

Structuring the domain of human nonverbal behavior: A biological, Popperian perspective from the field of human movement studies

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Introduction

Two decades have passed since a seminal contribution was made, in the first issue of this journal, to a structuring of the domain of human nonverbal behavior (Ekman and Friesen 1969). In the interval this domain has enjoyed a research thrust of great depth and breadth, as psychoanalytic, anthropological, social-psychological, ethological, linguistic, neurological, sociological, and even literary perspectives have been brought to bear on topics as diverse as dyadic paralinguistic communication, exhibitionism, facial affect, and gestural sign language.

Coincidentally, this bidecanal period has also seen the rapid maturation of the emergent discipline of Human Movement Studies (HMS), or Human Kinetics (HK). This field of study near its inception recognized that nonverbal communication was an essential component of human nonverbal behavior (HNVB) as a whole (Charteris et al. 1976). However, the more traditional research avenues in this field had been trodden by work physiologists, biomechanicians, and social psychologists with interests in performance optimization, rehabilitation, and diverse other directions; nonverbal communication received little or no attention (Kelly 1978 is a notable exception).

As the interests of Human Movement scholars turn toward the domain of human nonverbal communication (HNVC), it will be important for us to contribute not only data, but also conceptual structure, from the perspective of our own field of study.

What follows is not intended as an improvement upon the structures offered by Ekman and Friesen, Argyle, Hinde, Birdwhistell, Efron, Cicourel, Poyatos, Scherer, and the many others who have made important contributions to a structuring of the domain. Our present purpose is to reconcile their syntactical directions with our own conceptual framework for HMS, so as to facilitate research in HNVC from within our own ranks. It may not be presumptuous to hope that, in time, perspectives