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Abstracts

Manon Brouillet, “Beside the Threshold of her Father she Slipped off her Dress”. Sensory Regime and Athena’s Body in Homer

In the Homeric epics, man’s encounter with immortals strikes the human senses. Both, the human and the divine body are at stake. Focusing on the goddess Athena, this paper analyses the sensory regimes of the human perception of the gods. Whenever a divinity appears, the human body is temporarily but strongly affected. The senses are altered, and this alteration is precisely what makes the god or goddess recognisable as such. With Athena, we explore the divine body and its perception. In a scene where she undresses and then arms herself with the aegis, the poet stages a gendered feminine body. This body changes from a state of non-visibility (as it would be dangerous to see it) to a state of hyperbolic visibility, characteristic of the gods’ presence on the battlefield.

Daniela Hacke, Observing the World with Ears and Eyes. Sensory Stimuli in English Travel Reports on North America in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

Based on English travel reports on North America, this article analyses gender-specific sensory perceptions in situations of cultural encounter. Its aim is twofold: firstly, it strives to steer sensory history into a more gender-specific direction by using a praxeological approach; secondly, it analyses inter- and transcultural contact scenarios. Up until now, contact scenarios between different cultures (as well as *within* a culture) have not received the attention in sensory history that they deserve. Instead, sensory perceptions and expressions have been largely examined as isolated phenomena from a diachronic point of view. By contrast, this contribution attempts to analyse cultural encounters from the agent’s perspective based on their sensory experiences (with regards to the ears and the eyes), describing them in www.univie.ac.at/Geschichte/LHOMME

a gender-differentiated manner. Reports from English travellers to North America (Thomas Harriot, James Rosier/George Waymouth, George Percy) are taken into account, as well as Roger Williams's dictionary.

Julia Barbara Köhne, Medicinally Confused Senses. War Hysteria and Narco-Hypnosis in British and US Educational Films, 1943–1945

Between 1943 and 1945, military leaders of both nations commissioned the filming of symptoms of exhaustion and their treatment in order to communicate detailed knowledge about the application of narco-hypnosis for psychoneurosis patients to hundreds of British and US military doctors. From a transnational and interdisciplinary perspective, this article focuses on select military-medical instructional films about this form of treatment, which was supposed to help re-masculinise and remilitarise “war hysterics” who, at that time, were seen as symbolically effeminate. Using special dramaturgical and aesthetic means, narco-hypnosis films managed to suggest that the war participants under treatment could be cured. Filmic illusion was involved in imaginatively restoring overexcited, disturbed and irritated senses of the traumatised, “hysterical” soldiers and officers. Trance-like half-sleep initiated by medication with barbiturates was intended to invite loops of repetition and reliving and, at the same time, to initiate a conscious and cathartic journey of memory, which was closely supervised by military doctors.

Stephanie Weismann, Something's in the Air. The Smellscapes of Polish People's Republic under Transformation

Ruminating on soaps, perfumes and shampoo, the paper examines the olfactory notion of political, social and gender orders in socialist Poland. The smellscape of cosmetics not only provides insight into cultural practices of everyday life but also serves as an indicator of changing political and economic regimes. Sniffing through various cosmetic products under state socialism in Poland, the paper aims at tracking down what actually was in the air? Focusing on the cosmetic sector, the contribution traces desires and projections, anticipation and contempt, self-perception and ‘othering’, triggered by certain odours. Drawing on

narrative interviews, discussions in social media, articles in women's magazines and the history of cosmetic industry in the Polish People's Republic, the article focuses on smell-encounters and odour-images under state socialism.

Waltraud Schütz, Between Public Control and Individual Agency. On the History of Entrepreneurial Women in the Viennese Vormärz Period

Vienna's Vormärz period, previously also termed the "Biedermeier" epoch, has long been considered to be characterised by censorship and repression. Yet there have been women working in various types of self-employment. This article focuses on occupations that were generally seen as women's work at the time. In parallel, the impact of moral conceptions and legal frameworks that shaped women's possibility to exert agency and their attempts to overcome these limits are examined. The case study of a female educational entrepreneur shows the tensions between public control and individual agency, highlighting how gender-specific norms were simultaneously fulfilled and questioned in the early nineteenth century. By investigating female entrepreneurial activity, the customary image of the 'Biedermeier woman' is re-conceptualised to give new insights into the variety of efforts used to secure a livelihood.