GREAT ART FOR LITTLE CHILDREN. THE POTENTIAL OF MODERN ART AND ORIGINAL STRATUM OF DIALOGUE BETWEEN A CHILD AND AN ADULT

MALGORZATA KARCZMARZYK

University of Gdansk, Media Education Lab
E-mail: wnsmk@univ.gda.pl

Abstract- This paper show how great a potential in terms of communication and meaning modern art. can have. For communication via image is an original stratum of dialogue between a child and an adult. Thanks to it, a child reveals his or her perception of the world, his or her own theories on social reality, and also develops imagination inspired by a specific painting.

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT OF REFLECTIONS

Works of contemporary artists such as e.g. KatarzynaKozyra, Wilhelm Sasnal, or ZdzisławBeksiński are viewed as topics too difficult or too controversial for the young recipient. Is it not, however, the case that in the era of the supremacy of image, when we-recipients are overwhelmed by visual messages, be it in the street, on television, or Internet, the child should be prepared also for reception of difficult visual messages?

II. GREAT ART FOR LITTLE CHILDREN IN POLISH SCHOOL

The issue of "how to teach 'great art' in elementary grades?" is by no means as simple as it might appear. For many a year it has been and is still being discussed whether and what type of art might positively influence development of the child's personality? What is problematic, however, is that opinions of traditionalists prevail. They are convinced about the higher value of realistic art of old masters. They strive to bring up the child in the Kantian aesthetics, which is remote from the modern understanding of art.
In Poland in early education schoolbooks there are, unfortunately, no popular works by, for instance, Salvador Dali, Pablo Picasso, Wincent van Gogh, or Marc Chagall and polish artist such as: ZdzisławBeksiński, RafałOlbiński, Tomasz Sętowski. The question is whether these images can be too difficult for a young child? Whether the child is not going to "make up" her own meanings in them? Whether the child is not going to develop her creativity thanks to them? Which images does the child come in contact with in everyday surroundings? And why is it works of great masters that are "forbidden" to the child?

Hard topics may prove highly instructive to the child, and her maturity and comprehension of the world around may astonish many an adult. Paintings of striking colours, full of expression, of strange surreal shapes may strengthen the child's interest in art, all the more so that it is such messages that the child encounters in media, for example.

According to S. Tissoron: *for a small child equally important to what is presented is the emotional context. An image of a soldier with a machine gun exerts on the child a weaker impact than a view of screaming and crying people, leaving their houses in panic (...). It all depends on the parents' stance and the bond with them (...) In reality, parents cannot control everything and it is uncertain whether they ought to do so* (Tisseron, 2006:60).

It is not easy for an adult (be it a parent or a teacher) at the present time of supremacy of image to protect the child from various visual messages: those manipulating consumer behaviours (e.g. advertising), charged with aesthetisation (e.g. animated fairy tales) or aggressive ones (e.g. computer games). Far more important is talking to the child about a specific image. To recognise its material, emotional content, pay attention to the elements which saddened or intrigued the child. To be open to meanings which the child herself can assign to the image and negotiate them with a grown-up.

III. SOLUTION

The diagnosis which emerges from the above-presented observations indicates the need of reflection on the validity of introduction of elements of art education to the early school education in the form in which it takes place nowadays. Reflection on the training of teachers in this field, on the extension and the change of contents of the core curriculum regarding art. It would be advisable to disseminate the knowledge of the importance of teaching children not only the visual art skills and knowledge of art but perhaps, primarily, a creative attitude as a personality trait where precisely art can serve as a wonderful tool. The examples of activities conducted by various

kinds of animators as well as organizations and institutions such as Zachęta Gallery, Spotlight Kids or BunkierSztuki Gallery may be interesting for the school. These are the workshops with artists who co-create with children projects with great impetus. The projects are art-related – principally concerning contemporary art. The form of their realization is the dynamic class in the especially prepared rooms, with access to diverse media, visual art materials where children are encouraged to use the available means freely, to get dirty, create spontaneous scenarios with the help of artists and educators-aficionados. In school circumstances this is clearly an utopia, impossible to realize as curriculum activity. It may however constitute a model giving a direction to the conducted classes, specify the philosophy of the proposed message. It appears that any change resulting in the departure from the fossilized patterns is a change for the better.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the research results is the following: the school should teach and subject to reflection its own actions in the sphere of education about "artists", "artistry". The examples of activities conducted by various kinds of animators should be interesting for the school. It is necessary that the youngest generation should find their own place in the world of contemporary culture, whereas the school is a naturally predestined venue to facilitate this process. By the same token, actions should be undertaken in order to improve the formal visual art education and adjust it to the requirements and needs of contemporary recipient.

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