

Call for Papers

Enacting Modalities of Feeling: Anthropological Explorations into Affective, Sensual and Material Connections

Workshop, University of Vienna, February 25-27 2015

This workshop aims to bring together researchers interested in emotions, the senses and materiality. Its goal is to start devising a theoretical approach that links affective, sensorial and motor modes of engagement with various socio-material environments. In doing so, it takes up various strands of research in anthropology and other disciplines that have stimulated debates on the role of emotions, perceptions and material worlds for human life.

One recent strand of these debates is formed by anthropological studies that have resumed to consider emotions and affect as relevant topics for investigation. Claiming centrality of these themes in anthropological debates, such studies address new qualities of intimate relationships fostered by communication and biomedical technologies, various forms of affective labour emerging in processes of global migration and (non-)capitalist services, and the politics and economies of affect in relation to carework, political participation or globalized religious socialities (e.g. Beatty 2013, Besnier 2009). Moreover, the so-called “affective turn” in the Humanities and Social Sciences has shed light on the intersubjective intensity and dynamics immanent to bodily matter and matter in general. It has explored political, economic and ethical appropriations of emotions, as well as the complex relations between power, subjectivity, memory, the anticipation of the future, and emotions (e.g. Adams/Murphy/Clarke 2009, Clough and Halley 2007, Navaro-Yashin 2012).

Another strand of research on the senses has started to elaborate new approaches, stressing the centrality of the senses in the shaping of social practice and culture (e.g. Geurts 2002, Howes 2004) and calling for a focus on perception in processes of doing ethnography (e.g. Pink 2009). Furthermore, Ingold’s work (2000, 2013) has pointed out the need to highlight the creative processes in social practice and anthropology in the making as engagements and correspondences with materials, artefacts, objects and the environment, in which skills of perception and action emerge alongside with ontologies.

Last but not least, anthropologists and other social and cultural scientists have emphasized the important role matter plays in developing sensorial skills and in bearing or affording specific affects (e.g. Ahmed 2010, Durham 2011, Navaro-Yashin 2012, Warnier 2001). In doing so, these approaches have brought about surprising and promising insights into issues of subjectivity, morality, politics and the making of culture more generally.

Building on these frameworks, this workshop seeks to bring these debates together and to explore the possibilities for new theoretical approaches that, through an investigation of their correspondences grounded in the body and perception, link different modalities of “feelings” (i.e. affects, emotions and sensations) as intersubjective, creative and developing skills, with the animacy and dynamism of materiality and the non-human.

It aims to address questions such as:

- What is the relationship between the development of particular sensorial motor skills on the one hand, and affect and emotions on the other? How are they linked to particular socio-material environments?
- What is the role of particular sensorial or affective modalities in the shaping of emotions? And what is their role in the creation and reproduction of social practice?
- How do politics and economics shape the senses through the appropriation of emotions, and vice versa? How does this become articulated and institutionalized in particular social practices?

- How do artefacts, technologies or other material structures give rise to certain “feelings” and how in turn do these “feelings” shape things?
- What is the role of emotions, sensation and the material in the emergence of new social forms and subjectivities?
- What is the role of affects as linked to the material in generating imaginaries of pasts, presents and futures?
- How do the senses, emotions and the material actually shape, create and reproduce time through social practice?

We particularly welcome contributions that address questions such as the above on the basis of empirical case studies. We are also interested in contributions that explicitly use or experiment with innovative methods and/or tackle methodological questions specific to the workshop theme.

Submission Process:

Abstracts should not exceed 250 words. Please submit your abstract by the **6th of December 2014** to *modalities.of.feeling@univie.ac.at*. A notification of acceptance will be forwarded by the **19th of December 2014**. Following the notification of acceptance, we will require you to send us a summary of your contribution (up to 1500 words) by the **15th of February 2015**, so that all the participants in the workshop can prepare in advance.

Time and Location

25-27 February 2015,
 Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology
 University of Vienna
 Universitaetsstrasse 7
 A-1010 Vienna, Austria

There are no fees required for participation in the Workshop. Refreshments and lunches will be provided at no cost to participants.

Organizers and Contact:

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