

An analyses of the language of emotions in the history of medicine, philosophy, and art

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Summary: The Institute of the History of Medicine and Health of the Geneva University, in the context of a national research centre on emotion, is developing a new research project of the historical evolution of the vocabulary and semantic figures used in medicine, philosophy and art to describe and understand emotions.

This project can be developed in collaboration with computational linguists, at different levels:

1. the traditional concordance analyses of texts, and especially of the rhetorical figures of emotions.
2. the historical evolution of the vocabulary and semantic structures used in real-world languages and scientific discourses to talk about emotions and feelings, and their corporal basis (ex. the passage from 'passions of the soul' to 'emotions' or the role in the emotional process of the diverse components of mind, such as *ratio*, *imagination*, *memoria* in classical medicine).
3. The comparative analyses of the verbal expressions of emotions in different cultural periods and in different linguistic areas, and their exchanges with the medical and philosophical discourses (ex. The shift for the humoral models ('Blood is rushing to my head') to the mechanical models ('I am vibrating with love')).
4. The detailed analyses of the nuances of the language used in this complex biological, psychological, and cultural experience, and their changes through time.
5. The comparison of the rhetorical linguistic figures used in the scientific discourses with the rhetorical figures used in literature, arts and music.