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# Methods that Move: A Physical Performative Pedagogy of Subjectivity

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Driven by a desire to interrogate and articulate the role and place of the body in the study of sport, this paper encourages those who are incited by a richer understanding of the physical to expand and elaborate upon the fleshy figuration that guides the research projects and practices/strategies of the present. This call for papers is an opportunity to unpack the methodological impetus of “body work” (Giardina & Newman, 2011a) and to locate it within the nexus of dialogues that expressly seek to reengage an eclectic body politic at precisely the time when the body is a site of continuous scrutinizing and scientific confession. As researchers we grapple with and problematize method(ologies) in light of the conjunctural demands placed upon our scholarship and so I reflect on a recently conducted project and the methodological moments that it brought to light. Conceptualized in terms of a physical performative pedagogy of subjectivity, I tentatively forward a discussion of what moving methods might look and feel like and thus I question why, when we research into physical, sporting, (in)active experiences, do we refrain from putting the body to work? Why do we not theorize the body through the moving body?

Poussé par le désir d’interroger et d’articuler le rôle et la place du corps dans l’étude du sport, cet article encourage les individus souhaitant une meilleure compréhension du physique à réfléchir à l’aspect corporel qui guide les projets de recherche et pratiques/stratégies actuels. Cet appel à communications est une opportunité pour déconstruire l’élan méthodologique du « travail du corps » (Giardina & Newman, 2011a) et de le situer à l’intérieur du nexus de dialogues qui cherchent expressément à re-engager une politique du corps éclectique au moment précis où le corps est un site d’inspection continue et de confession scientifique. En tant que chercheurs nous utilisons et problématisons des method(ologies) à la lumière des exigences conjoncturelles placées sur nos travaux et je réfléchis à un projet récemment réalisé et aux moments méthodologiques qu’il a mis en évidence. Conceptualisé en termes de *pédagogie physique performative de la subjectivité*, je tente de favoriser une discussion sur ce dont ces méthodes peuvent avoir l’air et donc je m’interroge pourquoi, quand nous étudions les expériences physiques, sportives et (in)actives, nous empêchons-nous de mettre le corps au travail ? Pourquoi ne théorisons-nous pas le corps par l’intermédiaire du corps en mouvement ?

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Within this paper I unpack the notion that there exists any form of “evidence that matters” by adding to the chorus calling for a consolidated return to the “body that matters” within the research strategies of our scholarly endeavors. While the presence of the body has reinvigorated the field theoretically and conceptually, I make the argument for a centering of the tacit, sensuous body, its fleshy sinews, its movement and its (in)activity as a locus within more creative and meaningful method(ological) trajectories. This paper then resounds with the “‘messy’ practices of reflexivity, empirical vulnerability” (Giardina & Newman, 2011a, p. 36) and is informed from the outset by research practices that are simultaneously employed and embodied. To fully articulate the implications of these new moving methodological strategies for our field, I want to delineate the potential characteristics of evolving studies into the physical; I do not suppose that this is a complete project rather it is an *active*, and maybe provocative, attempt to engage with the implications for research methods that move the body into focus. I offer therefore an experiential approach by drawing upon recently conducted research into the (in)active young female body and a physical cultural study of femininity. This is couched, or rather conceptualized, in terms of an interdisciplinary *physical performative pedagogy of subjectivity*.

In exploring the relationship between physical subjectivities and performative pedagogies I refer to a recently completed study entitled “Sculpting girls’ subjectivities: Physical culture and the ‘normalized’ body,” that centered on the utilization of qualitative strategies to glean the personal “realities” of twenty twelve and thirteen year old school girls. Whereas this article is predominantly a discussion of research methods, the observations and suggestions offered are drawn from a more expansive research project within which I aim to illustrate the way in which an assemblage of physical cultural, practices, products, discourses and technologies relating to the body and young femininity speak to the complex interplay of political, social, economic, technological impulses (Rich, 2011) and everyday lives.

I held weekly workshops that were highly intertextual, multimodal, animated and dynamic; within them the girls and I read magazines, watched You-Tube videos, drew pictures, wrote narratives and made posters. Vitality however, we played and danced along to the Nintendo Wii game “We Cheer” on every occasion and even the girls that were spectating danced their own routines and demonstrated “moves” they “loved” or disliked. Movement was encouraged and equally reflected upon. What is more as a space of mediated engagement, the girls talked and wrote about the images we encountered in ways that were at one and the same time complicit with and/or critical of dominant discourses. The decisions made with regard to the cultural products consumed were based on a repartee and two-way interaction between the girls; who informed me about the forms of media they enjoyed and readily participated in/with and myself, as I brought the cultural technologies (Ouellette & Hay, 2008a,b) to each meeting. These cultural resources, in particular “We Cheer,” were selected due to the obvious corporeality that was *played with* in the choosing of skin color, hair color and style, cheer “uniform” and the sculpting of the body made possible by the workout mode (see Francombe, 2010).

Physical empiricism of this kind is notable for the diverse employment of multiple research “tools,” not its investment in any form of meta-narrative and it is underscored by the performative dimension and the steps taken to transgress textuality (Giroux, 2001). The key contribution of these methodological endeavors emerges when textual analysis is not seen as solely academic inquiry but instead

makes links with practical politics and dissemination among public spheres: it is about looking beyond the text.

## Experience, Meaning, Methods & Movement

In placing—or rather articulating—the body purposefully within our research, I suggest we can forward method(ological) innovations in qualitative inquiries that expand and redefine the boundaries of knowledge production. Giardina and Newman (2011a) initiate or ignite the call for a radically contextual core to our theoretical and empirical “dalliances” in the field. By noting the duress for the body “of the researcher and researched alike” (p. 37), they “identify various points of ontological, epistemological, and methodological intersection” (p. 36) from which the cultural body can emerge. These movements—between the bodily kinaesthetic and the “broader political shifts and power relations the human body brings to life” (p. 41)—are both compelling in terms of diversifying the field and alluring for those of us incited by a richer understanding of the various iterations of the physical. However, given the pathfinding nature of their work, they are the cartographers of a methodological trail; they act as cicerones who guide us toward thoroughly enabling embodied research; but there is a need to add flesh to these bones, so to speak. The next step—and these are meandering steps that, although in their infancy, are already being tread—is to develop the treatise on the philosophy of method/practice (methodology) while simultaneously indicating the implications of this for specific research methods. This is the intention of the present paper. Within a *mise en scene* that expresses a dispensatory prerequisite with measuring, setting targets, monitoring our research and our bodies, I offer some insights that expound the necessity to understand cultures of the body through bodily practice (Giardina & Newman, 2011a). In speaking directly to specific methods, I present a rationale for the replacement of the body within the research agenda in this area and I hope to argue the case for not only research that questions the playing, dancing, moving body but for research that puts the body to work: makes it move.

Within this commentary and reflection I encourage sport scholars to elaborate the theoretical and methodological insights that formulate and guide the research projects of the present. This requires an extension of Giardina and Newman’s (2011a) physical foray as well as a prolongation of the politically engaged and physically vulnerable work conducted by the scholars they point toward (Carrington, 2008; Giardina 2005, 2009; Giardina & Newman, 2011b; Mears, 2008; Newman, 2010; Newman & Giardina, 2008). By “rethinking” methodological boundaries and pointing toward what *moving methods* might look and feel like, the critique offered here may serve as a constructive advancement of Giardina and Newman’s (2011a,b) intellectual project. They, like myself, do not seek out the body “for tautological reassurance,” (Giardina & Newman, 2011a, p. 40), and likewise I privilege “bodily copresence within theory, method, and practice” (Giardina & Newman, 2011b, p. 523), however, I add to this emergent school of thought by pertaining to the practices that might be employed to engage the body in a different manner than as an object of inquiry or an artifact to which theoretical positions are applied. This inquiry aims to build upon this scholarship through musing on the relationship between the body and method. By focusing on the actualization of research strategies (methods), I amplify the instructive and insightful points raised by Giardina

and Newman (2011a) and build upon the work of others who are grappling with the multifaceted articulation of the body, pedagogy and subjectivity across certain times, spaces, histories, politics, through my own empirical exemplar. Through the invocation of methods that not only centralize the experiences, contact and cogitation of the corporeal but promote movement, I hope to augment and in some ways supplement this existing work, taking it in new directions. At present we conceptualize corporeality, immerse ourselves empirically, bring to bear our own researching flesh and bones body and focus on body praxis and I assert a need for embodied research to be allied with a more rigorous approach to issues of method and methodology. This is about expounding the approaches to active physicality that Silk and Andrews (2011) align to the physical cultural studies project.

Animated by a need for our research to intervene and create an impact, motivated by the insights made possible through interdisciplinarity and tasked with the job of (re)telling and (re)writing the bodily experiences of those our research engages, this paper begins by explicating the physical, performative and the pedagogical that pulsates and flutters throughout research. Underpinned by these tenets and located within the sensibilities of physical cultural studies—a somewhat emergent “intellectual offshoot” of the sociology of sport (Silk & Andrews, 2011, p. 6)—I look to highlight the potential contribution and impact of a *physical performative pedagogy of subjectivity* by examining and shedding light on pertinent method(ological) moments within my own empiricism. Reworking Silk and Andrews (2011, p. 6) I see the “tacit physical culturalization” of research methods as a progressive step toward (re)discovering the body as the empirical core of the field and in reconfiguring our methodological toolboxes.

## A Physical Performative Pedagogy of Subjectivity

Perhaps paradoxically, to push at the boundaries of sport scholarship my overture is guided by a reemersion with Giroux (2001), McLaren (2000) and Andrews’ (2008) push for praxis. I bring to bear a notion of learning on/with/through the body in terms of a *physical performative pedagogy of subjectivity* that actively brings together the essence of the physical as well as the political, moral and ethical referent within which, it is my contention, our studies should be grounded. Bound by issues related to knowledge production, (re)presentation and judgment, a *physical performative pedagogy of subjectivity* allows the (multiple) theoretical and methodological innovations of researchers of sport and physical culture to sit alongside a requisite for “action” and a need to struggle against and/or interrogate certain historical and political linkages, developments and connections (McLaren, 2000). The crux of this form of method(ological) advancement is that while I call for embodied experiences and sensuous sensations to be fully taken into account and I seek to develop specific research methods that incorporate movement and bodily comportment, I am mindful of the need to remain cognizant of power relations—within society and within research scenarios—and the forces of the conjuncture that impress upon and through the body.

At this juncture, for the sake of clarity, I want to attend to the complex terms of debate to explain how they cohere in a way that permits our interrogation of the nexus between the body, self, society and power. By way of a starting point, the concentration on physicality and subjectivity essentially bridges the performative

and pedagogic. Consequently, I am purposefully contending with the physical and the myriad of ways and settings through which the body is experienced, rather than discerning sport as an object of analysis. Moreover, founded upon the wider remit of my research, the attention to subjectivities is based on Foucault's theoretical conception of subjectivity as embodied and localized, as well as an understanding that an individual's body becomes a site of power struggles. Subjectivity differs from identity in as much as discourses and discursive practices are seen to operate on the body in culturally, historically and temporally specific ways (McLaren, 2002). For the other integral components that comprise a *physical performative pedagogy of subjectivity*, perhaps more expansive consideration is needed. Accordingly, I turn to the pedagogic and performative and I do so in this order as—will become apparent—this allows for a more comprehensive explanation of the ways in which each informs and impacts the other:

## Pedagogy

The pedagogic that I mobilize here seeks to avoid approximation to accounts of socialization and move beyond the temptation to simply list (mediated) resources and their *effect* as public pedagogies (Rich, 2011). Instead I strive to engage with the challenge set down by Emma Rich (2011, p. 70, emphasis in original) to “look more closely at the *constituents and particular relations and moments of pedagogies* within spaces beyond schools.” Rich (2011) comprehensively argues for dialogic sports studies that enrich our understanding of physicality but also usher forth the pedagogic in terms of how one learns about corporeality. In orientating this toward an exploration of the physical that is framed in terms of the sculpting of feminized subjectivities, the maintained body becomes, in a pedagogic sense, an important link between wider (neoliberal) body pedagogics (Shilling, 2010) that are underpinned by an individualized and responsabilized citizenry who unquestioningly take care of the self (Giroux, 2004; Rich, 2011). Hence I hold together that body work is both localized—temporally, spatially, and contextually specific resulting in embodied variations and manifestations—and related to broader (physical) culture.

In drawing upon the multifaceted role of the body and pedagogy as a constitutive part of the research process, a *physical performative pedagogy of subjectivity* transports us toward a study of physicality that takes seriously the entwined trajectories and investments in the body, social practices and relations (Hills, 2010; Rich, 2011; Wright, 2004). The scope of the pedagogic outlined is allied to the Giroux (2001, 2004) inspired public nature of pedagogy that transcends institutional school sites, permeates popular culture and engenders performativity. Hence both the pedagogic to which I point and the performative are informed by Giroux (2001, 2004) and relate to research praxis.

## Performative/ity

For Giroux (2001) a performative pedagogy takes on the politicized nature and potential of pedagogy and sees this reflected in the act of “doing” and an understanding that theory forms the basis for intervening into power relations. The performative within this milieu cultivates, reworks and retains the necessity to promote a radical democracy (Kellner, 2001). In centralizing the body (that matters and moves) as it intersects with a “commitment to radical democratic social

transformation” (Kellner, 2001, p. 221), I push for politically motivated research, a critical pedagogy of embodied experience and the positionality of the researcher as oppositional public intellectual who intervenes upon and confronts inequalities and enhances the enterprise through a (re)turn to the physical form. Developing this then, I propose that our research encounters empower and allow for the provision of a space and opportunity to de- and re- construct taken for granted bodily forms of knowledge (Denzin, 2005; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). Reflecting on my own research engagements, I aim to demonstrate that it is through dynamic conscious raising conversations, through verbalizing social linkages and intricate webs of everyday lives (Christians, 2005), through experiencing the motions of the body and the representations of movement, that these spaces for action become available.

When combined the physical, the performative, the pedagogic and subjectivity take on all the interrelated concepts outlined thus far and a *physical performative pedagogy of subjectivity* becomes fundamentally concerned with democratic and critical citizenship (Giroux, 2004). This signal toward a Freirian or neo-Freirian conceptualization of public pedagogy and its transformative, democratic potential is then reconfigured through thought, action, the body and *movement*. It is this combination between movement and a performative pedagogy that “allows critical discourse to confront the inequalities of power and promote the possibilities of shared dialogue and democratic transformation” (Giroux, 2004, p. 499). So, grounded in the nexus between this understanding of pedagogy, corporeality and subjectivity the body is at once a site of meaning, knowledge, flesh and (re)negotiation.

This paper then is not an analysis of the very public nature of pedagogy, nor is it an exploration of the location of the body within the construction of an individual’s embodied (feminine) subjectivity and/or the ways they variously “learn” the body through the popular (cultural) products—although both are valuable projects; have formed part of my wider theorizing and can inevitably be “read” into the line of analysis I present at times. Instead, I am suggesting that the political incentives that drive our work, the aspiration for our theorizing to cross borders and impact the public, as well as the need to consider everyday “body work” and practices of the body that underpin our conceptualizations need consideration now because they are pertinent; ubiquitous. But also because technological innovations that permit the body to move and interact with computerized corporeality blur the boundaries between ontological positionalities, it is imperative that our methodological approaches keep pace. Furthermore, because they are articulated more forcefully and felt more vigorously when the body moves, we need to acknowledge the physicality of the work we do, or should do. The implications of a *physical performative pedagogy of subjectivity* are methodological, they are to do with the “type” of methods we deploy, the way we (re) present this work and the related knowledge that we contribute. Like Giroux (2004, p. 502), we can reclaim pedagogy in the sense that our research itself is pedagogic and this pedagogy is “a central category of cultural [body] politics.”

Of course a physical, embodied and emplaced (Pink, 2011) sensibility that is envisaged upon social and political values, influencing practical dispositions and a moral duty to intervene, is in many respects oppositional to a scientific mythology given the situatedness of the researcher. As such, these forms of physical researching embodiment are replete with the choices that we make as empirical researchers—while not necessarily new, I hope that this serves as a timely reminder that shapes the methodological practices that circulate within our disciplines.

## Conceiving and Conducting Research: Corporeality and Critical Closures

In relation to my research trajectory focused on femininity and body management I am concerned with the ways in which individuals variously *learn* about their bodies and the ways physical culture and the corporeal presence of others impacts upon their everyday lives. Consequently I aim to theorize individuals' experiences of body management techniques (Riley et al., 2008), and interrogate the sites and sources of influence/information on the body. The physical then is discussed in terms of its (re)constitution and (re)production as it is experienced, shaped, at times constrained, mediated and lived contingently across particular pedagogic moments and through particular practices that must be situated socioculturally (Rich, 2011). Expanding this leads us away from the treatment of the body solely as text and sees a convergence between popular cultures' (re)presentation and symbolic investment in the body and the moving, acting fleshy figuration. Shifting between the spaces of digitized, mediated representation and the everyday experiences of the moving corpus opens up potential methodological positions that deal with the ways in which bodies, within these research spaces, are (re)productive and (re)producing. Subsequently, and guided by O'Riordan (2007) the virtual bodies that populate digital culture are transformed into (moving) simulations with ontological and epistemological status and it is these new articulations that challenge methodological thinking. The significance and impact of these ontological and epistemological assumptions in conjunction with the inclusion of movement as a strategy of inquiry, lies in the insight that is made possible when pedagogies are made known on and through the body and are intricately incorporated as part of bodily self-care (Huckaby, 2010). Put differently, the body is not regarded or contended as the site upon which theories are "put to work," nor is it compartmentalized as product or producer, but as Giardina and Newman (2011a, p. 39) proffer the body is dialectically dependent, it is "textual, sensual, lived, performative, fleshed."

Detouring between the hybridized digital and fleshy; hyperreal and real is leveraged as at once compelling and challenging as we pursue research acts that do not hide behind "excerpts from media texts in ways that might quite rightly reveal abstract bio-political entanglements but tell us very little about the *everyday struggles* and *flesh politics* of the individuals we are representing" (Giardina & Newman, 2011b, p. 523). Subsequently, I advocate a doubly articulated methodology—a two-part strategy (Livingstone, 2007)—that holds together popular cultural representations of the active female body and the ways in which these layers of representation mark the body and are in turn themselves shaped by corporeal contact that resonates and speaks to the lives of those positioned centrally. Put another way, the Nintendo Wii game "We Cheer," in addition to the multiple mediated representations found on the pages of glossy magazines, fitness magazines, internet websites, newspapers, television programs, books, films, music videos are populated by bodies, images that illuminate and shed light on the cultural context and their (re)production is indicative of our historical and social moment. Consequently as these "Media Texts" (Fusco, 2006) fold back on and recur throughout culture (Johnson et al., 2004), they can provide and bring to the fore the mediated (re)establishment of a particular female subject of the present and my analysis of these (Francombe, 2010) provided a springboard for



the citizen led research carried out with the young girls. Furthermore, using these pedagogic resources “to change the disruptive impact of these controlling visual representations in multiple ways in educational settings” (Piran et al. 2006, p. 229) meant offering the girls an opportunity to elaborate on ideas, supporting them to critique, engaging them in the research process and providing them with room for physical expression. This form of investigation seeks to identify cultural artifacts that perpetuate a homogenous body culture, to theorize this in terms of cultural struggles as well as individual lives and far from contending with this as banal and mundane, it problematizes the dominant discourses that circulate to somehow consolidate “normative” subject positions.

Owing much to the work of Kimberly Oliver and Rosary Lalik (2001, 2004), the study comprised activities that attempted to illuminate lived bodily-experiences and link them to social realities (Saukko, 2003). The “corporeal curriculum” that I instigated was vitally, and unavoidably, flexible; it was influenced by my engagement with the forms of media mentioned previously and my axiological aspirations for collaboration, theorization, critique and active participation. Qualitative research of this nature is inherently contradictory and in tension as it refrains from “operationalizing” paradigmatic prescriptions and the distinct designation of methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). My impetus then, my ontological essence, was the quest to make links, uncover, complicate and trouble the lived experiences of human actors as they converge upon and with cultural texts and “the broader political and economic structures of modern industrial societies” (King, 2005, p. 23). I borrowed therefore from the aforementioned methodological toolbox in an effort to unearth and understand mediated discourses and localized micropolitical discursive encounters.

### Curricular Politics of the Corporeal: Franklin School

Impelled to excavate “normalized” young female bodies as they perform and move in ways that are *learned* and managed by the double(d) discourses of gender—and (hetero)sexiness—and the “other,” the foci of the research were to interrogate *wider culture* through the *particular* lived (physical) experiences of a group of girls who attended Franklin School (a pseudonym), a private school (fee paying) in the West of England. Throughout I was guided by questions concerning the ways in which young girls articulate themselves within cultural discourses of individualism and the regulation of the “normal” body that permeates the present. I saw this project as an opportunity to learn more about how girls account for, develop and in places resist localized appearance cultures (Carey, Donaghue & Broderick, 2010). The site of the research—as somewhere chosen and defined—was investigated as a sanctioned space “for a few girls to create multiple gendered subject positions and accommodate the shifting and often contradictory meanings of normative adolescent femininity” (Adams & Bettis, 2003, p. 74). Researching within the preexisting structures of the school “meant that a number of choices regarding the population had already been made” (Duits, 2008, p. 58); seemingly our assumptions, positionalities and subjectivities were abundant and populated this project from the start. I do not provide the school demographic at this point as a way of setting out the strictures of the study, nor as a way of “justifying” my position there. Instead, I do so as I believe that the private school “site” at the beginning of the second decade of the

twenty first century represents the fulcrum of a number of contextual forces and relations which distinguish it as a unique social, cultural, and spatial location. The subjectivities of the girls and the ways in which they approached their embodied experiences were intricately related to their school, social and sporting lives.

I contend that the girls occupied positions of relative “privilege” and while class cannot be read explicitly into the biographies of the self they told to me, class can certainly be read into their educational pathways. As one of the region’s largest day and boarding schools, Franklin School was understood to attract those students from middle-upper class families—although the exact composition of the school was never discussed. With a strong academic and extracurricular focus the *schooled body* was certainly centralized and its performance nurtured and directed. Thus the girls were fundamentally attached to the worlds they inhabited; they were gendered and culturally situated (Johnson et al. 2004). With this in mind, the blurring of the lines of authority between the school, the researcher and the participant was never a complete and attainable facet of this project; power was embedded from the start.

The study involved the collection and analysis of qualitative data that was derived from workshops and focus groups. My detailing of methods can and should be seen as a tête-à-tête, a conversation that touches upon various guises of theory, participation (a “doing of research”), analysis and reflexivity. The key being that I tried to actively engage and move the body as often as possible. I presented the weekly meetings to the Franklin School teachers and parents alike as *Media and Body Image* workshops and in turn this was how the teachers presented them to the girls. Attendance was optional and they ran over the school lunch hour, they were thematically and topically grounded—the themes discussed were those that emerged following my media analysis and the preceding workshop dialogue, so for example, we discussed the (re)presentation of the female body, we talked about social class and racial diversity, (dis)ability—and involved the girls participating in activities that simultaneously made reference to popular (physical) cultural resources and entailed their physical participation by playing and dancing along to the Nintendo Wii.

My energies were toward the employment of strategies of inquiry that were loosely clustered around a creative approach and related to the situational character of the girls’ bodily experiences. It was hoped that the methodological practices (Johnson et al., 2004) that I initiated and the girls participated in would produce “Body Texts” (Fusco, 2006) that were consistent with or disrupted the “Media Text” readings of young femininity. The combination of these two layers of representation entailed that this research was able to harness the ways in which subjectivities were being (re)produced, (re)positioned and (re)imagined in the girls’ adherence, responses and resistances to the images encountered and the strategies engaged. However, in this instance I consider that it is the findings from these “Body Texts” that offer dynamism to the methods we muster. The citizen led “data” or “Body Texts” (Fusco, 2006) were collected during the communicative weekly workshops that ran over the course of a school term. Each workshop incorporated a number of the methodological strategies from the creation of personal histories/biographies and maps, freewriting responses (Barbieri 1995, cited by Oliver & Lalik, 2001), narratives, posters, illustrations, magazine exploration through to online blogs, researcher diaries and focus groups with both the girls and their parents.

The principle of each workshop was the transference from the predominance of my researching voice toward a centralizing of the girls' as they took part in the tasks and "chatted" among themselves. In addition, the fostering of a collaborative analytic element was enabled by a period of *Critical Corporeal Closure*, wherein the combined construction of ideas through dialogue (between the girls themselves and with me) was intended to heighten their critical consciousness. By troubling their own and the mediated representations they consumed and performed, this "space" became of paramount importance in terms of the potential for my research to impact upon lives. It also alluded to the potential for intervention. But what does this interventionist aspiration look like in practice? The provision of a space and opportunity to tussle with the tensions of body knowledge was facilitated by me posing contemplative questions, pushing the girls to imagine other possibilities, to reflect on their comments and offer potential counter-narratives. A *physical performative pedagogy of subjectivity* that makes an effort to make the political more pedagogical and the pedagogical more political (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005; Robbins, 2009) was brought into actuality in the girls' production of posters that critiqued the images and signs (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005) found in mediated forms such as "We Cheer." This research activity drew together the critical and counter narratives that I had initiated weekly and a space was created whereby the oppositional voice tussled with compliance to certain gender, class and race intersections. Far from simplistic and coherent, one of the major challenges posed by this form of critical endeavor is to "make sense" of the messy disciplinary borderlands within which we unequivocally find ourselves. The role of the researcher then can be comprehended by a dedication to creating links within these pockets of negotiation and it commits us to, what Kincheloe and McLaren (2005) term, a pot pourri of communicative activities that are not bound to the rigors of scientific dissemination but instead endorse "pedagogies that encourage struggles for autonomy, cultural well-being, co-operation, and collective responsibility" (Denzin, 2005, p. 944). Undeniably the workshops were distinctively and locally positioned.

What transpired was an unanticipated and potentially insightful methodological contribution that was made possible through the centralization of the body, especially the body that moves and is active, within the research process. A vehemently felt fleshy figuration of femininity was articulated when the body that moved on the screen blurred with a body that moved in the schooled space. I feel that this is an emergent methodological innovation that carries particular consequences and resonances for sport scholars who embrace the concessions and corroborations, the contradictions and contradistinctions that occur within the project itself, the activities deployed and the interpretations interrogated (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

## **Fleshy Femininity: A Focus on the Physical and a Turn to the Pedagogical**

The study charted previously was concerned from the outset by the ways in which young femininity was both experienced by the self and (re)established throughout popular (physical) culture. Emerging from my deployment of these research practices was a contention that the movement initiated from the Nintendo Wii game "We Cheer," during the weekly workshops, compounded the potency

of the girls' interactions with the female bodies of the cheerleaders. This was indicative of the increased a/effective intensity that was made possible through the moving image and this was then reinforced when the body that watched, experienced also. Put another way, the feelings evoked—be these feelings of annoyance toward an “unrealistic” portrayal of young girlhood, or individual feelings of inadequacy—when looking at the still body image (in magazines) were accentuated and magnified when working with “the range of proprioceptive ‘fleshy’ senses and memories” induced by the moving image (body without image) (Featherstone, 2010, p. 208). Furthermore, the movement of the body that was simultaneously watching the body without image—a necessary consequence of active or exer-gaming (Francombe, 2010)—only punctuated the a/effective responses experienced.

For instance, when the girls moved; that is danced along to “We Cheer,” their body practices and performances reverberated with discourses of heterosexiness and a desire to ascribe to a cultural thin ideal and their ability to critique and/or ask searching questions were replaced by more vigorously felt, gender, class and race specific, body politics. With Tangen (2004, p. 21), the moving body appeared to “trigger sensory activity that the consciousness in turn experience[d] as feelings.” Reflecting upon this, and responding to demands for creative and multidisciplinary methods; I make the argument for the integration of the physical as a pivotal force in our intellectual engagement.

I am driven by a theoretical need to locate the locomotive alongside the cognitive in a cultural weaving that is about “bringing the biological body into” (Pink, 2011, p. 246) the “doing” and interpretation of social science research (Allen Collinson, 2009, 2011; Hockey & Allen Collinson, 2007). Yet, and here I am informed by Pink’s (2011) critical response of emplacement, there remains a need to articulate the sociohistorical and sociocultural elements out of which bodily experiences/subjectivities emerge and of which they are constitutive. So, rather than focused on the Spanish bull fight as per Pink (2011, p. 351), we can engage with the ways that physical cultural narratives to “feel” and “know” by having “experienced” and “felt” were being expressed through the reenactment of the cheerleaders’ moves and the drawing and writing of these performances. This involves not the “verbalization of a critical commentary of the performance,” but the process of a radically contextual and localized “imagining of oneself into the body” of the cheerleader to either repeat (reenact) or anticipate (in a narrative or illustrative manner) her moves. As the politics of the conjuncture overlap and enswathe the kinesthesia of the body we must foster these sentiments. For instance, the Franklin School girls’ experiences of the sculpting of their subjectivities—the idea that their thighs were fat, their tummies wobble—were firmly rooted within the pedagogics related to the productive body, education, citizenship and employment as well as the localized body pedagogies negotiated through peers and the media. There was then, a notable convergence between the political rhetoric of the Big Society, the responsabilization of individuals purporting from the British Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government and the girls’ distancing of themselves from a body image indicative of lack of effort or investment. Of note, this was encapsulated by the deeply classed figure of the “chav”—in English parlance—who ate the wrong food, could not be bothered to go to school and made the wrong fashion and beauty “choices.”

## Politics of Privilege: A Research(er) Problematic

As I push for our immersion with corporeal conduct it would be remiss not to critically reflect on the political positionality of the researching or researchers' body: my own voice, privilege(s), power and physicality. Tasked with the "job" of retelling bodily experiences there is a further demand—one that is exacerbated by the incitement of motion and animation within our research—to situate the inhabited researching body that explores the empirical space. The consequences of advancing a politics of reflexivity and reciprocity for the researcher is that their story impacts on the world they engage and rather than look to negate or eradicate this we are obliged to locate a self-conscious "me moment," "my body" in our scholarship (Harrison, Macgibbon & Morton, 2001). It becomes about an intermingling of subjectivities and internal, individualized biographies that ripple throughout interpretations and reporting (Oliver & Lalik, 2004). As we occupy a particular positionality, as our body enters and interacts with the research site, the text, we hover in a position of in betweenness (Johnson et al., 2004), conversing with the self, as we "revise, critique and reformulate" (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 77) our understanding across physical cultural and academic fields (Thorpe, Barbour & Bruce, 2011). And here my feminist praxis is heedful of, the discursive practices—movements—of the body and the cultural conditions within which they exist.

As we seek to elicit projects that position and in some respects peculiarize the body politic, so our researching bodies are unavoidably situated in a dialectic space; dialectic body culture(s). Paying attention to Giardina and Newman's (2011a, p. 49, emphasis in original) demand to "both make use of, and also reflect upon, *how our own bodies frame and are framed by the critical cultural analyses we undertake*," we should be ensuring the empirical room for a discussion of how our bodies, subjectivities, auto-biographical stories are intricately interlaced in the research act. A far cry from any objective/positivist distancing or even phenomenological bracketing, I look toward my research(er) body as it stood, sat, danced alongside the "researched bodies." This shifts us from placing the body as a site of analysis and strategic intervention (through empirical strategies and modalities) toward a methodological imaginary in which my researching physicalities—in these spaces—are ontologically, epistemologically and actively productive and producing. Commensurate then with these demands of my own corporeality, I reengage with the ways in which my concern for my own feminized, heterosexualized, white, middle-class body battled for and against my own subjective tensions and my own bodily preoccupations. It turns out my body, its movement, as has been suggested before (Giardina & Newman, 2011a,b), was unsurprisingly, highly pertinent.

At the same time as I was an "outsider" (Oliver & Lalik, 2001), walking into Franklin School every week as a visitor—my body thus inscribed by the name tag hanging around my neck—I also seemed to trouble the student-teacher binary. Maybe my twenty four year old, governed, regulated, disciplined, manicured and "conventionally" heteronormative body—invested from head to toe with the discursive tentacles of fashion, beauty and consumption—troubled the girls' expectations? With Silk and Andrews (2011), these entanglements and others, of course violated academic neutrality and at times the sanitized empirical, educational, space became contaminated for instance by my brown high heels! The girls often commented on my "style" and dress, asking where I shopped, recalling the outfits they liked and

I often found myself pondering and scribbling in my research diary how my lived body, and the other bodies the girls encountered, were implicating and integral to their lived experiences:

*Felicity commented on my shoes today—I said that they were new and the girls said that they liked my ones last week as well. I couldn't remember which I had worn but they informed me it was my brown heels. Somebody also commented on my necklace. This is interesting with regard to critical methodologies & the reflexive researcher (Norman Denzin's work) e.g. ME AS EMBODYING WHITE, MIDDLE CLASS, HETERONORMATIVITY working with the "norm," an interesting milieu of concepts to consider*

Furthermore, my flesh was engaged in an embodied intersubjective relationship with the participants (Finlay, 2005), I became "one of them" as I seemed to reflect and be complicit with "appropriate" contemporary femininity. I "entered" the discourse in subtle but telling ways:

That's what you are like when you are brought up you know what I mean and then there's like *us* (Charlotte)

Moments such as this led to much mulling over my position as I contemplated where the girls located me when they talked about femininity? My biography became etched into/onto theirs in ways that were not wholly accurate but appeared to make sense to them and there were flashes in our interactions where my physical presence was indicated:

My sister she's really, well I think she used to be quite big, and in year four I think, she started losing all her weight and *I was actually then I was the bigger one. And it was just like a bit you wanted to be thin, you know when you just want to be thin [to me]? No you probably don't know that because you're thin but you just umm, I just sometimes I just wish I was the right size, you know what I mean?* (Paris)

Interestingly, Paris' reaction to my body not only impacted and made me aware of how my physicality was an unavoidable facet of the researching process, but comments such as this also made me more aware than ever of my own body. They sparked questions over my perceived thinness. In a climate of circulating obesogenic and anorexic discourses I asked questions of myself, and how my body was being consumed. When I run I feel strong, my legs powerful but as I stood in front of the girls I wondered how my body looked, strong or spindly? Powerful or fragile? Am I too thin? Should I be this thin? Similarly, my white body politic was ferociously realized when I initiated discussions of racialized femininity. The racialized politics of whiteness and my slim body effectively unsettled any prior assumptions that I may have been able in some way to step back from the "data."

Out of necessity these methodological positions and the strategies that they confer challenge the inconvenient truth(s) of positivist social science criticism and in doing so propose an antireductionist appreciation of the flexibility of the research project, the blurring of the boundaries between the "researcher" and the "researched" and a convergence of "I" and "we"/"Wii", "me" and "the girls," with an active, pedagogical, ethical and moral axiology. This work then, situates itself,

quite comfortably and healthily within moments of tension (Silk & Andrews, 2011) and this paper can, and should, be read as a montage of ontological, epistemological, political, method(ological), interpretive, expressive and impacting dialogues (Silk & Andrews, 2011). These are dialogues that expressly seek to bespeak an eclectic body politic at precisely the time when the body has been harnessed as a site of continuous scrutinizing and objective scientific confession. The generation of theory, the application of “methods” and the “assessment of quality” are marked by these political—and institutional—conditions that shape the social sphere, and yet this proposition is not a form of “safe distance” anthropology nor is the body something from which data might be extracted. Instead we are somewhere beyond the body as a site for investigation or a text for analytic consumption and, as this example demonstrates, we are contending with what it means for the body in the digital age when the technological seeps its way into the everydayness of our lives and physical activities.

As I stand with the girls Wii-mote in hand, dancing cheerleaders framing my own form, the nature of my female physicality becomes layered upon and inescapable from the other bodies in the room. The communication and connection between myself, the girls and the digitized (gendered) design of the hyperreal brings to the fore my feminist politics and reasserts a furtherance, and necessary avoidance of, the textualization of everything (Haraway 1990) as I comprehend the hybridized: cyborg body as “both a cultural construction and a material fact of human life” (Balsamo, 1996, p. 33). Through “We Cheer” and our engagement with it, the varied articulations of culture, technology and everyday life are considered matters of fiction and, importantly, matters of lived experiences (Balsamo, 1996). The task then, is to wrestle with issues of (dis)embodiment on the ground, within the practices of the field and upon the page. Politically compelled investigations of corporealities; those like mine, that encounter the body as both (re)produced and (re)producing in light of social “norms,” unsettle the determinacy of the physical and are guided by the impulse of copresent, contested body work and the “tactile flesh—technology connection” (Millington, forthcoming, p. 9) of prosthetic surveillance (Miah & Rich, 2008). In light of these evolving corporeal experiences, interactions and the prostheticising of technology there is an increased need to articulate and interrogate the posthuman pedagogies that augment our engagements in an academic and everyday sense.

## **Methods That Move and the (Re)Formulation of the Physical**

Predicated upon my musings of the empirical example delineated and my critical engagement with the process of research as a contextually and temporally bound enterprise, I maintain a need to examine rigorously aspects of physical culture, activity, health and pedagogy that implicate (girls’) bodies. The boundaries of qualitative research and knowledge production are henceforth layered with issues of (re)presentation and exchange as the thoughts, experiences and critique of the individuals our research engages nestle alongside our own and are documented, amended, extended and (re)contextualized in ways that reflect the indispensable obligation of our projects to not only understand but also to intervene (Silk &

Andrews, 2011). This is about (re)formulating and (re)locating the cultural politics of the body and centralizing research strategies that adopt the moving body as an embedded element of everyday experience.

The noun “method,” according to Slack (1996), suggests an orchestration, a rigidity that ignores the interrelated and inseparable nature of methods, theory, analysis and the historical realities of the present that have to be attended. The conception of methods as “practices,” “processes,” “activities” (Johnson et al. 2004; Markula & Silk, 2011) not only offers an appreciation of the “tools” to be deployed but is furthermore indicative of a “trying things out” approach. There is a sense of borrowing and a (re)articulating (Slack, 1996) that reveals a commitment to adaptation and a move away from the linear and monolithic application of a taken-for-granted epistemological position toward a “creative process of articulating” (Slack, 1996, p. 114). If we remain diligent to the desire to embrace the comingling of ontology, epistemology theory and method(ology) then we can advance a multiperspectival approach (Kellner, 1995) to research that allows one to better grasp a phenomenon from a multitude of perspectives through the application of research activities that aim to augment existing methods while also offering alternative, progressive approaches.

As radically contextual, founded upon intervention, purposefully multimodal and dedicated to the exploration of the salient questions of contemporary power, this type of research project is on-going, motivated by and committed to social causes and demands for change. Special issues such as this one, reestablish the centrality of methodological contemplation and task scholars in the future to consider the methodological agenda that their work initiates. What I hope to have shown is a need to consolidate the return to the body and issues of embodiment within the field through invigorated and progressive moving methods. Although dependent upon theorizing to understand the empirical, intervene and “operationalize” a *performative physical pedagogy of subjectivity*, my studies of the physical have become about excavating the power struggles that infiltrate the everyday lives and experiences of individual subjects through a focus on the flesh. Through the moving body a plenitude of societal conditions and possibilities become comprehensible and our research encounters need, implicitly, to be grounded in an incentive to work with and for these bodies and to disseminate, exchange and transfer knowledge in dynamic, illuminating and meaningful ways.

As we grapple with and interrogate method(ologies) in light of the demands placed upon research projects within the historical present, so I locate what should be, on the surface a pre-given, and yet seems to be forsaken concept: if we are researching into physical, sporting, (in)active experiences, why do we refrain from putting the body to work (literally)? Why do we not explore and theorize the body *through* the moving body? If, as I advocate, we embrace the body, the moving body and the mobilization the body within research methods then this entails a willingness to bring forth the researchers voice—their gendered, sexualized, classed and racialized subjectivity—and the capacity to sit comfortably with disciplinary, theoretical and methodological complexity. Moreover the unique contribution of a focus on physicality and the way it articulates cultural hierarchy, power, issues of “normativity,” privilege and marginalized “others” is the indispensable need to remain vigilant to the political, pedagogic and performative imperative of our work (Andrews, 2008).



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