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Culture – art – youth Reflections from the perspective of the need for greater involvement of culture and art

ABSTRACT: The observed deficit of interest and conscious participation of young people in culture and art results in uncontrolled dissemination of various threats, in the individual and the social dimension. The result of the dynamics and diversity of the changes taking place is that despite systematic multi-faceted education, human beings, especially young ones, experience a number of doubts, lack of stability and fear of the present and the future. It is difficult to find a rational and fully effective suggestion for improving such a reality, although it seems that it can be significantly stabilized through a wider and fully conscious inclusion of culture and art in the educational process, especially in the case of the young generation. In this context, it is worth making an upbringing and educational effort to ensure that young people present a greater need to participate in culture and art, so that culture, art and youth, through education, constitute a specific “community” of mutual interests/needs. The value of art, its artistry, aesthetics and utilitarianism determine the chance of constructive and holistic development to the highest degree, mobilizing various activities, therefore it seems a moral imperative to focus social attention on the need for full involvement of art in the educational practice of particular educational environments, so that culture/art become an integral part of everyday life of young people.

The presented reflections on the subject are a consequence of observation and analysis of the results of own research carried out among academic youth.

KEYWORDS: Pedagogy, culture, youth, art, need, education, upbringing.

Introduction

Since the beginnings of our history, culture and art have been woven into the everyday existence of man. Even if we do not always realize it, these

entities are present in every thought and activity of the human being. From the perspective of past epochs, culture/art – its particular fields – is not only a collection of artistic works implying emotions, but also a source of knowledge about past epochs and generations. It is the most efficient form of transmission between different epochs. As Marcel Proust rightly noted, “Through art alone are we able to emerge from ourselves, to know what another person sees of a universe which is not the same as our own and of which, without art, the landscapes would remain as unknown to us as those that may exist on the moon. Thanks to art, instead of seeing one world only, our own, we see that world multiply itself and we have at our disposal as many worlds as there are original artists, worlds more different one from the other than those which revolve in infinite space, worlds which, centuries after the extinction of the fire from which their light first emanated, whether it is called Rembrandt or Vermeer, send us still each one its special radiance” (Proust 1992, p. 212).

Culture and art dazzle and enlightens us if we allow and want it, if we are able to benefit from its message and values. “The cultural benefits drawn by its “users” interact and influence each other – nowadays more than ever before. [...] given the changing position of art in contemporary life, it is to be expected that this interaction will have an even greater impact. Indeed: contemporary works of art are usually undefined [...]; they are still searching for their meanings and remain uncertain of their semantic possibilities. They usually remain in such a state until they meet their “audience”, [...] a meeting in which both sides are active participants” (Bauman 2011a, p. 139, 2011b).

Lack of knowledge and awareness of the value and role of culture, individual fields of art in everyday life, causes the inability to make a choice among the multitude of proposals always considered valuable and important and beautiful, and those among which it is impossible to notice this beauty and value. Our orientation is therefore directed towards this area of culture, the forms and fields of art of which invariably present value and beauty. In other words, the area that some people — whether rightly or wrongly is a debate for another time — want to call high culture.

Participation in culture/art means interest, perception, the ability to read the message, the ability and willingness to apply the acquired knowledge, experienced emotions and reflections into the practice of everyday life. Full, committed participation in culture/art requires, however, a conscious and systematic education in various upbringing environments (Rzymelka-Frąckiewicz, Wilk 2016).

Writing about a *special radiance*, M. Proust thought about the special brilliance of art, illuminating our reality, everyday life, correcting stereotypes of thinking and perception. Art is not an antidote to all evil, it does not pro-

pose ready-made solutions, but it encourages reflection on-, and consideration of the surrounding reality, which is a very significant, social role of art. Originating from living space, illustrating social reality, through its courage and humility it wants to join the rhythm of social life, sensitizing and suggesting attention and prudence in social relations and all activities.

Considering the multiplicity of social functions of art, it is worthwhile to tame, learn and apply it. Maria Gołaszewska notes that “art is a value that the human being, along with the development of their own aesthetic culture, has been increasingly assimilating. Initially it is an alien value, but as a result of acquiring knowledge, experience and developing aesthetic sensitivity it becomes an irreplaceable element of the structure of personality and an important component of human life. The ability to integrate art into the entirety of life is about finding the right place and rank for it” (Bonna 2003, p. 61).

Florian Znaniński also noticed the dependence of man on all the elements that make up culture’s entire structure. What the sociologist described as entanglement in culture is both dependence in the sense of perception, consumption and its use for the realization of specific tasks, as well as the permanent need for its creation (Znaniński 1988). Since culture/art and the human being are mutually conditioned and interdependent beings, they probably also form a specific community. Does this need for orientation towards the cultural/art community apply to young people today? It is difficult to formulate an unambiguous answer, but it is worth considering this issue.

Based on our own research, we refer to academic youth, their interest in culture and art, their participation in its offers and the need to develop educational activities to make them aware of the role and functions art plays/can play in everyday life, as well as to shape their ability to apply its content/message in social practice (Przeclawska, Rowicki 1997). Popularization and dissemination of art, noticing its potential and role in the global, unpredictable and unfriendly space seems to be not so much a proposal as a duty of educational environments.

If we consider that youth is a specific potential that can still be developed, enriched and transformed effectively (in view of age), reflection in this area is relevant and gives hope for education and participation in culture/art.

Culture/art – essence, understanding, perception – youth’s own experiences

“Daily practice, which the human being has carried out over the centuries, was not only a building block of reality, but also a way to get to know

it” (Wilk 2010, p. 47). This space of cognition is created by culture. According to Ernst Cassirer’s concept, culture is “the only and inevitable human reality” [...] The human being cannot escape their own achievements, [...] they must accept the conditions of their own life. The human being no longer lives in the physical world, they also live in the symbolic world. The components of this world are language, myth, art and religion” (Cassirer 1977, p. 14). The author rightly saw culture as a means of saving people in the face of threats to reality. Nowadays, in our opinion, this position is still valid.

Among the numerous interpretations of the term *culture*, worth noting is Władysław Kunicki-Goldfinger’s approach, for whom: “culture is a tool for human cognition and mastery of the world...” (1993, p. 119). In turn, Norman Goodman and Gary T. Marx defined culture as “a conscious, socially transmitted heritage of knowledge, beliefs, values and normative expectations that helps members of a given society to cope with emerging problems” (1982, p. 85). Antonina Kłosowska (1980) saw culture in a similar way.

Culture as an integrated whole is not a monolith, as a result of human activity it transforms and develops, thus creating an environment – as it seems – more and more adequate to human needs. Through its own *tools*, it builds a space for dialog and understanding.

Among her many *tools*, art attracts attention. In ancient times, art was called any ability to make things. This position was represented by the classicists Plato and Aristotle (Tatarkiewicz 1982, pp. 62–63).

The perceived difference in perception of art over the centuries was caused by various factors, not only strictly artistic, but also social and moral. “Art was therefore a moral category, a value, knowledge, skill, cognition or means to achieve a certain goal (Wilk 2010, p. 48).

Presentation of own emotions, illustration of reality, praise of nature, showing beauty or ugliness, illustration of social problems, all these are the essence of art, which the artist puts into a specific form as a social message, a signal/inducement – as Joseph Beuys or Umberto Eco wanted – for discussion and reflection (Beuys 1990; Eco 2005, 2007).

Due to its values and functions – both artistic and social – which it performed and performs today, art becomes a subject of interest for representatives of many scientific disciplines: aesthetics, philosophers, sociologists and educators.

“The interest in art as a specific form of human activity in the methodological aspect, treating art as a fully social phenomenon, dates back to the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries” (Wilk 2010, p. 61). This interest was, to a large extent, a consequence of social development. Marian Golka notes that “Art is not a sublimation of social life, but it is not its margin. [...] Art is so-

cial by its very nature, just as societies are co-shaped in their very nature (together with other influences) by their creations of art” (Golka 2007, p. 269).

In the social and historical space, at least since the second half of the 20th century, a clear division in culture has been visible, generated on the basis of presented content, forms and media, groups of recipients, and their readiness to participate in a given offer and the level of understanding of the transferred content. It is thus nothing new that: “Culture according to various concepts is differentiated between high and low culture. The criteria for this division are also different. It is worth remembering, however, that in fact, all attempts to separate the two types of culture are not permanent and final. These distinctions are not sharp either – in methodological terms – because, if a specific type of human activity is included in one of the selected levels in a given moment and place, it may turn out in a short time or place that it was not an accurate choice. The very term “high culture” most often identifies itself with sophistication, elitism, commitment or even intellectual effort of both the creator and the recipient. “Low culture” is usually identified with commonness, easy accessibility or mass perception. It does not seem appropriate to carry out any further analysis in this respect, especially as post-modern interpretations abolish this distinction” (Wilk 2010, p. 59).

We refer to this explanation only in the perspective of organizing the content, and it is not our intention to evaluate, appraise or analyze the mentioned categorization. Although academic youth – albeit to a different extent – is a recipient of both forms, our idea, in our research, was to diagnose the level of interest, contact and participation of youth – using the not entirely precise term – in high culture.

Numerous studies on youth are generally related to institutions and educational environments in which educational processes are carried out. Taking into account the experiences of the past, the development of civilization, an increase in the level of education and the reality of the present, we should, in our opinion, expect that in the aforementioned circles education in the field of culture and art is conducted, preparing young people to participate in culture, conscious perception of art, the ability to read the message contained in a work of art, and finally to implement it in the practice of everyday life. The integration of all educational environments in this area, and especially the involvement of the family, should result in the development of the need to make use of the cultural offer available in the social space. What is the actual situation?

Pedagogical research on youth in the first half of the 20th century and later on concerned various areas of their activity, including participation in culture – Florian Znaniecki (1971, 1973), Helena Radlińska (1933/1934), An-

tonina Kłoskowska (1980), Irena Wojnar (1988). Aware of the need for mutual coexistence of culture/art and youth, we conducted our own research in this area. The inducement, and thus the goal, to take up this thematic range were the observations/reflections on the level of interest and presence of art in the everyday life of academic youth in the perspective of the domination of new technologies and preferred lifestyles, which do not always take into account the offers of individual cultural institutions. The results of the research were also supposed to show the need for a wider inclusion of education in the field of culture and art in the educational process.

In the adopted test procedure, the diagnostic probe method was used. The survey technique was used. The research using a questionnaire was conducted in June 2017 at the Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology of the University of Silesia, among first and second year students of pedagogical faculties, in which 253 students participated.

In the presented deliberations, the key issue was the presentation and analysis of the definitions and perception of art in the context of contemporary academic youth. The respondents defined the concept of art themselves.

In the studied population (N = 253) the largest group – 43 persons (17%) – perceives art as a reflection of the author's thoughts and emotions; for 34 persons (13%) art is a beautiful, valuable phenomenon created by man; 21 persons (8%) perceive art as a part of culture; 14 persons (6%) perceive it primarily as an aesthetic creation; for 12 persons, art is simply creativity. For a dozen or so people (12.5%) art is a manifestation of expression; for a similar number of respondents (13.5%) art is an expression of emotion. In the respondents' proposals, among 15 people (6%) there was a statement that art is a value. The multiplicity and diversity of terms may indicate different environmental conditions of the process of upbringing and education.

When diagnosing the understanding of the term/category of art, it is worth quoting the statements of a much smaller number of respondents – a few people respectively, not exceeding 10 (below 4%) – because they illustrate a broad perspective of the conditions that allowed the presented reflections to form. Young people feel that art: *diversifies the life of the society; is something important and necessary for people; works of art that make us reflect; art is something that each of us can put into society; it is the sense of existence; the medium of communication of valuable things; the collection of works of value for society; the way of communication, the message; it is the cultural heritage of civilization expressed in artistic works; something extraordinary and precious; art is: paintings, sculptures; beauty; it is the current thanks to which we develop; life inspiration; the way we spend our free time.*

The analysis of the quoted terms indicates that among the statements there are two basic trends of reading/perception or understanding of art. One is located in the emotional-artistic area, the other in the *strictly* social area, which confirms the unchanging functions of art, thus its pedagogical and praxeological character – presented so clearly, not only in the concept of J. Beuys (Kaczmarek 1995).

The illustration of the above mentioned statements suggests that for the majority of young people, art is above all an expression/effect of artistic creativity, a work implying aesthetic experiences/sensations, beauty. This position, while fully legitimate and true, suggests a common understanding of art, identification primarily with the senses, with works of art presented in appropriate places, which are created by artists for the purpose of contemplation/reading/inspiration and communication. This may suggest that a relatively large group of recipients, including young people, still does not see the social message in artworks. This is probably the result of insufficient education in formative environments, especially in the family and at school.

The results of the research indicate that only a small group of respondents see social values/factors in art, despite the fact that they have always been present. They were the final effect of a given work and, above all, were its inspiration. In the pedagogical space, these social aspects were significantly emphasized and realized in practice by the creators of Jesuit and Piarist schools during the Renaissance and Baroque period, later also by Martin Luther, Florian Znaniński, Helena Radlińska, Joseph Beuys, Irena Wojnar and others (Wilk 2010).

Lack of knowledge, sufficient education on the subject matter, difficulties in formulating one's own feelings and impressions in relation to the definition of art are confirmed by the statements of 14 people (6%) who used the formula – *I do not know, it is difficult to define*.

In the context of understanding art, the scope of art as a value was also analyzed. Being aware of the broad scope/area of the term or the category of values, it was not deliberately specified and no restrictions were introduced, thus allowing the respondents full freedom of expression. The results – in our opinion – confirmed the rightness of the decision, in the whole population (N = 253), 246 respondents (97%) decided that art is a value, while 7 people (3%) decided that it is *something that makes us think about values*.

Recognition of the value of art by almost the entire surveyed group evokes positive feelings, regardless of whether someone perceives art (a work of art) more in a material context or through the emotional or cultural-social prism, because the very recognition of its value creates a number of

theoretical and practical possibilities of including it in the space of everyday life.

For centuries, art has been functioning in several basic areas. Young people were offered 9 categories/fields, from which they chose those that were the most important to them (valuable, common). The responses were distributed as follows. Music – 134 (53%); film – 110 (43%); literature – 72 (28%); theater – 61 (24%); dance – 44 (17%); painting – 42 (17%); architecture – 30 (12%); sculpture – 17 (7%); opera/classical music – 11 (4%). The young people chose one or more areas. The illustration of the research results confirms the commonly observed and declared fields of art that are most important for young people: music, film and literature. The presented choices were dictated by the most frequent contact with a given field of art, its knowledge and understanding at the same time. The most rarely mentioned: sculpture, architecture, opera and classical music may signal that young people not only underestimate their values, but also do not know them, because in their education so far they have been interested in these fields in a vague manner or to a small extent.

Not only the quoted research results suggest that there is an urgent need to introduce a much wider range of cultural and artistic content into the educational practice of young people if the education of the young generation is to have a holistic dimension.

Culture and art in the educational and upbringing process of the young generation – an attempt to justify the need

In the perspective of many factors, the possibilities for ordering a given reality revealing a number of social problems, attention should be paid to culture and art, as those areas of human activity that, as history has confirmed, have always been an integral part of human existence. Not only because they were created by man, but also because the idea of each artist was to establish a dialog, a communication with the recipient/viewer, and the subject was social reality.

The increasingly cosmopolitan, diverse social space in a global perspective, as Samuel Huntington wrote, arouses anxiety and concern, both about the present and the future of everyday existence (Huntington, 2003). In a similar context one can read the reflection of other authors, referring to the present day: “Globalization and the direction of transformations of our contemporary society, as well as globalization and transformations of societies in other countries, located in different parts of the globe, certainly cannot be counted

among the full successes of humanity” (Marzec-Holka, Radziejewicz-Winnicki, Wilkomirska 2018, p. 121).

The threats, conflicts, as well as economic, social, cultural, axiological and moral destabilization or social divisions/stratification, which are experienced by more and more numerous communities, can hardly be considered a success for the contemporary generations. Only a superficial observation of everydayness indicates that we create the reality/space of our life often against ourselves, and certainly against the logic and essence of humanity.

In the constant pursuit of civilizational development and progress, we marginalize what is most important in human/social functioning – safety, dignity, respect and human well-being. These – as we would like to believe – mostly unconscious omissions and exclusions constitute what is most dangerous for human beings.

Although it is difficult to pinpoint a single, fully effective method of solving this problem, a proper social rehabilitation and revitalization, so necessary in the existing situation, it is impossible not to undertake actions contributing to the healing of the present state.

It probably takes a lot of courage and conviction to implement what is known as *dialog* in practice. Among many advocates of this form of social coexistence, it is worth recalling, after Z. Bauman, the position of Pope Francis: “If there is a word we should repeat *ad nauseam*, it is dialog. [...] The culture of dialog assumes authentic learning, asceticism, which helps us to recognize the other person as an important interlocutor; it allows us to look at a stranger, a migrant, a person belonging to a different culture as a subject to be listened to, recognized and appreciated. An urgent task for us today is to engage all social actors in promoting a “culture that sees the value of dialog as a form of meeting”, in order to seek agreement and common understanding, but not in isolation from the concern for a just society, capable of remembering and not excluding anyone” (adhort. Apost. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 239). Peace will last as long as we arm our children with the weapons of dialog and teach them how to fight well in meetings and negotiations. In this way, we will be able to leave them an inheritance of a culture that will be capable of outlining not strategies for death but for life, not for exclusion but for integration” (Bauman 2018, p. 277).

Reality, as Pope Francis observes, does not allow us to be only observers of life today; it imposes on us the obligation to be active in building a common safe space.

The areas that for centuries have been involved in creating understanding, dialog and community are culture and art. In the past period, just like

today, their presence and involvement in social experiences/resolutions have been and still are conditioned by the will, awareness and knowledge of individual societies, of what value and what potential, not only in artistic and aesthetic terms, culture and art represent. Reality “requires” or “suggests” a kind of “community” of culture, art and society.

In social sciences, a *community* is usually defined as “a type of social collectivity with a strong intercultural bond, the participants of which are united by a sense of common identity [...] mutual solidarity and cooperation” (Bobrowska 2008, p. 276). Taking into account the role and functions that culture and art invariably perform in the life of every person, borrowing this term seems to be fully justified. To some extent, similar borrowings were already used by Plato or later by Natorp, who noticed an inseparable connection between the process of education, i.e. the impact of different educational environments, and the community, society. This relationship is expressed in the statement that “man needs man in order to become man” (Speaker 2009, p. 118). P. Natorp wrote: “Man only educates themselves as a man in the human community. Conversely, the human community exists and develops only through the human education of its members” (quoted from Gadacz 2009, pp. 118–119). By accepting these statements one can and should develop them, because man needs man – in the perspective of their own existence – but shaped by culture and art, only then do they constitute a value in the education and formation of society. It can therefore be said that culture and art are indispensable factors modeling the quality and form of human existence, whether in its individual or social dimension. The unchanging reciprocity of building and creating one’s own essence – culture, art, man – makes this reciprocity seem to be a peculiar axiom. Why, then, does the present day provide so many examples of misunderstanding and ignoring this truth/necessity/need?

The relationship between culture/art and society was noticed by excellent sociologists. In his reflections on the concept of society, August Comte repeatedly pointed out that the people who constitute a given community and who live in a given area are not bound by natural and cultural ties: customs, religion, language and art (1961). Also from Herbert Spencer’s and Emil Durkheim’s point of view, culture is what definitely connects societies.

Among the many theories that confirm the reciprocity of culture/art and social life, of note is the social concept of Joseph Beuys, a German artist and sculptor, whose creations and artistic endeavors were a starting point for a discussion on social order. Beuys saw himself not only as an artist, but above all as a pedagogue, a social reformer. According to him, social sculp-

ture, also known as social architecture or social visual arts, is: “how we shape and model the world we live in” (Beuys 1990, p. 32).

The artist was accompanied by the perception of art as a formula (building material) shaping reality throughout his life. Analyzing this concept we find many common features with the classic assumptions of social pedagogy, defining its praxeological dimension achievable through individual and social activity. This idea can be confronted with the idea of Helena Radlinska, who points to the possibility of transforming reality with the help of *social forces* hidden in an individual.

J. Beuys, as an advocate of a close relationship between science and art, stressed that the lack of understanding between them leads to many social, political and educational irregularities. Zygmunt Bauman took a similar stance, perceiving culture as a leading factor in social integration and coexistence. An example of not only his reflection on the role and function of culture in the contemporary world was making *culture for social change* the main theme of the European Culture Congress 2011 in Wrocław. The need for universal recognition of the importance/value of culture was expressed by all participants of the congress: artists, scientists, and – although the least numerous – politicians, who expressed this need in their speeches, publications, discussions, performances and presented works of art.

Meanwhile, social realities and scientific studies do not fill us with optimism, despite the testimony of history, the voices of representatives of science and artists, culture and art remain a marginal, unnecessary beings for subsequent ruling groups and the dominant part of society. The lack of knowledge and understanding, as well as the need to change the way of thinking in this area, is “passed on” to the next generations. This in turn generates negative consequences in individual and social experience, observed in the social space, impacting values, attitudes, relations, kindness, knowledge, quality of life, mutual security, loneliness, alienation. Yet there is a simple and accessible solution, conscious and systematic education in all educational environments, especially in the family and at school.

The positions of representatives of social sciences are justified by the fact that, as the research results show, young people perceive cultural institutions in their environment: cinemas, museums, theatres, libraries, philharmonic halls, the National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra, art galleries, only 7 respondents (3%) in the whole group (N = 253) could not recall any institution. This fact may confirm the lack of interest in this sphere of life.

Cultural institutions have accompanied people for centuries, performing a number of social functions. In the conducted research, in this scope it was

stated that young people generally perceive their role in the environment, although a group of 41 respondents (16%) revealed they do not perceive and do not feel their presence and significance.

Interest and participation in the arts is related to the needs/willingness expressed by the individual, the possibilities/offer of the institution and the place where it can be presented. While conducting research on youth participation in art, an attempt was made to determine the significance of the presence of cultural institutions in the local environment. Among the statements, 212 people (84%) admitted that they were needed, while 41 respondents (16%) were of a different opinion. This position suggests that this group of 41 respondents (16%) does not see the role and function of culture/art in the social space. And yet, as E. Cassirer rightly noted (Cassirer 1977, p. 319), art invariably remains a permanent regulator of social life, even though it is often an unconscious fact. A similar position is presented by Marian Golka, who draws attention to the need to participate in culture, which he defines as “all human contact with cultural products and behaviors, and thus direct or indirect contact with other people” (2007, p. 122).

Awareness of the presence of individual cultural institutions in the local environment is one thing, what is important is whether they are visited or used.

In the last three years, young people surveyed mainly went to the cinema (204; 81%), to a lesser extent to the theatre (63; 25%), there were slightly more visits to the museum (75; 30%), the smallest number of people went to the philharmonic (28; 11%).

The presence of young people in libraries is much more positive, and all those surveyed said that in 2017 they used the resources of libraries.

In view of the collected results and the observation of youth participation, it was reasonable to find out whether the respondents have ever felt a lack of participation in culture and art? The obtained results indicate that 140 respondents (55%) feel no contact with art, while 113 respondents (45%) – feel no need to benefit the proposals of cultural institutions. The situation suggests that the direct cause is located in the educational deficits of basic environments.

Why do so many people treat culture and art marginally? The statements of young people show that it is mainly the lack of time, financial issues, but also lack of interest, boredom, or lack of education in this area. Young people choose cinema/film because they know it, are familiar with it, they understand it, it does not require much effort to understand the presented message, and a painting, theatre play or classical music requires attention, concentration, knowledge, i.e. initial education.

We learn culture and art in the process of family and school education, whether through observation, our own activity, as well as through participation in activities organized in cultural and educational institutions, knowing that culture is a specific force that allows us to find a place in society and realize life scenarios. Art presents a similar strength, its cognition enables one to experience beauty (Clément, 2010, p. 83).

This is important, but it would be even more desirable to create opportunities for cultural and artistic education in the school didactic process to a much greater extent than in previous years. Expanding upon Pope Francis' reflection on the need to integrate a culture of dialog into all school curricula, enabling young people to resolve conflicts in a different way (than before), it should be noted that it is no less necessary to include the works and contents of culture and art ther (Bauman 2018, pp. 277–278).

Observing the reality, as well as analyzing the structure and scope of school subjects at each educational level, it is impossible not to notice that for years school education in the field of culture and art has been marginalized. At the same time, given the lack of education in this area in the home environment, it is difficult to expect young people to disclose their needs in this area.

Acknowledging the important role of the school in the education of understanding and the need for participation in the field of culture and art, the respondents were asked whether the didactic and educational process involved the classes in this field. A positive response was indicated by 224 respondents (88%), while 29 respondents (12%) stated otherwise. Taking into account the core curriculum of primary and junior high schools, each pupil should be covered by education in the field of culture and art. However, it is known that it is very limited in content and implementation time. Perhaps these facts made 29 people (12%) feel that there was no such education.

Continuing this thread, a question was asked about the organization of joint/school trips to cultural institutions. 238 persons (94%) confirmed group participation in cultural offers, while 15 persons (6%) said that no joint events were organized. It is a satisfactory result. However, the question arises how often such trips were organized and how often did the respondents participate in them? In this respect, there were single answers, which may suggest that few group trips were organized and relatively few individuals participated.

School is an important place of education, but an even more important role – in our opinion – is played by the family, and: “This home environment, using the available institutional offerings, its own experience and the media, should lay the foundations for efficient functioning in culture” (Guzy-Steinke, Wilk 2009, p. 13).

Taking into account the above, the respondents were asked whether parents had in the past encouraged them to participate in the offers of cultural institutions. The respondents declared that in 182 cases (72%) parents acted as animators, while in 71 cases (28%) youths did not report such actions on the part of parents. The indicated lack of motivation could have been caused by many factors: geographical, social, cultural or economic ones. It seems, however, that the lack of own experience and parents' needs in this area may have been the dominant reason. The reality and the reflections of scientists, as well as the results of their own research on school and family environment raise awareness of the urgent need to revitalize the education in question with an orientation on the earliest years of life of a child and the selection of an artistic offer adequate to the age.

No less important is the role of cultural institutions themselves operating in the social space. Their programme offers, educational activities, promotional projects aimed at attracting and encouraging young people to consciously participate in numerous proposals should be a priority element of all the activities of individual institutions – theaters, museums, philharmonics, operas, galleries, cinemas, libraries – in order to educate young people in the need to incorporate culture and art into their lives.

Another key aspect conditioning the need to undertake cultural and artistic education is the reality around us, which is increasingly unpredictable and worrying. The need to undertake educational activities aimed at securing and improving human existence is reflected – so far – in the reflections of relatively few people who pay attention to the “introduction” of culture and art into the practice of everyday life. These activities should include raising awareness, knowledge, the need and role of the use of culture/art in a space full of threats, as well as shaping values and relations and attitudes towards others.

Already the ancients noticed the value of culture in organizing social existence. In subsequent historical periods there were also many bright people aware of the importance and role these entities play in social practice (Wilk 2015).

The relationship between social life/human existence and culture/art is a fact. L. Tolstoy rightly noted that art “is indispensable for civilized life and progress, both individual and collective” (Estreicher 1988, p. 8). Art is not only an artistic experience, but also a social practice (Krajewski 1995).

Since the importance and role of culture/art in everyday life had been noticed by many over the centuries and the need for education in this area had also been seen, it was decided to ask the respondents whether in their opinion art is a factor supporting development and education

In the surveyed group, 236 persons (93%) replied in the affirmative, while 17 persons (7%) did not see such a correlation. In justifying their positions, the respondents pointed out that: *interest in social issues of the world; possibility to develop interests; shaping sensitivity to beauty; motivating to think; creating interpersonal contacts; interest in history*. If it is an important development factor for most people, is it perhaps/is it also an important form of communication and education? The results in this respect were very similar to the previous ones, i.e. 231 persons (91%) considered that culture is an important form of communication and education, for 22 persons (9%) it does not constitute such a value.

The dominance of positive answers is a good signal, certainly encouraging more subjective educational activities.

Functioning every day in the society, it is important that we are able to properly arrange mutual relations, cooperate and support each other. Considering the common existence and analyzing the participation of young people in culture, it was decided to ask the respondents whether the common experience of art can strengthen social bonds. In the opinion of 235 people (93%) – yes, for 18 people (7%) it does not matter. Expanding this social range of topics a bit, a question was asked whether, and if so, why art is important in life and whether it may imply social changes. For 246 people (97%) art is important, only 7 people (3%) said otherwise. Justifying this essence and the possibility of changes, the respondents pointed to the following aspects most often: *art is important because it creates human views and shapes human values* (45; 18%); *it develops creative thinking, imagination* (38; 15%); *it sensitizes* (34; 13%); *it develops interests* (31; 12%); *it enriches education* (27; 11%); *it is a space for interaction and communication* (25; 10%); *it enriches the world and presents aspects of everyday life in an aesthetic, abstract, individual way* (23; 9%).

Among the justifications, the following statements were also noted – several/ten-odd indications – *young people learn tolerance and respect through art; it is a factor integrating people; it initiates social projects; it satisfies aesthetic and emotional needs; it shapes social bonds; it builds social relations; it integrates society; it sees problems and shows possibilities of solving them; art is a way of changing the environment/society; it builds a sense of common responsibility; without art, the world would be uninteresting and boring*.

The above mentioned content indicates that young people – although in various dimensions – see the importance of art in everyday life, they are also aware of the possibility of changes that may be implemented by it. This is significant in the broad view of social functioning, especially since in the so-

cial space we observe more and more examples of transformations/revitalizations with the use of art. (Wilk 2010, 2015; Fedorowicz 2007).

The difficult reality can be tamed, but it is necessary to engage culture and art in educational and upbringing activities to a much greater extent. Although Touraine's analyses do not fill us with optimism, they indicate where to look for information about the present and the possible future: in culture. Culture is the best carrier for the dream of a better future" (Bendyk 2013, p. 75). It is worth believing.

Final reflection

The analysis of research results shows that the majority of academic youth is aware of the importance of culture and art in social life. What is important, the respondents declare an interest in making use of the offers of particular fields of art. However, the results referring to participation in spectacles, concerts or exhibitions do not fully confirm this, which defines, to a large extent, a wishful thinking dimension rather than a real one. Is this conducive to creating a common, safe space for dialogue?

We leave this question unanswered, in the hope that the Readers will join the discussion on this issue.

In our opinion, the presented research results are not only information about the state of the subject matter, but our intention was to show – taking into account these results – the need for greater integration of culture and art into the educational process of the young generation, so that interest and participation, and then reading of the values and role of art in everyday life would be universal.

Culture and art undeniably and invariably make it possible to organize the world, the space of life, so diverse and unfriendly nowadays. This thesis appears more and more frequently in the reflections of outstanding representatives of science and culture, including in the statements of Zygmunt Bauman.

Let us listen to the voices of scientists, creators and artists, let us pay close attention to the social space and, as upbringing environments, let us undertake efforts to consolidate the intensified educational and upbringing activities in this area, let us make sure that young people have an opportunity to create a community with culture and art, for their own and social good.

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