

Emotions Between History and Science

A symposium organized by the Institute of Philosophy, the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and the Centre for the Study of Emotions in Cross-Cultural Exchange

Zagreb, Thursday 18 – Friday 19 October, 2018

Over the past four decades, the topic of emotions has increasingly attracted attention across a vast number of disciplines. It has become customary to speak of an “emotional turn” in anthropology as well as in social science and cultural studies, in history as well as in cognitive science. This interest has contributed to generate new questions, to address old problems from different perspectives, to connect different fields of research or to create new ones, to devise new theories and scientific models, and to the establishment of interdisciplinary research centers, journals and research groups. Fields as diverse as affective neuroscience, history of emotions, sociology of emotions, archeology of emotions, and emotional robotics – to name but a few – have gradually emerged.

On the other hand, both in the sciences and the humanities, original insights and genuine breakthroughs coexist with naïve enthusiasms, ideological dismissals, precipitous conversions to supposedly revolutionary theories or methods, sweeping generalizations and reckless mutual borrowings between different research traditions. The scenario is, as always, complex, diversified, often quite confused and therefore worthy of being examined.

By bringing together scholars and experts of different backgrounds – philosophers, historians, psychologists, linguists, neuroscientists, biologists, anthropologists – this symposium wants to throw some light on some of the major trends in current research on the emotions and, at the same time, to explore the ways in which ideas, images, theories and experiences of “the emotions” have changed, persisted, disappeared or resurfaced in the course of history. The aim is not to settle ongoing debates or “solve” philosophical dilemmas but, rather, to formulate problems with more clarity, to give voice to different positions, to raise questions and to understand where our scientific knowledge of emotions has advanced and where it has not. At the same time, by adding historical perspective, the aim is also to dispel the obviousness of our current assumptions, to complicate the picture, to question simplified historical reconstructions, to identify the tangled roots of our present views and to investigate the reasons behind the interest (and obsession) with the emotions in both current scholarship and in our societies in general. More specifically, this will also be an opportunity to distinguish the meanings, the uses and the philosophical or ideological connotations associated with terms such as “emotion”, “affect”, “feeling”, or “mood” in different fields of research and areas of culture (and across languages), to trace their history from a *long durée* perspective, and to explore both diverging opinions and common ideas, metaphors, paradigms and worldviews circulating across different disciplines.

Submissions should be sent to ivana@ifzg.hr by 1 April 2018.