

ANT 394M: Sensory ethnography

Spring 2020

Wednesday 9-12

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OH: Th 2-4 and by appt.

Sensory ethnography encompasses ethnographic research with an emphasis on the senses to media made with an attention to the haptic. In this class we take a broad approach to sensory ethnography, drawing out ways of doing, thinking, and making. Hence we will read, go on ethnographic outings, write, and create. Emphasis is on sensing as a way of engaging the world and one another, on the immanence of sensation, on the ephemeral and atmospheric, and on a more than human sensorium – all concerns that carry an ethical charge in the current climate.

Readings

The following books have been ordered through the Co-op:

Laplantine, François. 2015. *The Life of the Senses: Introduction to a Modal Anthropology*. London: Bloomsbury.

Luiselli, Valeria. 2019. *Lost Children Archive*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Marder, Michael. 2016. *Grafts: Writings on Plants*. Minneapolis, MN: Univocal.

Toop, David. 2004. *Haunted Weather: Music, Silence and Memory*. London: Serpent's Tail.

Paterson, Mark. 2007. *The Senses of Touch: Haptics, Affects and Technologies*. London: Bloomsbury

Most of the rest are available as PDFs on Canvas or elsewhere. Some are books I have, others are on reserve in PCL.

Requirements

Reading

Read following your own thread and interest. Skim, slow down and dwell on provocative passages, make connections across the readings. Consider aspect reading (from Davide Panagia):

“An attention to the aesthetic requires one to come to terms with the fact that a work doesn't simply represent arguments, but produces affects and effects too. Thus, aspect-reading is a genre of reading that acknowledges the incomplete, fragmentary, and untrustworthy nature of all reading practices, including the most attentive and analytic ones. ... [I]t is advised that you not read for argument but attend to the moments that strike your curiosities and remark on those aspects in such a way as to create a network of relations between experiences, authors, texts, tuitions, and vistas.”

Two students each week will work together to provide us with a roadmap through the readings.

Everyone should engage fully, bringing notes, brainstorming inspired by the reading, other texts, images, sounds, smells, and so on. Bring something to share, and a readiness to discuss the texts in themselves and as openings.

Making

We will be making things throughout the semester, in and with media as inspired by ethnographic encounters. You will also develop a longer media + writing piece as a final project. This should be driven by a sensorial ethnographic engagement with a site of your choice (your dissertation research ideally, or something related). The parameters of this are open ended and will be developed throughout the semester, though the writing should be in relation to the media (as opposed to explanatory). The ethos is one of play and experimentation. Don't be afraid to risk failure. Aim to create something robust. We might also make something together.

phenomenality of sense

Jan 22

openings

Ingold, "Textility of Making"
Latour, "Sensitizing"
Perec, "Approaches to What?"
Paul Stoller, *Sensuous Scholarship*
"Prologue" and "The Sorcerer's Body"

Ingold / Pink / Howes debate

Ingold, "Stop, Look and listen!"
Pink and Howes debate, "The future of sensory anthropology/the anthropology of the senses"
Ingold, "Worlds of sense and sensing the world: a response to Sarah Pink and David Howes"

Jan 29

body-world

Aristotle, *De Anima (On the Soul)*
"Sense-perception"
Laplantine, *The Life of the Senses: Introduction to a Modal Anthropology*
Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*
"Experience and objective thought: The problem of the body"
"The body as object and mechanistic physiology"
"The theory of the body is already a theory of perception"
"Sense Experience"
Taussig, *The Nervous System*
1. Why the Nervous System?
8. Tactility and Distraction
Deleuze, "Painting and Sensation," in *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*

Feb. 5

touch

Barad, "On Touching – The Inhuman That Therefore I Am"
Nancy, "Corpus," in *Corpus*
Paterson, "sensory/motor"
Paterson, *The Senses of Touch: Haptics, Affects, and Technologies*
Seremetakis, *Sensing the Everyday*
Pt. III Senses Revisited
Serres, "Veil," in *The Five Senses*

Feb. 12

permeability

Agard-Jones, "Spray"
Ladd, "Bad Vibrations: Infrasound, Sonic Hauntings, and Imperceptible Politics," in *Acoustic City*
Manning, "What if it Didn't All Begin and End with Containment? Toward a Leaky Sense of Self"
Spahr, "The Connection of Everyone with Lungs"
Zardini, *Sense of the City*, excerpts

Feb. 19

imperceptibility

FIELDTRIP – HOMEChem (unconfirmed)

Michelle Murphy, "Introduction," in *Sick Building Syndrome and the Problem of Uncertainty*
Nash, "The Fruits of Ill-Health: Pesticides and Workers' Bodies in Post-World War II California"
Shapiro, N. "Attuning to the Chemosphere: Domestic Formaldehyde, Bodily Reasoning, and the
Chemical Sublime"
Twilley, "The Hidden Air Pollution in Our Homes," *The New Yorker*

The Sensitives
Safe

Sound Studies Lecture Series (with No Idea Festival)

"High Vibration Resonance"
Zachary James Watkins
February 20, 12:30-2
Sonic Ethnography, RLP 0.112

Experimental sound workshop with
Makoto Oshiro + Takahiro Kawaguchi
February 20, 3-5
Digital Writing and Research Lab, PAR 102

Anechoic chamber tour
February 21, 2 p.m.
Foyer of ECG

"3D Audio: Techniques and Applications"
Anne Guthrie
February 21, 4-5
Acoustics Seminar, ETC 2.136

sensing beyond the human

Feb. 26

ticks, bats, and whales

Yusoff, "Insensible Worlds: Postrelational Ethics, Indeterminacy and the (K)notes of Relating"

von Uexküll, "A stroll through the worlds of animals and men: A picture book of invisible worlds"
Daughtry, "TURTLETALK"

Griffin, *Listening in the Dark: The Acoustic Orientation of Bats and Men*
Jones, "Sonic Ecology: The Undetectable Sounds of the City," in *The Acoustic City*

Ritts, "Environmentalists abide: Listening to whale music – 1965–1985"
Songs of the Humpback Whale (1970)

March 4

plants, insects, and stones

Hustak and Myers, "Involutionary Momentum: Affective Ecologies and the Sciences of Plant/Insect Encounters"

Myers, *Becoming Sensor in Sentient Worlds*

Povinelli, *Geontologies: A Requiem to Late Liberalism*

"The Three Figures of Geontology"

"Can Rocks Die? Life and Death Inside the Carbon Imaginary"

Hugh Raffles, "25 Years is a Long Time"

March 11

plant sense

FIELDTRIP – Tower Herbarium, 9-11

Hartigan, "How to Interview a Plant"

Karban, *Plant Sensing and Communication*

Marder, *Grafts: Writings on Plants*

Myers, "Conversations on Plant Sensing"

Myers, "Ungrid-able Ecologies"

March 25

technologies of sense

Doerksen, *How to Make Sense: Sensory Modification in Grinder Subculture*

Gabrys, *How to Do Things with Sensors*

Gabrys, "Sensing Practices"

Parisi, *Archaeologies of Touch*

Simondon, "On Techno-Aesthetics"

Listening with EMW detectors

AES/APLA Joint Spring 2020 Conference

March 26-28, 2020

listening in the anthropocene

April 1

atmospheric attunements

Choy and Zee, "Condition – Suspension"

Howe and Pandian, *Lexicon for an Anthropocene Yet Unseen*

Textures of the Anthropocene, Vapor volume

Phenomenographies. Describing Urban and Architectural Atmospheres. Special issue of *Ambiances*

April 8

echoes and sonic archives

GUEST LECTURE – Rupert Cox

"Echoes of life in Okinawa: a sonic ethnography"

Cox, "The Cave Mouth: listening to sound and voice in Okinawan war memory"

Cox, "Walking Without Purpose: Sensations of History and Memory in Nagasaki City," in *Senses and Sensation*, Vol. 1

Cox, Irving, and Wright, *Beyond Text?: Critical Practices and Sensory Anthropology*

Recommended

Harnetty, "Earthquakes and frack-waste: sounds of extraction-related disaster in Appalachian Ohio"

Harnetty, "Shawnee, Ohio"

Luiselli, *Lost Children Archive*

Pt. I: Family Soundscape

Pt. IV: Lost Children Archive

April 15

elemental

FIELD RECORDING WORKSHOP – Andrew Garrison

Lane and Carlyle, *In the Field: The Art of Field Recording*

Parry, "An Underwater World of Walls: Machine Sensing, Maritime Sovereignty, and the Aesthetics of Undersea Surveillance"

Toop, "Space and Memory," in *Haunted weather*

Listen:

Toshiya Tsunoda

Luc Ferrari

April 22

weathering

Howes, *The Sixth Sense Reader*

Paterson, "Haptic geographies: Ethnography, haptic knowledges and sensuous dispositions"

Serres, "Boxes," in *The Five Senses*

Starosielski, "Thermal Vision"

Yusoff and Gabrys, "Forecast Factory: Snow Globe and Weather Makers Weather Permitting"

April 29

"the boundary of life is quietly crossed"

GUEST LECTURE – Dario Robleto

Sagan et. al, *Murmurs of Earth: The Voyager Interstellar Record*

May 6

Final projects / wrapping up

DISTRIBUTE 2020

SCA and SVA virtual conference

May 7, 8, 9