

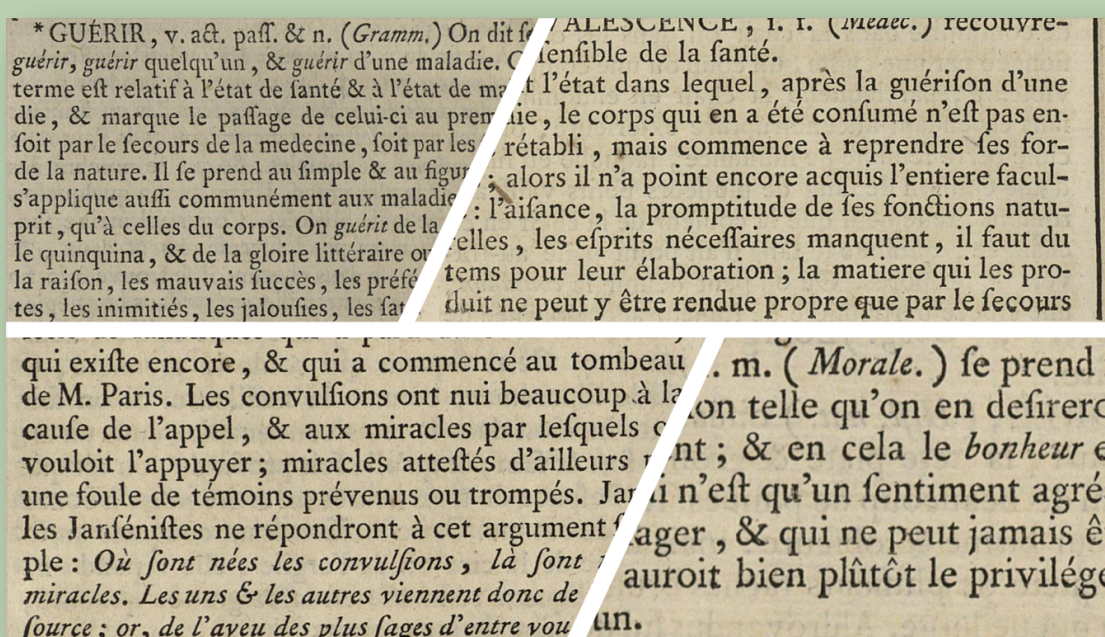
Well-being, Healing and Happiness in the Eighteenth Century



The Finnish Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Webinar

On Zoom* 25 November 2025

16:30 18:30 (Helsinki, UTC+2)



As part of its thematic focus in 2025 on notions of well-being in the eighteenth century, the Finnish Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies is organising a webinar on well-being, healing and happiness in the eighteenth century on November 25, 2025. The programme includes three short lectures and a concluding discussion. The webinar is open for members of the society and non-members alike.

*Follow the webinar on Zoom here: <https://helsinki.zoom.us/j/63090461069>

Health, in all its humanity, is an integral part of eighteenth-century society and culture. Alongside anatomical and purely medical discourse, health reflects deeper aspects of human experience that are, inter alia, touched upon in the poetics of literary production, rhetoric, and even the intellectual and political debates of the eighteenth century more broadly. In other words, health represents a *cultural practice* in which the body and the *self* play a significant role in experiencing illness, healing, and convalescence and in communicating that embodied experience to others as well.

The webinar highlights how recovery was reflected in literary works in their representation, production, and publication; how the language of illness, healing, and recovery was reflected in religious practices and beliefs about God's support in political conflicts between religious factions, without forgetting the significance of "pathologising" rhetoric in broader philosophical debates. Since well-being includes the concept of happiness, the webinar will also highlight female intellectuals' ideas about happiness and the meaning of a good life in early modern Scandinavia. The perspective of literary and intellectual production as a mouthpiece for the values of the Enlightenment is remarkable in this regard.

The webinar provides fertile ground for examining concepts of health and well-being as a heterogeneous research topic, not to mention the diversity of representations of human experience and the sensibilities of their channelling in the eighteenth century.

Programme:

16:30 PhD Bénédicte Prot (University of Basel, Switzerland)

"Writing (during) Convalescence"

17:00 PhD, Professor Anne C. Vila (University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA)

"Prodigious Healing and Threats to the Body / Body Politic in Eighteenth-Century France, from the Jansenist *convulsionnaires* to Animal Magnetism"

17:30 PhD Matilda Amundsen Bergström (University of Gothenburg, Sweden)

"Looking for Happiness in Early Modern Scandinavia"

18:00 Discussion