



Senses and Society

THEMATIC GROUP NEWSLETTER



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth and... *each other.*

Editorial

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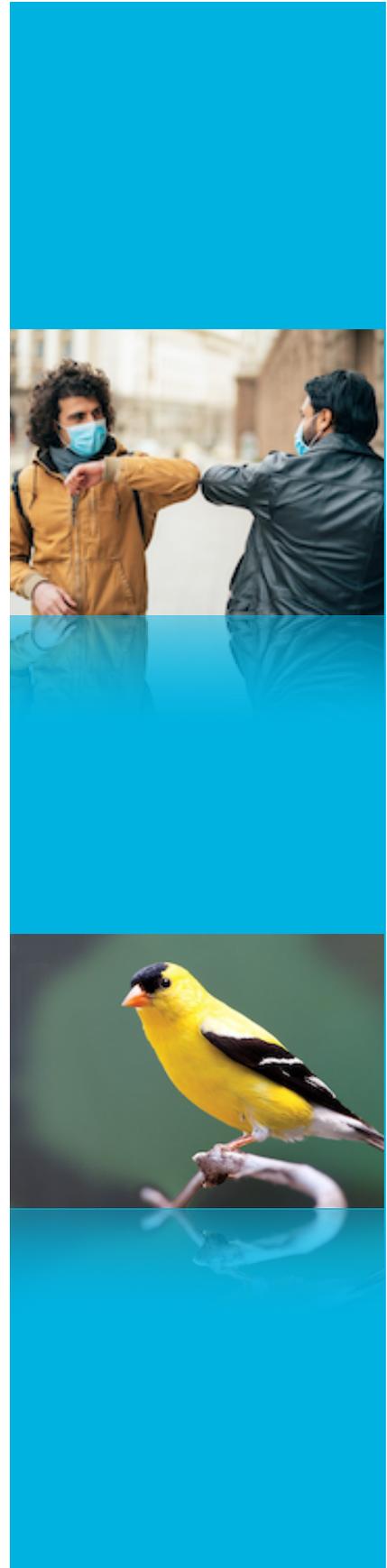


PUBLICATIONS

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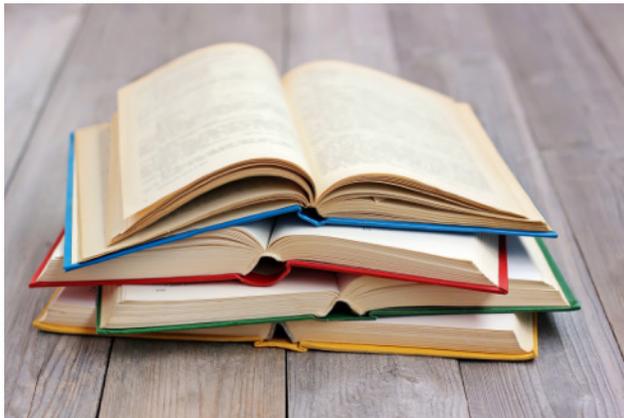
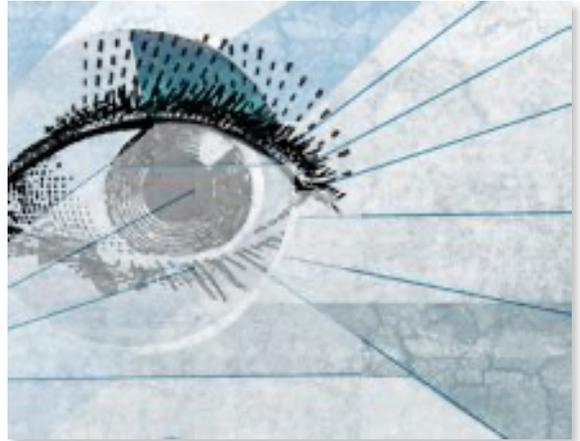
Editorial

Greetings everyone. World events since the last newsletter have meant that a lot of plans, a huge amount of work, in putting together conferences, workshops, symposia, and so on have been wasted or furloughed for now. There are advantages in not having to travel so much, of course. Our sensorium has certainly been altered, if only temporarily. For a few months at least, the usual sounds of heavy traffic in our city streets has lessened. Through the lockdown, the hedgerows and tree branches have come alive with sound - chirruping and tweeting (of the old school kind). Re-attuning to the sounds of nature, the sights and smells of flowers, of animals starting to make incursions into traditionally human territories, we have glimpsed the promise of a different life in the city. But of course, this comes at the price of a large amount of collective suffering, coping, and social isolation. The ability to touch each other (if we have been following the guidelines properly) has been dramatically lessened, and every elbow bump with an friend or acquaintance is a reminder of the lack of real tactile contact - hugs, pats, kisses on the cheek. The everyday nature of these interactions, their simply ability to maintain the momentum of emotional warmth, has been stripped from us. This phenomenon, of 'touch hunger', I talked about to Maryam Ghoreshi, the curator of a New York Center for Book Arts exhibition, 'Out of Sight, Beyond Touch' ([link](#)) in an interview to be published in the catalog and online. The exhibition, of three artists from the Middle East, is of course delayed because of coronavirus until winter 2021 (see 'News', p.4). But the unique aspects of these artists' books would be lost without the ability to touch them, handle them, manipulate them. Whereas some art can be viewed, albeit not ideally, through a web browser, these books were made specifically for touching, and to counterpoint the usual 'Do Not Touch' labels on museum exhibits - an idea familiar enough to those who have read Kevin Hetherington, Fiona Candlin, and others.



As usual, the purpose of this twice-yearly publication is to offer relevant news and opportunities, highlighting new publications of interest to scholars of the senses, publicizing future ISA meetings, activities, and plans. This newsletter and previous issues are available on the TG07 page of the ISA website ([here](#)).

News (pp. 4-6). Obviously, for this issue and perhaps for a while, the News will not include the many planned meetings that this international community of sensory scholars would be attending. As I write this, exactly a week from today the ISA Forum of Sociology in Porto Alegre would be starting. The huge collective efforts of organization had been finished, thousands of abstracts reviewed, panels sorted. Equally disappointing was the postponement from May of the multi-disciplinary conference organized by David Howes in Montreal, *Uncommon Senses III: The Future of the Senses*. But there are other things to announce: new calls for papers for a conference and an Encyclopedia.



Publication Highlights (pp. 7-9) includes brief descriptions of recent publications of potential interest to members of TG07, and some are authored by you, the worldwide community of sensory scholars.

As always, please feel free to email me (paterson@pitt.edu) with any relevant news, events, symposia, publications, exhibitions, or calls for papers that fellow Group members could benefit from. By all means

send me a brief description with time/date/place details.

Mark Paterson

Vice-President of TG07 & Newsletter Editor

News

Out of Sight, Beyond Touch بیرون از دید، ورای لمس

Center for Book Arts, New York Spring 2020 (Postponed to Winter 2021)



Curated by Maryam Ghoreishi, **Out of Sight, Beyond Touch** not only investigates the sense of sight, but also of touch. Through the artworks of Amina Ahmed, Bahman Mohammadi, Masoumeh Mohtadi, and Shirin Salehi, each of these senses— either acting alone or working together— reminds the visitor of the vital role of discovery and understanding that sight and touch play together in determining tactile sensations. Visitors' interactions with each artwork imply the concept of mystery via confrontations with unfamiliar objects or situations. While some works are covered and may only be touched, some can only be viewed, not touched: each concealing a different approach, resulting in the process of discovery. Out of Sight, Beyond Touch is also designed with a reading section containing multiple books in English, Farsi, and Spanish, with a sculpture by Ramyar Vala.

See [website](#) for more details, and to see related talks and the interview with Mark Paterson

Call for Contributions: Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of World Textiles

Co-chief editors Janis Jefferies and Vivienne Richmond

Textiles have been essential to human life since pre-history, have been traded for millennia and - as the continuing focus of technological and artistic innovation - have a dynamic future in the form of e-textiles. The Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of World Textiles will offer, in 700 articles, 3 million words, and 3,500 images, the definitive resource on textiles across cultures and time. Drawing upon archaeology, anthropology, history, art, design, and the social sciences as well as materials science and technology, the ten-volume set will present original articles which:

- define textiles
- describe how they have been made, traded and consumed globally over time
- examine their uses, meaning and significance in both private and public domains
- explore the new materials created as a result of recent technological advances and engage with the future of textiles in a world of finite resources

The architecture of the encyclopedia will reflect the multimodal nature of the subject and will be organized into ten overarching themes:

1. **Raw Materials:** natural fibers, synthetic filaments, blending fibers, spinning and twining threads and yarns
2. **Cloth in Cultures - Wovens:** woven structures, techniques and technologies in the history of weaving
3. **Cloth in Cultures - Non-Wovens:** history, technology, range of formation and use including knits, felt, lace, and non-wovens for medical and industrial use
4. **Color:** dyeing, dyes and the application of color to fibers and fabrics, printing and resist techniques
5. **Embellishment:** finishing, surface design, embroidery, subtraction, and new technology applications informing the design, aesthetics and qualities of textile substrates
6. **Trade and Industry:** global circulation of local manufacture, and the migration and consumption of textile products, both historically and contemporaneously
7. **Function and the Everyday:** textiles in the spheres of domesticity and duty
8. **Politics and Power:** textiles as global signifiers of status, wealth, national identity, ideology, and global influence
9. **Sacred and Ceremonial:** the role and meaning of textiles in world ritual, religions, ceremonies and celebrations
10. **Textile Futures:** textile environmental impacts and proposals for new ecologies of textile production, consumption and disposal, textiles and health

Individual entries will be a maximum of 4,000 words with deadlines for submission of drafts between July 2020 and December 2021. Prospective contributors are invited to submit brief proposals (1-2 paragraphs), identifying the proposed topic and volume, and may submit proposals for more than one topic or volume.

Please send proposals and/or requests for further information to Vivienne Richmond at: v.richmond@gold.ac.uk or j.jefferies@gold.ac.uk

Call for Papers: “Conflict and the Senses in the Global Cold War: From Propaganda to Sensory Warfare”, 15–16 October 2020, Berlin

Berlin Center for Cold War Studies, at the Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History (IfZ). In cooperation with Stiftung Luftbrückendank and Stiftung Ernst-Reuter-Archiv Berlin

Although a conflict in which military strategies and weapons of mass destruction were always on the “horizon of expectation”, the Cold War was to a large degree carried out by non-lethal methods. It was also a war of culture, politics, and (visual and sonic) propaganda. Therefore, it can be understood to a great extent as a war not only on the senses, but as a war through the senses. In recent times, sensory aspects of domestic and international conflicts have become a field of interest in both sensory studies and conflict studies, with their methods and questionnaires intertwining in fruitful cooperation. Historiographical approaches include the study of conflicts from the American Civil War to the Russian Revolution to both World Wars, and these examine how wars as the most extreme form of conflict were perceived—and how war changed contemporary perception. The central conflict of the second half of the 20th century, though, is still a blatantly unexplored area in terms of sensory approaches.

Steve Goodman has described how sound was used to carry out conflict—in propaganda, crowd control, and even in military practice and torture. Extending his term “sonic warfare” to “sensory warfare”, the workshop aims to discuss sensory aspects of the global Cold War—from sonic and visual propaganda to military forms of conflict in the “hot” wars of the Cold War in Korea or Vietnam. What techniques were developed to attack the enemy with non-lethal and lethal weapons, ranging from irritation to the deadly use of chemicals aimed at the respiratory organs of the enemy? How were the senses trained to motivate the masses into a state of alert, for example, through sonic signals? What sensory methods were used to gain intelligence and information? What were the “micro politics” and affective measures used to influence people unconsciously, with the aim of dividing them into political communities of different perceptions, for example, in gustatory preferences? How did the Cold War not only use but also change sensing as a result of division?

Papers may address (among other topics) aspects of:

- sonic and visual propaganda (e.g., at the borders of Germany, Korea, or Vietnam);
- cultural politics aimed at a Western/Eastern way of seeing, hearing, etc.;
- taste politics, as in “Americanized” vs. “Sovietized” and how this pertains to the global context concerning nutrition (e.g., airdrops of chocolate and chewing gum during the Berlin Airlift);
- spatial analysis of Cold War sense scapes;
- the “built view”, as in political architectures of transparency, centralism, or power;
- military measures aimed at perception organs (such as gas, and sonic and visual weapons);
- plans for “ecocide” or environmental weapons;
- sensory training and sensitization for both soldiers and civilians (altered states, e.g., by learning sonic signals);
- sensory methods of intelligence;
- the use of animal sensoria for warfare, border control and political policing;
- sensory warfare in domestic political conflicts of the Cold War (e.g., tear gas or olfactory forensics);
- sense aspects of human rights discourse, such as in detention and torture (e.g., pain, sensory deprivation);
- haptic aspects such as war toys or industrial design (from Sputnik to the red button);
- other everyday life aspects of the Cold War, such as how it affected music, gastronomy, perfumery;
- “new senses” like equilibrioception or pain control (e.g., in air force and other military training);
- transcontinental sensory aspects of the Cold War’s proxy wars (Africa, Asia, South America); or
- the Cold War and the senses in the museum.

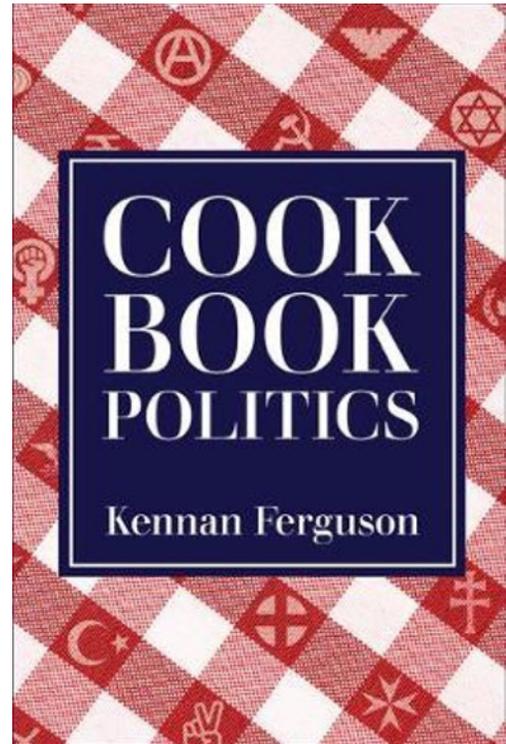
The conference language is English and our intention is to subsequently publish the proceedings. Each proposal should include: author’s name and affiliation, email address, abstract of 350 words or less, short biography (150 words or less). Please submit proposals to Bodo Mrozek: mrozek@ifz-muenchen.de

Publication Highlights

Kennan Ferguson, *Cook Book Politics*. University of Pennsylvania Press, May 2020.

Cookbooks are not political in conventional ways. They neither proclaim, as do manifestos, nor do they forbid, as do laws. Yet, as repositories of human taste, cookbooks transmit specific blends of flavor, texture, and nutrition across space and time. Cookbooks both form and reflect who we are. In *Cookbook Politics*, Kennan Ferguson explores the sensual and political implications of these repositories, demonstrating how they create nations, establish ideologies, shape international relations, and structure communities.

Cookbook Politics argues that cookbooks highlight aspects of our lives we rarely recognize as political - taste, production, domesticity, collectivity, and imagination - and considers the ways in which cookbooks have or do politics, from the most overt to the most subtle. Cookbooks turn regional diversity into national unity, as Pellegrino Artusi's *Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well* did for Italy in 1891. Politically affiliated organizations compile and sell cookbooks - for example, the early UN published *The World's Favorite Recipes*. From the First Baptist Church of Midland, Tennessee's community cookbook, to Julia Child's *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, to the Italian Futurists' proto-fascist guide to food preparation, Ferguson demonstrates how cookbooks mark desires and reveal social commitments.



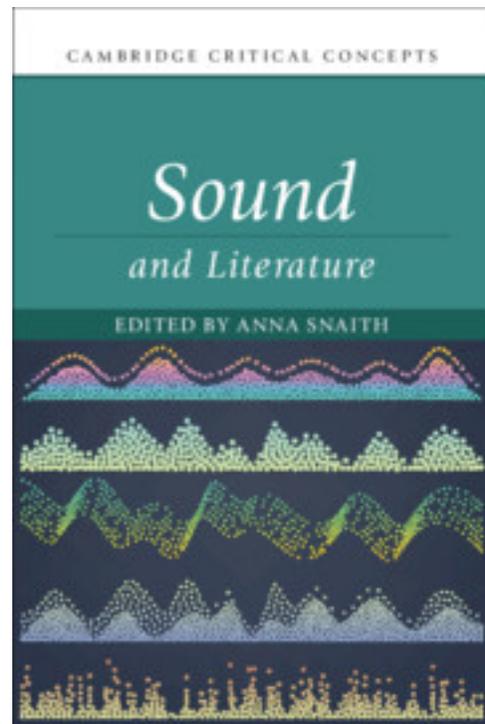
Kelvin E. Y. Low, 'Gastropolitical encounters and the political life of sensation', *Sociological Review* May 2020, available through [OnlineFirst](#).

Food as a political object has been pivotal in defining the political and socioeconomic positioning of political leaders across many different countries. Instrumentalised as a diplomatic tool to enhance and maintain economic and international relations, food as gifts and acts of commensality are routinely built into the pursuit and maintenance of local and foreign policy, which points to both the materiality and sensoriality of gastrodiploacy. This is, however, a realm of analysis that is fairly incipient in sensory scholarship. I make conceptual connections between food, senses and political life by proposing the notion of political gustemology, and by developing conceptual parameters in explicating the political life of sensation. In directing attention to sensory aspects of gastropolitical encounters, the article departs from extant works on gastrodiploacy and provides a newer framework and insight to apprehend the embodied and sensory features of political episodes in everyday life.



Anna Snaith (Ed.), *Sound and Literature* (Cambridge Critical Concepts series), June 2020

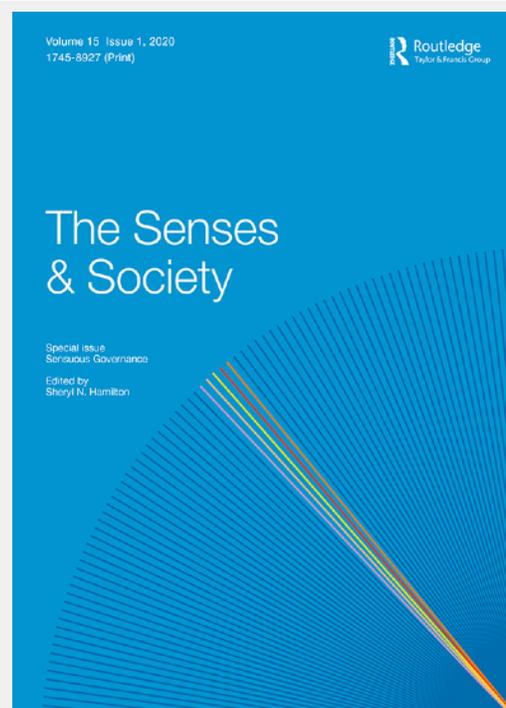
What does it mean to write in and about sound? How can literature, seemingly a silent, visual medium, be sound-bearing? This volume considers these questions by attending to the energy generated by the sonic in literary studies from the late nineteenth century to the present. Sound, whether understood as noise, music, rhythm, voice or vibration, has long shaped literary cultures and their scholarship. In original chapters written by leading scholars in the field, this book tunes in to the literary text as a site of vocalisation, rhythmicity and dissonance, as well as an archive of soundscapes, modes of listening, and sound technologies. *Sound and Literature* is unique for the breadth and plurality of its approach, and for its interrogation and methodological mapping of the field of literary sound studies.

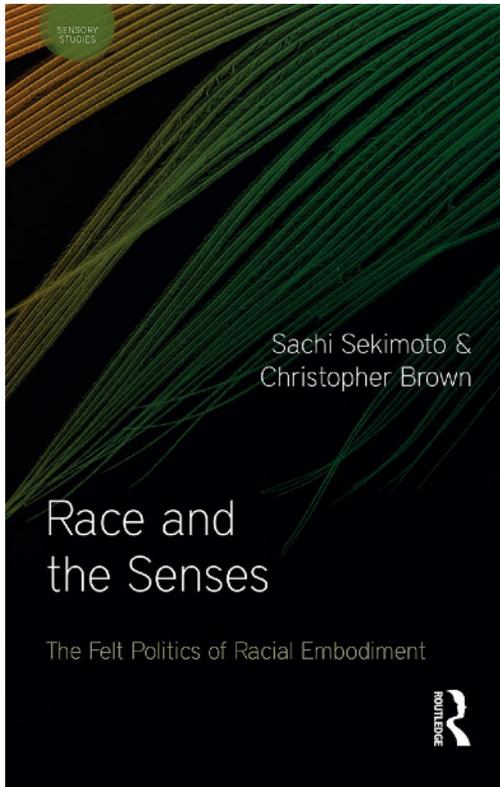


Sheyrl N. Hamilton (Ed.) *The Senses & Society* Special Issue on 'Sensuous Governance' 15(1), 2020.

While governmentality theory offers much to the notion of sensuous governance, as Mariana Valverde (2015) correctly recognizes, it often overlooks the emotional, aesthetic, and affective dimensions of social and socio-legal life. The sensorial could be added to Valverde's list of governmentality's oversights. Sensuous governance therefore seeks, not merely to incorporate the senses into the examination of the ways in which relations of governing operate, but rather to fully integrate sensation and the sensorium in understanding how governance is (and has always been) embodied knowing, guiding, forming.

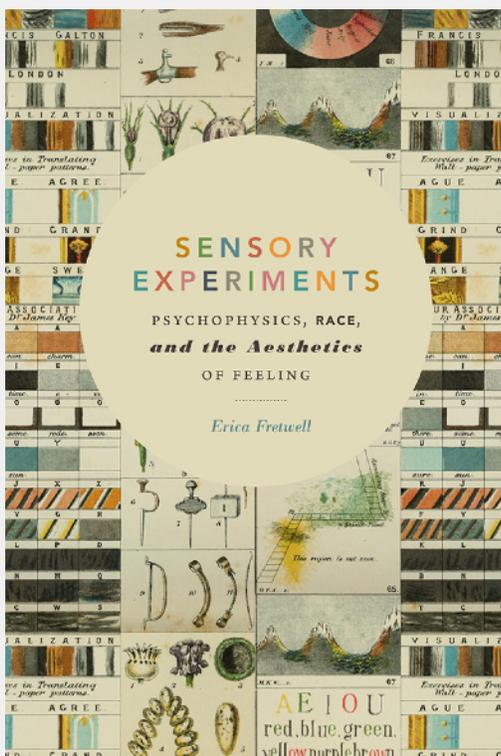
The articles in this special issue illustrate the sensations of politics, not only, or even primarily at the level of the state, but at the level of quotidian life – eating and grocery shopping for one's family; using a cell phone to film a police officer speaking to the driver of a car they pulled over; donning a smart watch before going for a run as one trains for a half-marathon; watching a ghost-hunter reality television show; wandering the halls of a museum; or going online to commiserate with, and learn from, other sufferers of a skin condition.





Sachi Sekimoto & Christopher Brown, *Race and the Senses: The Felt Politics of Racial Embodiment*. Routledge, 2020.

In *Race and the Senses*, Sachi Sekimoto and Christopher Brown explore the sensorial and phenomenological materiality of race as it is felt and sensed by the racialized subjects. Situating the lived body as an active, affective, and sensing participant in racialized realities, they argue that race is not simply marked on our bodies, but rather felt and registered through our senses. They illuminate the sensorial landscape of racialized world by combining the scholarship in sensory studies, phenomenology, and intercultural communication. Each chapter elaborates on the felt bodily sensations of race, racism, and racialization that illuminate how somatic labor plays a significant role in the construction of racialized relations of sensing. Their thought-provoking theorizing about the relationship between race and the senses include race as a sensory assemblage, the phenomenology of the racialized face and tongue, kinesthetic feelings of blackness, as well as the possibility of cross-racial empathy. Race is not merely socially constructed, but multisensorially assembled, engaged, and experienced. Grounded in the authors' experiences, one as a Japanese woman living in the USA, and the other as an African American man from Chicago, *Race and the Senses* is a book about how we feel the racialized world into being.



Erica Fretwell, *Sensory Experiments: Psychophysics, Race, and the Aesthetics of Feeling*. Duke UP, 2020.

In *Sensory Experiments*, Erica Fretwell excavates the nineteenth-century science of psychophysics and its theorizations of sensation to examine the cultural and aesthetic landscape of feeling in nineteenth-century America. Fretwell demonstrates how psychophysics—a scientific movement originating in Germany and dedicated to the empirical study of sensory experience—shifted the understandings of feeling from the epistemology of sentiment to the phenomenological terrain of lived experience. Through analyses of medical case studies, spirit photographs, perfumes, music theory, recipes, and the work of canonical figures ranging from Kate Chopin and Pauline Hopkins to James Weldon Johnson and Emily Dickinson, Fretwell outlines how the five senses became important elements in the biopolitical work of constructing human difference along the lines of race, gender, and ability. In its entanglement with social difference, psychophysics contributed to the racialization of aesthetics while sketching out possibilities for alternate modes of being over and against the figure of the bourgeois liberal individual. Although psychophysics has largely been forgotten, Fretwell demonstrates that its importance to shaping social order through scientific notions of sensation is central to contemporary theories of new materialism, posthumanism, aesthetics, and affect theory.