

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



## 'The Authenticity of Emotions: Sceptical and Sympathetic Sociability in the Eighteenth-Century British Public Sphere'

This interdisciplinary Collaboratory will discuss the public sphere and emotional change in eighteenth-century Britain from the perspective of literature, philosophical ideas, political and religious debate, print culture and literary sociability. We are especially interested in: literary and political controversies; the rise and development of the novel; satire; contemporary ideas about sentiment and the passions; and the shared culture of sensibility, sociability and politeness. The principal aim of the meeting is to consider the 'emotionalization' of eighteenth-century print culture and its larger influence on contemporary public affairs via the formation of communities – either public or self-selecting – of sympathetic or sceptical readers. Indeed sympathy and the communication of ideas and sentiments among the reading public(s) are central to our interests.

The period under discussion is the 'long eighteenth century' (from the late 1600s to the early 1800s) wherein changes of psychological expression occurred alongside the development of wider and deeper print cultures. Various social and artistic media served to channel and contain fissile emotions while also providing scripts for creating and communicating the sentiments. The Collaboratory is designed to encourage a more general discussion about the cultural and intellectual context of the eighteenth-century British public sphere by looking more broadly at the growth of a print culture which seems to exemplify Hume's (and other thinkers' and writers') emphasis on sympathy and emotional communication. Among other things it will be important to consider how - and how far - communities were united by humorous but biting criticism, as well as positive sympathy, and whether the balance between these emotions can be seen to change over time. This is not to suggest that there was no emotion in public discourse before 1700, but rather to argue that the coincidence of burgeoning print culture and an emphasis on feeling as the key to 'authentic' humanity may have had an unprecedented impact on the style of public debates, especially among a middle class readership.

**Date:** Tuesday 18 & Wednesday 19 September 2012

**Time:** 9.00am - 4.30pm

**Venue:** The Science Exchange  
55 Exchange Place, Adelaide, SA

**Keynote Speakers:** Michael Frazer, Philosophy  
Harvard University

W. Gerrod Parrott, Psychology  
Georgetown University

Laura J. Rosenthal, English  
University of Maryland

Conal Condren, Centre for the  
History of European Discourses,  
University of Queensland

### Important Dates

Registration opens: 28 May 2012

Deadline for papers: 31 August 2012

Registration closes: 7 September 2012

Conference cost: \$80 (incl GST)

### Enquiries

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