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Geschlechtergeschichte, gegenwärtig

Hg. von Caroline Arni und Susanna Burghartz

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Abstracts

Caroline Arni, Temporality, Anachronism, and Anachronies. Concepts of Time in Gender History and its Transformations

Periodically, gender historians are concerned with questioning themselves about “new challenges” in their field. This recurrent inquiry meets today with certain uneasiness: The relation contemporary gender historians maintain with their own present (as the point of departure of any history-writing) is, nowadays, somehow paralyzed – and this has consequences for how the past is addressed. The problem, in short, goes to the heart of the historiographical project more generally.

Against a critical analysis of the – actual or perceived – current impasses in the writing of gender history, the essay scrutinizes “anachronism” and “anachrony” as notions upon which, in historiography, different ways of conceiving historians’ relationship to the present and the past have been debated and concepts of continuous or discontinuous time have been spelled out.

I examine how the uses of both notions have, in gender history, informed foundations and transformations of the field over the past decades and scrutinize their salience and pitfalls. Against this backdrop, the essay argues that gender historians should let go of the nostalgic longing for discerning “new” unifying conceptual challenges and turn, instead, towards an intensified reflection on the concepts of temporality which inform their work.

Daniela Koleva, Telling Women’s Lives: Ideology and Practice

The paper is an attempt at approaching oral history material collected for archival purposes (i. e. not guided by a feminist programme) in a gender-sensitive way. It is based on my work with about 200 life stories of elderly women and men collected since the 1990s in Bulgaria.

In the first part I make some observations on women’s narratives looking at their content, language, style and structure. Then I examine in some detail two women’s stories. They were singled out because of the way the narrators edited their stories for the publication, which seemed to be at odds with the two women’s self-presentation throughout the interviews.

This type of editing has prompted some questions related, on the one hand, to narrative conventions understood as the ways in which life stories are guided by the ‘rules of genre’, that is by ideas of what constitutes a good story. On the other hand, the questions pertain to social conventions and offer an opportunity to juxtapose ideology and practice in women’s lives.

Christina Lutter, Gender, Emotion, Body – Categories of a Cultural Studies Perspective on Mediaevalism?

This article's focus is on the general question of this volume about recent challenges for Gender History from a cultural historians' and medievalists' perspective. Starting points are Joan Scott's concept of gender as an analytical as well as a social category and her critical remarks on the sex-gender-distinction. According to her this well established divide has in fact ensued a reification of sex as an a-historical category and a re-biologization of the ideas of 'woman' and 'man'.

Secondly, I will try to show how Scott's concept of gender can be adapted to the analysis of other phenomena often not perceived as being (at least partly) socio-culturally constructed. I will use *miracula* and other source material dating from a 12th century's monastic community delivering fascinating insights into representations of emotions, religious beliefs, and gender relations, as well as their social contexts.

Along these examples I will argue that gender as a multi-relational category can help to develop a constructionist concept of emotions without disregarding the various interrelations between their physical, psychic, and socio-cultural aspects. At the same time, medieval source material may help showing how emotions, embodied identities, and gender are constructed quite differently in specific historical contexts. Finally, I am using Catherine Lutz's term *emotion trouble* in analogy to Judith Butler's *gender trouble* to stress the instable and performative character of emotions. This might also help to conceptualize the 'making of' bodies, that is the constant interactions between 'biology' and 'culture' in a more comprehensive way.