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INTRODUCTION



Feeling (with) Japan: affective, sensory and material entanglements in the field

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ABSTRACT

This introduction provides a literature review on the anthropology of the senses and affect, highlighting the theoretical and methodological issues, and pointing at the ideas of “affective practices” or “practices of feeling with the world” as possible solutions. Subsequently, it reviews the literature related to these topics focusing on Japan, showing existing gaps in research. Lastly, it provides an overview of the contributions, in order to set the topic and clarify the reasons why we advocate for a novel approach revolving around “feeling (with) Japan.”

KEYWORDS

Feeling; affect; perception; embodiment; Japan

Emma: *It's “marine day,” a national holiday in July, and I'm in a small seaside town on the Japan sea. I stand next to a stand-up paddleboard with five others on the beach. My heart has picked up its pace as I look at the waves breaking, and my breathing is shallower. I feel cold, nervous, excited. Our instructor gives us some brief instructions about handling the paddle and board, attaching the ankle cord, and falling off, and then we're picking up the boards and heading for the sea. As I wade in my heart is pounding, and I can feel it reverberating through me. I take a couple of deep breaths in and out, push my board over the first waves, get on it, and settle onto my knees. It's wide, long, and inflatable and it feels sturdy as I remain on my knees paddling out past the breaking waves. I look around – my partner is already on his feet, but then wobbles and falls off the back of his board. I'm still on my knees, hesitating. I draw my attention back to my board and attempt to stand. I briefly manage it before the board wobbles wildly under me and I fall into the ocean. I come up spluttering, grab the board, and attempt to haul myself back onto it, but I have no idea how to do this with arm strength alone in an undulating sea. I notice the instructor watching but he doesn't say anything. I finally manage by realizing that I need to give my legs a kick. The instructor grins at me from nearby. He angles his board slightly towards me but remains silent. I try to stand again, wobble, and pitch off the board. This happens a few more times until my partner calls out that my feet are too close together. I push up, widen my stance and bend my knees slightly, and as a result,*

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I'm wobbling but standing. I dip the paddle into the sea and the instructor calls out "so, so, so, so" (that's right!) – his first verbalization to me since getting in the water. For the most part he seems intent on letting people feel their way with their boards and on the ocean without telling us how to do it. As our time comes to an end, I drop my trembling legs to kneeling and paddle back towards shore. Using the breaking waves, I slide onto the beach feeling exhilarated and keen to get back out to feeling with a world of wind, tide, smell, sound, sensation, water, paddle and board.

Andrea: *"You move the microphone a lot when you sing" "Well, yes... Otherwise, if it's too close to my mouth when I sing high notes, or when I sing louder, I can't hear the music anymore." "I see. I noticed that also Western professional singers normally do this. Generally Japanese singers do not." "And how can they hear the music?" "The sound technician needs to be ready to lower the mike volume, so everything feels smooth." I chuckled, knowing that the young man with whom I was having this conversation after I sang a Japanese rock song at the counter of a small karaoke bar in Kyoto, and whom I had met just a couple of hours before, was a professional sound technician. He pointed out that, for Japanese singers, not changing the distance from the microphone was common practice both in live and in studio performances. Nevertheless, to me it was simply the obvious thing to do. Not only was "learning to use the microphone" something that we were taught in singing classes in Italy during the brief period I took them, but being able to "play with the mike" was also generally considered by the musicians surrounding me as a sign of being a skilled singer, because it enables you to follow and attune to the song's dynamics. Moreover, in my specific case it is simply a necessity: although I don't have a great voice, I have much volume and, consequently, if I do not distance the microphone when I sing loud or high notes, the sound of my voice resonating in my head, together with the one coming out from the speakers, would prevent me from hearing the music, and not hearing the music is probably one of the worst things that can happen to singers, for they would be very likely to go off tune. On the other hand, I often noticed that Japanese singers, especially in rock, blues and jazz, tend to have great control of their voices. This allows them to reduce sudden volume peaks (to the slight detriment of dynamics). Yet, not having peaks at all is simply impossible. The choices and actors involved in the same rock, blues, and jazz singing practices, seem to differ in Italy and Japan.*

We decided to start the introduction to this Special Issue with two ethnographic vignettes that, although improvised and arguably cherry-picked, in our views illustrate what we would like to focus on in this special issue, i.e. "feeling," its entanglements with the material environment and with the socio-cultural. This was the topic that we editors set for the 28th Japan Anthropology Workshop (JAWS) Conference, held between the end of August and the beginning of September 2017 in Lisbon, concurrently with the Section of Anthropology and Sociology of the 15th European Association for Japanese Studies (EAJS) International Conference. As Section Conveners, we attended all the presentations and, for this Special Issue, we approached some of the authors whose papers spoke more closely to the topic and methodological approach, which have increasingly gained interest in recent debates on feeling especially in, but not limited to, anthropology.

Social feeling

In the last three decades anthropological scholarship has recognized corporeality as a condition of human experience and the body as the “existential ground of culture and self” (Csordas 1994). The lived and moving body is considered a source of perception, a bearer of practical knowledge and skills developed through practice, with which we dwell in the world (Ingold 2000). This approach points at the necessity of looking “beyond the body proper” (Lock and Farquhar 2007) by investigating the body from the perspective of its perceptions, which originate in its interaction with the material environment.

Research on the senses – while stressing their centrality in the shaping of social practice and culture – has pointed at the necessity to go beyond “Western” modern models of five senses in order to look at bodily modes of being-in-the-world (e.g. Geurts 2002; Howes 1990). These studies, however, have a tendency to particularism and to focus on the classification of which senses are developed in what society. Moreover, in spite of some remarkable exceptions (e.g. Desjarlais 2003; Iida 2006; Seremetakis 1994a), these studies generally tend to approach the senses as “bodily ways of gathering information” (Geurts 2002, 3), thus not necessarily analyzing the senses’ active role in the construction of realities. Nevertheless, they have demonstrated that “the sensory is not only encapsulated within the body as an internal capacity or power but is also dispersed out there on the surface of things as the latter’s autonomous characteristics, which can then invade the body as perceptual experience” (Seremetakis 1994b, 6). In this sense, therefore, anthropological research on the senses has contributed to a model of bodily, sensory perceptions not as “naturally” given, but as learned through socialization, pointing at bodily capabilities of perceiving which precede socio-culturally learned separations and classifications.

At the same time, the so-called “affective turn” (Clough and Halley 2007) in the humanities and social sciences has shed light on the (inter-)subjective intensity and dynamics inherent to bodily perceptions and matter in general (e.g. Massumi 2002). Approaches to this topic are generally supported by the ideas proposed by philosophers such as Gilles Deleuze, but go back to Baruch Spinoza, and are influenced by Henri Bergson and Alfred North Whitehead. They have become influential well beyond anthropology, in fields including social and cultural theory (Ahmed 2004; Clough and Halley 2007; Massumi 2002), human and cultural geography (Thrift 2007; Edensor 2010), and social psychology (Wetherell 2012; Smith, Wetherell, and Campbell 2018). As a consequence of the multiplicity of disciplines and approaches, the definitions of affect have also multiplied and, at times, they tend to be confusing (see Wetherell 2012 and White 2017 for a discussion of this). Yet, in general, Massumi’s (2002) take on the topic is acknowledged and, for the most part, accepted. In his view, affects are pre-cognitive, pre-symbolic, pre-linguistic and pre-personal lived “intensities” that constitute the virtual and vital from which realities and subjects may emerge. Emotions, according to him, are “captures” of affect within structures of meaning that, inevitably, cannot give a complete account of affects (see also Clough 2007; Stewart 2007). Similarly to the above-mentioned approaches in the anthropology of the senses, then, affect theory points at a bodily capacity that becomes socialized and eventually embedded into the discursive, although originally and phenomenologically

pre-personal and strongly linked with perception and movement (Massumi 2002; see also e.g. Manning 2013).

Furthermore, Ingold's work (2000, 2013) has pointed at the need to highlight the creative processes in social practice and anthropology in the making, understanding them as engagements and correspondences with materials and the environment in which skills of perception and action emerge along with ontologies. Anthropological works have also emphasized the important role that matter plays in developing sensorial skills and in bearing or affording specific affects (e.g. Durham 2011; Navaro-Yashin 2012), a point that was highlighted also by research on the senses. In fact, "the ability to replicate cultural identity is a material practice embedded in the reciprocities, aesthetics, and sensory strata of material objects" (Seremetakis 1994b, 3) and, consequently, a focus on perception as part of the processes of doing ethnography has also been advocated (e.g. Stoller 1997; Pink 2009).

A common thread among these studies is that they point at the need to go beyond symbols and representations, meaning-making processes, cognition, or belief. In other words, they suggest new research directions that go beyond overly simplified and overly representational conceptions of "culture" and of the body.

These suggestions resonate also with criticisms that research on emotions has had to face, also beyond anthropology. Paradigms based mainly on Western psychology or cognitivism have sought to delineate emotions' universal features. Also, in the social analysis of emotions, scholars have seen them as discrete packets, internal to the subject, and basically grounded in cognitive and biological routines. Scholars have attempted to relativize and bring into discussion the very definition of emotions. However, such approaches have been widely criticized as simplistic and not grounded in empirical data (e.g. Dumouchel 1996; Leys 2011; Wetherell 2012, 2015). The anthropology of emotions (a field extensively reviewed by Beatty 2013; Lindhom 2005; Lutz and White 1986) has pointed at the need to reconceptualize emotions by, for instance, acknowledging that according to the socio-cultural context, certain events – such as the death of a beloved person – might not be "emotionalized" (e.g. as grief), but experienced as sickness (e.g. Levy 1984). Moreover, anthropological research has demonstrated through ethnographic data that emotions are not only unnatural and embedded in social processes (Lutz 1988), but also refer to an individual or group's situation in which "I am involved" (Rosaldo 1984, 3), because "selves and feelings, shaped by culture, may be understood in turn as the creation of particular sorts of polities" (ibid., 142).

In this sense, therefore, such research has presented more nuanced elements that, although at times ignored or misrepresented in affect theory, go beyond a simplistic understanding of emotions as bio-psychological discrete categories. Nonetheless, even in the more nuanced cases, such approaches see emotions as linked to culture, thus reproducing the tendency to lean towards taxonomy and the risk of representing them as entities that, although not universal, continue being discrete within their social contexts. Furthermore, they barely consider the experiential dimension of such emotions, thus reproducing what White (2017) calls the "affect–emotion gap" and overlooking the "affective–discursive loops" (Wetherell 2012) between lived affective experiences and political, discursive and situated emotions.

On the other hand, recent research sheds light on the danger of leaving cultural differences aside by, for example, excessively focusing on concepts – such as suffering or

trauma – which rely on the assumption that they transcend culture, assuming the suffering subject as a human universal:

This is a way of writing ethnography in which we do not primarily provide cultural context so as to offer lessons in how lives are lived differently elsewhere, but in which we offer accounts of trauma that make us and our readers feel in our bones the vulnerability we as human beings all share (Robbins 2013, 455).

Although, as stated above, the political aspect of affect and emotions has been highlighted (see also Ahmed 2004; Barnett 2008; Rosaldo 1984), research has pointed at the relationship between the affective dimension of experience and discourse as problematic (Wetherell 2012, 2013; White 2017). Some solutions to this issue have been attempted in particular cases. For example, anthropological research investigating perceptions of place and space has shown how the politics of affect, place and memory are entangled in place and materiality in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict (Curti 2008), or have shed light on how the feelings that emerged while visiting a haunted tunnel in Kyoto contributed to “unearth” silenced memories about Korean laborers who died while building the tunnel (De Antoni 2019). Moreover, Navaro-Yashin (2012) has proposed the idea of “make-believe space.” She sees “make-believe as a social form, referring not only to space and territory but also to modes of governance and administration and to material practices ... [It is] an analytical category ... [that] refers not singularly to the work of the imagination or simply to the materiality of crafting but to both at the same time” (2012, 5). This work all sheds light on affect, emotion, feeling and discourse to greater or lesser extents. Nevertheless, the relationships between affect and, more generally, feelings and broader socio-cultural aspects of life, as well as power relations, remains under-investigated. Entangling these threads with one another allows us to understand in more depth the variety of ways in which people are “feeling with the world” (De Antoni and Dumouchel 2017).

In order to bring together a discussion of these issues and to begin to fill the identified theoretical gaps, this special issue explores the methodological and theoretical possibilities for new perspectives that doing fieldwork in Japan can provide. The articles revolve around different topics, but they share and contribute to a common research methodology and theoretical framework. While grounding their methodological points in ethnographic data gathered through fieldwork, all the articles focus on a variety of “affective practices” (Wetherell 2012) or “practices of feeling with the world” (De Antoni and Dumouchel 2017) that rely on specific skills of the lived, feeling body moving-in-the-world.

Wetherell (2012, 19) defines “affective practice” as “a figuration where body possibilities and routines become recruited or entangled together with meaning-making and with other social and material figurations ... an organic complex in which all the parts relationally constitute each other.” She proposes the concept as an answer to the above-mentioned criticisms, as well as a way to shed light on the fact that such figurations emerge through practice, interactions and intersubjectivity, thus getting away from interpretational models that see affect and emotions as internal to subjects, and introducing human work and meaning-making in the analysis. Nevertheless, her focus is still on affect “proper” and, consequently, tends to leave other sensory and bodily perceptions aside.

De Antoni and Dumouchel attempt to “bypass the methodological and disciplinary differences between affect as something that necessarily moves towards a language of emotions on the one hand, and sensory perception as something separated from it on the other” (2017, 94). Therefore, they elaborate the idea of “practices of feeling with the world,” which extends the above-mentioned interactional views on affect and bodies as entangled with the social and the material “to the broader perceptions of the body being-in-the-world, or ‘feelings’” (p. 94). “Feeling,” here, is conceived as “a mode of active, perceptual engagement, a way of being literally ‘in touch’ with the world” (Ingold 2000, 23; quoted in De Antoni and Dumouchel 2017, 94), and as the ground for experienced realities emerging through correspondences between bodies and material environments.

This conceptualization, in our views, might provide a clearer understanding of the workings of feelings and affects than “affective practice,” which, although innovative and useful, when applied tends to lean towards classification and description, as can be seen in the chapters in Smith, Wetherell, and Campbell’s work (2018). Conversely, the idea of “feeling with” implies a stronger focus on the practice-based “affective correspondences” (De Antoni 2017) among agents (including the non-human environment), thus opening up possibilities to be operationalized through a processual approach aimed at highlighting the dynamics of the emergence of affective practices and feeling subjects as results of such interactions (see Dumouchel 1996; De Antoni 2017; De Antoni and Dumouchel 2017). It focuses less on “what is what” and more on “how” that “what” emerges and comes into shape within the social. It is less about classifying boxes, and more about entangling and enmeshing lines of movement (see also e.g. Ingold 2011, 2013).

In this sense, the two vignettes above are meant to capture what we mean. Emma’s vignette on learning to stand-up paddleboard illustrates the embodied, embedded and entangled ways of paddling in, on, and with the sea and board as well as socio-cultural correspondences based on “feeling with.” To “look and learn” (*minarau*) through observing examples (as ostensibly an apprentice – *minarai*) is a common way of teaching and learning in Japan (see Edwards 2018 for a recent sports example, and Giolai’s article in this special issue for a nuanced discussion of affective sensitization practices in his musical apprenticeship). Entangled with this socio-cultural “feeling with,” the *feel* – material, perceptual, sensorial, emotional – of the board and ocean are integral to the experience of being in and with both the human and non-human environment. Andrea’s vignette, meanwhile, captures the differences in the practice of singing that emerge from the socio-cultural. The same “singing” also seems to imply different choices (e.g. giving more or less importance to sound dynamics), which are embedded and embodied in skills but in the Japanese case, extend to the surroundings, involving sound technicians, their bodies and technologies: ready hands on the mixer’s volume slider. When the singer’s skills are not enough to produce a result that is perceived as good, they are compensated through an interplay of hierarchy and power relations. Singing and stand-up paddleboarding can both be seen as “affective practices” or “practices of feeling with the world,” which imply bodily skills and attunements with non-humans and the environment (the microphone, the music; the paddle and board, the waves).

The novelty of affect and feelings as analytical foci, therefore, goes – at least in our views – well beyond academic fashion. While emotions and sensorial perceptions have always been part of good ethnographies, a focus on feeling allows, on the one hand,

a more fluid understanding of practices as “meshworks,” or entanglements of “lines of life, growth and movement” (Ingold 2011, 64) that emerge in correspondence between the perceiving, lived, moving body and the surroundings. It is not about discursive or analytical categories of objects, (re)production or (re)cognition. It is about following processes, movement, becomings, emergence of things, of the actual from the virtual, through intensities “anchored in (functionally limited by) the actually existing, particular things that embody them” (Massumi 2002, 35). It is about *how* bodily feelings interplay with the entanglements of the discursive, the social, and the material. It is about practice and doing.

This also allows bypassing modern aprioristic dichotomies such as body/mind, or body/culture, which have haunted anthropology for a very long time. Moreover, it allows grasping something that “is there,” but is not necessarily put into words, for once it is put into words, it is already part of the discursive dimension (see also Clough 2007; Stewart 2007; White 2017). This can only be done through a very specific ethnographic methodology, which focuses on experiences and micro-interactions in the field, in which the ethnographer’s perception also becomes central. This is a specific way of participant observation, resonating with Pink’s (2009) ideas of “sensory ethnography,” in which participating plays a larger role than observing.

Consequently, this special issue aims to contribute to broader anthropological theory by proposing a novel theoretical framework based on “feeling” and bodily perceptions as a way to bridge the dichotomy between the anthropology of the senses and theories that focus solely on affect and emotions. It is also an attempt to contribute to the broader anthropology of the body and embodiment by bringing engagements with the material environment into play. In addition, by focusing on cases related to Japan, this special issue also aims at investigating the interplay between bodily perceptions and the social and cultural, thus elaborating possible solutions to the above-mentioned criticisms to similar approaches. Needless to say, by using the terms “cultural” and “social,” we are not implying reified monolithic entities, nor are we appealing to any *nihonjinron*-related notion of the uniqueness of “Japanese culture” (e.g. Befu 2001) that have surrounded “Japan” as an ethnographic trope for a long time, not to mention techno-orientalist views that conflate “Japan” into an exotic, attractive, “cool” other. To us, Japan is as unique as any other context, anything but monolithic, and sharing more than some common elements with other postindustrial, advanced capitalistic societies. Indeed, “Japan” as an ethnographic trope, or any “typically Japanese” ways or skills of feeling, barely play any role in the analyses offered by the contributions to this special issue.

Rather, the contributions in this special issue aim at investigating how those bodily skills, “techniques of the body” (Mauss 1979), “techniques of the senses” (Howes 1990) or, as we prefer, “skills of feeling with the world,” which are learned through socialization, entangle with the material and the environment, in which certain choices and power relations may be inscribed. Therefore, the focus on Japan is simply a way to contribute to the broader theoretical debate by means of empirical data, relying on field research grounded in very local contexts. This attempt itself resonates with similar discussion within the anthropology of Japan.

Feeling (with) Japan

Anthropological discussions on the body in Japan were initially sparked, perhaps unsurprisingly, by investigations of religious practices. Early works on shamanism (e.g. Blacker 1975; Sakurai 1974), ascetic practices (e.g. Hori 1968; Suzuki 1991; see also Suzuki 2015), or practices of self-mummification (e.g. Raveri 1992) focused on the symbolic use of the body, and on its relations with the broader “culture.” Because their approach was very driven by the (mainly structural) nature/culture debate, these studies employed a very symbolic or interpretive approach, thus overlooking issues related to perception and enskilment through practice. Nevertheless, some intuitions planted the seed of further developments, claiming, for example, that “the body stands ... on the deepest and most complex margin of the interaction between nature and culture. It constantly redraws it, converting one into the other” (Raveri 1992, 175, translation by the authors).

Indeed, recent research on Japanese religions has started to explore these directions, with a stronger focus on the relationships among the body, bodily perceptions, and mind. For example, Ozawa-de Silva, in her explorations of *naikan* – “a Japanese method involving meditation-like body engagement with memory recovery and the reconstruction of autobiography to bring about healing and a changed notion of the self” (2006, 1) – explores the ways that the body, memory and healing are interrelated. She argues that using Western conceptions of the body and memory cannot – and should not necessarily – be applied to practices of *naikan* and rather draws on a rich body of work by Japanese scholars to explore “the nature of the body, of ‘body-mind’ and of memory, and the organization of autobiography” (Ozawa-de Silva 2006, 3). Another example is Lobetti’s (2016) work, which has explored ascetics and ascetic practices in Japan with a focus on embodied experience. He explores “embodied traditions” and the ways in which sensations, feelings and physical expressions are constitutive of non-verbal aspects of ascetic practices in order to theorize on “asceticism as a form of philosophy of the body” (Lobetti 2016, 5). These works contributed greatly to problematizing the Cartesian dichotomy between body and mind, and shed light on the importance of bodily experiences in religious practices and training. Nevertheless, they provide only short accounts of practitioners’ experiences or of how their perceptions and skills emerge, thus leaving this field still relatively unexplored.

In recent years, there has also been an increasing body of work that explores the senses, affect, and emotion in Japan in various ways, most prominently on topics unrelated to religion, such as dance, sound, and touch. Hahn (2007), for instance, has explored the transmission and multi-sensorial experiences of “embodied cultural knowledge” in the Japanese context, through both dance (*nihon buyo*) and, more recently, music (see Hahn and Jordan 2014). In her in-depth, participatory ethnography, Hahn focuses on the concept of “transmission” and the ways in which “transmission systems are valuable to observe as processes of embodiment” (2007, 3). In this process, it is the senses that emerge as transmission vehicles:

The senses reside in a unique position as the interface between body, self, and the world. They are beautiful transmission devices, through which we take in information, comprehend the experience, assign meaning, and often react to the stimuli. Not only do

the senses orient us in a very real, physical way; they enable us to construct parameters of existence – that which defines the body, self, social group, or world. Simply, we are situated by sensual orientations. (Hahn 2007, 3)

Drawing on both a body of work in the anthropology of senses and that which argues that mind and body are interdependent and not separate, Hahn argues that culture shapes the ways in which we attend to and make sense of sensory information. However, although she deploys concepts such as movement, flow, or even energy (*ki*), the analytical model drawn on tends to be grounded in a Western biomedical understanding of the five senses, a tendency confirmed by her later analysis of the pedagogy of *nihon buyo* as heavily relying on cognitive sciences (Hahn and Jordan 2014). Moreover, she relies on binary divisions to demarcate the inside from the outside of the body. Hahn understands “outside the body” to be in relation to “inside the body,” but this relationship appears to be primarily one-directional, moving from outside and the world of culture to inside the body and its senses.

A more fluid approach to dance practices is employed by Coker’s (2019) work on *butō* dance as taught by the dancers who developed it in 1960s–1970s Japan. She analyzes the way they teach movement as a method of generating and/or augmenting affect, and highlights the ways in which verbal imagery, onomatopoeia, physical touch and provocation of imagination, memory, and sensation in teaching the movement of *butō*, allow the movement to carry certain affects. At the same time, she also situates these practices in the dancers’ oral history, namely the body philosophies and social communities in which they have practiced, thus providing a link between the experiential, bodily, affective aspects of the dance, with the broader cultural and socio-historical dimensions.

Similarly, there has been some other work that incorporates the senses and explores bodies within socio-material environments. For example, with a focus on “touching at depth,” Tahhan (2013, 2014) considers skinship and co-sleeping practices. She draws on Merleau-Ponty’s (1968) concept of flesh and Ichikawa’s (1993) ideas of *mi* (in which the flesh includes the body but is not necessarily restricted or contained within it), to argue for a move beyond dichotomies of mind–body and the physicality of bodies touching other bodies. Instead, she suggests focusing on feeling. She proposes the concept “touching at depth,” in which touch is not only understood as a bodily sense, but as something which also moves into spaces that surround and are beyond bodies. She calls this “encompassing space,” “a filled space (*aidagara*) that was more tangible and felt” (Tahhan 2018, 233). It is thus not necessary, she argues, for touch to be limited to physical bodies; rather, it exists within a wider felt space. She consequently explores the affective, sensorial and embodied meanings of touch by focusing on feelings and connections both of and beyond physical bodies. At the same time, however, she remains focused on touch as a central sense in her work and in relation to the production of intimate feelings. Goldfarb has suggested that while Tahhan’s argument in her 2014 book is that “physical touch is not a central part of expressions of intimacy in Japan,” she does so while constructing a “theory of intimacy [that] is framed explicitly in terms of touch (broadly conceived)” (Goldfarb 2015, 294). Moreover, her “adherence to binary categories (intimate or non-intimate, authentic or

inauthentic, relational or non-relational, connected or not connected, inclusive or exclusive) distracts from more nuanced arguments to which her data seem to point" (ibid.).

Hankins and Stevens (2014a), meanwhile, turn their attention to sound and to the ways in which it creates space and community. Contributors to their book provide pieces on topics as diverse as aesthetics, right- and left-wing politics, ethics and art to explore the ways in which sound is constitutive of community and space. Who listens, how, and the kinds of knowledge and affects produced are all themes of the chapters, which deal variously with politics, protest, ambience, empathy and art. At the center of their analysis are what they call "sonic practices," which they use as a "means of approaching the active, embodied practices involved in making sound meaningful. This includes practices that produce sounds and allow for their perception" (2014b, 2). In developing their ideas of "sonic practice" they draw from Mauss's (1979) idea that "techniques are actions both 'effective and traditional'" (2014b, 3) and Bourdieu's (1977) arguments about practice to assert that it is "within practices, as exhibited in human interaction, that the frames granted significance to sound are negotiated" (ibid.). Moreover, their use of "sonic" (rather than "auditory") goes beyond exploring the hearing senses alone to analyze other senses in the process of engaging and experiencing the sonic (see also Abe 2018; Roquet 2016). By bringing in multiple senses and arguing that it is within wider material, socio-cultural, and environmental contexts that sounds become relevant and meaningful, this edited volume attempts, to greater and lesser extents, to bring together embodiment, the senses, space, and sociality in various ways. All contributions focus on different topics, showing that "sonic practices" are central in the constitution of "spatial and social relations," and highlighting "the political, ethical and aesthetic resonances of those relations" (Hankins and Stevens 2014b, 14). Yet, because of the focus on "sonic practices," they barely highlight the role of broader feelings, their interplay with the social, or their socio-cultural dimension.

In her 2018 book, Abe engages intimately with affect, arguing that *chindon-ya* (roaming advertisement bands) engage in a form of affective sonic labor that produces particular forms of sociality, the labor of which is "historical, affective, acoustic, and political" (Abe 2018, 4), and which can be achieved because of their general "out of place"-ness ("social, temporal, and spatial alterity"), as well as the liveliness of their performances. She argues that there are "resonances in their dynamic process of interaction, interference, reinforcement, and difference as sound, performers, listeners, and surrounding environment affect and transform each other" (2018, 6). Here context, history, politics, sociality, environment, materiality and affect come together, through the analytic of "resonance," around the affective labor practices of *chindon-ya*. Abe's research is very useful to understand "how a sonic culture produces social space, and how sound's materiality and ephemerality have particular tangible effects on affect and sociality" (p. 35). Yet, similarly to the previous case, this focus on the relations between sound and space limits its investigation of the broader interplay between the material environment and broader feelings or bodily perceptions.

As this brief description of some of the extant literature on ascetic bodily practices, sound, touch, and dance in Japan shows, there has been engagement with – and

contribution to – the anthropology of the senses, perception, and affect. However, skills of “feeling” are often missing. Instead, feeling is often subsumed under discussions of affect and/or emotion. In this special issue, we contend that feeling and bodily perceptions are one of the ways in which theories of affect, emotion, the senses, and material environments can be more productively brought together in conversation. The contributors in this special issue thus seek to build on this scholarship and bring to bear feeling, affect, emotion, and materiality in the ways in which people “feel with the world.”

Contributions

Building on the above-mentioned approaches, this special issue explores the methodological and theoretical possibilities for new perspectives that doing fieldwork in Japan can provide. In this sense, all the contributions revolve around different topics – crossdressing, interpretation practices, oral mnemonics, houses, and creative practices – but they all share and contribute to a common research methodology and theoretical framework. In each, feeling, affects, emotions, bodies, senses, materials, objects and discourses are entangled in different ways as protagonists “feel with the world.”

In the first article, Fanasca focuses on FtM crossdresser escorts and, using her body as an ethnographic methodology and fieldsite, analyzes interactions between bodies, objects, and gender practices. Building on De Antoni’s (2017) concept of “affective correspondence,” Fanasca analyzes bodies, affects, feelings, and emotions, and the ways in which gendered bodies affect and are affected by objects and the space surrounding them.

In the second article, Golovina turns our attention to the material realities of Japanese houses for Russian migrant women and examines the ways in which cold and wet houses are sensed, felt, absorbed into migrant bodies, and resisted. Bringing together materiality, environments, power relations, bodies, senses, affects and feelings she contributes to arguments that material environments shape and affect bodies through senses and feelings. Her work speaks to the ways in which objects have affective agency as well as the way in which affects and the senses are interdependent.

In the third contribution, Giustini provides an ethnography of interpreters’ management of affects and feelings that emerge during interpretation jobs. She argues that feeling and affect underlie the skills that interpreters have developed and honed through practice, and she shows that the skill of interpreting lies in bridging affect, “culture,” reason, and language within specific spatial, material and institutional environments. Feelings – their own and those that they feel from others – are integral to this process and practice.

For our fourth article, Giolai turns our attention to music and to the ways in which “the oral–aural technique of music transmission” are non-conscious affects which activate an “affective attentiveness” in performers of court music (*gagaku*). His article analyzes the ways in which oral mnemonics in Japanese court music are “techniques of affective sensitization” which “activate a disposition of the entire body toward the production of music” through a process of feeling with others. Here we see how feeling,

affects and objects are implicated in an embodied enskilmment process of learning to feel in particular ways.

In our final contribution Kavedzija brings imagination and imaginative processes to the fore as she explores how young artists in Japan sense and move their bodies in the creative process of making art. Her work illustrates that in creating art, imagination and movement of bodies are “both processual and emergent.” Moreover, imagination is not necessarily internal to the individual but instead can be understood as a “practice of feeling with the world.” Sensing and feeling, with oneself and with others, emerge as particular ways of knowing within the imaginative creative processes she describes.

Through all these contributions bodily perceptions, feelings, senses, affect, and emotions are entangled in complex ways with the socio-cultural, socio-material and with power relations, and all contribute to diverse ways of “feeling with the world” in Japan or, as we entitled this special issue, “Feeling (with) Japan.”

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