

SENSES AND SENSATION:  
CRITICAL AND PRIMARY SOURCES

*Volume 1*

# GEOGRAPHY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Edited by David Howes

B L O O M S B U R Y

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VOLUME 1

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GEOGRAPHY  
AND  
ANTHROPOLOGY

*Edited by David Howes*

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# Introduction: On the Geography and Anthropology of the Senses

DAVID HOWES

The multidisciplinary approach that informs this four-volume set is inspired by the sensory revolution in the humanities, social sciences, and fine arts, which has challenged the monopoly that psychology formerly exercised over the study of the senses and sensation. It also builds on the recent transformation within psychology and the neurosciences that has resulted in a heightened focus on the analysis of the interaction and integration of the senses in place of the former unimodal or one-sense-at-a-time approach. The approach advocated here goes under the name of sensory studies (Bull et al. 2006). Sensory studies involves a cultural approach to the study of the senses and a sensory approach to the study of culture. It treats the senses and sensations as both object of study and means of inquiry.

The orientation of this set is multidisciplinary and multisensory, cross-cultural and cross-modal, cross-species and interpersonal, and political, historical, and phenomenological. By bringing this orientation to bear on the study of the senses and sensation, this work will enlarge the definition and understanding of the “sensorium” from the “seat of sensation” in the brain to include the *total* environment of the perceiving subject. The specific focus of this volume is on the contributions of the disciplines of geography and anthropology.<sup>1</sup>

The geography of the senses is concerned with mapping sensory diversity in space. The anthropology of the senses traces the varieties of sensory experience across cultures. In the former, the focus is on how different environments shape perception, and how space becomes place through sensory interaction with differing surroundings, both natural and built. In the latter, the emphasis is on the enculturation of the senses, and how the differing ways in which the senses are constructed and lived generate distinct sensory worlds. In the result, each culture or “*umwelt*” (von Uexküll 3.3) must be approached on its own sensory terms.

## PART I: FOUNDATIONS

### *Overtures*

The first scholar to theorize the senses in anthropology was Paul Stoller in *The Taste of Ethnographic Things* (1989). However, there were various overtures to the senses in the anthropological literature of previous decades. Indeed, these openings date back to the very foundations of the discipline, although there is a vast difference between the

anthropology and anthropology of the senses as they were then and as they are now. For example, a major preoccupation of the Société d'Anthropologie de Paris was the "measurement of the senses" of the "savage races" (Dias 2004). The 1898 Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the Torres Strait was animated by a similar purpose, and its research was equally tainted by evolutionist and racist biases. Equipped with a wide battery of psychophysical testing devices, including such apparatuses as Lovibund's tintometer, the Müller-Lyer illusion, Zwaardemaker's olfactometer, Politzer's Hörmesser, and an algometer (for determining pain thresholds), the expedition sought to determine the "sensory acuity" of the natives. W. H. R. Rivers, the founder of British Anthropology, bemusedly related the devious methods employed to ensure the cooperation of informants:

The natives were told that some people had said that the black man could see and hear, etc., better than the white man and that we had come to find out how clever they were, and that their performances would all be described in a big book so that everyone would read about them. This appealed to the vanity of the people and put them on their mettle. (Rivers quoted in Howes 2016: 173)<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Atlantic, Franz Boas, the founder of American Anthropology, went to the Canadian Arctic to explore certain questions having to do with the psychophysics of vision among the Inuit, and one of his first professional publications was entitled "On Alternating Sounds" (1.2). Boas was struck by the fact that he had recorded the sounds of certain Inuktitut words differently on different occasions. The conventional explanation for such alternation was that "primitive" languages are intrinsically "vague" and "fluctuating" (just as the classificatory kinship terminologies of traditional societies were held to reflect a state of "primitive promiscuity"). Boas broke with the evolutionist assumptions of his contemporaries. He determined that the "mishearings" of sounds in a foreign language were a consequence of the listener "apperceiving" them in light of the known sounds of his or her own language. In this way, Boas shifted the focus of inquiry from the production of sounds to their reception, and underlined the importance of reflexivity in the pursuit of anthropological and sensory knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

Another anthropologist who broke to some extent with evolutionist assumptions, and also advocated a relational approach to the study of the sensorium, was Claude Lévi-Strauss. In *The Savage Mind* ([1962] 1966), he introduced the notion of a "science of the concrete"—that is, a science of "tangible qualities" characteristic of the classificatory systems of traditional societies in contrast to the abstractions of modern physics, though no less rigorous. In the four-volume *Mythologiques*, he sought to decipher the "sensory codes" of Amerindian myth by tracing all the homologies and transformations within and between sensory registers that attended the transmission of myths across cultural borders from Tierra del Fuego to Vancouver Island (see especially the section called "Fugue of the Five Senses" in *The Raw and the Cooked* [1964] 1970). In "Sensible Qualities" (1.3), in conversation with Didier Erbon, Lévi-Strauss set out the "basic principle" of his approach (structural analysis): "component parts have no intrinsic meaning: it [i.e., meaning] arises from their position." That is the essence of "structural thinking"—and sensing.

In "The Meaning of Body Ornaments" (1975), Anthony Seeger fleshed out the social concomitants of Lévi-Strauss's combinatorial understanding of the sensorium. He found that among the various tribes of the Mato Grosso region of Brazil, the ornamentation of a sense organ (by means of ear-disc, lip-plug, eye makeup, nose pendant, etc.) was normally related to the symbolic meaning of the related faculty (hearing, speaking, seeing, etc.). The presence (suggesting elaboration) or absence (suggesting suppression) of these

accoutrements or “extensions of the senses”<sup>4</sup> provided an index of the enculturation of the component parts of the sensorium. For example, among the Suyá, adult men wear ear-discs and lip-plugs but do not decorate the eyes and this reflects the positive social valence attached to hearing and speaking. By contrast, witches are poor of hearing, tend to mumble, and are endowed with extraordinary visual powers. Their sensorium is the inverse of that of the big man or chief who literally embodies the normative “sensory model” (Classen 1990, 1993a) through his adornments.

The first scholar to theorize the senses in geography was Paul Rodaway in *Sensuous Geographies* (1994). However, as with anthropology, geography too has a long—if interrupted and changing—history of engagement with the senses. The distinguished Irish geographer Anne Buttimer (2010: 12) has suggested that “multi-sensory attunement to the environment itself” can be seen to have informed the work of the discipline’s two most illustrious founders: Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859) and, a century later, Johannes Gabriel Granö (1882–1956). (These two were not regarded as founders at the time, of course, only in retrospect.)

Coincidentally, both Humboldt and Granö started out in botany, and both traversed Siberia (Granö repeatedly), but it was the sensuousness of their approaches that truly distinguished the geography they practiced. Buttimer quotes the following passages from Humboldt’s *Ansichten der Natur* (1808) by way of illustration:

The goals for which I strove were to depict nature in its prime traits, to find proof of the interworking of (natural) forces, and to achieve a sense of enjoyment which the immediate view gives to sensitive man ... descriptions of nature impress us more or less according to the degree to which they agree with the needs of our feelings; for the physical world is mirrored vividly and truly in the inner feelings. Whatever is essential for the character of a landscape—the outlines of the mountains which limit the horizon in bluish, fragrant distance, the darkness of the fir forests, the forest-streams which rush between overhanging cliffs—all that is in old mysterious contact with the inner life of man. (Quoted in Buttimer 2010: 22)

The Finnish scholar J. G. Granö’s *Reine Geographie* (Pure Geography), published in 1929, was even more explicit (if rather less feelingful or Romantic) in its focus on the sensory as *the* medium of geography. In “The Background to *Pure Geography*” (1.1), Olavi Granö (the son) and Anssi Paasi bring out well how, for Granö, the “real object” of geographical research is the environment that a human being perceives with the senses. Granö distinguished between the “proximity” or close-up environment, which is perceived (and to be charted or described) through multisensory modes (visual, auditory, olfactory, kinetic) and the distant environment or “landscape” which is perceived primarily through the visual sense.

“If smells belong to a geographical complex, be it a landscape or a proximity, they must be studied and their value assessed,” Granö insisted (1997: 128). The same with sounds, textures, sights, and so on, he maintained, for only in this way could a geographical complex (or region) be delimited.

It is important to note that the one doing the sensing was not just any ordinary person, nor Humboldt’s “sensitive man,” but the “pure geographer” with scientifically disciplined senses, which Granö assumed would guarantee the objectivity of the observations. (Alas, or perhaps fortunately, he was not always successful at upholding his own first principles, O. Granö and Paasi note, and there are places in his writings where he waxed as eloquent as Humboldt.) Also of note: Granö took his understanding of how the senses function directly from the psychophysics of his day. He did not question that account, and so missed

the opportunity to explore either how context alters perceptions, or all that geography might bring to psychology as regards the understanding of the spatial formation of the senses and sensations.

*Disciplines: The Sensory Revolution in Geography and Anthropology*

Granö's work, most notably his *Atlas of Finland* (1925), contributed substantially to the establishment of geography as a discipline in Finland and the German-speaking world. However, his insistence on the primacy of the sensory (i.e., the perceived environment as the basis for geographical study) was not well received, and even rebuffed. His sensorially grounded approach accordingly lay fallow for many decades, until the senses came back into focus in the 1990s, with the publication of Rodaway's *Sensuous Geographies* (1994). Even then, the recovery of the senses within geography owed more to the influence of thinkers from other disciplines, such as the maverick Canadian composer and musicologist R. Murray Schafer (1977), than to Granö himself. This is apparent in the seminal 1993 article by Douglas Pocock, "The Senses in Focus" (1.5), which took many of its cues from Schafer's work. In an expansive move, Pocock also suggested that geographers should explore the wonderment of the child, the sensibilities of non-Western peoples, and the alternative sensoria of the blind and the deaf. Granö, with his idea of the "pure geographer," would probably have been perplexed at this suggestion, but as we shall see presently, sensory and cultural pluralism has become the touchstone of geography going forward.

*Geography of the Senses*

Other factors that contributed to the (re)discovery of the senses in geography, according to Rodaway (1.6), included: the rise of human or humanistic geography—the brainchild of Yi-Fu Tuan (whose sensitivity to the senses is remarkable); the adoption of cultural, phenomenological, and ecological models of perception—all of which pointed to perception being "more qualitatively variable and creative than mechanistic stimulus-response models might suggest"; and the debates about postmodernism that convulsed academia in the 1980s, such as the controversy over "the redefinition of the 'real' and the position of the 'sign'" that was sparked by the writings of French postmodern theorist Jean Baudrillard.

The key insight of the geography of the senses is that the senses mediate the apprehension of space and in so doing contribute to our sense of place. Yi-Fu Tuan (1972) was the first to call attention to the spatiality of the senses and their role in shaping the affective relation of people to their habitat. "What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better [through our senses] and endow it with value" (Tuan 1977: 6; see also Tuan 1.9, 1.24, 1995).

Primed by Tuan's work, some geographers started questioning the (presumed) transparency of concepts like that of landscape, and techniques of data gathering like that of remote sensing (i.e., satellite generated imagery). As regards the latter, J. Douglas Porteous ventured that: "Remote sensing is clean, cold, detached, easy. Intimate sensing ... is complex, difficult, and often filthy. The world is found to be untidy rather than neat. But intimate sensing is rich, warm, involved ..." (1990: 201). For Porteous there was no question as to which methodology—remote sensing or intimate sensing—is more grounded in geographic reality and therefore to be trusted.

The concept of landscape was also interrogated. As the work of Denis Cosgrove ([1984] 1998), among others, had shown, the idea of landscape is rooted in a particular Western painterly and literary tradition—namely, the picturesque, with its reliance on

the Claude Glass and other technologies of vision (Maillet 2004; see further Broglio 2008). This ostensibly visualist bias led to the concept of landscape being bracketed and replaced by the more neutral term “sensescape.” The latter concept was in turn broken down into “soundscape,” “smellscape,” “bodyscape,” and so forth (Porteous 1990; see further Bunkše n.d.). This refinement stemmed from the recognition that: “Each sense contributes [in its own way] to people’s orientation in space; to their awareness of spatial relationships; and to the appreciation of the qualities of particular micro- and macro-spatial environments” (Urry [2003] 2011: 388). As a corollary to this, following Rodaway’s lead in *Sensuous Geographies*, a number of geographers started taking note of the distinct ways in which different senses are “interconnected” with each other to produce a sensed environment. These ways include:

*cooperation* between the senses; a *hierarchy* between different senses, as with the visual sense during much of the recent history of the West; a *sequencing* of one sense which has to follow on from another sense; a *threshold* of effect of a particular sense which has to be met before another sense is operative; and *reciprocal* relations of a certain sense with the object which appears to ‘afford’ it an appropriate response. (Urry 2011: 388 summarizing Rodaway 1.6)

These reflections concerning the multiple modes of sensory interconnection are noteworthy for the way they highlight the relations *between* the senses, above and beyond their informational content. The term for this is “intersensoriality” (on which more presently).

The sensory turn in geography, signaled by Pocock and Rodaway, in turn precipitated a shift within the discipline from a focus on “spatial organization” (which mainly meant visualization) to one on “activity.” Hayden Lorimer holds up Lisa Law’s work on migrant Filipino women in Hong Kong’s domestic labor economy by way of example. Every Sunday the off-work domestic workers flock to Hong Kong Central (i.e., the vacated banking district) and literally occupy that space with their pop-up foodstands, hair salons, etc. Hong Kong Central becomes “Little Manilla,” if only for a day (Law 2005). As Lorimer observes, “it is [the *activity* of] sharing in the taste, smell and texture of food that offers comforting reminders of home and bonds of friendship. However, the practice of food preparation, its odours and eventual consumption in public spaces also offer grounds for ethnic discrimination and a contested urban geography” (2005: 87). The point here is that the space remains the same, but it is reconstituted by the sensory activity that goes on in it.

Another emergent area is the “geography of rhythm” or “rhythmanalysis,” which augments the conventional focus on the spatial within geography by attending to the interpellation of the temporal (e.g., the seasonal, or more broadly, the repetitional): “every rhythm implies the relation of a time with space, a localized time, or if you wish, a temporalized place” (Lefebvre cited in Edensor 2012: 57; Edensor 2010). A third especially salient overture in geographical study is the burgeoning interest in the idea of “atmosphere.” The term “atmosphere” foregrounds the multisensory character and experience of *lived* space while downplaying the more formal aspects of environments. This attentional shift has spilled over into cognate disciplines, such as architecture and urbanism (Palasmaa 1996; Zardini 2005). Designing buildings and planning cities have accordingly morphed from a visual-technical art into a sensuous science of creating atmospheres or (to use another current term) “ambiences.” Geographers have followed suit by devising ever more sensitive methods for registering sensescapes and also of critiquing the political and commercial interests that drive schemes of “urban renewal,”

gentrification, and the like (Degen 2.7, 2008). The methods in question are typically of a populist, participatory nature and center on walking (e.g., the soundwalk, smellwalk, touch tour) as opposed to the God's-eye-view of the city planning bureaucrat (Paterson 2009; Degen and Rose 2012; Henshaw 2013).

Other areas of geography where a sensory studies approach has made inroads since the 1990s include the geography of tourism (Crang 1999; Edensor 2002; Obrador-Pons 2007) and that most venerable of geographical practices—mapmaking. The practice of cartography has metamorphosed from the production of two-dimensional scalar projections into cybercartography or “multisensory mapping.” This development is partly due to advances in technology. But it is also inspired by a growing awareness of what the study of indigenous knowledge systems, which tend to be nonpictorial, such as Inuit wayfinding, can contribute to our understanding of human spatial orientation. At the Geomatics and Cartographic Research Centre at Carleton University, under the direction of D. R. Fraser Taylor, there are many innovative cybercartographic forms being developed, which take their inspiration from indigenous practice (see Taylor et al. 1.21; Taylor and Lauriault 2013; Aporta 2005, 2006; see also Carpenter 1973).

Two further developing areas of research include the geography of displacement (Bunkše 1.10) and the geography of the insensible. These areas have been pioneered by Joy Parr, Canada Research Chair in Technology, Culture and Risk in the Department of Geography at the University of Western, Ontario (now retired). Parr is the author of *Sensing Changes: Technologies, Environments and the Everyday, 1953–2003* (2010). In it she writes: “Our bodies are archives of sensory knowledge that shape how we understand the world. If our environment changes at an unsettling pace, how will we make sense of a world that is no longer familiar?” The geography of displacement concerns how people cope sensorially with being uprooted and relocated by war (Bunkše 1.10) or to make way for state-sponsored megaprojects such as hydroelectric dams (Parr 2010: ch. 5). The geography of the insensible concerns how workers in nuclear power plants, for example, try in their own way to detect and protect themselves against radiation (Parr 2010: ch. 3).

The emergence of “non-representational”—or better, “more-than-representational”—theory has also had a catalyzing effect on the deployment of the senses and sensory analysis in geographical study. Hayden Lorimer explains what the “more-than” here entails:

To summarize lots of complex statements as simply as possible, it is multifarious, open encounters in the realm of practice that matter most. Greatest unity is found in an insistence on expanding our once comfortable understanding of ‘the social’ and how it can be regarded as something researchable. This often means thinking through locally formative interventions in the world. At first, the phenomena in question may seem remarkable only by their apparent insignificance.

This apparent insignificance or “everydayness” is, however, key. Lorimer continues:

The focus falls on how life takes shape and gains expression in shared experiences, everyday routines, fleeting encounters, embodied movements, precognitive triggers, practical skills, affective intensities, enduring urges, unexceptional interactions and sensuous dispositions. Attention to these kinds of expression, it is contended, offers an escape from the established academic habit of striving to uncover meanings and values that apparently await our discovery, interpretation, judgement and ultimate representation. In short, so much ordinary action gives no advance notice of what it will become. Yet, it still makes critical differences to our experiences of space and place. [citing Thrift 2004] (2005: 84)

In addition to focusing attention on practices and ephemera, the more-than-representational turn has entrained a shift from the exteroceptive to the interoceptive or “visceral” (see Longhurst, Ho and Johnston 1.17; Longhurst et al. 2009), as will be discussed further below. It is an interesting question whether the emergent focus on the visceral recycles Humboldt’s archaic notion of “the inner life of man” or represents a new departure.

### *Anthropology of the Senses*

*The Taste of Ethnographic Things* (1989) is composed of a series of previously published articles by Africanist anthropologist Paul Stoller, a master raconteur. Rather like Clifford Geertz in his famous Balinese cockfight article (Geertz 1973), Stoller typically starts with an incident and then puzzles over it, trying to make sense of it. There was the incident involving him being served a bad-tasting sauce, *fukko hoy*, by the disgruntled daughter-in-law of one of his hosts: though the sauce tasted horrible, the incident made for “good ethnography.” In his description of another incident, Stoller confesses that he failed to hear the sound that a sick man’s wayward soul supposedly made when the attendant sorcerer liberated it from a pile of rubble, and he relates how he was berated by the sorcerer for his inattention. Stoller invokes this case of the inaudible (to him) sound to underscore the fundamental aurality of Songhay modes of perception and cultural expression and the importance of transcending the “visualist” bias of Western thought and culture in order to connect with the cultural experience of non-Western subjects (see further Fabian 1983). The anthropology of the senses was thus initially inspired by a desire to explore under-investigated, nonvisual modes of experience. It would later draw attention to the varying ways in which sight too is configured differently in different cultures (Howes 1991: chs. 13, 16, 17 and 2003: ch. 5; see also Eck 1998) including Western cultures (Goodwin 1994; Grasseni 2007). Thus, contrary to the impression some might have, sensory anthropology does not entail shutting one’s eyes, though it typically requires focusing them differently.<sup>6</sup>

There is obviously a significant interruption in the anthropology of the senses as between the late nineteenth century (Rivers’s day) and late twentieth century (Stoller’s day), and significant changes, too. For one, the evolutionist and racist biases of Victorian anthropology have been exposed and extirpated; for another, a focus on meaning has supplanted the former fixation on measurement; third, attunement to the politics of perception has taken the place of psychophysics; and, it is self-reflexivity rather than (supposedly) innate reflexes that most occupy the contemporary sensory anthropologist’s attention.

In its initial stages, during the closing decades of the twentieth century, sensory anthropology was also animated by a critique of the “verbocentrism” and “textualism” of then current anthropological theory. Anthropology had always been “a discipline of words” (Grimshaw 2001) insofar as anthropologists relied on interviews to gather data and monographs and journal articles to disseminate their findings. However, this bias was exacerbated in the anthropology of the early 1980s by the emphasis on “text” (e.g., cultures “as texts” or “discourse,” ethnography as “textualization”). The focus on the “interpretation of culture” (Geertz 1973) and a fortiori “writing culture” (Clifford and Marcus 1986) distracted attention from *sensing* cultures. A growing number of anthropologists felt that the latter should take priority (Jackson 1989: ch. 3; Stoller 1989, 1997; Howes 2003: ch. 2; Stahl 2008).

The introduction of “embodiment” as a paradigm for anthropology (Csordas 1990, 1994), together with the notion of “sensuous mimesis” (Taussig 1993), Constance Classen’s idea of alternative “sensory models” (Classen 1990, 1993a, 1997), and Paul



Stoller's call for "sensuous scholarship" (Stoller 1997), helped galvanize the sensory turn by attuning anthropologists much more acutely to how they could use their own bodies and senses as means of ethnographic analysis, and then write about their experience (see Howes 1.7).<sup>7</sup> French socioanthropologist David Le Breton recounts the stories of a number of anthropologists who came to this realization early on, and also relates his own theory of the sociality of sensation in "Sensing the World in Cross-Cultural Perspective" (1.4).

Various electronic devices, such as audio tape recorders and camcorders, also came to figure more and more centrally in the practice of ethnography during the last decades of the twentieth century and on into the twenty-first. While this development dealt a further blow to the language- and text-based models and methods of previous decades, it also imported a new set of biases to anthropological knowledge, giving it an audiovisual cast (though this is not often recognized). It had to be acknowledged that we make sense of the world not just through language, not just by talking about it, however "performative" such utterances may be, but *through all our senses*, and their *extensions* in the form of diverse media (Seremetakis 1994; Taylor 1994; Finnegan 2002; MacDougall 2005). Furthermore, there are some places and some matters that the senses and sense-based media can reach, which words cannot.

The liberating effect of this recognition is evident in the ensuing explosion of interest in "sensorial fieldwork" (Robben and Slukka 2007: Part VIII) or "sensory ethnography" (Pink 2009), as it is also known. Sensory ethnography experiments with multiple media for the registration and communication of cultural facts and theories. There is a lively internal debate over the limits and potentialities of, for example, the medium of film compared to that of writing (Howes 2003: 57–8 and 2012: 637–42; MacDougall 2005: 52), installation art compared to the conventional ethnographic exhibit (Grimshaw 2007; Schneider and Wright 2010; Drewal 1.26; Howes and Salter 4.24), the medium of performance compared to the public lecture (Schechner 2001), and so on.

The term "sensory ethnography" has come to cover a wide spectrum of research and communication practices. It figures in the name of an ethnographic film lab at Harvard University directed by Lucien Castaing-Taylor, which is committed to expanding the frontiers of media anthropology. It appears in the title of a manual of fieldwork practice by Sarah Pink (2009), which advocates intensive use of audiovisual media but also acknowledges the usefulness of the unaided senses. It applies to Kathryn Geurts's (2002) in-depth ethnographic study of the enculturation of the senses among the Anlo-Ewe of Ghana (see Geurts and Adikah 1.11). The term "sensory ethnography" could equally well be predicated of the intensely sensorial prose of Kathleen Stewart in *Ordinary Affects* (2007), which conjures multisensory images of everyday "happenings" that seem (almost) to lift off the page (see Stewart 1.19). In Stewart's work, as in that of Nadia Seremetakis (1.12), representation and sensation blend.

In the present writer's work, beginning with *The Varieties of Sensory Experience* (1991), the emphasis has been on taking a relational approach to the study of the senses, using the comparative method to highlight the contrasts between the sensory orders of different cultures, developing the power of language to analyze and express sensory nuances, critiquing the essentialism of phenomenology, and challenging the dictates and assumptions of Western sensory psychology and neuroscience. Other sensory anthropologists have embraced phenomenology or sought explanations for cultural practices in neuroscience (see Pink and Howes 2010; Ingold and Howes 2011; Lende and Downey 2012). Some have opted for film and sound recordings in preference to

writing, or elected to concentrate on a specific sense, such as sound/hearing or “the visual,” rather than the relations among the senses. As well, some sensory anthropologists prefer single- or multisite ethnography to using the comparative method. There exists, then, a wide spectrum of approaches within the anthropology of the senses, and they continue to multiply. This plurality of sensory modes of engagement and the liveliness of the discussions over their respective merits are signs of the methodological and epistemological vigor of the sensory revolution in anthropology.

In the wake of all the different works mentioned above, the standards of ethnography have changed. Having an “experimental style” (Clifford and Marcus 1986) is fine, but good ethnography, increasingly, is seen as going beyond semiotics, beyond poetics, beyond representation,<sup>8</sup> and engaging with culturally mediated sensory experiences and expressions (Stoller 1997; Herzfeld 2000: ch. 11; Howes 2003; Pink 2006; Howes and Classen 2013; Cox et al. 2016).

## PART II: KEY DOMAINS AND CONCEPTS

The sensory turn in anthropology and allied human sciences came after the *linguistic turn* of the 1960s and 1970s, which privileged language-based models of culture (e.g., culture as “language game” or as “structured like a language,” culture “as text” or “as discourse”). It also succeeded the *pictorial turn* of the 1980s, which gave rise to visual culture studies and increased attention being paid to image-based models of meaning and communication (e.g., culture as “world view” or “world picture,” the importance of “visual literacy”). Sensory studies (i.e., sense-based inquiries) both critique and seek to correct for the verbocentrism of language-based models and the ocularcentrism of image-based models by analyzing the sensorium as a whole and striving to articulate the “sensory model” (Classen 1990, 1993a) that informs how people in different cultures or places talk about and “see”—or rather, *sense*—the world. Crucially, sensory studies plays up the double meaning of the term “sense” which encompasses both sensation and signification, feeling and meaning in its spectrum of referents (see Rodaway 1.6). *Sensation-signification* is seen as forming a continuum. Put another way, sensory studies foregrounds perception as the meeting point of raw stimulation and intellectual cognition (neither of which is purely physical nor purely mental from a sensory studies standpoint). Incidentally, in many cultures, language or speaking is regarded as a sense (Howes 2009: 5). In such cases, the sensory studies approach does not displace or elide language so much as put it in its place among the other senses.

The sensory turn in anthropology and cognate human sciences also figures as a successor to the *corporeal turn* of the late 1980s and 1990s. The latter turn was predicated on affirming the unity of mind and body. It gave rise to such constructs as the “embodied mind” and “mindful body.” The sensory turn refines on this merger. Sense-based inquiries attend to the differential elaboration or hierarchization and opposition of the senses across cultures. (Thus, the supposed “unity” of the senses, that Merleau-Ponty and other phenomenologists treat as an article of faith, is shown to be spurious as often as not.) Incidentally, in some cultures, the mind is regarded as a sixth sense, hence on a par with the other senses rather than occupying some privileged position over and above the body and senses (Howes 2009: 27).

Finally, the sensory turn crystalized at roughly the same time as two other paradigm shifts—namely, the *material turn* and the *affective turn*. The former emphasized the material underpinnings of social life and has important things to say about the agency