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# Phenomenology of Emotions

Annual Research Seminar, Liège (Belgium), 24-28 avril 2017

## CALL-FOR-PAPERS

For its 11<sup>th</sup> edition, the research seminar will focus on the topic of emotions.

### Presentation

It is widely held that emotions shape our relation to the world and to other human beings. Yet, to date, the nature of emotions still remains a thorny issue. Part of the problem is that the term “emotion” covers a wide range of phenomena. It is, indeed, commonly used to refer to phenomena as different as joy, sadness, fear, anger, astonishment, boredom, love, aversion, jealousy, disgust, etc. This raises the following classical questions: Does the term “emotion” refer to a *natural kind*? Do all emotions exhibit a common feature? What is the best way to describe them and single them out?

Over the last decades, *cognitive* and *physiological* approaches competed to offer the most convincing description and explanation of emotional phenomena. Now, while both positions certainly bring to the fore equally relevant aspects of emotions, none of them seems to provide a fully satisfying account of what emotional experiences really are. Focusing on the sensory dimension of emotional experiences, the physiological approach to emotions arguably fails to apprehend their intentional dimension: It doesn't seem to account for the fact that, unlike sensations, emotions often are “directed at” something and are open to rational justification. On the other hand, it is commonly objected that cognitive theories, whereas they succeed in accommodating those aspects, expose themselves to the charge of *over-intellectualizing* emotions by conceiving them as mere combinations of beliefs and/or desires.

The seminar aims at investigating the way phenomenological insights may contribute to contemporary debates on the nature of emotions. “Phenomenology” will be understood from both a historical and contemporary perspective. One question we wish to address is whether the return to the *phenomenological tradition* may provide relevant materials when it comes to escape the difficulties raised by cognitive and physiological theories. Yet, special attention will also be devoted to the question as to whether there is an *affektive phenomenology* per se, that is, whether emotional experiences are or not irreducible to cognitive and/or conative experiences.

## Confirmed invited speakers

Philippe Cabestan (C.P.G.E. / Archives Husserl de Paris)  
Natalie Depraz (Université de Rouen / Archives Husserl de Paris)  
Denis Fisette (Université du Québec à Montréal)  
Olivier Massin (Université de Genève)  
Fabrice Teroni (Université de Genève)  
Ingrid Vendrell Ferran (Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena)

## Paper proposals

A number of slots are reserved for contributed papers. We welcome papers addressing (but not limited to) the following topics:

### 1. **The intentionality of emotional experiences**

Do emotions represent something beyond themselves? If so, are all emotions intentional or should one distinguish between intentional and non-intentional emotions? How are emotions involved into one's so-called openness to the world? How do they bear on the capacity one has to be intentionally directed at something? How do they relate to paradigmatic intentional states like beliefs and desires? Are intentionality and affectivity separated features of the mental or are they best thought of as tightly intertwined?

### 2. **Methodological problems related to the description of emotional experiences**

What's the best way to describe one's emotional experiences? What are the roles and functions of pre-reflective self-consciousness and introspection in the attempt to understand one's affective life? How does one communicate about one's own emotions? Is it possible to go beyond cultural differences in order to share what is experienced in an emotional experience?

### 3. **The normative dimension of emotional experiences**

What is the role of appraisal and valuation in emotional experiences? Does the ascribing of values to something depend on one's emotional experiences? How can a full-blown theory of emotions contribute to illuminate ethical and/or esthetical issues?

### 4. **The bodily dimension of emotional experiences**

Can we think of an emotional experience without any bodily manifestation? What is the part played by bodily sensations in emotional experiences? How can a phenomenological account of emotions accommodate their bodily dimension? Conversely, how could theories of the extended mind contribute to shed light on emotional phenomena?

## Important dates

Proposals (title and abstract, maximum 700 words) are invited from senior researchers as well as graduate students and early-career researchers. Proposals must be sent to [a.dewalque@ulg.ac.be](mailto:a.dewalque@ulg.ac.be) and [aurelien.zincq@ulg.ac.be](mailto:aurelien.zincq@ulg.ac.be) by **January 5, 2017**. Please use only the electronic submission form (doc – txt).

Proposals will be evaluated by the URPh board through a blind-review process. Acceptance or refusal will be notified by **January 15, 2017**.

The workshop will take place from **April 24 to 28, 2017**, at the University of Liège (Belgium).

## Practical details

Attendance is free. Registration is not required. At the participant's request, the Philosophy Department will issue a certificate which can be used for doctoral certification (ECTS).

Talks will be in English and French. Passive understanding of French is recommended.

The Doctoral School does not cover for accommodation and travel costs of the CFP speakers. Information on accommodation is available on request.

## Selected literature

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