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## AESTHETIC PERCEPTION IN DUFRENNE'S PHENOMENOLOGY: POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO PSYCHOLOGY

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**ABSTRACT.** Aesthetics is a branch of philosophy, which usually corresponds, generally, to the study of sensibility and the arts. Dufrenne is considered one of the most distinguished researchers on the relationship among art, aesthetics and phenomenology. This study aims to comprehend how the aesthetic perception is constituted in the third part of the work *Phénoménologie de l'expérience esthétique*, by Dufrenne, which discusses the phenomenology of the aesthetic perception. It also aims to understand the possible repercussions of such a constitution for human psychic lives. This work was read with a focus on the distinct categories which, for the author, compose aesthetic perception (presence, representation and feeling), and their main characteristics were established. It can be noted that the aesthetic perception, unlike common perception, propitiates qualities that provide new senses and atmospheres, new ways to see, think or feel, beyond what is constituted. Thus, it allows for the configuration of genuine innovations and new ways to be in the world.

**Keywords:** Aesthetics; perception; psychology.

## A PERCEPÇÃO ESTÉTICA NA FENOMENOLOGIA DE DUFRENNE: CONTRIBUIÇÕES POSSÍVEIS PARA A PSICOLOGIA

**RESUMO.** Estética é um ramo da filosofia que corresponde, de maneira geral, ao estudo da sensibilidade e das artes. Mikel Dufrenne (1910-1995), filósofo francês, é considerado um dos mais prestigiados estudiosos da relação entre arte, estética e fenomenologia. Este estudo busca a compreensão da maneira como se estabelece a constituição da percepção estética na terceira parte da obra *Phénoménologie de l'expérience esthétique*, de Dufrenne, que trata da fenomenologia da percepção estética. O presente artigo pretende, também, compreender a possível repercussão dessa constituição para as vivências psíquicas humanas. A leitura do material foi realizada com foco nas distintas categorias que compõem a percepção estética para o autor, sendo levantadas suas principais características. Observa-se que a percepção estética, diferente da percepção comum, propicia qualidades que proporcionam novos sentidos e atmosferas, novas formas de ver, pensar ou sentir, para além do que está constituído. Ela possibilita configurar, assim, novas formas de ser e estar no mundo.

**Palavras-chave:** Estética; percepção; psicologia.

## PERCEPCIÓN ESTÉTICA EN LA FENOMENOLOGÍA DE DUFRENNE: POSIBLES CONTRIBUCIONES A LA PSICOLOGÍA

**RESUMEN.** La estética es una rama de la filosofía que corresponde, en general, al estudio de la sensibilidad y de las artes. Dufrenne es considerado uno de los estudiosos más distinguidos en la relación entre el arte, la estética y la fenomenología. El objetivo de este estudio es comprender cómo se constituye la percepción estética en la tercera parte de la obra *Fenomenología de la experimentación estética*, de Dufrenne. También tiene como objetivo comprender las posibles repercusiones de tal constitución para las vidas psíquicas humanas. El trabajo fue leído con un enfoque en las distintas categorías que, para el autor, componen la percepción estética, y sus características principales fueron establecidas. Se puede observar que la percepción estética, a diferencia de la percepción común, propician cualidades que proporcionan nuevos sentidos y atmósferas, nuevas formas de ver,

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pensar o sentir, más allá de lo que se constituye. Permite, así, la configuración de innovaciones genuinas y nuevas formas de estar en el mundo.

**Palabras-clave:** Estética; percepción; psicología.

*"The aesthetic object allows the public to constitute itself as a group because it presents itself as a superior objectivity that binds individuals and forces them to forget their individual differences. The man before the aesthetic object transcends his uniqueness and opens himself to the human universal."* (Dufrenne, 1982).

## Introduction

Aesthetics (from the Greek *aisthesis*) is a branch of philosophy that corresponds, in a general way, to the study of sensitivity and the arts (Casey, 2010). It is understood that this branch contemplates studies of varied authors in different historical periods, and Greece being the first place to expose studies of this type. The definition of this field depends on the time and the perspective which is considered. In any case, its study always refers to the dimension of sensitivity – remembering that the etymology of the word makes reference to "sensitive".

Historically, a normative ethics of aesthetics has prevailed, founded on the idea that there is, in fact, an idea or essence of the Beautiful. This idea would be exercised by "academies", in which particular models, rules and aesthetic tastes of an era would materialize (Pereira, 2012). In this period, and for some time later, the field of aesthetics was fused with the field of ethics, insofar as the Beautiful would be correlated to that which is Good.

It is only in the Middle Ages that the intention to study aesthetics arises as an independent branch within philosophy – although for some time traditionally it has been considered an inferior part, when compared to the studies of logic and epistemology, as well as to those of ontology and ethics (Casey, 2010). In the studies of Kant and Hegel, for instance, it is possible to find ideas that have gained prominence in considering the question that traditionally permeates the field of aesthetics: what is the Beautiful?

Gradually and punctually, other categories have been accepted as objects of study in the field of aesthetics: the ugly, the tragic, the sublime, the grotesque, the ephemeral, the perennial, the sensitive and the intelligible, the presence and the absence, the static and the movement, the rupture and the continuity, for example (Reis, 2011; Furtado, 2012).

Aesthetic experience gradually also starts to be considered not only as an experience with objects of art solely, but with a wider range of objects available in the world, within the possibilities of the field of human experience. Thus, although art is the field in which the aesthetic presents itself in a privileged way, it is not the only one when it comes to the emergence of aesthetic experience (Pinho, 1994). This notion, more recurrent in studies of contemporary aesthetics, appears within the work of several authors – among them, in the researches of Mikel Dufrenne (Albizu, 2013).

According to Figurelli (2002), the phenomenological aesthetics is, today, one of the most consistent branches in the scope of aesthetics. Its history, however, is recent, and the starting point must naturally be sought in Husserl's work – who, although he did not write on the subject, provided elements for the emergence of a phenomenological aesthetic. For Saison (2005), the phenomenological method is the only possible one to explain the noetic-noematic correlation and to clarify the specific intentionality contained in the constitutive acts of aesthetic experience. The connection of the two fields, which are, phenomenology and aesthetics, would bring the hope to overcome the conflicts that the theories of subjectivity and objectivism have faced in this field of knowledge.

Mikel Dufrenne, a French philosopher born in 1910, is considered one of the most prestigious scholars in the relationship between art, aesthetics and phenomenology (Dussert & Jdey, 2016). Renowned professor in the university career, Dufrenne, however, went through a singular episode in his biography: he was captured and taken prisoner by the Germans in 1940 (Casey, 2010). During his captivity, he established friendship with Paul Ricoeur, with whom he wrote a work on Jaspers – published in 1947 under the title *Karl Jaspers et la philosophie de l'existence*. In 1953, he defended his

doctoral thesis on the phenomenology of aesthetic experience, then following to teaching: first at the University of Poitiers and then at Nanterre. He also directed the *Revue d'Esthétique* between the years 1960-1994 (Saison, 2005).

Dufrenne is not, however, the only author to deal with aesthetics through a phenomenological regard. Notables are the works of Roman Ingarden, W. Conrad, N. Hartmann, M. Geiger, Alois Fischer among others (Figurelli, 2002, Kimura, 2014). In addition, there are the works of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, being through them that the figure of Dufrenne appears. For Henriques (2008), it would be possible to speak of an aesthetic-phenomenological school, but it would be in Dufrenne, however, the axis and the central place of this field of study. His work, in a specific way, presents a vast description of the ways and essential aspects contained in the aesthetic experience, with a rigorous description that makes possible to understand its results within the totality of the human experience. According to Casey (2010), the author confronts classic problems in aesthetics while at the same time opening to the new in the art of his time.

*Phénoménologie de l'expérience esthétique* is the author's greatest work, responsible for projecting him to the international scene of aesthetics, and consists of two volumes (the first, *L'objet esthétique*, and the second, *La perception esthétique*). The first volume of the book deals, in its first part, with the phenomenology of the aesthetic object; and, in its second part, with the analysis of the work of art. The second volume of the book begins with the third part of the work, which deals with the phenomenology of aesthetic perception; and the fourth is the critique of aesthetic experience. Among the four central themes, we could say that aesthetic perception deals with a problem that is also worked in a specific way within Psychology, since perception is understood as a basic psychological process (Feldman, 2015), that is, as a constituent of human consciousness. In order to understand the instant of aesthetic perception, however, it is necessary to consider the acts that make it up, namely, for Dufrenne: presence, representation and feeling (Saison, 2005).

The philosophy of Dufrenne, then, being inserted in a line of thought that finds its root in phenomenology, will have its greater inspiration by the French perspective. According to Dufrenne himself (1982): "It will be seen that we will not restrict ourselves to following Husserl to the letter. We will understand phenomenology in the sense that Sartre and Merleau-Ponty have introduced the term: description that points to an essence, defined as a signification immanent to the phenomenon and given with it<sup>2</sup>" (p. 39). Dufrenne is, however, faithful to Husserl's appeal to return to the things themselves and to grasp the essence of experience as a phenomenon.

Pinho (1994) reminds us that, in addition, when conceiving as worthy of an aesthetic attitude not only a work of art (differentiating even the aesthetic object from the strict connection with the work of art, in which it may exist outside the circumscribed field of artistic productions), Dufrenne takes away the elitist character of aestheticization – which is no longer the privilege of an elite of pretentious possessors of a refined taste. Since the aestheticizing subject is, first and foremost, the one who shows himself available to be asked for by the aesthetizable, "aestheticization is not the privilege of connoisseurs, but the act of a perception that joins the appearance of the object and appreciates it as sensitive" (Dufrenne, 2002, p. 85).

Considering the relevance of the theme of aesthetics and the consideration of the sensitive aspects of aesthetic experience, this study seeks an understanding of how the constitution of aesthetic perception is established in the third part of *Phénoménologie de l'expérience esthétique*, which deals specifically with the phenomenology of aesthetic perception. It also intends to understand the possible repercussion of this construction for the human psychic experiences.

As mentioned, Saison (2005) points out that, in order to understand aesthetic perception, it is necessary to understand that the three aspects of the object – the sensitive, the represented object and the expressed world – correspond to three acts of perception: presence, representation and feeling. Thus, in order to understand the distinction of the acts that make up the aesthetic experience, they will

<sup>2</sup> All cited passages of this work were freely translated from Spanish to Portuguese by the authors.

be considered separately. It is believed that the consideration of these acts in distinct categories may help us in our objective, that is, to understand the aesthetic experience in M. Dufrenne.

## Method

The work *Phénoménologie de l'expérience esthétique*, in its two volumes, is written in French. However, in the absence of a translation into the Portuguese language, it was used in this study the version in its translation into Spanish, entitled *Fenomenología de la Experiencia Estética*, which we will call *Fenomenología*. The translation of the work was done by Roman de Calle, published in 1982, belonging to the *Colectivo de Estudios de la Comunicación Artística*, of the Department of Aesthetics of the University of Valencia (Spain).

The reading of the material was carried out focusing on the different categories mentioned above – presence, representation and feeling –, which allow us to reach a greater understanding of what aesthetic perception is and how it constitutes the work of Dufrenne. As mentioned, *Fenomenología*, to the detriment of other works by the author, enables this understanding, especially in the specific part considered for this study, due to its direct thematization. In addition, along with this reading, some commentators of Dufrenne's work, found in materials such as articles and theses, were used, such as Saison (2005), Henriques (2008), Furtado (2012) and Werle (2015).

Considering also phenomenology as a possibility of work which explores what, in the immediate experience, occurs in a synthetic whole, we consider that there is no exact and direct distinction of the categories mentioned, in the concrete experience of aesthetic perception. What is proposed, then, is to follow the reflection on the constitution of the acts that appear in this perceptive experience. As Dufrenne (1982) points out: "the aesthetic object is singular, and it is singular as long as it is perceived". (p. 9). We will explain below the different acts, considering that it is not also a matter of primacy or overcoming from one category to another.

### The presence: capture of the body at the level of the experienced

In the first moment, in the third part of the book, Dufrenne (1982) addresses the perception. To do so, he returns to traditions that evoke the meaning of lived experiences, as given primarily by judgment/intelligence, or by learning/reproduction. For the philosopher, however, perception is not bound up with any of these elements, because, before, certain significations seem to be comprehended through a coup from an immediate experience. Returning to the first children's life experiences, he exemplifies: "the child adapts to the world, understands gestures or language as fast as it is capable of certain behaviors, and long before repetition has been able to develop and establish stable associations" (Dufrenne, 1982, p. 11). Such understanding presents the idea that there is a primitive signification, captured by the body, at the level of the experienced, upon which the other moments will be founded. For Henriques (2008), Dufrenne brings to the fore perception as the original background of meaning, which is always recurrent and accessible to the body.

On the pre-reflective plane, therefore, the discovery of the object is not made by a work of the understanding, because the object I perceive reveals itself to my body, and it exists before for the body than for the thought. For Dufrenne (1982), the lived body is capable of knowing, and this can only cause scandal to those who consider the body as an object, and not as something animated. Consciousness can live in things without reflection, and signification is experienced by the body in its coexistence with the world. He states: "the object seen says something, just as a charged atmosphere says of a storm at sea, or just as an altered intonation indicates anger" (Dufrenne, 1982, p. 14).

To Saison (2005), Dufrenne presents merleau-pontyan traits to describe this pre-reflective level, in which objects are given more at the level of the body than at the level of the thought, and for this reason he speaks of a "bodily intellection". For him, it must be considered, in the aesthetic object, firstly, a "type of *apotheosis* of the sensitive, with all its meaning being given in the sensitive: it is necessary for the sensitive to be accepted by the body" (Dufrenne, 1982, p. 14). The body is undoubtedly the first to be affected. Thus, to Dufrenne, it could be said that the virtue of the aesthetic object is measured by its power to seduce the body, and that therefore the aesthetic object foresees its desires as it awakens

them. Thus, he says, “we follow a melody, or we walk in a park, or contemplate a monument, surrendering to the object with satisfaction” (Dufrenne, 1982, p. 15). This pleasure and this virtue, deep down, would be proper to innocence, and it is remarkable that aesthetic experience always has this accent.

The relationship between author and spectator is then manifested, firstly, through the mediation of the work as corporal complicity. All that they know, Dufrenne (1982) points out, passed through the body, and the body was made itself music or painting (and thus the composer who improvises at the piano or the painter before his easel, give meaning to the expression “to think with your hands”). Dufrenne (1982) exemplifies the same relationship with the interpreter:

the pianist knows the work with his fingers, it all fits within his range of motion, each inflection of the melody awakens an echo in his body, and there are not even subtleties in the melody that do not first mean something to both his hands and his ears (p. 16).

For him, in front of the aesthetic object, every spectator is, in his own way, interpreter – which is not a matter of being a specialist or knowing the object as intimately as who produces it. It is about being present and participating in this production and construction. It is for this reason that, for Dufrenne, the witness is not a pure spectator but rather “a spectator committed to his own work, enabling the constitution of a circle that consecrates the union between subject and work of art” (Werle, 2015, p. 460).

To Henriques (2008), the importance of the body is given not only by allowing access to a pre-reflective primordial signification; but also to gather the diversity of the sensitive, guaranteeing the intercommunication between the various meanings and, with this, leading the aesthetic perception in the ways of the unity of the aesthetic object. The presence of the aesthetic object to the body is one, despite the diversity of the sensitive, and this is because the body is an already established system of inter-sensory equivalences. Thus, Henriques continues (2008), “presence is full, immediate, and the body is capable of intellection; conscious perception will inherit from the bodily intellection the impression of fullness” (p. 92). For this reason, it is said in Dufrenne the experience of a spell, or of an alienation of the spectator in the object.

It is clear, therefore, that there is only any possibility of interpretation by feeling or reflection if previously there is involvement by the body, that is, if the body is first intelligent (Dufrenne, 1982). For this reason, this meaning is not accessible at first by a discourse of thought work or rational discourse, since it is experienced at the very level of sensitivity, starting from the relevance of active perception and sensibility in the lived world (*Lebenswelt*). Starting from the knowledge in the sensitive, the invitation to the subject is of an action in which the task is not to decipher the world, but to feel it (Pinho, 1994).

Through this perspective, the clear appreciation of the philosopher about the presence as a moment of perception, of this immediacy in which other successive moments are sustained, becomes clear. This is because the philosopher considers, however, that not all perception can be maintained at this level, and that, therefore, there is a reflective cogito and a corporal cogito. For this reason, it is necessary to consider that a theory of perception (in which the presence in the world is realized) must move from a lived understanding to a conscious intellection, realized in the plane of the representation. For Dufrenne (1982), therefore, “the object first announces itself to the body, inviting it openly to enter the game” (p. 14).

### **The representation: passage from the lived to the thought**

Despite the importance of presence, Dufrenne points out that not all perception can be maintained at the pre-reflective level. It is required a passage from the lived to the thought, from the presence to the representation. As we have already pointed out, this is not a primacy from one category to another, because for Dufrenne (1982), by evoking the plane of perception, we feed representation, that is, we do not exclude the body, but inherit what has been experienced. Henriques (2008) emphasizes that point, stating that the succession of moments does not imply absolute overcoming, but the conservation of the acquired in the previous moment, since the root, where all knowledge is founded, is always corporal.

To understand this passage, from the unreflected lived to the reflected thought, it is necessary to remember that, at the level of presence, subject and object form a totality, without ruptures, which makes it impracticable to speak in thought. It is by imagination, for Dufrenne, that the transit from the lived to the thought becomes possible, since it is the imagination that will enable the retreat to affirm a necessary distance (Saison, 2005). Thus, when the brute immediacy of presence is overcome, imagination opens field for the *power to make us see* something or to *make us think of* something (Henriques, 2008).

Although it exists in unity, the imagination can present itself in a double aspect: the empirical and the transcendental. Dufrenne (1982) points out that, as a whole, in its transcendental aspect; it is the power of visibility, making it possible for an object to appear. As for its empirical aspect, it makes this object to have a meaning, enriching it with its possibilities. Therefore, for the philosopher, its essential function is to convert the acquired into visible, that is, to lead it and to elevate it to representation. It is, therefore, an update of previous experiences given in the presence. To exemplify the role of this update, Dufrenne (1982) says:

I know the snow is cold, that is, I can update the memory of experiences that I have made of that coldness; but when I see the snow, it seems cold to me without performing this update.... This type of immediate presence is thus the image of the cold. We see that if the cold can be anticipated, it is because it was known: anticipation is reminiscence when the memory becomes an image. In short, the image is attached to the perception to construct the object (p. 27).

Dufrenne (1982) also refers to the idea of Sartre, for whom perception and imagination are two irreducible postures of consciousness, which are necessarily excluded. For the philosopher, although there is a distinction between the two, it cannot be taken to extremes, since the imagination maintains its roots in the given, anticipating the real and glimpsing its possible (Henriques, 2008). If, for Sartre, it is a power of unrealization, for Dufrenne (1982),

unrealization is only a partial function, and Sartre takes the part for the whole. Imagining is mainly to open possible, which, in addition, is not always realized in images. Imagination is undoubtedly distinguished from perception, but in the way the possible and the given are distinguished, and not as real and unreal are distinguished: imagination produces nothing, except the possibility of something given, it reproduces; does not provide the content as perceived, but causes something to appear (1982).

As Saison (2005) states, the imagination in Dufrenne does not deny the real, but anticipates it: it is a pre-real, not an unreal. For the philosopher, therefore, imagination often points and refers to the ideal, and so he asks:

Do we have the right to accuse of bad faith a child who dreams of flying and the poet who relives the childish or dreamy images of the flight? They also discover an aspect of the real.... The unreal is never fully aberrant, there is no fiction from where everything is feigned; the adventures in Wonderland, the travels that I will never do, the landscapes that I only look at with closed eyes, are still an element of the real. They are for the consciousness that lives them, a proof of the real, perhaps, an unforgettable facet of the world. The imaginary that seduces us, instructs us as much as it attracts us (Dufrenne, 1982, p. 33).

However, the philosopher points out that, although possible, external elements brought by the empirical aspect of the imagination should be avoided. For him, imagination, in its transcendental function, enables the establishment of a necessary distance that overcomes the proximity of presence; but the requirement of fidelity to the work, to the world it is, requires that imagination not only be discouraged but restrained (Henriques, 2008). The aesthetic object would already bring, with it, a world that suffices for it, not requiring its appearance to be completed – because the work, in reality, wants the viewer to be lost in it.

Far from the open field of perceptual possibilities, the need is of fidelity and surrender to what springs from the sensitive. Dufrenne says (1982): “if Cezanne places the bottle obliquely, we do not have to straighten it; if Renoir makes ‘disappear’ the hair of a woman in the background of the painting,

to the point that the outlines cannot be distinguished, we do not have to outline them, as if we were painting the portrait.” (p. 45). Hence, for Henriques (2008), the imagination opens a field of possible, widens the real, but is not necessary for aesthetic perception. In addition, for this reason, for Dufrenne (1982), the aesthetic object becomes as respectable as it is not a pretext for imagination.

### **Feeling: the new immediate and the search for meaning**

Aesthetic experience, however, does not end in representation. For Dufrenne, the work also questions: “what does this mean?”, and the meaning – which appears opaque in the presence and must transcend representation – has its ultimate access guaranteed by feeling (Henriques, 2008). Attention, however, is necessary, since this meaning is already announced in the work, and therefore calls for a meaning that is congenital and genuine. This aspect is not always considered and, for Dufrenne (1982), it is necessary to orientate the reflection in a different way so that this meaning can be grasped. He then presents two forms of reflection: one that separates and another that adheres to the meaning of the work itself.

In the first, the meaning is sought in a way external to it, either in the story that involves its realization or in any other element that comes from outside. This type of reflection separates the spectator from the aesthetically perceived object, and makes the work an object, under an objectifying reflection. In the second, there is a reflection by which a new attitude towards the object is adopted. For Dufrenne (1982), through this reflection, I let the work deposit its meaning in me, as something spontaneous and directly significant; I am faithful to the work and I seek more than to discover what produces it, but how it itself is produced and unfolded. This reflection is also called sympathetic reflection, and for Dufrenne, it is what will culminate in the feeling, being inspired by it. On this subject, the author says (1982):

It is quite different to consider, in a writer, the art of composition and syntax than the climate of the universe he describes; in a musician, the style, than the feelings expressed by his work; in a painter, the pictorial technique, than the atmosphere it suggests.... Do I need to know the structure or history of a work to enjoy it? Do I even need to understand the objective meaning of a poem or its implicit metaphysics to be sensitive to its enchantment? (p. 98).

For him, the work, translated into another language, that is, reduced to external circumstances, is denied in what is specific and transformed into a natural object. According to Henriques (2008), the work does not need another language, because “it tells of itself what it really means” (p. 106). If it is only by dwelling on the object to find its meaning that a sympathetic reflection becomes possible, we may think that it is as if there were between subject and object a deep familiarity or co-substantiality (Henriques, 2008). For Dufrenne (1982), this affinity, which is also between nature and self, functions as a type of communion. It is this communion, which will be the access road to the feeling – being the feeling, therefore, where at last the aesthetic experience culminates. There is, therefore, a knowledge that is not of the order of the domain, of having, but of the communion and complicity of the agreement between the given and the thought (Henriques, 2008).

This allows us to think that aesthetic knowledge is not objectifying and that, on the contrary, it envisages an original agreement between man and world. This knowledge will not, therefore, follow the path of the purely objective significations that, for Dufrenne (1982), consecrate our power and our indifference; on the contrary, through feeling, the access to this knowledge allows a reality and a meaning under which we have no dominion. If there is a certain domain in the field of representation, in the field of feeling the aesthetic object can escape these developments, since, always rooted in the experience of the presence, it is possible that it returns then to a new distinct and immediate, but which is no longer the immediate of the presence (Henriques, 2005).

Thus feeling does not suppress representation, nor does it simply return to presence: it is a new immediate. For Henriques (2008),

In short, through the feeling it opens the possibility of access to the intimacy of the aesthetic object. Intimacy that, then, presents itself as immediate, but having already supplanted a mediation: the



representation. That is, the feeling is not an immediate naive, it involves a reflection on itself, which is possible because the representation has already manifested a split, a distance as a power of visibility (p. 114)

To speak of the feeling and the aesthetic object, Dufrenne also addresses the notion of depth. To be deep, for him, is to deny himself to be a thing, to be capable of an inner life and to acquire an intimacy because, while exercising only my judgment, I distance myself from the object and make myself impersonal (Henriques, 2008). Says Dufrenne (1982):

The aesthetic object is deep because it is beyond measure, and because it forces us to transform ourselves to grasp it: what measures the depth of the object is the depth of existence that invites us; its depth is correlative to ours. This correlation is characteristic of the feeling that culminates the aesthetic experience. This feeling can be described by explaining this correlation, showing how man becomes deep and how; in return, the object seems deep (p. 79-80).

The aesthetic feeling, therefore, gives us many signs of depth, and it is deep because it unifies us, affects us in everything that constitutes us and also opens us up – the aesthetic experience is manifested, above all, by its power of openness. It is for this reason that, for Dufrenne (1982), “to be deep is to be available” (p. 86).

Dufrenne shows, according to Werle (2015), that aesthetic experience is a dimension that runs through time and confirms the idea that art is a “universal language”. For the author, it is this substrate of essence, which is present in every work of art, which allows us to think of an ontology of the work of art.

Finally, it is worth bringing the idea that, in its two extremes, the feeling is surrounded by reflection. For Dufrenne (1982), reflection can not only prepare the feeling, but also ratify it, insofar as the feeling can be the object of a reflection that strives to explain and justify it. However, the task is no longer to know the techniques and history that explain the production of the work, but to understand how the work is expressive. However, the task is no longer to know the techniques and history that explain the production of the work, but to understand how the work is expressive. What is possible by the reflection that strives to explain and justify it, then, is to understand, to a certain extent, what is already understood. This is because, in some way, meaning is already given in what is given by feeling, and then elucidating will only be a necessary task for a better understanding, which may be increasingly complete about the affective quality of the object (Henriques, 2008).

Feeling, therefore, is built from what was acquired in previous moments, since it is an immediate that, paradoxically, needs conditions (Dufrenne, 1982). The feeling therefore exerts a noetic function, since it is a reading of the expression. In order to consider the prior ability in us to decipher these expressions, Dufrenne will point to a background, Nature, and an *a priori* knowledge of the affective categories, which would be appropriate to address in another moment of discussion. For the moment, it suffices, from Dufrenne's presentation on sympathetic reflection and feeling, to understand how the meaning of the aesthetic object can be more clearly made.

## Final considerations

We deal with the act of aesthetic perception from the follow-up to Dufrenne's reflection on its structures that are present and necessary, highlighting their essential characteristics. We therefore consider the importance of the lived body in its coexistence with the world, experienced at the level of sensitivity; the need for imagination, so that the necessary distance is made, in the constitution of the representation and reflection in the passage from the lived to the thought; and we reach, finally, the feeling, which is where aesthetic perception culminates and where its meaning has the possibility of becoming alive.

For this, we use the capacity of phenomenology to ground the sciences, from the description of the subjective structures, implied in all forms of knowledge. We believe, then, that for a greater rigor of the understanding of aesthetic perception, phenomenology could be useful in the aid of a detailed description, without presuppositions and that makes possible the return to the things themselves. In this way, we consider that the exploration of the theme under this phenomenological view can help us in a

critical and epistemological reflection related to the field of Psychology, considering both the shortage of academic papers, specific in Psychology, dealing with the question of aesthetic perception and its correlates; as well as in the use of this dimension in a new look at the clinical/professional experiences within the field.

When speaking of aesthetic perception, we are saying about how we let ourselves be affected by experiences, and about what is present when we are in touch with what breaks the barrier of the ordinary. Unlike common perception, aesthetic perception asks us to get in touch with the extraordinary, with what is somehow made to provide and generate some change, impact or transformation – or that at least has in it a *promise* for it, as Dufrenne would say.

If, in art, the aesthetic dimension is primarily a function, in human experience it is present and constitutive as an enabler of an authentic existence. As the world of the ordinary asks for answers, conditions, and automatisms, without openness, the extraordinary asks for genuine creations and innovations – which can make us see, think, or feel. It does not require, therefore, only survival, but rather experiences that go beyond what is constituted and that constitute new forms of being and being in the world.

In this sense, we find the relevance of unraveling, locating this experience, which does not necessarily have to be beautiful, but requires qualities that configure new meanings and new atmospheres. It is not again a fantasy and unreal world, but a capture that starts from what is lived and perceived bodily, in the present and in the presence.

Through the path taken by Dufrenne, we take as a contribution the notion of aesthetic perception as something not restricted to the work of art, and not exclusive to a certain class of individuals, in an elitist and exclusionary manner. Human experience itself is thus full of aesthetic dimensions which escape and are apprehended at all times, depending on the openness, delivers, spontaneity and depth available in each relational field in the constitution of subjects.

Moreover, aesthetic perception would deal with a type of universal language, insofar as it provides in itself an essence that presents itself accessible and allows to think of an ontology of the work of art. Finally, we must remember the importance and necessity of psychology to be in perspective to see things and to apprehend them in different ways, which we know to be possible not only through reflection but also through sensitivity. In a context governed primarily by a reflective *cogito*, inside and outside of Psychology, remembering the capacity of the sensitive world is configured as fundamental.

Lastly, let us remember the need, in concrete life, for a look at the world that considers not only the trivial, but that which somehow resonates and causes changes, which considers the depth and openness already present, but which also changes them. These are perhaps the capacities of aesthetic perception that can make us more attentive to what is accessible in the life world and which can always be considered under a different look.

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