

Art and Education

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1. Introduction

Two contradictory views on art and its role in the life of man have existed, or to be more precise co-existed with each other, since the oldest times. An opinion was formulated in ancient Greece that art serves for 'embellishment of human souls'; but at the same time it was promulgated that art is but a 'sublime Madness', dangerous for the internal harmony of man. Sometimes art was to be the source of internal purification and sometimes merely a light-hearted amusement. It was believed that art can serve as a valuable 'handbook of life', and simultaneously it was considered to be a dangerous 'manufacturer of illusions', an attempt at constructing life only within the dimension of imagination, being thus contradictory to real life.

Nowadays we can meet both the thesis that art constitutes an important element in the education of man and his general culture, and a contradictory view, according to which art belongs exclusively to the sphere of luxury, amusement, and pleasure, is close to flippant occupations of leisure, and does not have much in common with the problems of 'serious life', i.e. education, thinking, and work.

A history of opinions about art regarding its place and role in the life of man and society has not yet been written; nor can we say that innovative experiments undertaken from ancient times till our own day and aiming at substantiating education values and possibilities of art have been registered in an exhaustive way. Nevertheless numerous studies of a monographic or contributive character have drawn attention

to the richness of reflections on art and education as well as varied signs of practical initiative connected with the evolution of aesthetic education. Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle open a long list of theoreticians who have supported this trend. Many years later Friedrich Schiller, John Ruskin and William Morris, Nikolay Czernyshewski and Lev Tolstoy, John Dewey and Herbert Read joined their numbers. The names of pedagogue-practicians are less known. Vittorino da Feltre remained a lonely pioneer for a long time and it was only in the nineteenth century that the number of practical actions – which are so rich in our contemporary epoch – was multiplied. Corrado Ricci and Franz Cizek, Emile Jaques-Dalcroze and Celestin Freinet went down in this contemporary history as important names.

Although the problem of art and education has been of interest to thinkers since ancient times, the term 'aesthetic education' appeared relatively late. It was most probably created by Friedrich Schiller, whose work *Briefe über die Aesthetische Erziehung des Menschen* appeared at the end of the eighteenth century and gave expression to a belief in the educational role of art and hence to its social role. The 'aesthetic revolution', postulated by Schiller, was to be materialized in the name of harmonious development of man, who was torn by internal contradictions. Thus this conception deals rather with education of man through art than with education of aesthetic sensibility, which we first of all associate with the contents of aesthetic education.

When another crucial treatise on art and education appeared twenty-five years ago it was not a matter of accident that it was entitled

Education through Art. Perhaps even Sir Herbert Read himself, writing this work in the 1940s, did not foresee that it would become the beginning of the great international movement of educationists, who, reverting to the most brilliant traditions of their predecessors, desired to establish a new educational ideology, in line with the needs of contemporary and future times. Schiller would, of course, be found among the patrons of this movement, but its most essential roots would reach to a more general social situation of art and to the needs of contemporary man.

The question, however, should be posed: What actually is the sense aesthetic education may have in the context of postulated new contents of education? This question also assumes the necessity of some terminological explanations. For this is a field in which we deal with many ambiguities. Aesthetic education, as understood commonly or even in the language of handbooks of education, constitutes one of the fields of the general education of man, namely that which is connected with shaping his aesthetic sensibility. Thus we speak about aesthetic, moral, social, mental, etc. education, assuming that there exist corresponding 'spheres' in the psyche of man which are treated with directional educational operations and which are connected with the corresponding contents. Understood that way, aesthetic education, as connected with the sphere of aesthetic sensibility, is first of all the education of feelings and imagination, and the tools of education of that kind are art and nature. But even a cursory confrontation of this educational thesis with the conception of Friedrich Schiller shows that the Schillerian aesthetic education is, paradoxically enough, not just aesthetic education. For the intention of the German poet was to show the synthesis and harmony of man precisely in the light of the 'ideal of art', proving that art, acting upon man's imagination and affectional life, also forms him in a specific way. It was Kant who interpreted the sphere of aesthetic experiences as the sphere of linking the functions of the practical mind with those of the theoretical

mind, of linking emotional sensibility with the intellect. Schiller, according to this philosophy, believed that only man developed in the 'holistic' way, man whose rational nature directs the sensual nature, but whose sensibility individualizes and brings out in full relief the acts of intellect; only such a man will be able to transform 'the kingdom of necessity' into the free and human 'kingdom of liberty'.

The same harmonizing tendency will underlie the contemporary conception of education through art. Sir Herbert Read – an aesthetician and a poet – solicitous about the fate of man in the alienated society of contemporary capitalism, wishes to find in art a synthetic remedy for curing ill individuals. Contemporary man will be compared by Read to a wounded bird, which flies using one wing only. Art is to help in regaining the full harmony of flight, which is possible only by a simultaneous spreading of the wings of intellect, feelings, and imagination.

What is then in fact 'aesthetic education'? In the time of Schiller it could be a sublime Utopia, since it was reduced in practice merely to adorning the life of rich people or to the education of those who were 'initiated' into the matters of art. This, anyway, was how these problems were still considered in educational practice in the nineteenth century, and this tradition influenced many, even present-day views. Entirely new educational problems, however, had to appear together with the deepening of the theory of art and the penetration of art into real dimensions of social life. These were, obviously, in the first place, the problems of aesthetic culture of new social environments, of a new audience. And thus aesthetic education in the 'classical' meaning of the word, was shaping the aesthetic sensibility interpreted not so much as a spiritual culture of an individual but as a social problem. The category of audience, i.e. people who do not deal with culture in a professional way, but who are only its 'consumers' or 'receivers', only appeared in the nineteenth century and led to essential changes in the dimension of experiences. As art was reaching broader and broader circles of audience, there appeared characteristic ten-

dencies to identify connoisseurship of art with a certain category of social and cultural good manners. Hence the first attempts at including the sphere of art, which had at first been treated only superficially, in the general education of 'every cultured man'. These tendencies were the expression of the internally contradictory social position of art. It was escaping from the closed world of the social or artistic élite, but its more serious personal values, links with the contents of life, with morality, with education, with thinking, with work, were not yet fully recognized. The situation gradually changed, and it was the nineteenth century that brought the crystallization of educational functions of art, on the one hand within the range of moral and social attitudes, on the other within the range of creating the elements of material reality 'according to the rules of beauty'.

We must once again return to our statement that aesthetic education is not only aesthetic education. It constitutes a multilayer process of the forming of people, carried on thanks to the fact that complex and rich values of art penetrate into human life and activity. Their function consists both in organizing the aesthetic dimension of life, of individuals and society, that is the deepening of the ability to experience and evaluate artistic phenomena, in forming the artistic culture depthwise and breadthwise, and in enriching the holistic process of the forming of the integral personality of man thanks to links of art with moral, social, and cognitive problems. In such an approach we surmount not only the élitist conception of aesthetic education reserved for people of certain spheres and certain walks of life. At the same time we surmount the opinion that art is a value in itself, self-sufficient, and justifying the education of people in the name of values which were unilaterally aesthetic ones, the education 'for art'. We believe instead that education must first of all be the education of man, and in this process art has purely the role of a specific and rich instrument. Hence: Art for education, and not education for art.

This multilayer educational process, in which art interweaves with a complicated richness of

human personality and human life, must certainly be a subject for further consideration in a more thematic and carefully arranged approach. For although by 'education' we always mean education of a whole man, when we speak of education through art we can consider concrete elements of this education – both in the vertical and in the horizontal arrangement. The horizontal arrangement would mean reference to corresponding 'strata' of personality. We could thus distinguish between the stratum of aesthetic culture, the complex of possible reactions of man towards aesthetic stimuli coming from the diversity of the world of art, and the stratum of personal life in the dimension of moral, social, and cognitive problems, considering a more general character of human actions, more closely tied to creativity thanks to art. We could thus speak about aesthetic education *sensu stricto* and about the education of man in the light of a specific 'aesthetic education', based on the social range of the action of art, and on the richness of its various values.

2. The teaching of aesthetic culture

The problem of the teaching of aesthetic culture is part of a broader problem of art and beauty in the life of man. In the epochs when culture constituted an integral part of the whole of life and human activities, when it created an indivisible unit together with science, technology, and work, the problem of the need for aesthetic education in its narrower interpretation did not exist. The significant words of Johann Huizinga, referring to the Middle Ages, can also be considered correct as a diagnosis of the situation of a full agreement between art and man's existence in society, between art and the character of man's labour. Stating that at that time 'art was being born in the very life', Huizinga believes that art was not yet connected with the domain of absolute beauty and that its task was 'embellishing of forms in which life develops'. What was then searched for was not art in itself but simply a beautiful way of life. 'Art was still inherent in the very life as a means for intensifying its

splendour' (Huizinga 1961).

Autonomy of art, gradual crystallization of the so-called fine arts or belles-lettres, tended towards the formation of a separate and specific world of art, the recognition of which or admission to which could result only from certain abilities or preparation. For instance, in the situation when a Roman or Gothic cathedral was a sanctuary for believers and a source of knowledge presented by means of visible language on portals and tympana, it performed at the same time aesthetic, moral, and cognitive functions not requiring any special aesthetic preparation. Experience of its aesthetic dimension necessarily belonged to a complex of situational experiences evoked by the presence of a man in a shrine. The same artistic objects, however, detached from their general social functions and becoming at a certain moment works of art, possess other elements that allow contact and experience on the part of the audience. Since it is usually considered that the gradual process of autonomization of the world of arts begins in the period of the highest development of arts, i.e. in the period of the Renaissance, the beginnings of the programma of teaching aesthetic culture – if only of a very narrow social range – should be connected with this period.

The problem does not become acute before the nineteenth century. André Malraux is right when he says that a work of art, which for a long time has been a document of its times or an element of a cult, after having been put in the closed area of a museum becomes an autonomic aesthetic object. It must be thus 'seen' quite differently – as a work of art. Malraux writes: 'A Roman crucifix was not first of all a sculpture, Cimabue's Madonna was not first of all a picture, even Phidias' Athene was not first of all a statue ... The role of museums in our contact with works of art is so great that we can hardly believe that no museum has ever existed in countries where contemporary European culture is not or was not known and even here they have been created only less than two hundred years ago. ... Up to the nineteenth

century all works of art were but a picture of something that had or had not existed in reality and only later did they become works of art' (Malraux 1965).

Only the appearance of the autonomous world of works of art, which constituted a specific aesthetic reality, substantiated the necessity of an organized guiding in this world and thus the aesthetic education of society in the situation where museums – since they are our best examples here – began to become institutions of social objectives. The situation was, besides, similar in the case of works of other arts. Being presented in theatres and concert halls they required a mediating commentary, a guide, an informer.

The programma of teaching aesthetic culture seems thus to have a two-fold conditioning: The aesthetic one and the social one. It was becoming necessary but also feasible only under conditions when a category of people called the audience was facing art, not as an element of everyday life but art in the dimension of aesthetic exhibition. A museum, concert hall, or theatre – these were the areas of extraordinary experiences intensified by the setting, scenery, and atmosphere. The common term 'a shrine of art' is not deprived of a deeper sense. A fundamental contradiction takes place between participants of a Greek performance freely gathered in the natural scenery of Athens or Epidaurus, and, wearing their Sunday best, spectators in an opera hall surrounded by the plush and gold. The theatre experienced and the theatre seen. The theatre of participation and the theatre of a great performance.

Expert guidance in museums and galleries, lectures introducing the secrets of a performance or a concert, great numbers of editions of an advisory type, for instance, how to watch the theatre, how to listen to music, how to appreciate paintings – all these were gradually, starting from the nineteenth century becoming an urgent social need. Teaching people to 'understand' art seemed to be necessary, The first programme of aesthetic education on a larger social scale was thus a program of introducing 'laymen' into the sphere of great art not so much

for the authentic problems of aesthetic participation as having in mind specific aesthetic advancement, smoothing away differences between the circle of connoisseurs and the mass of the uninitiated. That is perhaps why the informative side of such an aesthetic education was particularly stressed. Knowledge of art was to belong to fundamental elements of general education. Characteristically enough, plastic arts, particularly painting, were granted a special place in this programme, whereas music – as an art less connected with general cultural cognitive problems – seemed to be less essential. On the other hand, literature and the theatre were not included by common consent in the programme of aesthetic education since the function of these arts was first of all educational in a more general meaning: Moral, patriotic, intellectual.

Thus a specific partial conception of aesthetic education apprehended as teaching aesthetic culture on a broader social scale was outlined in the nineteenth century. Use was made of a new situation of art isolated from its authentic and functional contexts, of art identified with the variety of works which were thrown open to the public by means of different cultural media. Art was associated with the principle of classical beauty, according to the aesthetic conception which was predominant at that time, and painting was granted a manifest privilege in education of this type. Connoisseurship of painting was, for many people, a synonym of cultural good manners and aesthetic culture.

But this stage seems to belong to the past already. We see aesthetic education in a much broader context, conditioned none the less by the situation and the role of art. The accessibility of art is subject to the continually growing intensification, in different dimensions, of the museum 'without walls', which is more and more technically efficient. A contemporary man of our civilization gained – on a mass scale – the opportunity of communing with many diversiform categories of art and works of art, belonging both to the past and to the present. The chance of meeting different kinds of art,

different artistic convention and styles, offers at the same time a chance for a broader, more open look at the infinite richness of art. Classical canons of beauty, recognized for long centuries, cease in a sense to 'hold good'; the category of beauty as an aesthetically accepted value undergoes constant broadening, becomes an open category. It was still unthinkable in the nineteenth century, whereas it is necessary nowadays, when we place so many different objects under the name of art. Herbert Read is right to write: 'A Greek Aphrodite, a Byzantine Madonna and a savage idol from New Guinea or the Ivory Coast cannot one and all belong to this classical concept of beauty' (Read 1951). Considering the richness and massiveness of the contact of people with art in our times Malraux is correct to state: 'It is not important what works of art meant some time ago, what is important is what pictures or sculptures *tell us* today.'

Aesthetic education thus faces a concrete and general task, the task of introducing man, from the earliest period of his life, into a complicated variety of the world of art, equipping him not as much with so-called good aesthetic taste as with the ability to be in rapport with diversiform works of art, to notice their senses, both the historical and current.

These new tasks seem to have been accepted by practicians and authors of curricula, for the aesthetic culture of man should be begun during early youth. Recognizing the need of including different fields of art in the processes of this education and the value, not only of plastic arts or painting culture, but also of the musical, literary, theatrical, or even film cultures – is certainly a positive symptom. The opinion that aesthetic education is to be identified with the history of particular arts was superseded a long time ago; curricula of a problematic character with stress on mutual links between arts in different historical epochs are constructed nowadays. It is becoming more and more obvious that the aesthetic culture of man is not based on a compendium of knowledge of the history of literature or painting, but on orientation to the problems of artistic culture of the past and the present.

The realization of aesthetic education seems to be very different in practice. Difficulties result first of all from the fact that the 'programme scale', proper arrangement of factual material, consistent with the development of the psyche of an educated man, has never been planned. It is not precisely known what is 'more difficult' or 'easier' in art and for whom, though in other fields of knowledge the gradation of difficulty has been settled a long time ago. Nor has it been satisfactorily examined to what degree one's own artistic activity makes easier the so-called understanding of art, particularly of plastic arts and of music. School curricula in the field of art are generally too reticent about the controversial matter of contemporary art, making use almost exclusively of historical examples which create certain distrust towards everything that is new, with lack of orientation and, many a time, acceptance in order to avoid contradiction.

Particularly valuable initiatives are to be noticed, however, among which we should first of all point to a broader and broader, on a world scale, co-operation of schools with different artistic institutions, particularly with museums, bolder and bolder introduction of quite new branches of art into school work such as the records, film, radio, and TV, which allow for intensification of the aesthetic culture and for the enrichment of forms and methods of traditional education.

Doors and windows of school opening more and more widely to matters of vivid artistic life are obviously an indication which is both concrete and encouraging.

Aesthetic education as a social and common matter obviously cannot be limited to the operation of curricula, even if they be the best ones, but it should be applied generally to all adults, as an element of 'éducation permanente', life-long education, which is being more and more broadly postulated nowadays.

3. *Education of man through art*

When we consider a broad range of education

of this kind, with general accessibility to art, we can, or rather we must, think about translating these valuable opportunities into concrete elements of a deeper personal life. We must thus try to answer successively the question of how aesthetic education can at the same time be the enrichment of moral, or of social education, increase of mental education, and formation of a creative attitude?

Answers to this will be a subject of the further course of our considerations.

3.1. *Patterns and anti-patterns*

The fact that art fulfils an important role in forming the moral attitudes of man has been debated for a long time. But already in ancient Greece two different conceptions of such an education were outlined, two orientations which, in different formulations and variations, also exist in our time. Each of them has its merits and its specific dangers.

The first of all these orientations or conceptions can be linked with the philosophy of Plato and with the thesis that a properly chosen art can shape man, who wishes to be at the same time beautiful and good. The aim of the art was to express goodness and to shape the moral attitudes of man which were to be consistent with the aesthetic idea. From the times when reading *Parallel Lives* by Plutarch had been recommended to young men, trust in moral principles was being strengthened and particularly in those transmitted by works of literature which were endowed with the possibility of presenting model moral situations and model human characters serving as patterns to be followed. This is how the conception of art as a 'handbook of life' was created, the basic conception of moral education through art, consisting in directional organization of imagination, which was possible thanks to the fact that a receiver identified himself with suggestively presented situations of character of heroes. These heroes, in literary, theatrical, or film works, have always grown from definite, concrete examples in life and they have always carried

definite values or ideas. The influence of these characters exerted upon a receiver has always been effected by evoking feelings of sympathy or approval which are more intensive if links with a real situation of a receiver, his life experience, and the level of his expectations are strong. Such educational possibilities of art are many a time a subject of educational 'abuses' when one attempts to construct, for immediate moralizing purposes, works with a so-called moral; they are consciously removed from the truth of life and suggest a trivial and false philosophy of reward and punishment.

It is not true, however, that moral action by means of art must be unequivocally positive. We notice significant dangers in this particular field because numerous works of art offer many examples of situations and decisions which contradict the generally accepted principles of morality or of interhuman relations. When stating the fact that people commune with works of art of a non-unequivocal moral meaning (which is unavoidable under the conditions of universal presence of art) we should not keep our eyes shut to the existence also of an anti-moral influence of art upon man. The intensification of the danger of crime, violence, and lawlessness is generally observed today all over the world. Although no serious research has proved a direct dependence of these phenomena upon interest in art with crime themes, educationists, none the less, often think with deep concern about the popularity, particularly among the young, of films and literature which deal with crime, and they associate this with numerous difficulties of an educational nature.

At the same time the fact that the young grow up faster and faster, and come into contact with the so-called real life earlier, makes it impossible to isolate them in an artificial way from difficult problems – including those of art. Besides, the subject of crime, violence, and lawlessness can be found in the greatest masterpieces of old times, in Greek tragedy, and in Shakespeare's or Dostoevsky's works, and all these works are included in the obligatory programma of the cultural education of modern man. How thus

can the conception of education through moral patterns presented in art be connected with necessary levels of moral education, with making man responsive to difficult and complex questions of life and morality?

Still another trend of moral education through art should be outlined, one which is also rooted in Greek thought and art. If, however, in the first case, Plato's aesthetics reminded us of the soothing Apollonian or Orphic function of art, we shall now refer rather to the aesthetics of Aristotle and the cathartic function of art connected with its Promethean or Dionysian action, i.e. with moral shock, shaking of internal balance, and dramatic effect. It is necessary to achieve purification and evoke self-dependent critical reflection which is, obviously, possible at that stage of psychic development when a man has already undergone a number of experiences in life that have given him awareness of the existence of conflict, and dramatic and impossible situations.

The teaching of moral patterns, obligatory in the first stage of moral education and valuable throughout life, must be enriched, or complemented by necessary teaching of moral conflicts or, to use more modern language, by teaching through anti-patterns. It seems that the stories of Cinderella, David Copperfield, or Kortsagin are needed for full moral education as much as stories of Antigone, Hamlet, or Raskolnikov. The share of moral education through anti-patterns, which require critical evaluation and self-dependent moral reflection, may increase as the number of life experiences increases, and an image of the world, acquired through model works of artistic imagination, seems to be increasingly moving away from reality and successively acquired experiences. The intention of imitating then yields to the need of reflection and understanding which, in consequence, is to cause the formation of a fully critical and self-dependent moral attitude, with conscious establishment of a personally experienced moral truth.

The conception of such an education is best illustrated by words of a great Polish writer,

Maria Dabrowska: 'Without sanctions, without duties, without a hope for rewards and without the fear of punishment we are to be moral out of the very feeling of responsibility for our own fate and for another man's fate. The awareness of the existence of other people and of 'brotherly ties with them' must be a sufficient stimulus and indicator of behaviour. We live in darkness and that is why we have to be careful when moving in it not to do harm to fellow creatures and things that move jointly with us in darkness. The ordeal of darkness, the merciless ordeal of depriving people of the light of illusions is the hardest ordeal of human morality. It is only through it that we recognize the value of a man and his spiritual culture' (Dabrowska 1959).

We can notice the influence of art in both kinds of moral education, which are useful to the same degree and which are non-contradictory to the same degree as the contradiction between Orpheus' song and the tragedy of King Oedipus is impossible.

3.2. *Human and inter-human*

When Maxim Gorky said at a congress of Soviet writers thirty years ago that the ethics of the future was to be aesthetics he thus put forward a new conception of moral education. It was to be an education based upon moral and social values of art which would shape individual attitudes of a concrete man to the same degree as the relations among people, and new principles of the community.

Tich traditions also exist in this field. From the oldest times art has been a personal matter for the individual to the same degree as a concern for the community, and participation in collective aesthetic manifestations has intensified the membership of a group and strengthened the tie among its members. The collectiveness of experiencing effects a deepening of the state of emotional tension that guides the development of specific inter-human contents of a social character. Numerous researchers into primitive cultures are agreed in their conviction about the magic function of art, which is, as

E. Fischer writes, 'a magic weapon of human collective in its struggle for existence', obviously in the struggle with the mysterious and hostile force of nature. Participation in performances of ancient tragedy gave rise to cathartic action by virtue of a collective act of tension and purification. The original sense of mimesis was connected with the expression of feelings and their discharge, which seemed to be possible not only in cases of participants in a mystery or in a performance, but also with respect to spectators.

A Utopian attitude towards the educational possibilities of art has always assumed the duality of its actions: Forming individual, better, people was to provide for the formulation of a better society according to a principle – which has not been closely defined – that the quality of particular individuals decides about the character of a whole.

Concretization of aesthetic education on a social scale and frequently formulated opinions of theoreticians who have dealt with the social aspects of art have substantiated the existence of a particular social dimension of education through art. One may speak about the role of art in organizing the social living together of human collectives in a sense independent of the individual dimension, from action of the Promethean or the Orphic type. These problems were noticed by many theoreticians writing in the nineteenth century, by creators of the sociology of art or of sociological aesthetics who were interested not only in the social origins, but also in the social functions of art. They stressed first of all the character of ties created by common aesthetic experiences; they were to be ties of a deeply emotional character, a guarantee for a better social understanding and communication. Contemporary sociologists, stating the particular importance of the problem of communication in the world of today, look for the essence of this phenomenon in art itself. The growing range of social accessibility of art brings about a mass generalization of definite values or models of life, which create specific categories of inter-human community in the

dimension of imagination. The richness of inter-human relations develops not only thanks to the broadening of the historical artistic heritage of this – already mentioned – fund of generally accessible masterpieces of different epochs and different cultures. Contemporary artistic creation, particularly that which is generalized by mass media, becomes the basis for specific ties in the dimension of emotional life and of imagination, a new category of participation in the community of the world, non-existing in reality. Individual contacts and meetings, personal contacts, were the expression of inter-human relations of old times. Nowadays these relations are to a great extent determined by mass media, in which the share of art is all the time increasing. The figure of a lonely man sitting in his own apartment in front of the TV set is a symbol of this new quasi-participation in this would-be real world. The whole great world, strange people, acquaintances 'from a picture', in a sense 'come' to his apartment from the screen. And the TV spectator sits with the illusion of participating in the life of this great world which he can see, but in which he does not participate.

This power of the world of imagination seems to force itself on a social scale with a great intensity. The specific quasi-participation creates acts of communication, particularly in the field of patterns and models of manners, style of life, and people's appearance. This becomes the basis for new educational problems on a mass scale.

3.3. *To know and to understand*

The role of art in the intellectual education of man is not an equally obvious matter to everybody. For in the most common conviction (and frequently also in the predominant educational opinion) art is more connected with the emotional-imaginary side of the human psyche, whereas cognitive processes are a matter of intellect. Thus art, as is frequently thought, more affects than educates. This opinion requires a more detailed analysis both because of a new inter-

pretation of art and in the light of a new understanding of cognitive problems.

The so-called cognitive function of art has been discussed for a long time in connection with the conviction that art reflects objective regularities of a perfect nature. This opinion had its adherents, particularly in ancient times and during the Renaissance. Richness of art showing the variety of an image of the world not only of nature but – particularly – of the world of human affairs, that is, social life, became the source of a specific knowledge, of a concrete and spectacular character. For during many centuries art was a 'camera' recording facts and events in a way similar to that which nowadays is peculiar to films or photography. This aspect of art – its ability to grasp reality in a picturesque manner, in the form of painting or literary pictures – has been for a long time favourably treated by educationists. Making use of artistic pictures for enriching educational processes constituted an important element of aesthetic education. For it was known that, with regard to the same historical facts or events, there exist parallel, true scientific data with the mass of dates, names, and concrete, checked information and artistic data provided by novels, paintings, or the cinema. Art was becoming an illustration of factual data, first of all as a complement to historical knowledge. But this is merely one of several possible aspects of intellectual education through art – and the most fundamental one.

Art enriches cognitive processes not only by means of multiplying facts and making more concrete information about events which certainly took place. Showing phenomena, elements which are almost imperceptible to ordinary people, both in the dimension of visual perception and in the dimension of phenomena of the psychic world, is an essential domain of art. 'For centuries', Bergson wrote, 'people have been appearing whose task has consisted in noticing and showing us what we do not see in a natural way. These people are artists . . . We would not understand them if we did not to a certain degree notice in ourselves what they

are telling us about others. As they are telling us that, there appear in ourselves shades of feelings and thoughts which could have been expressed in us for a long time, but which remained hidden' (Bergson 1955). Art is given a specific and unique role of showing truths about the world which are difficult and hard to notice, and it happens in a sense independently of concrete artistic picturing. Allusions and metaphor, emphasizing specific expressive accents allow ordinary people – who are not artists – to discover new and always surprising dimensions of human reality.

The range of cognitive functions can be easily determined in relation to art, faithfully reflecting the order of the world and based on criteria of fundamental consistency with the objective reality which is being affirmed. The picture of the world presented by such an art is usually unequivocal and does not suggest any serious trouble. It is possible to answer the question of what the world and the people in this world are like on the basis of artistic works of literature, painting, or the theatre representing this type of art.

It is often thought of contemporary art that it is anti-human, hermetic, and incomprehensible, that it removes itself from the matters of life and man. A contrary opinion seems to be more reasonable, though more difficult to substantiate, namely recognizing the phenomenon of a new art as a specific way of thinking about reality, a specific way of getting to know it. For works of a new art constitute a part of reality made by man; they confirm its richness and variety as well as the variety of possible structures and relations, mutual ties and tensions. A careful look at concrete works can be a source of knowledge about our reality; in vain, however, would we look for an unequivocal and clear mirror – instead, we should be able to look at splinters of numerous smashed mirrors and sometimes even to learn to see what is 'on the other side of the mirror'.

Mutual relations between a creator and a receiver are determined in ancient art by the existence of the plane of communication:

Subject, contents, generally accepted reality; whereas nowadays they are reduced to the intersubjective exchange of experiences.

Cognitive problems of art should be translated into educational language and thus we could state that, in the same way as in moral education through art, in intellectual education we also deal with at least two mutually complementary conceptions. The first one, making use of arts whose essence is picturing, participates in processes of enriching knowledge or information. The other, referring rather to arts of the creative type, enriches the intellectual sensibility of man, makes him responsive not as much to pictures as to structures, relations, and syntheses. A Soviet aesthician, M. Kagan, has expressed an opinion that penetration of art to man's psyche is not limited to simple facts of seeing, getting to know. A poetical grasping of the world by an artist engages the thoughts and feelings of a receiver, forms his holistic attitude towards reality. To experience art, suggests Kagan, is as much as to 'take it into ourselves', 'make it a fact of our own biography' (Kagan 1964).

Art can be interpreted both as a faithful picture of reality, and as a 'man's potential', 'telling of what could be', artistic modelling of reality. These problems are connected with a specific character of aesthetic thinking which has a personal character, thinking whose 'field of operation' is only the works of man. Thus art, and speaking precisely, works of art as human creations par excellence are particularly entitled to exercise this kind of thinking that is identical with understanding. The juxtaposition of two separate kinds of thinking operations, each of which can be exercised with the help of art, is particularly precise in English: on the one hand 'knowledge' as a collection of information, on the other hand 'understanding' as a capacity for comprehension which requires the participation of emotions and imagination. A French aesthician, Mikel Dufrenne, argues that there exist affective categories in psyche – analogous to Kant's categories that apply a priori to the way the human mind apprehends world. It is these affective categories that have given man a natural

ability to recognize specifically human contents, and this ability can be intensified by a conscious communion with various works of art which express the world of human experience. To use a concrete example we can state that a picture such as the famous *Shoes* by Van Gogh can, in the cognitive aspect, be examined both with regard to the artistic trend it represents, its artistic values, etc., and in the light of philosophical existential problems of human fate, whose particularly moving symbol it constitutes. The cognitive act thus acquires a doubly personal character.

Cognitive problems of art must stand particularly sharply in the centre of interest of educationists, for art allows one to discover new dimensions of truth about man and reality. A Soviet psychologist, A. S. Vygotskij, is right when he states that art not only evokes emotion but, constituting the 'concentration of life', allows one to get to know it better and to go deeper into it.

3.4. *Imagination and creativity*

An analysis of particular concrete contents of the educational influence of art on man confirms how synthetic this influence is. Speaking about moral matters, it is necessary to refer to an intellectual critical reflection in order to show central educational matters and conscious morality. Speaking about the problems of thinking, it is impossible to omit the participation of emotional life in the processes of a full and personal understanding. However, both moral questions and social or cognitive problems will gain, in the light of art, their full educational sense only when they are accompanied by an active participation of the imagination.

It is only contemporary educational conceptions which recognize general-personal and general-educational values of imagination. It can even be thought that the need of talking about imagination not only as a basis for artistic actions, but as a personally and socially valuable dimension of the life of man has been substantiated by the fact that educationists

have recognized the general-educational values of a free artistic expression, the need of expressing oneself in different acts of spontaneous activity, stressing individuality and 'creative evolution'. The opinion expressed by John Dewey on the subject of imagination is particularly significant:

It is the large and generous blending of interests at the point where the mind comes in contact with the world. When old and familiar things are made new in experience, there is imagination. When the new is created, the far and strange become the most natural inevitable things in the world. There is always some measure of adventure in the meeting of mind and universe, and this adventure is, in its measure, imagination (Dewey 1958).

The problem of 'creating the new' is obviously an artistic one, but in the light of the general conception of education through art it concerns not only artists. Directing attention towards the relationship between the development of man and the spontaneous exercising of his creative possibilities, and displaying the question of expression and creativity as understood more broadly than only artistically are certainly lasting and general-educational achievements of the movement of New Education. As spontaneous artistic expression came to be interpreted as an element of the development of every man and the ability of creating as an attribute of every human being, not just artists or education for creativity, or education through creativity, gained new importance – particularly from the social point of view.

The conception of 'child's art', connected with the tendencies of the movement of New Education, became the basis for a new interpretation of the phenomenon of art and creativity. The emphasis was moved from creation of a 'work of art' into liberating the creative freedom and creative imagination. An understanding of art was outlined in which what is valuable is the content of creative activity, which, while translatable into objectified values, is particu-

larly important for the full development of acting man. Making use of expression and creativity for purposes of social education comprehended in the modern way, for creation of foundations for deeper communication among people, is a merit of present-day continuators of the above-mentioned movement. Expression and creativity, becoming means for social contacts, become at the same time means for cognition of the world, personal adoption of it.

The problem of education for creativity places itself in the centre of educational questions nowadays. For what is essential is the shaping not only of sensitive responsiveness of people towards already existing works but also of creative and constructive abilities, in different fields, 'creation of the new'. Creativity is interpreted as a prospective vital force realized not only in the sphere of art. The creative attitude is an ability to invent, to oppose all stereotypes, and multiplication of values. In that light, creative and expressive educational exercises, organized already in the work with the youngest children, are to serve the purpose of acquiring longer-lasting general-personal dispositions which are translatable into other, already non-artistic contents and situations and thus serve in forming creative and imaginative thinking.

We undoubtedly agree, however, that this process cannot be realized in isolation from the outer world; spontaneous expression is not only an individual or personal matter of a single man. There is no other way of setting in motion the creative forces of man than by means of a dialogue with the creative forces of man than by means of a dialogue with the outer world and with other people, by means of intensification of the constant exchange between man and the world, between a man and people.

Imagination has many a time been considered to be a way of living which leads to 'nowhere', an ability to create illusory pictures of false reality – even an harmful game. Whereas in the perspective of the growing demand for what is new and considering the participation of man in

transforming objective factual reality, this adventure of the human mind meeting the world can lead to creation of lasting values. Art, inasmuch as it is created by imagination, can constitute a kind of anticipation in relation to what already exists; it is in a sense a hypothesis of possibilities which are faced by life and experiences of individuals and communities. The French sociologist, Jean Duvignaud, rightly states that 'we are to the same degree what we were as what our imagination proposes'.

The fact that art, experienced and cultivated, enriches imagination and intensifies creative possibilities, has been known since that time: This phenomenon has been confirmed by numerous educational tests in the fields of plastic arts, musical and literary expression, particularly of younger children. We should once again mention the names of Corrado Ricci, Cizek, Dalcrose, or Freinet. But it is only in our times, in a new structure of the world which is opened before the creative forces of man, that education through art as education of imagination and of creative attitudes assumes a general meaning on a world scale.

4. *The perspective for homo aestheticus*

The analysis of the content of aesthetic education and of the general-personal values of art is important for a general conception of the education of man.

We often think nowadays of what that dream man of the future should be like, the model, the ideal, capable of overcoming different kinds of difficulties, internally rich; thinking consciously and critically, creative, on a level with the greatness of his time. It is this man with whom we willingly and frequently associate all the values which are formed by art – interpreted in a modern and broad way – not only man 'aesthetically educated', but first of all responsive and creative man, capable of constant enrichment of himself, of participation in enriching his world. Marx's vision of man as comprehended by many is associated with exactly such a

Homo Aestheticus, man-creator; thus not with a professional artist but with a creator for whom all the actions performed are of a personal, individualized, interior character, as it is described by contemporary psychology, which means to a greater and greater extent dependent on internal factors. Herbert Read is right when he says, 'The artist is not a particular kind of man, but every man is a specific kind of artist.'

In such a perspective of the general education of man, for whom, as Marx says, 'his own realization exists as an internal necessity, as a need', art gains an essential importance. And this is the perspective which determines concrete practical postulates, both in the field of teaching the aesthetic culture of man and in the field of education through art understood more broadly. The general situation of art and its social importance allow us to think that these postulates have a growing chance of better and better realization. More and more educationists seem to share this opinion.

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