

Casta Paintings, Human Diversity & Inferiority of Life (Harvard, 3 Nov 07)

Pat Denault

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The Casta Paintings, Theories of Human Diversity, and the Inferiority of Life in America

November 3, 2007

Harvard University

This one-day Workshop will concentrate on the widespread theoretical discussions and bitter disputes in early modern Europe and America over the environment's influence on the human body, the hierarchical view of human nature, and the social controls implicit in human classification. The vivid Spanish American casta paintings will be studied as documents in the theory of human "temperament," a central concept of Hippocratic-Galenic medicine, and as a common form of racial arithmetic. Discussion will include the ways this widely accepted ordering of types was ultimately inverted. Scholars with an expert knowledge of the field will discuss aspects of the topic; each of their presentations will be followed by general discussion. Lunch will be provided, and a reception will follow the final session.

PROGRAM

9:30-10:00 a.m.

Bernard Bailyn, Harvard University

Introduction

10:00-11:00 a.m.

Ilona Katzew, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

"Classifying Colonial Mexico: The Case of Joaquín Antonio de Basarás"

11:00-11:15 a.m. Break

11:15-12:15 a.m.

Carlos López Beltrán, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

"Blood and Temperament; Purity and Mestizaje in Castas Society"

12:30-2:00 p.m. Lunch

2:00-3:00 p.m.

Joyce Chaplin, Harvard University

"Race in British America: Reality and Appearance"

3:00-4:00 p.m.

Magali Carrera, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

"Mapping the Territory of the Body in the Visual Practices of New Spain"

4:00-4:15 p.m. Break

4:15-5:15 p.m.

Nicolás Wey-Gómez, Brown University

"Nature, Place, and Political Hierarchy in Columbus's Invention of the Amerindian Tropics"

5:30-7:00 p.m. Reception

Attendance at the Workshop and participation in the discussion are open to the academic community. Historians at the beginning of their careers are especially encouraged to attend. Pre-registration is required. For a registration form and additional information, please see our Web site, <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~atlantic/casta.html> or contact the Seminar office via pdenault@fas.harvard.edu.

Reference:

CONF: Casta Paintings, Human Diversity & Inferiority of Life (Harvard, 3 Nov 07). In: Arthist.net, Oct 25, 2007 (accessed May 11, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/29772>>.