

The significance of culture and visual arts in the educative system.

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ABSTRACT:

Culture represents the fundamental social and comprehensive basis of people's living way, without which the history and development of people, nationalities, and societies cannot be understood and since it represents a factual anthropological basis, without culture, we cannot imagine even the very life of the individual. The transmission of the cultural values to the youth happens through education and upbringing. In the contemporary world the term education is replaced by the term multicultural education which implies a broader meaning. Today's and future's imperative as a precondition for a virtual self and social progress, is making possible education and upbringing through cultural contents, since this is a precondition for the human civilization.

Key words: Culture, art, visual arts, education

1 INTRODUCTION

Culture represents the fundamental social and comprehensive basis of people's living way, without which the history and development of people, nationalities, and societies cannot be understood and since it represents a factual anthropological basis, without culture, we cannot imagine even the very life of the individual. Culture can be defined as "a network or an accumulated system of knowledge, customs, values, beliefs, norms, through which is resolved the

fundamental issue of an individual's existence." (Ogbu, 1989).

Examining the social processes as a consequence of cultural impact, Kale, (Kale 1982) also believes that education cannot be understood if we exclude it from the cultural context and that of time, since education is always part or an expression of culture and time. Basically, White (White, 1949) holds the same opinion and states that a person does not create his own culture but he inherits it from his predecessors, and hence

culture shapes the person into who he is, and at the meantime it creates the self while insuring continuity and survival by bearing its own values.

According to Wood (Wood, 1995), Bruner Vigotski and Luria emphasize in particular the role of culture and its symbolic elements such as science, the book, the picture, language, etc., on the development of intelligence in children. Wood considers that during the learning process of a language, the child learns not only to memorize the meaning of things with characteristics of the physical and social world, but to also memorize the way the world is formed and built. "When a child is watching TV or is observing a picture in a book, he, in addition to experiencing it in a different way of how things are presented, at the same time he also undergoes a particular mental process which over time becomes part of his mental formation." (Wood, 1995)

2. CULTURE AND THE EDUCATIVE SYSTEM

Hartmut Von Henting thinks that "what culture means to a people, i.e. to live according to preconceived and desired norms, to an individual this means education." While regarding the limitations

of the mentioned arguments, Nola emphasizes that "nevertheless, culture represents the wholeness of education and upbringing, of science and of the overall social development." (Nola, 1987). Ogby, (Ogby, 1989) also stresses the significance of education and upbringing in bearing the cultural values and in her book "the Anthropological Pedagogy" she expresses her belief that the sole continuity of a social community and the survival of the cultural essence of each society depends on the transmission of the cultural goods from the older generations to the younger ones, as they are the future bearers of culture.

The transmission of the cultural values to the youth happens through education and upbringing. The greatest content of culture is part of educative programs and curriculums. Culture must be learned and studies, and that is why Reboul considers that education and upbringing represents the overall processes and actions which enable of each child to have access into culture. (according to Mialaret, 1989)

Some authors view education and upbringing as a creative process, as a person's inspiration to have an active relationships with the world.

Among other things, Kalin claims that education and upbringing are the most

important activities of an individual. “Education and upbringing, not only as institutionalized, in absolute terms represent the most important activity of people. Ultimately, many other activities and achievements in other spheres of economical development, rule of law, health, judiciary, science, culture, and sports depend on education and upbringing.” (Kalin, 2006)

It is noticeable the inclusion of the notion ‘culture’ in many definitions of education and upbringing, which places these two in such an important position in terms of bearing and creating cultural values. In the contemporary world the term education is replaced by the term multicultural education which implies a broader meaning.

Culture, education and upbringing are necessarily interrelated. Schafer (Schafer, 1996) believes that one of the priorities of the contemporary world is to create a unique world in the dynamic and cultural constellation, in terms of more qualitative values, while considering them as very important for the realization of the cultural education, fulfillment of cultural and human needs as well as for fulfillment of rights and responsibilities.

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progress, is making possible education and upbringing through cultural contents, since this is a precondition for the human civilization.

3 ARTS AND EDUCATION

Historically, one of the main contents of culture has been the arts. With each culture, regardless of the time and space determinants, primarily relate the material forms, although its uniqueness does not lie in the materials modeled according to the parameters of that particular culture, but in the meaning and the symbolism of art, whose roots are in the culture.

The connection of the artistic production to culture is well known, and therefore Kale, regarding the arts claims: “the arts or the artistic deeds as symbolic configurations are examples of life and the experience of it in a culture, and as even more typical can be considered the paintings of that culture, which offer sufficient opportunity for it to be renowned, hence making the artists the best ambassadors of their own culture” (Kale, 1982).

In the contemporary world, art is defined as social communication and as a necessary product of culture and as Crespi stresses, “the artistic production is a very broad and diverse field through which are

simultaneously expressed experiences, feelings, dimensions as well as individual and collective desires, preconditions of the timely and social truth and of the significance of the world and of life.” (Crespi, 2006). Another author, Phillipson, emphasizes the importance of arts within the cultural production during an individual’s life and the relationship of the individual towards the arts, and states that “the purpose of the arts’ presence in culture is a practical conceptualization that helps us in taking a stance towards it.” (Phillipson, 2002). Hence the arts remain appealing and attractive in knowing the individual and represent the universal anthropological potential in its symbolism and relationship.

Regarding the power of the artistic acting Finci expresses himself as follows: “the Arts have been an imitation and beautification of the truth, reflection of the truth, resistance to the truth and the truth itself. It has been conditioned in many different ways, it have been positioned in many different ways in regards to the truth, but it have never been simply a repetition of life. Art tells us, it informs us on how things are in reality, but also how they might be” (Finci, 2008)

Just because of their multi-dimensional importance, the arts challenge

the field of education. Through the arts the children and young people can sincerely approach culture, themselves and the others, while imagining the world in light of symbols. In the field of education and upbringing, the power of arts stands in its trans-discipline nature and in the definition that the primary purpose is knowing and understanding the individual, therefore the role and the importance of the arts’ filed remains uncontested.

Popovich, Vandeleur and Mills consider the arts as very significant in the educative and upbringing systems, while they view the compatibility between the arts and education as “awareness of the differences between cultures, personal expression, reflection and response, historical trail, path towards aesthetic awareness, way of developing creativity for resolving problems as well as way of communicating” (Popovich, Vandeleur, Mills, 2004).

The necessity of the presence of arts in the educative process, Martha Uberman views it in “the context of the existential issues and of the interaction of the individual with reality, while education through art represents a set of incentives and experiences which release and promote human powers, also as a process for

developing creativity while developing in this way the motives for social belonging as well as a stimulation of the process of humanization of the individual” (Uberman, 2008). In the same way, the great theoretician Herbert Read in his visionary work “Education through art”, speaks about a world in which the presence of art is more than necessary for resolving increasingly complex problems in the field of education (Read, 1945). Another author who has supplemented this view is Hauser who states: “the arts not only open people’s eyes, but they do not let them close their eyes again” (Hauser, 1963).

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1945) . Another early author who fills this position is Hauser which art points out that "not only art opens people's eyes, but also allows them to not close them again" (Hauser, 1963).

The arts represent great creative and spontaneous activity of an individual, power which transforms the reality differently from how it was transformed by technology and science. The arts, at the same time, through their creating and creative action, result as prevalence of the man over the material. Through the arts and freedom of expression, the individual goes beyond the borders of his region, redefining it, and while discovering new dimensions of awareness, he creates new spaces of his own existence. Therefore, education through arts becomes quite important since it develops the conscience and ability of the students.

The subjects of arts are not positioned well in the educative systems, in the context of the modern society and the fundamental ignorance, i.e. they are completely marginalized. The concept of knowledge is viewed to be acquired from the natural sciences, mathematics and technical subjects, while the artistic insights are underestimated or poorly valued in the educative system as well as in the wider social context, even though they are more

than necessary for a balanced educative process. Jalongo and Stamp state that: “cognitive and intellectual development of the children can be often measured through their ability to read and write, but also through getting an insight into how the children view and experience the world through paintings, drawings, dancing, theatrical plays, and that these activities also require cognitive process, and therefore the inclusion of the creative activities in the educative system of children can also improve the cognitive skills.” Regarding this ‘conflict’ between art and science Gardner believes that: “the humanitarian and artistic sciences, though decisively smaller (fewer) than the scientific natural disciplines, also provide information and knowledge. They clearly enhance our understanding on the different kinds of beauty and morals, introduce us to all the ways by which the individuals have defined themselves, their world, their opportunities and their destinies” (Gardner, 2005)

The problem with the positioning of the artistic subjects in the educative system involves many prejudices. The public opinion treats art as an unserious skill, as entertainment, game, “a pleasant way of living and less as a component of mental education” (Broudy, 1987)

Efland A.D deals with the issue of the arts in the educational systems by stressing on the prejudices and the problems as follows as problems which attack the role of the arts in the overall educative process:

- The first problem of the artistic subjects in the overall educative and upbringing process is about the fact that the arts are not amongst the preferred professions and that of arts it is often thought and discussed as entertainment and as a ‘beautiful’ cultural experience, and hence the arts are not considered as contribution towards strengthening the mental culture or the personality formation.
- The second problem is the serious lack of sense towards the significant roles that the arts may play in the overall cognitive development. Moreover, even those who lecture about the arts, often in their work, describe the arts as cultivation of creative expression, while forgetting that creativity is not separated from the thinking process, from the intellectual endeavor and from acquiring knowledge.
- The third problem comes from insufficient education of the art

teachers, who are insecure themselves as to the ways of using art in order to develop cognitive skills in children, i.e. they are not quite sure on the assessment of the tools which should be used for the realization of the achievements (Efland, 2002)

Art as well as science must be present and incorporated in the system of education and upbringing of the youth. Whithead since 1929 has stated that: “only one subject is important about education, and that subject is life itself along with all its achievements.”(Whithead, 1929). Life along with all its achievements is present in different forms of the artistic activity. “the artistic education about life is authentic, it is based upon the contents of artistic education. Which possess and considers the works of art as a window into or a mirror of out lives”. (Andersen, 2003)

All researchers of the quality of the educational system agree as follows: art has an important and decisive role in improving the quality of education. The presence of the arts in the systems of education and upbringing is simply necessary. According to Hickman (Hickman, 2004): “Art is significant not because of itself, but because of the psychological and social health of the

individual and of the society in general, art in reality, is not as important as people are, whose lives are enriched by art.”

Art, with its contents, encourages children to develop critical, imaginative and creative thinking. It enables them to develop intellectual flexibility about which Eisner (Eisner) states that: “the arts enable children to act and to judge without relying on rules, but only on feelings, the arts attract children’s attention in nuances, they evaluate the choice of others, analyze what is being offered and create many other options. So, the arts aim at creating the individual, who will be able to think and draw conclusions. Art in the educational systems can never be underestimated, rather it should be a powerful tool in the area of education and upbringing.”

Conclusion

The subjects of arts are not positioned well in the educative systems, in the context of the modern society and the fundamental ignorance, i.e. they are completely marginalized. The concept of knowledge is viewed to be acquired from the natural sciences, mathematics and technical subjects, while the artistic insights

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