

The ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions presents:

NICOLE HOCHNER: PUBLIC LECTURE

(E)Motions and Humours or Anxiety about Motion in Late Fifteenth-Century Political Thought



Date: Wednesday 8 August 2012
Time: 6.15pm
Venue: North Lecture Theatre, Level 2 Old Arts
The University of Melbourne

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The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Many definitions have been given to the word emotion, though its etymology is certain. The word itself is thought not to have existed before the sixteenth century. Dictionaries place its first usage in 1534 in France. It came from the Latin roots: 'to move out'. It originally referred to the fluctuation of the humours of ancient medical theory.

Humours engaged not only our bodies but also our minds; and therefore blood pressure was not a medical matter alone but an inclination to feelings such as anger, anxiety, or love. But in the sixteenth century 'emotion' referred to popular motion in the political sphere, not to a variation of mood or character. It designated popular movement or popular rebellion, rather than its present meaning of feeling or sentiment. It referred to a moving and disturbing humour in the body politic.

The lecture will argue that changes in attitude towards motion in the late fifteenth century support the argument that the word emotion expressed anxiety about political disarray, leading to a new vision of nobility constructed on race and blood.

Nicole Hochner is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Political Science and Head of the Program in Cultural Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Her research focuses on early modern France, and more specifically on the years 1480-1520.

Her publications include *Louis XII: Les dérèglements de l'image royale* (Seysse, Paris 2006) and a co-edited volume with Thomas Gaehtgens *L'Image du roi de Francois Ier à Louis XIV* (Paris, 2006).

Her many articles have covered topics such as the emblem of the porcupine, the figuration of the biblical Esther, the notion of propaganda, the display of tears in official pageants, and the political thought of political thinkers such as Guillaume Budé, Pierre Gringore, Claude de Seyssel and Niccolò Machiavelli.

Her current projects include a study of social mobility in early modern France, which emphasizes the 'birth' of the word emotion and the importance of the medical gaze; a project on Machiavelli and love; and a political reading of Pierre Gringore's works which focuses on satire.