

PERCEPTION AGAINST Reflecting Ethnographically on the Sensory, Walking, and Atmospheric Turns¹

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The paper seeks to contribute to critical reflection on recent trends in cultural anthropology, the humanities more generally, and ongoing transformations of urban space. The first part of the paper explores the genealogy of two crucial anthropological approaches to “the life of the senses,” anthropology of the senses, and sensory anthropology, outlines their relationship to so-called walking methodologies, and relates them to the recent upsurge of research in atmospheres. The second part presents selected topics from the described fields in Ljubljana. More specifically, the paper deals with how, during sensobiographic walking through the historical city center, *Ljubljančani* and *Ljubljančanke* experienced what “atmospheric transformations” ushered in by Ljubljana’s annual December celebrations/festivities. The authors conclude that concepts and epistemological frameworks produced or implicated in the anthropology of the senses/sensory anthropology, as well as in walking methodologies and atmospheric studies, engender an examination of sensory dimensions of politics and economy in late capitalism but are appropriated in a reified form for purposes of capital accumulation.

Keywords: anthropology of the senses, sensory anthropology, sensobiographic walking, atmospheric transformations, Ljubljana

Introduction

In the early 1990s, a call emerged in social and cultural anthropology to move beyond the linguistic, the visual, and the bodily (Howes 2003: 28–58; cf. Classen 1997: 401; Porcello et al. 2010). The call was articulated by those who, in their estimation, had already moved toward this envisaged “beyond” by establishing a rec-

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ognizable scholarly orientation and a distinct object of study, namely the anthropology of the senses and the study of senses as such (see Stoller 1989; Howes 1991; Muršič, Bajič and Abram 2022). The appeal is to be understood in conjunction with then contemporary demands to undo dualistic epistemologies and/or ontologies (Stoller 1989; Latour 1993; Ingold 2000) voiced by adherents of approaches operating within non-dualistic conceptual frameworks, such as sensory anthropology. Unsurprisingly, the scholarly suggestion of “going beyond” resonated in art, a field that has historically privileged aesthetic production (Eagleton 1990), with art being permeated by ethnographic approaches (Foster 1995). It is worth noting that many of these endeavors converged in their interest in walking as a research tool and aesthetic practice.

This paper first explores the genealogy of the two anthropological approaches to the sensory and contextualizes the emerging field of and beyond sensory studies. Since anthropological recourse to art has become an important orientation for new ways of researching and thinking that seem to reach beyond the textual, the visual, and the bodily, we outline this hybrid field and pay particular attention to walking. First, walking has acquired a (proto)methodological status within the approaches addressed (Ingold and Vergunst 2008; Bates and Rhys-Taylor 2017a). Second, it constitutes the main “ingredient” of the sensobiographic walking method. Accordingly, we outline the implications of sensobiographic walking in Ljubljana. Lastly, the paper discusses epistemological limitations and potentialities of the anthropological approaches to the sensory.

Anthropological approaches to the sensory

Since the emergence of a purported sensory revolution (Howes 2006), a discussion has developed around (dis)junctions between *anthropology of the senses* and *sensory anthropology* (Pink 2010), their epistemological and methodological foundations, and their ethnographic and theoretical contributions (Herzfeld 2001; Bendix 2005; Porcello et al. 2010; Low 2012; Bajič and Abram 2019). At the same time, we emphasize that much work in this area incorporates aspects from both sides and is often seasoned with ingredients from other fields, such as ethnomusicology and sound studies (Feld 2012; Järviluoma 2022), the anthropology of food (Sutton 2001), urban anthropology (Low 2009; Rhys-Taylor 2018), political anthropology (Trnka, Dureau and Park 2013), memory studies (Seremetakis 1994), postcolonial studies (Taussig 1993), medical anthropology (Geurts 2002; Desjarlais 2003), the anthropology of everyday life (Pink 2003), and media and cultural studies (Wunderlich 2008). While it is worth noting that the anthropology of the senses and sensory anthropology do not encompass the entire conceptual spectrum of anthropological approaches to the sensory (e.g., Laplantine 2015; Le Breton 2017), they arguably represent the theoretically most productive directions.

Anthropology of the senses

The anthropology of the senses was consolidated in the early 1990s in the works of Constance Classen, Anthony Synnott, and David Howes (and partly in the writings of Paul Stoller, Nadia Seremetakis, Michael Taussig and Robert Desjarlais). These scholars aimed to dispel epistemologically debilitating abstractions within anthropology, such as “structure,” “text,” and “reflexivity,” cultural biases toward visuality, and an individualistic notion of the body. Simultaneously, they also sought to (re)introduce the senses into cultural anthropology. They referred to the senses as “cultural constructs” (Classen 1997: 401; Howes 2010: 335) defined by a culturally specific “sensory model” (Classen 1993: 135–7), designed the anthropology of the senses as a relativist, comparative project (Howes 1991: 3; Howes 2019: 20; cf. Pink 2010: 332; Ingold 2011a: 316–317).

Sensory models appear to exist “out there,” independently of the anthropologist (Classen 1997: 401–402). Hence, there is no mediation between the imposed epistemological framework and the ontological status of sensory models. As such, they supposedly offer a way beyond the above-mentioned limitations. Instead of conducting (ocular-centric) participant observation, one is encouraged to engage in “participant sensation” (Howes 2006: 121). Instead of engaging with (verbo-centric) forms of representation, one is meant to adopt multimodality (Stoller 1989; 1997), and instead of thinking through the (individual(ist)) body, one is prompted to embrace decentered multisensoriality. However, as David Howes (2003: 49) notes, “there are grave possibilities for misperceptions to arise when anthropologists rely solely on their own senses for an understanding of the sensory world of another people,” making it practically imperative to “elicit the sensory models of the people they are studying, and not just rely on their own bodily experiences.” To put it another way, according to the anthropology of the senses, our senses can distance us from the sensory models of others; the only thing that enables us to “properly” understand are the native sensory models themselves (Stoller 1989; 1997; Howes 2003: 49–50, 54; 2011a: 318; Howes and Classen 2014: 8–11).

Sensory anthropology

Sensory anthropology developed through a polemic with the anthropology of the senses around the 2000s (Pink 2010) as an interdisciplinary approach (Pink 2010: 331–332). Its foundational ideas come from philosophy (Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology and Deleuze’s vitalism), psychology (Gibson’s ecological psychology), and cognitive science (Clark’s notion of the extended mind). The discipline focuses on sensing, namely (sensory) experience (cf. Ingold 2000; Pink 2015) as an inseparable entanglement of what we commonly refer to as perception, affect, materiality, practice, and discourse.

In sensory anthropology and its “participant sensing” (Pink 2015: 67), concepts emerge in research and “being *with*” (Ingold 2011b: 241; emphasis in original) people; sensory experiences create a common reality regardless of potential cultural, social, and economic differences. At its limits, sensory anthropology thus suggests a new understanding of perception, one which does not divide between the subject and the object of perception, but rather a free-floating sensation – a “perceiving *with*” (Ingold 2011b: 88; 2013: 91–108; 2015: 94–100; emphasis in original). Such “perceiving *with*” is – to borrow from DeLanda (2013: 46) – “literary comprised of intensities (of color, sound, aroma, flavor, texture) that are given structure by habitual action.” In such a notion, for example, the experience of listening to music (Ingold 2015: 19–20) is not simply “ours;” it is immanent to the sound, the sound frequency, the amplitude of the sound pressure in the matter, the instrument that produces the sound, the materials from which sound is made, etc. (cf. Riedel and Torvinen 2020; Tiainen, Aula and Järviluoma 2020).

In what follows, we discuss precisely how such matter – referring not only to sound, but also to light, aroma, flavor, texture – resonates with *Ljubljanci* and *Ljubljanke*. As we will see from the ethnographic vignettes, the proliferation of sensory experiences in tourism, architecture, and urbanism does not necessarily evoke a “perception *with*” but can also provoke a “perception *against*.” “Perception *against*” cropped up during sensobiographic walking that belongs to the emerging “walking methodologies” (Bates and Rhys-Taylor 2017a), to which we now turn.

Walking through

Walking emerged as a new research domain incorporating themes and tendencies from sensory and art anthropology. This “walking turn” was drawn upon the early works on the body (Bourdieu 1977; Mauss 1996) and followed the footsteps of artistic appropriations of walking. Through walking, scholars explored sensory overload (Simmel 1950; 1997), social interactions (Goffman 1971), as well as power and resistance (de Certeau 2007) in urban space.

The genealogy (Bates and Rhys-Taylor 2017b) of the “walking turn” goes back to Romanticism and its understanding of walking in the countryside as a way of (re)discovering aesthetic and moral values that had been lost through rapid industrialization and urbanization. Walking allowed the strolling individual to create himself and reflect on his [sic!] role in the world. In a counterpoint, modernism, as conceptualized by Benjamin in the *Arcades Project* (*Das Passagen-Werk*), understood walking as *flânerie*, a way of participating in contemporary urban space associated with leisurely (male) bourgeois (sic! see Elkin 2016; Andrews 2020) who survey the flow, impulses, and experiences offered by the crowded early-nineteenth-century metropolis (Benjamin 1998; Coverly 2006).²

² We should bear in mind that the romantic conception of walking received its continuation in the nationalist movements of the 19th and 20th centuries, such as the *Wandervogel*, which operated within the framework of *Die*

Francesco Careri (2017) identifies three sets of (art) movements that influenced the artistic adoption of walking in the 20th century: the Dadaists and Surrealists (1921–1924); Letterist International and Situationist International (1956–1957); and Minimal Art and Land Art (1966–1967). The Dadaists and Surrealists were inspired by psychoanalysis and searched for the “unconscious” of the city. The Letterists and Situationists aimed at changing the world by utilizing psychogeography (see Debord 1955/2006). Minimalists used walking as a form of “intervention” in nature, and Land Art practitioners explored the relationship between art, architecture, and the environment through walking (Careri 2017).

Inspired by the above-mentioned art movements, and in the context of then-emerging soundscape studies, acoustic ecologist Hildegard Westerkamp (1974/2001) introduced the method of the soundwalk in 1974. Described as “any excursion whose main purpose is listening to the environment,” soundwalking focuses “on varying subjective experiences of places, moving narratives,” (Westerkamp 2006) and thus contributes to an embedded analysis of soundscapes.

In the development of the anthropology of sound (Thibaud 2011; Feld 2012; 2015; Järviluoma 2022) and its influence on the anthropology of the senses and sensory anthropology, the role of soundwalking should certainly not be overlooked (Low 2007; Ingold 2011b: 33–50). Soundwalking, in one way or the other, provides a blueprint for contemporary walking methods such as sensory walk (Southworth 1967), go-along (Kusenbach 2003), smellwalk (Porteous 1985: 360; Henshaw 2014; Quercia et al. 2015), talking whilst walking (Anderson 2004), commented city walk (Thibaud 2013), participation-while-interviewing (Bærenholdt et al. 2004), walking with place and transmaterial walking (Springgay and Truman 2018), walking with video (Pink 2007a; 2007b), walking fieldwork (Irving 2017) and sensobiographic walking (Järviluoma 2016; Murray and Järviluoma 2020). The stake of the majority of these methods, be it the array of mono- or multisensory walking methods, lies in the idea that such methods enable us to move “beyond” language, the visual, the bodily, and the dualistic (cf. Springgay and Truman 2018), regardless of their use in a particular academic field (see Bajič and Abram 2019). Nevertheless, one of the rare critiques of walking methods is, (un)surprisingly, that they remain burdened by “textualism, cognitivism and representationalism [and] are not sensory, spatial enough, not sufficiently and coherently mediated and do not represent a suitable incentive. They are often too methodological, too systematic and overly defined by research goals” (Vannini and Vannini 2017: 179). We now turn to some examples of how, through sensobiographic walking (a method to which this critique seems to apply), people in Ljubljana have experienced transforming urban atmospheres.

Deutsche Jugendbewegung, and reached its peak with the Nazi marches. On the other hand, we should also remember that with walks and marches, such as the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom (1963) or the March from Selma to Montgomery (1965), socially progressive, peace, and anti-racist movements also expressed their demands.

Atmospheric transformations in Ljubljana through sensobiographic walking

Urban atmospheres are becoming a building block of differentiation between cities in the global competition for consumers and capital in neoliberal conditions (see Harvey 1990; Welsch 1997; Tsing 2004). It is therefore not surprising that atmospheres are turning into an important selling point in tourism and gastronomy (Tzanelli 2018; Volgger and Pfister 2019; Falconer 2021), urban planning and architecture (Degen 2008; Zukin 2008; Böhme 2013; Schreiber and Carius 2020; De Matteis 2021), and art (Engelmann 2020). Atmospheres refer to the cross-section of the sensory, affective, spatial, and material (Schroer and Schmitt 2018: 4).³ Atmospheres denote the interweaving and merging of the multiple bodies and circumstances that can be produced through sounds, lights, colors, surfaces, and aromas (Böhme 2019: 262; cf. Griffero 2014: 113–119) and, as such, problematize any steadfast distinction between the subjective (experience) and the objective (reality) (Riedel 2020: 4).

The production of urban atmospheres aims to generate affective experiences and sensory responses to space in order to influence people's moods and guide their behavior for aesthetic, artistic, utilitarian, or commercial reasons (Bille, Bjerregaard and Sørensen 2014: 3; see also Thibaud 2006; Bille 2015; Chari 2015; Edensor and Sumartojo 2015). Thus, in contemporary cities, as one can imagine, urban atmospheres are undergoing rapid and palpable change that is more or less planned, for example, in endeavors for aestheticization and "revitalization" of historic centers (see Smith 2002), but change which exceeds their individual constituent elements (Böhme 1993; 2017; 2019).

The same is true for the case of Ljubljana. In the last twenty years or so, the Slovenian capital has been experiencing a veritable touristic boom, partially prompted by, and in turn strengthened by, processes of aestheticization of the city center.⁴ This boom has entailed not only changes in the social composition and periods of intense renovations of the Old Town and adjacent neighborhoods but also an unprecedented explosion of boutique cafés and restaurants, shops, hotels and – especially in the years before the outbreak of Covid-19 – short-term rentals, as well as a year-round festivalization of public-cum-private spaces (Bibič 2003; Bajič 2015; Abram *forthcoming*). This transformation also entailed a shift toward essentially neoliberal discourses on the form and function of culture in socio-economic processes (Vogrinc 2013), toward a paradigm that designated culture as a kind of entertainment sup-

3 In ethnographic research, the notion of atmosphere is by no means new, as atmosphere (or similar terms, e.g. *ambiance* in French, *Stimmung* in German, or *ambient* in Slovene; for the history of the concept see Griffero 2014: 55–99) has been described by anthropologists from Marcel Mauss to Clifford Geertz (Schroer and Schmitt 2018: 2–4). In Slovenia, Slavko Kremenšek (1970) often alluded to *ambient* while introducing similar ideas, such as tone (*ton*), character (*značaj*), or communal feeling (*skupnostno občutje*).

4 While the term aestheticization has a long history and is infamously ambiguous, by aestheticization of urban space, we mean strategies and processes that produce an enchanting, and today increasingly multisensory spectacle, or rather a commodity-based (atmo)sphere of imaginary freedom grounded in affects, senses, and feelings (see Eagleton 1990; Jay 1992; Smith 2002).

porting the tourist industry (Bajič 2017). Most of the restructurings were geared, as explicitly stated in the city tourism development and marketing strategy (Turizem Ljubljana 2014), toward creating a place that affords experiences of “distinctive,” “authentic,” and “easy-going” atmospheres throughout the historic center’s cobblestone streets and squares by activating the body and the senses.

In fact, sensobiographic walking, a method based on similar principles of activating the body and the senses, introduced us to atmospheric transformations of urban space. However, these transformations proved disruptive to everyday life, as our research participants expressed perceptions *against* the “depoliticized appearance of social harmony” (Bibič 2003: 75). The goal of sensobiographic walking (Järviluoma 2015, 2022) is to get people to verbalize their experiences by getting in touch with “their” places (Bajič and Abram 2019; Bajič 2020). Through the conversations, remembering, and comparisons, sensobiographic walking served as a performance and (re)construction of past and present selves. In our case, sensobiographic walks included two participants of different age groups; the older group was born between 1930 and 1949, and the younger group was born between 1990 and 2005, making the walks transgenerational in character. Twenty walks were conducted in the city center of Ljubljana.⁵ The perceived change and permanence of the atmosphere of urban spaces encouraged remembering and describing, as did the differences and similarities between the experiences of participants.

Sensobiographic walkers, particularly in the Old Town, often spontaneously described atmospheric transformations of urban space that had taken place in recent decades or were happening right under our noses. One of the most recognizable atmospheres, if our walkers’ observations are to be believed, unfolds in December, *the* month of celebrations and festivities in Ljubljana. The “December atmosphere,” as the participants called it, was delineated not only by its (relatively) easily definable character in terms of “*vzdušje*,” “feeling,” or “vibe” but also by its socially and culturally disruptive consequences.

Throughout December, large open-air festive events and outdoor public activities are held daily across the city center. Open-air performances, such as thematic music events and live performances for children, are complemented by winter simulacra such as ice-skating rinks, sledding grounds and a miniature ski slope (snow is trucked in from Kranjska Gora ski resort, 58 km away) in Kongresni Square and Novi Square. Pogačar Square turns into an Oktoberfest-like festival space. The Old Town is embellished with fairy lights, and along the riverbank, the Christmas Market stalls sell handicrafts and winter paraphernalia, as well as a variety of foods and drinks with locally sourced ingredients (e.g., blueberry, honey, plum or lemon schnapps [*borovničke, medica, slivovka, limonca*]), Carniolan sausage, pancakes, pretzels, meat

5 The method was used in three medium-sized cities (Ljubljana, Brighton, and Turku) between 2017 and 2021 as part of the SENSOTRA project. Recruitment was handled in an open, accessible, and transparent manner, with participants selected on a first-come, first-served basis. Multiple recruitment methods were used to spread the call for participation as widely as possible and reach both older people and children from different socio-cultural backgrounds, including outreach to mass media, local interest groups and gatekeepers, social media, and personal email invitations. In addition, the snowballing method was employed (Abram 2021).

rolls [čevapčiči], caramelized roasted almonds, etc.). Perhaps the most prominent beverage on offer is *kuhanček*, mulled wine richly flavored with cinnamon, nutmeg, whole cloves, and orange slices, whose multi-layered aroma permeates the air and creates the “winter smell of Ljubljana,”⁶ as one of the walkers described the sensory atmosphere. People warm their hands on grilled chestnuts while the streets resound with art music from outdoor loudspeakers installed almost invisibly on buildings. The elaborate artistic light installations draw crowds to the center of the festivities, Prešeren Square, to capture a photograph of another indispensable element – the Christmas tree. Although the emblematic smells, sights, and tastes of December in Ljubljana were perceived with affection by most of the participants, at the same time, as if following Sara Ahmed (2007, 2010), they emphasized that “Happy December,” as the month of festivities is often dubbed, conceals its “truth.” They simultaneously provoked a “perception *against*,” that is to say a perception permeated with a sense of alienation and an elementary form of “dissent” (see Rancière 2010; Filak 2022).

During one of the walks, Jernej, an older male sculptor, decided to head to Prešeren Square. When we got there, we immediately noticed the richly-textured sensory atmosphere. Despite the freezing cold, he paused to explain to us his earlier quip about the difficulties in getting his bearings because of “light pollution” in December: “I can hardly orientate myself. Everything is kind of bright,” he emphasized as he pointed to Prešeren Square under the brightened night sky.” Annoyance was written all over his face:

You can't see the buildings you are familiar with. And you feel a little lost in all this dreadful kitsch, right? If it was at least tastefully done, it might be easier, but this way it's just plain kitschiness that only confuses you if you didn't grow up in it.

Nika, a young female semi-professional musician, after a moment's pause, joined Jernej: “I have to admit that there are too many people here and ... I'm not that excited about everything they have that ends up on the streets. Okay, a little bit would be fine, but this is just too much.”

A few hundred meters from Prešeren Square, on Mestni Square, Sabina, a queer performer and feminist activist in her late twenties, was troubled by the oversaturation of street lighting. She “perceived *against*” the lightscapes and their annual expansion. She replied when asked if she liked the lights: “No! (...) I mean, first of all, there are too many [fairy lights], and there are more and more of them. They are leeching further and further into Trnovo [a Ljubljana neighborhood adjacent to the Old Town].” Sabina also criticized the ethical value of the decorations:

Maybe these [fairy lights] don't bother me so much since they're winter [themed], but in between, there is a lot about conception and life, with some ova and sperms wrapped in there and a DNA helix. I think that's really awful. I feel uncomfortable every time I see that.

⁶ All verbatim quotations are transcribed from the sensobiographic walks and in-depth interviews. They were corrected for grammar to improve readability. All participants were given an altered personal name to match their age group. All other personal data potentially suggestive of the research participants' personal identities were also pseudo-anonymised.

Angela, a retired female archivist, sympathized with Sabina. “I have to say that it bothers me too. The second thing that bothers me is that they start decorating so early, in an American way. I don’t even know when!” In fact, the preparatory works for the light installations start already at the end of October and are crowned with the grand finale – the switching on of the luminous decorations, an event which marks the official opening of “Happy December.”

Marko, a well-off male living a block away from Kongresni Square, formulated the contemporary atmospheric transformations of urban space as a sign of “*unculturedness*” (cf. Elias 2000): In general, it seems to me that Ljubljana has become immensely uncultured [silno nekulturna]. For him, the general “*noise pollution* [zvočna polucija]” and sporting events in the city center were both signs of “*uncultured brutality*” and of “*third-class* [tretjerazreden]” quality. For Marko, the artificial ice-skating rink on Kongresni Square represents the paradigmatic example of such interventions pertaining to human and non-human life:

They set up an ice-skating rink. I have the impression that, in a way, we are ousting the flora and fauna and the elderly people with this noise, and I don’t know who else. The roots of these Platanus trees were supposedly already cut back for [the construction of] the garage [underneath Kongresni Square]. [...] These Platanus trees aren’t what they used to be. It’s awful that these trees are now illuminated all night long. After all, a tree *rests* in wintertime, as they say. But these trees are completely exposed. I find this extremely brutal.

Marko sardonically concluded that the only way to accept such uncultured brutality is by tuning into the frequency of money: “You hold an event where I don’t know how much money is involved, and then you can simply close off the park.”

So, contrary to what Vanini and Vanini (2017; see above) seem to claim, we see that sensobiographic walking, despite (or rather because of) its design to study social and personal sensory remembering (i.e., defined by particular research goals and its methodic and systematic structure), enabled us to “detect” previously unimaginable sensations, things, and processes – from sperm-shaped fairy lights to feelings of disorientation due to luminosity, that are, in the last instance, conditioned by a global competition for consumers and capital. In this sense, sensobiographic walking resembles the Situationist *dérive*, or drifting, a technique of passage through varied urban atmospheres (see Debord 1959/2006), and could be defined as a method of organized serendipity. Sensobiographic walking and the gathered fieldwork material enable cross-fertilization between experimental methods, multimodal analysis, and collaborative ethnography, which goes beyond conventional academic work and crosses over into the field of art anthropology (see Venäläinen, Pöllänen and Muršič 2020; Abram 2021). Sensobiographic walking provides a well-defined perspective that enables one to expand one’s research and artistic interests. It does not in any way predetermine or preclude what effectively is, or is not, being studied and created. In the present case, the study of sensory remembering extended into the study of atmospheric transformations and of the production of new urban sensorium(s),

i.e., ideology in its sensory and affective dimensions (see Goonewardena 2005; cf. Highmore 2018; for the case of Ljubljana, see Bajič 2020), as well as ways of sensing, e.g. “perception *against*” that might not be possible to imagine in advance.

Conclusion

This paper presented two dominant sensory approaches in anthropology and walking methods in urban space converge to open new avenues for the ethnographic study of sensory transformations. The implications of sensobiographic walking in Ljubljana show a transformation of atmospheres. Nevertheless, returning to the introductory remark, it is important to emphasize how the sensory turn, with its endeavors to go beyond the textual, the bodily, the visual, and the dualistic, has established a framework within which new concepts were and are being created. As such, one can and must examine reconfiguring modes of urban governance and economic ventures (see Yang 2014: 3). By exploring the sensory dimensions of politics and economy, we can understand “the life of the senses” in late capitalism (DeFazio 2011: 4–6; see also Marx and Engels 1974; Dawkins and Loftus 2013). Simultaneously, however, the sensory turn, as well as the atmospheric and walking turns, also have contributed to the production of new meanings and methods that were, at their conception, reified and appropriated for the purposes of capital accumulation. “Senses,” “atmospheres,” and “walking” have become buzzwords for urbanists, corporate marketers, political think tanks, and self-help gurus, as have ideas of decentralized connectivity and flexibility (cf. Boltanski and Chiapello 2018).

The case of Ljubljana is exemplary. The management of the “meshwork” of the senses, atmospheres, and walking promises to reinstate the “organic” connection between the body and the city to produce a *genius loci*, the spirit of a place. In other words, it conditions “the art of enticement” (Harvey 2006: 26) as an aid to the tourism industry (Volgger 2019). It is no wonder that experiences, especially “tourist experiences” (Volo 2009), have become important commodities (Degen 2008; Zukin 2008; Böhme 2013). To this end, not only is every conceivable sensory and social “nuisance” imaginable targeted, but also any (idea of) an alternative sensory and social order is marginalized (see Hajer and Reijndorp 2001: 104). In other words, the management of atmospheres in the contemporary city is effectively another instrument of control (Degen 2014: 92).

In such a context, atmospheric transformations reveal themselves as aspects of aestheticization that are justified and legitimized by the agents of touristification precisely in terms of enriching sensory experiences. However, as numerous research participants indicated, atmospheric transformations lead to an increased sense of disillusionment and alienation. Such practices reveal a progressive aestheticization of urban space and everyday life and, as Neil Smith (2002: 99) warns, point to an “anesthetizing [of] our critical understanding of gentrification in Europe.” Taken together, they represent “a considerable ideological victory for neoliberal visions of

the city” (Smith 2002: 99). Perhaps, then, it is not enough that we simply research the city through the senses, as if “coming to our senses” (Howes 2003) would automatically eliminate most of our epistemological and social problems; we must also critically self-reflect on our own theory and practice.

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Percepcija protiv. Etnografsko promišljanje o osjetilnim, hodajućim i atmosferskim obratima

Rad nastoji pridonijeti kritičkom promišljanju o nedavnim kretanjima u kulturnoj antropologiji i humanističkim znanostima općenito, kao i o transformacijama urbanog prostora koje se trenutačno odvijaju. Prvi dio rada istražuje genealogiju dvaju ključnih antropoloških pristupa "životu osjetila": antropologije osjetila i osjetilne antropologije; opisuje njihov odnos s takozvanim hodajućim metodologijama i povezuje ih s nedavnim porastom istraživačkog interesa za atmosfere. U drugom su dijelu prikazane odabrane teme iz opisanih područja onako kako se one manifestiraju u Ljubljani. Preciznije, rad se bavi time kako su Ljubljanci i Ljubljančanke tijekom senzobiografske šetnje povijesnom gradskom jezgrom doživjeli iskustvo koje nazivamo "atmosferskim transformacijama" i koje je rezultat godišnjih prosinakkih proslava i svečanosti. U radu se zaključuje da koncepti i epistemološki okviri razvijeni ili implicirani u antropologiji osjetila / osjetilnoj antropologiji, kao i u hodajućim metodologijama i istraživanjima atmosfera, dovode do ispitivanja osjetilnih dimenzija politike i ekonomije u kasnom kapitalizmu, ali su prisvojeni u reificiranom obliku za potrebe akumulacije kapitala.

Ključne riječi: antropologija osjetila, osjetilna antropologija, senzobiografska šetnja, atmosferske transformacije, Ljubljana