




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The Face of Physiology

Paul White

Abstract

This article explores the relationship between the physiology of the emotions and the display of character in Victorian Britain. Charles Bell and others had begun to link certain physiological functions, such as respiration, with the expression of feelings such as fear, regarding the heart and other internal organs as instruments by which the emotions were made visible. But a purely functional account of the emotions, which emerged through the development of reflex physiology during the second half of the century, would dramatically alter the nature of feelings and the means of observing them. At the same time, instinctual or acquired sympathy, which had long underpinned the accurate reading of expressions, became a problem to be surmounted by new 'objectively'. Graphic recording instruments measuring a variety of physiological functions and used with increasing frequency in clinical diagnostics became of fundamental importance for tracing the movement of feelings during the period prior to the development of cinematography. They remained, in the form of devices such as the polygraph, a crucial and controversial means of measuring affective states, beneath the potentially deceptive surface of the body.

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