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The Education of Senses. At the Intersection between Affectivity and Aesthetics

Abstract

This article makes the argument and emphasizes that aesthetic education is central for a discussion and critical awareness of affectivity with our self-perception and world-relation. Our affective relations are a component in our interaction with others with whom we share feelings and emotions, formed and learned through this interaction. Judgments of taste in which social norms are made explicit demonstrate such an education and emphasize the centrality of aesthetic education for a critical awareness of our self-perception and world-relation.

Keywords

Aesthetics, Education, Taste, Affectivity, Perception

Introduction

At the intersection between affectivity, as a common notion for feelings and emotions, and aesthetics, we find education. I understand education as the formation of our feelings and emotions, enabling our social participation based on feelings shared with others and constitutive for our self-perception. In what follows, education is not about acquiring formalized competencies but becoming competent in living. Although it makes no sense to ask for a curriculum for our social learning; nevertheless, we are subject to specific rules. They form our feelings and emotions because we actively and unknowingly bring our feelings and emotions in concordance with them.

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As a sentient being, an individual acquires a sensorial training that forms sensorial, cognitive skills such as, among others, an acute sense, imaginative capacity, wit and astuteness, good memory, expressive or poetic skills, and taste. Sensorial cognition is what A.G. Baumgarten called aesthetics, and the cognitive skills mentioned above are from his work *Aesthetica* (§§ 30-35).

The problem we face in aesthetics is the relation between the individual and the general, between sensuous intuition and conceptual understanding. The aspect in question is when something becomes present in an intuition that cannot be conceptually determined, yet it does relate to a general idea (Gadamer 1980; Bubner 1989). Aesthetic relation to something is double: it is to something concrete, that touches us as concrete, and also becomes something revealing a truth to us not as the concrete object as such, but as the concrete object that is simultaneously more than what we intuit as being sensuous present to us (Ritter 2010, 78).

Aesthetics concerns a tension between the senses and spirit (*Geist*). It concerns staying in that tension; otherwise, it becomes either an epistemological question or a psychological characterization. The balance in this tension is delicate. It is one of intuition, which is no mere intuition because it implies something more yet asks to be in the center of attention. It is the determination that is indeterminate because it never brings us to a conclusion. In that tension, we are concerned with an acute relation to the present in a social context, using our imagination to produce good ideas and interpretations based on our memory to interpret and express our relationships. We are in the context of cultural artifacts concerned with a relation between us and what they offer to us, so we can recognize and learn from—if we use the characterization of Hans Robert Jauß, we experience a self-enjoyment in the enjoyment of what is other (*Selbstgenuß im Fremdgenuß*) (1982/1997, cf. Gadamer 1960/1990, 102 f.).

The experience we advance here, the aesthetic experience, is one that can be characterized by following Jauß to include three aspects: a receptive, a productive, and a communicative aspect, for which he uses the Greek *aisthesis*, *poiesis*, and *katharsis* (Jauß 1982/1997, 71 ff., for elaboration on *katharsis* and communication see 170). The three components significantly parallel Balthasar Gracián's *agudeza* (acuteness or wit), *ingenium* (inventiveness), and *concepto* (concept) (Bianchi 2020, 34 ff.). This experience comes about through continuing attempts of imagining, grasping, and expressing, accompanied by feelings of excitement, frustration, relief, and shock, for example. Such feelings and emotions are equally crucial for guiding us in social encounters where they enable us to interpret and act appropriately. Aesthetic education relates to becoming a socially skilled person by forming feelings and emotions to correspond to the social environment.

I begin by elaborating on the intersection between affectivity and aesthetics, which is vital for establishing common feelings and shared emotions and is where aesthetic education belongs. This educational focus requires a section to establish and emphasize aesthetics, leading to taste as a meeting point of the sensorial and social. I conclude by discussing a critical potential of the sensorial training of aesthetic education with Sara Ahmed's example about the feeling of happiness to emphasize the importance of including this perspective on aesthetics in reflections on forming one's self-perception and world-relation.

1. Why Aesthetic Education?

Researchers approach the role and importance of feelings and emotions for our relation to the social environment from many perspectives (e.g., Goldie 2000; Slaby 2008; Fuchs 2012; Scheer 2012; von Scheve *et al.* 2013; Röttger-Rössler 2015; 2019; Mesquita *et al.* 2016; Fuchs 2016; Thoma *et al.* 2017; Slaby *et al.* 2019). They represent discussions on the significance of affectivity for perception. My contribution is not to the characterization of different affective states, nor to discuss, for example, the relation between affect and rationality (De Monticelli 2015), the difference between feeling and emotion (Ratcliffe 2005), or between a minimal and a narrative self (Bortolan 2020). In contrast, my focus is on how our affectivity is acquired, formed, and made to become ours.

The focus on how we relate to the social environment centers on having a sense for people and situations, and a sense shared with them—to have a common sense, as Samuel Thoma and Thomas Fuchs say (2017). Their use of common sense concerns a sensorial and bodily relation to standard rules and norms that serve our intersubjective bodily presence and social interaction by allowing us to use our senses in ways that make sense (see also Fuchs 2012; 2016). The sensorial and bodily relations form a foundation for our social presence and interaction and our intellectual capacity to reflect and question what we do. We should look at how we form our concrete sensorial, emotional, and bodily habits and skills.

When exercising our skills to act knowingly, our relation to the environment belongs to what Aristotle calls, in his *Topics*, dialectical reasoning, where we start from what is generally accepted. Dialectical reasoning does not imply that utterances are arbitrarily and relative. The starting point is, as said, generally accepted, because it relates to shared conditions of our social existence that we cannot be without: “no matter how hard man tries

it is impossible for him to divest himself of his own culture, for it has penetrated to the roots of his nervous system and determines how he perceives the world” (Hall 1966/1990, 188). Aristotle says, in his *Nicomachean Ethics* (1104b 3 ff.), that feelings, in particular of pleasure and pain, are at the roots of moral excellence because we have, since childhood, learned how to feel something, along with when it is appropriate to have the feelings and in what form.

Common sense, dialectical reasoning, and education are critical elements in reflections on forming human existence in communities found in the literature on moral and political issues, on rhetoric and grammar—in short, in what belongs to a humanistic tradition that provides us with knowledge about the human condition. We learn about human existence, and we learn how to exist as an educated individual. The emotions activated by the play we see are not merely for passive entertainment; they also exercise how I should feel, as a spectator, about something and the other spectators.

Emotions are, as Fuchs in line with Maurice Merleau-Ponty emphasizes, a matter of bodily resonance through which we interact with others (Fuchs 2016). Emotions become incorporated, making the body “our capacity to see, touch, move, etc.” (Fuchs 2012, 10; see Slaby 2008, 436 f.). They are a capacity embodied to act immediately. Incorporated means they are not added-on, which is the essential critical point against ideas of separation of reasoning from feelings and emotions made by Peter Goldie. According to the add-on theory, it is possible to “distinguish emotional thought and action from unemotional thought and action.” However, “[a]cting out of emotion is not acting without emotion (explained by feelingless beliefs and desires) plus some added-on ingredient or ingredients.” As Goldie exemplifies, “one just has to think what it is like to be made love to with feeling for this to be obvious: it is not like being made love to without feeling, plus feeling” (Goldie 2000, 40). When emotions are incorporated, bodily resonance means that individuals’ emotions are shared. The feeling of being in love can take many forms between individuals in terms of intensity, feeling of being possessed, permanence, *et cetera*, yet we know what it is about, despite individual differences that can lead to misunderstandings, but not to a lack of understanding. We can talk about affective arrangements, meaning “a material-discursive formation as part of which affect is patterned, channeled, and modulated in recurrent and repeatable ways” (Slaby *et al.* 2019, 5).

My feelings and emotions are formed and educated in interacting with other people and cultural events and artifacts. For example, I learn about love in a way familiar to those with whom I share a cultural environment.

Affective arrangements and common sense relate to our concrete lives embedded in sensorial and bodily forms unless the distance in culture and time is considerable and only partially resonates or requires interpretation. Such learning is an aesthetic education. We learn what to do, for example, when we meet another person and must exercise different gestures to engage with the other—greeting someone by extending our arm for a handshake, placing our hand over our heart, bowing, or what we in the situation perceive to be the correct behavior by doing what we have learned. We also learn to have a sense of the situation, i.e., the appropriate action. Some of these acts require more attention than others because we are insecure about our role in them. Sometimes we end up with a sensorial and bodily reaction beyond our control because our performance was wrong, and we sweat, turn red, and feel uncomfortable.

This lifelong training of feelings and emotions form our appearance as sentient beings, and we must add that this training is the aesthetic education that should not be confused with the training of our skills in making judgments about aesthetic qualities, whether in artworks or any other artifact.

2. Aesthetics

In Erasmus of Rotterdam's small treatise about civility in boys (*De civilitate morum puerilium*) from 1530, he instructs how one should be present to others in concrete ways like stating there should be no snot in the nostrils and one should not wipe the nose on the cap like a peasant or use the hand and then wipe it on one's clothing; instead, one should use a cloth and turn away while doing it (Elias 1939/2000, 49). The examples are sensuous dimensions of what we think of as civilized behavior, good manners, and not doing what others consider disgusting. The treatment of one's nose appears to be an enduring problem. Lord Chesterfield can, two centuries later on 25 July 1741, advise his son, then at the age of 9, to stop "putting his fingers in his nose, or blowing it and looking afterwards in his handkerchief, so as to make the company sick" (Chesterfield 2008, 19). The blowing of one's nose is illustrative because it relates to a mild, at least, sense of disgust. The appearance of a virus causing a pandemic in 2020 probably has made many people react with discomfort to someone's nasal habits since they represent a potential risk. Someone's behavior reveals ideals of manners, and we express our views of them in a judgment of taste.

The most revealing phrase about ideals about one's presence comes from another educational treatise if we move from what comes out of the nose to what comes from the mouth: Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*. Here the orator

is characterized as *vir bonus dicendi peritus* (XII, 1, 1), i.e., the good citizen skilled in the art of speaking, the “good citizen,” is a loose translation since *vir* means man. However, the man in question exercises a citizen’s role, i.e., by being politically active. Speaking well is to combine this virtue as a citizen with a sense of the situation and the people present to express the desired discourse in the best possible way.

Speaking well, of course, relates to the words used. They are chosen for stylistic reasons and for addressing the situation, i.e., the audience and the topic. Rhetoric as an *ars bene dicendi* is about affecting the audience by speaking well, by having the audience turning an opinion presented into its own. Rhetoric is often said to be about persuasion, *dicere ad persuadendum accommodata* Cicero writes in *De Oratore* (1, 138), but this does not imply persuasion done by any means. Rhetoric is not to create effects contrary to truth. To follow Hans Blumenberg, it is not about a possible alternative to an insight that one could *also* have. It is an alternative to evidence that one currently *cannot* have, and the art of persuasion is not a means of manipulation but to transform *cannot* into *can* (Blumenberg 2001, 412). Using any means is no *ars*, i.e., knowing how to use the right means in the situation. The art of speaking well requires a sense of the situation to exercise this knowledge to choose the most appropriate words for the present audience. Such a sense of the situation is what Gracián in *Agudeza y arte de ingenio* from 1648 calls *agudeza*, i.e., wit. To have such a sense, to know what the situation is and what to do, i.e., to exercise a sense of judgment, is a sensorial cognition and something an empirical-based and methodological secured knowledge marginalizes. It is a cause for concern that Giambattista Vico expressed in his *De nostri temporis studiorum ratione* from 1709 and a motive for Baumgarten to legitimate the sensorial cognition as knowledge (see Cassirer 1932/1998, 368 ff.; Franke 1972; Linn 1974).

Knowing how to appear and how to act in others’ presence may relate to following the rules of etiquette. However, knowing about etiquettes does not imply knowing when and how to apply them, i.e., to have a sense of judgment. Aesthetics as the problem of the relation between sensuous intuition and conceptual understanding becomes apparent here. It is to acquire a sense of a situation, *agudeza*, and wit, which comes about by training our feelings, emotions, and perceptions that make us capable of performing in different situations in ways acknowledged by others present. Reason can here give us the general norms, but it is impotent to make them concrete as G.W.F. Hegel brilliantly explains in his short essay *Wer denkt abstrakt? (Who Thinks Abstractly?)* from 1807. General laws should be blind to con-

crete interests, but we should not be blind to how they must be applied to factual matters, requiring a sense of judgment. Hence, in the eighth letter on the aesthetic education of man (*Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*), Friedrich Schiller can write that his age's most urgent task is to develop the sentiments.

For Schiller, it is about how fine art through form affects the human being in its totality (Schiller 2009, letter 22); it is a process of education to empower reason. We are with Schiller in a transition of reason from a Kantian desire to encourage reason to a Hegelian maturation. A stepping stone in this transition is aesthetics, where an ideal of imitating beauty in nature in human production becomes a creation of a human spirit. *Imitatio* becomes *imaginatio* (Ritter 2010, 52). The creation of a human spirit requires investigation into the faculties at work, what they are and what they can and should do—the products of imagination should not become infatuated or merely sentimental. For Schiller, encouraging and maturing is an educational process to mature humanity which is a gift of nature (Schiller 2009, letter 26). Freedom, the grand topic of his age's philosophy, is a reconciliation of senses, subject to law, and the law giving reason. However, the faculty of reason is impotent if it cannot make itself real, and man is, consequently, not free. The sensuous and the free formal drives must be united in what he calls play, which appears in beauty (Schiller 2009, letter 15). Here artistic beauty proves its educational task, the form that affects the human being, and it proves that the end is the complete artwork, which is the creation of political freedom (Schiller 2009, letter 2).

While this points clearly towards ideals of spirit and freedom dominating the aesthetics of Schiller's age, where his idea that beauty is freedom in appearance (Gethmann-Siefert 1995, 162 ff.) resonates with contemporary philosophers and writers; we must come back from such ideals to the tension between the senses and spirit, intuition and idea. In the lengthy note to the 20th letter, Schiller explains how we can think of all phenomena in four different ways, where the aesthetic is how something has a relation to the totality of our faculties without being subject to a specific one. A person can cause sympathy by the mere appearance, without us thinking of the person's character or their deeds. We, thus, judge the person aesthetically. As written above, we return to bodily resonance and the importance of feelings and emotions in social matters due to their education. An important meeting point of senses and common understanding expressed in such judgments is taste, which demonstrates the importance of combining aesthetics with affectivity and installing aesthetics in an educational role.

3. Taste

Taste is a feeling communicated to others, revealing our shared views of cultural phenomena. We utter a judgment of taste with the expectation that others share the feeling expressed. We demonstrate such shared feelings when we discuss cultural artifacts and individuals' appearances. If perception is only about identification, we talk about knowledge. I can identify themes in the novel I read, such as difficulties in reflecting on one's appearance and self-identity. I can also identify the novel as Luigi Pirandello's *Uno, nessuno e centomila* (*One, No One, and One Hundred Thousand*).

Nevertheless, while reading it, I also feel affected by its poetic forms, and I am invited to engage in it with my imagination and relate it to my environment's norms and actions, i.e., to share my subjective impression in intersubjective forms. My aesthetic engagement of a receptive, productive, and communicative form allows me to perceive and learn about social, psychological, and existential conflicts in a way different from factual-based knowledge, yet it is still to be called knowledge. I learn about what others feel and think and interpret my feelings and emotions in accordance, and I learn to feel similar to how they do.

This forming of sensuous responses is different from information, which can change our view on something factual. We can tell people who are concerned about a black cat crossing their road that their belief is nothing but superstition, and they may agree, yet it is clear that the feeling of discomfort when seeing the cat does not go away as quickly. Lord Chesterfield may explain to his son how to enter a room full of strangers, and the son may, after performing the act many times, start feeling it natural to do so, including feeling how his entrance is also received. Feelings and emotions do not change overnight. If that were the case, a mere instruction would suffice, and there would be no need for a training of sensorial awareness and for exercising our sense of judgment. His contemporary, David Hume, can write in *The Skeptic*, that here lies "the chief triumph of art and philosophy: it insensibly refines the temper, and it points out to us those dispositions which we should endeavor to attain, by a constant *bent* of mind, and by repeated *habit*" (Hume 2008, 105, emphasis in original).

While focusing on bodily resonance and common sense, our interest is in how we move from the subjective feeling to a shared and communicated one. Edmund Burke writes that "I mean by the word Taste no more than that faculty, or those faculties of the mind which are affected with, or which form a judgment of the works of imagination and the elegant arts" (Burke 1757/

1990, 13). This meaning is how we usually understand taste—as a faculty of the mind. However, we should not understand taste in purely intellectual terms. The sense of taste matters, as Caroline Korsmeyer (1999) makes us aware.

Taste is a feeling, a sense, and as such private, yet taste as a feeling communicated concerns spirit. The transformation from sense to spirit probably relates to our cultivation of the sense of taste, which enables an act contrary to immediate desires. We prove to be free, moral beings that can influence and form sensuous habits (Gadamer 1960/1990, 40 ff.). We come here to the intersection between affectivity and aesthetics as a moment for education. It makes sense to illustrate this educational moment through discussions of the taste of wine. The development of a common language, such as used in enology, exemplarily demonstrates the intersection between affectivity and aesthetics in making something as private and individual as the taste of wine accessible for discussions. A motive for such a desire is to develop American wine production in need of a common language among producers. The enologist Maynard A. Amerine hoped for objectivity to explain “how the identifiable constituents of wine cause the sensory experiences that can be so described” (Shapin 2016, 437). The hope is questionable since tasting is not a matter of measuring the constituents, such as chemical components causing taste buds’ reactions, but of how the wine tastes. The presence of chemical substances can only secondarily explain the taste. The taste’s complexity defines the quality of the wine, including the pleasure of drinking it, not a chemical composition (Deroy 2007; Shapin 2016, 452).

What is exemplary with wine tasting is the cultivation of our sense of taste. For Amerine, enologists’ language is not intended to be used beyond the producers themselves (Shapin 2016, 438); nevertheless, it has become operationalized with Ann C. Noble’s development of the Wine Aroma Wheel. It makes it possible to coordinate subjective experiences and give them a common language, which, in return, enforces the way one sense characterizes, and communicates about taste (Shapin 2016, 450 f.). Wine tasting has become a social affair—we could enjoy what we drink without talking about it—where one shares judgments of taste to demonstrate that one recognizes qualities like sommeliers and other experts do. Furthermore, contemporary wine tasting focuses on flavors that have had no role in characterizing wine throughout history. Instead, we find characteristics concerned with medical use, quality—meaning merely good or bad (i.e., unhealthy), correspondence to the four temperaments, and other issues (Shapin 2012).

In his *Of the Standard of Taste*, Hume retells a story by Miguel de Cervantes in *Don Quixote* in which two of Sancho Panza's relatives detect the taste of leather, for one relative, and iron for the other, in a glass of wine. They discover, "[o]n emptying the hogshead, there was found at the bottom an old key with a leathern thong tied to it" (Hume 2008, 141). This case is for Hume, an example of delicacy in taste, i.e., where "the organs are so fine as to allow nothing to escape them" (Hume 2008, 141), and such individuals are "easily to be distinguished in society by the soundness of their understanding" (Hume 2008, 149). Apart from noticing that in Hume's story, there is no word of how the wine tastes of any likeness to contemporary discourses of wine, we learn of the importance of refined senses for understanding how the standards of the social environment matter to how we educate our senses to become someone of good sense, *bon sens*.

In taste, we express the education of our senses, feelings, and emotions, and consequently our interpretation and understanding of ourselves: "Internalized into the psyche and integrated into everyday social life, this worldly intelligence of taste determines how one acts and also how one thinks of oneself" (Ferguson 2011, 381; see Ratcliffe 2005, 48). This integration implies having specific feelings at the right time, regarding the right objects, towards the right people, with the right motive, and in the right way. As Aristotle tells us, they are the signs of virtue (*Nic. Eth.* 1106b 20). What "right" means is a matter of ethics. Acquiring these feelings belongs to aesthetics.

We often find ourselves engaged in discussions of good and bad taste related to a value judgment of social hierarchies where the well-educated is thought of as one better skilled in performing etiquettes and showing tact (Highmore 2016). However, it suffices to see it as a relation to our world, as an attachment, as Antoine Hennion explains. He calls taste "another de-clension of the word 'attachment'" (Hennion 2007, 111). Of course, we are interested in knowing the *τέλος* of the education of the senses. It is not the same if our attachment to the world concerns discussing qualities of wine or Schiller's ideals of political freedom. Of course, discourses in aesthetics may include such discussions. If something ideal appears in our sensuous intuition, we wish to learn about what appears to us and about the means of making something appearing in the way it does. Sensorial cognition invites us to investigate faculties and skills at work. However, I would like to conclude by asking if we should pay more attention to the education of our feelings and emotions to become better aware of what is at work in the formation of our self-perception and world-relation.

4. Concluding Reflections

For a concluding reflection on the critical potential of aesthetic education, I will use how Sara Ahmed, in her book *The Promise of Happiness*, relates happiness to a feeling. She explains how happiness entails a direction of desire. It is not about what happiness is but what it does; it is about making life choices (Ahmed 2010a, 19). She states that happiness involves affect and that “happiness creates its objects,” and these objects accumulate “positive affective value as social goods” (Ahmed 2010a, 21). We should not restrict the term “object” to a narrow sense. It is “anything that we imagine might lead us to happiness” (Ahmed 2010a, 29; 2010b, 41). The family is an example of a happy object. It affects us, and the importance of family for self-perception and social position makes it an object of desire (Ahmed 2010a, 45 ff.).

Happiness objects do not cause a feeling of happiness. Only retrospectively are they seen as the cause of the feeling, which becomes self-affirmative “so that when we feel the feeling we expect to feel, we are affirmed” (Ahmed 2010a, 28). Happiness, indifferent from what we understand it to be, is a word for “a feeling-state or state-of-being that we aspire toward” and “the word is often articulated with optimism and hope” (Ahmed 2010a, 200); “the promise of happiness is what makes things promising” (Ahmed 2010a, 181).

For Ahmed, happiness seems to be more than a question of feeling—she notices how happiness refers to the virtuous life for Aristotle (Ahmed 2010a, 36) but how far she will go in that direction is not clear. What is clear is “that happiness involves good feeling” (Ahmed 2010a, 13). What Aristotle would agree with is the claim that no one put to the rack can be called happy (*Nic. Eth.* 1153b 20). Her ideas of happiness clearly imply hedonistic views in which feelings can be measured and profited from (Ahmed 2010a, 4 ff.). Perhaps this comes from her agreement with “the empiricist account of the passions offered by John Locke” (Ahmed 2010a, 15 and 22; see also 2010b, 31), which brings her within an understanding of feelings as established empirically, manipulative, and measurable psychological reactions—something added-on in Goldie’s critique mentioned above in sect. 1, and serving the contemporary market and its interests in profiting from happiness (Davies 2015). She points out the problem, but I believe she does not escape it in the examples she gives. Perhaps it is merely a question of taking her intended critique one step further. Perhaps the instrumental approach she takes in combination with the empiricist add-on presumption form a hin-

drance. I do not intend to formulate a critique of her, given that the point is that she illustrates the role of aesthetic education for our self-perception and world-relation, a role I believe should be taken a bit further than she does.

She points out the hedonistic narratives that influence what we feel and how we feel, to the point where we naturalize the way we feel. To oppose such communal feelings implies creating uncomfortable feelings for others because such opposition kills a good atmosphere. It is to become a killjoy or—to use an old German word—a *Spielverderber*, one who “refuses to convene, to assemble, or to meet up over happiness” (Ahmed 2010a, 65). Ahmed follows classical Western ideals that being free means avoiding making oneself slave to something, here to the narrative structure of ideals appearing as “happy objects,” and through the critical distance to liberate oneself from prevailing norms.

A rebellion against the norms that one internalizes and what makes one’s feelings and emotions natural is, of course, immensely difficult and can lead to “an anxious narrative of self-doubt” (Ahmed 2010b, 37). She proposes a struggle with values we have installed into our desires and turn the bodily resonances, to use Fuch’s characteristic, essential for our interaction with others, into dissonance. The case of abuse may reveal the difficulty of such a rebellion against feelings constitutive for our perception of situations and people. The abused person who feels violated, hurt and angry, can also feel ashamed and, for that reason, refrain from confronting or revealing the violation. Even though others would be supportive, a feeling of shame may become dominant and motivate the victim to remain silent. Such feelings have been formed through multiple narratives affecting us, and an example of such narratives can be the films Ahmed discusses. Her focus is on their liberating messages when the protagonists insist on ideals in conflict with society’s expectations. However, one could also find they reproduce an ideology of individualism, one of the individuals who emerge through conflicts as the victorious individual. In that light, they convey a message of feeling ashamed when one is incapable of performing like the narrative’s individual.

Ahmed illustrates difficulties at the intersection between affectivity and aesthetics. She points at two elements, the importance of our sensorial education and cognition and the inevitable ideological content of that education. An aesthetic analysis is about ideals present in the sensuous and the sensuous means at work. An analysis of the latter can be in danger of becoming an experience of the object or situation isolated from the world within which it appears because it is considered subject for a unique experience: the aesthetic. When we demonstrate our delicacy in taste, it can become a demon-

stration for fellow aestheticians enjoying an experience of wine, etiquette, and artworks. However, what we simultaneously demonstrate, and what Ahmed points at, is our embodying of norms including or excluding participants; norms we internalize in our feelings and emotions become apparent in our presence; norms acquired through a sensorial education form bodily resonance, common sense, and shared emotions.

Unfortunately, Ahmed seems to stop short of how far-reaching the implications of aesthetic education are. The examples of narratives with protagonists that are exemplary for liberating themselves from the social restraints should make us ask if we really have a self that can liberate us from such acquired and appropriated feelings? Furthermore, if we have such a self, what is it if it can act against our innermost feelings—a self without feelings? Do we have to address the question of a minimal and a narrative self, i.e., “a sense of self intrinsic to any phenomenally conscious state,” a “pre-reflective self-consciousness,” and a self with an identity and history (Bortolan, 2020, 68)? Or could we believe that persons can “reflect on their incorporated social background and then deliberately strive to transform their own habitus” (Fuchs 2016, 204)? We step into a new line of questions about affectivity, for which aesthetics is a prominent partner for how our feelings and emotions come to have the form they have and what they do to our self-perception and world-relation prior to our awareness of them and to our rebellion and self-cultivation.

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