

EMOTION AND MOTION

Emotions are central to human experience and behavior. They condition our actions and are inherent in all forms of communication. It has also become widely accepted that there is no cognition without emotion, suggesting that every formation of cognitive skills and epistemological faculties, every cultural practice and any form of human communication is accompanied by specific emotional habituations and the formation of an *emotional habitus* – a set of habits involved in emotional communication.

In considering this interrelation, scholars tend to focus progressively more on embodiment – and more specifically, on the connection between emotions and motor actions (usually understood as ‘expressions’). In other words: The habituation of emotions is constituted by more than simply psychological aspects (in the narrow sense of the word): It must rather be described by considering the whole body in motion – and how this body, by means of its (often subliminal) motions, relates to its environment. In reflecting on the etymology of the word ‘emotion’ (i.e. *ex motio* – out of the motion) in an embodied sense, and not just related to a mental, and hence metaphorical ‘movement of the soul’ (a *motus animae*), the relation of motion and emotion become understood as an issue of the embodied mind, implicating literal movements of the body as well. The term “emotion” hence should not only refer to something disembodied and inner, but it should refer to an environmentally related behavioral pattern involving cognitive, motivational and sensorimotor aspects of experience. And moreover, emotions involve embodied interaction with an environment – including as much the interrelation of subjective expressions and impressions, as involving transsubjective emotionality (observable in affect-driven mass phenomena or moods and atmospheres).

The formation of an *emotional habitus*, i.e. the development of a set of habits involving the moving body, is fundamental to understanding emotions. It too must be conceived of as taking place within a specific *emotional habitat*, in which other bodies play a crucial role. Thus, *the habitus of one individual is also a part of the habitat for others*. Not only is the habitus shaped by the environment – it is also the environment which is shaped by the habitus.

This fact becomes more striking when considering that emotions extend beyond solely anthropological issues. In current research they are understood as being a fundamental aspect of animal behaviour as well – and hence human emotions can be investigated through experiments with animals or by referring to comparative ethology. Taking research on animal emotions and animal behaviour into the study of evolutionary heritage of human emotions provides for a vivid discussion about the interrelations of phylogenetic and ontogenetic aspects of emotions – in other words: the evolutionary development of specific ‘animal’ emotions through interaction with a ‘natural’ habitat – and the habituation of human emotions in and with a culturally produced habitat.

This discussion regarding evolution, development and culture has even become intertwined in the current discussion about neuronal plasticity and mirror neurons, paving the ground for a more productive discourse on the interrelation of ‘nature’ and ‘nurture’ in emotions: It allows for conceiving of the formation of an emotional habitus, which exists beyond the dichotomous alternatives of solely classical conditioning or cultural production of meaning, allowing rather for the articulation of a *habitus-in-habitat* relation as well. The advantage here is that the *interrelation* of culture and evolution become emphasized rather than opposed.

Focusing on the interrelation of motion and emotion thus expands the scope of *Habitus in Habitat*, providing a foundation for broader discussion. Emotional habitus and emotional habitat constitute the foundation of sociocultural communities, the psychology of emotions, and cultural

practices – and they have much to contribute to the study of emotions both for cognition and aesthetics. Habitualizing embodied emotionality is hence crucial for communicative and social sciences, psychology, philosophy, and all cultural fields of research.

In order to focus on these issues, we set the following fields of interest for the conference:

- 1) Questions of appearance and representation are central to regarding emotions as emerging from motion: How do emotions present themselves? How are they represented in motion? What is their relation to the specific media contexts of the arts – how can an embodied relation with, for instance: a printed text or a two-dimensional image, be conceived of and habitualized? How are embodied emotions brought into visibility, audibility or readability? How can media processes represent and relate to neuronal processes, and vice versa?
- 2) Focusing on the embodied interrelation of habitus and habitat means to go beyond concepts of emotionality as ‘something inner’ expressed by ‘something outer’. Encoding and decoding are part of the emotional process themselves. This suggests the question of emotional ‘meaning’, or ‘meaningfulness’ of emotional articulations, the relation between cognition and sensorimotoric aspects of habitualized emotions, and their relation to the imaginary as well as proprioception. These issues should also be focused on by considering the specific habitualizations of the senses – and hence include concepts of the iconic or the pictorial. How does knowledge derived from the arts intervene in this discussion?
- 3) Current research on the articulation of emotions is primarily focused on facial expressions. The conference attempts to conceptualize a broader view on the articulation of emotions by addressing the whole body – as well as its environmental interrelation. Thus, we will focus on mise-en-scènes of the body and on body practices, and on the immanent cognitive and emotional processes. Moreover we will investigate how gestures, prosody and other articulations can be culturally ‘coined’ and have their own ‘lives’ by travelling not only from body to body, but also through time and space, and hence from one culture to another.
- 4) If human emotions are studied by recurring to animal emotions, this does not only imply a conception of animals as similar to humans, and hence of anthropomorphization – it also implies a conception of humans as similar to animals, and hence a de-anthropomorphization. Moreover current artistic practices often address humans imitating animals in their emotional articulations, or focus on phenomena of emotional communication animals can share with humans (e.g., rhythm). The conference hence also wants to focus on habitus-habitat relations which can be shared by humans and other species.
- 5) If emotions are linked to the implicit temporal contextualization of motions, then the current focus on momentary expressions should be expanded. This is especially true when relating emotionality to the process of embodied communication and of time-related media practices (e.g., in film, literature, music and performance). The focus on habitualizations and on how these processes work and communicate with habits allows us to raise these questions.