

CfP for Book Proposal // Article Proposals for an edited collection

Tracing Disgust: Cultural Approaches to the Visceral (edited by Max Ryyänen, Susanne Ylönen & Heidi Kosonen)

We often recoil at the thought of mold gathering at the dishes used for eating, of bad breath on a person we do not specifically like, or of a spider walking across our body. Disgust, exemplified in these classic illustrations, is probably the most visceral of the basic human emotions. Some argue that it engages in particular the so called lower senses — taste, smell and touch — with a function for an organism's preservation. It is also one of the recognized "moral emotions," functioning symbolically on social and cultural scales and serving, for example, as an instrument of political discourses. This can be traced in different examples, such as the discrimination of sexual minorities or the populist rhetorics of racist and fascist movements.

In a more deconstructive vein, disgust has also facilitated the criticism and resistance of prevailing norms and hierarchical constitutions often reiterated in its moral uses. In countercultural movements, such as artistic avant-garde or punk, or in children's culture, disgust, disgustingness and varied kinds of disgust-objects from slime toys to disgust-evoking sweets serve also as sources of pleasure. In art and popular culture disgust has proven to be a welcome enhancement to spectacle-seeking entertainment. Disgust, manifested not only in our instinctive recoiling from danger and decay, but also in these varied kinds of symbolic discourses and cultural products aiming to provoke, agitate or bring about enjoyment, is thus more than the biological mechanism seeking to protect animals from particular kinds of dangers, or a negative emotion negatively felt.

We now invite researchers from a variety of fields ranging from arts and cultural studies and philosophy to sociology and anthropology to reflect on the different varieties and functions of disgust. We especially welcome unexpected approaches that consider the topic from perspectives that are novel both methodologically and content-wise. The themes may consider but are not restricted to:

disgust's relationship to other emotions and affects
disgust's moral, social and/or biological aspects and uses
disgust, decay and biological, cognitive, socio-cultural or symbolic dangers
disgust and its uses as low or high culture
disgust and disgust-objects as humour or art
disgust and disgust-objects as pleasure and entertainment, for instance in popular cultural phenomena, transgressive art, extreme cuisine or children's culture
disgust's and disgust-objects's relationship to cultural change, for instance in political discourses, hate speech and their rhetorics
countercultural disgust and its potential for change
disgust, ethnic minorities and refugee crisis
disgust, gender, sexuality and LGBTQI
disgust and death
disgust and climate change
disgust, foodways, food identities and food economies
disgust, social class and social hierarchies
disgust and identity

The proposals for an article (300 words) and additional information (such as contact details, affiliation and a short biography), should be sent to editors via email (tracing-disgust@jyu.fi and max.ryyanen@aalto.fi) by August 15th, 2020. Notification of acceptance will be sent by September 15, 2020. Full texts (max 9000 words) are expected by December 15, 2020.

We seek to widen our networks to find as interesting article propositions for our book as possible. Thus, although we already have some great authors with interesting papers on board, we have decided to also open this CfP for article propositions beyond our current range of authors. We are currently negotiating with several high profile publishers, and aim to put forward a more detailed book proposal, based on the abstracts we receive, in September 2020.

If you have any inquiries, you may contact us through email: tracing-disgust@jyu.fi.