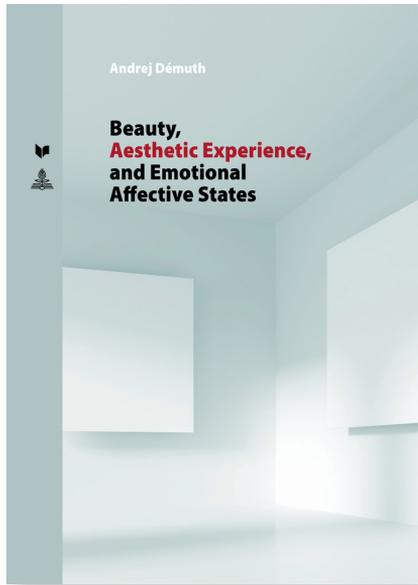


EMOTIONALITY AND AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

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First and foremost, Andrej Demuth's *The Issue of Emotionality and Aesthetic Experience as its Specific Example* is a remarkable book, which gives insights to emotionality and can “helps us find a way to ourselves”. In the first chapter the author attempts to define emotions. In this definition, emotionality has been described mostly as an obstacle than a solution which people tend to avoid to express, instead, they cover it up unnecessarily. Mathematics and wood sharpening seem like irrelevant examples in the case of emotionality but in fact, the process of shaping could lead us to emotions. Undoubtedly, emotionality and physical elements have a connection point, which is different from interpersonal relationships. Emotionality is usually taken into consideration as a core element of interpersonal relationships, isolated from science, experiences or physical activities. Yet, it is completely different from physical attractiveness.

I strongly agree that our emotionality is an expression of a deeper level of ourselves as the author mentioned: “a window into the deeper levels of our existence.” But on the other hand, it is an expression of the state of mind. In my opinion, emotions exist independently from their manifestations and without someone's knowledge about them. Emotions can be observed only when they are experienced, otherwise there is no meaning or sensation as the author noted, thinking about pain does not hurt. There is an issue of subjectivity about emotions. Emotions are considered when we perceive them which also makes them subjective and unique for whoever experiences them. Researching about emotions and neglecting their subjectivity would possibly destroy the several dimensions of their vagueness, which I find relatively important.

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When the subjectivity of emotions is considered, I agree that scaling the experience of pain will not be very accurate. On the contrary, in my opinion, people may tend to react similarly to similar stimuli but it does not mean that some people will have identical or similar reactions as others. From my point of view, it is against the characteristics of phenomenology of emotions. A generalisation may not lead us to the same movements as a response to the same stimuli because we assume that we cannot feel the same intensity of the emotions.

It is worth mentioning the similarity of Peter Gärdenfors's idea to Wittgenstein's (1953) famous "The Beetle in the Box" theory which represents the concepts in one's head as distinct from the concepts in another person's head. But still, I can match a concept to a word, and then say the word to the others in a common language so that they can understand me. Basically, nobody else but I can express what is on my mind, what I have in my box.

As for the ontological priority of emotionality, emotions respond to stimuli but the important point is that they are not necessarily external. It means that emotions are also responsible for and a tool to communicate with ourselves, which leads us to explore ourselves. It is undeniable that individual experiences of emotions possibly overlap and sometimes fail to show a wide view on reality. According to Heidegger (1967), emotions could reveal and are a reflection of a self-image on the objects and other entities. Actually, emotions show us what we like and we do not like to do, what our interests and desires are. Emotions are our way to shape our reality, the source of our enjoyment which is a reflection of what we actually like deep in ourselves.

In the second part, chapter four, *The exposition and structure of the issue of beauty and aesthetic experience*, a brief introduction to Idealism presents two cornerstones of the comprehension of the concept of beauty, the metaphysical aspect of beauty and the cognitive aspect of beauty. "Although beauty is considered an objective idea in idealism, even a product of God Himself, or something even more original, it is approachable through thought or intuition, making it a notably subjectivist object." As it is pointed out by the author, in the Islamic period of the Arabic language the concept of beauty is also the one of the most likely to be connected with the greatness of God –Allah. Furthermore, another important point is that "Beauty is in the "eye" of the beholder – the concept of "eye" can be more likely understood as the mind or soul, i.e. the ability of a distinct intellectual mental approach." As the author mentions, it is also a common point in Turkish language. If we look at the root of the word "güzel" which means "beauty", we can find that the first version of this word comes from "göz" which means "eye" in Turkish².

The classical concepts of beauty are obviously a complex phenomenon, due to fact that we still do not have a common definition of this concept. There

² See Nisanyan, S. (2011).

are different intensity levels of beauty. It is because of the multidimensional structure of the concept. In addition, it is also possible to observe differences of degrees in the case of intensity in different languages. Maybe one of the most significant descriptions comes from Hutcheson (1725, p. 29) “What we call Beautiful in Objects, to speak in the Mathematical Style, seems to be in a compound Ratio of Uniformity and Variety; so that where the Uniformity of Body is equal, the Beauty is as the Variety; and where the Variety is equal, the Beauty is as the Uniformity”. It is a description based on a mathematical proportion, a real quality of an object and its internal harmony.

In part three, chapter five, the author explains Husserl’s point of view about the aesthetic experience. According to Husserl (2009), the pure sense of aesthetics is connected with imagination. Therefore, imagination is strongly connected with feelings. If I were a sceptical reader, I would argue about the reflexive reactions based on observed data and somatic response. For example, when I see a dog from a distance, there will be no emotional reaction due to the fact that there is no danger for me; what would I do when I am close to that dog, within the range of danger? There are two possible ways to behave towards danger as it is also mentioned in the related context: fight or flight reaction. Either I would stand and fight with the danger – in this case, with the dog – or flight and run away from the danger as fast as it is possible to avoid possible harm. How would I decide between those completely different reactions? Is my behavior based on my observation at the moment or is it going to be connected with my previous experiences? In my opinion, if everyone has a subjective experience of the same situation – as some of us are scared from a dog, some of us are not – that means we create our feeling of fear from our own experiences. If we create our own reality, our emotions are an inseparable apparatus of our experiences.

The chapter on liking is mostly based on Heidegger’s point of view. There is a perfect description which the author calls “Promised Land”, a place where we always would like to be, and surround ourselves with beautiful things and create our “liveable”, comfortable zone. It is important because we aim to find our safe zone where we feel well from psychological point of view. According to Maslow (1987), the safety need is one of the core points in Maslow’s Pyramid. In his pyramid these levels are the physiological need, safety need, love and belonging need, esteem and self-actualization need. Hence, I believe that the “Promised Land” is a place where we feel comfortable, safe, pleasant and even a place where we imagine it is better than in the real world.

In the section *Aesthetic experience enriches*, the author discusses sharing the beauty with others. If I were sceptical reader, I would ask why it was necessary. According to many psychologists, the feeling of beauty gives us wellness, a feeling of pleasure and satisfaction. Why would not we keep it for ourselves? If we are selfish inherently, we would like to keep this satisfaction or feeling of amazement for ourselves rather than sharing it with someone else. For me,

sharing the feeling of beauty is important and cannot be denied but it is not necessary. The explanation could be that we would like to share those feelings because the effect is similar to that of laughter, feeling of beauty could be expansive when it is shared with others. Another explanation could be that we would like to share the feeling of beauty because we would like to compare our feelings of beauty with someone else's and, to see if s/he will be amazed with the same object as we are amazed. If s/he is amazed, it will be an evidence that we liked something because it has aesthetical values not only for me also for someone else, which is an evidence that aesthetical values are loveable/likeable not only by me but also by others.

The section on commonality or originality reveals the problem of aesthetic essentialism; the recipient gets satisfaction when s/he is able to understand and therefore like an art work or fashion design; s/he gets satisfaction because it distinguishes him/her in this way from the others who did not. As we like to compare the feeling of beauty with others, we also would like to be appreciated for our choice of art work or fashion trend by others, and if others decorate or behave like we do, it means that, we have something new and fashionable not only for us, but for others as well.

In part five, chapter seven, the dehumanization fact from the technological development level is mentioned. It is undeniable to say that technology took the responsibility of our acts through our emotions, the opponent's emotions and the consequences of our acts. Therefore, because of technology, distances are no longer an obstacle of facing the trouble, instead distance is the new weapon to our opponent. In fact, the strength of technology was supposed to remove distances, to help and enhance the relations with individuals but in contrast, technology created more distances. The author is right to criticise dehumanization.

The section on *Art as the expression of the (in)visible* raises the question: if beauty is subjective and if everyone takes into consideration differently an object or someone, are we really sharing the same experience? In fact, we share and hope that we get a similar feeling from that experience. We would like to share the feeling of aesthetical experience, positiveness or happiness from amusement. In this sense, we perceive things in different ways and share the feeling as an input from that experience and perception.

Last but not least, it is an exceptionally rich book which requires reading, especially for someone who is interested in the concept of beauty, aesthetical experience and emotionality. Finally, the author used footnotes and endnotes which are informative and it is possible to see the sources of the related concepts in the text. In addition, it was also very impressive to see more than 200 sources in the bibliography of this book.

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