WHAT IS AN ARTISTIC EXPERIENCE?

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The article defines the concept of the artistic experience as a totality of states of the emotional sensitivity lived through directly in the process of the artistic act (reception, performance, creation, reflection), which promote the formation of beliefs or value orientations in the pupil’s personality through the reflection. The artistic experience forms and develops the traits of the pupil’s personality and at the same time, the results of the accumulated experience bear the personality’s mark. Recognition of this interrelation has an overwhelming importance in forming the pupil’s artistic culture in the context of the general education. Based on the analysis of researches conducted in this field we have determined the following: elements of the process of accumulation/formation of the artistic experience; the nature of the man-arts interrelation; essence, characteristics and the criteria of existence of the artistic experience; content of the experience.

Keywords: artistic experience, art education, identity formation, the essence of artistic experience.

Conference participant, National championship in scientific analytics

The artistic experience creates and develops the student’s personality traits. Results of the artistic experience bear the imprint of the personality. Recognition of this relation has a considerable importance in the development of the student’s artistic culture within the framework of general education.

Scientists treat the concept of experience in the field of art and culture as an aesthetic experience, which, in its turn, includes artistic experience. The notion of “aesthetic experience” is one of the cloudiest, since in the 23rd century philosophers deemed inadequate to provide it a spot in their reflection about beauty and art.

In the dictionary of philosophy, experience is defined as follows: 1) a philosophical category, setting the integrity and universality of the human activity as a union of knowledge, skills, senses and will. The experience is characterized by a mechanism of social, historical and cultural inheritance; 2) a gnoseological category, representing the sensual-empirical unit of activity [9, p. 492].

In antiquity, Democritus, Aristotle and Plato appreciated the role of experience in the process of knowledge and study of nature. According to Aristotle, philosophy itself must be based on the alliance between experience and art.

In the Middle Ages, the sensitive experience, with the help of which people are getting to know the world around them had been ignored, while the existence of the inner-spiritual experience was recognized as contributing to the knowledge of God [8, p. 216].

In Renaissance, experience comes to the forefront. Two approaches are outlined in the conceptualization of experience, which are still topical: (1) experience as a knowledge method and (2) experience as initiation in cultural achievements, a method of education and development of personality. (See Picture 1. Perspectives in gaining artistic experience).

Empiricism philosophers (17th-18th centuries) state that any knowledge comes from experience. Idealistic empiricists (George Berkeley, David Hume, Richard Avenarius etc.) are limiting the experience to the aggregate of sensations and representations, denying the fact that experience is based on the objective world. Materialistic empiricists (Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke) considered that the source of sensitive experience is the objective world [10, p. 426-427]. Therefore, all knowledge is gained only from experience, i.e. experience is a spring of knowing.

Supporters of rationalism (René Descartes, Baruch Spinoza, Gottfried Leibniz, Immanuel Kant, Johann Fichte, Friedrich Schelling, Georg Hegel etc.) generalize the nature of knowledge and state that knowledge is learned from concepts on the basis of innate mental skills. Nowadays, positivists deny the possibility and the need of tackling the issue of existence of another reality outside human consciousness.

The view of Immanuel Kant on the aesthetic experience is of special interest. According to him the chaotic action of the object (of the “object itself”) on consciousness is transforming into experience only in result of an a priori mental action. The main goal, according to Im. Kant, is the identification/development of innate abilities before the manifestation of talent and development of the aesthetic taste through experience and culture. If the base of one’s skills (consciousness, knowledge) is culturalized and based on the experience of previous generations, then we can claim the development of a creative personality, able to exploit artistic experience.

http://dx.doi.org/10.18007/gisap.es.v0i10.1299

ЧТО ТАКОЕ ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННЫЙ ОПЫТ?

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В данной статье определяется понятие художественный опыт как совокупность эмоциональных состояний переживаний непосредственно в художественном процессе (восприятия, исполнения, создания), которые посредством рефлексии способствуют формированию убеждений и ценностных ориентаций личности учащихся. Художественный опыт формирует и развивает личностные черты учащихся и в то же время, результаты опыта несут в себе отпечаток личности. Признание этой взаимосвязи имеет подавляющее значение в формировании художественной культуры учащихся в контексте общего образования. На основе анализа исследований проведенных в этой области, мы установили: элементы процесса накопления/формирования художественного опыта; характер взаимодействия между человеком и искусством; сущность, характеристики и критерии наличия художественного опыта; содержание художественного опыта.

Ключевые слова: художественный опыт, художественное воспитание, формирование личности, суть художественного опыта.

Участник конференции, Национального первенства по научной аналитике

ARTISTIC EXPERIENCE

As a means to know
Arts
Life
Self

As a means to initiate
Culture
Education
Formation of personality

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The German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder conceptualizes the experience of the individual and the experience of humankind in close connection with education and cultural progress. Experience, just as culture itself, comprises all the necessary elements for the process of development of a human individual. [Apud: 9, p. 8].

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, in his work Phänomenologie des Geistes (The Phenomenology of Spirit), reveals the picture of knowledge about the essence of the absolute spirit, outlining the fact that the individual gets through the experience related to the manifestations of the absolute spirit. Experience occurs as a result of self-knowledge of consciousness, realized through thinking and not in reality. [3]. That is to say, constitutive elements of the artistic experience acquire a certain weight in the process of development of the student’s personality only when these are acknowledged. Obviously, we cannot deny the need for experience in the process of knowledge. The work of art comes to knowledge only through an artistic act. For an artistic experience, a direct contact with the artistic phenomenon is needed, which exists and is perceived as the world, language, significance. The theory of art is grounded and develops on the basis of the artistic experience data. The process of gaining artistic experience itself is not visible and cannot be completely characterized on the basis of certain objective/interior observations, as it implies certain interior processes.

According to the Russian scientist Ghenrich Orlov [11, p. 17], the nature of music experience is manifested through characters: (a) subjective, (b) concrete, (c) universal, (d) untranslatable, (e) unique. It is absolutely impossible to completely overlap the experience of the art creator, interpreter and beneficiary, as all these individuals gather elements of their own experience from several sources (art, education, sensibility, psychological portrait, motivation, etc.). Therefore, we come to the conclusion that the artistic phenomenon cannot be studied separately from art sources and the impact of the art effect on the beneficiary.

John Dewey, the author of the aesthetic study of artistic experience, draws the attention to the relation of interconditionality between the life experience of an individual and the actual artistic experience. In this regard, the continuity and connection between the elements of the artistic experience and the events/activities/life adventures, which constitute the general content of an individual’s life experience, are of paramount importance for the organization of an artistic experience. [1, p. 3].

Depending on the relation between the artistic experience and life experience of individuals the value of art in different periods of human society had been determined in the following ways: art as an element of life, art as a goal itself, art for the chosen ones, etc. The understanding of art is facilitated when it is perceived as a representation and embodiment of the world, things, ideas... If art is a microcosmos, then it must correspond to a certain extend to the human macrocosmos and the world megacosmos. [11, p. 19]. All in all, the entire process of gaining artistic experience and music experience in particular, in the opinion of Ghenrich Orlov, can be divided into two phases:

- Phase I – perceptive, when sense organs are sensitized/oriented towards the perception of the phenomenon and are activated;
- Phase II – aperceptive, which includes processes of identification, differentiation and organization of the knowledge process elements.

In each of these two phases of experience, the individual can attain four levels consecutively, within which thinking/knowing of the artistic image is transforming, evolving. By thinking over the message/artistic image, the inner world of the individual is getting enriched and cultivated. Even if not all art consumers get through the four levels of perception/knowledge of the work of art, it is due to them this artistic experience becomes deep and complex. In both phases – perceptive and aperceptive, the following levels of artistic experience can be reached:

1 – passive, when the message of the work of art is similar to a story, drama, exciting succession of events, without remembering the details and affinities;

2 – associative, when a meaning is given to the artistic message/image/language by association with the acquisitions of previous experience;

3 – of differentiation, when the artistic language exceeds its symbolic meaning and the individual perceives the subtleties of the work of art, conquers the hidden meanings;

4 – of synthesis, when all intellectual abilities of the individual are mobilized into a unique artistic thinking and a spiritual relation is created between the beneficiary and the work of art. By passing from one level to another, phases of artistic experience contribute more and more to the discovery of a variety of dimensions of the work of art and stimulate their integrity in an ensemble. All fantasies, associations, sensitive traits, structure elements, etc., acknowledged by the individual on different levels of the artistic experience are interpenetrating and complementing each other completely.

A considerable contribution to the conceptualization of experience had been made by Russian scientists. We can classify their researches into three groups, which: 1) Equal experience with practice. According to them, experience is gained during practical activities, while defining qualities of experience are the degree of accumulation and assimilation (Buianova N., Espicue N.). 2) Treat experience from the gnoseological point of view, representing it as a result of perception of the surrounding world and as a measure of knowing objective laws. Representatives of this view (Averin A., Lectorskii V.) are merging experience with knowing. Experience is unrepeatable, it cannot be fake and it cannot be entirely reflexive. Skills and habits can be considered to be unconscious elements of experience. In conclusion, the process of accumulation of experience cannot be reduced only to the acquisition of knowledge. Not all experience elements are conscious. It is gathered during the change of forms of activity and the creation of habits, skills, habits. 3) Perceive experience as a change of subject, manifested through abilities in assimilating phenomena from the surrounding world (Alexandrov B., Ivanov V., Karagadin V.). Experience leads to changes due to cognitive-
practical assimilation of reality, in direct contact with the artistic phenomenon. Such changes are expressing the individual’s capacity of organizing his own activity efficiently and accurately.

The following can be considered as **indexes of an artistic experience**: the interest for artistic phenomena, the degree of development of the sensual-imagistic sphere, the volume of gathered knowledge / skills / habits and the system of personal values. [7, p. 24].

The **content of artistic experience** can be characterized on two planes:

1. **objective plane**, specified with impressions, aesthetic appreciations, taste, opinions, artistic deeds, cultural phenomena, specific works of art;
2. **subjective plane** – specified in self-analysis, reflection, interior spiritual life, etc. [12, p. 125-143].

In order to explain the artistic phenomena, professor I. Gagim brings arguments from the perspective of art philosophy, outlining the importance of the interior content of the artistic act. To make art means to perform an artistic act: to create, to interpret, to party collaborate and participate in a musical party. The essence of the artistic act – the creator of the work of art, the interpreter and the receiving party collaborate and participate in a common artistic experience. “To perform music” (= to perform a music act) means to communicate inside with music” [2, p. 44]. Therefore, „the musician identifies himself with the work of art, he lives it with his entire soul, and he is giving his spiritual self completely - giving all the best he has, not just a part of himself. [Idem].

The **essence of artistic experience** lies in the quality of relationship between the student’s personality and the work of art, which represents a problem of the young human spirit.

As we mentioned above, not all constitutive elements of artistic experience pass through consciousness, but namely the process of awareness mobilizes all resources for the creation/development of the student’s personality.

The **process of awareness of artistic experience** takes place successively in five stages. [Apud: 12, p. 14]:

1. **Sensory and sub-sensory stage**. At this stage the perception of the artistic phenomenon takes place (with the manifestation of emotional experiences, primary appreciations and memorization of certain impressive elements).

2. **Contemplation stage**. The individual is detaching, is departing in time and space from the artistic phenomenon. Here takes place the identification of the most expressive moments, elements, sequences, fragments, etc., being appreciated as something original, beautiful, and unique. At this stage the general perception of content, determination of shape and aesthetic appreciation of the work of art take place.

3. **Stage of the perception results differentiation**. The content of impressions gets crystallized as original and unique elements in the artistic experience of the personality. The aesthetic appreciation of the work of art is rendered, which depends on the taste and inner opinion of the individual.

4. **Stage of experiential “echo”**. The individual is creatively operating with the data of artistic experience, based on the results of previous experiences. Each meeting with the work of art becomes a re-creation of it.

5. **Attitudinal-value stage**. All the artistic experience, the mechanism of aesthetic awareness, aesthetic needs, interests, value orientations, aesthetic attitudes, etc. are being creatively updated in relation to individual’s motivation.

A special role in gaining artistic experience is played by the context and models of the work of art. The scientists Curt Sachs and Victor Zuckerkandl are mentioning the universal character of the context in which the artistic experience is created [Apud: 11, p. 27]. Art laws and the nature of the process of artistic perception determine the process of gaining artistic experience. In the book “The Commonwealth of Art Curt Sachs” „common law and union of meaning with the spirit” is determined in the parallel evolution of all arts. The work of art can be perceived as an ideal and dynamic model of the world. The problem of the context necessary for gaining the artistic experience requires understanding the plurality of the world cultures, which determines the methods of perception, behaviour, beliefs and the system of values.

The reflection on a work of art can be one of the results of the artistic experience. If artistic knowledge presumes a synthesis of the individual and the general through the artistic image of the work of art, then artistic reflexion represents a thought about the artistic aspect of the work of art, in relation to the Ego. Through reflexion we can make the work of art become a value of the Ego.

The **value of an acquired artistic experience** can be deducted from its functions in the creation and development of personality:

- **pragmatic function** (regulation, determination, control),
- **gnoseological function** (heuristic, evaluative, substantiation, argumentation),
- **vision function** (educational, moral-spiritual, value-related etc.),
- **social-regulatory function** (communicative, social-adaptive etc.) [7, p. 44].

The quantity and the quality of functions of the artistic experience depend largely on the volume of the individual’s experience, as well as the degree of its awareness and application. In conclusion, we shall define the artistic experience as an aggregate of states of emotional sensitivity, lived through during the process of the artistic act itself (reception, interpretation, creation, reflexion). If the emotional sensitivity to the work of art is a central index of artistry [6], then sensitivity states are expressing affective reactions, the artistic receptivity has occurred under the influence of the exterior agent. As a result, the affective accumulation contributes to the generalization of an affective experience and confers a permanent emotional character to perception, while the affective perception contributes to the creation of a belief or a value in the personality of the educated person. Pleasure, needs and reasons are the leading factors in the emotional perception. After the emotional accumulation and integration, the subject is attaching the origin and the reason of emotional situation to another element of the situation. This assignment is leading to the creation of a belief, which is getting generalized, becoming a permanent belief with the status of a way of being. Therefore, emotional
perception, emotional accumulation/integration affect the quality of acquisition of an artistic experience. In the process of artistic experience, value is given to the student’s personal autonomy by “discovering” the spirituality of the artistic message of the work of art, by creating and stimulating the needs for cultural values. Artistic experience is created and evolving only in direct contact with the work of art, but its impact is extended, covering all the fields of human activity.

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