

Forming of Aesthetic Judgement in Movement

Monika Roscher

Faculty of Social Science, Media and Sport, Johannes Gutenberg University

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Human movement and human experience can be described in quantitative terms. This is what, among others, biomechanics has tried. And yet, the positivistic and objectivist type of description leaves important dimensions of human movement outside. The bio-metric approach is reductive. Self-reflected biological research is well aware of this insight into methodological reduction. But how can methodological reductionism be overcome in a self-reflected way? This has been the starting point of phenomenology, ever since Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Zur Farbenlehre* (1810), and the classic French epistemologists (e.g. Gaston Bachelard's *La psychanalyse du feu*, 1938). The philosophical school of phenomenology has tried to build a theoretical framework around this challenge, with Edmund Husserl (*Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie*, 1913) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (*Phénoménologie de la perception*, 1945) as main references.

If movement is not seen as factor or system in a world of explanation, but as phenomenon in a world of complex understanding – where does this lead? This is what several contemporary phenomenologists try to figure out, and to apply to – among other things sports studies. One of them is Monika Roscher, and in her doctoral dissertation, entitled *Reflexives Bewegen – Phänomenologische Studien zu einer Ästhesiologie körperlicher Bildung* (Reflexive movement – Phenomenological studies towards an aesthesiology of bodily education), she has tried hard, and the following article sums up her attempt. Among wary observers, critical questions may arise about some over-complex newspeak characterizing the approach of phenomenology as well as about the weight of authority references. Does phenomenology express a new type of academic neo-scholastics? Or are these just teething troubles of new narrative ways to approach human bodily practice? All this can and should be debated. There can be no debate, however, about the need to enrich the methodology of studies in human movement.

Henning Eichberg
University of Southern Denmark, Odense

Introduction

A woman stands in front of a table. With her hand she fumbles along the edge of the table. She pulls one leg above the table and is balancing. Firstly just on one hand, then on both. She is circling her legs around her arms and finally lowers herself onto the table.

Would you dare call a movement like this ‘aesthetic’? It is not that it isn’t graceful. The term “Aesthetics” is used here in the sense of its Greek origin *aisthesis* describing realisation through sensuous percipience. According to this, the question could also be if the movement observed could lead to sensuous percipience. This interpretation would be daring, because the clarification of the field of aesthetic forming of opinions in relation to sports sciences is, as yet, largely unexplored.

Firstly we have to go into the matter of how aesthetic opinions are formed. In what way do antagonisms encourage doubts about the generated understanding of the self and the world? What are the structural conditions for the transformation from the experience of deviation to the genesis of a new understanding of the senses?

It seems logical to consider the genetic phenomenology of Edmund Husserl as a fundamental theory for the relevance of the experience in the forming of opinions. This essay aims to demonstrate under which conditions these confusions can be included in the aesthetic forming of opinions, how difference can cause a negation of the consciousness¹ and how a new “body knowledge“ can slowly sneak in or suddenly develop.

1 Finger plays and the rules of the game

A woman supports herself with one hand on the table, and balances. This is a kind of creation of form. But under what kind of conditions is this form created? There seems to be a game in the creation, but what kind of rules apply? Firstly we need to acquire a comprehension of the conditions of possibility, dynamics and the validity of aesthetic creation, in order to reach a decision on a phenomenologically well-founded assertion of aesthetic forming of opinions in movement.

One needs a certain *distance* to become aware. When watching a movement like the one described, and then trying to imagine the movement quite clearly again, it is not hard to notice distances. The watching of the movement, and therefore also the opinion formed by it, occurs in *temporal and perspective* distance to the subject of the awareness. The incident over which an opinion should be formed precedes the opinion itself. Or to put it in other words: The forming of an opinion happens after the actual movement. The temporal difference therefore can be easily identified. The perspective difference also seems to be obvious. Because the hand that touches the table, whose fingers cling to the edge of it, is not the watcher’s own hand. The opinion is formed about the movement of someone else’s hand. But what if it was one’s own hand’s movement one had to form an opinion on? And that judgement would not be expressed linguistically, but as part of the movement *itself*? Where would the necessary distance be to reach realisation?

¹ Edmund Husserl, *Erfahrung und Urteil*, 7th ed. (Hamburg: Meiner, 1999) 98.

What I am talking about here is something which Elk Franke in reference to Pierre Bourdieu² and Ernst Cassirer³ calls “body relevant reflexivity”,⁴ a non-linguistic mode of realisation that is located in sensuousness itself. As with linguistic reflexivity, sensuous reflexivity happens in temporal and perspective dimensions.⁵ But what if the subject of realisation is one’s own movement? How is perspective formed? When realisation is a constant process throughout the *moment of movement*, where do we then find the temporal difference?

According to Bernard Waldenfels, the moment of sensuous realisation comes from the *Organisation of Rhythms of Movement*.⁶ The element creating order is the emergence of dynamic patterns. The search for deviation therefore should focus on the generation of rhythms. One should not be misled by the term genesis, and assume a construct of temporal succession of pattern building that makes reflexion impossible in the moment of execution. In linguist rationality one assumes a realisation that structurally follows the event, in the “other rationality”⁷, the deviation temporally links the event back to the past.⁸ The present pattern of movement positions itself in relation to the one in the past.

It is necessary to observe the phenomenology of the moment more closely. Søren Kierkegaard suggests taking the moment, not as a point in time, but as a bearer of all structures loaded with sense, and therefore not really fixed in time.⁹ This suggests that the structure of a sensuous effect does not appear in and of itself, but in relation to past structures as well as providing a reference for future ones. The balancing I did just now was not done for the very first time. That is why obviously the sensuous effects do not appear in themselves but in relation to past attempts. Through the integration of past and future with the realisation of the present, the sensuous effect can stand out in its difference to a past structure; and therefore realisation can be realisation. A kind of *temporal deviation in the moment* is created.

The moment of realisation happens in the moment of execution. This should not be surprising, as this restructuring of movement is noticeable in the execution of movement in itself. Through this, a temporal deviation during sensuous realisation emerges without distance to the event. The aesthetic opinion is *at present*.¹⁰

2 Pierre Bourdieu, *Die feinen Unterschiede. Kritik der gesellschaftlichen Urteilskraft*, 3rd ed. (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1984).

3 Ernst Cassirer, “Philosophie der symbolischen Formen,” *I: Die Sprache. II: Das mystische Denken. III: Phänomenologie der Erkenntnis* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1994). Ernst Cassirer, *Versuch über den Menschen. Einführung in eine Philosophie der Kultur* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1996).

4 Elk Franke, “Körperliche Erkenntnis – Die andere Vernunft,” *Bildungstheoretische Grundlagen der Bewegungs- und Sportpädagogik*, eds. Jörg Bietz, Ralf Laging, and Monika Roscher (Baltmannsweiler: Schneider Verlag Hohengehren, 2005), 180-201. Elk Franke, “Erfahrung von Differenz – Grundlage reflexiver Körper-Erfahrung,” *body turn. Perspektiven der Soziologie des Körpers und des Sports*, ed. Robert Gugutzer (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2006) 187-206.

5 Franke, 194.

6 cf. Elk Franke, “Rhythmus als Formungsprinzip im Sport,” *Aus dem Takt*, ed. Christa Brüstle, et al. (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2005) 83-103.

7 Franke, 202.

8 cf. my own assumptions on the topic in “Über die ästhetische Sinnbildung,” *Ästhetik und Körperbildung* ed. Monika Roscher (Hamburg: Czwalina, 2008) 21-32.

9 Søren Kierkegaard, “Der Begriff der Angst,” *Die Krankheit zum Tode und Anderes*, eds. Harald Diem and Walter Rest (Köln: Hegner, 1956) 445-651.

10 The term *at present* is based on the assumptions made by Martin Heidegger in his “Sein und Zeit”. This paragraph especially refers to the ontological assumption by Heidegger in which he refers to the *actual present* that is nothing but the moment itself (cf. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 7th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2001) 388).

In this piece, special attention shall be given to the other “aesthetic distance”, as it raises a couple of yet unanswered questions. Even if one agrees on the interaction for the emergence of temporal deviation in the moment and the differing rhythms that act as kinds of communicative dissonances, one has to ask what these different rhythms might be. How do they contribute to a perspective of aesthetic creation of deviation and therefore present a condition of the possibility of aesthetic forming of opinions?

2 Regarding the Change of Perspective

When one’s own hand balances on the table in this kind of way, this moment is only highlighted as significant, as a *certain moment*,¹¹ because the rhythmic structure of balancing differs from the previous one. The encompassing of the edge of the table might be stronger, frailer or more stretched than expected. The sensuous effect is different and creates a deviation to the expected. But how can there be “another perspective”¹² to or in a sensuous impression?

In *Physical Realisation – the Other Rationality*, Franke brings up the thought of a continuous change between the mover and the observer’s perspective. Therefore *aesthetic deviation* links the action and the observation of action. The stretching of the hand is perceived as a form of impression of the hand and through the form of observation of this impression. But who is observing in the first place?

And what kind of observation is this? If one stops being the hand, but instead possesses the hand, doesn’t one have to step out of and look at oneself? And how can this stepping out still be aesthetic? Isn’t the observing perspective a form of linguistic creation of deviation in the sense of visualising an action that one observes like an action of another person? A body that in this moment presents the objectified item of realisation? An objectified item that one can notionally grasp, in the sense of “maybe next time I will try a quicker change to the balancing stage”. But then we deal with a linguistic and not a sensuous realisation. Or would this conclusion be too hasty and there is no such thing as an observing perspective that becomes aesthetic through identifying the self as the ‘other’? An observing perspective that does not concentrate on itself as something alien?

When one looks at the problem once again from the presumption of differentiating rhythms, one probably opens up an answer to the shift to the “other perspective”. Waldenfels describes in *Sinnesschwellen* that one can assume a process of *aesthetic organisation of the self*, which shows primarily a kind of *differentiation of the self*, and less focus of the self as single entity.¹³ The communication of the senses results from rhythms of movement as discussed previously. Following the idea of the differentiation of the self through the organisation of the senses, it suggests an assumption of *differentiating rhythms of movement*. The change of perspectives therefore would happen in a deviating comparison to differentiating rhythmic patterns. Because rhythmic structures are based on the interaction of various modalities of the senses, the condition for aesthetic distance of perspective lies in the differences between sensuous impressions. To put it in other words, the misunderstanding

11 Roscher, 2008.

12 Franke, 2005.

13 Bernhard Waldenfels, *Sinnesschwellen* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1999).

in communication of the senses creates the condition for the alienation which is necessary for realisation.

If one tries to remember the movement of the hand once more, the differentiation of the self in the organisation of sensuousness probably becomes more obvious. On the one hand there is the movement of the hand which at the same time can be felt as a strain in the shoulder, on the other hand, one feels how the fingers cling to the table, one hears deep exhaling, and one sees how the hand vanishes out of view through the interaction with the leg. All these impressions of Aisthesis and Kinesis converge. If the fingers' clinging to the table do not blend well with the expected rhythmic pattern of the perceived movement of the arm or the smell, then in this moment a dissonance emerges. The self differentiation of the senses is a condition of the possibility of perspective as an aesthetic deviation. How can this other perspective be defined that is, at the same time, a possibility of transcendency in aesthetic movement?

3 The reflexive act of perspective

If one separates the perspective of the observer from the imagination of a linguistic opinion one develops a thought that Heinz Paetzold expresses in his *Ästhetik der neueren Moderne*.¹⁴ He outlines how aesthetics have to go beyond the theory of sensuousness to uncover the reflexivity of aesthetic experience. At the same time this concept should be an independent original one contrary to linguistic power of realisation.

Kant developed the leading idea of the fundamental structure of a realising consciousness as a synthesis of the layer of reason. In Husserl's phenomenology this idea is expanded through the steps of feeling/perception and conception.¹⁵ Merleau-Ponty goes one step further with his thesis synthetic structures evolve from the layer of experience of the senses. Merleau-Ponty unfolds his researches of the synthesis of the body with *binocular vision*, the *phenomenon of synaesthesia* and the circumstance that all experiences through the senses can lead back to a *phenomenal body*. All these points are crucial aspects for my following thoughts. Synaesthesia and binocular vision refer to functions of the synthesis, which cannot be traced back to linguistic discursivity. On the contrary, one should proceed on the assumption of forming powers of sensuousness beyond ordered reason.

When one sees her hand balancing on the table, when one assures oneself of the details in the field of vision, the position of the fingers, their colour, or the position of the forearm, then the "gaze rests,"¹⁶ the gaze can grasp itself. Heinz Paetzold describes it like this:

Vision becomes transparent to itself. More clearly: The act of seeing becomes transparent. It captures its own reason. This could be called *transcendental seeing*.¹⁷

14 Heinz Paetzold, *Ästhetik der neueren Moderne. Sinnlichkeit und Reflexion in der konzeptionellen Kunst der Gegenwart* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1990).

15 cf. Ludwig Landgrebe, "Prinzipien der Lehre vom Empfinden," *Wege der Phänomenologie. Das Problem einer ursprünglichen Erfahrung*, ed. Ludwig Landgrebe (Gütersloh: Dieckmann, 1978/1953) 111-123.

16 Paetzold, 65.

17 Paetzold, 65.

Exactly at this point Franke starts with his considerations in reference to sportive action:

A reflexion *during* the execution is the kind of action-accompanying reflexivity that does not interpret an action temporally after the action, but is another perspective in the action (Emphasis E. F.).¹⁸

One balances on one's hand on the table, you feels the cool surface and the pressure of one's own weight against it, swaying back and one trying to maintain the balance point. Experienced impressions seem alien and are different to the expected ones. In balancing on one's hands one identifies oneself as the balancing person.

The philosophical requirements as first postulated by Kant are fulfilled when one considers movement through what Paetzold viewed as art, that is, when a movement through a combination of sensuousness and a reflexive posture becomes a sensuous structure.¹⁹ When we compare this to the previous consideration of differentiated rhythmic movement, we find the conditions for the realisation of movement as an observed activity. The opinion of the aesthetic value is formed when differentiated rhythmic movements operate in their role of providing distance from the event.

Through the experience of communicative dissonance in the creation of the senses, the self is constituted as a reflexive self in movement. I do not want to go deeper into the consequences of structures of synthesis, but to look at such phenomenological genealogy of logic points to genesis of the form of body knowledge through aesthetic deviation from a sport-science perspective. After clarifying which conditions of possibility are there, so the hand reaches its opinion, we now have to clear up the modes of validity.

4 Forming of Opinions as modification of awareness

To encapsulate the act of aesthetic judgement, I have to talk about a disappointment. Disappointment originally meant nothing but taking away the delusion, abrogation of the anticipated intention, the expectation through a new impression. If a disappointment happens, anticipated intent and the new creation of sense of the same item form an *antagonism*²⁰. Through the incarnation of the newly constituted sense, it displaces and generates the anticipated content of sense. The expectation still is connected to the subject, but this happens in *negation*.

Not only does this change the contents of cognition, but it comes to a reinterpretation of the whole structure of the senses.²¹ In order to disappoint this original order in which an expectation is planted, this order has to be constituted in some kind of consciousness to be modified in its originality. Husserl also brings up the term of consciousness in this context. Old sensual memories are still retained for the subject, however, they are overpowered

¹⁸ Franke, 2006, 202.

¹⁹ cf. Helmuth Plessner, *Die Einheit der Sinne. Grundlinien einer Ästhesiologie des Geistes* (Bonn: Friedrich Cohen, 1923) 13 f., 184.

²⁰ Plessner, 95.

²¹ Plessner, 96.

by the new ones. This is why one can quote Husserl: “Negation is a modification of consciousness which acknowledges itself as exactly that.”²²

It would be misleading though if one located the original phenomenon of negation in the non-linguistic area. The modalities of opinions are also established in non-linguistic experience.²³ Modalities constitute the entity of traditional formal logic, and that is why this circumstance becomes increasingly serious when discussing the forming of opinions. To achieve this, one firstly needs to look more closely at the modalities of opinions.

A disappointment of an expectation does not always have to initiate a significant change. Of course, one can develop doubts about an expected intention. In this case, the expected intention does not alter abruptly: “Doubt represents a mode of change for negated invalidation that can also act as a permanent condition.”²⁴ That is why – while balancing on the table – one can doubt whether the patterns of rotation and turning which one is performing at the same time are executed as planned prior to the act, or if one touched, stretched and rotated in an different way. The arising doubt can be removed during the balancing act. It can be ascertained, if either the variation of the posture on the table or the development of the intention of movement has to disappoint the expected intention or not. In the aftermath of the doubted circumstance two patterns of cognition are shifted on top of each other. The first pattern is intention, the second the the realising activity. *Abeyance* arises.

The evolving pattern of movement does not really show coherence with an intended pattern. Expectations are unrealised and it is not clear, if this disrupts the continuity of the flow of activity. But the doubt, contrary to the clear disappointment, does not create a conflict with the intention. The intended cognition and all former executed opinions related to this cognition do not have to be revised. When in doubt, possibilities argue with each other, but they are based on the same circumstances. Due to their common core, they interfuse their contents of cognition. Simultaneously, they alternate in superseding and controlling the actual significant perception. In one moment, the incarnation of the evolving pattern of movement works and is deemed successful. In the next moment it seems as if the idea of movement replaces the incarnation of the executive pattern.

Thus the modality of becoming conscious of the emerging is something else, only of doubtful consciousness. This way one can say that consciousness possesses not only the mode of incarnation of the body and therefore differentiates itself from the recalling and re-envisioning consciousness, but it also has a “changeable *mode of being and validity*.”²⁵ The mode of validity therefore has an impact on the past execution of cognition insofar as becoming doubtful of or questioning the past.

A repression takes place in this consciousness of doubt not unlike progressive disappointment. Expectations are not fulfilled. Demands are not satisfied, as one neither gains certainty nor can negate it. No “Being” can be determined. In cognition, no mode of “Being” exists, but a *mode of possibility*.

It is interesting, that the mode of possibility also has its origin in the act of cognition. “*Being possible, possibility is a phenomenon which not unlike negation is already present in the pre-predicative sphere* and there finds its origin.”²⁶ That is why one can say that not

22 Husserl, 1999, 98.

23 Husserl, 99.

24 Husserl, 99.

25 Husserl, 101.

26 Husserl, 104.

only the phenomenon of negation but also the modalities of opinions have their origin in the acts of cognition.

Those are the conditions of possibility and the validity of the aesthetic opinions. The phenomenological mode of thought and aesthetic forming of opinions lead to the discovery that aesthetic judgements emerge as a disappointment of anticipation. This is often displayed through communicative dissonance. At the same time it can be shown that this change of consciousness does not represent the substitution and acceptance of contents or the cultivating of methods, but sees that the whole field of possible expectations is modified, leading to the conclusion that aesthetic judgements is first of all a *modification of consciousness*.

The briefly outlined theory about forming of aesthetic judgements also presents the first part of a theory regarding the genesis of form of body-knowledge through aesthetic deviation. Whether this theory can also be used as a fertile source for other aesthetic fields has to be discussed.