

The Dance of Attention: Toward an Aesthetic Dimension of Attention-Deficit.

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Abstract

What role does the aesthetics of bodily movement play in the understanding of attention among children diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)? This article animates a phenomenological approach to attention and embodiment with a special focus on the relation between aesthetic or expressive bodily movement and behavioral awareness in children diagnosed with ADHD. However, beyond this it is argued that the aesthetic aspect of movement calls for an expansion of the phenomenological perspective. In this context Gilles Deleuze's notion of aesthetics as a "science of the sensible" is activated and discussed in relation to the phenomenological concept of perception. Empirically the article takes point of departure in a qualitative study conducted with a group of children with attention-deficit practicing the Afro-Brazilian martial art, capoeira. Combining ethnographic and phenomenological methods, it is demonstrated that capoeira can be considered a form of aesthetic movement that offers a transition of attention-deficit into a productive force of expression that changes the notions of sensation and movement in ADHD.