

Multisensuality Through History and Across Media

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Shahal B.

How do boundaries feel? A study on playing film songs in private buses of Kannur, Kerala

Abstract

This article explores how playing or pausing music in general transport buses demarcates a multisensorial boundary between the urban and the non-urban in the South Indian state of Kerala. This is to analyse how the ritualised habit of playing (mostly) Malayalam film songs in buses adds to the multisensorial experience of the passengers. Drawing upon ethnographic research conducted between 2019-2022 among bus drivers and bus passengers, the article traces a history of this everydayness, and how legal and extralegal means have become necessary for its maintenance.

I posit the categories used by the bus drivers to differentiate the sound of everyday travel and occasional travel in terms of tactile and non-tactile music and set these categories against a 2007 judgement of the Kerala High Court regarding the playing of music in buses.

I argue that pausing of music by the drivers as they enter, what they understand as, the city limits causes physical sensations on the travellers’ bodies, consequently marking a multisensorial boundary that is beyond administrative.

Biographical note

Shahal B. is a 4th year PhD scholar at the Department of Communication, University of Hyderabad. He is studying the relationship between infrastructure and sound (technologies) in Kerala, India, and how technology allows for a certain everyday of sound. His PhD research draws from sound studies, infrastructure studies, and media anthropology.

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Damian Bączkiewicz

Multisensory sources of human cognition in the realm of politics. Enactivistic approach

Abstract

It used to be a common belief that the politics is all about governing and a struggle for power. Within such an approach, the citizens should perceive the realm of politics as a win-lose political game with clear rules and regulations. Therefore, how they see this sphere of public life should be affected only by the elections, laws, parliamentary debates etc. However, it seems inappropriate to limit the field of politics cognition to such a narrow area. As I believe, people receive many sensorimotor stimuli and it shapes their mind in the context of political attitudes.

I would like to use the enactivism theory as a theoretical background to enlighten how the everyday's events shape people's cognition of politics. I am highly convinced that we should not limit its boundaries to the classical meaning. The stimuli that reach us from the world of politics have a different character - visual, sound, smell or simply multisensual. Perhaps, as the language seems to be socially constructed as well, one should count it as one of the important factor shaping our political attitude, beliefs and thoughts.

To conceptualize the theoretical framework of my paper, I would start by taking into account concepts even earlier than the enactivism itself. For instance, James J. Gibson believed that the elements of the environment in which a man lives, provide him with the so-called affordances that determine his attitude towards the object and are either seen as an advantage or a disadvantage for this man. The basic concept of Varela, Thompson, and Rosch is key for understanding the concept of the enactive approach.

Accordingly, to their beliefs, enactivism is a cognitive model which assumes that the subject's cognitive abilities result from his activity in the surrounding world (so-called enaction) and his involvement in life (both in the natural and non-material sense) creates meaning and introduces the meanings of other objects of the environment. This theory assumes that "in the world of living creatures, order is, in fact, inseparable from the methods by which meaning is given, so it can be said that every living creature has its own world".

Throughout my paper, I will try to persuade that the that the enactive perspective means that the limits of cognition are determined by the scope of all human activity, man "recreates the world in which he lives", and embodied action determines his perception of politics, in this case. During my proposed presentation, I will focus on considering the following questions: how the various stimuli shape our political cognition and how the citizens create their attitude towards the multisensual cognition. To achieve these goals I use behavioral methods and the analysis of enactivism approach.

Biographical note

Damian Bączkiewicz, PhD Candidate, University of Wrocław, Faculty of Social Sciences.

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Monali Chatterjee

A Kaleidoscope of Multisensory Perceptions in the Films of Buddhadeb Dasgupta

Abstract

In the present age, digital media particularly films have earned the reputation of successfully forging an alternative reality by offering a multisensory experience to the spectators. Playing a pivotal role in the foundation of Indian realistic cinema, the films of Buddhdev Dasgupta have conveyed its serious, hard-hitting messages through its sensory appeal. His films have been widely applauded and recognized for portraying multisensory poetry on celluloid. His iconic films like *Tahader Katha* (1992) *Grihajuddha* (1982) and *Bagh Bahadur* (1989) reveal the bleakest secrets of the human mind. On the other hand, films like *Charachar* (1993), *Top* and *Uro Jahaj* convey a unique sense of the ethereal existence through its multisensory experience. This paper attempts to analyse the multisensory film aesthetics in some selected films of Buddhdev Dasgupta that question the cultural codes and sets exemplary models of individual, social as well as environmental responsibility through its unique portrayal of multisensory experiences. This experiential perception of these films creates an alternative reality with the help of the stylistic aspects of narration. This paper also attempts to find out what purpose is served by this multi-sensory appeal and how it has opened new avenues and genres in the discipline of film-making.

Biographical note

Dr. Monali Chatterjee, Assistant Professor, Gujarat Arts and Science College, Ahmedabad, is keenly interested in English Literature, Language and Communication Studies. She has been teaching the same for numerous professional courses in several colleges and universities across Gujarat and abroad for about two decades. She has also taught English Language in the UK. An ardent lover of music, dance, poetry and drama, she is professionally trained in Indian classical music, dance and art. She has presented papers in many international conferences and has published widely on higher education, diaspora studies, South Asian Literature and Film Studies apart from poetry in popular dailies.

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Anna Dominikowska

Syneesthesia in the poetry of Zbigniew Herbert

Abstract

The subject of this paper is the analysis of synaesthetic metaphors on the basis of the poetic output of Zbigniew Herbert. The theoretical part illuminates the issue of synesthesia from a medical perspective, providing theories regarding its etiology and the most popular typologies of the phenomenon. The first chapter also includes a consideration of synesthesia from a cultural perspective – the theme of the influence of intersensory perception on art, focusing on the field of literature. The research part of the paper begins with a short characteristic of Zbigniew Herbert's poetic language. Chapter Three provides a quantitative and semantic analysis of synaesthetic metaphors contained in the poet's poems.

Biographical note

Anna Dominikowska is a student of the second degree of Polish philology at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. She received a bachelor's degree in speech therapy at the same university in the previous year. She is interested in arts, linguistics and neurobiology.

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Kavon Franklin

The Mask as Reality and Metaphor

Abstract

In Paul Laurence Dunbar’s “We Wear the Mask” (1895), the speaker bemoans the need for black Americans to hide their frustrations behind the pretense of simple-minded “Negro” amiability. Literal and figurative mask-wearing figures prominently in several works of literature, past and present, but my presentation will go beyond these texts to explore the historical and cultural importance of masks—from their functions as shields for criminals (including the bandits of the Old West and the founding members of the Ku Klux Klan in the Deep South) to the number of ways masks have played and continue to play a role in health, fashion, sex, education, politics and entertainment. Masks have been a focal point of conversation since the beginning of the COVID-19 lockdown in the United States, but they have long played an outsize role in the American mythos. This presentation examines how they not only affect the senses, but the psyche.

Biographical note

Kavon Franklin is an associate professor of English at Alabama State University. She received a BA in journalism and an MFA in creative writing from the University of Alabama. She earned a PhD in English from Florida State University. Her areas of interest include African American history and cultural studies, narrative nonfiction, media studies, and twentieth and twenty-first century American literature. Past awards include the Excellence in Teaching Award from the National Society of Leadership and Success and the McKnight Fellowship. Her work has appeared in the *Pierian Literary Journal*, *Trespassing Journal*, and the *Journal of South Texas English Studies*.

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Eden Hevroni

Jaffa’s Multisensual Experience: Exploring Unknown Odorous History by a “Wheel of Smells”

Abstract

The Mediterranean Jaffa, one of the oldest cities in the world, embodies a particularly intriguing *and* political multigenerational and multisensory experience involving the senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. In my inquiry of the cultural history of Jaffa, I genuinely developed a "smells wheel," a tool that help us in experiencing the history of this site in a unique sensory way. My "Jaffa's Wheel of Smells" represents this place's scents from the Ottoman period (1516-1917) to the British Mandate (1917-1948). My investigation concentrates, however, on critical reading of 19th Century Western travelogues and visitors' diaries written by European and American tourists. In their typical colonial perspective, they eagerly describe Jaffa's smells during the Ottoman period. Their vigorous references to the particularly "exotic," unique odors of Jaffa are the data of for my research. My classification of the Western tourists' fragrant experiences, and the consequent odorous morphology I developed, are the origins of my "Jaffa's Wheel of Smells." This sensory tool enables the user to imagine her/himself getting off the boat at the Mediterranean shore, encountering a new land, following her/his nose in examining the town's streets, and passing by loud market with smells of its own that s/he has never smelled before. Significantly, my presentation focuses on the interrelations between words and smells, textuality and fragrancy, and the benefits of mapping historical smells. I believe that recognizing these tourists' significantly odorous experiences stimulates a deeper understanding of Jaffa's emotional and cultural histories and identities. We can learn from these testimonial diaries about the smells of the Holy Land in the past. Further, we can explore the way in which the odorous texts constructed the lure of the East through the writers' foreign eyes. In a way, their noses can teach our nose about the historical fragrancy of Jaffa.

Biographical note

Eden Hevroni is an artist and MA student in the department of Israel studies at the University of Haifa. Her ongoing research focuses on the historical scents of Jaffa, a significant aspect of the cultural identity of this place. During her research, Hevroni has developed a unique “Jaffa Smell Wheel” which revitalizes Jaffa's colorful history.

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Lea Horvat

Spatio-sensory coffee settings and experiences on the Habsburg semiperiphery

Abstract

Coffee consumption is a layered multisensory phenomenon that goes far beyond the taste buds. The fragrance, haptic qualities of cups, spoons, chairs, tables, benches, the visuality and the sounds of the coffeespace — a murmur of conversations, music in the background, noises accompanying preparation of coffee — are an essential part of the coffee experience. Yet, for the most part, historical research on coffee focused either on the history of the substance or drink (looking at the history of trade, gustatory history, and preparation modalities) or on the history of cafés and related coffeespaces (history of built environment, social history). I argue for merging both and conceptualizing coffee consumption as a spatio-sensory setting and experience.

In the first part of the paper, I explore the wide range of spatio-sensory settings in the southwestern part of the Habsburg Empire, shaped by a wide range of coffee cultures — from Vienna-style Kaffeehaus to Italian espresso culture and Ottoman kahvehane. Furthermore, drawing on ego documents and visual sources, I demonstrate how similar settings could produce significantly different spatio-sensory experiences. The differences were rooted not primarily in individual taste and preferences but in societal restrictions and norms surrounding and co-constituting gender, race, ability, and class. In the second part, I discuss the methodological limitations of 19th-century sources. Finally, I reflect on the importance of the feminist decolonial framework centering “semiperipheries” (Boatcă) and “strategic inter-imperial zones” (Doyle) for a better understanding of spatio-sensory settings and experiences.

Biographical note

Lea Horvat (*1990, Zagreb) is a postdoctoral lecturer and researcher at the Friedrich Schiller University Jena, Department of Cultural History. She is currently working on her habilitation project, *A Taste of Caffeinated Emancipation: Coffee, Cafés, and Gender in the Habsburg Empire (18th-early 20th Century)*. She holds a PhD in History from the University of Hamburg and an MA in Art History and Comparative Literature from the University of Zagreb. Her dissertation project *Baustelle, Wohnung, Siedlung, Bild: Eine Kulturgeschichte des Massenwohnbaus im sozialistischen Jugoslawien und danach* (defended in 2022, grade: *summa cum laude*) was supported by the German Academic Scholarship Foundation. In addition, she was a teaching fellow at the Humboldt University of Berlin, the Center for Women’s Studies in Zagreb, and the University of Leipzig and a visiting scholar at the Iowa State University (College of Design) and at the Leibniz ScienceCampus “Eastern Europe — Global Area” in Leipzig. Her research interests lie at the intersection of the modern built environment, feminism, everyday life in Southeast Europe, Sensory History, and popular culture.

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Sandra Imko

Hidden aspects of modern tapestries

Abstract

The paper aims to analyze how tapestries affect our senses in the context of haptic sensitivity, embodied cognition, and the concept of extended haptics (Smolińska 2020). I will focus on Polish tapestries, made in the second half of the 20th century. With particular emphasis on works by prominent weavers Magdalena Abakanowicz and Jolanta Owidzka. In the 1960s Polish artists played an important role in reinventing traditional, centuries-old craft. They used new, innovative techniques and materials, among others sisal, ovine fleece, thick wool, and cotton string. These materials are stimulating our senses on many levels, including haptic and olfactory perception. It is not evident without close contact with a tapestry, but it is fragrant and it stimulates our sense of smell. Haptics is also very important; the complicated weave tempts us to touch it and feel it with our own hands. In most cases, we are not allowed to touch the art, but our sense of sight can cooperate with our tactile memory to help us imagine the tapestry's structure. The sensual experience of artistic fabrics returns continually in art critique and reviews but was never before analyzed as an important factor of this art. Rereading textiles with contemporary research perspectives, particularly embodied cognition, will allow us to highlight an aspect so far overlooked in the history of art: the meaning of sensual cognition in experiencing the art of fiber.

Biographical note

Sandra Imko is a museologist, art historian, and Ph.D. candidate at John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. Currently preparing a thesis about Polish modern tapestries in the second half of the twentieth century.

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Kamila Kalista

The Polyphonic Dance of Wilde, Shaw, Dostoyevsky and Shakespeare in Woody Allen’s films

Abstract

Woody Allen’s comedies are like a perpetual carnival, filled with festivity and laughter – a time when most senses are awoken, and participants celebrate freedom and equality. His dramas are marked by a profanation of rules which are generally sacred or at least widely respected. Most of Allen’s films are anti-elitist, showing the dysfunctionality of hierarchical relationships and characters who often behave in inappropriate, provocative and revolting ways.

The author of the presentation analyzes several of Woody Allen’s films, referring to Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory on polyphony and his concept of the carnivalesque. Allen’s films are upside down worlds of such classics as *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *Pygmalion*, *Crime and Punishment*, and *Othello*. The director conducts a constant dialog with other artists, writers, philosophers and even God. He agrees or polemizes with them on subjects concerning a whole range of emotions mostly in a humorous or ironic way, copying different styles to create a pastiche, a parody, or his own version of drama.

Biographical note

Kamila Kalista graduated from English Studies and Political Science, focusing on discourse and genre of advertisements and propaganda. She completed her PhD, in which she analyses food and death motifs in film. She is the author of texts related to: food and drink as symbols in historical perspectives; food and death in cultures; food and gender; and food film. Currently, she is working at the University of Humanities and Economics in Lodz. She is mainly interested in politics, culture and literature theories, literature in film, and food studies.

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Peter Kao

Face as Metaphor in Dream Visions in Milan Kundera's *Identity*

Abstract

This paper mainly investigates the sensual image through the representation of face as the metaphor in dream visions in Milan Kundera's *Identity*. Despite the fact that previous studies mainly focus on Mr. Kundera's novels mostly as political campaign or philosophical manifesto, I'd suggest that *Identity*, however, indicates the modern multisensuality through the icon of face represented in terms of love between Chantal and Jean-Marc and between those around them. Moreover, this paper also attempts to delineate face identified to be metaphor as literary technique in Sigmund Freud's words "the return of the repressed." Also, face as metaphor is embodied in what Lacan in his "Anamorphosis" argues "the symbolic fulfillments of unconscious desires." That face as multisensual object shown in *Identity*, therefore, can be seen as external factors that instigate a certain self-reflection on love between Chantal and Jean-Marc. Second, that face can also be regarded as re-enchantment as internal drive that helps re-define a certain correlation in terms of identity between Chantal and Jean-Marc. In this paper, metaphor in dreams visions as inherently unstable literary tradition follows a short introduction. A metaphoric reading approach to *Identity* will be utilized. Finally, as this paper suggests, that face serves the function of one's self-identity that is quite often displaced, juxtaposed and belated.

Biographical note

Mr. Peter Kao is currently a postgraduate student whose research interests, broadly speaking, focus on British & American literature, European literature, literary theories and criticism, world and comparative literature. He has presented several papers at domestic and international conferences. His recent work drawing on the 18th-century literary studies went through double-blind peer-reviewed process and will be published this year. Should you have any questions, please contact him through email: longpeter066@gmail.com.

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Marzena Keating, Joanna Łapińska

Listen to This Crispy Chicken! Sound in Culinary Recipes

Abstract

In the paper, we will present an overview of numerous roles, ranging from informative through performative to artistic-aesthetic, which sound plays in culinary recipes. Based on the analysis of selected recipes presented in various media, such as cookbooks, television culinary shows and ASMR videos, we will seek to demonstrate both the material dimension of sound, mainly brought to existence by the techniques and technologies used and its aesthetic-artistic dimension actualized in a performative act. In the presentation, we will prove, following Maurice Merleau-Ponty's and Melissa Van Drie's observations, that sensory experiences in culinary contexts are always intertwined, and listening, like cooking, is multisensorial. Our research draws primarily on the concepts developed within the field of sound studies, phenomenology, postphenomenology, culinary history and food studies.

Biographical note

Marzena Keating, PhD in the field of Humanities in the discipline of Culture and Religion Studies, MA in English Studies. The author of several texts centred on Irish history and culture. She works at the Pedagogical University of Cracow in the Institute of English Studies, where she teaches courses in British and Irish culture. Her primary interests lie in the fields of Irish History, Cultural Studies, Postcolonial Theory and Culinary History.

Joanna Łapińska, PhD in Cultural Studies, MA in Film Studies. The author of many articles in the collective monographs and journals, as well as the monograph entitled “To kocha! Związki miłosne ludzi i maszyn w filmie science fiction” (2020) about the love relationships of humans and machines in science fiction film. Her interests include the phenomena of contemporary cinema, the theories and practices of posthumanism and the new practices of intimacy. Currently, she works at the University of Vienna in the Department of Theater, Film and Media Studies as a project leader of FWF Lise Meitner postdoc project “ASMR as a New Intimacy Practice in Western Culture.”

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Bartosz Mroczkowski

Designing the Future by Touch and Other Senses

Abstract

The aim of my presentation is to discuss how we can create different models of material futures using a combination of our senses. I understand various models of the future as living communities involve the bodily relationship and the connection between the human and the non-human. I pose questions about the possibility of creating communities that arise in the conditions of dynamic planetary changes, considered precisely as various variants of the materialization of the future.

Biographical note

Dancing philosopher. He obtained his Ph.D. from philosophy on the basis of a dissertation entitled „Conceptualizations and Practices of the Body in the Perspective of Posthumanism and New Materialism” (2021). Founder of the non-governmental organization Thinking Machine and co-editor of its website (2014-2017). Member of The Sense of Movement Foundation (2015-2020). He uses a transdisciplinary perspective in his research work, combining tools from the field of philosophy and practices of the body (martial arts, dance, performance, meditation, etc.), aimed at developing bodily awareness and mindfulness in movement. His research interests are focused on the contemporary trends of posthumanism, new materialism, aesthetics of existence, with particular emphasis on the broadly understood corporeality/materiality and experiments related to it. He published in „Time of Culture”, „Theoretical Practice”, the scientific series „Scripta” IFK UW, and „Thinking Machine”.

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Urszula Niewiadomska-Flis

Expressing Troubled Southern Identity Through Multisensory Experiences

Abstract

In Monique Truong's *Bitter in the Mouth* the main heroine Linda, a daughter of Thomas and DeAnne Hammerick – an old aristocratic Southern family in Boiling Springs, North Carolina, experiences the surrounding world through lexical-gustatory synesthesia. Monique Truong builds her nonlinear narrative of Linda's Southern existence around three secrets, two of which the narrator reveals in the first part of the novel, called “Confession.” Linda is presented as an outcast because of what she dubs her “secret sense” – that is synesthesia. The third one is explored in the second section, called “Revelation,” which is a revision through which the adult Linda comes to terms with her Southern childhood. I wish to analyze how this synesthetic experience of reality shapes Linda's sense of otherness affected by the third secret.

Synesthesia offers access into (racial/ethnic) double consciousness, which DuBois identified as a clash between a sense of a self and a sense of being seen as a different / other self. Linda's feeling of otherness and her disconnection from others is conveyed and experienced synesthetically through (con)fusion of the senses. In synesthetic experience sensory modes meet and overlap but there is a nonhomologous relationship between the sound of a word and the evoked taste of food. The tastes that are evoked by spoken words are not a type of associative metaphor. Rather, they are clues that Linda's sense of self is fragmented, if not perceived as aberrant. As an unconscious coping mechanism, synesthesia might refract Linda's narrative of herself into multiple fragments that protect her from the impact of total recall of early childhood she was forced to repress. Thus, it is also my intention to analyze how multisensory experience of the “Partly Colored South” becomes an expression of Linda's ethnic doubling that has been repressed by her adopted family.

Biographical note

Urszula Niewiadomska-Flis is associate professor of literature at John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland. Her scholarly interests encompass representations of foodways in literature and film, literature of the American South, and ethnic/immigrant literatures of the USA. Her most recent book project *Live and Let Di(n)e: Food and Race in the Texts of the American South* (KUL Publishing House, 2017) was awarded “the 2018 American Studies Network Book Prize” by the American Studies Network (of EAAS). Her current research projects explore the ethnic Southern literatures through the prism of food, the issue of “farming while black” as well as food apartheid in communities of color. She is Eccles Fellow at the British Library, London (2014) and a Fellow of Salzburg Global Seminar (2019). More detailed information can be obtained here: <http://urszulaniewiadomska-flis.com>.

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Kai Nowak

Synaesthesia of Safety. The Emergence of the “Seventh Sense” as a Key Concept in West German Traffic Education (1960-1980)

Abstract

Since the 1960s, the notion of a “seventh sense” shaped West German traffic education and its media for several decades. It even became widely popular through the TV series of the same name, which ran on national television from 1966 to 2005. The seventh sense was conceived as a new and specific synaesthetic sense, that is essential for survival on the road in the age of mass motorisation. It combines various sensory perceptions, especially hearing and seeing, as well as fundamental qualities such as the ability to anticipate the behaviour of others and self-awareness. The seventh sense can be understood as a kind of sensory- and experience-based instinct that always lets road users do the right thing in any kind of situation. As safety experts believed, traffic education had to achieve the formation of the seventh sense in road users in order to reduce the number of accidents and thus make roads safer.

My paper asks where the notion of the seventh sense came from, what was new compared to the older role of the senses in traffic education, and why it was such a success story – regardless of whether road safety actually improved or not. In doing so, I pay special attention to the question, how media of traffic education tried to represent the specific synaesthetic qualities of the seventh sense. My paper draws upon a variety of sources such as scientific publications, journal articles, campaign concepts, textbooks, and educational films and television programmes.

Biographical note

Historian at Leipzig University. Research fellow of Gerda Henkel Stiftung. Research interests: 20th century cultural and social history, media history, history of risk, safety and prevention, cultural history of technology. Currently working on the history of traffic education in 20th century Germany.

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Joanna Nowińska

Multisensuality in canonical apocalyptic literature as a rhetoric tool transforming temporality and evocation (on the basis of Rev 21:10 – 22:5)

Abstract

Taking up research on multisensuality of ancient Semitic apocalyptic texts announces a breakthrough of their interpretation. It reveals the dimension of purposefulness and not the end of the world, shows temporality of the apocalyptic literature which is focused on the present and not on the future. Sensual stimuli introduced in the text reduce distance and allow the main heroes and recipients to cope with traumatic experience in the atmosphere of closeness and relationship. Multisensuality turns out to be a great tool in the process of persuasion as it changes perception perspective in relation to the reality shifting attention from danger analysis onto search for the meaning of the events. A subsequent transformation of emotional climate takes place on the basis of a relationship, and not only on the basis of shaping one's sensitivity. The description of Jerusalem in the last chapters of the Revelation of St John is a great example of this type of activities and simultaneously its exegesis including multisensuality changes a popular understanding of this image.

Biographical note

Doctor habilitated Joanna Nowińska, Silesian University in Katowice, a biblist, lecturer in Silesian University in Katowice and Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow, co-creator of the project YOUMYGOD; she cooperates with interdisciplinary research centres in Poznań and Warszawa. Academic profile: canonical apocalyptic literature – interdisciplinary research. The latest monograph: “What can you hear apart from sound? Sound design in the Revelation of St John (Warsaw, Vocatio, 2017).

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Benjamin Olin

Studio-Mix: Haptic Visuality and Intersubjective Flux on New York Artists’ Television

Abstract

This paper will provide a multisensory perspective on public access cable-TV shows produced by artists in lower Manhattan during the 1970s and 1980s. While downtown culture from this period has been critically acclaimed, this important body of work remains largely overlooked. Examining a selection of key shows—including *TV Party*, *Public Access Poetry*, *Potato Wolf*, and *Anton Perich Presents*—and drawing closely on interviews which I have conducted with the artists, the paper will investigate how the TV studio functions as a site of intersubjective flux, an affectively rich space in which bodies, technics, and architecture become intimately entangled.

Artists’ television shows were recorded in a municipal TV studio on 23rd Street in front of small studio audiences—consisting of friends and fellow artists—broadcast live on Manhattan Cable-TV, and screened in local art-spaces and nightclubs. The artists were responsible for all aspects of the production, operating the cameras, lights, and mixing desk. Formally experimental, each episode superposed bit-parts of performers and audience members with shots of technical equipment, splicing together a heterogeneous techno-body, which—I will argue—gave form to the broader social corpus of downtown life. The paper will explore how the degraded, pixelated qualities of these amateurly produced cable-TV images solicited an immersive haptic mode of encounter. It will show how these artists used cable-TV to extend the techno-utopian aims of 1960s expanded cinema, using the television studio to construct a chiasmatic socio-technic assemblage, in which the lines between individual and collective, audience and actor, actualized and speculative media, and organic and technical circuits were intentionally blurred.

Building on a range of theories of embodiment, visuality, technicity, spatiality and affect—developed by Karen Barad, Laura Marks, Vivian Sobchack, Michel Serres, Hito Steyerl, Merleau-Ponty, Deleuze and Guattari, Bruno Latour, Manuel DeLanda, Elizabeth Grosz—the paper will explore how the production of these shows functioned as a cybernetic techno-social ritual, which played a vital role in bolstering the relational fabric of downtown counterculture. I will argue that this process of world-making challenges received understandings of media feedback as an inherently singular, solipsistic, or “narcissistic” process. Finally, I will ask how taking a multisensory approach to this historic instance of an independent analogue media ecology can open new windows on self-imaging practices within contemporary digital culture.

Biographical note

Benjamin Olin is assistant professor in the Department of English Language and Literature at Hong Kong Shue Yan University. He received his Ph.D. in Cinema Studies from New York University. He previously served as assistant professor in the cinema and television program at Beijing Normal University-Hong Kong Baptist University UIC, and as a postdoctoral fellow at NYU. His research on film and media has been published in *Art Journal*; *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media*; *Millennium Film Journal*; *Jacket 2*; and *Downtown Film and TV Culture, 1975-2001*, ed. Joan Hawkins (Intellect, 2015). His current book project, “Underground Networks: Artists’ Television in New York,” examines cable-TV shows produced by downtown artists during the 1970s and 1980s.

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Iga Pękala, Magdalena Witkowicz

Sensuality and affect in contemporary Polish films

Abstract

The aim of the paper is to analyze three Polish films in terms of *sensuous theory* (Vivian Sobchack, Laura U. Marks: *haptic visuality*) and the theory of affects (Gilles Deleuze, Brian Massumi). We would like to focus particularly on fragments of works portraying characters' intense emotional states. Our main interest will be the way emotions and affects are presented in the plot and form – and how the viewers can feel them.

We have chosen three films made by young Polish directors about young people. The first one, Dawid Nickel's *Love Tasting* (2020), is a coming-of-age film about a group of teenagers waiting for their last day of school. The second one, *All these sleepless nights* (2016) by Michał Marczak, is a hybrid of fiction and documentary about the summer nights of two friends in their twenties. Magnus von Horn's *Sweat* (2020) looks into the issue of social media fame through the eyes of young fitness influencer. All three works tell stories of failed relationships and rejection, but also portray young people's identity building.

Teenagers and young adults are especially prone to experiencing turbo-charged emotions and feelings (e.g. Dahl, 2004). The films depicted above show their characters in vulnerable positions. We would like to look at the scenes of intense emotional states through the prism of the following categories: identity building, growing and interpersonal relationships. We wonder how the *sensuous theory* can combine these categories.

Biographical note

Iga Pękala: I am a PhD student at the University of Wrocław (Faculty of Philology). I am interested in: the multisensory experience of film (*sensuous theory*, haptic nature of cinema), auteur theory, influence of film works on the viewer. I am writing about movies of Yorgos Lanthimos mostly from the perspective of sensual theory. I explore what happens if methods of *sensuous theory* to analyze films are used, especially those which are could be described as examples of auteur cinema.

Magdalena Witkowicz: I am a research associate at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research into Health and Illness (University of Wrocław) and a PhD student at the Doctoral Faculty of Philology. I hold a Master's degree in psychology, while my current work is associated with media studies. I am interested in representations of mental health in different types of media. I am currently looking into discursive representations of death and coming out of loneliness.

Organizers:

University of Vienna, Pedagogical University of Cracow, University of Humanities and Economics in Lodz

Nina C. Rastinger

Capturing Extraordinary and Multisensory Experiences in Writing: Reports on Natural Disasters in an 18th Century Newspaper Corpus

Abstract

The contribution at hand deals with written representations of natural calamities, which can be considered both extraordinary and multisensory experiences, in historical newspaper texts. More specifically, it takes a look at the 18th century Austrian newspaper “Wien[n]erisches Diarium” (since 1780: “Wiener Zeitung”) which functioned as the most important publicly accessible source of information within the Habsburg monarchy and is (partly) already available in digitally searchable full text: Within the so-called DIGITARIUM (digitarium.acdh.oeaw.ac.at, Resch & Kampkaspar 2020) users can read and/or query over 300 issues (approx. 3 mio. tokens) of the “Diarium” which are evenly distributed between 1703 and 1799.

This digital corpus acts as the starting point of the investigation, as it allows for the combination of an efficient ‘distant reading’ and a detailed ‘close reading’: Through search queries using selected keywords, namely natural disaster-specific (e.g. *Erdbeben*, *Wolkenbruch*) and more general terms (e.g. *Unglück*, *Schrecken*) as well as their graphematic and grammatical variants (e.g. *Catastrophen*, *Fluth*), mentions of natural catastrophes can be detected even when they are brief and/or widely scattered throughout the historic material. In an iterative and explorative approach, the text passages found are then used for both further analysis and identification of new search terms – a process that is repeated until ‘saturation’, meaning that no new relevant text passages appear any more and the findings compiled can be deemed representative.

As a next step, a quantitative-qualitative analysis or ‘close reading’ of the collected natural disaster reports is conducted. Hereby, not only their diachronic distribution and recurring linguistic patterns are taken into account, but also given cultural frames (e.g. religious vs. scientific interpretations of disasters). Furthermore, the focus is put on the multisensory nature of natural calamities, by asking the following questions: (1) How frequent and in which context(s) are (multi)sensory experiences part of historical disaster reports and, if so, who is depicted as the sensing entity within them (e.g. a generic, collective instance vs. a singular eyewitness)? (2) Are certain senses dominant in 18th century disaster depiction and/or linked to specific types of catastrophes (e.g. hearing to earthquakes)? (3) Which linguistic means are used to convey (multi)sensory aspects of disasters via written text, thus hinting at an early modern “language of senses”?

Using digital and corpus-based methods to answer these and further research questions offers valuable insights into early modern disaster representation and the role multisensuality plays in it. For instance, the ‘distant reading’ demonstrates that natural catastrophes constitute a popular topic in early modern media as they are mentioned in 304 different text passages and almost every second newspaper issue of the DIGITARIUM, while the ‘close reading’ reveals, among other things, that writers frequently use comparisons to every-day sensory experiences to make extraordinary natural events ‘sensible’ for their readers.

Biographical note

Nina C. Rastinger, MA BSc, is a researcher at the Austrian Centre of Digital Humanities and Cultural Heritage of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. She is currently part of the City of Vienna funded project “TIME MACHINE VIENNA: Corresponding digital data treasures and knowledge resources” (PI: Claudia Resch) and the FWF project “Relational Adjectives in the History of German” (RAHiG, PI: Martina Werner) and is heading the upcoming City of Vienna funded project “Visiting Vienna – digital methods for the semi-automated analysis of the arrival lists of the Wien[n]erisches Diarium”. Nina C. Rastinger has received degrees in both Psychology and German Philology and graduated from the University of Vienna with distinction. Her masterthesis is situated at the interface of Multimodal Linguistics, Corpus Linguistics and Digital Humanities and examines the use of Antiqua and Fraktur in historical newspapers.

Organizers:

University of Vienna, Pedagogical University of Cracow, University of Humanities and Economics in Lodz

Sandra Schnädelbach

Sonic Skills for a Healthy Body: Educating the Senses on the East and West German Television Screen, 1960s–1980s

Abstract

From its early days on, television was an important tool for health education in both, the socialist German Democratic Republic (GDR) as well as the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). Often combining various genres, broadcasts on body and health made not only use of a rich visual tradition but also of a careful sound design.

Whereas moving images of these educational or advice oriented programs have received growing attention in recent historical scholarship, their sound track has mostly been neglected. Looking at German television broadcasts from the 1960s to the 1980s this paper seeks to shed light on the connection between sound and images in health advice shows and investigates what knowledge about the effects of sound and music they relied on. How was sound staged in this context? The paper argues that medical research and health advice in East and West was increasingly dedicated to the sense of hearing during these decades, considering it key for physical and mental health. The connection between sound and self-care was of growing popular interest at a time when music therapy started to bloom, New Age celebrated the ‘natural’ triangle of body, mind and music, and new sound technology threatened young people’s hearing abilities. Television, this paper will demonstrate, reflected and shaped these trends – not merely with images but with the *audio-visual*. The relation of both proved to be most important in the field of health education.

Biographical note

Sandra Schnädelbach is a historian of 19th and 20th century European history. Her work focuses on cultural history, history of knowledge and science, media history and the history of emotions. As a doctoral fellow at the Center for the History of Emotions at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development Berlin she received her PhD from Free University Berlin, dedicated to theories of ‚Feeling the Law’ in German jurisprudence around 1900. After a Post-Doc with the ERC project „The healthy self as body capital: Individuals, market-based societies and body politics in visual twentieth century Europe“ at the University of Strasbourg she is currently Gisela Eisenreich Fellow at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf where she explores the entanglement of visual history and history of the body in East and West Germany. Among her recent publications are: *Entscheidende Gefühle. Rechtsgefühl und juristische Emotionalität vom Kaiserreich bis in die Weimarer Republik*, Göttingen: Wallstein 2020; *Bad Vibes: Images of Communication, Emotional Balance and Health in East German Television, 1970s-1980s*. In: *VIEW. Journal of European Television History and Culture* (2020) <https://www.viewjournal.eu/articles/10.18146/view.222/>; with Borge, Jessica/Close-Koenig, Tricia: *Broadcasting Health and Disease: Bodies, Markets and Television, 1950s-2000s*, Thematic Issue in: *Gesnerus* 76/2 (2019).

Organizers:

University of Vienna, Pedagogical University of Cracow, University of Humanities and Economics in Lodz

Tamar Schori

A Visual Language for Scent

Abstract

I'll discuss the underlying conceptual background of ScentSenzia, an ever-growing digital quilt shaped by scent memories AI-harvested from 6.6k members of the [‘Abscent’ Facebook community](#), concentrating on smell loss in the context of covid 19. I invite the quilt visitor to consider the connection between a scent memory¹ and a texture by determining the tactile parameters one ascribes to a specific scent memory. Visitors' input will help determine whether a memory of a wood stove that induces a feeling of longing is smooth or wrinkled, damp or dry. These inputs will serve as building blocks of a future visual language for scent.²

Barwich³ claims that the olfactory experience is more attuned to contextual clues, including semantic content, cultural associations, and affective value. Following her lead, I offer the opportunity to consider the precepts of touch and smell in the absence of sensory stimuli. ‘Scentsenzia’ invites us to redistribute accounts of sensory memories and grow a communal memorial quilt. ‘Reading’ the digital quilt might replace a direct sensory experience with a cognitive percept, much like in-dream rich sensory impressions. Near-death, Turing wrote ‘The pattern of all things’⁴ to explain how the same mathematical principles describe each pattern in nature: zebra stripes, fish dots, and growing embryos. It’s a marvelous way to organize patterns. I used it to allow visitors to perceive scent in tactile terms; in my last scent-oriented installation— ‘Sense of Scent.’⁵

Current research⁶ shows that people worldwide have similar emotional reactions to smell. In my proposed paper, I will explain in detail how, following information visualization and analytics practices, I can position a succession of Turing patterns on the X-axis according to their reaction-diffusion performance, from low to high. I can add a series of recorded emotional reactions to scent arranged according to their amount of stimulation, from low to high. With this, I formulate a scatter chart and a rosetta stone that correlates scent, its emotional response, and textured pattern.

Biographical note

Tamar Schori is an interdisciplinary artist and M.A. graduate from the Shenkar College of Engineering, Design, and Art. Schori is currently an active member of “The sense of smell interdisciplinary workshop” at The School of Cultural Studies, Tel Aviv University, Israel. Her ongoing research focuses on a ‘Visual Language for Scent’ to augment art and design’s ‘visual spectrum’ with a cross-modal vocabulary based on information visualization, big data, and a cross-cultural approach. Web page: www.tamar-schori.net/scentsenzia

¹... Also, in the area of HCI, studies about smell and memories have been explored. For example, Obristet al, [1] collected 439 smell stories about personal memorable experiences involving smell via anonline questionnaire. The aim of the authors was to gather enough information about personal attitudes towards the use of the sense of smell to focus on possible future opportunities for designers to create smell technology. [1] ‘Opportunities for odour: Experiences with smell and [implications for technology](#)’.

² See The bottom paragraph.

³ Smellosophy: What the Nose Tells the Mind A. S. Barwich Harvard University Press, 2020.384 pp.

⁴ Vittadello ST, Leyshon T,Schnoerr D, Stumpf MPH. 2021 Turing patterndesign principles and their robustness.Phil.Trans. R. Soc. A379: 20200272.<https://doi.org/10.1098/rsta.2020.0272>.

⁵ ‘Sense of Scent’ [About Gallery](#).

⁶ Effects of odor on emotion, with implications Mikiko Kadohisa Front Syst Neurosci, 2013. 7: 66.

Organizers:

University of Vienna, Pedagogical University of Cracow, University of Humanities and Economics in Lodz

Jules Sebastian Skutta

Multisensuality of Racism in 19th Century Ethnographic Texts

Abstract

The construction of characteristics of racial differentiation is based on the interplay of different sensory perceptions, as the planned contribution will demonstrate using ethnographic texts from German East Africa. The exploration of cultures and populations in sub-Saharan Africa at the height of European colonialism between 1870 and 1920 was also accompanied by a peak period of intercultural contact and exchange. Here, knowledge was gained about the cultures and populations, and knowledge circulated between Europe and Africa. The "spectacle of the others" also gains special significance for a history of the senses in colonialism.

A history of the senses offers a promising approach to colonial history for an investigation of racist differentiation. According to the equally influential and controversial studies of Marshall McLuhan, not only did reason and objectivity spread in Western societies through the possibilities of printing, but seeing was also able to develop into the preeminent sense perception. In contrast, any society without an established printing press would be characterized by a pattern of perception dominated by hearing. These scriptless cultures would have in common a universal scheme of synesthesia of communication based on hearing and sonic images, in form of an interplay of hearing with touch and smell, as McLuhan sees confirmed in the "tribal societies" of Africa. Moreover, such "ear dominated societies" would have a higher sensory perception, which in turn would refer to a lower intellect on a ladder of living beings. The reason of seeing as the superiority of the Europeans is contrasted with the African cultures determined by emotions: since their pattern of perception is determined by an interplay of hearing and the lower senses, they were at the same time denied the possibility of developing rational reason. The ascription of primitivism and the description of African "tribal societies" often also meant that their sensory perceptions were primitive. This inferiorization of African populations as colonial subjects serves as the starting point for the planned contribution: the ethnographic descriptions of European travelers were examined in terms of their own perception, as well as the descriptions of patterns of perception of the populations of German East Africa.

Furthermore, the example of ethnographic travelogues from German East Africa reveals the multisensuality in the emergence of racial differentiation features. Sensory perceptions can and must first be seen as a central aspect of the colonial encounter, and often exist in written sources as an essentialization of individually and culturally shaped perception. Consequently, there is an emphasis on the uniqueness or exotism of characteristics of foreign cultures and populations that deviate from the biographical imprint of the observer. Here, existing racist differentiating features were taken up, but also sensually constructed through ethnographic observation in the field, and the transmission of existing prejudices was mixed into the evaluation of ethnographic perception. For an investigation of the transmission, emergence, and dissemination of racist features of differentiation, not only the senses of sight and hearing, but especially the interplay with the so-called lower senses of smelling, tasting, and touching offers a promising starting point for historical studies. The added value of a history of the senses, however, lies in the consideration of all the senses involved and their interaction in a phenomenon under investigation, and in this way new approaches and insights can be gained. Accordingly, aspects of ethnographic observation should not be presented according to individual senses in the proposed paper, but the socio-cultural phenomena described in travelogues and the multisensuality in the emergence of such should be brought to the fore. Examples of the multi-sensuality of racial differentiation are then offered, for example, by the living, eating, and working conditions in different cultures of German East Africa. These ethnographic descriptions bear witness to the emergence of racist differentiations based on sensory perceptions - and occupy an essential position in a history of racism that has, however, rarely been examined in studies to date.

Biographical note

Jules Sebastian Skutta, PhD candidate, University of Kassel, Germany. Academic title: M.A. History and Public.

Organizers:

University of Vienna, Pedagogical University of Cracow, University of Humanities and Economics in Lodz

Heiner Stahl

Sensing noise, tasting space. Multisensual perceptions of urban space in Germany and the United Kingdom (1900-1930)

Abstract

This contribution connects noise nuisances to anticipatory memories of urban environments in early 20th century. Between 1900 and 1930 aesthetic discourses on social behaviour in terms of noise pollution shaped the utopian imagination of multisensualities in urban spaces (Bjsterveld 2008; Walraven 2014; Morat 2014; Morat/Ziemer 2018). In *City of Pleasure* Arnold Bennett (1907) develops a sensory utopia. Theodor Lessing launches the journal *Antirüpel* (1908-1911) in order to conceptualize a future's past of noise emissions abated through means of social engineering, disciplining and distancing. August Endell (1908), a German architect, applies a sensory approach to urban experiences whereas Ebenezer Howard (1913) structures future urban space along functionalities of motions. Technical engineers like Bernhard Tschorn (1904), Georg Pinkenburg (1904), Hermann Rasch (1911) and Louis Ascher (1914) are mapping environmental pollution and suggesting measures to an empirical analysis of urban space. Hope Bagenal (1931) explores good acoustics in indoor environments and buildings (Mansell 2017). Knowledge systems, narratives, sensory perceptions, agencies and notions of environmental behaviour intersect in those texts. At that time around 1900, the negative effects of an emerging anthropocene were already in place in urban spaces. The authors outline various paths of city analysis, suggest procedures of mapping noise emissions, assessing multisensualities and creating a comprehensive evaluation of how urban spaces can/should be managed in the future in order to control and enclose public/private soundscapes (Schafer 1973; 1977; Attali 1977; Augoyard 1979).

Biographical note

Since 2013 Heiner Stahl is a post-doctoral researcher in Modern History at the University of Siegen. He submitted his PhD dissertation *Jugendradio im Kalten Ätherkrieg. Berlin als eine Klanglandschaft des Pop (1962–1973)* at the Center for Contemporary History Potsdam in 2008. In October 2019 he successfully completed his habilitation treatise and lecture qualification with a transnational and transregional study on noise and urban space between 1880 and 1960, *Lärm machen. Geräuschkulissen, (Hör-) Erfahrungen und soziale Akustik in Essen, Erfurt und Birmingham*. His second book is due to be published in 2021. He is currently developing a research project on knowledge transfers and gastronomical cultures between 1750 and 1950.

Organizers:

University of Vienna, Pedagogical University of Cracow, University of Humanities and Economics in Lodz

Agata Stronciwilk

The Taste of Hunger. Community and the Sensory Experience in Karolina Brzuzan’s “The Hunger Cookbook”

Abstract

Since 2015, Polish artist Karolina Brzuzan has been engaged in the artistic-research project "The Hunger Cookbook" in which she collects hunger "recipes." During the performance "Hunger is the Best Cook" Brzuzan recreated the hunger dishes and served them to the audience. Her project was based on the idea of searching for a different narrative about hunger, as it emphasized the inadequacy of visual representations. Brzuzan searches for the narrative about hunger that reaches beyond the visuality, allowing the audience for the embodied experience which engages various senses. The confrontation with the visual evidence allows to remain distant, but the act of consumption requires radical proximity. To fully participate in the performance, one had to transgress their own (culturally-based) boundaries of edibility. Brzuzan invited the audience members to "taste" the hunger, believing that the radical proximity inherent in every act of consumption is reflected in a more profound understanding. The artist also provided the context of every dish by placing the narratives that explained their origin beside every plate.

Brzuzan speaks about hunger not through images or statistics but through the body and multisensory experience. Participation in this experience was thought to create an imagined community as the viewer reexperiences the taste of famine foods. Brzuzan compared her project to a communion describing it as a "type of symbolic reconciliation." However, the artist's project raises many questions. In a safe environment, this transgression of edibility does not have its crucial emotional component – the feeling of humiliation, guilt, or fear. There is a danger that the hunger dishes will become only curiosities, and the transgression of the edibility will be treated as an almost playful, childlike dare. The crucial questions raised in the proposed paper concern the ethical aspect of the proposed multisensory embodied experience and the role of an imagined community in this particular food-based performance.

Biographical note

Agata Stronciwilk, PhD, assistant professor at Institute of Art Studies at University of Silesia in Katowice and at Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice. She graduated from Inter-Faculty Individual Studies in the Humanities (Cultural Studies and Philosophy) at University of Silesia and Art History at University of Wrocław. Her research focuses on food in contemporary art. She is particularly interested in the topics of food and power, migration, and senses.

Organizers:

University of Vienna, Pedagogical University of Cracow, University of Humanities and Economics in Lodz

Jan Topolski

Embodiment through sound in early science fiction films

Abstract

The paper is inspired by the term „rendering” by composer and film scholar Michel Chion. He noticed that sometimes sounds in cinema can „convey the impression of material or immaterial, fragile or resistive, sensual or austere, heavy or light, worn out or brand new, and so on”. The most accurate genre to test this argument is science fiction as it introduces unseen (and unheard) worlds, characters and events. How do we believe in them? High budget set design and special effects are only half of answer.

I’d like to examine some iconic films from both sides of the Iron Curtain produced in the 1950s and 1960s (like *Forbidden Planet*, *Silent Star*, *Ikaria XB-1* or series *Doctor Who* and *Star Trek*) through lens of haptic and affect theories. The first one, introduced to film studies by Laura U. Marks and Max Peter, explain on how many, intersecting and sensual levels we do perceive moving images on flat screen. Hearing is one of of them and seems to be key one, as it is most direct, quick and often unconscious and uncontrolled – we don’t have eyebrows after all. The second theory, developed by Gilles Deleuze and Brian Masumi, describes a kind of embodied, intensive, resonant reception, that was called affect. It is often referred to by contemporary sound designers like Academy Award Winner Walter Murch.

Thinking along categories drawn once by writer Italo Calvino in his famous *Harvard Lectures*, I attempt to come up with some typical affects aroused by classical science fictions films. How do we feel the smoothness of heavy spaceships, flying cars or tele transportation? How are we scared by the sliminess of alien creatures or paranormal beings? How are we disturbed by the uncanniness of other planets or futurist labs? And eventually, how are we intimidated by the throbbing of laser swords, photon torpedoes or other lethal weapons?

All these affects and effects mentioned, known from the 70s and 80s blockbusters, actually have been born several decades earlier. Soundtracks to films like *Forbidden Planet* or *Silent Stars* were created on path of painstaking experiments in home or radio studios. Their creators, like Louis and Bebe Barron on one hand, or Andrzej Markowski and Krzysztof Szlifirski on the other, had to be invent sound of futures out of scratch. To create new sound worlds, quite literally. And to succeed they had to refer to haptic and affective perception.

Biographical note

Jan Topolski – PhD candidate at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Poland in field of art studies. Editor-in-chief of „Glissando” new music magazine, film and music curator and critic.

Organizers:

University of Vienna, Pedagogical University of Cracow, University of Humanities and Economics in Lodz

Karolin Wetjen

Experience the climate through the senses. A multisensory approach to climate history

Abstract

Climate, climate change, and global warming have become defining issues in our contemporary world. However, despite human responsibility for global climate change, climate often seems unrelated to culture. Especially the scientifically and politically used definition of climate as the “average weather” disconnects it from human experiences. Recently, Fleming and Jankovic argued that this “weather-biased understanding of the atmosphere” has separated climate from human experience, making it all the more challenging for individuals and societies to relate to climate change. In order to re-address and re-assess the multifold relations of climates, bodies, communities, and their environment, as well as of individuals and their ways of living with the weather, I would like to propose a multisensory approach to climate history.

How people experience the weather was always dependent on sensual experiences. Unbearable heat, the icy cold, a summer breeze, thunderstorms, or the pouring rain can be smelled, heard, felt, seen, and sometimes even tasted. Those sensory experiences of the weather shape the understanding and expectation of the climate and the environment. Hence, the paper argues that the memory of these sensual weather experiences significantly influences how and if climate change is perceived or why the climate is considered stable or unstable. Indeed, with regards to weather phenomena and contemporaries’ evaluation of frozen rivers or the success of harvests, climatic variations have been discussed since classical times. Especially during the Little Ice Age, the sensual experience of the colder weather was compared to former, milder times, as Wolfgang Behringer has prominently shown. But even after the first discoveries and theories on climate changeability in the newly established discipline of climatology that proposed a disconnectedness from the daily weather, sensual experiences of especially hot or cold weather triggered public deliberations about a changing climate whenever they compared their present sensory experience with the weather memory of former times. My paper will use these deliberations as a starting point. It will firstly show how the weather was experienced through the senses and shaped perceptions of the environment. Secondly, it will discuss how sensual experiences of the weather were always entangled with past experiences – whether memorized or recorded – of weather phenomena and how these entanglements facilitated perceptions of climate change. As a result, I would like to propose and discuss a multisensory approach to climate (change) history.

Biographical note

Karolin Wetjen has been Assistant Professor at Kassel University since 2019. After completing two master’s degrees (with distinction) in Medieval and Modern History, Latin, and Education, she earned her doctorate (summa cum laude) in Modern History at Göttingen University in 2019 with a thesis on negotiations of Religion in East Africa at the end of the 19th century (Mission als theologisches Labor. Koloniale Aushandlungen des Religiösen in Ostafrika um 1900, Stuttgart 2020). She received grants from the Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes, the Göttinger Graduiertenschule für Geisteswissenschaften, and the DAAD. In 2017, she worked as a researcher and lecturer at the Department of Modern History at the University of Göttingen. Karolin Wetjen co-edited (with Linda Ratschiller) a volume on new approaches in mission history (Verflochtene Mission: Perspektiven auf eine neue Missionsgeschichte, Cologne 2018) and authored several articles on colonial history and religion. She currently works on a second book (habilitation) on the history of climate knowledge, perceptions of climate change, and the media in the 19th and 20th centuries. Her research interests include the history of cultural entanglements with regard to religion, environmentalism, colonialism, power, and gender.

Organizers:

University of Vienna, Pedagogical University of Cracow, University of Humanities and Economics in Lodz

Abigail Wiese

Dis/Connection: Mutisensuality and shame’s affect in the work of Gabrielle Goliath

Abstract

This paper opens a consideration around what the embodied, immersive and live exchange of performance aesthetics might make us feel and in-turn how this multisensual engagement awakens the feeling-body, specifically around notions of shame.

In 1843, Karl Marx stated in a letter to a friend that shame is a revolutionary sentiment/feeling.⁷ Shame is revolutionary in its nature because it is both a state of disconnection and connection. In feeling shame, we highlight our human desire for connection, making it a fertile ground for empathy and change. In *States of Shame: South African Writing after Apartheid* Caitlin Charos states, “[S]hame is both a site of exposure but also a site of change. Shame separates us from others, causing us to experience that state of painful disidentification and self-consciousness” (246). As outlined by Charos, the affective atmosphere present in South Africa today, ‘chants’ an urgent call to work towards lasting connections of empathy and understanding. In this paper I argue working with shame through multisensual modalities gives us a way to look back to look forward, in order to look in and to look out.

The discussion centralises the work of South African visual artist and performance artist, Gabrielle Goliath⁸ with a critical reading of *Stumbling Block* (2011), *Personal Accounts* (2014), and her most recent work, *Chorus* (2021).⁹ In Goliath’s durational performances the body, both of the performer and the audience member, are carefully centralised in production and engagement of the performance. This centralisation of the body in her works points towards and facilitate an empathetic engagement during the performance as live event. Some points of departure are how these performances curate relationality between bodies which offer potential spaces of clarity to begin to consider the world, our position within it, and our position in relationship to others. Furthermore, this multisensual ‘unspoken’ engagement between bodies reminds us how the body is a communicative instrument. The detailed reflections on these three case studies probe the aesthetics in these performances, critically interrogating their use of ‘gaps’/the in-between, breath, ‘ums’, sound and humming. In addition, the paper discusses how the body is activated differently through multisensual aesthetics and modes of meaning-making through performances that are immersive and embodied. The discussion further highlights how these multisensual modes of meaning-making offer a breaking of tragic cycles of shame that have historically split and polarised humanity. This contemplation therefore critically positions modes of multisensual ‘seeing’ which often fall into the ‘gaps’ of academic spaces and thinking as central bridges in opening up humans to new ways of consciously ‘seeing’.

Biographical note

Dr. Abigail Wiese is a mother to a 3-year-old son, an interdisciplinary artist, theatre-maker, performer, lecturer/teacher and researcher. She obtained her doctoral degree from the University of the Western Cape in 2021. Her doctoral study centralised performance as a critical medium of enquiry in understanding how shame traffics in/through and affects the body. The study used an autoethnographic, practice-led methodology and the analysis was in a post-apartheid context. The study focused on four South African artists working in visual arts, performance art and theatre. Abigail is interested in affective atmospheres/economies and encounters that resonate firstly in the body. Her research focusses on shame and its intersection with discussions around the politics of feeling, performance studies and how the aesthetics of performance might be a helpful mode in better understanding shame. She currently holds a post-doctoral research fellowship with the Institute for Social Cohesion and Identities in Africa (ISCIA) at the University of Nelson Mandela, South Africa.

⁷ Marx writes the letter to his friend Arnold Ruge while traveling in a barge to Dresden in March 1843. The letter was first published by *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* in 1844.

https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/letters/43_03-alt.htm

⁸ Gabrielle Goliath is a PhD candidate at UCT and an ICA fellow. She has a background in Fine Arts and works in multiple mediums. She was the recipient of the 2019 Standard Bank Young Artists Award for Visual Arts and was awarded the Future Generation Award in 2019.

⁹ Synopsis’ of her work can be viewed here: <https://www.gabriellegoliath.com/>

Organizers:

University of Vienna, Pedagogical University of Cracow, University of Humanities and Economics in Lodz

Anna Wiśnicka

Scandinavian perspective to multisensory design

Abstract

The sensorial approach is by definition inseparably linked to the realm of industrial design. Every single prototype and/or object which comes into production is meant to be seen and most often touched. The visibility, being the most obvious manifestation of the sensory approach, is accompanied by various stimuli which come from other sense. The universe of Scandinavian design, which in its core is based on tradition and deeply rooted in local materials and manners, is also keen to adopt new technologies and aesthetics providing an innovative user experience.

In my presentation, I would like to investigate methods and techniques introduced by Scandinavian designers which are beneficial to the overall sensorial aspect of their work. To emphasise the wide spectrum of the subject, various materials would be taken into consideration - wood, glass, metal, textiles, plastic etc. Wood provides the visual, tactile, and olfactory experience which has been used in both conceptual and commercial projects such as those by Simo Heikkilä and Hans Wegner. Glass often considered by designers exclusively for its visual aspects, while in reality it brings the tactile element of shape and structure which are meant to mimic the contact with nature, vital for many Nordic designs just to mention the Kastehelmi (dewdrop) collection by Oiva Toikka. The sound of glass is often used to emphasise certain ambience tones, bringing along the often-neglected component. The auditory nature of design is also used in the new wave of experiments within the sphere of textile design to provide the user with additional ways of experiencing their garment as proved by the recent study of Margareta Zetterblom. It is a new addition to the way design can incorporate multisensory into the product. In a wider perspective, many companies apply branding techniques using olfactory connotation to Scandinavian heritage, just to mention Skandinavisk, and most recently IKEA.

Summarising, the question of multisensory in Scandinavian design, although not yet thoroughly investigated in international literature, provides an interesting research opportunity which is interesting from both the design critique and cultural studies viewpoint.

Biographical note

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