

Physical Education and the Significant Human Movement: a Phenomenological Look

Educação Física e o Movimento Humano Significativo: uma Possibilidade Fenomenológica

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Abstract

The study of human movement can be studied in several ways. The work presented herein seeks to develop a philosophical reflection on human movement. Based on phenomenology, it is concerned with showing that human beings who move have enormous potential which makes it possible to understand human movement in a significant way. Phenomenology understands people who move as more important and not the pre-established forms of movement, thus opening innumerable opportunities for the human power of creation and invention of movements with the intention of understanding the world by action. Teachers should seek to understand more broadly the meaning of human movement. This procedure can be done through greater engagement in studies based on philosophy and sociology. A reflection in this order can broaden the direction of people in the search for their autonomy. Problem-solving teaching should be emphasized. Students must be encouraged to move in their own way to build and create new forms of movement that stimulate creativity and pleasure. The teacher can ask more and answer less. The multiplicity of ideas and responses favors a dialogic environment. This dialectical exchange of information between students to solve a given problem shows that the student is at the center of the learning process and with this he thinks he is important. Thus, he becomes increasingly able to make his own decisions, both in the classroom and outside.

Keywords: Significant Human Movement. Phenomenology. Physical Education.

Resumo

O estudo do movimento humano pode ser estudado de várias formas. O trabalho aqui exposto procura desenvolver uma reflexão filosófica sobre o movimento humano. Com base na fenomenologia, preocupou-se em mostrar que o ser humano que se movimenta tem um enorme potencial que possibilita compreender o movimento humano de forma significativa. A fenomenologia entende como mais importante as pessoas que se movimentam e não as formas preestabelecidas de movimento, abrindo, assim, inúmeras oportunidades para o poder humano de criação e invenção de movimentos, com intenção de compreender o mundo pela ação. Os professores devem procurar entender de forma mais ampla o sentido do movimento humano. Este procedimento pode ser feito através de um engajamento maior em estudos baseados na filosofia e sociologia. Uma reflexão nesta ordem pode ampliar o direcionamento das pessoas na busca de sua autonomia. O ensino problematizador deve ser enfatizado. Os alunos devem ser instigados a se-movimentar de forma própria a construir e criar novas formas de movimento que estimule a criatividade e o prazer. O professor pode perguntar mais e responder menos. A multiplicidade de ideias e de respostas favorece um ambiente dialógico. Esta troca dialética de informações entre os alunos para resolver um determinado problema, mostra que o aluno é o centro do processo da aprendizagem e com isto se acha importante. Assim, ele se torna cada vez mais capaz de tomar suas próprias decisões, tanto na sala de aula como fora dela.

Palavras-chave: Movimento Humano Significativo. Fenomenologia. Educação Física

1 Introduction

The importance of Human Movement as a component of Physical Education is undeniable. However, according to Kunz (2010), human movement in the research scope in Physical Education has been very little addressed until now. In general, something is known about movement from the existing Movement Culture, whether by Sports, Dance, Gymnastics, Fighting, Playing and Games which involve these practical activities, and which can be copied, imitated and taught as a culturally constituted activity.

Even though there is a degree of flexibility in some of these Movement Culture activities, or rather the freedom for improvisation and discoveries are present, as in games and

playing, there is a tendency for its standardization, just as sport has already reached this high degree of standardization of movement. As all these more or less standardized activities of human movement are increasingly easily recognized socially and culturally, they also allow us to identify meanings and values. Thus, the senses and meanings, as well as the values present in a movement culture activity are no longer constituted by the practitioners, but are constituted in the activity and are reproduced by the practitioners.

Thus, sports sciences, Physical Education or human movement have been approaching the theme in different ways (KUNZ, 2010). According to the author, one of the approaches might be called Morphological. These are studies

which seek to show Physical Education professionals the best way to teach Human Movement. They seek to show possible errors, their implications for teaching the “correct movement” and possibilities to correct and perfect the practice of human movement for different contexts. Thus, they are directed to sports, dance, games and even therapy, for although this form of scientific approach to human movement generally and almost exclusively appears regarding sports in the literature, there is a similar concept for human movement in what are called postural therapies, and in the learning and correction of motor activities.

Another approach to Human Movement sciences is better known, which is Biomechanics. This is fundamental nowadays for learning and training human movement activities in sports, especially in high-performance sports. Its concept of Movement in fact eliminates the Human, which means it defines it as a displacement of the body or its parts in time and space. The human disappears in these approaches because even though there is the constant preoccupation with their complex biological question, the body mechanics are valued in synthesis. It was also in this approach form to human movement that the most complex technological instruments to measure, evaluate and interfere in gaining sports revenue were created.

We also cannot fail to recognize that there are other forms of scientific approach to human movement which we may call empirical-analytical, which are really interested in teaching and learning motor activities. The most well-known area with this approach is motor learning, which was of great interest in the field of Physical Education. Its studies intend to not forget the human of the movement, and therefore its research object involves ever more comprehensive studies of the human question and its relations. They not only involve physiological and neurophysiological aspects, but also psychological and ultimately sociocultural situations of teaching-learning human movement.

Another approach that could be mentioned, although not so well known in the Brazilian reality, is what some authors call the functional approach of Human Movement. Such an approach was born, in fact, from a critique of approaches which focus on body mechanics, even if they involve psychological and other issues in addition to physiological issues. What matters to these scholars is the movement and life of the human being; therefore, they understand that this is only possible if the activities of the human being are deeply understood by their function, which means as an objective expression of human actions and feelings, to which they impart and constitute their own meaning and significance. It is with these approaches that the question of the meaning and significance of human movement gains importance.

Although all of the above approaches involve almost the entire field of activity of a Physical Education professional, whether as a teacher, trainer, therapist or recreationist in the

teaching of human movement, they nevertheless put it at the center of the question the Movement of Human Beings and not Human Beings who Move.

Therefore, another important approach to studies and research on Human Movement is necessary. This means a philosophical approach, which this article intends to deepen. This perspective of studies on Human Movement is still very recent among us. It initially arose among the Dutch such as by Buytendijk, Gordijn, Tamboer, and recently Peter Heitj, and in Germany with Andreas H. Trebels. All present a basic theoretical foundation in phenomenology. Therefore, this article aims to develop a reflection on the importance of phenomenology as a possibility for understanding meanings and significances of human movement.

2 Material and Methods

This article is a theoretical essay that aims to discuss a certain topic of theoretical and scientific relevance, based on books, magazines, articles, among others, in order to expose ideas, criticisms, reflections and personal impressions on a certain topic. In this sense, this essay intends to problematize and reflect on some issues that relate Phenomenology to School Physical Education, through the appropriation of the existing literature to develop deep interpretations on this theme, as well as to present original conclusions. In this way, we will use the foundations of phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty (1971), where phenomenology can be understood as the revelation of the world of life, this world that is the foundation that sustains our purposes and our postulates and is associated with the first form of rationality. Japiassu (1996) states that phenomenology can be considered one of the most important philosophical currents of this century. Likewise, we will appropriate the concept of the Theory of Self-Movement, Kunz (1994) e Surdi et al. (2019), as a possibility of analyzing human movement as a dialogue between man and the world, thus providing it with meaning and intentionality. This movement becomes a source of communication and expression, making human beings creative and producers of culture. In this scenario, we will reflect on a dialogic conception of human movement that allows us to question the world, placing the human being at the center of the learning process.

3 Results and Discussion

The dialogical conception of human movement is oriented in the relationship between the human being and the world through action, and this action is exactly the dialogue that the human being develops with the world through their movement. For Tamboer apud Trebels (2006, p.40), this movement

is the form of an original act by the human being by means of which he asserts himself as a being-in-the-world and in which - in this act - himself, as subject, and the world, as his imaginary counterface, acquire visible contours.

According to Surdi (2010), both the world and the things

that inhabit the movement are questioned by the subject that moves. These questions are guided by the intentionality that permeates every relationship between man and the world. Thus, the movement means intentionally referring to the world and is based on the internal relationality of each individual to be related to them. This intentionality does not mean only the human being directing attention to the object, but also being aware of pre-conscious and pre-rational for all the things of the world. In this way, Gordijn apud Trebels (2006) comments that the movement means updating the motor meanings in concrete situations, corresponding to the realization of movements from individual possibilities. Respect for the individuality of each subject should be a fundamental factor. This means that certain motor situations must have different motor responses depending on the various motor meanings given by the subjects.

We can see that the relations in the movement of man which involve human movement must receive an interdisciplinary and integral prominence. Man moves as a unitary and total being. The intentionality of human movement generates a global sense of meaning which involves all the spheres of man moving towards the world. This sense of integration is provided by the very form that the human being has created in their movement and which will give opportunity to the knowledge of the world and maintain relationships in a significant way, adding values for their life.

The disciplinary understanding of human movement limits its significant understanding. In this sense, Kunz (1991) also advocates interdisciplinary interpretation of human movement for achieving a more complete and dynamic aspect. This is the only way to develop a theorization or construction that reaches the context of totality, totality which must be understood as much more than the simple sum of the parts. Trebels apud Kunz (1991, p.163) says that human movement is an

action in which a subject, through their movement, introduces themselves to the world in a dynamic way and through this action perceives and realizes the meanings/significances in and for their environment.

In this same view, movement is understood as a dialogue between man and the world, always involves the subject and their intentionality. It is through intentionality that self-moving is constituted as significant. "Human movement is based on intentionality" (KUNZ 1991, p.175). It is this intentionality that seeks to overcome the dualistic relation of congruent subject and cognizable object. Everything is a totality, both factors are closely related and interconnected in which it is impossible for one to exist without the other. In this relation, we cannot distinguish anything in the world as being an object or subject, but a world of intentional relations. So sense/meaning is thus constituted in the man/world relationship, and cannot only be located in the subject or the object(s).

Mechanized visions of human movement based on biomechanical analysis interpret human movement to construct effective movement patterns for a given technical gesture,

whether in sport or another performance activity. We want to emphasize that this type of understanding has its importance, but does not take into account some essential factors that directly relate to people's lives and their possibilities to know the world and modify it. Thus, individual differences, cultural expressions and the lived world which mark each person are minimized. These essential and distinct characteristics of each human being in movement have a secondary treatment.

The theory of human movement is based on principles which seek to rescue the human meaning/significance of movement. To this end, interpretations must be primarily based on three dimensions; first, to the Actor of the movement, which means to the action subject. All movement actions are produced by actors who are the discoverers of motor conducts. Then, to a concrete situation in which the movement actions are linked, a situation which, in addition to the physical environment, must contemplate the social and cultural contexts where the movements will be performed. Finally, a meaning/significance which guides the action and structuring of the movement. This meaning/significance must be constituted by the culture of people's movement through their lived world (KUNZ, 2005).

In this way, we can see that there really is a dialogue between the human being and the world through movement. In this movement the person actively participates in the action, and with this they can understand the world around them through experimentation. In this relationship between the actor, the situation and the meaning, there is a moment of exchange which enables assimilating the occasion, thereby providing an understanding of the person who is moving about that moment of reality. According to Kunz (2005, p.385-386), "to move is the proper movement of the human being. This movement must be interpreted consciously and always from the previous references presented".

To move provides a world of motor meanings. These meanings are intentional and must, in the words of Tamboer apud Kunz (1991, p.175), "transcend limits." For the author, intentional human movement can be acquired based on three different forms. The first is the direct form, when transcendence happens on the basis of people's spontaneous intentionality, as an unthought action. This form is related to the pre-reflexive plane, which means the answers are freely and spontaneously supplied to the world. As an example, Kunz (1991) cites the first contact of a child with a ball. The child knows what to do with the ball and gradually plays with it, kicking, bouncing, hitting it, and with that the child dialogues with the world, building their world of meanings.

The second form is that which is apprehended arises from learning or further by the intentionality that develops through the idea of the movement image. In that way, the main question is to provide clues about the idea of movement so that the problem is solved. One does not want to value imitation, but simply to partially show the intention that movement can be executed to reach an end. This is the movement which,

according to Tamboer apud Kunz (1991, p.176), must be learned through a strategy, one which the author called "imitation of an intention".

The third form is creative-inventive, which arises from inventive and creative intentionality on the part of each. The transcendence of the world is made from creation and invention. The human being explores and constitutes the world with new significances/meanings which provide a greater understanding of the world. From this understanding, the human being acquires capacities to change the situational world in which they live and consequently to change themselves.

According to Gordijn apud Trebels (2006, p.41), to move is closely related with intentional intrinsic factors and the perception of objects and phenomena of the world,

Those who move experience acquiring a world of motor meanings. In this concept, the subjective meanings, which mean intentionally included, and the objective meanings, which mean the pre-given and perceived ones in the world, organically interrelate. Motor meanings are not only the production of individual senses (only as an intention of movement), nor are they merely the result of experiences with the intrinsic qualities of objects (the perceived world in being-so), but rather a delimitation and complementarity of these perspectives. Both are in a relation of nexuses which are coinciding.

Our world is always a living world. It is in this world that our possibilities of moving become human and significant. Our original experiences are fundamental so that our understanding of the world is significant. We have to act and actively participate in the relationship that we have with this world. This relationship is often given by movement, and this movement has to be inventive and individual, because all people are different. Because they are different, they must understand the world in their own way and thereby create their own movement, which provides significant communication with the world (SURDI, 2010).

This power of motor creation is directed to a subject who practices the movement and not to the movement itself. This power provides the subject of action with the goal of being participatory and controlling all of their movement actions. The intervention of subjectivity in this process is indispensable, since it acquires social characteristics which develop through individual experiences. Thus, in creating a relationship with education, developing critical and emancipated people is to open a range of individual and subjective possibilities of each subject to the world.

Subjectivity is our true way of knowing the world. The world and the things that inhabit it do not exist defined in themselves, but rather they are constituted of infinite possibilities to act, to perceive, to feel, among others. The subjectivity of each person is what translates their human side of being what they are. The subjective experiences of human movement are fundamental for children and are based on the movement culture of each one; they do not have parameters nor models. Individual experiences provide the naturalness

and originality of this movement, which makes it significant for the child to become aware of their own movement, which translates into their authentic way of unveiling the world.

The culture lived by the human being is of great importance in the knowledge process and understanding the world, it is what provides them to show what the world really is. Kunz (1994, p.114) comments that,

to keep the human being distant or removed from what is real and sensitive to culture, to their way of acting, to think and to feel is to fragment subject and knowledge, to avoid repressed knowledge, curiosity and passion for the world, of things and the other, it is to keep them in ignorance. You can easily identify where and when these moments happen in school (although school is not the only instance in which this happens). [...] In prohibiting speech; in the discouragement of expressions of affection, or of emotion such as laughter and crying; by censorship of childish attitudes; by the separation of boys and girls, and mainly by the control and discipline of their own movement.

This impediment of the human being to act as their own through their culture and their subjectivity can make them an uncritical spectator of reality and leave it at the mercy of a ruling class who desires a submissive and passive being who accepts a reality which is imposed externally. Reality must be constructed by the subject through their lived relationship with the world, whose relationship must pass through a rigorous reflection of the subject of action, who seeks the best for themselves and for the world in which they live. The movement decisions must be made by the actor of the movement, based on their experiences, taking into account individual criteria such as speed, strength, rhythm and other human qualities which are individual to each person.

In the quest for understanding human movement as significant, Santin (1987) points out that there are several possibilities for understanding human movement. First, it is classified as a motor action, based (as mentioned earlier) on the principles and laws of physics and mechanics. Herein, movements are configured as being biomechanically developed with the intention of improving human performance. We can mention the movements destined to improve the performance of certain sports modalities. This view is linked to the mechanical functionality of human movement.

Another possibility for understanding human movement is locomotion from one place to another. This locomotion can equal man to any animal. Movements like running, jumping and walking are understood herein as simple forms of movement which pass from generation to generation. The third point of understanding human movement characterizes it as a source of energy and productivity. Man's work produces a caloric expenditure which is critical for many tasks and goals to be accomplished.

As the ultimate form of understanding of human movement, it must be understood as language or further as expressive capacity. Humans, through their movements, are expressed by their forms of posing, of looking, of gesturing and others. "The human body is speech and expression" (p.34). This significant

way of understanding human movement is always intentional and significant. The body speaks, discusses and reflects on the world through its movements. This significant and expressive movement is what distinguishes man in the world and gives them the power to transform themselves in their own way. Thus, other ways of understanding human movement are fully valid, but they understand human movement in a biased way.

Based on this view that we have addressed so far, significant human movement can be understood as a real possibility of discovering the world by man through the dialogue which man in movement does with the world. Understanding the world through action, which means using human movement towards the world, this world that is always a lived world, that pre-reflective world, where we use our most original experiences and motor experiences, driven by our intentionality. To move consists of significant and individual motor experiences with which the individual seeks contact with the world. This contact, however, must be understood as dialogical, and for this to happen, the human being must be participatory, creative and intentionally produce communication, so that the dialogue is effective and thus can understand this complex world and be understood by it.

Normative facilities related to sport can limit the space of movement and consequently dialogue with the socioeconomic and cultural world. The great standardization of movements provided by sport in order to achieve better performance in a given modality can in some way overshadow the power of the individual's own and intentional movement. The dialogue in this relationship is not with my world, but with a world that is foreign to me; to move part of the subject that moves. Regarding the learning of the movement-dialogic, Kunz (1991, p.180) points out that,

it is not oriented in the teaching of technical, closed, and standardized skills of human movement, but it opens the perspective for re-dimensioning and a comprehensive apprehension of fields of action by the dialogical movement. What should be perceived in the movement of the construction/elaboration of this field of action by the participants in the process is the meaning/significance of this movement. Thus, the movement becomes a dialogue between man and world which demands a dialectical interrelationship between subjectivity and objectivity, without ever being central for any of these external positions.

Along this same path, Freire and the teaching-learning process,

it should not be a transmission of information or techniques, but it must be a dynamic, living process that is carried out through dialogue with all participants in the process and always related to the local situation and to the existent experiences and experiences of the learner. In this process, he does not see a dichotomy between man and the world and nor should learning be concentrated on one of the poles (man or world), but precisely on their interrelation, on the cultural product that characterizes the result of this relation (KUNZ 1991, p.180)

In this sense, Gordjin apud Kunz (1991) differentiates three learning stages of moving which can be understood as

significant. The first is related to the spontaneous realization of already known movements, which generally belong to the culture of movement traditionally understood in the world of the life of each individual. The second stage is characterized by problematizing the objects already known and producing new knowledge. The third step relates to creation and invention, and is based on the process of reflection-action, the understanding-of-the-world-by-action is given more and more in a situational and personal way.

4 Conclusion

Significant human movement sees people moving around based on an intentionality which enables the individual to be aware of what they are doing. Individual differences between people are taken into account in this process, for they are free to move, and from this movement they discover a world of opportunities which are greater than the imitation of pre-established movements. This freedom enables developing creativity in the creation of new games and movements from those we already know. This understanding of the human movement deals with the real understanding that the human being must have about their movement. In this sense, the subject must be privileged in their movement which is always unique and original.

Phenomenology allows us to understand human movement as significant when the world's understanding of action is valued. This pleasant and creative movement makes it possible for the human being to know themselves more and more. Human feeling and previous experiences are important factors in the contextualization and critique of the forms of movements. Human movement, understood from phenomenology, characterizes movement as a possibility of making humans subject to their action. In this way, it becomes expressive, providing a dialogical relationship between man and the world, which enables to both transform and develop consciously. School, physical education and physical education teachers can pedagogically favor themselves with the phenomenological process of understanding human movement, and thus expand their possibilities of dealing with their students in such a way that privileges dealing with the movement of each one, meaning their own movement.

Physical education teachers are key to making some educational changes happen in this sense. Technical training, which still predominates in undergraduate courses, is not able to offer a reflection which goes beyond exercise manuals and movement analysis. They are still studying forms of movement and how the human being can adapt to it more accurately and quickly. This experience limitation of students' own movement minimizes the knowledge they may have of the world in their own way, and thereby also diminishes their power to modify it, thus making them easy prey in the processes of alienation and social domination.

Teachers should seek to more broadly understand the

meaning of human movement. This procedure can be done through greater engagement in studies based on philosophy and sociology. A reflection in this order can broaden the direction of people in the search for their autonomy.

Problematizing teaching should be emphasized. Students should be encouraged to move in their own way to build and create new movement forms which stimulate creativity and pleasure. Teachers can ask more and respond less. The multiplicity of ideas and answers favors a dialogic environment. This dialectical exchange of information among students to solve a given problem shows that the learner can be the center of the learning process and with this they are important. Thus, they become increasingly capable of making their own decisions both in and out of the classroom.

The movement of the human being is the most important factor that physical education possesses. With this, it should seek to understand it in its entirety. It must always extend its understanding in an infinite search, because the human movement understood as significant is always new. Every gesture intended for the world has its particularity that is unique to each subject, which is why the study of human movement and its multiple relationships must be more explored.

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