

SECTION I HISTORY OF THE SENSES

PRODUCING SENSE, CONSUMING SENSE, MAKING SENSE: PERILS AND PROSPECTS FOR SENSORY HISTORY

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Can You Hear, See, Smell, Taste, Touch Me, Now?

It is a good moment to be a sensory historian. Sensory history—also referred to as the history of the senses, sensate history, and sensuous history—is booming among historians. George H. Roeder, Jr.'s claim that "ours is a nearly senseless profession" was true when he wrote it; now, a decade or so later, sensory history is brimming with promise, so much so that recent bangs will likely prove, upon reflection, prefatory whispers, smells, anticipatory whiffs, touches, mere caresses, tastes, alluring nibbles, and sights just glimmers in what is a rapidly growing "field."¹

In that delightful anticipation, though, problems loom, especially concerning methodology and presentation. In part, the dangers are a product of the very speed with which sensory history has gained ground, particularly in a spate of work on U.S. history. In the rush to see, hear, smell, touch, and taste the past, some of its practitioners have hop-scotched careful engagement with the conceptual and empirical insights of related work. The result is an often under-theorized field of inquiry, more empirically fleshed out than intellectually considered. Sensory history currently ventures in two directions, one offering an appropriate historicization of the senses, the other positing a usable but ahistorical past. In the midst of the recent flurry of sensory history studies, this essay offers a place to pause, a space in which to evaluate where we are now and where we might go.²

This essay has three aims. First, it defines sensory history, explains some of the methodological and interpretive problems facing historians of the senses, and offers a rough, interpretive trellis for future sensory histories. In so doing, it argues that we need to historicize the senses and resist the temptation to create a usable but ahistorical sensory past. I argue that if sensory history is to realize its full promise, we need to distinguish between the production and consumption of the senses. While it is possible to reproduce, say, a particular sound from the past, the way we understand, experience, "consume" that sound is radically different in content and meaning to the way people in the past understood and experienced it. Failure to distinguish between sensory production (something that can, at least theoretically, be replicated in the present) and sensory consumption (something that is hostage to the context in which it was produced) betrays the promise of sensory history. In short, we must be careful always to

historicize the senses. Second, the essay considers how sensory history is best presented by scholars. Is print, the traditional historical monograph, up to the task of presenting histories of smell, sound, taste, and touch or do we need to embrace new, non-print technologies to effectively convey our findings? Third, the essay points to the promise of sensory history for U.S. historians, noting especially the way in which the topic grants us deeper access to—and offers a more complicated understanding of—the relationship between the senses and modernity and the connections between the senses, emotion, space, and metaphor.

Although this essay is framed in terms of “U.S.” history, I do not mean to claim American sensory historical distinctiveness or to suggest that the nation-state is the only appropriate analytic location for sensory history. In fact, I think it very likely indeed that future work will rightly deal with sensory histories that are external to the nation-state. Indeed, some recent work on the sensory aspects of what Paul Gilroy has termed “race thinking” make it clear that nationally delimited categories function poorly when attempting to come to terms with ideas that transcend geographic boundaries.³ That much said, many of today’s practitioners of sensory history came to their senses, as it were, as historians of a particular country. In this regard, framing the senses within a national idiom—albeit French, British, or U.S.—is understandable and, for the purposes of this essay, helps us understand why writing on U.S. sensory history has usually been conceptualized within the larger national framework.

Sensory Histories

First, some brief definitions. Some historians refer to “the history of the senses,” others to “sensory history.” They often mean similar things. Historians of the senses have mostly traced the evolution of a particular sense in and of itself. Histories of hearing, for example, tend to examine how the intellectual and especially medical understanding of hearing—the ear as physiology—has evolved over time and place. Sensory history does the same but tends towards the ecumenical, considering not only the history of a given sense but its social and cultural construction and its role in texturing the past. At its most powerful, sensory history is also explanatory, allowing historians to elucidate by reference to both visual and non-visual senses something that makes little or less sense if understood simply as a scopic phenomenon. Sensory history, in short, stresses the role of the senses—including *explicit* treatments of sight and vision—in shaping peoples’ experience of the past, shows how they understood their worlds and why, and is (or, at least, should be) very careful not to assume that the senses are some sort of “natural” endowment, unchangeable and constant.⁴ In this respect, sensory history is more a habit of thinking about the past, a technique used to investigate and understand rather than a carefully delimited field of inquiry. What are usually considered history “fields”—diplomatic, gender, race, regional, borderlands, cultural, political, military—could all be written and researched through the habit of sensory history.

Perhaps the chief, distinguishing feature of sensory history is its explicit treatment of the senses. Of course, lots of historians mention sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches in their narratives but such invocations are usually in the service of literary flourishes and, as such, conceptually flaccid. Playful reference

to a smell or sound does not a sensory history make (just as a study of antebellum U.S. slavery which casually refers to Abraham Lincoln is hardly political biography). In fact, invoking the senses in this way can invite uncritical acceptance of the legitimacy and accuracy of contemporary characterizations of, for example, who smelled and who was inodorate, who was ugly and who was beautiful, whose taste was refined and whose was common, whose skin was delicate and whose was leathery enough for hard labor, who made noise and who made sound. Such breezy, implicit reference to the senses can amount to an unwitting surrender to the power structures of the past and comes perilously near to repeating them. Historians who quote a nineteenth-century observer's characterization of immigrant homes as reeking—"The filth and smell are intolerable"—leave the impression that the description was objectively and universally "true." What we really need to know is whose nose was doing the smelling, how the definition of "smell" changed over time and according to constituency (did the people living in the "filth" agree?), and how the characterization was used to justify actions by middle class reformers. Absent such explicit commentary, we present the past on the terms set by the reformer's nose and all of the prejudices and values that inhered in that nose.⁵

For the most part, Americanists interested in the sensate have been fairly explicit about their topic and U.S. historians of all periods have recently produced a number of works on the senses. Our understanding of colonial America has been enriched considerably by, for example, Jane Kamensky's 1998 study, *Governing the Tongue*, an astute investigation of the relationship between gender, power, and the spoken word. As with most recent work, Kamensky's emphasis is on orality/aurality, not taste, hence the book's subtitle, *The Politics of Speech in Early New England*. Richard Cullen Rath's path-breaking examination of soundways in *How Early America Sounded* (2003) is along similar lines but pays much more attention to "paralinguistic," non-vocal sounds. More recently and ambitiously, Peter Charles Hoffer investigates all five senses in *Sensory Worlds of Early America* (2003), an important book worth careful consideration (I will say much more about the work by Rath and Hoffer shortly). And John E. Crowley's study of sensibility and material culture in early modern Britain and America, *The Invention of Comfort* (2001), necessarily engages the senses, especially how people saw light and dark. For the late eighteenth century and early republic, Leigh Eric Schmidt has written a very important study of aurality and religion illustrating the enduring importance of aurality to evangelical Christianity. In Schmidt's hands, sound remain central to the conversion experience at precisely the moment when visuality was supposed to have triumphed. And my own effort, *Listening to Nineteenth-Century America* (2001), examines the evolution of antebellum sectionalism, the operations of southern slavery, the emergence of northern free wage labor, the fighting of the Civil War, and events of Reconstruction by exploring what contemporaries considered "keynote" sounds. Late nineteenth-nineteenth noise has been studied by Raymond Smilor, while Lisa Gitelman, Jonathan Sterne, and Emily Thompson examine, in a variety of ways, sounds, acoustemology, aurality, and modernity in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁶

Very few Americanists have begun to engage taste, touch, and smell—the so-called "lower," proximate senses. Such inattention is unfortunate because it

has tacitly imported the post-Platonic, Western sensory hierarchy promoting the supposedly "higher" senses of hearing and, especially, seeing, into the field. Connie Y. Chiang's 2004 article on odor, ethnicity, tourism, and social conflict in California in the 1880s and 1930s is an exception and a notable effort seeking to redress the imbalance.⁷

Moreover, missing from much of this work is engagement and dialogue, the absence perhaps a function of how quickly and widely the field is being produced. As anthropologist David Howes has suggested, scholars of the senses sometimes feel they are working in isolation and the "need to invent the study of the senses from scratch." Such a belief is potentially damaging. It not only denies us opportunities for theoretical and empirical cross-fertilization, it also invites unnecessary duplication and remains deaf as well as blind to important interpretive insights generated by scholars in other fields. If we are to realize sensory history's full potential, historians of the senses need to start having sustained, candid, and informed conversations.⁸ This essay tries to initiate that dialogue.

Perils

Any evaluation of sensory history by U.S. historians necessarily engages Peter Charles Hoffer's pioneering, award-winning book, *Sensory Worlds of Early America*. Hoffer's is the first U.S. history work to deal with all of the senses, examining how sight, sound, smell, touch, taste influenced, even caused, behavior in early America. His range is impressive: the study considers the invisible experience of the supernatural in seventeenth-century Salem, the aurality and visibility of the 1739 South Carolina Stono slave rebellion, the mediated and conflicted nature of sensory encounters between Europeans and Native Americans, and sensory aspects of the American Revolution. There is a lot to recommend Hoffer's study. It is elegant, robust, ambitious, and it invites careful consideration of the historical importance of the senses. The book also raises some fundamental questions about how best to go about a history of the senses. It is, in short, a work we need to take very seriously, as key reviews have noted.⁹

In some fundamental respects, however, Hoffer's book threatens to lead sensory history in an unprofitable, conceptually withered direction. This is a bracing charge and warrants detailed explanation. I hasten to add that Hoffer is not alone. While his work might be the most pronounced example of what I consider perilous sensory history, his conceptual missteps are also evident, albeit in more muted form, in several other works. First, though, Hoffer's *Sensory Worlds of Early America*.

Hoffer starts off on firm ground: "From all evidences, the report of the senses was of immense importance to the people who lived in early America. It should be so to historians." Indeed. Quickly, though, Hoffer's thinking becomes spongy. Although he is well aware that "the very idea of the senses is a cultural convention," that the number of senses possessed by humans has changed over time, and that the meaning and ranking of the senses had been subject to much debate during antiquity and the Enlightenment, he nevertheless posits sensory history as essentially a project in the recovery of a usable, consumable past.¹⁰ "Can we use our senses to replicate sensation in a world we have (almost) lost?" asks Hoffer. "I think the answer is yes," he says, "and perhaps more important, the

project is worth the effort." He considers the argument that past actors "used their senses and perceived the world in a way so different from our own as to be unrecoverable now" mere "caveat." At work here is an assumption about how history can and should be used in the present. "A sensory history should convey to the reader the feel of the past," he maintains, and he is convinced that we can "recover what others long ago saw, heard, and smelled."¹¹

Hoffer elaborates his case thoughtfully and carefully in a section entitled "Going Back in Time." Here, he says that it is possible to "approximate the immediate sensory experiences of people" in the past and that doing so entails the reproduction and (re)consumption of a sensory "event" and "experience." Writes Hoffer: "If we assume also that we have the same perceptual apparatus as the people we are studying in the past, and can sense the world as they did, we are another step closer to our objective," namely, experiencing the past the same way as "they" did (more on the problematic nature of the universal "we" and "they" later). Hoffer's earlier, sensible remarks regarding the historically and culturally mediated nature of the senses should have tempered the extravagance of this claim (would someone today who shared the same physiological nose as, say, an antebellum slaveholder, also think that black people stink?) But it does not. In fact, Hoffer's version of sensory history becomes increasingly radical, calling for changes even in the ways historians conduct research. He considers scholars "hunched for days over the flaking, yellowed pages of parchment rolls in the archives," scribbling notes with aching digits, unlikely to "recapture that sensory past." No, we are better off if "we follow children and their parents to the living museums that dot our country." Despite Hoffer's argument that he and the historical reenactors he encountered during the course of researching his book "knew the difference between the original and the re-enactment," despite his recognition that many sites "sell a vision of historical process," sometimes highly distorted, he firmly believes that "living museums" and "commercial recreations of the past and popular re-enactments" can "close the gap between then and now."¹²

Hoffer gives examples. On July 1, 1998, Clinton Wakefield Epps took part in a massive reenactment of the 1863 battle of Gettysburg. The actual (1863) soldiers at Gettysburg, according to Hoffer's reading of their evidence, experienced an intense sensory event. Letters, diaries, recollections describe the heat, the noise, the smell, the feel of battle, with bullets ripping flesh or, if lucky, whizzing by ears. Did Mr. Epps or any of the other reenactors come near to experiencing, recapturing the sensory Gettysburg of 1863 in 1998? They dressed in replica uniforms (some reenactors do not wash their uniforms for years in effort to capture the smell of the time), carried the same equipment, and fought in the same formations. And Mr. Epps even felt the event: during the course of Gettysburg '98, a bullet was fired into his neck (someone had inadvertently loaded a lead ball in a pistol; Mr. Epps later recovered). For Hoffer, all of this—the bullet in the flesh especially—showed how the "re-enactment could begin to approximate the past reality." Hoffer's second illustration is rooted in his own experience, a sort of personal encounter with past sensations. Hoffer recounts how, during his research on the witchcraft trials in colonial Salem, Massachusetts, he "journeyed to Danvers, the site of many of the supposed bewitchings." Standing in the middle of a field, Hoffer started to think about "Satan and all his evil works,"

the "night sounds," dogs barking, leaves rustling, all making him believe he was experiencing the past. When all is said and done, "when all the qualifications are entered and all the caveats filed, the re-recreations and the re-enactments, the interpreters and the travels to historical sites do enable us to sense a little more of the world we have lost."¹³

In effect, Hoffer wrongly marries the production of the past to its present-day consumption. While it is perfectly possible to recreate the sound of a hammer hitting an anvil from 1812, or a piece of music from 1880 (especially if we still have the score and original instruments), or the smell of horse dung from 1750 (I image that, chemically, the reproduction is feasible), it is impossible to consume, to experience those sensations in the same way as those who heard the hammer or music, smelled the dung, or experienced Gettysburg. What was rank and fetid to, say, the southern slaveholder's 1850 nose is not recoverable today not least because that world—the world that shaped what smells existed and how they were perceived and understood by multiple constituencies—has evaporated. Even the reproducibility of past sensations should not be taken for granted. One wonders how much the sight of jet planes overhead, the rhythmic throb of distant traffic, the accidental application of 1990s aftershave on a "Union" soldier, the soft hands of the "Confederate" accountant holding his reproduction sword, the lingering taste of a Shoney's breakfast, and a host of other modern elements that existed in 1998 but not in 1863 hamper the actual "reproduction" of Gettysburg, not to mention those irreproducible, unique accidents of climate, time, and history—acoustic shadows. But the essential point it this: whatever Mr. Epps felt as the lead bullet—even if it were a carefully preserved original—burrowed into his neck in 1998 was not what the Gettysburg soldier felt in 1863 because even though Mr. Epps might have the same "sensory apparatus" as the 1863 soldier, the context and meaning has changed sufficiently since 1863 that he cannot experience the bullet in the same way. Not only has the meaning of pain changed—Mr. Epps' comparative references for his pain are radically different to those of the similarly injured (1863) soldier—but our expectation for successful recovery and our ability to end or dull the pain is much greater than that available to the poor soul in 1863.¹⁴

There is an additional danger here. Even as Hoffer correctly stresses the importance of the plurality of the colonial American experience, rescuing the experience of African Americans, women, and Native Americans; even as he rightly calls for a carefully differentiated history, one that delineates the specific experiences of particular groups beyond the Great White Male; even as he aims to take us beyond the nationalist narrative of the 1950s, he ends up replacing a nationalist sensory narrative with a universalist one in which "we," all of "us" in the present, can "experience" the past just as each, highly differentiated group did.¹⁵

So, why go to all of this trouble of visiting living museums, trying to "experience" battles, standing in fields at night? "By engaging in sensory history we can stimulate our powers of imagination to their fullest extent," answers Hoffer, explaining: "Such histories of the senses would fulfill the highest purpose of historical scholarship: to make the past live again."¹⁶

Should the aim of sensory history be to make the past come "alive"? Hoffer plainly thinks we can more readily experience and enliven the past by repro-

ducing sensory aspects of it. This claim unnerves me for two reasons. First, I am far from convinced that history is, in fact, dead. Second, I fear that should sensory history lend credibility to this conceit, it will have succumbed to societal pressures urging the consumption of everything we produce (or reproduce), including the past. Instead, sensory history holds the promise of radically historicizing the past, of reminding us how very contingent it is, of rescuing history from commodification. As David Howes has recently remarked, although "employing sensuous description has a particular charm for those wishing to enliven the dry bones of history and put readers 'in touch' with the past," the "history of the senses . . . in its fullest development, is not only evocative—it is also interpretive: it makes sense of the past—through the analysis of sensory practices and ideologies."¹⁷ If they are to properly historicize the senses, historians could do worse than to listen to anthropologists.

Presenting . . . Sensory History

Hoffer's important work raises not just phenomenological questions but closely related presentational ones. The problem is this: can sensory historians rely on print alone to accurately present their work to readers? Asks Hoffer: "Even if historians can satisfy themselves that they can recover the sensory world of their ancestors, can they convey that sensory past to their auditors and readers?" This is what Hoffer calls a version of the "lemon problem": "I can taste a lemon and savor the immediate experience of my senses; I can recall the taste after I have thrown away the fruit, but can I use words and pictures to fully understand what I am saying or, rather, to get at the reality behind my words?" Hoffer thinks we can reliably convey something of the taste of a lemon to readers.¹⁸

Let us radically empower Hoffer's argument by imagining that we could actually reproduce the taste of a lemon; that, courtesy of the gas liquid chromatographer (a machine able to reproduce flavors), John Hopkins University Press, which published Hoffer's book, reproduced a small square of lickable paper immediately following his paragraph about the taste of lemons. Thus, Hoffer is relieved of his main epistemological and phenomenological problem: the reader simply licks the square and experiences what Hoffer experienced.

Or does he or she? How a lemon tastes is contingent on the tongue doing the licking, its specific history and culture. After all, cultural and historical specificity shapes all of the senses. Take, for example, the olfactory tastes of modern Britons and Americans—united by a common heritage, it seems, but separated by a different nose. Two studies—one performed in the 1960s in the U.K, the other a decade later in the U.S.—found that Brits disliked the smell of methyl salicylate (wintergreen) while Americans loved it. Notwithstanding the problematical categories of "British" and "American," historical specificity accounts for the learned preference: among a particular generation in the U.K, the scent of wintergreen was associated with medicine and ointments used during the Second World War (not the best of times). Conversely, wintergreen in the U.S. is the olfactory cognate not of medicine but of candy (a minty smell—or so I am told). And this is just in the recent past. Imagine trying to recapture the "taste" of a lemon from, say, the fourteenth century when people who had yet to encounter sugar tasted food in ways that would be different after sugar had

been introduced to their diet. Thus, the taste of a lemon is far from historically or culturally constant and *how* it tastes, its meaning, its salivating sharpness or margarita, Jimmy Buffet-laden signature, is dependent on many factors, the not least of which is history.¹⁹ Lickable text, scratch-and sniff pages, touch-and-feel pads offer the historian and reader alike modest heuristic returns.

The same holds true for all historical evidence, visual and aural included. "We" do not "see" the engraving of a slave whipping from the 1830s in the same light, with the same meaning, with the same emotional intensity as the abolitionist did at the time; what the modern New Yorker considers a "tall" building is not what the medieval European peasant considered tall.²⁰ But even the most thoughtful work sometimes slips in this regard. Despite his own careful engagement with printed evidence investigating the sounds and ways of hearing in early modern England, Bruce R. Smith—a professor of English and author of the extraordinarily innovative *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England* (1999)—suggests that "For an historian interested in the sounds of the past, there would seem to be nothing *there* to study, at least until the advent of electromagnetic recording devices in the early twentieth century." But Smith surely knows better. Imagine that we could hear with utter fidelity the sounds of, say, a southern plantation in 1830, that, somehow, we had access to electromagnetic recordings of slaves singing, masters shouting, overseers ranting, whips cracking, hoes thumping soil, whispered conversations, and a thousand other sounds—and silences. What would the actual reproduction of those sounds, in the present, enable us to understand that conventional, direct and indirect written evidence from the people who experienced or (ear) witnessed those sounds do not? Very little indeed. While the reproduction of the sounds might give us the (false) impression that history is something we call "alive," our act of listening to the reproduced sounds is itself an act of consumption. Historians are more interested in the meaning the slaves, the masters, the plantation visitors, northern abolitionists, and a whole host of contemporaries attached to these sounds. How these people listened is not only more important than what they heard but, in fact, constitutes what they heard. The sound of the whip, the slaves' midnight whispers, the plantation work song, held such radically different meanings to multiple constituencies in the past that we can understand (and interrogate) the sounds only on the terms described by those constituencies.²¹

Perhaps now, more than ever, we need to think carefully about such matters. As reproductive auditory technologies advance (whether as online audio files or as compact disks tucked into book pockets) and as they begin to affect the way historians present their work, we would do well to think about what we want readers to take away from this supplemental form of presentation. Shane White and Graham White's recent book *The Sounds of Slavery* (2005), for example, includes "an 18-track CD of historic recordings" of ex-slave songs recorded in the 1930s (not, obviously, during slavery itself). Beacon Press, the book's publisher, claims the text and, especially, the CD "is the closest modern listeners will ever get to experience the diverse sounds that surrounded slave life." These songs "lets us hear, for the first time, a complex history that has been silent for too long" and, in Hofferian fashion, allow "us" to "experience" the "history" of slavery. But it is critical to remember—and for authors to make clear—that when

we listen to the CD we are not hearing slavery not just because the tracks were recorded in the 1930s and not the 1830s but because the CD cannot convey the meaning contemporaries attached to slave songs. "Our" reaction—highly differentiated, as well—to the CD tells us more about our own understanding of antebellum southern slavery than it does about antebellum slavery itself. Even the presentation of history in this form—a CD filled with some very beautiful songs sung by African Americans in the 1930s—necessarily distorts in important ways the texture and range of the aural world of antebellum southern slavery. The decision to present the past in this fashion makes "experiencing" the history of southern slavery necessarily an act of consumption. When readers/auditors play the CD, they expect to hear "something," even though a good deal of the history of slavery had nothing to do with the audible, heard world. Quietude, attempted silences, whispers, the rustles of the escaping slave, were equally important. John Cage fans notwithstanding, a CD of quiet, murky, indistinct sounds (noise?) would hardly sell as well as songs. Of necessity, the form of evidentiary presentation in this case necessarily privileges the slave song over the barely audible but equally meaningful and significant murmur, whisper, or rustle.

Likewise with the pioneering work of Constance Classen, David Howes, and Anthony Synnott who conclude their study, *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell*, with the observation that "We do not know what the past smelled like" because smells "cannot be persevered." The assumption here—a curious one, given the wonderful attention to the need to historicize smell in the rest of the book—is quite mistaken and suggests that unless a scent can be preserved it is not subject to historical inquiry. In fact, smells are accessible to the historian precisely because—not in spite of—most written descriptions of smells from the past tells us what smells smelled like.²²

In other words, sensory history should not give up too quickly on print. It is, I think, still an effective medium for conveying the sensory meanings of the past. Through careful and considered engagement with printed evidence, we can readily grasp what particular sensory events or stimuli meant to particular individuals and groups in particular contexts. There is no small irony here. If the print revolution did, in fact, elevate the eye and denigrate the nose, ear, tongue, and skin, printed evidence and the sensory perceptions recorded by contemporaries constitute the principal medium through which we can access the senses of the past and their meanings.

Prospects

Some of the most promising work on the senses by Americanists is also the most theorized, carefully conceptualized, and historiographically situated. For example, Richard Cullen Rath's *How Early American Sounded* refines our understanding of a debate in which Europeanists have long been engaged: whether modernity nursed a transition from, in Lucien Febvre's formulation, an "age of the ear" to an "age of the eye," whether the invention of print and moveable type, the Enlightenment, the interest in perspective and balance, eclipsed the value and significance of nonvisual senses. The argument and historiography is

much more complex, of course, but I think it fair to say that this bracketing of modern/visual, premodern/nonvisual is most often associated with Marshall McLuhan and Walter Ong, both of whom did much to help us historicize an often unwitting privileging of sight. In arguing for a shift in the ratio or balance of the senses, both Ong and McLuhan helped us see that sight was historically contingent. Ong expressed it simply when he wrote, "before the invention of script man is more oral-aural than afterward" and that "greater visualism" is a product of print.²³

Broadly, Rath argues that we must treat the history of sound in resolutely historical terms and, to that end, *How Early America Sounded* explores the ways in which early Americans experienced and understood paralinguistic and vocal sounds as well as silence. He treats the seventeenth and eighteenth century and examines the soundways and acoustemologies of European, African American, and Native American cultures and the ways in which they interacted.

Throughout, Rath engages the debate concerning literacy, print culture, orality, aurality, visuality, and modernity. For Rath, aurality/orality is not necessarily in tension with literacy—he considers belief in the tension itself a modern convention and one hardly recognizable to the people he studies. But Rath is in quiet but firm agreement with McLuhan's essential insights, insisting, "early Americans sensed the world more through their ears than we do today" and maintaining that as "literacy and printed matter came closer to saturating North Americans' minds . . . attention was drawn away from the realm of sound and speech in order to give more to the visible world."²⁴

Rath's treatment of the sensate past is fundamentally different to Hoffer's. We have already listened to Hoffer sensing; now, listen to Rath listening: "Some sounds, like thunder, physically sounded much the same in early America as they do now." The wording here is slippery and begs the question, to whom? He goes on: "But how they were perceived is an entirely different matter, subject to historical contingencies, and is a matter of historical inquiry." Indeed. Here, Rath rightly identifies the impossibility of trying to experience and consume those sounds that were the special provenance of the past, holding radically different meanings for contemporaries than they do for "us." "Our bells, drums, and fiddles may still sound similar to their seventeenth-century counterparts," writes Rath, "but their meanings and social contexts have changed them from important elements of cultural cohesion to," and here is a telling phrase, "merely entertainment." Rath fully appreciates the dangers of reconstituted, consumable sensory history.²⁵

But perhaps Rath does not go far enough. After all, his work accepts, albeit with intelligent caveats, the fundamental modern/premodern model postulated by McLuhan and Ong. As more work on the so-called lower or proximate senses of smell, touch, and taste is produced, I suspect that the binary will come under increasing strain and gradually lose its explanatory effectiveness. Sensory history must avoid leaning too heavily on such meta-historical frameworks that sometimes fail to capture the complexity of events, trends, and tendencies thrown up by new research. For example, where do those late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century white southerners who believed that they could use, for example, their sense of smell to detect racial identity fit? The prevailing wisdom,

the argument that the rise of modernity empowered the eye and denigrated the other senses (especially that of smell), has trouble explaining the enduring importance of the proximate senses to racial constructions in the modern period generally. As recent, explicit work on vision suggests, sight was not the stable, objective sense at the end of the nineteenth century as overarching historical models assume and white southern segregationists relied heavily on their supposedly "lower," animal-like noses at century's end to complement vision. In fact, the thoroughly modern system of segregation—of racial categorization, grouping, demarcation (all accepted hallmarks of the "modern")—was necessarily indebted to, and stabilized by, the putatively premodern senses of smell, touch, taste, and hearing. This should remind historians not to let the model drive the interpretation and to allow new evidence help refine old explanative frameworks. Such reformulations will resist the temptation to cast the lower senses as premodern and sight as modern and will likely show how the proximate senses proved temporally promiscuous and, in particular contexts, were imported and resurrected to bolster modernity.²⁶

By way of extended conclusion, it is worth pondering how else sensory history might evolve. Americanists will, I think, recognize that escaping some conventions will not mean dispensing with all of them. Although the argument bracketing proximate senses and emotion is plainly a convention of Enlightenment thinking, several historians of the senses have already employed the idea profitably, examining the non-visual senses as conduits for understanding the power and depth of emotional, visceral behavior. While stressing what people saw can also explain emotional behavior, the Enlightenment association with seeing and balance, of sight with reason, vision with truth—"perspective"—intellectualized and segregated the eye from the presumed disruptive vicissitudes of smell, touch, and taste especially. For the eye to be trusted, it had to be steadfastly rational, reasonable, and balanced and, fundamentally, less susceptible to emotion than the other senses. Careful attention to how people used the other senses to process information and meaning, therefore, helps explain what might, at eye level, seem irrational or chaotic but that, understood through another sense, makes perfect, well, sense. Alain Corbin's highly innovative work suggests as much and will, I suspect, prove important to historians of the U.S. Olfaction in nineteenth-century France was part and parcel of a history of emotion, one not quite accessible or understandable in purely visual terms. As Corbin puts it: "Emphasizing the fetidity of the laboring classes, and thus the danger of infection from their mere presence, helped the bourgeois to sustain his self-indulgent, self-induced terror, which dammed up the expression of remorse." So too with the sound of bells. In *Village Bells: Sound and Meaning in the 19th-Century French Countryside*, Corbin argued that the sounds of bells to particular groups held an emotional meaning that went deeper than even music and could illicit reactions that would be largely unintelligible to—and hidden from—a wholly visualist history. Wrote Corbin: "Finally, we have come to realize just what emotional power bells possessed. Peals solemnized an occasion and gave rise to or expressed rejoicing. They were far more effective in this regard than were 'rough music' or the charivari. Any collective emotion that ran deep involved use of a bell be it the threat of fire or bloodshed

announced by an alarm or the terror aroused by the passing bell tolled during epidemics."²⁷

Likewise, I have argued that the prevalence of aural metaphors—based in meaningful and distinctive sectional antebellum soundscapes—helps explain the profoundly emotional aspect of Civil War causation often missing from conventional, largely visualist, political accounts. Sectional identity was at once rooted in the sounds of everyday life—the imagined pastoral quietude of the slaveholders' South, the energetic throb of the North's hum of industry—and also mediated through aural metaphors. Abolitionists decried the ominous silence of the Slave Power, the enervating silence of southern industry, the curling screams of the whipped slave, and fretted about what the West, the American future, would sound like. For their part, southern slaveholders blasted the noise of wage labor, the degenerative cacophony of northern urban life, and the worrying discord of what they heard as liberal gender relations. Sound as well as sight had real force and sectional soundscapes sharpened in emotionally powerful ways a sense of enduring, deep, and real difference between North and South in the minds of contemporaries. Emotionally laden and potent sounds, silences, and noises—both real and imagined metaphorically—helped propel the nation towards civil war.²⁸

This emphasis on sensory metaphor also offers a promising avenue of inquiry precisely because understanding how contemporaries used and invented sensory metaphors thoroughly complicates the notion of "proximate" senses. Through metaphor, smells, tastes, touches, and sounds broke free of their physical space, slipping into the social and cultural realm. In this way, the construction of, for example, sensory otherness became independent of immediate interaction and physical encounter. By way of illustration: the notion that black people had a distinctive odor gained national currency in both the nineteenth- and twentieth-century U.S. even though many people who believed the stereotype had virtually no direct contact with African Americans. And when whites did encounter African Americans the stereotype, already in place and of metaphoric status, predisposed them to believe that black people did, in fact, smell, even though, obviously, no such racialized odor exists.²⁹

I also suspect that future work will work detail multiple senses. Such scholarship will not necessarily judge the senses in tension or as mutually exclusive and will thus avoid smuggling Enlightenment assumptions concerning the superiority of the eye and the premodernity of the proximate senses into its analysis.³⁰ And while it is likely that sensory histories will increasingly go beyond the analytical and geographic borders of the nation-state, I think it also likely that historians will apply the senses in an effort to understand the process by which nation-states were created. That is to say, sensory history will profitably examine the ways in which the senses have helped in the creation of nationalism (and, for that matter, particularism), as some work on the American Revolution, the coming of the U.S. Civil War, and the creation of German national identity already suggests. This development will be of particular interests to historians of memory not least because non-visual senses frequently play very powerful roles in not only stimulating memories of the past but in activating and shaping them. I suspect that a study of the role of smell, taste, and touch in the creation of, for example, southern nationalism after the Civil War is not far off.³¹

But whatever the specific directions of sensory history, practitioners would be well advised to always historicize the senses and think carefully about the meaning of non-visual forms of presentation. Should they do so, this "good moment" for sensory history might prove extremely long-lived.

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ENDNOTES

Versions of this essay were presented at the Annual Meeting of the St. George Tucker Society, to members of the Department of History at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and as the Second Annual James Baird Lecture, Department of History, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg. I learned from the questions offered on each occasion. I remain grateful to Mike Grossberg and Peggy Hargis for their comments on an early draft.

1. I take my cue from Eric Hobsbawm who, in 1970, considered social history vibrant, intellectually robust, and excitingly new. "It is," he said, "a good moment to be a social historian." Sensory history has a similar feel. Eric Hobsbawm, "From Social History to the History of Society," in his *On History* (New York, 1997), 93. See also my essay, "Making Sense of Social History," *Journal of Social History* 37 (Sept. 2003): 165–86. On recent, highly-profiled interest in sensory history, see Emily Eakin, "History You Can See, Hear, Smell, Touch, and Taste," *New York Times*, Saturday, December 20, 2003; Douglas Kahn, "Sound Awake," *Australian Review of Books* (July 2000): 21–22. Note, too, Mark M. Smith, "Introduction: Onward to Audible Pasts," in *Hearing History: A Reader*, Mark M. Smith, ed. (Athens, Ga., 2004), ix–xxii and the recent and highly innovative series on the history of the senses on Chicago Public Radio's "Odyssey," hosted by Gretchen Helfrich, which aired in May and June in 2005. Recordings for each session are on line at http://www.wbez.org/programs/odyssey/odyssey_senses.asp. For a very helpful overview of current interest in the senses, measured by the number of international conferences on the topic in recent years and the proliferation of scholarly work across disciplines, see David Howes, "Forming Perceptions," in *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader*, David Howes, ed. (New York, 2005), 399–402. The introduction of book series on the topic (most notably Berg's *Sensory Formations* and *Sense and Sensibilities* series) and the establishment of a new journal—*The Senses and Society*—also suggest burgeoning interest in the topic. Quotation from George H. Roeder, Jr. in his essay, "Coming to Our Senses," *Journal of American History* 81 (December 1994): 1112. Scholars at Canadian institutions—most obviously historians John E. Crowley and Joy Parr, and anthropologists Constance Classen, David Howes, and Anthony Synnott—have written thoughtfully and innovatively on aspects of the history of the senses. Why the intellectual and programmatic interest in the senses at Canadian universities is unclear but it might have something to do with the early work on sound and the senses by, among others, R. Murray Schafer, Barry Truax (both of the World Soundscape Project at Simon Fraser University), and Marshall McLuhan. European historians, influenced by Lucien Febvre, the *Annales* school generally, Alain Corbin, and the important work of medical historians (particularly by the late Roy Porter), have been engaged with sensory history for a while. See note 6 below.

2. Few historians of the senses have deliberated at length on the theoretical or methodological aspects of the field. Notable exceptions include Alain Corbin's essay, "A His-

tory and Anthropology of the Senses" in his *Time, Desire and Horror* (London, 1995; orig. 1991), 81–195; an important section in Richard Cullen Rath's *How Early American Sounded* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2003), 173–184; an astute discussion of aspects of the historiography in Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Hearing Things: Religion, Illusion, and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Mass, 2000), 1–37; Emily Thompson's helpful chapter in her *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900–1933* (Cambridge, Mass., 2002), 1–12; Bruce R. Smith, "How Sound is Sound History?" in *Hearing History*, 389–393; and my own thoughts in *Listening to Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill, 2001), 261–269; "Listening Back," in *Hearing History*, 398–401; "Introduction: Onward to Audible Pasts," in *ibid.*, ix–xxii. Part One of *Hearing History* reproduces some theoretical considerations on sound and history offered by R. Murray Shafer, Jacques Attali, Peter Bailey, Douglas Kahn, Hillel Schwartz, and Steven Connor.

3. Paul Gilroy, *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line* (Cambridge, MA, 2001), 11, 13, 21–23, 35–37, 40, 44–46, 48, 155–164, 191.

4. On historians' tendency to privilege the ocular much has been written. See especially the thoughtful remarks in Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley, 1993), 45, 66–69; Constance Classen, *Worlds of Sense: Exploring the Senses in History and across Cultures* (London, 1993); Roeder, "Coming to Our Senses," 1114; Mark M. Smith, "Listening Back," in *Hearing History*, 398–401. In this regard, we have been pursuing a sensory history for a long time—but it has been a visual history, and a largely unwitting one at that.

5. Note Roeder, "Coming to our Senses, 1115, 1116.

6. Jane Kamensky, *Governing the Tongue: The Politics of Speech in Early New England* (New York, 1998). Along similar lines, see Edward G. Gray, *New World Babel: Languages and Nations in Early America* (Princeton, N.J., 1999); Christopher Grasso, *A Speaking Aristocracy: Transforming Public Discourse in Eighteenth-Century Connecticut* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1999). Scholars in a variety of fields have broached the senses. Lisa Gitelman, *Scripts, Grooves, and Writing Machines: Representing Technology in the Edison Era* (Stanford, Calif., 1999), Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham, N.C., 2002), and Emily Thompson, *The Soundscape of Modernity*, approach the topic by way of communication and media studies and the history of technology. Legal historians have written a fair bit on the senses. See most obviously the essays in Lionel Bently and Leo Flynn, eds., *Law and the Senses: Sensational Jurisprudence* (London, 1996); Bernard Hibbitts, "Making Sense of Metaphors: Visuality, Aurality, and the Reconfiguration of American legal Discourse," 16 *Cardozo Law Review* 229 (1994), 229–356; Hibbitts, "'Coming to Our Senses': Communication and Legal Expression in Performance Cultures," *Emory Law Journal* 41, no.4 (1992), 874–959. For work by geographers, see Paul Rodaway, *Sensuous Geographies: Body, Sense and Place* (London, 1994); Douglas Pocock, "The Senses in Focus," *Area* 25 (1993): 11–16. Environmental historians have been especially sensitive to questions of sensory experience. As early as the 1970s, for example, Raymond W. Smilor produced important work on noise. See his "Cacophony at 34th and 6th: The Noise Problem in America, 1900–1936," *American Studies* 18 (1977): 23–38; "Confronting the Industrial Environment: The Noise Problem in America, 1893–1932" (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas, 1978); "Personal Boundaries in the Urban Environment: The Legal Attack on Noise, 1865–1930," *Environmental Review* 3 (1979): 24–36. Peter A. Coates has recently taken up where Smilor left off. See his "The Strange Stillness of the Past: Toward an Environmental History of Sound and Noise," *Environmental History* 10 (October 2005): 636–665. Of particular note is work on sound by the

art historian, Douglas Kahn. See his *Noise, Water, and Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts* (Cambridge, 1999). Although there is little historical scholarship on taste, this is changing in part courtesy of “commodity” and “food” historians who, while they probably do not consider themselves sensory historians, nevertheless offer helpful details. See, most obviously, Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York, 1987); Peter Macinnis, *Bittersweet: The Story of Sugar* (Crows Nest, NSW, 2002); Mark Kurlansky, *Salt: A World History* (New York, 2002); Andrew Dalby, *Dangerous Tastes: The Story of Spices* (Berkeley, Calif., 2000). See also Sidney W. Mintz, *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom: Excursions into Eating, Culture, and the Past* (Boston, Mass., 1996). Also see Denise Gigante, *Taste: A Literary History* (New Haven, Conn., 2005). Historical work on the haptic generally is relatively rare, virtually all of it in European history, and a good deal of it indebted to literary scholars and historians of medicine. See Sander Gilman, “Touch, sexuality, and disease,” in *Medicine and the Five Senses*, W. F. Bynum and Roy Porter, eds. (Cambridge, Eng., 1993), 198–225.; Sander Gilman, *Goethe's Touch: Touching, Seeing, and Sexuality* (Tulane, La., 1988); Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle, *Senses of Touch: Human Dignity and Deformity from Michelangelo to Calvin* (Boston, Mass., 1998); Laura Gowing, *Common Bodies: Women, Touch, and Power in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven, Conn., 2003); Elizabeth D. Harvey, ed., *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture* (Philadelphia, Penn., 2003) (see the essay by Scott Manning Stevens, chapter 7, for some material on North America). Medical historians have, given the nature of their topic, been conspicuously engaged with histories of the senses for some time. As W. F. Bynum and Roy Porter noted in their introduction to the 1993 edited collection, *Medicine and the Five Senses*: “As a practical activity, medicine requires its votaries to rely on their senses to come to diagnostic judgments which in turn dictate therapeutic recommendations. As members of a learned profession, doctors are forced to ponder on the relationship between sensation and reality. . . . As students they are taught how to use their senses and, detective-like, to interpret the clues they have picked up. . . . The history of medicine embraces ample portions of both sense and sensibility.” See Bynum and Porter, “Introduction,” in *Medicine and the Five Senses*, 1–2.

7. On sensory hierarchies much has been written, but see especially Howes, “Forming Perceptions,” 9–11; Classen, *Worlds of Sense*, 2–7; David S. Shields, “Questions, Suspicions, Speculations,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 24 (Summer 2004): 336. Connie Y. Chang, “Monterey-by-the-Smell: Odors and Social Conflict on the California Coastline,” *Pacific Historical Review* 73 (May 2004): 183–214. A good deal of work on aurality continues to privilege both the audible (not silence) and music (rather than paralinguistic sounds). See, for example, Shane White and Graham White's, *The Sounds of Slavery: Discovering African American History through Songs, Sermons, and Speech* (New York, 2005). On music and sound, see Scott Gac, “Listening to the Progressives,” *Reviews in American History* 32 (September 2004): 411–412. Gac's essay reviews Derek Vaillant, *Sounds of Reform: Progressivism & Music in Chicago, 1873–1935* (Chapel Hill, 2003). But note Douglas Kahn's warning not to continue “the privileging of music as the art of sound in modern Western culture.” Kahn, *Introduction: Histories of Sound Once Removed*, in *Wireless Imagination: Sound, Radio, and the Avant-Garde*, Douglas Kahn and Gregory Whitehead, eds., (Cambridge, Mass., 1992), 2.

8. Howes, “Forming Perceptions,” 400. I have no grudge here. The two works I deal with in some detail in this essay—Rath's and Hoffer's—I have endorsed deliberately, as with Rath's, or, as with Hoffer's, my review has been excerpted to serve as an endorsement. Hoffer has also complimented my own work. Hoffer, *Sensory Worlds*, 4.

9. Two reviews that make this point are Richard Rath's in the *William and Mary Quarterly* 61 (April 2004): 381–382 and mine in the *American Historical Review* 109 (October 2004): 1223.
10. Hoffer, *Sensory Worlds*, viii, 2–3
11. Hoffer, *Sensory Worlds*, 2, 6.
12. Hoffer, *Sensory Worlds*, 2, 8, 9, 10.
13. Hoffer, *Sensory Worlds*, 12–13. Other historians also reference the personal in their narratives and research strategies. For research on his much anticipated forthcoming book on the history of noise, Hillel Schwartz visits, among other things, libraries (both to read in and listen to), foundries, nightclubs (what a job!), airports, and, like Hoffer, “living museums, to study the decibel levels of blacksmithing and of eating off pewter plates.” In the absence of Schwartz’s book, we cannot know for sure how his experience of these sounds—or noises—has influenced his findings but I confess that I am hard pressed to understand how visiting a museum materially adds to an historical investigation of how people in the past experienced and understood blacksmithing. Richard Rath also uses his personal experiences with sound—as a musician, a band member, and a listener in a Quaker church—but less to shape his research, rather as a way to present it. Rath begins each chapter of *How Early America Sounded* with personal sketches of his listening. But he is always quick to historicize. Hillel Schwartz, “Beyond Tone and Decibel: The History of Noise,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Jan. 9, 1999, B8. On Civil War reenactors and clothes, see “How to Dress for War,” *National Geographic* (April 2005).
14. On acoustic shadows, see Charles D. Ross, *Civil War Acoustic Shadows* (Shippensburg, Penn., 2001). On Civil War sounds, see Mark M. Smith, “Of Bells, Booms, Sounds, and Silences: Listening to the Civil War South,” in *The War Was You and Me: Civilians and the American Civil War*, Joan Cashin, ed. (Princeton, N. J., 2002), 9–34. On changing notions of pain, see David B. Morris, *The Culture of Pain* (Berkeley, Calif., 1993).
15. Hoffer’s book tries “to include the powerless, the put-upon, the oppressed,” to “restore to American history its diversity.” Hoffer, *Sensory Worlds*, vii. A close reading of earlier work would have avoided these problems. See, for example, Roeder, “Coming to Our Senses,” 1115–1116.
16. Hoffer, *Sensory Worlds*, 253.
17. Howes, “Forming Perceptions,” 400.
18. Hoffer, *Sensory Worlds*, 14. Hoffer is also quoted on the centrality of the lemon problem in Emily Eakins’ *New York Times* piece on the history of the senses.
19. The same held true, apparently, for sarsaparilla—a medicinal odor in Britain but a tasty soft drink—root beer—in the U.S. Rachel S. Herz, “Influence of Odors on Mood and Affective Cognition,” in *Olfaction, Taste, and Cognition*, Catherine Rouby et al. ed. (Cambridge, Eng., 2002), 160–177, 162 esp. On the gas liquid chromatographer, see Classen, Howes, Synnott, *Aroma*, 198–200. On sugar and taste, see Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*.
20. On the historically situated meaning of visual evidence and abolitionism, see Elizabeth B. Clark, “‘The Sacred Rights of the Weak’: Pain, Sympathy, and the Culture of Individual Rights in Antebellum America,” *Journal of American History* 82 (September 1995): 463–493. For thoughtful remarks on the nature of visual evidence, see Joshua

Brown, "Visualizing the Nineteenth Century: Notes on Making a Social History Documentary Film," *Radical History Review* 38 (1987): 114–125, and the penetrating commentary of Louis P. Masur, "Pictures Have Now Become a Necessity": The Use of Images in American History Textbooks," *Journal of American History* 84 (March 1998): 1409–1424.

21. Bruce R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor* (Chicago, 1999); Smith's comment in his "How Sound is Sound History?" in Mark M. Smith, *Hearing History*, 389–393, quotation on 389–390. See also my "Listening Back," esp. 394–395.

22. Classen, Howes, Synnott, *Aroma*, 204.

23. Ong's work is most readily summarized and accessible in Walter J. Ong, "The Shifting Sensorium," in *The Varieties of Sensory Experience: A Sourcebook in the Anthropology of the Senses*, David Howes, ed. (Toronto, 1991), quotation on 29–30. But see, too, Ong's *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (New York, 1988) and *The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History* (New York, 1967); Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto, 1962); David Howes, "Sensorial Anthropology," in Howes, ed., *Varieties of Sensory Experience*, 170–173 esp.; Jack Goody and Ian Watt, "The Consequences of Literacy," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 5 (1963): 304–45. Febvre's discussion is in his *The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century: The Religion of Rabelais*, Beatrice Gottlieb, trans. (Cambridge, Mass., 1982), 428–32, 436–7. The most robust engagement with the McLuhan/Ong thesis is Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Eng., 1979). See as well D. R. Woolf, "Speech, Text, and Time: The Sense of Hearing and the Sense of the Past in Renaissance England," *Albion* 18 (1986): 159–93. Leigh Eric Schmidt (*Hearing Things*) is also influenced by the McLuhan/Ong debate but ends of making a powerful case against the visual-as-modern claim.

24. Rath, *How Early America Sounded*, 174. Hoffer is only marginally interested in the McLuhan/Ong debate. Hoffer, *Sensory Worlds*, 3, 4–5.

25. Rath, *How Early America Sounded*, 173. Neither Rath nor Hoffer raised methodological questions in their reviews about the other's work. See Peter Charles Hoffer, "When Sound Mattered," *Reviews in American History* 32 (June 2004): 144–150; Rath's review in *William and Mary Quarterly* 61 (April 2004).

26. On smell as premodern and vision and odorlessness as modern, see Classen, Howes, Synnott, *Aroma*; on the destabilizing of vision at century's end, see Kate Flint, *The Victorians and the Visual Imagination* (Cambridge, Eng., 2000). See also Jay, *Downcast Eyes*; Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990); Gillian Beer, "'Authentic Tidings of Invisible Things': Vision and the Invisible in the Later Nineteenth Century," in *Vision in Context: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Sight*, Teresa Brennan and Martin Jay, eds. (New York, 1996), 83–98. On efforts to shore up racial categories around this time, see Michael O'Malley, "Specie and Species: Race and the Money Question in Nineteenth-Century America," *American Historical Review* 99 (April 1994): 369, 375. The larger argument is in my *How Race Is Made: Slavery, Segregation, and the Senses* (Chapel Hill, 2006); see also my "Finding Deficiency: On Eugenics, Economics, and Certainty," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 64 (July, 2005): 887–900.

27. Alain Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social Imagination* (Cambridge, Mass., 1986), 143; Alain Corbin, *Sound and Meaning in the 19th-Century French Countryside*, Martin Thom, trans. (New York, 1998), 288. See also Sima Godfrey, "Alain Corbin: Making Sense of French history," *French Historical Studies* 25 (spring 2002): 382–398.
28. See my *Listening to Nineteenth-Century America*; "Listening Back," 399–401; "Listening to the Heard Worlds of Antebellum America," 379, both in *Hearing History*.
29. On metaphor and the senses, see Mark M. Smith, *Listening to Nineteenth-Century America*, 261–269; Hibbitts, "Making Sense of Metaphors." On race and smell, see my *How Race Is Made*; and my essay, "Making Scents Make Sense: White Noses, Black Smells, and Desegregation," in Peter Stearns, ed., *American Behavioral History* (New York, 2005), pp.179–198.
30. A good example of work that understands its topic through touch, smell, and sight is Steven Connor's, *The Book of Skin*, a powerful meditation on the haptic that is necessarily informed by deep understanding of the olfactory and visual. Steven Connor, *The Book of Skin* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2004). Note, too, the sensible call (and offering) by Robert Jütte, *A History of the Senses: From Antiquity to Cyberspace* (Cambridge, 2005), 12–13 especially.
31. On the Revolution, see Hoffer, *Sensory Worlds*, 189–251; on competing versions of aural national identity, north and south, and the coming of the Civil War, see my *Listening to Nineteenth-Century America*; on German nationalism and music, see the astute remarks by Nora M. Alter and Lutz Koepnick, "Introduction: Sound Matters," in Nora M. Alter and Lutz Koepnick, eds., *Sound Matters: Essays on the Acoustics of Modern German Culture* (New York, 2004), 1–29.

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