

Prologue

Uncommon Sense

[The] Eye is as knowing as the Ear, and the Ear as knowing as the Nose, and the Nose as knowing as the Tongue. . . . The Heads Braines cannot ingross all knowledge to themselves.

—Margaret Cavendish (1623–1673), Duchess of Newcastle

A Note to the Reader

Psychology teaches that the brain perceives, not the eyes or ears. According to the latest research in cognitive neuroscience, sensation and perception are subordinate to cognition and the way the brain is wired (Seth 2021). However, critics argue that this smacks of “neuromania” (Tallis 2011), or brain fetishism. They do not deny that the brain plays a role in perception, but they do question the way all knowledge is arrogated to the brain. “Sentience takes us outside ourselves,” writes the cultural anthropologist Michael Taussig (1993, 38). Perception is not just

down to the brain; it is also up to our culture. Neuroscientists need to get out of their own heads.

Fortunately, psychology no longer “owns” the study of cognition, perception, and sensation the way it formerly did. Historians and anthropologists have been steadily encroaching on its terrain since the early 1990s. Historians claim that the senses have a history, and anthropologists argue that there are as many psychologies as there are cultures.

The senses have a history? The reader may wonder how that can be the case when our sense impressions are so fugacious and ephemeral, so immediate, so subjective. *Chacun à son goût* (To each their own taste). But this is a mirage, a trick of perspective. As historians and anthropologists aver, the sensorium is a *historical formation* and the senses are *loaded* with cultural values. It is just that you cannot so easily see this when you only ever study “sensory processing” within the confines of a psychology laboratory, or worse, an MRI machine (Dumit 2004; Joyce 2008). Psychology ignores “the social life of the senses” at its peril. The presumed privacy and idiosyncrasy of sense experience is a myth, propped up by the ideology of “possessive individualism” (Macpherson 1962).

Psychologists are naturally wont to psychologize the senses. But historians and anthropologists know otherwise. The senses are *socialized*—that is, “the sensible” (*le sensible*) or “the perceptual” is carved up and distributed along gender, class, ethnic or racial, and other social lines, and the individual is a product of the intersection of these lines (Classen 1998; Hsu 2019). The senses, like our very selves, are “relationally produced” (i.e., made, not given).

Sensorial Investigations challenges many commonsense assumptions about how the senses function. This book takes uncommon sense as its point of departure, and its argument ricochets between anthropology, psychology, history—and the law.

The law is responsible for the normalization of perception. It does so by enforcing a particular sensory regime. Law is also supposed to transcend the senses. Think of Lady Justice with her blindfold and scales (Jay 1999). Surely, justice should be blind, judges ought to be impartial, and right reason must prevail in the court of law. "The rule of law and not of men" is the cornerstone of our legal system. But what if we ask, with Alasdair MacIntyre (1988): Whose justice? Which rationality? Might it be the better part of justice to confront these questions, to lift the blindfold, and recognize that our sense of justice is just that (i.e., rooted in the sensible)?

I hold five university degrees (three in anthropology, two in law), and I currently teach in both the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Concordia University and the Faculty of Law at McGill University. This dual formation has instilled in me a sort of double vision. Within anthropology, my research has focused on charting the varieties of sensory experience across cultures, and within law, I have been primarily concerned with exploring issues of legal pluralism. In what follows, I would like to share this double vision with you, the reader. This book is about crossing disciplines, crossing cultures and historical periods, and crossing the senses, to see what will out. Call it cross-eyed if you wish. But as I hope to show, blurring vision by interweaving the wisdom of the senses of other cultures and other historical periods can help sharpen one's sense of what doing justice entails.

How Anthropology Came to Its Senses

A wave of interest in the senses as both object of study and means of inquiry has swept over anthropology in recent decades. This resulted in the displacement of the conventional anthropological methodology of participant observation and instituted

“participant sensation” in its place. In *The Life of the Senses: Introduction to a Modal Anthropology*, François Laplantine ([2005] 2015, 2) sums up the gist of this approach as follows: “The experience of [ethnographic] fieldwork is an experience of sharing in the sensible [*le partage du sensible*]. We observe, we listen, we speak with others, we partake of their cuisine, we try to feel along with them what they experience.” The former stress on observation limited many anthropologists from fully immersing themselves in the lifeworlds of other cultures: the new emphasis on sensation enables the investigation of multiple forms of sensory expression and communication. Furthermore, the anthropology of the senses promotes a critical awareness of how social hierarchies and conflicts are perpetuated through a diverse range of sensory channels.

Allowing the senses in has precipitated many keen insights into how both social *con-sensus* (“with the senses”) and social *dis-sensus* are formed and also sets the anthropology of the senses apart from other subfields of anthropology. For example, in contrast to the subfield of linguistic anthropology, with its focus on language, or visual anthropology, with its emphasis on visual documentation—and in contrast to symbolic anthropology, with its stress on interpretation, or political anthropology, with its focus on ideology—sensory anthropology studies *all* the fields of social life, including the life of the mind, from a multi- and intersensory perspective. Thus, sensory anthropology corrects for the verbocentrism of the linguistic and the ocularcentrism of the filmic; it expands the focus from meaning-making (or “the symbolic”) to *sense-making*; and it shifts attention from the prevailing focus on political communities as “imagined” (Anderson 2006) to how they are sensed and lived (Trnka, Dureau, and Park 2013). After the sensory turn in anthropological understanding, as theorized by Ulf Hannerz in an essay on nationalism in Europe, “political anthropology . . .

becomes an anthropology of the senses, an anthropology of emotion, an anthropology of the body" (Hannerz 2006, 278).

Part 1 of this book explores the history of the senses in anthropology.¹ It starts by examining the work of Paul Broca and the Société d'Anthropologie de Paris (SAP) (1860–90) and that of W. H. R. Rivers and the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the Torres Strait of 1898. In the physical/psychological anthropology of this period, the focus was on the measurement of the senses. Diverse tests, inspired by advances in psychophysics, were deployed to gauge the "sensory acuity" of Indigenous peoples, with the general expectation that the results would conform to the racist stereotypes that attributed greater sensuality to non-Westerners. As will be shown in the chapters of part 1, over the course of the twentieth century, the experimental (and often problematic) methods of the first generation of anthropologists (Broca, Rivers, and also Franz Boas) were supplanted by the experiential methods of a second cohort (Marcel Mauss, Maurice Leenhardt, and Margaret Mead) and then the embodied or phenomenological as well as media-centered methods of a third cohort (including Paul Stoller, the present writer, Sarah Pink, Ruth Finnegan, and Kathryn Linn Geurts, among numerous others). This transition resulted in a shift from an etic (i.e., external, typically Western, supposedly universal) perspective to what strived to approximate an emic (internal, local) perspective on "the five senses." The anthropologists of the second and third waves came to question the hegemony of Western perceptual psychology when it comes to understanding how the senses function. The idea that there are multiple perceptual psychologies—indeed, that there are as many psychologies as there are cultures—took shape. This in turn opened the way for the liberation of the senses from the laboratory (in that anthropologists study the senses in everyday contexts), and also contributed to exposing the cultural contingency of the diverse ways in which

the senses are discriminated or bureaucratized, hierarchized, and alternately pacified or overloaded in contemporary society (Jones 2006a; Howes and Classen 2013, chap. 5).

Part 2 of this book, “The Senses in Psychology,” investigates how the senses have been framed within the Western tradition, beginning with Aristotle’s famous dictum in *De Anima* (On the Soul) “There are five senses and five senses only—sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch.”² It goes on to examine how the British philosopher John Locke departed from the Aristotelian tradition with his account of sense perception in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* ([1690] 1975), and laid the foundation for modern experimental psychology (i.e., the confinement of the senses within the psychology laboratory, and inside the head). It is argued that this refiguration may be seen as a process of “unhinging the senses” both from one another and from the cosmos. The historical purview of part 2 is accordingly quite broad. It has to be expansive in order for us to fathom the original connection between psychology and cosmology and how this later came undone. Thus, chapter 3 ponders the implications of the ontological transformation in the constitution of the material world that was precipitated by the Scientific Revolution, when the bottom fell out of the sensory cosmologies of premodernity as a result of several developments, including the visualization of the universe through telescopes and microscopes and the dissolution of the Four Elements of classical/premodern cosmology (earth, air, fire, and water) into the dozens of elements of the periodic table.

Chapter 4 goes on to examine the fallout of the cognitive revolution within psychology, beginning in the mid-twentieth century, when the mind or brain came to be conceptualized on the model of a computer program, and, in a related development, perception was reduced to the idea of “information processing.” To this overly programmatic, totally instrumental,

and thoroughly modern vision of how the senses function, this book opposes the archaic notion of “the sensorium.”

The Sensorium as a Focus for Cultural Studies

The sensorium is a remarkably holistic notion. In the early modern period, it referred primarily to the “seat of sensation in the brain” and still carries this meaning today. But it also extended to include the circumference of perception. In illustration of the latter point, the *Oxford English Dictionary* quotes one usage from 1714: “The noblest and most exalted Way of considering this infinite Space [referring to “the Universe”] is that of Sir Isaac Newton, who calls it the *Sensorium* of the Godhead,” and another from 1861: “Rome became the common sensorium of Europe, and through Rome all the several portions of Latin Europe sympathized and felt with each other.” This expanded sense (cosmological and social) of the term “sensorium” was countered by the privatization of sensation that occurred with the rise of Lockean empiricism. The interiorization of the sensorium was further entrenched under the aegis of cognitive neuroscience, which reduced the definition of perception to “patterns of neural activity.” The construction of perception within cognitive neuroscience is aptly summed up in the following quote: “The events that culminate in perception begin with specialized receptor cells that convert a particular form of physical energy into bioelectric currents. Different sensors are sensitive to different types of energy, so the properties of the receptor cells determine the modality of a sensory system. Ionic currents are the currency of neural information processing, and current flows that begin in the receptors are transmitted through complex networks of interconnected neurons and, in the end result in a *pattern of brain activity* we call perception” (Hughes 2001, 7, emphasis added). Thus, advances in cognitive neuroscience

precipitated a retraction of sensation from the interface between sense organ and world to focus on the neural pathways leading from receptor cells to brain.

This tide was partially turned by the media theorist Walter J. Ong, a student of Marshall McLuhan, in a section of *The Presence of the Word* (1967) entitled “The Shifting Sensorium,” which was in turn reprinted as the opening chapter in *The Varieties of Sensory Experience* (Howes 1991). Ong took up McLuhan’s notion of cultures as consisting of contrasting “sense-ratios” in accordance with the prevailing medium of communication—namely, speech, which privileges the oral-aural; writing (chirography) and print (typography), which both privilege the visual; and electronic communication. On the basis of this schema, which conceptualizes media as “extensions of the senses,” Ong proposed that “given sufficient knowledge of the sensorium exploited within a specific culture, one could probably define the culture as a whole in all its aspects,” including its cosmology or “worldview” (Ong 1991, 28). Ong was adamant, however, that the term “worldview” should not be applied to the cosmologies of societies without writing—or “oral societies.” Given the dynamic nature of sound in contrast to the distancing nature of vision, the cosmologies of oral societies present the world not “as view” but rather “as event” (Ong 1969).

While there are serious difficulties with McLuhan and Ong’s “Great Divide” theory of the evolution of human consciousness, as we shall see presently, it nevertheless precipitated a heightened focus on the cultural mediation of sense experience, as exemplified by Paul Stoller in *The Taste of Ethnographic Things: The Senses in Anthropology* (1989),³ Ruth Finnegan’s *Communicating: The Multiple Modes of Human Interconnection* (2002), and Kathryn Linn Geurts’s *Culture and the Senses: Bodily Ways of Knowing in an African Community* (2002a), among other works. In fulfilment of Ong’s suggestion that “the

sensorium is a fascinating focus for cultural studies" (Ong 1991, 28), the *cultural* anthropology of the senses was born, and the latter body of work has substantiated the multiple respects in which, as Oliver Sacks once put it, "culture tunes our neurons" (cited in Howes 2005a, 22).

The tidal turn, intimated by Ong, has had ripple effects far beyond anthropology. These can be seen in the way MIT art historian Caroline A. Jones recuperates and expands the original (early modern) definition of "sensorium" in "The Mediated Sensorium." This essay figures as the introduction to *Sensorium: Embodied Experience, Technology and Contemporary Art* (2006b), which is the title of both the 2006 art exhibition she curated and the exhibition catalog she edited to go with it. She writes, "The human sensorium has always been mediated. . . . But over the past few decades that condition has greatly intensified. Amplified, shielded, channeled, prosthetized, simulated, stimulated, irritated—our sensorium is more mediated today than ever before" (Jones 2006a, 5). In her introductory essay, Jones sets the stage for showcasing the artworks she brought together by presenting an analysis of the "segmentation," "bureaucratization," and commodification/instrumentalization of the senses in the culture at large and in the writings of the highly influential mid-twentieth-century New York art critic Clement Greenberg. The latter's work, with its high formalism and repeated warnings against "genre confusion," increased the "sensory demarcation" of art (Candlin 2010) to an extreme degree. Greenberg proclaimed painting to be "for eyesight alone" and pointed to Color Field painting as the purest expression of his dictum (Jones 2006b). Meanwhile, advances in audio technology revolutionized listening by supplying "high fidelity" (hi-fi) recordings and the paraphernalia to go with them, such as surround-sound speaker systems and headphones that enclosed the auditor in an acoustic bubble (Jones 2006a, 28).

As Jones goes on to observe, the age of the ideal modern viewer, as of the hi-fi auditor, has been eclipsed in the ensuing decades as more and more artists, driven by a “desire to escape sense for sensation” and attracted by the idea of sensory *métissage* (in place of purity), have used digital technology to create art that is intersensory or “intermedial.” For example, one of the pieces in *Sensorium* consisted of a singing microscope; another translated the body heat of its spectators into the visible spectrum. Thus, according to Jones, art “viewers” in the twenty-first century are increasingly met with “dramatically synaesthetic and kinaesthetic scenarios,” with the result that “our experience of mediation itself is where the art happens” (Jones 2006a, 18). Otherwise put: there are no more *objets d’art*, only experiences. Art has come off the wall, and the sensorially neutral space of the modern art gallery, or “White Cube,” has come to be suffused with a profusion of sensations—critical sensations, Jones would add: “*Sensorium* dreams that we can come to feel the body pulsing in tandem with its prosthetic extensions and microscopic addenda, that we can learn to partner our proliferating technologies in increasingly coordinated, supple, and critically conscious ways” (44).⁴

What Jones accomplished in *Sensorium* is echoed within anthropology in the practice of sensory ethnography. In one of its incarnations, sensory ethnography involves sense-based inquiry (in contrast to language-based or image-based inquiry) as exemplified by the work of such anthropologists as Kathryn Linn Geurts. Geurts’s *Culture and the Senses* (2002a) is notable for its inquiry into the local understanding of the sensorium and social vocation of the senses among the Anlo-Ewe of Ghana. Similarly, Sarah Pink’s *Doing Sensory Ethnography* (2009) provides a helpful catalog of tips for doing sense-based research (see further Howes and Classen 1991).

The term also figures in the name of the Sensory Ethnography Lab (SEL) at Harvard University directed by Lucien Castaing-Taylor. The SEL specializes in the production of sensational cinema, such as the documentary *Leviathan* (Castaing-Taylor and Paravel 2012). Filmed aboard a North Atlantic fishing trawler, this film graphically portrayed violence toward marine animals and had a profoundly visceral impact on its audiences because of its sensationalism (Pavsek 2018). It is also noteworthy for the absence of any voice-over, a feature consistent with Castaing-Taylor's denunciation, as a champion of visual anthropology, of the "linguification" of meaning in anthropology at large (Taylor [2014] 1994, 1996; see further Howes 2016).

A third incarnation of sensory ethnography can be discerned in the multiplication of the modalities of anthropological research as evidenced by the substitution of the term "multi-modal anthropologies" (Collins, Durning, and Gill 2017) for "visual anthropology" as the title of the section of the *American Anthropologist* formerly dedicated to reviewing ethnographic films. This development was anticipated by the publication of *A Different Kind of Ethnography: Imaginative Practices and Creative Methodologies* (Elliott and Culhane 2017). Across its six chapters, this book charted and exemplified how anthropologists have taken to experimenting with embodied social practices such as walking, staging collaborative theatrical productions, treating writing (including poetry and drawing) as a practice of "worlding," and creatively editing sound and visual recordings to "conceptualize, design, conduct, and communicate ethnographic research" (Elliott and Culhane 2017, 3). This explosion in "imaginative ethnography," as Elliott and Culhane style it, has opened up a space "between art and anthropology" (Schneider and Wright 2010), where ethnographers experiment

with artistic means of expression, and, conversely, artists increasingly experiment with ethnography to generate new ways of being and knowing.

The third part of this book, "Between History and Anthropology," presents an altogether different psychology of perception from the sort that is theorized (and enforced) within the confines of the laboratory. Chapter 6 addresses the highly fruitful exchanges between the disciplines of history and anthropology instigated by the great French social historian Alain Corbin in an essay entitled "Histoire et anthropologie sensorielle" (1990). Corbin introduced the idea of "the history of the sensible" (Corbin and Heuré 2000), which dovetails nicely with the ideas of the sociality of sensation, cultural contingency of sense-making, and politics of perception that come out of the anthropology of the senses.

The pointers for doing sensory history that Corbin signaled in "Histoire et anthropologie sensorielle" include the need to take account of "the habitus that determines the frontier between the perceived and the unperceived, and, even more, of the norms which decree what is spoken and what left unspoken," and being alert to the dangers of "confusing the reality of the employment of the senses and the picture of this employment decreed by observers" (Corbin 2005, 232, 235).

The crossing of history and anthropology proposed by Corbin forms the basis of the new theory of "the archaeology of perception,"⁵ or better, "historical anthropology of the senses and sensation" advocated in the ensuing chapters of part 3. There, this new paradigm is applied to the analysis of the life of the senses during two pivotal historical periods: namely, the encounter between European and Chinese civilizations during the advent of East-West trade in the early modern period (chapter 7) and the encounter between European settlers and the Indigenous peoples of the land now known as North America

during the colonial period (chapter 8). These “first contact” situations are of interest to us for the way they throw the contours of the sensoria of the parties to the conjuncture into relief. Equally illuminating is the study of the ways in which the cultural divide was bridged through sensory exchange—that is, the traffic in goods that were prized for their sensory qualities.

Doing Justice by the Senses

Weaving in and out of the chapters of parts 2 and 3, there is a stress on the politics of perception and, especially in chapter 8, on doing justice to and by the senses.⁶ What is a just sensory order? This question takes on added urgency in the context of the current conjuncture when, as a result of the globalization of the economy and the upsurge of international migration, “*les milieux* are all *mixtes*” (Geertz 2001, 86); that is, we live in an increasingly multicultural world where difference no longer begins at the borders of societies but arises within them. It is a matter of first importance in such circumstances to extend comity to the many different “ways of sensing the world” that culture-bearers bring with them when they migrate or are displaced. Holding that “When in Rome, do as the Romans do” would be to forget that Rome was once “the common sensorium of Europe” (as noted above). The roads that led to Rome were all two-way streets, and they allowed the various parts of Latin Europe to “sympathize and feel with each other.” Sympathizing does not entail identifying. Rather, it involves sensing and thinking across divisions—from the divisions of the sensorium to the divisions of civil society (or “the State”), including the divisions along gender, class, and ethnic or racialized lines. Only in this way can we arrive at the “enlargement of mind” of which the philosopher Hannah Arendt speaks in *Between Past and Future: Six Exercises in Political Thought* (1961).

In "Embodied Diversity and the Challenges to Law," law professor Jennifer Nedelsky encapsulates Arendt's position as follows:

Judgment, according to Hannah Arendt, is genuinely subjective. . . . But judgment is not therefore merely arbitrary or simply a matter of preference. Judgments, properly understood, are valid for the judging community. . . . What makes it possible for us to genuinely judge, to move beyond our private idiosyncrasies and preferences, is our capacity to achieve an "enlargement of mind." We do this by taking different perspectives into account. . . . [We] imagine trying to persuade others. . . . The more views we are able to take into account, the less likely we are to be locked into one perspective, whether through fear, anger or ignorance. (Nedelsky 1997, 107; see further Arendt 1982)

Nedelsky's account of the conditions for the de-subjectification of judgment (following Arendt) flies in the face of the subjectification of the senses and enclosure of the faculties inside the head within conventional Western perceptual psychology.

The preceding account of "what makes it possible for us genuinely to judge" can be refined further by drawing on the anthropologist Clifford Geertz's account of moral reasoning in "The Uses of Diversity," a lecture delivered at the University of Michigan in 1985. Geertz's point of departure in this lecture is the emergent "perception" that "meaning, in the form of interpretable signs—sounds, images, feelings, artefacts, gestures—comes to exist only within language games, communities of discourse, intersubjective systems of reference, ways of worldmaking; that it arises within the frame of concrete social interaction in which something is a something

for a you and a me, and not in some secret grotto in the head" (Geertz 2001, 76).

According to Geertz, then, "meaning" (or what we call "sense-making") is a public activity. He proceeds to interpret the famous line of the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein—that "the limits of my language are the limits of my world"—to mean that "the reach of our minds, the range of signs we can manage somehow to interpret, is what defines the intellectual, moral and emotional space in which we live" (Geertz 2001, 77). That reach can be expanded, Geertz maintains, by pondering the "alternative worlds" of other cultures. Such an enlargement of mind has become increasingly crucial, given that "we are living more and more in the midst of an enormous collage" (85), with all the "value conflicts," all the "wrenching moral issues centered around cultural diversity" (86), that that condition entails. "To live in a collage one must in the first place render oneself capable of sorting out its elements, determining what they are (which usually involves determining where they come from and what they amounted to when they were there) and how, practically, they relate to one another, without at the same time blurring one's own sense of one's own location and one's own identity within it" (87).

There is a greater stress on reflexivity to Geertz's approach to moral reasoning than Arendt's. According to Geertz, striving to comprehend what it means to be "on the other side" can in turn engender a deeper understanding of what it means to be "on one's own side" and in turn compel us to explore "the character of the space between" the two sides—that is, to cultivate a sort of double vision, or state of "being of two sensoria" (Howes 2003a, 10–14) about things.

As frameworks for enabling us "genuinely to judge," both Arendt's and Geertz's stances in relation to diversity are powerful and enabling. However, from the standpoint of the

anthropology of the senses, Arendt's position is limited by its reliance on the idea of "perspectives" or "views" just as Geertz's is beholden to the Wittgensteinian idea of "language" or "language games." *Sensorial Investigations* maintains that these limits can best be overcome by entertaining the idea of "consensus" in lieu of "perspective" or "language," and thereby extending the goal of achieving an "enlargement of mind," or *con-sensus*-building, to include all the faculties. As Geertz's allusion to meaning as arising "within the frame of concrete social interaction" further suggests, the senses have a social vocation. The German sociologist Georg Simmel put this point best in his essay entitled "Sociology of the Senses": "That we become involved in interactions at all depends on the fact that we have a sensory effect upon one another" ([1921] 1997, 107).⁷

To trouble this idea that "the limits of my language are the limits of my world" a bit further, it will be appreciated that Wittgenstein's pronouncement is vulnerable to the criticism that the senses come before language and also extend beyond it (Howes 2022, 13). In other words, this dictum occults the *extralinguistic* dimension of meaning (i.e., sense-making). This occlusion can be seen behind the rise of ordinary language philosophy (also known as analytic philosophy), which took its cue from Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922). In the words of the highly influential British philosopher Michael Dummett, analytic philosophy holds "first, that, a comprehensive account of thought can be attained through a philosophical account of language, and, second, that a comprehensive account can only be so attained" (Dummett 1993, 4). What a presumptuous thing to say! As if all the epistemological problems of philosophy could be solved through the rectification of language! The verbocentrism of this pronouncement is astonishing.

At the same time, Wittgenstein cannot be held accountable for what others made of his ruminations. In point of fact, his

Philosophical Investigations ([1953] 2009) and other works delved beyond the pale of language. For example, his oeuvre also includes disquisitions on the experience and expression of pain (Wittgenstein 2009) and the perception of color (Wittgenstein 1977), which are eminently sensible topics. He also engaged with anthropology in, for example, his commentary on Sir James George Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (Wittgenstein 1967). Hence, Wittgenstein's cogitations extended beyond the confines of the conventional Western episteme. It is in recognition of, and as a tribute to, these other sensorial and cross-cultural dimensions of Wittgenstein's thought, particularly as taken up and expounded further by Clifford Geertz, that I chose *Sensorial Investigations* as the title for this book.⁸

To conclude, let me lay out the three main propositions that inform this inquiry into the history of the senses in anthropology, psychology, and law:

- The senses are social, and sense-making is a public undertaking—not the private activity posited by psychology.
- The sensorium is a dynamic, multifarious whole, and attending to how the senses are relationally produced is a matter of first analytic importance.
- Doing justice to and by the senses involves building *consensus* while allowing that uncommon sense(s), or *dis-sensus*, also has a role to play.

These propositions should be read in conjunction with the “Twelve Propositions for Sensory Studies” put forward in the prologue to *The Sensory Studies Manifesto* (Howes 2022). That said, let us begin our investigations into the far borderlands of sensation and perception in history and across cultures by examining the history of the senses in anthropology.