

Call for papers

Celtic Classics Conference, Edinburgh, June 25-28, 2014

Disgust in Greek and Roman Literature, History and Art

Coordinated by Professor Donald Lateiner (Ohio Wesleyan University, USA) and Dr Dimos Spatharas (University of Crete)

Disgust is a distinctively sensory emotion that wards off real or perceived contaminants. It is typically, but not exclusively, associated with the mouth, since it centers on oral consumption and surfeit. Furthermore, in spite of the fact that danger is sometimes described as central to disgust, it is not a necessary constituent of this emotion: poisonous mushrooms are more dangerous than sterilized cockroaches, but their sight does not make us feel sick. Disgust is also an emotion caused by 'magical' thinking and therefore frequently involves ideations rather than beliefs: Swiss chocolate ceases to be a delicacy when it is served in the shape of feces, and we find a glass of orange juice less refreshing if we spot the waitress's hair in it. Finally, as common experience indicates, disgust arises from excrements and other fluids of the human body as well as other substances whose qualities, especially stickiness and softness, are associated with them. Disgust has therefore been interpreted as an emotion that sets boundaries between human beings and animal nature.

Disgust is an emotion that displays remarkable salience in our moral vocabulary. Hence, we frequently tend to express sentiments of anger, indignation, or hatred through the idiom of disgust. The emotion figures prominently in our early moral education, because parents and other educators employ disgust and shame to control unwanted types of behaviour. By projecting aversive qualities onto morally condemnable categories, disgust has also been amply used to dehumanize, and, thereby, marginalize individuals. Nazi and, unfortunately, neo-Nazi propaganda abounds in relevant examples and the same situation applies to certain modern homophobic or misogynistic stereotypes.

We invite abstracts of 300 words on any aspect of Greek and Roman literature, history, and art that can enhance our understanding of disgust. Papers will typically be 40 minutes each with ten minutes of discussion.

Confirmed speakers and topics:

Daniel Levine (U. of Arkansas): "Disgust and delight: polysemous *αἰβόη* in Attic comedy"

Dimos Spatharas (U. of Crete): "Understanding visceral sentiments"

Robert Kaster (Princeton U.): "Not tonight, dear, I'm feeling a little /pig/"

Jack Lennon (U. C. London): "Unclean professions in the Roman world"

Debbie Felton (U. of Massachusetts): "The Disgusting Roman Witch as Abortionist?"

Donald Lateiner (Ohio Wesleyan U.): "Evoking disgust in Latin novels"

Stelios Panayotakis (U. of Crete): "A short history of *nausea*"

Please submit abstracts to **both** Professor Donald Lateiner ([dglatein@owu.edu](mailto:dglatein@owu.edu)) and Dr Dimos Spatharas ([spatharasd@gmail.com](mailto:spatharasd@gmail.com)) by **November 10, 2013**.

Possible topics of discussion would include:

- the phenomenology of disgust, e.g., body language and disgust, the symptomatology of disgust and its action tendencies
- the semantics of disgust and metaphorical discourse
- definitions of disgust in philosophical treatises and disgust in ancient ethics
- the uses of projective-disgust as a means of stigmatizing and marginalizing groups of individuals, e.g. the *kinaidos*, prostitutes, foreigners or disabled people

- goriness and horror in narratives
- the uses of disgust in *psogos*, comedy and forensic slander
- perspectives on disgust in ancient novels: characters, narrators, audiences
- disgust and gender, e.g. its relation to misogynistic stereotypes; rape, adultery and abortion; the construction of gender-identities; regulations controlling sexual behaviour
- disgust, surfeit and sympotic etiquette
- ancient approaches to hygiene and the implications of disgust; the suffering body, disease and disgust; disgust and contamination
- mapping the boundaries between disgust and pollution in religious practices and ritual
- disgust and the law
- threats of disgusting consequences from social policing of inferiors and equals
- suppression of disgust in medical and military training
- disgust and obscenity: are there ascertainable ancient boundaries?
- changing attitudes towards what constitutes disgusting—is a history of ancient disgust possible?
- differences between Hellenic and Roman concepts and practices regarding disgust
- beasts and disgust