

Sensing and Feeling (Indiana Univ., 23-26 May 07)

Barbara Truesdell

Call for Papers:

"Sensing and Feeling: The Embodiment of Experience in the Eighteenth Century"

The Center for Eighteenth-Century Studies at Indiana University is pleased to announce the sixth Bloomington Eighteenth-Century Workshop, to be held on May 23-26, 2007. The workshop is part of a series of annual interdisciplinary events that has been running since 2002, with 20-30 scholars presenting and discussing pre-circulated papers on a broad topic in a congenial setting.

Our topic for 2007 is "Sensing and Feeling: The embodiment of experience in the eighteenth century". Connecting mental and social practices to bodily sensation became crucial in many different venues during the eighteenth century. How were cognition, experience, and feelings understood to be linked to the body? What were the mediations between the sensorium and religious, social, and political practices?

Our aim is to go beyond the Foucauldian notion that the body is above all a medium of power - suffering its consequences or heroically offering resistance to it. We seek to provide a more nuanced perspective on the body by investigating sensation, embodiment, and the connections between them, at the levels both of experience and of conceptualization of experience. How did understandings of the embodiment of cognition and affect shift over time? What sort of social and psychological practices were enabled by thinking of the senses in certain ways? How, in turn, did these practices prompt a rethinking of the nexus of psychic and physiological realities? And how did representational practices (visual, musical, textual, scientific, dramatic, etc.) respond to such shifts?

Papers might address topics such as:

- * the shifting relationship between sensing and feeling
- * the isolation and division of the senses

- * sensorial mutilation, phantom limbs and prostheses
- * the relationship of "inner sense" to the outer senses
- * the changing relations between religious experience (conviction, conversion, enthusiasm, etc.) to the senses and embodiment
- * aesthetics and aesthesiology
- * the conceptualization of the embodiment of thought and feeling in different spheres (physiology, philosophy, medicine, anthropology, drama, literary criticism, etc.)
- * the place of embodiment of thought or feeling in the changing understandings of the relationship between body and soul
- * the social organization of the senses
- * the embodiment of sympathy, pity, compassion, and empathy
- * skin and touch
- * eighteenth-century texts and institutions seen from the vantage of current research in cognitive science and related disciplines
- * the relations of sight or vision to the other embodied senses in eighteenth-century science and natural philosophy

The workshop format will consist of focused discussion of four to six pre-circulated papers a day, amid socializing and refreshment. The workshop will draw both on the wide community of eighteenth-century scholars and on the large and growing group of scholars in this field at Indiana University-Bloomington. The workshop will cover most expenses of those scholars chosen to present their work: accommodations, travel (up to a certain limit), and most meals.

We are asking for applications to be sent to us by Monday, 8 January 2007. The application consists of a two-page description of the proposed paper as well as a current CV. Please email or send your application to Dr. Barbara Truesdell, Weatherly Hall North, Room 122, Bloomington, IN 47405, Telephone 812/855-2856, email voltaire@indiana.edu. Papers will be selected by an interdisciplinary committee.

For further information please refer to our website,
<http://www.indiana.edu/~voltaire/>
, or contact the director of the Center,
Dror Wahrman, Dept. of History, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405,
e-mail dwahrman@indiana.edu.

Reference:

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