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INTRODUCTION TO SPECIAL ISSUE

Sensing together: multisensory experiences and political phenomenology in Southern African cities

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Why not the quite simple attempt to touch the other, to feel the other, to explain the other to myself?
Was my freedom not given to me then in order to build the world of the You?
At the conclusion of this study, I want the world to recognize, with me, the open door of every consciousness.
My final prayer: O my body, make of me always a man who questions!
—Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

Martinican psychoanalyst Frantz Fanon concluded his famous essay *Black Skin, White Masks* with these words. Investigating the profound structures that underpinned the mechanisms of domination and the racial complex in colonial societies, Fanon, drawing on Maurice Merleau-Ponty, insisted in his book on the relevance of a phenomenological approach to raise consciousness on the affective and unconscious roots of human alienation. Although he insisted, as did W.E.B. Dubois (1903) before him, on the power of the look and the gaze to tie the inner knots that alienate Black people, he recurrently employed a lexicon infused with references to touch: either to address how he was himself intimately affected by racism or to call for emancipation from interior structures of domination,¹ which his research aimed at examining “tactilely and affectively”² (Fanon 1952, 70).

Over the last several decades, Fanon has become one of the main inspirations of anticolonial movements, postcolonial and decolonial studies and critical race theory (Gordon 2015). Fewer authors have pointed to his pioneering contribution to autoethnography (Weber 2015, 23) and ethnopsychiatry (Gibson and Beneduce 2017) or to his reflections on the significance of thinking through the body in contexts marked by exploitation and racial inequality (Vermeren and Ferdinand 2018). As highlighted in the opening epigraph, his writings can indeed be apprehended as laying the foundations of a “political phenomenology” (Beneduce 2016), if not of a “sensuous scholarship” (Stoller 1997) before its times.

In parallel with this, Fanon’s oeuvre gave rise to several critical analyses, particularly amongst historians and anthropologists studying the fine-grain organisation of colonial societies. Nancy Rose Hunt (2016) stressed Fanon’s disregard of the subtle margins of mobility and manoeuvre, which in Congolese colonial society were designed to cope with and evade existing orders through, for example, healing, daydreaming and music. Anthropologist Ghassan Hage insisted on the contradiction of Fanon’s call for a new humanity and his attempts at rupture, noticing that “it remains propelled by a very particular affective and ambivalent mode of reacting to the colonial/racist dimensions of European modernity: it is both emotionally fixated on this modernity while at the same time wanting intellectually and politically to go beyond it” (Hage 2010, 114). Finally, and more generally, Achille Mbembe spent several pages in *The Postcolony* to flag the contradictions and “cul-de-sac” of a Fanonian theory leaning on death and sacrifice as a condition for raising humanity (Mbembe 2000, 37).³

Why start an introduction of a special issue on multisensory experiences in Southern Africa with Fanon? I do so because, as Hage (2010, 113) proposed, the enduring power of Fanon’s writing

lies in the unique “fusion of the analytical and the emotional” that appears in his ultimate words. This is what we address through contemporary prisms in this special issue.

Decades later and thousands of kilometres removed from Fanon, our reflections approach the subtle issues that arise at the moment when we seriously consider the importance of affect and the senses in the production of social, political and cultural life, and the possibility of analysing their lineaments with the rigour of qualitative methods. With this in mind, this special issue explores the multisensory experiences that are met in the everyday life of South African multicultural cities and their significance in situations marked by neoliberal urban transformation, political surveillance or renewed inequality of access to space, resources and social recognition.

By doing so, the authors of this issue bring to the forefront the supposedly “simple” question Fanon raised so much earlier: what is it to know the other through feeling and to question through our bodies? How are our senses and our affect entangled in the social construction of boundaries between the self and the other, in the production of social constraints, ties, belongings and attachments, in the shaping of difference and community? Following questions raised by several studies after Fanon, the special issue asks whether touching and feeling the other really alters existing structures of othering and alienation. If so, can it lead to the advent of new manners of being together, particularly in contexts marked by a history of violence, division and oppression? Finally, and consequently, can the anthropology of the senses offer new food for thought to reconsider the dialectics of identity and difference in the context of the postcolonial/post-apartheid societies of Southern Africa?

By raising these questions, our special issue inherits a wide literature developed over the last decades in the domain of sensory anthropology (or the anthropology of the senses) and a burgeoning anthropological corpus that deals with the senses in Southern African contexts. The four articles included in this issue refer to specific readings in the literature on sensory or phenomenological anthropology, which they expand on according to their own focus: in the field of sound studies (Jethro and Lehloenyana), phenomenology of space (Buire), senses and the self (Aterianus-Owanga) and materiality of religion (Bafford). Yet, it is useful to provide a brief outline of some general insights engendered by sensory anthropology, before presenting the shared line of thinking that has guided our reflections in this project, so as to better emphasise its resonances with and distinctions from prior publications.

Drawing on sensory anthropology

The methodological and epistemological turns that occurred in the last three decades around sensory anthropology and anthropology of the senses took various forms: they intersected with different topics (embodiment, materiality, communication, human/non-human relations, linguistics, memory), generated heated debates (see, for example, Pink 2010a; Howes 2010a; Ingold 2011) and built themselves through exchanges with different disciplines (particularly cognate disciplines such as history and sociology, but also neuroscience, sports sciences and dance and music studies). However, this heterogeneous field shares several common features and premises.

The sensory turn that transformed anthropology in the 1990s generally drew on a critique of the logocentrism of a previous anthropological tradition, which mainly approached cultures as “texts,” “discourses” or interpretations. Scholars began to call for a more systematic treatment of affective and sensorial life (see Classen 2010; Howes 2010b; Porcello et al. 2010; Low 2012; Howes and Classen 2013), something that had long been disregarded by classical social anthropology — apart from a few exceptions (Mauss 1936; Levi-Strauss 1964). Simultaneously, they broke with a European legacy beginning with Aristotle and continuing with the Enlightenment that presupposed the universality of a regime of perception that identified five senses and established the superiority of sight. This hierarchy, also called ocularcentrism (Jay 1988), can be described as “the Western cultural and historical bias of opticism ... recognizing the primacy of the visual image and the privileging of ocular observation as a path to certainty and knowledge whereby touch is routinely

debased and ignored” (Paterson 2007, 6). Although already criticised over the course of the twentieth century, notably by French philosophers (Jay 1988), this ocular bias had a certain impact on the consolidation of scientific methods, including anthropology, with its long tradition of observation and visual description, ratified as an argument and proof of ethnographic authority. On the other hand, sound, smell, taste and touch have long been overlooked and downplayed (Classen 2012), as hierarchies between the five senses were used to create distinctions between different levels of “civilisation.” Works from the first generation in sensory anthropology, by authors such as Constance Classen (1993), David Howes (1991, 2010b), Paul Stoller (1997), Michael Taussig (1993) or Tim Ingold (2000), were crucial in demonstrating that this centrality of sight was a Western historical construct. In addition, they highlighted the roots of a methodological bias that prevented scholars from grasping the existence of other sensory configurations and perceptions of the world in human societies.

Amongst these important works in early sensory studies, the anthropologist and jazz musician Steven Feld explored the sound system of the Kaluli people in Papua New Guinea and analysed how they draw most of their “cultural metaphors” from the surrounding avian wildlife. He showed how, in New Guinea’s rainforest, bird songs tend to constitute the main mediator for the imagination and expression of Kaluli emotions (Feld 1982). As a first-of-its-kind example of sound ethnography, this book was canonical for the anthropology of sound, and the anthropology of the senses more broadly.

Drawing from another context and theoretical foundation, Nadia Seremetakis’s edited book *The Senses Still* questioned the role of the senses and everyday life’s material things within the production of political memories, breaking with the ideology of modernity and progress in capitalist societies (Seremetakis 1996a). In her contributions to the book, Seremetakis argued that sensory experience and memory are inextricably attached to artefacts and objects, understood as icons that “speak” and recall sensations, ideas and moments otherwise lost through urban transformations and industrialisation. Considering memory as “a meta-sense” that “transports, bridges and crosses all the other senses” (Seremetakis 1996b, 9), she assumed that an approach grounded in the everyday life of the senses and their many material mediations could counter the “effacement of sensory memory in modernity” (Seremetakis 1996b, 10) and better grasp the cultures or social strata that “cultivated break, rupture, discontinuity and alterity in everyday modern life” (Seremetakis 1996c, 21).

Through research on varied configurations of affect, mind, memory and senses in diverse societies, sensory studies then helped to reveal the ethnocentric and historical nature of the idea of the five senses, its correlation with the ideology of progress and its biased consequences for social science research and the comprehension of the different ways humans actively engage with their environment. This turn led to the emergence of more multisensory oriented approaches — or, to invoke Benjamin, to a more holistic idea of the sensorium, that is, the sensory apparatus — to highlight “the variable boundaries, differential elaboration, and many different modes of combining the senses across (and within) cultures” (Howes 2019, 20). These contextual sensory assemblages happen to be mediated by numerous things, technologies, machines, tools, robots — probably today more than ever (Jones 2006) — but also through myths, tales, stories, discourses and epistemologies (Porcello et al. 2010). For this reason, it must be noted that, rather than a radical rupture with textual and interpretative anthropology, sensory anthropology articulates the study of the senses with the analysis of texts, interactions, semiotics and linguistics to better approach the concrete, embodied and resonant texture of social life. Similarly, and despite some exceptions, sensory studies did not promote a pointless rejection or banning of research on eyesight — since visual anthropology is a fully-fledged component of sensory anthropology (Pink 2006) — but instead attempted to understand its multiple correlations with other channels, media or regimes of perceptions depending on contexts and environments (Ingold 2011).

It is also significant to mention a common thread in this field of research that lies in the

insistence on the sensuous nature of the experience of fieldwork itself (Pink 2009), which has become more and more frequently claimed as a moment of “sharing in the sensible” (Laplantine 2015, 2). According to sensory scholars, participant observation must be approached as an immersion relying on the training and activation of sensory receptors and affects, which led Howes to coin the term of “participant *sensation*” instead of “participant *observation*” (Howes 2019, 18, emphasis added). As a continuity of the sensuous practice of fieldwork, the sensory turn has had a significant impact on writing practices, since the life of the senses is also something anthropologists must write on. Faced with the gordian knot of translating subjective, idiosyncratic and often indescribable sensations into the conventional grammars of words, Stoller stressed the necessity of overcoming “the flat, neutral, and ‘sludgy’ writing which [used to be] endemic in anthropological discourse” (Stoller 1997, 136). Currently, the intention to reproduce the atmospheric, tactile, affective and sensuous texture of fieldwork is often mixed with attempts at producing multimodal and collaborative forms of restitution through citizen science: for instance, in collaborations with artists or public institutions (Moretti 2021; Leon-Quijano 2019, 2021).

The institutionalisation of the domain of the anthropology of the senses was mainly carried by scholars, projects and departments in American and European universities, such as the journal *Senses and Society*, launched in 2006 (Bull et al. 2006), or the Concordia Centre for Sensory Studies (founded in 2012). However, African and Southern African studies also offered important contributions to these discussions. Already in the early 2000s, Fiona Ross beckoned in *Anthropology Southern Africa* for a phenomenological, emotional and sensory-oriented understanding of relationships in South African contexts of intense transformation (Ross 2004). She drew from ethnographic research in an informal settlement in the Western Cape to describe how being lost or finding one’s way in space is highly related to a web of subjective and dynamic indicators connected to sound, smell, emotions and cognitive processes, which cannot be transcribed into ordinary graphic maps. From the late 2000s, Rosabelle Boswell’s research on the Indian Ocean made an impact in this domain by stressing the pivotal significance of fragrance for the production of identity (Boswell 2008, 2017). Her study of Zanzibar unfolds how smell is a “metaphor for political life,” allowing “for local expressions of identity, the display of varied statuses, and the cultivation of ‘new’ transnational linkages and hybrid identities” (Boswell 2008, 309). She describes how political and heritage management policies after the 1964 revolution led to the vanishing of smell from places that were turned into heritage sites (for example, Stone Town), but how this did not affect its permanence as a tool for memory in private spaces (Boswell 2008).

By considering scents as both experiences and cultural metaphors for the political administration of space and identity, Boswell’s reflections prefigured some orientations taken in this special issue, such as the intersection of the senses, identity and politics. Her research paved the way for considering the senses as a fruitful instrument for unsettling the writing of coherent narrations of the past, complicating the polyphonic and heterogenous perspectives on memory and identity in multicultural societies and recalling the intrinsically political nature of the sensorium as a flexible apparatus shaped by interindividual power relationships or nation-state policies.

From the 2010s, several important anthropological publications proved the relevance of using the senses, embodiment and phenomenology to diversify our understandings of the complex transformations affecting African multicultural urban societies. Scholarship on sound studies can be considered as a niche of its own in this domain and studies conducted from Southern Africa were at the source of considerable insight for anthropology at large, and for the field of sensory studies especially (Meintjes 2003; Holtzman 2018; Steingo and Sykes 2020; Sykes and Byl 2023). In addition to this discernible subfield, other recent works paved the way for an anthropology of the senses in Southern Africa. Duane Jethro, who co-authors an article in this issue, wrote an important book for the recognition of the senses as an object of research in itself for Southern African anthropology (Jethro 2019). He challenged the existing approach to heritage formation by analysing

different heritage projects and emblems, each related to one of the five senses (such as Freedom Park in Pretoria, “Braai Day” or the vuvuzela), to insist on the “politics of aesthetics” and to prove that “the ability to sense [is] unevenly distributed and carrie[s] real material effects” (Jethro 2019, 8). As he consolidated the analysis of the politics of the senses in this area, he noticed the “scarcity of sustained sensory studies” in the context of South Africa (Jethro 2019, 13). In a similar vein, Jess Auerbach recently opted for organising the narration of her ethnography on the everyday life of a post-civil war Angolan middle-class into different sensory chapters. She described sensory-oriented writing as “low-tech virtual reality,” through which “readers immerse themselves more fully in the space that they can imagine through the page, but that *is* real, in all the three-dimensionality that that entails” (Auerbach 2020, 7). For that purpose, she used a considerable number of alternative writing materials, such as cartoons, photographs, recipes and poetry.

In parallel with these works, which explicitly put the senses at the centre of their analyses and methods, other endeavours can be mentioned in recent Southern African studies: they question, for instance, the production of meaning through embodied contact with urban constructions in Cape Town (Jackson 2017), the materiality of class transformations as played out through sweat in Mozambique (Archambault 2022), the power of ethnographic collaborations using methods oriented towards aesthetics (Alhourani 2017) and auto-ethnography (Gibson 2013).

Outline

The special issue extends this existing research. It emerges from a desire to offer a more systematic collective discussion anchored in sensory anthropology in Southern Africa, as previously called for by Jethro (2019). It partly results from a one-day conference organised in May 2022 at the anthropology department of the University of Cape Town, which led to an open call for papers. This call initially invited authors to draw on the field of music and dance performance, a domain of social life which represents a powerful catalyst for a juxtaposition of sensory and affective indexes that has for long represented a powerful medium of mobilisation, evasion, class formation and boundary transgressions in African cities. Noticing the considerable number of works already devoted to the area of sound studies in Southern Africa, we suggested in the call to offer more attention to the tactile and haptic components of urban performing arts by considering, for instance, the tactile dimension of sonic experiences, or by focusing on social dance performances observed in the streets of Southern African cities. Research on popular music in Southern Africa was highly influential for African ethnomusicology and African popular culture studies in general and gave an important impulse to the generative knowledge developed in the area of sound studies. In comparison, and despite a series of collective endeavours and publications on dance in South Africa (Rani 2013; Samuel 2016; Friedman and Lock 2008; Pather and Boulle 2019), the domain of dance anthropology remains less developed, particularly when it comes to ordinary and popular dance practices which are performed outside of institutional stages. In this call for papers, we asked for a broader dialogue between scholars working on a variety of music and dance performances as a means to shed light on certain sides of cultural life and sensory experiences that have been rather undervalued in existing research, such as touch, proprioception (the perception of the position of different parts of your body in space) and kinaesthetics (the consciousness of one’s own body motion).

The articles produced in the course of our editorial process (which, apart from one exception, differ from those presented at the original conference) span a wide range of sensory apparatuses, flows and media that animate urban life in Southern African contemporary societies, as to offer a multimodal mosaic. The four articles tackle different spaces, sensory modalities and practices. Nevertheless, they share common orientations that are captured in the polysemic (equivocal) expression *sensing together* put at the core of this title.

Sensing together is, first, a reference to our intention to deploy multisensory ethnography to envisage the diverse perceptual assemblages through which individuals and social groups create

collective meanings, actions, struggles, communities, memories and engagement with their environment. With this in mind, the articles presented here provide an ethnographic attention to social situations, public debates or emic concepts that relate mainly to interrelations between touch, sound and beyond. Duane Jethro and Arthur Lehloenya examine the mediatic disputes generated around the sound and aesthetic perception of the Muslim adhan in the neighbourhood of Bo-Kaap in Cape Town. They insist that the adhan is acoustic, “but also tactile and culturally informed,” affecting worshippers’ relations to place, memory, heritage and faith. In another religious context, Douglas Bafford explores the dilemma met by conservative evangelical churches in Johannesburg in their attempt at gathering the different demographics comprising the “New South Africa” in similarly universalising religious theology and service. The embodied, affective and sonic side of religious life appears as a profound matrix for the renewal of demarcations involving linguistic, racial, class and cultural differences. In her article, Aterianus-Owanga pays attention to tensions, hopes and boundaries generated by the experience of sensing together, by questioning the centrality of the emic notion of “connection” — a multisensory principle including touch, proprioception, kinaesthetics and sound — in the practice of Afro-Latin dances in Cape Town. Finally, Chloé Buire describes “interactive performances” organised by a group of artists in Luanda, to describe how the “carnavalesque synaesthesia” produced in these moments represent a medium of participation in the public space and a disruption of the mechanisms of political surveillance and censorship. In this fashion, all of the articles approach interactions, encounters and moments of being together involving different sensory receptors, mediations and ways to engage actively and sensuously with places.⁴

On a second level, sensing together refers to the anthropological framework we privilege in our approach towards sensory phenomena, envisaged as reciprocally shaped by and shaping complex webs of social assignations, power relationships and collective imaginations. By doing so, we distance ourselves not only from a purely cognitive or psychoanalytical way of examining the senses but also from perspectives that would isolate individuals from the systems of control, inequalities, boundaries and embodied “habitus” (Bourdieu 2000) that structure their way of perceiving their lifeworlds. All of the articles included in this issue shed light on the political nature and collectively debated meaning given to the perception and experience of coexisting in the cities of Southern Africa: around the unequal perception of the voice of Muslim muezzin in neighbourhoods turned into touristic, gentrified heritage sites (Jethro and Lehloenya); in churches facing the aporias of building a universal community of believers on a basis of enduring distinctions (Bafford); in “carnavalesque” moments of effervescence in contexts of political domination and censorship in Angola (Buire); or on dance floors using intimate connection and self-optimisation to cure individual and collective wounds (Aterianus-Owanga). In all the situations described here, the problematics raised about ways of being affected by sonic, haptic, kinaesthetic or intersensory performances light up the dialectics of relationality/disjunction and connectedness/disconnection played out in situ between a multiplicity of individuals, artefacts, technologies or spirits. This relational nature of the sensory apparatus that appears within these gathered articles recalls Feld’s definition of the concept of acoustemology, elaborated as a way to insist on how worlds and their various substances are “constituted relationally, by the acknowledgment of conjunctions, disjunctions and entanglements amongst all co-present and historically accumulated forms” (Feld 1982, 12–13). Assuming that the senses are part of a relational ecosystem of co-constituted agents does not mean yielding to the vulgate of an all-encompassing relationality or fluid system of connections. This insistence on the fluidity of networks of things and humans was criticised by Gavin Steingo (in his research on kwaito, an electronic music genre born in Johannesburg in the 1990s) for its inadequacy to address contexts of scarcity, accidents and material ruptures (Steingo 2018). On the contrary, by locating the senses at the nexus of a relational web of components more or less autonomous or interdependent, the articles in this special issue illustrate the symmetrical existence of disputes, ruptures, miscommunications and boundaries. Sensory encounters occurring

around music, dance or other aesthetic performances epitomise and reveal unforeseen angles of the fractures of the city and the nation-state, which the legal and official regulations of diversity often cannot approximate: they show through in the paradoxical fears and desires provoked by touch in couple dances, unsung tensions in ways of inhabiting urban built forms or contrasted manners of feeling the presence of God.

Finally, sensing together refers to the participation of ethnographers themselves in this “togetherness” of the field: it can be seen from Buire’s collaborative ethnography and ethical reflections on what it means to stand with a camera in a crowd of voicing protesters; Aterianus-Owanga’s use of a reflexive narration of her ethnography to highlight shifting lines of class, gender, culture and race differentiation as materialised in the embodied ways of moving in salsa; Bafford’s ethnographic vignettes on his own interior feeling of the significance of music in the lively service of an evangelical church and its “shared sense of spiritual connection”; or Jethro and Lehloenyana’s practice of soundscape walks in the city.

The directions we take in this issue can in some ways be linked to what some scholars have described as the “new generation of sensory studies,” an idea which is approached differently, and controversially, amongst sensory anthropologists (Pink 2010b; Howes 2010a; Low 2012; Howes 2023). In a recent publication, Howes recapped how the first generation of sensory anthropologists insisted on unravelling the existence of different divisions or assemblages (between the senses, mind and body, humans and non-humans) *across* cultures. Instead, he noticed that next-generation sensory anthropologists are characterised by their interest in “intracultural” diversity and (amongst other distinctions) for a heightened reflexivity and the use of new media (Howes 2023). Proposing a different view on the contrasts between different generations of sensory anthropologists, Kelvin Low (2012) noticed that current ethnographic research sheds light on cultures of the senses in industrial societies in the global South, where previous sensory ethnography had long focused either on Western industrial societies or non-Western non-industrial societies (Low 2012). We could add that this new generation seeks to deconstruct the idea of the great divide between the West and the rest that has often underpinned prior anthropological research, alongside the problematic and excessively generalising categories that they carried with them, such as the holistic idea of culture itself.

The special issue echoes some of these reorientations in the international area of sensory research: by our rejection of any essentialist and homogenising perspective that would seek for the existence of a distinct sensory system within the limits of bounded “cultures”; by our reflexive view on fieldwork and the positionality of the researcher in their web of sensuous interactions; and by our common insistence on considering the sensory realm as a political matrix shaped by histories, paradigms, struggles, ideologies, beliefs and imaginaries. In these ways, the ethnographies gathered in this issue distance themselves from an “anthropology of the senses” criticised for naturalising the sensorium as a given cultural system conditioning individuals differently across social groups or cultures (Ingold 2000) or from perspectives that would investigate the sensory in itself. This is not to say that our authors use the sensory as a pretext or as a metaphor, since sensory disputes, notions and experiences represent the main ground, raw material and core substance of their reflections. More precisely, they seek to understand how the sensory, the social and the political are mutually shaped, equidistant from the individual and collective, and prove that one cannot analyse the former without approaching the latter.

In sum, this special issue stresses the importance of pursuing discussions on the sensory, aesthetic and affective roots of social lives (including those of ethnographers). They prove how the sensory realm is not only crucial for the ways we approach how people live, enjoy, suffer, bond together, fight or dream their social environments; it is also an area of critical reflexivity used by social actors to transform their social environments. For this reason, it is a crucial domain through which anthropological research can offer better understanding of the underlying structures of social life and how social agents actively transform it with and within their bodies. In this sense,

and to circle back to Fanon's thought, we see here that relational ways of "feeling the other" are surely tied by insidious and apparently inextricable representations or habitus that affect the ways in which we touch, listen, look, taste and smell the world. Nevertheless, the sensorium is simultaneously the matrix for the unpredictable emergence of a critical consciousness about these very same structures. There could be many reasons to seek in the sensorium the quintessential roots of the bodily questioning that Fanon invoked, but also the locus of imagination and materialisation of new possibilities of coexisting and being together — by training ourselves to other ways of sensing together.

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Notes

1. Fanon (1952, 151) suggested, for instance, that "nous avons besoin de toucher du doigt toutes les plaies qui zèbrent la livrée noire." This was translated into English as: "We need to put our fingers on every sore that mottles the black uniform" (Fanon [1986] 2008, 183).
2. I translated this quote from Fanon's original French. The English translator of the 1986 Pluto translation into English, Charles Lam Markmann, opted to use the adverb "physically" for the French "tactilement" (Fanon [1986] 2008, 64). This adverb creates a much more holistic representation of the body than Fanon's original adverb "tactilement" would intimate. Markmann's translation removes Fanon's discursive insistence on the tactility of his intellectual work, and for this reason I choose not to use it. The full original quote in French is the following: "Je me suis attaché dans cette étude à toucher la misère du Noir. Tactilement et affectivement. Je n'ai pas voulu être objectif. D'ailleurs, c'est faux: il ne m'a pas été possible d'être objectif" [In this study, I have made it a point to touch on the misery of the Black man. Tactilely and affectively. I have not wished to be objective. No, that is incorrect: it was not possible for me to be objective] (Fanon 1952, 70).
3. Roberto Beneduce (2016) addressed these critics and others in his introduction to a special issue on contemporary mobilisations of Fanonian thought.
4. We can see a parallel between this first meaning of *sensing together*, which comes through from the articles of this special issue, and the idea of synaesthesia. In dictionary definitions, *synaesthesia* is often referred to as an anomaly leading some people to a confusion in their perception, for instance perceiving a colour as a sound. But it has also been considered a useful concept to complement previous works on "the multisensoriality embedded in the materiality of human existence" (Howes 2006, 161), provided that we do not assume that multisensoriality means equality, interchangeability, simultaneity or redundancy of the different senses involved (Howes 2006, 164).

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