Introduction

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Interactionism and sensuous scholarship

This edited collection is part of a growing tradition of "sensuous scholarship" (Stoller, 1997), a domain of research that explores the everyday practices of sensory understanding and the lived practices of "sense work". A starting point for this work is the idea that while individuals sense the world on their own – through their own bodies, emotional experiences and life contexts – the expression, communication and interpretation of the senses are all sociocultural practices (Howes, 2023). In this tradition, a common way to think about the senses - or the "sensorium", to use their collective noun - is that they/it connect(s) the psycho-organism of individuals with the physical/social worlds they inhabit. In this metaphor, the senses are a kind of contact point with the "external" social world and the "internal" mental/emotional world of individuals. As we shall see, there are more subtle ways to think about the senses – i.e., that try to avoid the dichotomy of "self"/"other" or "inner"/"outer"– but for now, the metaphor helps us to see why the senses are of relevance to scholars of sociocultural phenomena: i.e. because sensing is always a social act.

To describe sensing as cultural phenomena we can invoke two phenomena: first, the sensory practices through which individuals bring taken-for-granted experience to awareness, which Winchester and Pagis (2022) refer to as "somatic inversions"; second, the cultural construction of "sensory domains", such as how specific social contexts take on particular somatic properties (see Linke, et al, 2006). Both of these aspects are explored in sensory scholarship and in this volume. It should be emphasised that many disciplines in the social sciences and the humanities have long-standing traditions of research into the senses that may foreground other questions (Ong, 2023 in Howes, 1993). A famous example comes from media studies with McLuhan's (1964/2001) investigation of how sensory perception is reconfigured by the emergence of electronic media. Other examples are studies of the sense of taste in ancient philosophy (Rudolph 2017), philosophical investigations of smell (Barwich and Smith's 2022; cf. Barwich 2020), and research in literary studies concerned with the importance of the sense of smell in story telling (Rindisbacher 1993). The formation of "Sensory scholarship" involves focusing such interests into a cross-disciplinary concern that draws together sociologists, anthropologists, historians, psychologists and others. Within sociology, this "turn to the senses" can be thought of as a continuation of interest in the body and emotions, areas that, since the 1980s have had a strong foothold in research agendas (Hochschild, 1983; Shilling, 1993; Bendelow and Williams, 1998; Turner, 2012; Mason and Boero, 2020) So, while sensory scholarship may be a new

interdisciplinary concern, the issues themselves emerge from well-established research programs.

Sensory scholarship analyses how the senses are shaped by society, how the senses shape or inform people's engagements with themselves and others, as well as how people's sensory practices come to shape or feedback on social practice. There are all kinds of questions and topics that scholars have pursued in this extremely broad area, such as the relationship between social structures and sensory practices, the ways that different social groups might use or experience the senses, as well as cultural variations of sense work in different contexts. As an example of the latter, instead of using the Western five senses scheme, the Nigerian Hausa "recognize two categories of senses comprising the multimodal (the *ji*-complex) and the monomodal (sight)" (Low, 2013, p. 272). Even within the same cultural group, such as Nepal's Yolmo Buddhists, one can find variations in the way people of different social locations relate to their senses. Anthropologist Robert Desjarlais (2003), who studied this group, discovered that his informants, Ghang Lama and Kisang Omu, had different "sensory biographies": while the first talked about his life centering on the sense of sight, the second one narrated her life in an acoustically-driven manner. The two biographies highlighted different senses as central in their self-understanding: one "visualist", the other, acousticist.

Our specific interest in this collection is in how the concepts, methods and perspectives deriving from "interactionist" scholarship are being used to examine the senses and what contribution they can make to the field of sensory scholarship. An important point to emphasise from the outset is that while interactionist scholars are interested in society, they do not deal with social categories in the way that sociologists often do; interactionists are much less concerned with generalised depictions of the social than they are with situational particularities. Indeed, we (as editors) have a suspicion of analysis that does not take such particularities into account. To give an example of the kind of framing that we feel suspicious of, a lot of ink has been spilled on the macro-structural relationship between cultural context and sensory action. Within sensory scholarship there is a common question surrounding the ways that particular senses may become more or less dominant in different social contexts. So, for example, Howes refers to "the hegemony which sight has for so long exercised over our own cultures' social, intellectual, and aesthetic life" (Howes 2022, p. 4). Indeed, in Western cultures, sight is often said to be the pre-eminent sense in a western "pentapartite" sensory system (i.e. one comprised of taste, smell, touch, sound, vision) (Low, 2012; see also Friedman, 2012).

Anthropological studies of different cultures and of people with different sensory experiences when young might imply that people can develop different types of sensory skill in different circumstances. Classen's (1991) work suggested that children who had grown up in the wild had a particularly sensitive sense of smell which they relied on heavily, but a "poor" understanding of the visual, and were unable, for example, to distinguish a picture of a person from a real person. So, one might imagine, the dominance of the visual through abstract systems such as scientific language and monetisation (Simmel, 1900/2004), as well as through cinema, television, fashion, visual art, consumerist culture and so on, may have sharpened, so to speak, western

capitalist sight (see also Low, 2012). In other words, an argument can be made that the rise of the visual has develop in tandem with capitalist expansion.

But, as we shall see, when one looks closely at specific domains of action rather than the larger historical trends involving the sensorium, we notice the complexity of ways that sensory practices operate, including how different senses intersect. We are interested in a move away from generalised claims about senses in society writ large, towards a concerted analysis of sense-work in practice and context – i.e. how people engage in sensory work in discrete and concrete settings. The analysis of the minutia of sensory work as a localised, ongoing social achievement is the distinctive contribution of interactionist work that each of the chapters in this volume peruses in detail.

An interactionist turn to the senses

The senses have long been of concern to interactionism, particularly within research that focuses on embodied action. However, with notable exceptions (see e.g., Waskul and Vannini, 2008; Waskul et al., 2009; Vannini et al., 2012), interactionists have been relatively absent from conversations about the senses in the past decade or so. The philosophers who provided the basis for the emergence of symbolic interactionism as well as early symbolic interactionists themselves often implicitly referred to the senses. Mead (1932), for example, investigates the process of communication that underpins the production of the self, communication that is only possible when sensory perception of participants' actions is presupposed. Similarly, Blumer's (1969) conception of meaning-making through social interaction involves sensory perception of others and of the environment of social action. Later, symbolic interactionist research increasingly highlighted how the self arises through social interaction. With this focus on the self, it is no surprise that symbolic interactionists have made a strong contribution to exploring how the senses mediate the relationship between self and society (Vannini, Waskul and Gottschalk, 2012). In this work, the senses are not seen as passively "doing the work of perception", but are instead seen as parts of our "somatic work" or "somatic labour" (Gottschalk, 2023) – i.e., the locally achieved, interpretive actions involving knowledge and understanding of the practices being undertaken. In their studies, symbolic interactionists show, for example, how sensory perception is achieved by actively attending, for example, to auditory events (Vannini, Waskul, Gottschalk and Rambo, 2010) or odours (Waskul and Vannini, 2008; cf. Largey and Watson, 1972), or how touch is used to in the establishing and organisation of social relationships (Leichty, 1975).

In the introduction to a recent special issue of *Symbolic Interaction*, Gibson and vom Lehn (2021) pointed to three intersecting themes within the collected papers. The first was how people bring their sensorial experience to other people's attention, and the resources they use to explain what they are sensing and what others should/could sense. Within this, the sequential ordering of talk, gesture, body posture, facial expression and material objects was a key interest. The intersection of bodies and the material environment was another theme, with contributors looking at how objects are used in the process of doing sense work. This includes objects that are

the "subject" of sensing (like cheese, coffee, syringes, motorbikes), as well as the "devices" used to aid sensing, like guide dogs. A third theme involved looking at the relationship between sensing and professional activity, and how communicating about the senses is situated within certain priorities of action, such as how a racing bike feels so that it can be modified, or interpreting the diverse sensorial characteristics of a patient in order to make clinical decisions.

Of course, each interactionist perspective offers something very distinctive and, let's be open about this, conflicted views, so it is important to clarify the distinctive contributions of each approach. Within Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis often abbreviated to "EMCA", there is a shared concern with situated action and the negotiation of intersubjective understanding - in Garfinkel's (1967, 2002) terms, the achievement of local social order that is witnessable and accountable. Chapters in this book by Mondada and da Cruz on forensic examinations (Chapter 3), Jenkings on rock climbing (Chapter 10), Due on preparing food (Chapter 11) exemplify this work. Some chapters pay more attention to the sequential organisation of practice (such as Mondada and da Cruz), while other chapters represent an ethnomethodological concern with the "just thisness" of the action as represented in narrative re-descriptions. For example, Smith et al. (Chapter 9) reject the notion of "sensory orders" in favour of a view of "shifting contextual relevancies that provide for the gloss of 'setting'", where the setting is "the *production* of an environment as an emergent, reflexive, no-time-out, accomplishment" (p.x). Due draws on the concept of post-praxeology to develop a "total" analysis of social situations, beyond the sequential features of just talk, and with a close analysis of the material environment.

What is at stake in these studies is the rejection of the idea of social order as anything other than a social practice. The senses are lived at the level of the individual: a person cannot "share" what they smell, they can only communicate it for others and, so doing, transform it into communicative activity (Street Schostal, 2024). Whatever its focus, perhaps it is fair to say that EMCA is concerned with how sense experience is made accountable as communicative action in the realisation of some specific practice or other.

A quite different set of interests are found in symbolic interactionism. De La Fuente and Walsh (2021) articulated an interpretation of Goffman's work that involved a concern with 'atmosphere' and the feelings of social environments, such as the fun of a party or the seriousness of a courtroom. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in courtrooms and homes for juvenile offenders in Sweden, Flower and Wästerfors' (Chapter 6) explore these ideas further, analysing "difficult to get at moods, tones or feelings that emerge from the in-betweens, constructed from the interplay between the physical, material, and social" (p.?). Their ethnographic enquiry aims to unpick something different from the sequential organisation of talk: how sensorially tangible experiences such as the tension in a courtroom might be dealt with ethnographically.

In making the case for an interactionist turn in sensory scholarship, Gibson and vom Lehn (2021) also argued that interactionism itself may benefit from a closer attention to the senses. The turn to embodied action within Conversation Analysis (CA) in the early 2000s involved a shift to treating seriously the ways that bodies (gestures, posture, facial expressions, material artefacts)

are used in communication alongside talk (Nevile, 2015). We think that a similar shift towards senses can equally enrich the analysis of social praxis, and we see the contributions collected here as clear examples of this. In Chapter 2 we provide an exploration of some key conceptual and methodological issues that inform and flow through interactionist work in the senses. Before this, we wish to use the remainder of our introduction to highlight two key thematic areas that find particular emphasis across the chapters that we have collected here: namely, learning and technology.

Sensory learning

The senses are our central mediation to the world, the resources by which we interpret actions and environments and communicate with others. Fritz Perls' (Clarkson and Mackewn, 1996) work in gestalt psychotherapy drew heavily on the idea of the senses as mechanisms for the perceptual (bodily) 'contact' that people have with the world. The senses are the resources through which our psychosocial relations with the world emerge. They are developmentally critical to our adaptation to the environments that we find ourselves in. Taking touch as an example, developmental psychologists have made much of the role of touch in early childhood maturation (Montagu, 1971). In very dated, gendered language, they highlight the developmental importance of "mothers'" touch with infants in teaching babies emotional regulation. They also discuss how children substitute this touch with objects like toys and blankets as "transitional objects" that help them to self-regulate (Winnicott, 1951). This idea has been extended to think about how touch continues to be used through our lives as a kind of "grounding function" (Fischman, 2023).

As children, we quickly learn to make sense of our sensory world, to recognize, for example, degrees of light as an element of "the world out there", to understand the sources of sounds, such as whose voices belong to who, or to identify which things are pleasant to touch, and which cause pain. As we grow, our understanding becomes more subtle and nuanced: the hubbub of sounds around us have origins and meanings that we can usually quite easily place: the children playing loudly in a nearby school mean that the after school sports sessions have started, the thwack and rumble of a skateboard outside is the next-door neighbour's son coming home from school, and the smell of a smoke is his father preparing the barbecue for the party they are having that evening.

Though we may not always "notice" them, these sensory features are pervasive, complex, and ready for us to engage with at any moment. As we will see later, creative writers are often a rich source for drawing out the complexity in the often "mundane" sensory environment, such as Anthony Doerr's (2014: 7) description of the protagonist's lived experiences during World War II: "The sweet, slightly chemical scent of gun oil; the raw wood of newly constructed shell crates; the mothballed odour of old bedspreads".

Where the meanings of our sensory experiences are not obvious we search them out, trying to identify the source of that scratching feeling (an insect crawling or just the over-long label of the

shirt worn for the first time?), the piercing scream in the distance (children playing or something to worry about?), the slight sense of nausea (having eaten something too fast, or the first signs of a stomach bug?). The ways that we sense the world become engrained and embodied in our life experiences so that the interpretation of the senses often requires little effort. But when we encounter new sensory experiences, then a period of learning or re-learning may be needed for us to make sense of things. In his characteristically poetic prose, the British Psychiatrist R. D. Laing said that:

> *"our capacity even to see, hear, touch, taste and smell is so shrouded in veils of mystification that an intensive discipline of un-learning is necessary for anyone before one can begin to experience the world afresh, with innocence, truth and love."R. D. Laing, (1967: 23)*

One of the things that Laing's quote alludes to is the idea that learning to sense things differently - or just learning what a given sensory experience should be - involves gaining new perspectives. This "un-learning", "re-learning" or simply "learning" occurs in the most mundane of contexts: learning what is involved in "seeing the chart" in an optometry examination (vom Lehn, Webb, Heath and Gibson 2013), how to appreciate the taste of coffee or beer (Borer, 2019), how to experience the effects of Marijuana (Becker, 1953), or to sense nature in the outdoors (Allen-Collinson, 2018). For people in their everyday lives, such learning is about producing sensory orientations, and a central concern for many of the chapters in this volume is with this process of learning to sense.

Laing's reference to mystification draws attention to the idea that it is quite hard to experience the world outside of our learnt and taken for granted interpretive frames. At a very basic level, we come to "like" or "dislike" certain tastes, smells, sounds, and often so vociferously that the idea that something we dislike could actually be enjoyed by others can cause a real sense of horror. This relates to the important point that sensing is deeply personal. As J. L. Carr (1980: 47) put it "We all see things through different eyes, and it gets you nowhere thinking that even one in a thousand will see things your way". To see – or to sense - is to understand, interpret and evaluate. We will return to this idea in more detail in Chapter 2.

But while that may seem individual, sensory preferences are not just personal matters: they are socially constructed and organised ways of experiencing the world. Sociologists have long been interested in the social distribution of how we evaluate our sensory worlds. Bourdieu's (1984) explorations of the social distribution of "taste" looks at how social class, for example, can impact on the cultural (*sensory*) experiences that people value, from food to music, perfume, interior decoration and every aspect of sensory, social life.

Bourdieu's work has been heavily critiqued for its social determinism and the implication that we can't experience the world outside of our cultures (Archer 1995; Giddens 1986). It also ignores the actual aesthetic and affective practices and experiences surrounding the senses (Schwarz, 2013), setting aside the feelings and processes that are constitutive of cultural consumption - the actual context-specific "work" that goes into sensing, such as what it is to taste a Michelin stared meal or a "good" street hotdog; how one hears the nuances of a chamber

orchestra or a hip hop beat. Despite this, Bourdieu's influential work helps us to think about the ways that culture intersects with sensorially, and it illustrates the importance of the idea that the senses are configured within the contexts of social lives, as ethnographic research, inspired by Bourdieu, shows (Wacquant, 2006).

Of more relevance to this volume – and, again, we discuss this further in Chapter 2 - is the phenomenological turn to experience itself, which points to the ways that we orientate towards social action as "body subjects" (Crossley, 1996). We are sensory beings, and we encounter and orientate to the world through embodied forms of engagement and assumption of shared experience - the concepts of "interchangeability of standpoints", "typifications" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Schutz, 2012) and "common ground" (See Ekström, Cekaite and Gramner's Chapter 14) are central to how interactionist thought has pursued these ideas. In short, sensory engagement is *social* engagement, and the social is no more or less than our quotidian actions in the here and now. Our collection is substantially a turn to examine in-depth sensory practices as contextual social phenomena. The chapters address questions like "What is it to sense in a given social practice?", and "How do people use the senses to bring about a given experience or 'way of being' in the world?".

The senses, technology and material culture

The things and objects of the world are a substantial part of our sensory experience and given the extraordinary technological change that societies have undergone through the internet, social media and AI, it is worth reflecting on the relationship between senses and technology. Technological innovation (as with many kinds of social change) is about sensory experience. To take an entirely arbitrary point of (Western) historical comparison, L. S. Lowry's 1943 painting "going to work" depicts a dramatic historical moment and helps us to "visualise" the sensory world it represents. The painting shows workers arriving to a factory in an industrial city in the Northwest of England. It shows people marching in heavy-looking shoes, musty wool coats hunching against the cold and damp of the weather. We see the buses on the right and can imagine the rattle and grind of their engines and the noisy bustle of people walking, talking, and shouting, dogs barking and children playing. In the background, the factory belches black smoke into the polluted air and, next to that, the clock tower sounds out the hour. These perhaps (then) mundane scenes are overshadowed by something that is historically extraordinary: above the factory we see a barrage balloon, a war time protection against aerial dive-bombers. This tiny, easily overlooked part of the painting hints at all kinds of other sensory experience: the air-raid sirens, explosions, the intense sensorially of people crammed into shelters, their bodies squeezed together as they smoke, eat, talk, cry, sweat, fart and, presumably, defecate, vomit and so on. This setting, in other words, is framed by the technologies of war and all the practical, emotional and *sensory* upheavals that this produced.

We are living in our own moment of intense technological development. The internet, mobile technologies, Artificial Intelligence and all the technologies that these imply have created sensory worlds that are unrecognisable from Lowry's scenes. Chat bots, electric vehicles, smart

watches/jewellery/clothing, voice activated and interactive home appliances, lights, cameras, scent diffusers. All these ordinary and (now) mundane features of our technological lives have re-configured our sensory landscapes as tangibly as the technological revolutions of the early 20th century did (see Classen 2005).

Moreover, we are simultaneously the producers and consumers of these sensory spaces. As consumers, we are told by advertising campaigns what a given technology will do for us, how it will make us feel and how it will structure our lives. The good night's sleep we will get from a memory foam mattress, the energy we will experience from consuming certain types of foods or supplements, the quality of sound that a pair of headphones will produce and the impact it will have on our mood. But discourses of consumption that inform advertising are always different to the ways that we encounter technologies in our lives and what they are like as sensory objects. The advertisement for a new shampoo can use all kinds of metaphors and narratives to convey an image of the product, but its texture and smell are only available in its use. The way Hi Fi speakers might sound in a store - how a salesperson teaches a customer to hear the nuances of the speaker in a certain way - is different to how it will sound in the distinct acoustics of a home, how it will be heard by other people, and the meanings they will make of it.

The ways that objects are used and experienced arises in action and interaction. Sensory action or "somatic work", as Vannini, Waskul and Gottschalk (2010) have called it, is central to the ways in which people orient to, interpret, use and experience these objects. For a long time, it has been fashionable to argue that the perception and use of objects and technologies are bound up with their "affordances" (Gibson, 1977; Norman, 1988). In this view, well-designed technologies have affordances that can be straight-forwardly perceived with the senses, especially through vision and touch. For example, people, instantly perceive if a door-handle "affords" pushing or pulling. Underlying this conception of how action arises from predefined characteristics of the environment is a behaviourist view of stimulus-response that leave little space for interpretation.

Studies undertaken with a symbolic interactionist or an ethnomethodological attitude critique deterministic ideas about the relationship between objects and action. Nearly a century ago, George Herbert Mead (1934) challenged behaviourism and developed a social behaviourism that highlighted the reflexive relationship between action and experience. In his paper on "The Physical Thing", Mead (1932) described how an actor's experience of a book lying on a table is gradually transformed as they approach and stretch their arm to grasp it; how, in turn, the approach is adapted step-by-step as the exact position of the book on the table and how best to grasp it emerges in the actor's perception. Here, Mead shifts the conception of the individual's being-in-the-world from an action-object to an action-experience relationship: this has important implications for empirical research concerned with technological innovations and their implementation in the everyday (cf. vom Lehn, Gibson and Ruiz-Junco 2023).

Rather than arguing that people adapt their lives to technological innovations and that technology determines action, studies that follow Mead's re-conceptualisation of the relationship between actor and environment argue that "the technological apparatus is being made at home with the rest of our world" (Sacks, 1992 Vol.2, 548). Ethnomethodologists argue that moment-by-

moment, people embed aspects of the material and sensorial environment in their actions. Technological innovations, such as those that were part of industrialisation (Blumer, 1990), do not *determine* how people perceive and interpret emerging technologies: rather, people make sense of and embed these technologies within their lives and work with them in ad-hoc ways (Barley, 2020). From these discussions about technological innovation and its impact on work, a body of research has emerged that is often called "workplace studies" (Engeström and Middleton, 1996; Heath and Luff, 2000; Luff, Hindmarsh and Luff, 2000; Suchman 2007). This strand of research reveals how personnel in contexts such as control-rooms of rapid transport systems renders their actions observable, thus allowing colleagues to see where they visually orient, enabling each other to align the production and design of their actions. Through detailed analyses of video-recorded interaction within workplaces, these studies demonstrate how critical small actions such as a glance" can be for the coordination of orderly socially organised of work (Heath and Luff, 1992).

In this way, workplace studies contribute to the body of work that has considered "seeing" as a form of "sensory work" (Vannini, Waskul and Gottschalk, 2010), showing that "looking" and "seeing" are produced in social interaction. They are sensory actions that are observably produced and oriented to as accountable actions; people look at and see objects and are seen by others to be doing so. Moreover, looking and seeing are complex and highly differentiated practices. For example, there are different ways of looking - such as glancing, inspecting, or staring (Sharrock and Coulter, 1998) – and there are different ways of indicating to others "how" one sees an object (see also Simmel, 1908/2009). The concept of "aspect-seeing" (Nishizaka, 2018) draws attention to the ways that seeing is situated without people's local concerns. An example of aspect-seeing is Goodwin's (1994) research in which he shows how different personnel, such as lay-people and archaeologists, see the same archaeological object in different ways, or how airport personnel may see a plane in terms of its destination while other people may see it in terms of their technical specifications (Goodwin and Goodwin 1996). In all these studies, visual perception is treated not as a psychological or cognitive process, but as social action that is oriented to (and through) technologies like display screens, archaeological charts, computer terminals and so on.

All technologies - be they complex and specialist or ordinary and mundane - are a core part of the analysis in each chapter of this book: the specialist tools used in forensic examinations (Mondada and Cruz, Chapter 2), sport (Hiemstra et al., Chapter 7), tattooing (Force, Chapter 8), firefighting (Sellberg and Viktorelius, Chapter 13) or eating food (Due, Chapter 11); the objects of professional scrutiny, like lingerie (Picolli, Chapter 4), flowers (Gafvels, Chapter 5), the security mechanisms found in detention centres or courtrooms (Flower and Wästerfors, Chapter 6); or the spaces and places that make up the "gestalt architectures" for action (Jenkings, Chapter 10; Smith, Chapter 9). Materiality is central to the quotidian meanings of sensory action as a social accomplishment, and the chapters here analyse what Due (Chapter 11) refers to as the complex intertwining of "assemblages" of humans and material culture.

We should emphasise the point made by Flower and Wästerfors (Chapter 6), that it is extremely challenging to separate out sensory practice from the material contexts of their enactment -

technology is only one component of a broader field of sensory practice. Nonetheless, technology can come to dominate our everyday sensory experiences. Take the daily communication with terminals (computers, cell phones, etc.) that most of us engage in. Our ongoing interactions with these technologies are defining more and more of our daily and nightly activities, shaping our very sense of self (Gottschalk, 2018). Because this human-terminal interaction usually entails profit-gaining, interactionists theorize that our use of technology in this context can lead to "sensory exploitation." Čapek and Ruiz-Junco (2025:10) explain this as a social process whose purpose is "the profitable extraction of people's sensory engagement with the world, to the point that some people find it unwanted or oppressive."

Concluding remarks

Interactionist research plays an important role in interrogating our sensory entanglements with the world. The chapters in this book approach this task from multiple perspectives and we think that this eclecticism radically enriches the field and shows the diverse ways that interactionists can contribute to sensory scholarship. One of the tasks of this introduction has been to begin to reflect on the tensions and points of connection within these approaches, a topic which we turn to in more detail in the next chapter.

In closing this introduction, rather than flagging again the undeniable diversity of interactionist approaches, we would like to highlight that these chapters all contribute to the larger agenda of interactionism that we work within. This volume represents an important part of this evolving agenda. With the completion of this book, we have now edited together a total of three books about interactionism. The first book was a major statement on the state of interactionist frameworks and methods at the beginning of the second decade of this century (vom Lehn, Ruiz-Junco, Gibson, 2021). The next two expand the agenda by offering in-depth empirical analyses of two interdisciplinary concerns: technology (vom Lehn, Gibson, Ruiz-Junco, 2023) and, here, the senses. This body of work proves that interactionism is alive and thriving as a "family of perspectives" (vom Lehn, Ruiz-Junco, and Gibson, 2021). We cannot emphasize enough how critical this perspective is in our societies, where deterministic views about technology abound, and where the rise of AI introduces questions about the possibility of re-defining selfhood away from a sense-based relationship with the world. In societies seemingly dominated by hyperbole and decontextualized analysis, the rigorous examination of meaning as a local accomplishment is needed more than ever.

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