Erich Mistrík

Art/Aesthetic Education in Civic Education

Awareness of one's own identity belongs to the characteristics of an autonomous, self-confident and responsible citizen. If citizens did not reflect their relationships towards society, it would be more difficult for them to act independently and they might not be aware of their responsibility. Citizens' affiliation to a group, therefore, probably would be perceived only on the basis of their own legal relations to the state or on the basis of unconscious, unconsidered ethical norms that the citizens acquired at an early age.

It is identity, the result of independent self-reflection that reveals people for who they are; what they do and do not value in life; who they do and do not appreciate; what they would and would not like to do in life.

In the modern world, to be conscious of his/her position within society and/or state, each citizen needs to construct and develop his/her personal values by questioning and evaluating orthodoxies. The ability to make choices is based on the ability to judge, to evaluate and to construct a personal structure of values. Each citizen needs to confront civic virtues within diverse traditions of the surrounding world.

The confrontation of civic virtues with societal traditions results in building and developing one's personal identity, as well as civic identity. Both identities are not permanent, built once and for ever, but fluid, just as the positions of citizens within given societies are constantly in flux. In the current multicultural and globalized world, both personal and civic identities play crucial roles in understanding the identities of other people. Being aware of who I am, where I stand, what I value and how I relate to other people is the core for understanding other people – if I understand myself rather well, I can much more easily understand the motives, psychic world as well actions of the others.

A human being is able to be conscious of his/her own perceptions, feelings or more difficult mental processes and to perceive from a distance. This process, called introspection in psychology, was called reflection by J. Locke (An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,

Erich Mistrík is full professor in aesthetics, Chair of Institute of the Humanities within Faculty of Education and guest editor of the JSSE. His research interests include methods of aesthetics and of aesthetic education, theory of civic education and of multicultural education. *Comenius University, Faculty of Education, Račianska 59, 813 34 Bratislava, Slovakia.*
Email: erich@erichmistrik.sk

1690). We reflect what is happening to us, what is happening in our brain, and we perceive our activity from a distance.

We interconnect experiences with perceptions because we look for connections and we want to understand them. It would be very difficult to do so, if each perception and each deed were independent, separated. We would need to look for the purpose of each individual deed and perception. If we do feel some connection in between the deeds and perceptions, if we are able to interconnect them in reflection, if we create a story out of them, they become a whole that can be assigned a meaning.

Our experiences and perceptions become one flow which has a characteristic structure and logic. If it is a whole or a structure, we stop perceiving ourselves as separate collections of deeds, perceptions and thoughts, hence, we start perceiving ourselves as compact units. They are no longer separated perceptions but perceptions of an individual being.

The ability for self-reflection makes us perceive ourselves as ourselves. That is how a human being becomes a person with a particular identity. By developing reflection and self-reflection we support the formation of person's identity. By forming a person's identity we support his/her free and responsible activity in community.

An affiliation with a whole is crucial for identity. A person affiliates with a particular whole, but he/she distinguishes this whole and its members from other wholes and from other individuals. Therefore, any form of identity is a social relationship. It is also a relationship of the individual with himself/herself but it still expresses the relationship of the individual with "his/her" society and other societies.

According to Lestinen et al. (2004, p. 3) a person distinguishes his/her identity by three means:

1.„Identification from self-reflection and experience of interaction with surrounding social/cultural group.
2.Categorisation: created [by] using racial, ethnic, religious, occupational and other existing social categories. Specific constructs based on historical experiences: cultural identity arises from the consciousness of a common, shared present and past.
3.Social comparison allows evaluation of our group by comparing it with others. We need otherness to realise ourselves as myself".

Identity is a complex of images about ourselves. The systems of stories, values, symbols and rituals are created within this complex of images (and often myths). Stories give purpose to our efforts in life. Values show

that to affiliate with any identity and with tradition has a purpose. Rituals enable us to publicly affiliate with a particular identity, because in rituals we use symbols recognized by society.

Awareness of identity is irreplaceable for the functioning of society. Identity brings a group together, supports its cohesion, makes the communication among its members easier and with the help of rituals and symbols separates the group from the others more clearly - it determines the boundaries of the group. Identity, which uses stories, gives the group stronger foundations because these stories are "oriented towards political interests and the foundation myths of the community" (Bourriaud, 2011, p. 22).

With the help of identity, which is the result of self-reflection, the group gives purpose to its existence.

In the background of these demonstrations, there are emotions, opinions, prejudices and stereotypes related to them. Stereotypes in the perception of oneself, one's own reference group, and other groups, are a strong bond because they support the awareness of affiliation with a community, almost automatically, without thinking.

On the other hand, stereotypes prevent the further development of a group because they conserve the existing state. Therefore, self-reflection does not lead only to formation of a person's identity. If the identity is formed very strongly and the person rejects its further modifications, it becomes a burden and a targeted systematic self-reflection must take place. This prevents the society from persevering in conservative or stereotypical attitudes.

One of the most effective means of developing self-reflection is art and the use of art.

Art education, aesthetic education, use of art in education – all of these various pedagogical methods have long been considered as the path to understanding beauty. Even nowadays many teachers have the ambition of harmonising each pupil's personality by means of art/aesthetic[1] education. They want to present classic, balanced, and recognized-by-tradition works of art, which should evoke higher feelings in children and hence to positively influence them in life.

The idea about this way of using art is no longer in use. Nowadays, cultures from distant regions meet on a daily basis, the content of mass media from one country immediately penetrates to the whole world, and symbols taken out of context from one culture are being used in another. In this kind of world it is no longer possible to lead young people to any kind of beauty and pretend that this is the generally valid ideal. Nowadays, each ideal will quickly fall apart and will be substituted by other norms or other ideals. In the multicultural and globalised world, it is no longer possible to talk about one ideal, only about ideals in plural.

Nowadays, the use of art has lost its original focus on beauty or good-taste education. Citizen of today's world with global economics, politics and even global mass media will no longer adopt an ideal from above, but will often look for his/her own place within global processes.

If citizens are offered art values, they will not adopt them unless they accept them as their own. If citizens accept the art values, after a while, they may find out that in a different situation they no longer suit them, because they have been intruded by someone else.

Therefore, nowadays art/aesthetic education has evolved into something else. It no longer wants to show what is tasteful, what is beautiful, what needs to be mastered. Instead, it stimulates a person into his/her own searching for what is for him/her suitable in a given situation. Art/aesthetic education wants a person to form his/her own norms about beauty and to respect other people's right for their own concepts of beauty.

Therefore, art/aesthetic education helps people to critically reflect what cultural tradition offers them and to be actively present in its formation. Simultaneously, it shows people the limits of their own tradition and variety of traditions in the world. Art facilitates self-reflection, hence, art/aesthetic education can lead people to self-knowledge and to formation of their own identity. That is why civic education acquires a distinct cultural dimension.

For decades civic virtues have been developed through various kinds of civic education in Europe. Civic identity has not been developed by the use of art, except as a by-product of several art education subjects in different schooling systems. Art and citizenship streams in education have been largely separate, causing reproduction of cultural stereotypes and prejudices toward citizens from other cultures.

Art education and citizenship education can and should cooperate in order to educate responsible citizens participating in responsible ways in social life. Civic education pursues a variety of goals: it supports the responsibilities of citizens in the promotion of effective government, it supports respect for human rights, it develops obligations to promote sustainability that all citizens benefit from. Civic education can also develop practices for communication throughout the world, while at the same time civic education supports appropriate understanding of patriotism. The arts pursue understanding of comparable issues, by using diverse communication modes, including symbolic and metaphorical representations of the human condition and empathetic narratives of the universal human condition.

Papers in this journal issue explore the use of the arts as a tool and technique for promoting more effective civic education and for development of civic virtues through self-reflection.

At this point, it is necessary to state that adding the cultural dimension into modern civic education can add a completely different meaning and content to it.

Art (aesthetic) education, use of art within civic education prevents restriction of civic education to the sole development of a casual knowledge of a society political life. Reducing civic education to political education frequently ends either in political indoctrination or in transferring just knowledge structures into students' minds. Both approaches can be considered dead ends from pedagogical point of view.

Harry S. Broudy (*The Uses of Schooling,* 1988) outlines four aspects of inefficient and efficient methods of teaching:

a) Replicative criterion: the student repeats what he/she has learned in different types of examinations. This is, according to Broudy, totally non-effective action because researchers have clearly shown that much of what is memorized is forgotten.

b) Applicative criterion: the student applies his/her general theoretical knowledge in real situations. This criterion is also inadequate as it can lead to the neglect of general education and leads to the overestimation of a system of narrow specialization in education.

c) Associative use of schooling: the student creates associations and analogies with respect to what has been learned. This is very effective action in the process of learning.

d) Interpretative use of schooling: in the act of interprettation, the student translates his/her knowledge from one concrete sign system to another. This is effective action, according to Broudy, as it allows the student to use many dimensions of thinking and imaginative processes in his/her mind. To a considerable extent, this involves an aesthetic interpretation as it is also realized by means of metaphors and stories, using sensual perception, imagination, body movements, etc.

Harry S. Broudy further elaborates the third and the fourth types of teaching that should incorporate "a complex of images, concepts, memories of all sorts available to provide meaning to words and events." (Broudy, 1988, p. 65) Broudy states that without this dimension, the teaching process is reduced merely to analytic and rational differentiation between different notions as well as words. Broudy promotes a close affiliation or unity of feelings, concepts, and imagination that should play important roles in the process of teaching. Only then, the teaching process would be complex and would be able to include complex self-reflection by a student.

Together with the above-mentioned author, it is possible to claim that the use of art should be added to the basic elements of education (confer Broudy´s fourth "r": Reading, wRiting, aRtithmetics, aRt). The necessity of a tight link between art education (use of art) and civic education is strengthened by the fact that the use of art can deepen processes of self-reflection and self-identification of a citizen. "Developing aesthetic sensitivity, in other words, is compatible with developing a sense of social responsibility." (Smith, 2006, p. 29)

According to neurophysiologic research, this link can have an even deeper foundation. Research shows that default mode network starts functioning in a human brain when people do not concentrate on achieving external goals, so they are in a state of relative tranquility. These parts of the brain are activated when people are not in full activity, but when they are calmly reflecting upon the world. It is activated by higher order tasks - social cognition, for instance (Mars et al., 2012). The default mode network is fully activated during self-reflection and inner contemplation processes. Simul-

taneously, research shows that the default mode network is activated during the most intense aesthetic experiences (Vessel et al., 2012). Therefore neurophysiologic experiments support the notion that aesthetic activities, the use of art and aesthetic values are interconnected with self-reflection and self-know-ledge processes.

If we added this neurophysiologic knowledge acquired by functional magnetic resonance imagining to the dictionary of the social sciences we would be able to state a generally known fact: Art, works of art, citizenship, and civic education (even morals) meet in concepts of values, truth, and identity within the life of society. As J. Williams declares in this issue of our journal, all of these aspects of culture and education come to a mutual conclusion that values, attitudes and activities are essential for effective citizenship. These aspects of culture and education do not exist hermetically on their own, but art as well as citizenship, art/aesthetic education and civic education can be interconnected and opened for other purposeful activities from other aspects of human culture and education.

There are several texts dedicated to dramatic education in this issue of JSSE. This is very meaningful because the use of drama belongs to one of the most effective ways of using art. Drama offers a direct way to self-consciousness and self-reflection.

While performing dramatic work in education, students play roles which are very close to real life. They play the roles consciously but they put their own attitudes and emotions into the roles unconsciously. Students are taken into a fantasy world but the world is a reflection of their own real world. Our authors consider various aspects of dramatic education: starting with general principles when play is applied, though not regular but serious playfulness (H. Heikkinen), through a solid example of community theatre (Ch. Moschou, R. R. Anaya), to the reflection of dance, gesture and movement as parts of community life. (J. M. Hall).

J. M. Hall inquires "Why dance specifically, instead of painting, or rock-climbing?" in order to be able to consider the inevitability of dance and other specific movements. It appears that dance (as an aesthetic human body) and dance-related movements can have essential purposes in human life. Therefore, we need to work with them in the education of a citizen.

M. Dewhirst and D. Desai also claim that for effective development of lifelong skills it is inevitable to perceive the reality around ourselves. With a solid example they show how an artistic activity can essentially help. S. Pereira, C. Maizaiztegui-Oñate, and D. Mata-Codesal's project about working with photography shows how a practical artistic-documentary work can change the understanding of the world and impact people's lives in practice.

While thinking about the use of art in civic education we consider also the possibility of combining discursive education with the development of perception and sensibility, of imagination and creative skills. Simultaneously, each citizen's abilities to apply knowledge in real life

situations are taken into consideration. In such edu-cation we need practical as well as theoretical skills to be involved.

Our considerations in the use of art in civic education have been directed towards the education of a conscious and responsible citizen. To use classical psychological and pedagogical terminology, we would say that our consi-derations have been oriented neither towards a taught subject at school nor towards society in general but rather towards the student in particular. The general aim of the use of art in civic education is not transfer of information about society to students, or strengthening the social cohesion – these are just necessary and useful by-products. Rather, the final aim is to develop the skills and abilities of autonomous, conscious and responsible citizen.

It has not been easy to obtain high-quality texts for this issue. The use of art education for the education of a citizen is not a common pedagogical method. The nature of both ways (art as well as civic), their common value-base, their connection in person's self-reflection, and even a similar neurophysiologic base – all of this shows that art can essentially make civic education more effect-tive.

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Endnote:

[1] Here we use the notion „aesthetic" education together with the „art" education in order to stress use of wide range of arts in civic education, outside the field of visual arts.

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