dusting off’ process, rather than navel gazing, in order to understand how our respective
29
30 historical acculturations inform a phenomena (Seremetakis, 1994). Much like the archaeologist, we
31
32 need to excavate how our ‘brute’ physical bodies are always informing proceedings (Howes, 2006).
33
34 Through our bodies, our physical, historical, acculturation is brought to bear on the ethnographic
35
36 present shaping boundaries and acceptance (Stoller, 2005), using our explicit bodily history to
37
38 connect with others, rather than covertly overlaying our assumptions onto them (Strati, 2007). We
39
40 will illustrate therefore in two ways how [first author’s] own bodily ‘dust’ shaped his grasp of the
41
42 expression of rugby.
43
44
45
46
47
48
49

50 First, professional sport is an exemplar of a ‘heroic ethic as the manly ethic par excellence’
51
52 (Wacquant, 2005a: p. 462). Certainly there was evidence of such an ethic. For example, in ‘Depiction
53
54 3’, Ru talks about the need for thick skin both in terms of taking banter but also honest conversations.
55
56 The idea of such skin evokes leathery toughness, ‘tough’ enough to take the rigours of sporting life.
57
58 Players too often tried to engage with [first author] with jokes or a nickname of sorts (‘[first author]’)
59
60

1
2 to embed him within the fraternity. It may be suggested then that being a man may facilitate greater
3
4 acceptance (Gilmore and Kenny, 2015). As a researcher, however, [first author] was more
5
6 comfortable in the role occupied by the all female team of physiotherapists whose focus was on the
7
8 players' care not performance (see Depiction 1) (Coupland, 2015). Certain organisational norms
9
10 therefore were gendered, so a man asking for the players' thoughts on their lives and sporting hope
11
12 and fears, was somewhat of an 'ill fit' within Hibernia. We see this gendered 'fit' further with the
13
14 handshake in Depiction 2. Males greatly enjoyed this greeting, but the female employees, particularly
15
16 the physiotherapists, preferred a fist pump or high five. Certain bodily norms, dictated by localised
17
18 concepts on gender, were incarnated more readily than others. Through being positioned as a male
19
20 academic therefore [first author] was between two worlds, challenging some organisational norms,
21
22 and confirming to others, which impinged on player relations (Gilmore and Kenny, 2015).
23
24
25
26
27
28
29

30
31 Second, [first author's] physical literacy also methodologically shaped how he carnally connected
32
33 with those at Hibernia. It is suggested that having a background in sport, particularly elite sport,
34
35 fosters engagement with professional athletes (Hockey and Allen-Collinson, 2007). [First author's]
36
37 amateur boxing background may have helped foster an espoused acceptance, but sensual connection
38
39 occurs more viscerally. For boxing and rugby share an appreciation of sport's brute physicality
40
41 (Wacquant, 1995; Cunliffe and Coupland, 2012). Through a medium of pain, [first author's] boxing
42
43 background connected with rugby (Küpers, 2015). The need to 'smash shit' (as assistant coach Pat
44
45 states), like in boxing, is part of the work of rugby. An exposure to sporting pain ensured that the
46
47 'arc' of [first author's] own corporeal history overlapped with the players, facilitating a connection
48
49 around this topic (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) Furthermore, [first author's] upbringing as a strict Irish
50
51 Catholic, in which martyrdom is a strong premise, ensured that pain carried more than biological
52
53 meaning. Merleau-Ponty (1964b: p. 95) suggests that it is through our physical body that, 'our present
54
55 keeps our promises to the past', ensuring our corporeal histories are an aid not some form of 'bias'.
56
57
58
59 Importantly, [first author's] history also did not privilege him. For Hibernia consisted of a number of
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1
2 backgrounds, with his particular physical history on gender, religion and sports simply facilitating
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4 different connections than other researchers may have formed.
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8 9 **Conclusion - the body as the site of learning**

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11 Wacquant (2005b: p. 444) refers to intoxication as an ‘engine for resocialization’. For example, it
12
13 was the ‘extreme sensuousness’ of the boxing setting which enabled him to become ‘invested’ in the
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15 pugilistic craft (Wacquant, 2004). It is not possible for all of us to become sporting apprentices, but
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17 we can ‘educate our attention’ to become *sensory* apprentices, ‘gearing’ into the shared sense of
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19 phenomena (Ingold, 2000). Specifically, sensuous intoxication highlights how we are plunged into
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21 organisations and thus re-orientated by them in different ways. In particular, intoxication is suggestive
22
23 of how our whole being is swept up in such organisations (Ybema, Yanow et al., 2009). During these
24
25 intoxicating moments therefore it is crucial to understand what is being *done to us*, as well as what
26
27 we are doing (Eliasoph, 2005). We have tried to show here how, through the situated, emotional, and
28
29 physical ‘bodies’, we may become intoxicated in the thickness of rugby. We believe rugby as a site
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31 of teamwork is uncommon but joins more recent examples of bodily scholarship in such a setting. In
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33 doing so it helps move us away from corporeality as bounded bodies to those working together in
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35 practice (e.g. Bouty and Godé, 2022; Coupland, 2015). The intoxicated researcher therefore is
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37 founded on Merleau-Ponty’s (1968) distinctive ‘le schéma corporel’, acknowledging through our
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39 shared physiognomy we communally taste, touch and smell and so forth (Krueger and SaintOnge,
40
41 2005). Specifically, all knowledge is sensual, with the ‘lens’ of the three bodies detailing how we can
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43 obtain a richer source of understanding to what is occurring through the senses (Ingold, 2011). In
44
45 order to finalise this approach, we believe there are three key learnings on how we may facilitate and
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47 utilise the sensuous intoxication process we seek.
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57 First, our multi-sensory corporeality illustrates the folly of looking for forms of knowledge that cannot
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59 be grasped by observation (Pink, 2011b). Wacquant (2005a: p. 466) illustrates overtly that it is the
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1
2 'body of the analyst as a fount of social competency and an indispensable tool for research'.
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4 Specifically all of the body acts as this 'fount' not one singular part. Furthermore, there is recognition
5
6 that as we make our way through ethnographic research we are keenly aware of how our body is
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8 being sensually shaped, and is shaping, the organisation in which we reside (Gilmore and Kenny,
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10 2015). We may be only too aware in such settings of 'feeling' the atmosphere in a meeting change,
11
12 being 'touched' by a colleagues personal story, or how we may be looking to 'sniff out' why a project
13
14 may not be working. Strange then that when academics sit down to represent the research in the final
15
16 monograph, this corporeal shaping process is seen as 'lesser' or untrustworthy, with the researcher's
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18 gaze, and thus spectacle, the privileged orientation. There is a presumption here that observation is
19
20 somehow more objective (Howes, 2006). By intoxicating ourselves through a multi-sensory
21
22 corporeality we dismantle any hierarchy of the senses, opening up the potential for new forms of
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24 'knowing' to manifest itself through our bodies (Merleau-Ponty, 1962).
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32 Second, becoming intoxicated occurs through our senses being apprenticed over the ethnographic
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34 journey (Wacquant, 2004). However, researchers need to reflexively explore how they may become
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36 'highly attuned' to this apprenticeship process to detail further what they are sensing (Rasche and
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38 Chia, 2009). For example the current research strived to understand how [first author's] body was
39
40 being shaped by working practices in Hibernia, but also how his own corporeality was 'implicated in
41
42 the production of research' (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: p. 187). Intoxication can happen blindly so
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44 it is essential to understand how research 'moves' you in different ways by tuning in emotionally, as
45
46 well as physically and rationally, to what is occurring (Gherardi, 2019). In order to attune or 'attend
47
48 to the senses' to develop ethnographic knowing, the researcher, professionally at least, must make a
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50 'diligent effort toward inward openness' (Leder Mackley and Pink, 2013: p. 261). To detail our
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52 sensuous intoxication therefore requires ongoing reflection during the field work on both the wider
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54 practices of the organisation around us, and how our bodies are implicated in the ongoing construction
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56 of localised working practices (Wacquant, 2005b).
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4 Finally, enabling our senses to open up and become intoxicated is not an individual process. Such
5
6 inebriation is a profound desire to organisationally ‘re-turn to life’, and dismantle the detached,
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8 disengaged, notion that there is a boundary between ‘us’ the researcher and ‘them’ the practitioner
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10 (Shotter, 2010). In plunging in to organisational waters, as opposed to standing on its banks, we ‘re-
11
12 awaken’ ourselves to what others are experiencing, and thus can accomplish two things (Dreyfus and
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14 Kelly, 2011). Initially, as Goffman (1989) attests, in allowing ourselves to get closer to those
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16 involved, we can then begin to get a sense of what they are experiencing. Specifically, Goffman is
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18 suggesting we indeed ‘go native’ in order to communally make sense of how things are developing.
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20 Furthermore, in striving for a sensual connection to others, we can begin to embrace a ‘scholarly
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22 burden and responsibility’ to provide a voice for those in organisations (Stoller, 2004: p. 832). Such
23
24 a burden may seem rather grand for professional rugby players, but actually one of our ambitions was
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26 to ‘de-exoticize’ such professionalism, illustrating how the work of such athletes is more mundane
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28 than glamorous (Wacquant, 2005b). Sensuous intoxication therefore allows us to provide an
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30 alternative perspective on how we can learn through our sense organs.
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Figure 2

249x166mm (300 x 300 DPI)



Figure 3

302x204mm (300 x 300 DPI)

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Figure 4

1151x863mm (72 x 72 DPI)



Figure 5

297x209mm (300 x 300 DPI)

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Figure 6

341x255mm (300 x 300 DPI)



Figure 7

233x195mm (300 x 300 DPI)