

PROCEEDINGS



2014

INTERNATIONAL ARTES CONFERENCE

ART as a vehicle for Education and Social inclusion

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INTRODUCTORY NOTES

The International ARTES Conference has been a crucial point in the public activities of the EU funded LLP KA4 project ARTES-Art as a vehicle for Education and Social inclusion. The two days of the conference were dedicated to lectures connected to the project themes and scope, and to workshops organized by the ARTES partnership members on diverse inclusive education practices based on arts such as literature, music, drama.

This e-book collects and spreads—as far as it is possible through the written word—the conference contents which were presented as speech. As for the workshops, they should in fact be experienced. Each organization or trainer who has designed and animated the workshops can be contacted by those who want to delve into this specific aspect. Contacts with the partnership member organizations as well as a wide range of possible workshops and educational courses can be found on the platform created by the project: <http://artescommunity.eu>.

The Fondazione Nazionale Carlo Collodi as a member of the ARTES partnership is responsible for the conference organization, and for the making of these Proceedings.

The theme of art – especially literature and visual arts – as a basic educational tool is central to the Fondazione Nazionale Carlo Collodi since its start. Such principle becomes effective in the promotion of reading, literature and art as specific elements of culture for children, according to the example of Carlo Collodi and his literary masterpiece: *The Adventures of Pinocchio*

The central role of the arts for education and inclusion purposes belongs to all members of the ARTES partnership. We are grateful to all of them, as well as to the conference speakers, trainers of the workshops, and all the attendees for having created a significant opportunity of meeting and exchange for practitioners of inclusive art, bringing into play their human and professional qualities.

The collaboration of ISI-International Study Institute in Florence, which has provided its staff and its beautiful venue in Palazzo Rucellai in Florence, has been a real asset for the conference and gave to it a frame both exciting and perfectly equipped. Thanks for that go to the ISI Florence Director Prof. Stefano U. Baldassarri, also for his active presence as a session chairperson. Such collaboration was made possible by the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Collodi Foundation, the ISI Florence and the Amici di Groppoli" Association to promote common cultural activities.

Special thanks go to Donald Tarallo, Associate Professor from Fitchburg State University (USA), who as an associated partner in the project provided his design skills to create and make the layout of this e-book.

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WORKING IN THE ARTS AND CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

In Denmark, the services and training resources for people with special needs at archives, libraries and museums are very few. Most libraries and cultural centres provide good access opportunities for physically disabled people but there are no specific resources or educational programmes for people with learning difficulties or mental health issues. GAIA Museum Outsider Art is the exception. Being a centre for outsider art, GAIA Museum has since its foundation in 2002 been devoted to support and promote specialist organisations providing art practice for people with certain needs. It therefore seemed natural to consider the opportunity of establishing an art practice within the organisation itself and using the museum as a training resource. The aim of this paper is to introduce the organisation of GAIA Museum Outsider Art and especially the GAIA Academy, a 3-year long education in visual arts and culture for youths with special needs.

Introduction

As a cultural organisation GAIA Museum's primary objective is to provide cultural experiences, knowledge and education for the general public. The museum has 3 to 4 special exhibitions a year and a permanent collection that show the broadness of art by national and international artists with learning disabilities and mental health problems. Within the framework of the museum there are different divisions and subdivisions that run as sheltered places of employment for people with special needs - this includes a busy lunch café, a framing workshop, a media team, a museum shop, different workshops producing and developing designs and goods for the museum shop and companies in all of Denmark.



As a whole the museum aims to encourage society and the general cultural public to acknowledge and embrace diversity. It is essential that we practice this in all aspects, not only by exhibiting art works by people 'differing from normality' but also by making it possible for these particular groups to work for and be a part of a cultural environment.

GAIA Academy – a specially arranged education in arts and culture

In 2007 the Danish Government set up a specially arranged educational programme, which gives youths who are not capable of accessing the existing educational systems, an opportunity to complete a 3 year long education. The framework and content of the education is open, but it has to include subjects and methodologies that train and develop the students' personal, social and vocational skills. It is aimed at giving the students the best competences to live an independent and active life and in this way enhance their chances for future employment.



The programme enabled GAIA Museum to bring the idea of an art practice to fruition. In August 2010 the museum expanded with GAIA Academy, a 3-year long education in visual arts and culture for young adults with special needs, which includes people with learning difficulties, diagnosis as autism and Asperger syndrome and mental health issues. The advantage of setting up an education is the form and objective. As it is for all of us, education is a constructive way of entering adulthood. It is beneficial for the individual's creation of identity and self-awareness to have access to an educational system, that is, to undergo a progress where learning is gradually constructed, and your skills and knowledge is evaluated by professionals within a specific field.

The students at GAIA Academy will after 3 years complete an education in visual arts and culture. They will have gained practical skills in different art disciplines and developed an understanding of art as a medium of expression and art as a cultural phenomenon in society. GAIA Academy's overall objective is to give the students the best qualifications to find a profession or vocation in the arts and culture sector; it could be as performing artist or as cultural workers in museums, galleries, cultural events and organisations.

In practice

The education consists of 6 semesters. There are lessons from Monday to Friday from 9 am to 2 pm. Until noon the training is focused on visual arts – in practice and theory. These lessons are managed by a professional artist 4 days a week and an art historian one day a week. In correspondence with the prerequisites of the specially arranged programme as regard to content, the education has to connect the specialist subjects with general personal and societal subjects in order to strengthen the students' personal, social and vocational skills. This part of the training is managed by a social educator.

To combine the education's different perspectives, every semester has two overall subjects that somehow relates to the students' sense of reality and their everyday life. This could for instance be topics like neighbourhood, sound, time, friendship, sexuality, democracy etc. Both the art practice and the general pedagogical training deal with these subjects in order to get the students to reflect on their role as citizens in a working society. We want to encourage the students to see themselves and their achievements as a part of their communities and thus to learn what they do, create and know can have an impact on others.

A precondition for educating people with special needs is a strong consideration for the individual's personal, social and vocational skills. At GAIA Academy we emphasize that each student is a unique individual, worthy of unconditional respect and commitment. The skills and talents of the students can point in many directions, and it is essential that these directions are examined and developed in order to avoid standardisation and make space for individual expressions. In the daily training the students have to work with different exercises that encourage them to discover their strengths and special competences. The trainer has to create a room where the student's views and sense of reality are taken seriously. In that sense, it is important that the exercises are open so the students understand that there are no correct solutions or answers.

Photography is a beneficial tool in these forms of exercises. It enables the students to take quick snapshots of reflections which can be used as basis for further working. As an example, the students had to take snapshots of their neighbourhood and work with them as non-figurative pieces of art. The assignment was to discover lines, shapes and colours in the image and reproduce the image how they see it. By doing so, the students learn how to look at their daily surroundings in new ways and develop their own transformations of reality.

Interdisciplinary projects and social interaction

An important objective for the training at GAIA Academy is to obtain a continuous balance between a stable and dynamic structure. There has to be stability in the daily practice in order to provide a safe and supportive environment for the students. At the same time it is essential that we promote the individual student's natural curiosity and support his or her own initiatives and expressions. In that sense, we want to challenge the students to think and perceive in new ways, for example by bringing the training out of the classroom and set up projects that can get the students to interact with the society around them.

Project work is a pedagogical method that has appeared to be an excellent way of solving concrete assignments within this group of students. It gives them an understanding of working interdisciplinary, and it opens up to social interaction. In this way the students are more likely to transcend their own barriers and discover new resources and strengths. As an example we set up a project that encouraged the students to interact with the local community in a 2 weeks stop-motion animation workshop with a school for disadvantaged youths. We hired a group of young people who were specialised in animation to teach the students at GAIA Academy in the techniques of filming and editing and together develop short stop-motion films. This youth-to-youth training turned out to be an excellent way of stimulating the student's ability to learn from and cooperate with others.

What happens next?

GAIA Academy is devoted to give the students the best qualifications to find a profession or vocation in the arts and culture sector. It is thus, of great importance that the education supports and strengthens the students' understanding and acceptance of their own identity and abilities. They need to be heard and actively involved in the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of their concrete educational processes and aims.

In terms of ensuring that the students get familiar with the arts and culture sector at all levels, they have to undergo practical training in different professions or vocations throughout the education. They can for instance be job-shadowing in galleries, museums and other cultural centres or assisting teachers in art schools and workshops. The students take part in the planning of the practical training themselves and choose where they wish to work. It is essential that the cooperation with the organisation that provides the work placement becomes an educational experience for the students and help them to develop an understanding of how to work with, communicate and promote art. Eventually, we hope that the practical training can create future job opportunities within the cultural sector for the graduated students.

For those students who have the skills and desire to work as performing artists and to promote and sell their works, we plan to establish a form of sheltered ateliers where individual practitioners can work together and get daily support in their practice and promotion by professionals in the field. We wish to integrate these ateliers socially and culturally in the community by getting the practitioners to participate in cultural events and projects and by running workshops for schools, institutions, companies etc.

GAIA Academy is aimed at exploring and making visible new ways of educating special needs groups in our society. Based on art and culture the education provides a room for reflexion, experience and creation. It is not only meant to encourage the students to discover new ways of expressing themselves, it is also a way of helping them to interact with their communities, socially and culturally. Moreover, by integrating the expressions and skills of people with special needs in the general cultural awareness, we wish to challenge society to acknowledge and embrace difference.

INVESTING IN SCHOOL WITH MUS-E ART PROJECT FOR INTEGRATION THE MUS-E ITALIAN EXPERIENCE IN PISTOIA

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ABSTRACT

Mus-e (Musique Europe) is a European multicultural project dedicated to the schools where immigrant, disabled or in severe socio-economic hardship children can be found. It aims to counteract inequality and intolerance through the arts. Cultural differences among the students are considered an asset and a valuable opportunity to teach respect of different cultures, to promote relationship, socialization and exchange of experiences, using art as a medium.

This path is the brainchild of Lord Yehudi Menuhin, the famous violinist and conductor who established in Brussels in 1993 the Foundation that bears his name (IYMF), and who disclosed the artistic project of education in Europe called Mus-e. Today Mus-e is present in 12 European countries, in Israel, and in many Italian towns. It obtained the patronage of the Ministry for International Cooperation and Integration. The European Commission assessed it as the best cultural project supported by the Community budget.

The MUS-E project was conceived by Yehudi Menuhin who, inspired by the educational concepts of the Hungarian educator Zoltàn Kodaly, founded the International Yehudi Menuhin Foundation along with Marianne Poncelet and Werner Schmitt.

MUS-E works on the importance of children's imagination as an element of growth and development of the personality, by practicing different artistic languages and respecting the different cultures.

It is a multi-purpose project that brings together three aspects:

- the artistic aspect: the artistic experience develops the creative potential of the child*
- the pedagogical aspect: the project is implemented in schools during curriculum hours*
- the social aspect: the project promotes education integration, respect for cultures, and the practice of collective work.*

The project, in a short time, has established itself in France, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, Hungary and Estonia, later on in Spain, Portugal, Italy, Luxembourg, Ireland, the Netherlands, Finland, Poland, Bosnia, Lithuania, and Israel.

The International Yehudi Menuhin Foundation (FIYM) has been the engine for the growth of the project.

The FIYM grew, welcomed within its ranks great personalities from different countries, among them the current International President, Dr. Enrique Barón Crespo, to whom Yehudi Menuhin himself proposed to succeed him.

The objective of the International Foundation is to have the MUS-E draft adopted by all EU member states, e.g. innovative methods for the prevention of violence and racism through the practice of the arts in Primary Schools.

Mus-e Italia, a non-profit organization, is based in Genoa. It promotes MUS-E project in public primary schools in over twenty Italian towns. Activities are completely free for the children. They include weekly meetings throughout the school year, during curricular hours and develop in the same class for a term of three years. The tools used for this purpose are artistic expression such as music, visual arts, mime.

Mus-e Pistoia - a non-profit organization - was founded on July 30, 2008. Starting in 2008-2009 school year, more than 1,000 children have participated in activities led by professional artists. Mus-e Pistoia is partner in Comenius and Erasmus projects, particularly one which includes an exchange between Mus-e Spain and Mus-e Italy, with three Spanish towns participating: Leganés; Majadahonda; Fuenlabrada. In the project framework, Mus-e Pistoia leads the creation of a European Library on Botany and Landscape, and "Green Olympics".

The project Mus-e: art for integration at school

Open art classes in Pistoia schools

Mus-e Pistoia organized open art classes with pupils who had previously taken part in a Mus-e activity at the local Comprehensive Institute "Roncalli-Galilei". Children presented "Travel in Space" with artists Silvio Zanoncelli and Luca Tonini: an artistic journey about the solar system, the conquest of the moon and the life of astronauts told by acting and body movement.

Other pupils from the Comprehensive Institute "Nannini" in Quarrata presented "Lol – the Circus" with the artists Yuri Ricci and Andrea Sabatini: it was about listening intently to the body and its rhythms, eyes shut and touch at work (host: Giorgio Tesi Group).

All activities are made possible thanks to sponsors who believe in the project, in Mus-e and its educational goals: the non-profit Giorgio Tesi Foundation; the Conservatory of St. John the Baptist Foundation; the bank foundation "Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Pistoia e Pescia"; the "Cassa di Risparmio di Pistoia e della Lucchesia" Bank; Conad Il Tirreno; Saint Gobain Glasses Spa. Many pupils' families attend the open classes, so they can appreciate their children's performances, which are the result of a school-year-long commitment to the art route to integration in school.



Description of a final open lesson: "LOL - the Circus"

Empty room. The show begins with the departure of the children's fantastic train. Passengers carry a suitcase or a duffel bag each. In the lead goes the director. The train has an engine: it is the kids who move it on by beating on their percussions. The train whistle announces the departure, percussions and other instruments start to play, the kids slowly move on in synchronous. Pace increases, the train picks up speed, until it stabilizes. At a certain moment, children disperse, as if they got off the train. They greet each other, arrange themselves in semi-circle, and settle their suitcases on the floor. So they mark the ring of a travelling circus, then they leave, their suitcases left on the floor. The Director announces and introduces the "LOL – the Circus" show. Then he starts calling the various circus performances and performers on the ring. Each child will perform with different tools, relying on improvisation too. Each performance is a creation worked out by the child-performer during labs at school.

Summary of the projects and most significant events implemented in Pistoia

Fundraising for Mus-e Pistoia

The CNA (Confederation of Artisans) Pistoia organized a Christmas Concert to raise funds for art workshops in Pistoia schools. The event was hosted by Elena Magnanensi, in the presence of local authorities and sponsors: the President of Pistoia Provincial Administration Federica Fratoni; the Mayor of Pistoia Samuele Bertinelli, the Mus-e Italy National coordinator; the Mus-e Pistoia Onlus President Gian Piero Ballotti; the CNA President Aldo Piantini and Director Sergio Giusti; the owner of INA Assitalia agency Francesco Manzari; the President of the "Cassa di Risparmio di Pistoia e della Lucchesia" Bank Alessio Colomeciuc.

Call for a selection of artists to cooperate with Mus-e Pistoia Onlus

Artists are selected through a public call which aims to assess the quality of the activity each artist submits, its contents, its possible cross-subject connections and didactic potential, diversity or numerosity of aspects involved; rhythm in communication; group-management; quality cooperation or participation in the proposals from other candidates; previous experience in similar subjects and practices, or in different ones; ability in time-management in relation to the selected proposal; relationship between the choice of the proposal and the submitted CV; relationship between the choice of the proposal and the artist's motivation; language level in the proposal description.

Artists' Training: a visit to UFIP factory to know the making of cymbals

A delegation of Mus-e Pistoia paid a visit to UFIP firm factory premises to learn how cymbals are made. President of Confindustria Pistoia Tourism Mr Riccardo Chelucci - partner and adviser of Mus-e - introduced artists Yuri Ricci, Sara Montaleni, Raffaele Terlizzi, Silvio Zanoncelli and the Mus-e Local Supervisor Riccardo Niccolai to Mr Luigi Tronci, owner of UFIP. Tronci guided the group to discover the world-famous cymbals production process. For the artists the purpose of this visit was to witness the transformation of raw materials into musical instruments (in collaboration with UFIP and the Tronci Foundation).

Project "From Raw Materials to Cymbals"

After the visit to UFIP in Pistoia, our artist became fully aware of the making of percussions, specifically cymbals for drums, from raw materials. They could transfer that to children, who understood the importance of raw materials such as copper, lead, iron and wood, and saw how these materials have been used to make tools, weapons, and other objects over time. Such a historic perspective has shaped an educational/artistic learning path which has been implemented during Mus-e Pistoia didactic activities. It provided our children with the opportunity to understand more closely Nature through the process of transformation of raw materials into instruments.

Project "From the Roots... to the World"

Under the assumption that children can experience the natural world by knowing and understanding what happens "from the seed to the birth of a plant", we imagined an artistic and learning path which provided children with the opportunity to understand nature more closely through the process that allows the seed to turn into roots, plants, trees, flowers and fruits; and to discover – by comparison and metaphor - their roots and geographical, social and cultural environment. Thanks to comparison between the natural world and the origin and development of their world, children made different artworks, using visual arts, expressive movement and music.

Project "Shoe! and It Will Pass"

Inspired by the old saying, "laugh! and it will pass," we created an art and training program called "Shoe!, and it will pass!", which includes the creation of an "extraordinary" shoe by the children. Several Mus-e local groups were involved in this project, which acquired a network structure and a national interest. Our ultimate goal was to create a true "collection" of shoes, some of them wearable, some probably not. ANCI (that is, the National Association of Italian Shoemakers) approved the initiative, which included an exhibition as well as an auction at the MICAM fair in November 2013.

Together we look to the future

We think that school should look to the future: to be richer - especially from the social point of view - not only by an income increase, but also and especially to strengthen democratic values, we need to grow. Now more than ever, a school system should educate individuals capable of living the life of democratic societies.

For this, we need a school which shapes hardworking citizens, because the wealth of a country is not the money but the "know-how". What is it that makes us truly rich? Wise and industrious citizens, people who go along together, no major social unrest, Institutions working well. A good school which teaches respect for others and provides the knowledge that society needs. Artisans and industries keeping a treasure of "know-how" and passing it down to the young. This is real wealth. But, the wealth is in the bowels of the earth: in oil, gas, in copper, gold, in iron ore, coal... is it? Actually, if a country is lucky enough to have so many raw materials, it can be defined rich. Yet beware: there is what the economists call the "resource curse". When a country is so rich with natural resources, it is likely to

become like a spoiled child who does not engage in anything, because he relies on the riches of his father. He remains idle, and wastes away. Raw materials come to an end, the qualities that make a real wealth never exhaust. Italy is poor in raw materials: perhaps that is our luck. We have an economy of transformation. That is why it is important to preserve and protect the “know-how” which allows us to earn a living.

Against the crisis, invest in children

Against the crisis we need to invest in children. Because we can and should grow, but it all starts from the little ones, who will grow up. This is a thesis by James Joseph Heckman, a 70-year-old American economist, a Nobel Prize winner in 2000, who read a keynote speech under the title “Investing in our young people” at the Catholic University of Milan, on September 28, 2009.

School is required to diversify to meet non-homogeneous educational needs, and seriously address both learning deficit issues and the enhancement of excellence. The most advanced European educational system follow this trend: such school systems do not foresee remedial examination, and they do not conceive support in the form of repetition afternoon classes either. There are no shortcuts to Europe, or to school system change. Up to now - paradoxically - the only real major reform of Italian school was led by don Lorenzo Milani in Barbiana, who worked in full accordance with our Constitution, which prescribes: “be the task of the State to remove barriers and inequalities ... respecting diversity”.

In Europe the Italian educational system is graded in backward positions. What does our country need not to envy Finland - a schoolchildren’s paradise - anymore? We need a Marshall Plan for the school, to boost the finances of the citizens, of the State, of our Southern regions. Because “a year of education is more rentable than Treasury Bills or actions”. This is stated in a research by the Bank of Italy on the financial amount of revenues from investments in school. A higher revenue for the citizens - education is a very profitable individual investment – means higher revenue for the state. Mus-e aims to train highly educated, creative, hardworking citizens of the future, who will be happy to live in our country. We lay the foundations of that in pre-primary and, even more, in primary school. That is why Mus-e operates in “industrial districts”, those areas where SMEs thrived in post-war years. Our slogan is: “to ignite the spark that ignites the genius of the districts”.

Chocolate valley - no silicon

Genius for research, commitment, imagination and creativity; that is all we need to be happy to grow, in any sense. Mus-e Pistoia soundtrack is “Pinocchio in music”, an opera for small orchestra and narrators. Its script is freely drawn from Collodi’s book; the music is by Maestro Joseph Vella from Malta. The premiere was performed in the Garzoni Garden in Collodi.

Pinocchio is actually the paradigm of the disadvantaged child who, at the end of a tiring yet exciting process, becomes a child like all the others. Some might think that is too many irons in the fire. They would be reassured, had they witnessed the enthusiasm for our initiatives that has plagued school principals, teachers,

our artists, kids, parents, grandparents, aunts. That is why you should see them at the school year closing parties, dancing, singing, moving all together, happily participating in a choral event which resembles a thanksgiving.

POETRY: A NON-USER'S GUIDE

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to investigate the way in which a given group of people who belong to heterogeneous layers of society and have mixed nationalities reacts to poetry within the context of a prison. Individuals partaking in the 4 seminars are women sentenced to either short- or long-term detentions in the State prison of Sollicciano, in Florence.

Seminars take place every Monday afternoon at 1.30 pm in the prison library and last 2 hours. Discussions were held around a single table so participants could interact under my direction on the following topics: 1. Time; 2. Space; 3. Memory; 4. Fantasy.

The aforementioned sequence is designed to intersect and guide all participants throughout a common experience of self-development and enjoyment. The sole language of communication is Italian, even though participants may have different levels of education or may not be native speakers.

Meeting sessions are structured to include the following: 1. Brainstorming (possible definitions of poetry as a form of expression and a literary genre); 2. De-contextualization of normative language (poetic license as grammatical, syntactic and semantic subversion); 3. Close-reading of poetic texts; 4. Personal interpretation (in the form of a written analysis); 5. Written production of poetic compositions (based on the discussed topic of the day); 6. Reading out loud; 7. Individual reactions and final discussion.

This approach to poetry must be the means through which the aesthetic quality of this form of expression is linked to its educational role. Creativity includes indeed a certain degree of recreation, which is to be manifested by the way language is used. As a consequence, the interaction between language and the individual's emotional and intellectual spheres, i.e., how language can shape feelings and opinions and vice versa, will also reveal its possibilities and limits.

A direct comprehension of the language's strength and weakness is central to the educational experience of a group of people who face poetry for the first time in all of its aspects, encompassing reading, form and content analysis, production, and discussion. By "translating" ideas, opinions and feelings into poems, individ-

uals will be compelled to come up with new and creative solutions through language and then reconsider their perspective on people and things surrounding them.

At the end of the four seminars, the group's creative experience must definitely bring all participants to the point of a broader reconsideration of their emotional and intellectual role within the context of the prison in which they find each other and in which they interact. The elaboration of feelings by means of poetry helped the participants acquire a more complex and comprehensive understanding of themselves and others; moreover, it could provide the foundation for their future rehabilitation and pave the way for their social reintegration.

Introduction

Let me start with a quote by the Anglo-American poet W. H. Auden: "Poetry makes nothing happen: it survives". The line is taken from Auden's well-known poem *In Memory of W. B. Yeats*. Surprisingly enough, Auden speaks of poetry's lack of acting, making, creating, which is the most paradoxical definition of poetry, whose original meaning implies creation. However, Auden's intention was far from celebrating poetry's sterile nature. In a poem, which meant to exult another poet's name triumph over oblivion, whose actions — from a human, intellectual and political standpoint — were sign of engagement, Auden's characterization of poetry defies definition. Should such line be interpreted as the poet's personal take on Yeats's quip "Life is a long preparation for something that never happens" or the reaffirmation of the poet's remark "what can be explained is not poetry", we do not know.

The section of the poem where the quotation was taken from begins with an apparently naive statement: "You were silly like us". Stupidity, along with the foolish inconsistency of its puns and jokes, hides its truth from the eyes of those who do not want to see. Stupidity, along with its inconsistency, is power's most corrosive tool. Auden's poignant line is nothing but the confirmation of poetry's strength to make things be, stay, survive and — last but not least — happen, even if the result turns out to be eventually useless. By looking more closely at the way the line is structured, the idea of poetry as the means through which "nothing happens" could be the final result of poetry's power to create. What is then "nothing/ness"? I suppose a closer investigation into this space- and time-related concept is appropriate for our purpose. In terms of both time and space, nothing/ness can be easily represented by prison. So that nothing/ness is now, as it was in the case of Auden's poem, representing a substance. The void anyone is absorbed into as soon as they enter the Chinese box-like Sollicciano State Prison is self-explanatory. This is even more significant in the case of the prison's library: two white rounded tables surrounded by white chairs and white walls. All along the walls, the imploded capacity of an empty space. This is it: inside the library room there were no books. "It is all temporary" — the Sollicciano Prison Supervisor for Education said. That statement disoriented me even more. This is why that day, when I first sat at those two white round tables the one thing I said to the small group of participants who gathered for the occasion was that "Poetry makes nothing happen". And this is just how we started out our unconventional and spontaneous journey into poetry. I did not have to teach them how to write, nor did I have to

make them become better writers. I just had to (and wanted) invite them to read poetry as if nothing would happen. What I meant by that was to offer an escape from and an alternative dimension to their daily experiences with space and time in prison.

Chosen Topics

Time

The objective in my first session was to bring the participants' attention to the inextricable relationship between space and time and how it was possible to separate it. By reading together poems in which time was the action's trigger, it was immediately clear to everyone that temporal references in poetry implied a spatial correlation. The writer's difficulty to define an event as "a single moment and a single situation" was also experienced in first person by all of the participants who tried in their poems not to correlate a certain moment to its given situation.

In order to see how a text would change, I asked my students to work on one poem only by changing it in accordance with a given topic. This made all sessions extremely difficult, as only a few people could stick to one text and work on it over again.

I chose the following poem, whose title is the combination of two calendar dates, as I consider it the most suitable example in terms of difficulties and accomplishments as far as my requirements were concerned.

25/03/2006 – 27/06/2009

Corri, corri, ci siamo, è arrivato il momento.
Un sacco di persone sono intorno a me,
chi mi mette una flebo, chi mi dice
di stare calma.
Nell'aria si sentono grida strazianti
di dolore.
poi dopo un attimo di silenzio,
un vagito.
Mi appoggiano quel corpicino caldo
sulla pancia e cominciano a scendermi lacrime di gioia.
Ecco, da oggi sono MAMMA.

[Run, run, here we go, the moment has come.
Lots of people around me,
one is taking care of the I.V., another tells me
to **stay calm**.
All around I can hear heartbreaking **cries**
of pain.
Then, after a moment of silence,
a **baby cry**.
They lay that tiny warm body
on my womb and I start to shed tears of joy.
That's it: from today I am a MOTHER.]

Motherhood and children, I can say, were recurrent subjects in prison. Though the approach was different for everyone, all women who had children manifested and stressed their motherhood. However, in this particular case, what I was struck by was the woman's exclusion of any direct reference to space. What was also interesting was the woman's double temporal reference; she in fact associated the birth of her two children with one single experience, as if the important thing for her was not the moment her babies were born, but the two moments she became (and became over again) a mother. In spite of the calendar reference, it was impossible not to consider the mother, emphasized typographically by capital letters, as the real subject of the text.

Space

Next step was to further develop the first version of everyone's text by making reference to a given space. Here is how the poem developed in order to include space:

25/03/2006 – 27/06/2009

Corri, corri, ci siamo, è arrivato il momento.

Un sacco di persone sono intorno a me,
chi mi mette una flebo, chi mi dice
di stare calma.

Nell'aria si sentono grida strazianti
di dolore e la stanza dell'ospedale
dove mi trovo diventa immensa.

Poi dopo un attimo di silenzio,

un vagito.

Mi appoggiano quel corpicino caldo
sulla pancia e cominciano a scendermi lacrime di gioia.
Ecco, da oggi sono MAMMA.

[Run, run, here we go, the moment has come.

Lots of people around me,
one is taking care of the I.V., another tells me
to **stay calm.**

All around I can hear heartbreaking cries
of pain and the room of the hospital
where I am in gets wider and wider.

Then, after a moment of silence,

a baby cry.

They lay that tiny warm body
on my womb and I start to shed tears of joy.
That's it: from today I am a MOTHER.]

"The room of the hospital where I am gets in wider and wider": the intervention on the poem, as it is, appears to some extent inconsistent, but I consider it less obvious than it may appear. If you read the text closely, the woman does not make direct reference to the delivery room. A more generic room, that of a hospital, where she is, opens up to an abstract dimension, which transforms actual space by revealing a further distance between subject and event.

If we consider such an approach in the context of a prison, it might be that the woman relates the experience of motherhood to her present condition as a woman, deprived of her motherly role. Poetry serves then as an exorcism and builds up a distance by a process of abstraction. The mother in the poem is in fact a passive agent; she does not have any active role, she does not participate does not react, does not push or hold the baby. She is indeed subject to all actions, which are external to her.

Memory

In the third session, the effort was to develop memory as it were external to the subject. In our case, the recollection of childbirth required a third-person point of view, as if the poem should describe someone else's event. Here is the text in its final version:

03/25/2006 – 06/27/2009

Correte, correte, ci siamo, è arrivato il momento.
Intorno a lei ci sono un sacco di persone,
chi le inserisce una flebo, chi la rassicura.
Nell'aria si sentono, grida strazianti di dolore
e quella stanza dell'ospedale
dove mi trovo si trasforma.
Poi dopo un attimo di silenzio, un vagito.
Le appoggiano quel corpicino nudo sulla pancia
e lacrime di gioia scendono sul suo volto.
Ecco, oggi è diventata MAMMA.

[Run, run, here we go, the moment has come.
There are lots of people around her,
one is taking care of the I.V., another **reassures** her.
All around I can hear heartbreaking cries of pain
and **that** room of the hospital
where I am in **transforms itself**.
Then, after a moment of silence, a baby cry.
They lay that tiny **naked** body on her womb
tears of joy **falls down** her face.
That's it: from today she has become a MOTHER.]

The use of longer verses could be related to the change in the individual's point of view. No emphasis was given to isolated words as before. The external perspective brought about a more relaxed approach to the event, which was in fact "narrated" in a prose-like style by the woman. Significant changes occurred in the description of the preparatory moment preceding the birth of her child/children. Verbs and verbal periphrases were specific signs of a less intense involvement of the subject: "to stay calm" becomes "to reassure"; "to start to shed a tear", which was initially referenced the subject as "I", was changed into a completely different expression, where tears have become the subject of the sentence. The woman's intention to draw distance between her past and present is even further emphasized: "the room" is now "that room" as well as "a warm body" is seen

just as “naked” by the woman, who is not a mother anymore but a witness. However, it is precisely where the aforementioned increasing distance was stressed by style and word choice that the subject could not succeed. Without realization, the woman wrote “I am” just where she had described the center of the entire scene, which was the hospital room. This is the reason why the change in the verb which follows was even more significant. Whereas the room was previously getting wider and wider, that space is now undertaking a process of metamorphosis. A typical Freudian slip enacts transformation, which is a radical form of change.

Finally, by looking more closely at the poem in its three steps, the only line which does not change is the very first one: “Run, run, here we go, the moment has come”. So the right question should be about which moment she is speaking of and why the verb “to run” is repeated three times at the beginning of the text.

Fantasy

It is quite certain that the verb “to run” was not meant to express a get-away. The action had indeed nothing to do with the speaker in the poem, nor with the agents described in the text. “To run”, then, brought about the need of attention and focus. A theatrical scene, which draws the attention of an implicit public, opens up with the woman at the center of it. The fictional determination of space, time and memory enacts an evasion from the self, which is the fantasy of prisoners.

Fantasy, leading theme of the last meeting, was introduced according to its original meaning, which is “image”, “visible image”. The fourth step of our creative writing seminar was designed to develop the counterpart of a given space-time relation. In this session, I asked the participants not to write but to reflect on the visible image the poem would give back by reading it out loud to others in its last form:

Correte, correte, ci siamo, è arrivato il momento.
Intorno a lei ci sono un sacco di persone,
chi le inserisce una flebo, chi la rassicura.
Nell’aria si sentono, grida strazianti di dolore
e quella stanza dell’ospedale
dove mi trovo si trasforma.
Poi dopo un attimo di silenzio, un vagito.
Le appoggiano quel corpicino nudo sulla pancia
e lacrime di gioia scendono sul suo volto.
Ecco, oggi è diventata MAMMA.

[Run, run, here we go, the moment has come.
There are lots of people around her,
one is taking care of the I.V., another **reassures** her.
All around I can hear heartbreaking cries of pain
and that room of the hospital
where I am in **transforms itself**.
Then, after a moment of silence, a baby cry.
They lay that tiny **naked** body on her womb
tears of joy **falls down** her face.
That’s it: today she has become a MOTHER.]

By reading the text in the third person, the woman admitted at first a certain degree of distance from it. She agreed on the fact that verbs such as “to transform” and “to fall down” were evidence of less involvement. Also, she agreed with the fact that a “warm body” could not be felt from a distance, and this is why she changed the adjective to “naked”. However, she did not realize at all that she used the “I” in the middle of her text while reading. She then could not figure out that presence: “my mistake”, she said.

It must be pointed out that poems in this particular case were not meant to be literary works but ways to process everyday feelings and emotions. This could be a first attempt to reflect and justify the woman’s Freudian slip. In this case, the experience of birth as well as motherhood were lost by describing one’s own experience as someone else’s. Participants’ feelings and emotions were essentially an elaboration of a metaphorical death, which corresponds to the individual’s loss of freedom. Poetry became the means through which the void one experiences in prison — which is real in terms of space and time — was then processed. In the end, the final version of the poem determined a “coincidence of opposites”; it was quite clear that the experience of conviction was then processed by all women as an opportunity. The aversion towards their present situation implied a great deal of nostalgia as far as their previous life was concerned.

A Dante-like “sweetness”, as it is expressed by souls in the *Inferno*, could be a fitting reference to describe the state prisoners are in. By speaking of their life in form of poetry, women were able to frame their feelings and emotions through words. They experienced the hardship of putting together a formal thought by means of free verses; however comfortable this form could be in comparison to a more traditional structure, it was nonetheless demanding and represented a real challenge for all of the participants.

Conclusions

I have not had yet the opportunity to re-enter prison again after this experience, nor have I had the chance to hear from the people who participated in the seminars as communication is strictly limited in prison. I cannot tell how this experience was processed meanwhile, whether or not a certain distance in time could add any meaning to what they read and wrote; if any of them kept writing and reviewing their texts. It could be that one time was enough for them; enough to understand that poetry exists as anything else; that a book of poetry can be bought, opened read as one goes to the theater to see an opera, dance tango or eat deep-fried chocolate. What I have called the interaction between language and the individual’s emotional and intellectual spheres, i.e., how language can shape feelings and opinions and vice versa, had different outcomes and represented the real paradigmatic change.

I can now say that in this class I had people completely unaware of what poetry was; people with higher education; and people with undeniable literary skills. However, what was common to all of them was the will to discover and develop their feelings through means of poetic language. In this regard, the class was no doubt a success.

MUSIC AND LISTENING AS A NEW SOURCE OF EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

More deeply we listen, more completely we understand.

Our listening skills, usually taken for granted, are for us as much vital as the speaking, reading and writing skills and yet in our hectic, mostly visual society, the art of listening is proving increasingly unattainable, inaccessible.

Listening has become a lost art and the forgotten key competence which, nonetheless, has the potential to unlock learning in any subject, any discipline, at any level of education.

Our school systems are lacking implementation of proficiency of this fundamental skill which could and should be developed since an early age.

Studies estimate that between 50 and 75% of students' classroom time is spent in listening to the teacher, other students or audio media.

But how well do children listen? Do primary school children's listening abilities improve during the years?

Not only the ability of deep listening is pivotal for academic achievements but the need for it expands into a lifelong approach to a more inclusive personal growth and fulfilment as human beings.

Experiencing empathic listening and cultivating it is the key to overcome prejudices, stereotyped ideas and racism. This may be the human activity that most supports the foundation of a society based on justice and solidarity and it is essential in the dialogue between nations, cultures and religions.

Music, for its inherent qualities, is one if not the most effective means to support listening training, to help us discover the various 'layers' of listening experiences and to foster knowledge/wisdom through evoking self-questioning, process that we may call 'music maieutics'.

This presentation is about exploring the above concepts and to illustrate some relevant experiences that were developed within the framework of pioneering education projects funded by the European Union.

Listening is a transversal key competence that is often ignored, but is a key factor in an individual's learning experience.

Although of paramount importance, listening is not taught in any school system: we learn how to become good speakers, but we do not learn how to become good listeners.

There are no specific practices, within the school system, aiming to teach in a structured way this essential competence.

Studies estimate that between 50 and 75% of students' classroom time is spent in listening to the teacher, to other students, or to audio media (Wolvin and Coackley, 2000).

But how well do our children listen? Do children improve significantly in listening competence from year one onwards, in primary schools?

There is no doubt that listening skills are almost ignored. Few teaching methods textbooks include more than one page on listening, as educators assume that learning to listen is somehow automatic.

Listening is the language skill children use the most, yet it is the one that is taught the least – an inverse relationship between the real world and the classroom. We also know that children with listening comprehension difficulties face serious learning challenges and are much more likely to fall behind their peers as they progress through school (Jalongo, 2010).

It is a fact that when children do not hear or understand what is being discussed, they often become withdrawn in school or appear inattentive; they may also act out in socially inappropriate ways (Kruger, 2006).

Listening skills can be used in any aspect of life and through them we could solve problems in many areas: learning, behaviour, relationships, communication, creativity and social inclusion, among others.

Being able to 'listen' in a complete way gives us a chance to 'understand' properly.

Listening is the grounding of all relationships: within family settings, schools, in any social environment.

Listening is the grounding for the development of our creative abilities; only by listening to ourselves we can give space to our own ideas and intuitions. Therefore, listening is also the starting point of any artistic creation.

Listening is a learnable skill.

We should be trained to give attention to the way we listen to the people with whom we interact, to the reality around us.

We could even be trained to become 'empathic' listeners.

Empathic listening is the key to overcome prejudices, stereotyped ideas and racism.

This is the human activity that supports the foundation of a society based on justice and solidarity.

There are times in our lives when there is nothing we need more than to be listened, just simply, deeply listened. One of the best gifts we can receive is the presence of someone who is not there to judge our state of mind, emotions or expressions or to give us suggestions or to analyse our situation.

Under these circumstances, when we have the presence of an empathic listener, we start to release ourselves, freeing emotions and thoughts. Only when we have been able to empty all the heavy load of emotion, such as anger, fear, frustration, desperation, sadness and so on, can we start to approach our reality with new clarity. The role of the listener is vital in this process. "There is a marvellously therapeutic power in the ability to think aloud and share with someone who will listen", says Prof. Gregorio Billikopf Encina from University of California.

In fact, not only the ability of deep listening is pivotal for academic achievements but the need for it expands into a lifelong approach to a more inclusive personal growth and fulfilment as human beings.

In order to know ourselves as attentive listeners, we can follow the example of the 'akousmatikoi' of the Pythagorean School. In the Pythagorean School, the first years of studies were dedicated to the acquisition of the ability to listen. Learning to listen in order to comprehend; which implies getting rid of our inharmonious noises, knowing how to create silence in the agitation of the mind, avoiding 'pollution' of our vibratory charge and making our true human identity audible.

In the Pythagorean teachings we also find that music is science, is philosophy and mathematics.

For Johannes Kepler "harmony is part of the constitution of the world and the structure of human nature".

Human beings and music have much in common; this may be a reason why music so naturally reaches the very intimate places of our psyche.

To experience deep listening we should try to free our mind as much as possible, so as to become free explorers of the sonorous waves.

Music itself facilitates this process of liberation and acts as a tool, an ideal companion, to explore new longitudes of freedom.

For all this, it is necessary to start by getting, and getting back, the ability to listen, not just in physical terms, but as a reconquest of the emotions, which are a vital part of human beings.

In Edgar Willems' lifework concerning musical pedagogy, psychology and philosophy, we find links between music (sound, rhythm, melody, harmony) and human nature (energy, sensory perception, affectivity, mental state). His method is timeless because it corresponds to basic human and musical principles.

Inspired to his principles, the following outline is a synthesis of the auditive faculties in relation to the human structure and the elements that constitute music:

Hearing Feeling Listening (Auditory faculty)

Physic Emotion Mind (Human being)

Rhythm Melody Harmony (Music)

Rhythm relates to the physical aspect of music and relates to the physical aspect of human beings. Hearing is the physical part of the auditory faculties.

Melody, in music, is a sequence of notes.

These form one line of sounds of different pitches. Lullabies sung by a mother to her baby are melodies; as is the nightingale's song. Melodies arouse our emotions. They speak to our heart. We 'feel' a melody.

When, in music, or in nature, we have several melodic lines playing together, in certain orders, with certain relationships, we have harmony.

The sense of measurement, analysis, the distinguishing of pitches and their relationships, this unconscious counting, is provided by a mental activity.

Hearing, feeling and listening are included one into the other, but at some moments we can have a predominance of one of them. When we really activate the three together: hearing, feeling and listening, we can reach a real understanding and give space to one of the most refined function of the mind: intuition.

What happens when we listen to a beautiful symphony?

If we listen intently, we start to resonate with the beauty that the composer brought from the abstract, reified into a form, a musical form. This is not a process that involves acquisition from an outside source or having something external added to our background. What really happens is that we start to resonate with that beauty. We already had that beauty, to some extent, within us, but the music brings it to the surface of our consciousness.

It's like the phenomenon of sympathy. In physics, we have this phenomenon clearly explained.

Let's think of two guitars close to one another and tuned in the same way. When we pluck a string on one guitar, the same string will start to vibrate, to play, without being touched.

We are here getting closer to the concept found in the ancient Indian Vedic tradition for which music is not just the art of combining the sounds (our dictionaries have usually this kind of narrow definitions) but it is everything that resonates within us when singing voices or playing music instruments remind us of it.

After all, the term 'Indian music' embraces a very wide and varied field of musical phenomena. From an Indian standpoint there is nothing strange in the fact that the *Samgitaratnakara* (The Ocean of Music), a treatise dating from the thirteenth century, should begin with a detailed cosmogony, gradually narrowing its scope to the human body and the stages of pregnancy from month to month, before it gets down to what we should consider the subject of music proper (Arnold Bake, 1957).

So, through music we can reach a knowledge that is not that of acquiring information and adding data to our mind. With music we can reach a knowledge that is a truth for our entire being, which includes mind, emotions and physical response.

Through music we can reach levels of intuition that will make us capable of using data that we possess towards a process of synthesis.

So, through music we can reach a knowledge not made from acquisition and retention of information and data. With music we can reach knowledge that is a truth for our entire being, which includes mind, emotions and physical response.

The knowledge we reach through music is attained by levels of intuition.

Music enables us to use the data we possess toward processes of synthesis that lead us to new discoveries.

Our brain usually works with the same patterns and we use only part of it. When we have a spark of intuition, we are making other connections, new synapses and new patterns are arising with new meanings, new feelings, new knowledge. For Plato, music, in its physical concreteness, can become a bridge between sensible reality and pure intelligence.

In the Republic he criticises the music fashions of the IV century Athens because, with the new styles, music was going to be something different from the tradition – a tradition with which Pythagoras had discovered music as the supreme *sophia*, as wisdom itself.

After Plato, from Aristotle onwards, music loses this function, it becomes entertainment.

This separation from its essential role goes on until the present.

And just to be closer to our time, I would like to quote an excerpt from a letter that Carl Gustav Jung wrote to a friend:

"To listen to music deeply opens new ways of research that I never dreamt of.

Because of what you have shown to me this afternoon - not only what you said, but what I listened and of what I made a concrete experience – I feel that from now onwards Music will be an essential part of analysis.

It reaches the deep archetypal material that only few times we are able to get without analytical work with patients. This is astonishing and marvellous”.

There was a European Union funded project in a former European education programme called ‘Socrates’ that was dedicated to a research on the effects of sound and music on human beings and the environment . Several universities and research institutes participated in the project and this led to the creation of training modules designed to promote listening skills in adults. The name of the project was “Euphony - Implementing Teacher Knowledge” and the in-service training for teachers of any subject, created within the project and delivered across Europe, was selected as a best practice in Europe by a group of experts of the Commission.

The most of the practices were based on music listening and participants’ feedback was a very important part of the exercises. All participants were invited to make an effort to express the experience they had during listening, even if in very few words and even if often some of the participants wanted to keep to themselves the feelings and perceptions that they experienced during listening.

A variety of insights usually arouse, since music stimulates each person in different ways. Sometimes, a completely abstract experience was reported in the form of emotions with neither mental representations of images, nor words, nor symbols and with no connection to place or situation. Or, a past memory emerged and with it the understanding of its meaning appeared in a clear cognitive synthesis.

Sometimes, not a memory but a new aspect of a reality unfolded. Sometimes, with just a symbol, one could perceive a message from the unconscious. It’s interesting to notice that these experiences could be attained in a very few moments, on the wings of the piece of music.

This process of ‘giving birth’ to one’s own intuitions can be linked to the concept of Socratic maieutic. The trainer does not tell anybody what to think or believe, but gives the participants a powerful tool to explore their own sense of discovering truths, by gradually unfolding new insights, and to re-examine their own values and beliefs.

In a dialogue of Socrates with Theaetetus, in the Plato’s work called “Theaetetus”, by Plato, we read something that Socrates told in that conversation: “... I have nothing to show which is the invention or birth of my own soul, but those who converse with me profit. Some of them appear dull enough at first, but afterwards, as our acquaintance ripens, if the god is gracious to them, they all make astonishing progress; and this is in the opinion of others as well as in their own. It is quite clear that they never learned anything from me; the many fine discoveries to which they cling are of their own making. But to me and the god they own their delivery...”

This process is linked to the ability to deepen listening, which is called 'auditive intelligence'.

The neuronal paths in the brain will increase where new synapses are allowed to expand. Auditive intelligence is a less developed aspect of intelligence, at present, since our societies are now more visual than auditive. Auditive intelligence does not concern itself exclusively with listening to music, but it applies to all kinds of listening, whether it be another person speaking, a bird, or any other sonic reality (and we might even go further to include also inaudible realities).

For the correct performance of the session's exercises, the trainer did not reveal the title and the composer of the chosen piece of music before the exercise. This allowed a more complete sense of wonder in the participants/listeners.

Wonder is necessary element. To use Plato's words: "Wonder is the feeling of a philosopher and knowledge begins in wonder".

The group dynamics, with a general increasing ability to pay attention to other's feedback and interaction among the participants and the trainer(s), provide a unique learning environment where individual outcomes greatly depend on the quality of the group connotation and unity. If the learners focus on their listening and share revelations and knowledge with the genuine intent of an open mind, the results are astonishing. In any case, a process of growth towards the understanding of our resonating reality, through music and listening, will be set in motion.

Regarding the music to select to foster effective, transformative and inspirational listening practices we can say that there is a variety of works we can choose from. It is essential to find quality music.

There is music that contains the essence of what we call empathy.

By tuning into it, we can expand our listening and understanding of humanity's suffering and aspirations; we can become responsive to animals' and plants' needs; we can tune into the "speaking voice" of many "silent realities".

Music can be our trainer.

This particular 'empathic' musical quality is to be found in a variety of compositions from both East and the West and in many works of classical music. Recently, while listening to the *Märchenbilder* by Robert Schumann, I clearly felt that human beings possess the gift to equally embrace those who are good and those who are bad, the beautiful and the ugly alike..., just as music does by reaching out to all.

I'd like to end this speech with these Shakespeare's words:
"If music is the food of love, play on, give me excess of it".

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BILINGUAL PICTUREBOOKS IN A MULTILINGUAL AND MULTICULTURAL REALITY

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ABSTRACT

Bilingual books for children are considered nowadays a special type of books with regard to their structure, the organization of the linguistic material, as well as their objectives. On the one hand, they form a distinct category of books which are by definition intercultural, or at least have an intercultural function, given that in a bilingual book two linguistic -and consequently two cultural- systems co-exist. More specifically, literary bilingual books, except for their supporting role in purely linguistic activities, also constitute a source of information and morality, which complements our knowledge on important issues of life. Their linguistic material makes up a total of symbols, codes and ideas which express not only a different linguistic system, but also a different cultural reality.

Picturebooks are a distinct category of books, considering that the final meaning of the book is being shaped by the interaction and collaboration between verbal and visual text, illustration and its symbolism. Lately we have observed a systematic production of bilingual picturebooks, which are very interesting to study due to the multiple and complex parameters involved in their structure. The exploration of new and alternative ways by which a picturebook can be designed reveals its wide potential to contribute not only to the linguistic awakening of its readers and the multilateral development of their visual and cognitive abilities, but also to the promotion of the intercultural idea.

Introductory remarks

Multicultural children's literature

The "Council on Interracial Books for Children" (CIBC) was founded approximately fifty years ago, as an "outgrowth of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s" [1], with the aim "to promote a literature for children that better reflects the realities and the needs of a multicultural society" and "to effect basic change in books and media". Its foundation leads to systematic and conscious production of multicultural children's literature and consequent relative research.

The CIBC focuses on the creation of books for children by accepting that one of the basic objectives of children's literature is to affiliate young readers with the social reality in which the plot takes place. Children's literature – of whatever era – reflects, even more than any other kind of literature, the social, political and cul-

tural alterations which take place in every epoch [2]. Therefore, in recent decades and in the context of multicultural societies, the tendency to revise and redefine crucial social matters, in combination with the need for harmonious co-existence among people from different cultural systems, inevitably influenced the domain of children's literature. The belief that children's literature has the power to promote different voices and to contribute to mutual understanding [3] led to the creation – firstly in the United States of America and then in European societies – of a remarkable production of multicultural books for children, varying from general knowledge books to literary ones and to culturally diverse literature, which is incorporated in the wider term "multicultural children's literature". The meaning and connotations of this definition are susceptible to each researcher's approach [4]. Even though multicultural children's literature has often been identified with the narrow term "multiethnic", implying literature focusing on "people of color" [5], a brief and yet wider definition includes books aspiring to provide a new perspective on regard to co-existence with the "other", i.e. anyone different to the numerically superior group.

A few years after the foundation of the CIBC, the term "multicultural children's literature" became associated with the adjectives "authentic" or "culturally conscious" [6], out of a need to define those books which promoted realistic and authentic depictions of other civilizations, avoiding conventional representations. This tendency suggested that merely the subject-matter of the text or the writer's intentions are not sufficient to create a book with an intercultural objective. Consequently, an issue which emerges is the existence of the writers' or illustrators' individual beliefs, competences and experiences and of course, their relation with the cultural reality they aim at projecting. As we understand, certain books which have been labeled as multicultural children's literature fail to keep up to their intercultural role. A common trap connected with the intercultural idea is that certain books are promoted as intercultural judged only by their subject-matters. Moreover, Mingshui Cai, in his *Multicultural Children's Literature* [7], observes that "authentic literature of a culture, in most cases, comes from the so-called insiders, namely, members of that culture" and continues by stressing that "writers create best the landscape that they know—in their minds or in their hearts" [8]. Therefore, the "perspective" molding narration and illustration is of great importance; it is in fact extremely difficult to see with the eyes of the other and speak the voice of the other, if we are not in their shoes.

In the introduction of his book, Mingshui Cai [9] asks the reader questions such as: "Do we need a category of books called multicultural literature? If yes, how do we define it? And who can create true multicultural literature? Can "outsiders" create culturally authentic works about a culture? How do we evaluate and select multicultural literature for use with children? What functions do we expect it to serve for educational purposes?" These questions, which he first comments and then answers in his study, reveal, in fact, that multicultural children's literature continues to raise debate as to whether it has the potential to meet the objectives it has been created for. Let us also consider that quite a few books which have entered the realm of multicultural children's literature and have been praised for their intercultural function –which they advertise with unsuccessful title pages and latent peritextual elements- fail tragically to support the intercultural idea. Al-

though they do hold an important place in their young readers' social and school life, they actually project false stereotypes and despite their initial intention to promote the intercultural ideology, they end up being superficial and mundane.

Bilingual books for children [10]

The truth is that, in the last decades, countless congresses, publications, pieces of research, studies, pilot projects and workshops have focused on the role of multicultural children's literature as a means to promote intercultural education in the school environment, offering us priceless pieces of relative information. Nowadays, one can easily access both printed and online publications presenting theoretical quests, research findings and teacher's handbooks which analyze, comment and approach this issue through different perspectives. What is hard to find, though, is bibliography concentrating on the intercultural function of bilingual works of literature. Bibliography on bilingual books in general and especially in bilingualism at school and inside the family is already quite rich and keeps being gradually widened [11]. Various studies, however, focus on the benefits of bilingual books and strategies for using them in classrooms, focusing on the performance that bilingual students exhibit at school. These studies usually approach bilingual books as text-books: as a means to reinforce bilingualism, as a supportive measure to learn second/foreign language (L2) or as a tool to learn or improve the first/native language (L1), specifically when their users belong to "parallel" linguistic communities [12]. This is predictable in a sense, considering that the main reason for the creation of bilingual books for children is related to language. Bilingual books were originally designed either to meet the linguistic needs of bilingual students and their families or to complement the learning of an L2 language. After undergoing experiments and different stages of design, their structure and content was organized in various ways so as to better serve the linguistic needs of both children and parents and also to facilitate training in multicultural school communities [13].

Bilingual books have earned themselves a distinctive, discrete and yet continuously growing presence in the area of children's books and they are identified as a separate category, at least in respect to the structure and organization of the linguistic material or their aim [14]. They incorporate all genres, from encyclopedias, dictionaries, informational books to literature texts, picturebooks, and interactive books, often enriched either with activities or glossaries [15]. Bilingual books also include the so-called multilingual books, which are written in three or more languages. In the hereby study, we refer to this type of books using the term bilingual. Semi-bilingual books also bear coherent objectives and structure. These are books which "integrate occasional L1 words and phrases into a primarily L2 composition" and from which "benefit monolingual children who speak the language of the majority" [16]. Concerning their structure, however, the criteria for the selection and organization of their linguistic material are different.

The research

Bilingual books, and more specifically the literary ones, except for their supportive role in purely linguistic activities, are also ideologically charged; they project certain points of view concerning people and behaviors, having thus an important impact on the way we conceive the reality around us; they also complement

our knowledge on essential issues connected with life. On the other hand, they constitute a special category of books, which are by definition intercultural or at least, bear an intercultural function, considering that a bilingual book promotes two linguistic, therefore, two cultural systems. As a result, the co-existence of two or more languages drives us to view bilingual books as mediators of culture and accept the fact that their linguistic material comprises of symbols, codes and notions which express not only a different linguistic system, but also another cultural reality. It is this dimension of a bilingual book which calls the reader to realize that there are other realities, apart from the ones that he is familiar with. The purpose, of course, is not to make the reader understand simply that there are multiple other "worlds" in parallel with his, but to recognize these "other" worlds as equal and to explore a creative way of managing domestic and exotic cultural traditions, by activating mechanisms which will render him able to live in harmony and interact efficiently with individuals of different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, the way notions and ideas connected with cultural realities are communicated is crucial to the way the reader perceives, internalizes and addresses these realities.

A common point of debate among researchers concerns the ideology promoted by bilingual books. A parameter which raises suspicions regarding the equality in the use of the languages and the authentic representation of the two languages/cultures is the fact that a bilingual book is created within a dominant culture, and is addressed both to children from that culture and to bilingual children. While its design and its overall creation is the offspring of the dominant culture, it aims to promote another [17].

Of course, "the demands of biculturalism and interculturalism are different", as Michale Byram observes and he continues by saying that "in the Western world, at least, the dominance of people with a monocultural identity which coincides with the national identity of the state in which they live, means that they expect everyone living in that state to be like them, to have a simple and single cultural identity. Immigrants are expected to be loyal to the state and nation where they have chosen to live, and monocultural, monolingual people have difficulty in understanding ties with the state and nation of origin" [18]. Michale Byram's observation highlights the need for a deeper understanding among members of different cultural systems developing inside a dominant system. It also challenges us to consider the consequences of secluding ourselves in a monocultural model and consequently, to a one-dimensional way of thought and perception of our multifaceted and multicultural reality.

Taking into account what we have mentioned so far, I would like to continue by commenting three bilingual picturebooks, which could challenge young readers to take a first step in discovering a different linguistic reality than the one they are familiar with. The specific books could also introduce the young readers to the idea that the world is not confined to the boundaries of their own small world.

The basic criterion for my choosing the specific titles was their structure, subject-matter, ideology and symbolism, which provided a rich platform to comment on. Another factor was also the juxtaposition of text and illustration. Let us mention that picturebooks are the first and main type of books that children are

introduced to in the first grades of primary school. They constitute a distinctive category of books. Studies by Aggeliki Yanikopoulou (2008), David Lewis (2001), Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott (2001), Perry Nodelman (1988), [19] just to mention a few, that look at picturebooks –despite the fact that each study has a different objective– all converge on one thing, namely, that the dynamic relationship between verbal and visual text in picturebooks is what determines the book's meaning. So, if we consider that the examination of codes employed in picturebooks is a challenge in the field of research, we can easily understand how bigger this challenge is when we study bilingual picturebooks, where more factors intervene in the interaction between visual and textual codes and symbols.

In quest of the intercultural dimension of bilingual picturebooks

We're going on a bear hunt/We're going to catch a big one/What a beautiful day!/We're not scared. This is the introduction of the book *We're going on a bear hunt*, in the bilingual version in English and Arabic that we are examining. The plot is based on the adventure of five children of different age and gender, who on a beautiful spring day decide to go on a bear hunt with their dog. In these introductory phrases we can easily sense the courage, the lively mood and their ambitious goal; even the weather in the chronotope allegorically reflects their optimism (What a beautiful day!). In this comic and tragic adventure, suspense climaxes gradually. The children pass through a long wavy grass, a deep cold river, a thick oozy mud, a big dark forest, a swirling whirling snowstorm, until they reach the rocky beach where there is the bear's narrow gloomy cave. In the view of the enormous and terrifying animal, joy and enthusiasm are substituted by fear, and following the same route, they run to return to the safety of their home, "into bed, under the covers", only to decide that "we 're not going on a bear hunt again". The plot is based on a folk children's song which inspired Michael Rosen and the illustrator Helen Oxenbury to create the book in 1989. The song probably belongs to the folk tradition of Scotland and it is very familiar to English speaking children all over the world. After its first version in English, the book was translated into many languages and was soon published in 17 dual editions, in various language combinations.

The subject-matter of the book does not bear any intercultural connotations. The rhyming pattern of a children's song, however, inevitably communicates universal and homogenizing elements; after all, practices and sounds related to the local folk traditions are cherished and preserved probably because they have the dynamics to appeal to different generations and pass from one culture to the other. On the other hand, the subject-matter of the book highlights a shared human value, which is common among children and adults: the feeling of fear that we experience when facing the shiny wet nose, the two big furry ears and the two big goggly eyes of a big dark bear in a narrow gloomy cave, or even, in a more general framework, the sense of awe or helplessness that possesses humans when dealing with the powers of nature.

As we can notice in the pictures, the heroes involved in the adventurous bear hunt belong to the white race. Some may think that this factor reduces the intercultural value of the book and that a set of personas representing different races would better fit the profile of a bilingual text. With some reservation, I would

say that the depiction of a multiracial group of characters would simply project a realistic wish and would have a different impact on the message communicated. The racial heterogeneity would become the center of attention. As a result, the plot would appear less attractive and the intercultural function would become less efficient, because quite often, when pointing “others” with our finger, we inevitably “isolate”, generate discrimination and create targets [20]; in this sense we distract attention from the elements of deeper intercultural value.

The selection of the theme, as well as the language, is one of the first questions to be answered when designing a bilingual book, in order to avoid using certain cultural concepts that are untranslatable or uninterpretable into another language – at least when these books address children of a very young age [...] it seems to be most functional to choose simple words or phrases, or even interjections, that are used repetitively” [21]. Like in the case of folk songs related with children’s games, the book “We ‘re going on a Bear Hunt” follows the same structural and linguistic pattern: frequent repetitions of words or phrases with a simple morpho-syntactic structure and texts full of onomatopoeic or sound words cited in every two pages. The onomatopoeic words, which share the same meaning in both languages/cultures, allude to the sounds made by the children as they pass from various landscapes and obstacles until they reach their final destination: *splash splosh!* as they cross the deep cold river, *squelch squerch!* in the thick oozy mud, *hooooo woooo!* as they pass from a whirling snowstorm and finally “tiptoe!” when confronting their final challenge. This effect invites the reader to play with words and search for equivalents in the second language, which –in the particular case– is Arabic.

In *We’re going on a bear hunt* the reader’s attention is also attracted by the alternating colour and black and white double page spreads. Illustrator Helen Oxenbury [22] shares her thoughts: “I came up with the idea of having black-and-white drawings when the children were contemplating an action, and colour when they were actually doing it”, while writer Michael Rosen [23] wonders: “are the black-and-white pages ‘reality’, and the colour only what is in their imaginations?” Whatever the answer is, the total effect created by illustration in combination with sound words, as well as the reducing or accentuating of the characters’ volume and intensity triggers the mechanisms of critical thinking in the reader’s mind.

Critical thinking is also triggered by the comically ironic relationship between text and illustration. The weather changes gradually to the worse, suggesting the heroes’ proximity to danger. Paradoxically, however, the phrase *What a beautiful day!* is a motif which is steadily repeated even when the heroes find themselves inside the swirling whirling snowstorm.

The linguistic material is equally distributed in both languages, which occupy the same number of pages. None of the two languages is degraded or presented as inferior to the other. Quite often in bilingual books one of the two languages/cultures is prioritized over the other, either in the peritextual elements and the title page or inside the book, where for instance, one of the two languages is given more space in the setting of the page, or when certain peritextual elements

appear only in one of the two languages. Although a basic criterion for the intercultural function of a bilingual book is the equal representation of both linguistic systems, sometimes this is not possible, as in *We're going on a bear hunt*. First of all, the Anglo-Arabic edition cannot respect both reading systems for practical reasons; reading in Arabic is from left to right, in antithesis with the established western way. Therefore, the way that the text will be read is one of the factors which –in combination with other complex and multidimensional parameters– highlights the importance of taking into account the cultural/linguistic status of the target audience for which each bilingual book is created.

Traditionally and by rule, a bilingual book is produced when a primary or pre-existing text and its translation in another language are juxtaposed in parallel, in the same page or not. Lately, however, some books have been designed from the beginning as bilingual, meaning that they cannot exist as monolingual, as they are completely dependent on the interaction between two languages. Such is the case of *Margaret and Margarita* or *Margarita and Margaret*, by Lynn Reiser, published in 1996. The plot and structure of the book is based on the linguistic model of code-switching between English and Spanish, as well as in universal visual codes. The book tells the story of two little girls who meet at the park, where they go with their mothers. The one does not know the language of the other. Despite the different linguistic code and national identity characterizing them, they soon come to realize that they have many things in common: same gender, same age; they both carry a toy with them, a little animal, and most importantly, they share the same willingness to communicate. Their mothers, as shown in illustration, are sitting on the same bench, but they have turned their backs the one on the other, probably because their linguistic distance does not allow contact. On the contrary, Margaret and Margarita are leaning the one towards the other and manage to find a way to communicate, first with a smile and then by talking, each one in her mother tongue. As they play, each girl uses words from her language. Narrative and visual techniques collaborate to introduce words/notions which carry the same cultural meaning and value, like *hello/hola*, *yes/si*, *friends/amigas*, *party/fiesta*, *goodbye/adios*. Thanks to the girls, who manage to overcome eloquently linguistic barriers, their mothers also get to communicate. The story ends with a “promise” of friendship between the two girls, which suggests, consequently, a closer affiliation with each other’s language. The message conveyed is clearly the power of friendship and good communication between people who share the same interests, regardless of their linguistic identity.

In the book there are positive and smart points, such as the alternation of colors and the shades of the printed characters, the rotation of the focus of illustration on the instances in the plot that promote communication. I have to comment, though, that while Margaret’s mother is depicted reading a book during her stay at the park, Margarita’s mother is knitting a long scarf. Although I personally believe that both activities have a vigorous and creative side, reading books is an intellectual activity and knitting a physical one. Physical activities are often associated with less intellectual people. In this sense, this depiction contradicts the book’s intention to present equally the two linguistic/cultural systems.

I mentioned previously, in the introduction of my paper, that it is very difficult to see through the eyes of the other and speak the voice of the other, unless we are the other. After all, isn't it in this competence, that is, the ability to see through the eyes of the other, that the whole meaning of intercultural conscience is based upon? The development of this skill is proposed in a very intelligent and convincing way by the 16-page long bilingual picturebook *Upside Down*, published in India in 2009, written and illustrated by T. R. Rajesh, 2009. The book was originally written in Malayalam, one of the scheduled classical and spoken languages in India, predominantly in the state of Kerala. In its bilingual version, the book is written in English and Hindi.

The text is extremely simple and looks more like a caption or a title phrase in the illustration of each page: . etc. The pictures are impressive. In very vivid colors, they depict happy moments of the daily rural life in Kerala, where nature is friendly and generous and people live in harmony with animals. From the very first page, however, pictures are printed upside down and one needs to roll over the book to observe them carefully. While a reader's first impression might be that this is printing mistake, as he continues reading he realizes that the book has been structured in an enigmatic and playfully mysterious way. The reader will not pay special attention to the meaning of the text, which consists, besides, of simple, descriptive phrases. He will not focus on the flow of illustration, either, which is not so difficult to grasp, even in its upside down version. His attention will be captured, though, by the unconventional place of the pictures in the book. He shall find the answer to the riddle in the last page, which is depicting a bat, hanging upside down from the branches of a tree. The picture is accompanied by these phrases: "Kutti bat's word ... Upside down!" The last phrase (upside down) is also the title of the book.

The upside down pictures of daily life was what the bat could see. This point of view was shaped by the way the bat was standing, which molded its impression of the world. By using this illustration trick, the book invites the readers to reflect on the fact that people have multiple and distinct ways of standing in the world; there are geographic, cultural, spatial, emotional and psychological parameters which shape their perspective and their perception of the world. In other words, the book challenges us to see through the eyes of the "other" and to overcome obstacles that may hinder effective communication by helping us realize that each person has a different point of view, which is shaped by the conditions they are living in. I assume that whoever reads the book, will start perceiving differently the phrase "upside down" or will discover an added meaning in it. The structure of the book is so revolutionary and the twist ending on the last page is so unexpected that it will create to the readers associations and connotations every time they encounter this phrase in the future.

Conclusive remarks

Bilingual books are possibly considered to be a suitable -or perhaps the most suitable- tool to promote intercultural dialogue. Some of them, however, promote racist representations and false ideas connected with a culture. This phenomenon is partly due to the fact that controversial factors are often involved in the design and creation of a bilingual book. These factors are connected with the

pair of languages which will be selected and the equal amount of space that they have to occupy in the book; additionally, the type of the book and its function, its target, the subject-matter and the narrative techniques employed, the visual codes and their symbolism, the intention of its creators and their relationship with the two languages/cultures, as well as the age, educational status and wider cultural environment of the target audience.

It is widely believed that picturebooks address only young readers, given that they are works consisting of short texts and illustration. As we have noticed, however, the visual and linguistic codes involved in a picturebook raise questions to be answered and trigger thought instead of merely explaining a situation; this means that a picturebook can be intriguing and appealing to adults, also. Lately, we keep witnessing new and alternative ways of designing the linguistic material of the book in relation with the visual codes involved; this development is indicative of the dynamics that characterizes bilingual picturebooks, which can be used not only as a tool contributing to the readers' linguistic awakening and the promotion of the intercultural idea, but also as a means to foster "the readers' multifaceted visual and linguistic competences", by "employing multiple linguistic and visual codes" [24].

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that – as various pieces of research suggest [25] –, the introduction of bilingual literary books in the school environment – or books written in languages other than the dominant one, including the mother tongues of all students –, had a very positive impact on both the speakers of the dominant language and the students-members of linguistic minorities, even when that was done in the status of pilot projects and only in school libraries. By interacting and working together on reading/comprehending the book, the first ones had the opportunity to meet the benefits of a perception other than the monocultural one; based on the educational conditions each time, they were given the chance to meet two or more cultural realities and this process supported their socialization and personal development. The minority students, on the other hand, felt that their national/linguistic identity was being recognized; a vital prerequisite for them to successfully fit in the new school environment.

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BECOMING A HUMAN BEING: ARTS AND EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

How and why do we become “human” beings? What are the anthropological, cultural and ethical issues which allow it? What deep connections are there between art and education? “Human” is every being of our species who accomplishes experiences, sediments them, coming to open up to life in its various perspectives and to transmit them to his fellow men of the future; who is able to respond to the evolution of things, as well as to the cases of men and, therefore, even to choose and take risks. He is the being who creates with his own hands and ideas, who builds the future, though every time in a different way. Indeed, the destiny of human beings does not coincide with biological necessity, with death as its impassable limit. “Human” is the being who is able to think such limit, therefore creating a connection between the physical and the metaphysical; the being who can perform a plurality of experiences, to self-educate and educate. Art - the arts - are creations of that “human” being, who thinks the world: this world, not another one. He thinks the possible developments of it, increases it, because he is ready and willing to change the change of it, not to become a passive pawn. Art educates and creates the only human world in which human being can live in harmony.

Introductory remarks

What does “Human Being” means?

Why and how do we become “human beings”? This question does not refer either to specific scientific evolution issues, or - ironically - to the famous British horror serial *Becoming Human* - “a supernatural drama webisode series”. Becoming a human being is the real adventure of our lives: a game we play throughout our body in this world, on this earth, not in an improbable Afterlife where vampires are presumed to exist; a game we play in the place and time we entirely share the fate of, and which belong to the world’s natural and historical heritage. The human body is made of matter, mind, and spirit; reason and feeling; rational and irrational; the conscious and the unconscious; memory and imagination; technique and invention; nature and culture, all these coexisting at the same time or in alternating moments.

However, to start from the beginning: *human* refers to our genus *Homo sapiens*, and “human being” is - in terms of genetic and biological characteristics - each creature belonging to our species. Yet – as far as meanings are concerned - the

term “human being” has much wider implications than natural sciences convey.

The most enlightening term to understand one of these elements - namely, the adjective “human”, which derives from the Latin “humanus” - is related to the Akkadian *ummanu*, which means: ‘artisan’, ‘artist’, ‘scientist’. Furthermore, we mustn’t also leave out another affereent word, also related to Akkadian: *umun*, or ‘lord’, ‘ruler’[1]. Thus, the adjective “human” in connection with “being” mainly refers to someone who is (sentient), and has a tangible existence and is aware of it; someone who lives by himself and for something; who can make, create, get to know things, and govern them – to be exact.

Moreover, the same term also refers to the anthropological scope of culture and civilization. The human being fully belongs – body, soul, and spirit - to the historical context and the geographical area where he/she is destined to exist; he/she lives, studies, works, creates things, being able to add world to the pre-existing world: in this way he/she really becomes “auctor” (=author) according to the original meaning of the Latin word *augeo* (=increase), as the writer Giuseppe Pontiggia pointed out [2].

In conclusion, the human being is someone who can perform a variety of experiences in order to explore the complexity of culture and different traditions coexisting in culture itself and around him/her; someone who can examine and put traditions and their heritage in a deep relationship with the present. We mean a heritage of time which takes the shape of thought, matters, forms, arts, techniques, words, ideas etc.; a heritage we have to safeguard in order to choose which traditions to pass on to future generations and which to leave behind.

Human Being and Ethics

The French philosopher and anthropologist Jousse [3], was the first to notice that the great achievement of language is accomplished by an individual together with and through the propositional gesture. Such a gesture connects man to man and permits to distinguish the human from the non-human: it is the bodily gesture/action of the mouth which is used to breathe, eat, talk, and closely connects survival, word and awareness acquisition: in other words, freedom, responsibility and ethics.

Therefore, “human” is every being of our species who recollects his/her own experiences, opens up to understand various perspectives of life and passes them on to his/her neighbor-human beings of the future. A living being who is able to live fully in the world, to *respond* to life events, is, therefore, able to choose, and take risks. The same living being is able to create things with his/her own hands and with his/her own ideas, to build up the future, though in a different way each time. Indeed, the destiny of human beings does not always coincide with biological necessity, which has death as an insurmountable limit. “Human” is the living being who is able to think about such a limit, and create a tension between physical and metaphysical spheres, in order to live a life of humility (i.e., aware of limits), and fullness of understanding: just “human.”

Art as creation of the Human Being

Art and Science: True and Truth

Art, all arts, are creations of that “human” being who is able to think the world: our real world, not another one. He/she imagines world’s possible developments, enhances it, because he/she is willing to change the change, not to be a passive pawn in life. Art creates the only human world where humans can live in harmony.

Even science is a creation of the human being who thinks the world, but in this case in a different way. According to the Nobel Prize for Physics Feynman, science is “the body of knowledge arising from the things found out” [4]. Else - we might add - , everything that can be confirmed as *true* according to specific theoretical and operational paradigms, i.e. everything that appears to be objectively consistent, “real”. On the other hand, the purpose of all arts is the acquisition of the *truth* concerning the human being. Our subjectivity perceives what is “real”, i.e. the world, and aims to build an experience of expression (beauty) and knowledge in art – or an experience of *truth* as problematic conquest of authentic values. Such a *truth*, however, is a necessarily dynamic, constantly questioned one, because history, things, behaviors, and forms of human existence continuously change. In the various arts priority goes to expressive, sentimental, speculative or ethical needs and aims, while science favors a purely cognitive intent. Anyway, it would be a mistake to assign tasks of solely irrational knowledge to the arts, because a work of art has several features. However, the *truth* concerning all Arts – though it springs from the deepest needs of subjectivity, and cannot be reached through one method only – always depends on a theoretical effort, a rigorous practice of craft and invention.

Truth cannot be the object of study or research for scientists, who need to ascertain *what is true*, although *truth* and ethics may concern them as human beings-scientists. It would be indeed desirable that they would much more do so...

Art and Education

If education (from the Latin *educĕre* or ‘to lead out’, ‘pull out’) is life itself and not mere preparation for life, as John Dewey thought, arts and education are linked to each other. Hence, there is a continuous interaction between both of them. Art itself is an experience [5]. Indeed, we always experience while living; and experience and knowledge endlessly intersect and intertwine, because human beings – according to the anthropological characteristics and biological properties of their own genus - cannot live, feel, think or act outside the natural and socio-cultural environment where they can survive. In *Art as Experience*, Dewey underlined: “Experience occurs continuously because the interaction of live creature and enviring conditions is involved in the very process of living”. Therefore, an experience is not something sporadic, limited to external human existence and, as such, enclosed in itself. Experience is always a “transaction” between the individual and the world, or in other words, in an experience, “*flow is from something to something*” [6]. Thus, both parts always act and interplay with each other in an unceasing process able to involve and bring with it all that ever came before. In the same process mind, intelligence, logic, imagination contribute dynamically to invent the present and create the future. In *Experience and Nature* (whose

revised edition was published in 1929), Dewey makes clear that experience is a point-of-entry to the explanation of the world we live in, and affirms that human beings want to experience something broad, deep and full as much as the entire story of the earth: a story which includes the earth and the physical correlates of man, as history and experience do not occur in a vacuum. Experience embraces dreams, madness, illness, death, work, war, confusion, ambiguity, falsehood and error; involves both transcendental and empirical systems; includes magic and superstition as science [7].

This is why, when we think about art as experience, knowledge, education, we should take into account a very important aspect of self-education and education: that is Technique. According to Feynman again, technique – in both art and science - “is a special method of finding things out.” That is, a working method, a set of rules to be followed in order to learn the statute of materials: words, syntax, rhetoric in literature; marble or wood, colors, musical notes, or time values in other arts. The artistic technique is a deeply liberating practice, since it unlocks the Artist’s potential, inventive and creative energies. Artistic technique, which involves all bodily reality, also unlocks the energies of the matter an artist has to face and wrestle with. In short, an artist aims at beauty (a phenomenon, bear in mind) when he takes the matter, or a material, at its highest level of expression; in other words, by creating a “formed matter”, as Schiller defined it in *Kallias* [8]. The object, the matter is determined through/by the artistic technique and the artistic technique is determined through/by the nature of the object.

Yet, the Science of scientists is “a special method of finding things out”, i.e. the implementation of a series of protocols and parameters based on an established paradigm. In short, it corresponds to what Dino Formaggio defined as “external technique” in any form of art: that is learning and enacting an objective practice and its rules, its methods, working on the different materials according to their natural laws. Despite that, an artistic technique has even more complex statutes, because at the same time there is an “internal technique”. The latter cannot be separated from the former: similarly it happens with the linguistic sign as conceived by Ferdinand de Saussure, according to whom signifier and signified are an inseparable unity. According to Formaggio, on the one hand the internal technique is the process of internalization and getting more and more specialized skills over time; on the other one, it is a work of memory collection and construction, culture, and reflection. Thanks to the internal technique it is possible to make choices, and overcome any obstacles to the work [9].

The artistic technique appears in its various spectrums as a special form of “somaticisation of culture”, as Bourdieu understood it [10]. Antonio Damasio also showed that cognitive acts are a process of “regaining possession” of the body and the world, and that memory, mind, emotions and consciousness are closely interconnected [11]. Any identification: technique=art, or opposition: technique or art is indeed misleading, because the artist is the inventor of the “technique of the techniques”, i.e. of his own rules. On the contrary the craftsman can only follow the rules, by the simple implementation of them.

When the artist does that, he/she sets free, “educates”: in the sense that he/she can “pull out” not only what the world is, but also what it might be in the splendor of beauty.

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ART AS A PSYCHO-SOCIAL TOOL FOR INCLUSION

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ABSTRACT

Our paper aims to unveil the aesthetic conception and the basic framework of the project of using Art as a vehicle for social inclusion. In order to do so, it will explore the tension between a set of notions. First we will analyse the opposition between exclusion and inclusion as the fundamental categories for explaining to what extent Art can become a psycho-social tool. Secondly, we will explore the notion of Culture to address the discussion around two different conceptions of the artistic production: Art as an institution and Art as “a social fact”. Our objective is to explain to what extent today conception of Art can be interpreted as an historical construction that was built upon and justified by a specific social order. We will dive in some of the key notions of Hegel’s aesthetics in order to better understand the performative potential of Art as a psycho social tool in contemporary Europe. Finally, we expect to sketch the general features of an inclusive conception of art, capable of conveying societal transformations.

Introduction

Europe is experiencing a financial, political and economical crisis. We are all aware of this critical situation. That is why most of us are trying to help those who suffer the most from the consequences of the living societal crisis. We share the common goal of thinking together, trying to answer a common question: how can Art contribute to reducing the negative impact of the crisis? This paper aims to reflect on an area that -although unrecognized in educational institutions and in the wider society- is currently enjoying a renewed interest: Art as a vehicle for social inclusion. We will try to unveil this notion to answer a central question: can artistic production or practice function as a psycho-social tool to favor inclusion? Our objective is to explain the basic framework of the aesthetics idea of Art as a “social fact” that allows the configuration of new learning matrix. We will also try to think about the universality and versatility of the artistic production: is it possible to think of the advantages of a pedagogical and educational strategy of transcultural, interdisciplinary and inclusive Art?

Before plunging into this subject matter, we should remember that art is not an easily definable element. How to define and distinguish a work of Art? What are the differences of Art as an institution and Art as “a social fact”? It seems essential to define what we mean when we talk about Art and/or artistic production. That is why this paper will establish a first contact with the concept of Art, and then

focusing on the relationship between artistic production and social inclusion, considering the different potentials that this relationship can develop.

Exclusion vs. Inclusion: a cultural matter

Before we start discussing how Art as “a social fact” can become a psycho-social tool for inclusion, we should stop for a few moments to approach the bigger notion of Culture. We can think about Culture in a broad sense, as the totality of socially transmitted behaviour patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions and all other products of human work and thought [1]. Therefore the concept of culture is linked to the system of knowledge and skills that gives us a model of reality by which we can make sense of our behavior and our actions. We human beings are always a part of a specific culture that we co-create in our everyday life. Hence, we live in an integrated system that builds a set of foundational schemes generated by a specific group of people. At the same time, we have to be aware that we are also influenced by our own Culture because it somehow affects our vision of the world.

Thus, the specific Culture that we build and co-create as individuals belonging to a cultural group is performing us back, at the same time. *Performativity* is, according to Theodore Adorno, the ability of Culture to act upon individuals to make them play specific roles. In other words, performativity is the dominating power of Culture over individual subjectivity [2]. Hence, Culture could be seen a socially co-constructed structure that performs our vision of the world, of the others and of ourselves and it therefore defines the central features of our identity, both individual and social.

But Culture also defines itself by the exclusion of everything that doesn't fit to its structure. When our perception of reality does not cope with the cultural and socially co-constructed structure, then, we experience exclusion. We will state that there are at least three different types of exclusion:

- Eliminary exclusion: the complete suppression of the difference. It can lead to the genocide as the more “complete” form of eliminary exclusion.
- Marginalised exclusion: the construction of enclosed spaces or community split into the same culture. It leads to institutionalised exclusion (asylums, nursing homes, special schools for people with disabilities).
- Integrated exclusion: the integration of the socially excluded in the social order. It leads to life without fundamental rights (work, education, social activities, recreation and political action).

This last type of exclusion is the one we are dealing with nowadays. This “integrated exclusion” is the contemporary social drama *par excellence*. The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu [3] already talked about this several years ago when he claimed that our societies rest squarely on a set of discursive abstraction that the social order accepts: the naturalisation and reproduction of unemployment, the acceptance of economic or educational failure and the exaltation of individual responsibility; poverty, hunger, exclusion and other social disruptions are only the consequence of individual [lack of] actions. Collective illnesses are therefore never linked to a social order in which injustice and inequality is legitimised. We are all accepting the fact that there is a fundamental and antagonistic dichotomy

(exclusion-inclusion) because it historically became a natural process that reproduces itself in a cultural discourse. This dichotomised and bipolar conception of society could be referred as one of the biggest tragedies of XXI century.

Furthermore, today it seems that education cannot really contribute to overcome this rift within social structure by the inclusion of the socially excluded - as it originally intended to do. Traditional learning paths don't teach the more disadvantaged the adequate strategies to face the challenges they will encounter in the context of the societal crisis we are all living in. What can we do? How can we include the excluded? How can we help without paternalist social assistance that is demeaning to those in need? We have to work at the very first level of social action, to empower excluded people to take the first step in order to change the social order that accepts *integrated exclusion* of individuals [4].

Art as "a social fact"

The rise of Art as an institution

The Art concept has suffered numerous changes over the centuries; during the *Renaissance*, Art was the result of an artistic production that wasn't expected to express anything about the creator, for his/her production it didn't carry any kind of spiritual or emotional *substance*. Art as symbolic production then coexisted with Art as craft work. Slowly over time, Art became a sign: the sensible expression of an abstract concept that doesn't end in the meaning represented by its material, by its *objectuality*. According to Hegel [5], the Art became a sign, and the artistic production left the surrounding world and was transformed into an idea, an institution. Little by little artists became *geniuses* and were able to put themselves ahead of the artistic production that, as a consequence, abandoned the social field to represent a *foreign content*.

The museums are the apotheosis for the Art as an institution that emerges as the instrument that not only embodies and defends the new private way for artistic production but that also legitimises and perpetuates a class division linked to a specific and historical cultural order. Nowadays, Art as an institution remains a tool of exclusion; it represents the exclusive worship of certain individuals (the so called *geniuses* of Art) by a certain social class (the so called *amateurs*). That's why it is important to consider the economic and commercial power that is developing around the artistic production; it is precisely this very economic matrix that, by defining what a work of Art is, leads the moves and changes of the current conception of Art as an institution. This system of artistic conception puts Art in a pulpit of erudition that appropriates even the Art forms arising from the complaint of this very *status quo* by giving those productions an economic and mercantile value that sterilises the essence that created them by inseminating them with their own [6].

Art as a reflection of human spirit

Luckily, Hegel also gives us a clue to unchain ourselves from this institutionalized system of Art. The German philosopher remembers that Art is always the expression of oneself as a part of something bigger. Hegel argues that self-knowledge and self-consciousness is acquired through awareness of our products, our actions and crafts in the world. Man is a creature that is above all in the process

of finding itself. Art is defined as the basic tool for this quest. Hence, in a social level, an individual can recognize himself as the one who's doing something. That is its contribution to the world that surrounds him, that is the contribution to the cultural world he shares with the others, that is the co-construction of a social structure in which he settled. Hegel aesthetics lead to think that our artistic production is in a continuous progressive process of emergence that changes Culture in a *Panta Rhei* [everything flows] system.

To illustrate his thought about what Art can be, Hegel uses a fine example: he asks us to picture a child that throws a stone into the water just to marvel himself on the water rings he produces. In his action we distinguish the very principle of the "artistic production": he finds a reflection of himself, a self-reproduction of his *intentionality* anchored by the changing world. This can be seen in multiple occasions and under the most diverse forms: we all share this need to print ourselves externally in an effort to become familiar with the surrounding world, transforming external things and appropriating them in emotional terms. As free subjects, we do this to cope with the elusive strangeness of the outside world [5].

With this general example, Hegel is seeking to demonstrate that the action of a man is the way to reveal his existence to himself. The need arises to compare the theoretical representation one can have of oneself with the particular action in the world; in every free human action - both artistic production and child play - there is an expression of uniqueness and individuality through Art.

Art as a social fact

Man has always sought to make sense of the surrounding world. Following Ernst Cassirer [7], a well-developed man is both capable of logical thinking and symbolic representation that nurtures its own culture. Art allows the development of the spiritual and emotional dimensions of man; it demands to use and transform different kinds of symbol systems and materials. It is a doorway to the transformation of Culture, the psycho-social frame where men evolves. An individual who approaches Art has to learn to "read" the various symbolic frames involved, and thus, he learns how to manipulate them, how to modify them, he learns how to become owner of its representational surrounding. This gesture opens the path for several questions: what to represent? How to express it? How can one contribute to this representational universe called Culture? How to change it? These questions arises in the creative process and respond to artistic practice that empowers the action and opens the possibility of believing in change, a cornerstone of any social transformation.

Herbert Read [8] argues that art in all its expressions plays a crucial role in the process of human formation and the construction of subjectivity. In other words, the artistic practice allows reconciliation of the singularity with the unit of social order. Hence, Art can also help to destroy the historical discourse that accepts and even sometimes affirms and legitimizes exclusion. We can say that Art is the result of an artistic production that works as a "social fact"; we are talking about Art as a practice that, by its very definition, process and configuration is always changing and evolving with its surrounding society.

Thinking about Art as a “social fact” that can work as a vehicle for social inclusion means communitarian activities within social and historical phenomena. Art is a collective activity with cognitive aspects that can easily become a part of the community it belongs to. We are proposing to reclaim the concept of Art as “a social fact”, because we understand that it cannot be distinguished from the cultural structure that’s anchoring him to be seen only as an exclusive cult that is accessible to a restrictive amount of people.

There are multiple experiences of inclusion through art and touting pedagogical processes that enable the construction of new cultural representations. There are also actions that bring together the various existing intelligences (creative, emotional, etc.) to contribute to the construction of dignity and social bonds and networks necessary for the proper functioning of any social order. There are spontaneous experiences with no centralized organization, actions seeking to bring changes in society like a small oasis arising as an endogenous response to a model that exclude.

Art is “a social fact” that works in a psycho-social level as the fundamental and foundational cornerstone for the re-newed subjectivity that is required to overcome the crisis. Understanding Art as “a social fact” enables the synergy of several social actors, operating from different institutions, contributing to elaborate new learning models. In contradiction to Art as an institution, we believe in the need to promote Art as “a social fact”, Art made by everyone and for everybody. These are the experiences that we want to share; experiences conceiving Art as a psycho-social practice for the transformation of Culture [8] into a performative tool for a new, more inclusive society.

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PLAYFUL ADVENTURES: ART AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Culture – however we understand the word – is central to the postmodern economy, to current ideological struggles and to human rights in a world whose essential diversity can no longer be avoided. It is the territory on which humanity's immediate future is being worked out and, at the same time, it is a resource through which we can negotiate better settlements of our differences. So it is not surprising that culture, art and creativity have grown in importance within education theory and practice, even as education's own importance has grown in a globalising, knowledge-hungry world. But if a political wind now fills the sails of education and culture, it often seems to blow from two opposing directions. In education, higher standards are pursued through ever-tighter prescription, assessment and examination in the hope of achieving better outcomes for students and employers. At the same time, those students are expected to be creative, self-reliant and flexible in a labour market and a society that offers less structure and less support. How can rigid, standardised, graded education equip students for life in a complex, fluid and unreliable social and working environment? Art cannot resolve these tensions, which are caused by the deeper uncertainties of a world in rapid transition. But it can offer an open and safe space within which, individually and together, we can explore them – and not just these, but all the uncertainties we experience as growing, learning beings engaged in the human adventure. The talk will focus on how the exploration and practice of art in education can provide students with the resources to navigate these swirling waters – but only if it avoids following the rest of the education world into the labyrinth of prescription, assessment and examination. Whatever else it might be, in education art must be a free space.

Why is our childhood not a good guide to our children's?

For someone like me, who grew up in the 1960s, the world of 2014 can seem quite disorienting. Although the Sixties are now seen as a time of social, political and cultural upheaval, that was not what they seemed to a child in primary school. On the contrary, at least for me, they were characterised by a sense of stability. The world seemed relatively simple. At the global level, it was divided between us and the largely unknown communist bloc, who were the bad guys: about everyone else we knew little and thought less. Everyday life was similarly intelligible. Mostly, the other children at school, their families and everyone else you met seemed much like you. They looked and spoke like you, kept the same

festivals, watched the same TV shows. The other, like the communists, was elsewhere. With two television channels, offering just an hour or two of children's programmes a day, our window on the world was small and closely controlled. And the future seemed equally straightforward: there were jobs and professions to choose from and you could picture yourself living a life much like that of your parents, only better.

I don't evoke this childhood idyll, if such it was, to inspire nostalgia. Nor indeed do I mean to suggest that this eight-year-old's view of the world was an accurate one. But it illustrates how much and how fast the world has changed. A child growing up in Europe now has a more complex view of the world than ever before. Her primary school will include children of different races, cultures and ethnic backgrounds, brought up in different faiths. They dress and eat differently and often speak another language at home: she herself may be learning a new language by coming to school. She is more likely to live with only one parent or with a step-parent. She may not live in the country where she was born and her walk home from school may be along unfamiliar streets and among strange people. Television, computers and smart phones will give her access to an unimaginably large and diverse world, filled with wonder and beauty, as well as horror and chaos. She will have learned about places and ideas to inspire her dreams: she may also have seen images that bring her nightmares. She will be growing up in a world where unemployment, war and financial crisis are the norm, where getting a zero-hour contract as a barista is seen as a success, and where her older siblings still live at home because there is nowhere affordable to rent. She will, as she grows older, be wondering what place there will be for her in this complex, exciting, scary world. But whatever she is thinking, her eight-year-old understanding of normality *is* very different to that of my generation.

Again, this sketch is not intended to be pessimistic, but to mark how different a European childhood is today than it was when the people who rule, manage and administer our lives were themselves children—because it is largely my generation that is in charge now. The generation that grew up in that relatively simple, stable world I evoked is making decisions about how to support the education of children growing up in a world that they may understand in an abstract, theoretical way but cannot experience as do the children for whom they provide. And yet, precisely because the world in which today's children are growing up is so different from the one that shaped previous generations, it is vital to help them prepare to succeed in it.

What kind of education can prepare children for life in the mid 21st century?

Few people would disagree with that, of course: the disagreements arise when we ask what success means, what is needed to achieve it and how children can best acquire the knowledge, skills and capacities required? It is a vital debate and, since the idea that universal education was a public good found acceptance in the late 19th century, it has animated education theory, policy and practice. I am not an educationalist and, with only a layman's understanding of the issues, I shall not venture into the theories and methods of education. But it is not necessary to be an expert to have a view about why we educate our children: that, after all, is something every parent cares about.

For British politicians, of left and right, the answer has been broadly consistent throughout my life: education is about equipping young people with the skills needed to find jobs. The current Prime Minister said exactly that in a speech last autumn: *'The second thing we've got to get right is education [...] to ensure that the people can take part in a modern industrial economy'* [1]. Again, who would disagree with that? It would be a grave failure not to equip young people with the skills to get rewarding jobs and earn a living. But the statement begs the question of what skills and capacities are needed to 'take part in a modern industrial economy'. For the Prime Minister, the answer is clear: 'English and Maths are the two most important vocational qualifications [and] children should go on taking and retaking English and Maths until they get them' [2]. Literacy and numeracy are certainly vital skills, but are they enough? What about the other things our child is learning in her multi-lingual, multicultural classroom, such as the ability to live and work with difference, to empathise with others or cooperate? What about her innate gifts and talents, which Plato wanted the teacher to bring to life as a midwife helps a mother to give birth? And what about her sense of right and wrong, her values and her ethical understanding?

Too often, in focusing on the skills needed for employment, these and other aspects of our human potential is neglected or even ignored by political discourse. And even in its focus on marketable skills, the Prime Minister's utilitarian approach has a dubious, old fashioned confidence in the nature and needs of a modern industrial economy. In fact, when there are few jobs for life, when people train, re-train and train again and may work in several different fields throughout a working life that is likely to include part-time and flexible working, the most valuable skills may be transferable and adaptable: the ability to work independently, to learn from experience, to take initiative, to be a team member, to think creatively and so on. And unlike literacy and numeracy, which can be drilled into young minds and tested again and again *'until they get them'*, these skills are better learnt than taught. How can rigid, standardised, graded education equip students for life in complex, fluid and unreliable working and social environments?

This is where art has something to offer children and young people, though its importance is still rarely understood by politicians. In their own, relatively stable schooldays, art was confined to a lesson a week, perhaps some music lessons if they were lucky, and a rare school outing to a museum or theatre. It was seen as giving children an opening onto their culture—because it was still possible then to think in terms of one universal national culture—that could be built on in adult life. It was not seen, except by some visionary teachers, as integral both to how a child might develop a wider range of competencies and how she might learn to understand and relate to the world. Part of what has been achieved since the schooldays of most politicians has been a transformation of our understanding of art's place in education, but the generational lag and the influence of utilitarianism in our politics means that we have not yet been able to act consistently on that changed understanding.

I am not proposing more and better access to art in schools as a substitute for teaching literacy and numeracy, science and citizenship. Nor am I offering it as a panacea to the social, economic and other uncertainties of a world in rapid tran-

sition. But I do argue that creative approaches to education in and through art can help equip children with some of the life skills they need to succeed in our complex, diverse and globalised world. Art can help children and young people understand more about themselves and the society in which they will use the literacy, numeracy and other skills they are acquiring, so that they know better their power and risks. In the end, art's greatest value in education may not even be what children can learn from it but *how* they learn it. To see why that is, we need to look more closely at how art works with children and young people and how they work with it.

How do children and young people engage with art?

Visible and invisible

All children discover art for themselves. From a very early age, they draw, paint, sing and dance, mostly without hesitation, and they love stories with a passion. Art is so important and so natural to children because it is central to how they understand and interpret their experience. Through it, they can re-present, to themselves and to others, what they have seen, heard, experienced and felt. They can externalise their developing ideas in communicable form and learn whether they are similar to or different from others, and how to communicate better what they want to share. They can begin to understand what they and others see as good, important or valuable. They can look for meaning in what surrounds them. As they grow older, if they stay with it, they can discover that art is a deliberate, often self-conscious but only partly rational activity that sets out overtly to reflect or create meaning by exploring subjective experience and bringing to it enough clarity or order that people can be comfortable with it. Art is a toolbox people use to tinker with how they see and are seen and so, perhaps, come to terms with their existence. It is not the only means humans have created for this purpose, but it remains the most open, free and accessible.

Since art is a working space, where people make meaning and values from experience, it is naturally messy. Workshops and studios are not tidy, like classrooms. The people who work in them know where things are but visitors may see only a chaotic assemblage of materials, half-finished work, abandoned failures and scrap. An artistic space, whether actual or metaphorical, can be hard for an outsider to interpret. Walk into a dance workshop with a group of 10 year olds and it may not look more interesting than the average gym class: but inside the minds of those taking part, linked in a shared imaginative space, a process of creative exploration is at work. In *Star Trek*, the crew relaxes by using an immersive role playing experience called the holodeck: to an outsider, nothing is visible, other than someone going through a series of incomprehensible motions, but to the participant, the purpose and meaning is reality [3]. Pierre Bayard, the French professor of literature and psychoanalyst, has written perceptively on the existence of imaginary worlds in literature, where the reader's *'identity is often blurred and shifting and his relation to literary characters can remain unclear, but he is undoubtedly an inhabitant [of this world] and undergoes the psychological effects of the events that occur there'* [4]. Anyone who wants to understand art, and how it works on people, must be willing to enter the space. To stand outside, and refuse to acknowledge internal experience as real, is to be wilfully blind. The internal experiences of love, hate or friendship, like those of art, are no less powerful because a school inspector cannot grade them.

In fact, the privacy of artistic experience is one of its principal assets. People become vulnerable in an artistic space, because they open themselves imaginatively to all sorts of unknown possibilities. They are willing to share that space with others only because everyone is similarly vulnerable. Art without trust is impossible. The inaccessibility of the space to an outsider—a non-participant observer—is part of what makes the experience safe. A space of trust can give a child who would normally spend the whole lesson erasing her work the confidence to make and leave a mark.

Ambiguity

The ambiguity of artistic experience is also crucial to permitting safe exploration. People generally avoid ambiguity because it can be dangerous: operating industrial machinery or accounting for money depends on clear and reliable processes. But human beings are not machines and their experiences are contingent: their behaviour changes with different people, in different situations and at different times. When two people speak, shared knowledge may give their words a sense unavailable to a third person without that knowledge. People are malleable and porous, constantly influenced by what is around them. They need to learn how to live in a world of uncertainty, where interaction with others cannot always be predicted or relied upon.

Among the many paradoxes of artistic practice is that it demands empathy, engagement, openness and vulnerability towards the other but produces experiences that remain internal, unshareable and ultimately unquestionable. As John Carey, another professor of literature, has pointed out, '*other people's feelings cannot be accessed*' [5]. Artistic experiences can be claimed or denied with equal confidence, and that makes them a very safe place for interacting with others. Though they articulate profound feelings, beliefs and values, they do so in ways that people need not commit to: there is an essential deniability to most artistic experiences. Beliefs and values form the basis of social relations. They govern the degree to which individuals or groups find one another mutually acceptable. The arts make a space within which our beliefs can be formed, experienced, questioned and reformed; at the same time, they enable people to learn how to explore beliefs through interaction with others. A rich access to such experiences can give children and young people capacities and understanding that will serve them throughout their lives.

Exploration

The arts have an important if not always self-conscious place in most people's lives, though the work that matters to them is not always that which others would wish them to like. But setting aside, for the moment at least, contested ideas of artistic worth, it is obvious that people would not spend so much time watching films and drama, reading, listening to music or looking at pictures, to say nothing of amateur participation, unless it meant a lot to them. And it rarely means more than when they are children because then they are living an experience of continual exploration. (Most adults, unfortunately, lose that sense of unmediated exposure to the world, as they fall into the illusion of thinking they understand it: that is one reason why descriptions of artists, by other adults, so often use terms such as playful and child-like.) Art is among the most flexible, enjoyable, varied

and exciting ways children have of engaging safely with the external world. It offers a secure bridge between external and interior worlds, and it is by constant use that children deepen their understanding of both, and learn to make their own judgements.

Art's role in permitting exploration is central to its importance in childhood. In a school day dictated by the learning outcomes of every lesson, there should be some activity which is itself an outcome rather than a vehicle for instruction. Good artists cannot say where their work will arrive, only where they think they are aiming: indeed, it is a reasonable test of a good art education project that its *results* cannot be known in advance or guaranteed. If the aim is to produce something sure to look good on the classroom walls for parents' evening, the activity is likely to be less valuable as art. Unless there is the possibility of failure—and learning that failure is both normal and survivable is one of the most important things that children should bring into adulthood—there is no real creativity at work. The principal task of an artist working with young people is to ensure that the journey itself, the experience of participation, is so rich and rewarding that failure to reach an anticipated outcome is no more than disappointing. It should encourage the participants to reflect on the ground they have covered and how they might move on with a better chance of success next time.

But outright failure is unusual when children are supported imaginatively through a creative process. The trust that gives them confidence is mirrored in the confidence that an experienced artist will have in them during a workshop: they will be trusted to succeed in their own terms. This is not because there are no standards or because success is easy but because children set themselves goals that they can imagine and what they can imagine is within their grasp, even when they do not yet have the technical or other skills they may gain as they grow older. Young people need to be trusted and, like most people, they respond to trust by proving themselves trustworthy. It is a calculated risk, but the arts are not about giving something ready made to children—there is no shortage of such experience elsewhere in their lives—but about empowering them to take an autonomous role in shaping their own experiences. (Paradoxically, an artist working with children, whether in school or elsewhere, is often expected by teachers to deliver *better* outcomes than a normal class, if only to justify their inclusion in the timetable governed by instrumental education policies).

Wonder and empathy

Such autonomy helps foster other important aspects of artistic experience, including a capacity to wonder and to empathise. Good artists remain able to look at the world as if for the first time and, by doing so, they can question how it is seen. They help revive a proper sense of the extraordinary adventure it is to live at this time, in this place, and with these possibilities. Wonder also imbues many of the processes they use: turning out a plaster cast to reveal negative space, making and transforming a digital image, or producing a satisfying sound from an instrument are experiences that feed a child's natural capacity to marvel. A child who marvels at what other people do, or are, or think, or say, uses empathy, essential recognition that other people are also autonomous beings, observing us as we observe them. Seeing how others have responded to the same idea,

and yet produced different images or stories, is part of learning to place oneself in the world and in relation to others, rather than as its centre. As people externalise themselves through their art, they engage with the very different visions of others, and gradually develop their own sense of what they like, what they feel comfortable with and what they believe.

Exposure to the arts is part of how people find their values. By working through a diversity of books, good and bad, thrilling and dull, children begin to develop their own taste—but only if the books are the work of artists, such as Tove Jansson, Dr Seuss, Hergé or Roald Dahl, rather than the reading schemes that grade ascent of the language mountain. Those may have their place, but they do little to feed a child's imagination or to help them understand themselves in the world. Their stories are forgettable. Their ideological frameworks instruct rather than question, and it is not access to instruction that children lack. Later on, it is in passionate discussion of the merits of bands, films, books and TV shows that teenagers define themselves and their relationships with others, helping them build a sense of shared identity through infinite subtle cultural distinctions obscure to their parents. The sense of identity, shared and individual, that children build through immersion in the arts as they grow stays with them throughout their lives, shaping the kind of people they think they are and forming important tokens of recognition.

Finding a voice

So the arts provide children and young people with opportunities to explore, to wonder, to empathise and to find their own sense of values: at the same time, they provide young people with a voice. Because the arts space, unless misused, is safe, it enables the most timid or uncertain to express themselves, and because the language and skills are different, it may be quite different children who shine than those who excel in the classroom. Artists experienced in work with schools will be familiar with the teacher's surprise at how a particular child has been transformed during an arts workshop; this comment from a teacher is typical: *'He usually finds it hard to concentrate for any length of time, whereas on the day he sustained interest for nearly one and a half hours'* [6]. In fact, this should not be surprising, since the arts create a completely different kind of space in which children can find their own position. The child who struggles with spatial concepts in mathematics may find them entirely natural in choreography. Finding a voice, and the confidence to use it, is the other side of the empathy required to listen to others: collectively, they are essential to becoming an autonomous member of a democratic society. It looks like play, but young people's engagement with art is more profoundly serious than most people imagine.

Playful adventures

Children and young people get most from art when, paradoxically, least is intended. When art is used as a tool for instruction—deliberately to build skills and confidence, to address 'offending behaviour', or to pass on cultural or identity values—it becomes just another part of the education system. It ceases to be a space for learning and becomes, like maths or science, a means of teaching. The child's experience switches from an active one of discovery to a passive one of reception and response. Art is neither more nor less effective in this purpose than

any other field of knowledge: success depends on other factors. It is not even particularly interesting, either in the processes employed or in the products that result.

But when children's access to art is more autonomous—and, as I have argued, art is a very safe territory on which young people can explore the benefits and risks of autonomy—it opens up remarkable new opportunities for personal growth and development. The many and varied projects of the ARTES community demonstrate art's potential in supporting the learning of children and young people and helping them grow up to live, work, create and lead in the complex societies of 21st century Europe. Through working in theatre, visual art, music and digital media, in discovering traditional and new forms, in creating individually and together, and in sharing the results with each other, with their families, with friends and with strangers, the participating young people will always be learning. Their experiences will often lead to positive personal changes welcomed by parents, sought by teachers and required by government.

But engaging with art needs to happen within a liberal, child-centred education framework that encourages the child to find their own way, that genuinely enables them to be the best they can be and not just conform to an external standard. Art's deepest, and very real benefits, come as gifts, unexpected and unobserved. Those who demand them as tribute will get, at best, a hollow simulacrum. As the instruction and testing of children becomes more and more dominant in education, and as the future it is supposed to prepare them for becomes less and less predictable, art still provides a safe alternative space within which to explore, discover and learn. It is more important than ever those children and young people should be enabled to engage with art in the way that it works best: on their own terms.

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THE IMITATION CIRCLE AS A PRACTICE OF BELONGING

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ABSTRACT

This paper is about a game called “the imitation circle” and it is a piece of research investigating the behavior of groups of people of different ages (between 6 and 70 years old) who took part in this game. The imitation circle is a game of imitation of gestures and voices.

Following my observations I would say that this kind of approach leads almost always to a positive sense of sharing and of belonging; moreover it is an important base from which to enter gradually into a creative dimension.

The observations are based mostly on two aspects: 1) the consciousness or unconsciousness of our own codes of expression; 2) the ritualistic dimension of the game.

In this game it is possible to search and find universal codes, identifiable at every age, and, for this reason, can be a way of getting to know and making comparisons between different people and different generations.

There are several studies demonstrating how, through imitation, human beings establish a first contact of mutual confidence, even when they do not know each other, and how people are in general more attracted to those who imitate their own gestures.

Imitation intended as a feeling of vibration to be received and reproduced in a group can produce a common sense of familiarity, which is really important when working in a creative context with strangers.

In this game imitation helps us investigate our human nature and become more aware of our own communication levels.

Through the deepening of awareness of the imitation act it is possible to stimulate creativity.

All that human beings learn comes from imitation, starting in the first hours after birth (as the studies of Meltzoff e Moore have demonstrated). This function is essential for human beings to understand actions and emotions belonging to other people, or to experiment a sort of empathy. It is also important for understanding our own nature as something not separate from other human beings. I'm con-

vinced that the power of this game lies in the understanding that every detail of every single gesture is mirrored in the universal human which everyone carries inside him or herself. For this reason people of all ages can experience together the imitation circle, creating a communication between different generations in a clear and amusing way.

Introduction

For several years I have been leading workshops on drama game and the expressivity of the body and the voice, and I would like to reflect on one of the essential tools setting up the base of my work and creating the fertile ground from where to start.

The work that I'm carrying out and leading, with groups -of children teens and adults - almost always starts with a game that I consider useful in order to produce a strong sense of union and sharing in a short time and to establish a common communication code.

I call this game the "imitation circle". It consists of a very simple practice that the majority of people working in the pedagogical theatre field certainly know, but I'd like to reflect on this, because I think there is something of great value in this game, both on the symbolic and on the "energetic" level.

For me, the imitation circle is a game, a study, a way to communicate, an investigation of the human being and an enjoyable occasion to meet other people, as well as a creative act to share.

How to play it

The game works this way: I begin by giving a stimulus to the group, arranged in a circle, making a gesture and a sound at the same time; then I ask to the whole group (all together or one by one) to imitate me in the closest way they can; at the end of the first circle, I change the gesture and sound and we continue the game.

Gradually I start putting every kind of emotion in the gesture, changing and transforming the mood and the expressions, circle by circle.

So I can observe the relationship of the participants with various emotions (anger, sadness, and joy in all possible shadings...).

Perhaps the most important aspect I'm trying to develop is non-verbal communication as a shared sign; the idea of an universal communication through those characteristics that belong to human beings, which can be found in ourselves and in our actions and are recognized by everybody.

Sometimes I start the game with gestures only, without sounds; it is interesting to observe how many ways we have to say something without words and how some gestures are universal and others particular of a specific place.

The basic game of the imitation circle can lead to a lot of successive developments.

In this context imitation is used primarily as a game of listening(feeling), where in the first stage the focus is not on personal creativity, but on listening(feeling) to the frequency of an intention or emotion.

Finding a frequency and its expression at a collective level leads us to continually recognize ourselves as the human race and to share that aspect. So our emotional and expressive states are living together in that moment.

It's not, then, about mocking somebody or something, but about integrating, "hosting" that something inside us.

Living together, at the same time, an emotion, even if simulated, doesn't expose us to the judgement of others, and allows us to live in the situation with more serenity and irony.

One of the things we can observe is that, no matter how accurately a person mimics a gesture or attitude, there is always a personal ingredient making this gesture unique, even if we all are doing the same movement.

Uniqueness and equality with our fellow human beings are some of the principles on which I always try to base my workshops.

Consciousness of our human nature

According to my observations, in any category of people (if we can define categories), the main tendency is to manifest two possible characters: some try to catch as much as possible of the original intention (suggested by me); and others, more or less naturally, are tempted to change the imitated gesture, transforming and shaping it, according to their own nature.

The reflection that I always try to make about this concerns the level of awareness of the acting person; if people are conscious when they change something and if, once conscious, there is a will to do so, or not.

How much our own nature affects our effort, regardless of our will and our initial intentions; and how much do we realize how our nature really shows herself to others?

Sometimes (or I could say very often) our nature is more transparent than we think, and operates in spite of our will, efforts and intentions; the question is, to what extent are we aware of how our nature shows itself to the external world.

At the beginning of a workshop I think it's important to ask participants to try to be equal, because they can feel themselves as part of the same situation, but at the same time they can observe the differences between each other.

In this, sharing frequently produces a sense of familiarity (the familiarity and relaxing in the group is an important element of balance for the creative work, because it predisposes us to be open and calm towards other people). We can

feel this sense of familiarity with strangers too; it's mostly the level of reception and welcomeness that we can feel in the group's space, giving us a tranquility similar to what we feel in intimate situations, and that because of this is familiar to us. Several studies about imitation and also a recent study from the University of Parma demonstrate how "E' come se attraverso l'imitazione si canalizzassero le preferenze sociali e di fatto si rafforzassero i legami sociali fra individui." ("imitation was like a way to channel social preferences, effectively reinforcing the social bonds between individuals") (A. Paukner, S. J. Suomi, E. Visalberghi and P. F. Ferrari, 2009: pp. 880-883) [1]

Creativity is not separated from imitation

Someone argued with me that imitation doesn't help to stimulate personal creativity, and on the contrary it limits fantasy and the creative process, but I agree only in part with this observation.

I start from the idea that imitation is the foundation of the human being, without it, it would be difficult to survive (how the studies of several scientist tell us, like Meltzoff e Moore [2], or the theory of the mirror neurons of Giacomo Rizzolati [3]); and even creativity comes, in a way, from the imitation of something that is already present within, or that emerges from the unconscious at that moment. Also Aristoteles said in his "Poetics" that "Infatti l'imitare è connaturato agli uomini fin dalla fanciullezza (...) e connaturato è il piacere che tutti hanno dell'imitazione" (Aristotele, trad. 2008, pag. 19-23)[4]

We could say that when we create something really new, we are deeply connected with the universe.

For this reason, this method is not opposed to a free creation, but is integrated with it. The listening/feeling of each of us is composed of several elements, it's like a fluid mixture in constant movement between inner and outer perception, between what we are listening/feeling inside us and what we are listening/feeling out of us, from the environment, emotions, sounds and colors everything around us.

The imitation circle helps to refine this listening/feeling and its various levels. Breathing together, or singing the same tone trying to find the same vibration in the same rhythm is a practice that leads the group to feel a collective sensation very quickly, but at the same time teaches something new about themselves and their expressive capacity. The studies of the Canadian psychologist Albert Bandura pointed out that imitation isn't just copying or repetition, but a learning system from which every subject pulls out some aspects and modifies others, translating them in his or her own personal behaviour's model. [5]

I think that the work on imitation offers, in some contexts, a useful 'crutch' for people who do not have a well-developed relationship with their own creativity.

Very often those who are not used to playing with creativity or to individually developing the their own expression, when faced with a request in this sense, can feel pressured or embarrassed, and even in children this discomfort can manifest itself clearly.

Of course imitation is only a phase, after which it's important to find another kind of creativity.

The imitation circle is the beginning of a path.

From the first step we can develop other methods, such as, for example, going individually to the center of the circle and making your own gesture or saying something about yourself (what I love, what scares me, what makes me angry...), or walking in different ways, or dancing freely or searching for some particular gesture.

I also experimented with the imitation circle as a support to teach a foreign language, and I found it very interesting.

An enjoyable ritual

Don't forget that the imitation circle can be really enjoyable; children usually find this exercise great fun, they like it and ask to repeat and repeat it in every meeting and also with adults it's a very interesting experiment, because it leads to deep concentration.

In fact it can be considered a kind of ritual and this ritualistic aspect is always very helpful in working with groups and generally with kids.

To ensure that the work is fluid, it's important to establish a code to be shared with the group, a common ground that will include us in the group quickly and its creative context (regardless of how the group will be led).

Through a ritual form you can transmit a sense of community and how it's important to share space, gestures, laughter, silence, respect and confrontation...

The form of the ritual has to be clear, with just a few rules... a place where each of us can recognize himself or herself.

Usually the ritual that I lead is composed of a rhythm, simple gestures and a song (also just a short melodic cell); on this basic structure you can integrate something calmer or more energizing, depending on the type of work that we're interested in playing.

The importance of a ritual dimension is related to the possibility that the ritual offers to attune everybody to the same frequency.

According to the circumstances, each person brings moods, emotions and thoughts that are very different. Through the ritual you can channel them into a more collective and less individual feeling.

I think that the game of imitation can be a way to move beyond differences, searching for an ideal of fraternity, also through the deep enjoyment that we can feel watching each other.

At the end of this short reflection about the imitation circle, I'd like to ask a question: through work/play like this, searching to discover and investigate human nature and its behaviors, can we find a connection with our spirituality?

If we think that spirituality has its roots in a deep contact with ourselves, with our own body and with the consciousness of ourselves; if we think that wisdom comes from the ability to understand the human being, to investigate it and to affect it, then any activity that leads to this path is a way to develop part of our spirituality. In this way, every subject establish a relationship with others and, through own body, own voice and own particular expression connect oneself with the own soul and with others souls. [6].

For everybody

Experimenting the imitation circle with groups of people of mixed ages, from 6 to 70 years, I can say without doubt that this exercise/game is suitable to all ages; the importance of expressive activity in a transgenerational group is for me of primary importance.

In my opinion the main value of an imitation circle in a multigenerational group is to find an open and free way of communicating that will unite the human, will work with all ages and will educate everybody mutually.

Through the individual expression that every one of us brings to the group, we can perceive that universal part which joins us and in which we are mysteriously involved.

Obviously it's only a point of departure, a small seed which can germinate if the condition is favourable.

I think we need to go beyond the stereotypes that divide us continually into categories that see the human being as divided into sectors and groups and cannot see a thread uniting every age deeply.

I feel that the need to meet all together is stronger today than ever; playing the imitation circle could be a small contribution to finding a way for more conscious communication.

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TEACHING LANGUAGES THROUGH MOVIE MAKING

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ABSTRACT

The Teaching Languages through Movie Making (TLMM) is a language teaching method based on the creation of a short film by the students. It won the European Label for Languages in 2010 and it has been further developed within the framework of the European programme LLP thanks to the project financed with funds of the Leonardo "CiLL, Creativity in Language Learning" and the Leonardo Transfer of Innovation "Movet" project. It has also been included in the In Service Training Comenius Grundtvig catalogue and has received funds from Grundtvig to set up a workshop.

The TLMM method is designed to teach languages in an effective and motivating way, by placing the students' creativity at the hub of the learning process. In fact, the creation of a script and acting it out to make a short film, enabling them to acquire an authentic language, stimulates students to focus their attention on the linguistic meaning rather than the grammar. By having to recreate a setting similar to real life, the contents of the script must be as close as possible to the real speech of the target language. Moreover, the creation of a short film is also a task that students find entertaining and motivating; this perception helps increase their motivation to learn the language. Finally, in order to complete the task, there must be ongoing interaction among the students who in this way are able to use and improve their language skills through continuous communication in the target language which is used not only in writing the script but also in every stage of making the short film.

The theories of the method are based on pragmatic language teaching, in accordance with the concepts of "communicative competence" and "speech acts" of the communicative approach. Thanks to its intrinsic characteristics, TLMM also allows for in-depth analyses of non-verbal and para-verbal communication, as well as careful evaluations of a sociolinguistic and phonetic nature regarding the text that the students create and enact.

Teaching Languages through Movie Making

Several years ago I was asked to work as a tutor for a summer programme for foreign teenagers who came to Italy to learn Italian. I knew which types of problems I would be up against in handling a rowdy group of teenagers; kids who are not yet fully adults but think they are, seeking both independence and approval of

their peers, and baulking against any authoritative approach. For these reasons, very often in class we witness refusal of educational activities that are considered childish, or teaching methods based on the teacher's authority. Aware of the difficulties I would encounter, I searched for activities to propose after the lessons that would be fun and at the same time helpful in learning Italian. As I had previously taught cinema I wondered whether the creation of a short film in Italian might be the answer. When I suggested this activity to the students, their reactions exceeded my best expectations: the students accepted this idea with great enthusiasm and promptly wrote a screenplay which they learnt off by heart and then enacted. After this, they immediately asked if they could make another one and some of them even extended their stay in Florence in order to complete it. From teens with very little interest in cultural activities and Italian lessons, they soon turned into active students who were eager to learn the language which they needed in order to write, act out and interact with each other - in other words, to express themselves.

In a very short time, TLMM has been used with students of all ages and all language levels. In fact, students can produce screenplays at all levels depending on their own skills. The choice of subject matter, as well as the possibility for free expression, allow for stimulating the interest of students of all ages. Thanks to its vast versatility, this method also can be used in groups of students at different language levels, by dividing their tasks and the rolls they have to interpret, all based on their individual abilities.

What is Teaching Languages through Movie Making?

TLMM is a language teaching method based on the creation of a script by the students, which is then learnt by heart and a short film made by the students themselves[1]. The role of the teacher is not that of a lecturer who gives a lesson *ex cathedra*, but rather, that of collaborator and organiser of a task, where possible, it should be carried out independently by the students.

The first step of the project is the organisation of the class, which by working together, must create an original script. The idea underlying the script should preferably come from the class itself after a collective discussion following brainstorming. This will mean that the creation of the entire short film will be more motivating due to being based on a theme chosen by the students themselves, and therefore, more to their liking. Alternatively, if the teacher decides to develop specific themes or speech acts in the class, the theme could be decided in advance by the teacher and then discussed together with the students.

The second step in creating a script is its division into modules (scenes) that groups of students can write on their own. During the creation of the text, by drawing from their imagination and creativity, the students have to use particular speech acts and reproduce situations and interactions which must be as realistic as possible in order to emulate the authentic aspects of the target language in these situations. In this step it is normal for the students to have difficulty in expressing themselves correctly in a language which is not their own. However, it is possible to overcome these shortcomings in various ways, depending on the educational method that the teacher (or the group) decides to adopt. If the

teacher or the class are accustomed to adopting a deductive type method, then according to the subject matter chosen the teacher can identify which special skills the students must possess to carry out the task and as a result, several lessons might be necessary before drafting the script. If the students are used to an inductive type of teaching then there could be several lessons on metalinguistic reflection in the aim of writing a script and then correcting it based on the new skills acquired. Finally, it will be possible for the teacher to interact with the students while the activity is being performed in order to help them complete the task, this taking on the role of language facilitator in the strict sense of the word. However, where possible, it is always important to encourage students' creativity and freedom of expression.

The next stage in the writing of the script is the choice of roles, their learning by heart and acting out in front of the camera.

The choice of roles may represent a critical phase of the project. In order to avoid discontent and fractures within the group, it is better for the teacher not to assign the roles which should instead be decided by the class itself after a collective discussion. If situations of conflict persist, then the assigning of roles can be carried out by drawing out of a hat the parts that cannot be decided unanimously following the discussion.

Thanks to TLMM, the memorising speech acts and communication functions, which is usually the phase that is least loved by students, is performed actively due to being essential for the creation of a short film. The writing of a script, its learning by heart and subsequent enacting are complex tasks that make it possible to fix the new skills learnt and developed during the task in the long-term memory[2], to acquire them in the Krashen-type meaning of the term[3], and therefore to reuse them in a flexible manner. Consequently, TLMM is not just a simple way to study a language, but also an effective method that allows for significant development of participants' language skills while exploiting and at the same time, stimulating, their artistic and creative side.

Why use Teaching Languages through Movie Making?

Besides being a useful method for stimulating young people to learn a language, Teaching Languages through Movie Making has also been widely used with adult students with excellent results. The creative and playful component of the method is important but this is only one of its characteristics. In fact, TLMM enables the acquisition of a language by focussing on the linguistic requirements for writing the script. The creation of a text centred around the students' specific linguistic needs and its memorising, which allows for fixing of speech acts and the realistic simulation of the situation in which the speech acts are carried out as required by the screenplay, also enable an in-depth analysis not only of the language but also of the co-text and the communicative context.

Finally, by stimulating ongoing interaction among the students, which is necessary for completing the project, TLMM makes it possible to develop bonds and relationships in the group that often continue even after the project is over. TLMM allows for focussing the students' attention on several components which

are essential for acquiring an effective command of the language. Since the students have to make a short film in which the dialogues and scenes must be as realistic as possible, they are stimulated to learn and use an authentic language. In addition, by having to interact amongst themselves, they improve not only their written and oral skills, but also the ability to communicate. In fact, it is important for the project to be developed by interacting in the target language. In this way, the students improve their language skills not only through working to complete the project, but also by interacting with each other.

As they have to act out and create realistic situations, TLMM also allows the teacher to focus the group's attention on social, sociolinguistic and paralinguistic aspects of the target language. The analysis of some of the scenes and their performance actually makes it possible to naturally introduce a discussion dealing with some of the problems linked to social conventions (for example, when to use formal/informal speech, how to take the floor when speaking), several uses of the language linked to the various linguistic variables (diaphasic, diamesic and diastratic in particular), and some of the communication methods in which it is also necessary to have knowledge of the paralinguistic aspects (such as non-verbal communication and intonation).

Starting from the script, the teacher can create *ad hoc* some specific lessons on these topics that could effectively improve the participants' language skills (understood as the ability to use the right linguistic action at the right time and in the right context [4]).

The making of a short film also allows for focussing the students' attention on certain phonetic aspects of the target language. By viewing the short film completed by the students, it is possible to allow them to observe important or recurrent phonetic errors during the acting. Alternatively, it is also possible to intervene on the phonetic actions during the filming stage, pointing out phonetic imperfections to students and perhaps asking them to repeat the scene in an attempt to improve their own phonetic expression.

Theoretical framework

The creation of a short film by the students is a method based on modern language teaching techniques, the philosophy of which offers ideas and inspirations for being used as effectively as possible.

The underlying reference is the communication method, with the theorising of the "Speech acts" [5] [2] and the learning of a language aimed at learning to "deal with the language"[6] and the practical skills in general. Moreover, the writing of a script allows for gaining insight into and analysing the context in which it takes place, in full agreement with the concept of communicative competence theorised in D. Hymes' ethnolinguistic essays [4].

Through the writing and memorising of a script, TLMM stimulates students to learn speech acts that are useful in creating a dialogue or a monologue. In the scripts the students must learn how to invite, give advice, and introduce themselves; more generally, in order to complete a task they have to learn how to use

the language in a practical manner, and to express themselves. In addition, as a short film simulates real situations and should, as far as possible, resemble reality, the students are forced to analyse the individual situations and to analyse the most appropriate diaphasic, diamesic and diastratic variables within the speech acts for creating a realistic script.

TLMM is not merely an excellent instrument for the pragmatic application of the theory of speech acts and communicative competence; rather, it is also inspired by and draws ideas from other language teaching methods which were developed during the eighties. One of the first to influence the theoretical development of TLMM was the Project Work method [7] [5] from which it gained inspiration for the self-organisation of the group in order to achieve a certain goal, and for the figure of the teacher who no longer has a role that is clearly differentiated from that of the students, but instead collaborates together with them as a facilitator and organiser for achieving the envisaged objective, in this specific case, the creation of a short film. In addition to Project Work, TLMM has also been influenced by other methods, including Cooperative Learning, based on the interaction within a group of students who work together to reach a common goal, and Robert di Pietro's Strategic Interaction [8], in which the students are stimulated to construct effective language models within the framework of precise "Scenarios".

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DESIGNING SOCIAL CHANGE: INQUIRY-BASED PRACTICE & TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

This paper shares an exploratory and inquiry-based graphic design project and the resultant pedagogic approach that offers arts and design educators ideas on teaching to instigate positive social change. The author summarizes a year-long fellowship project where he worked as a change agent in service to a partnership of six non-profit, after-school arts programs in Providence, Rhode Island who are organized as the Providence Youth Arts Collaborative (PYAC).

The intention of this project was two-fold. The primary effort was to investigate ways graphic design can be strategically used to seed interest and empower youth to make positive choices with how they spend their time after school, such as enrolling in a free PYAC member Arts program. The second aspect was to use design to strengthen the visual identity of PYAC in order to unify their voices and improve their offerings.

The design process and the visual outputs are presented as a model for teaching at high school and college levels that cultivate awareness of the social power of visual communication and a civically engaged process. Systems thinking and theoretical models of social change are discussed in support of the project intentions.

From the printed word to Graphic Design

Since the birth of Typography in the middle 1400s, religion, politics, and industry have utilized the power of the printed word and image to benefit their communication needs. Over time, a sophisticated commercial art evolved to service those needs, which was later termed *Graphic Design*. Graphic Design shapes visual culture and can be part of society's problems as it may be used to fabricate artificial need and desire. It also holds potential to benefit the greater good because it has the power to shape how we perceive our environment and therefore how we live. Design education equips students well to meet the demands of commerce, but it could better nurture its potential to influence the greater good. For that to happen there needs to be teachable alternatives to the dominant commercial and client-driven practice model. As educators we can offer alternative models that cultivate a critical involvement with the practice to enable students to transform their world.

The graphic designer Jan Van Toorn writes extensively on the need for a change in the design practice. He claims that graphic design has reached a point that it no longer has room for “emancipatory engagement”. He explains the practice as “imprisoned in a fiction which does not respond to factual reality beyond the representation of the culture industry and its communicative monopoly” [1]. He asserts that designers must oppose this monopoly through critical practice. If designers were more involved in the initial planning of projects (upstream), rather than production (downstream), then there would be more opportunities to serve the greater good. Traditionally designers work somewhere in between marketing (upstream) and production (downstream) [2].

This essay summarizes a project carried out to extend the design process upstream and to work in a strategic and civically engaged manner. Tim Brown of the design firm IDEO popularized the designer-as-strategist concept with the term “Design Thinking”. He defines this as something unique a designer can offer at the planning stages because design is an activity that is “human-centered” and it “relies on our ability to be intuitive, to recognize patterns, to construct ideas that are emotionally meaningful as well as functional” [3]. Design education fosters empathy, analytical problem solving, and intuition. Introducing more strategy to visual education is a logical step to empower students to critically engage with their world through their hands and minds.

The project and the process

The Providence Youth Arts Collaborative was an ideal community to explore designer as strategist for social change. Their offerings are one of many positive and negative choices that lure youth for their free time after school. The community also needs them: a rough statistic offered by PYAC was that there are twenty seven thousand Providence public school students and twenty-two K-12 Arts teachers [4].

The design process and resultant visual outputs were guided by the inquiry question: *How can graphic design improve the credibility and visibility of the Providence Youth Arts Collaborative so that they can increase their offerings to youth and encourage youth to enroll in an after-school program?* This inquiry-based approach is not common in design education, which typically models a client and a designer-in-service scenario. In contrast, a civically engaged inquiry-based approach leaves room for questions and discovery as students search for support to reinforce their ideas on how to deal with systemic problems that cannot often be premeditated and must be worked with over a long duration of time.

To fully understand design in its social context, I involved a range of viewpoints to give all stakeholders a voice in my process. The inquiry methods were interviewing, surveys, workshops, meetings, and work critiques. I interviewed students and the PYAC mentors to learn their thoughts on effective communication channels and a suitable design tone. I held workshops with a high school student at New Urban Arts (a PYAC member) and a former student from my university. I attended monthly PYAC meetings where we brainstormed and critiqued ideas. My design team (the two students) and I read case studies and theories concerning social change. These activities aided us in our design decisions by providing feedback,

expectations of impact, and theoretical support. A useful model of social change was *Diffusion of Innovations*, which studies the process of how an innovation is “communicated through certain channels and adopted over time among members in a social system” [5]. Those who embrace the innovation are divided into groups according to the time they embrace it: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. According to this model opinion leaders and peer-to-peer networks are the most effective change agents. Utilizing this well-established model, we designed outputs that exert an influence over time and through the change agents. To integrate this model into our design process we defined the current PYAC students and mentors as the innovators and early adopters with peer-to-peer influence and as potential opinion leaders. Guidance counselors were also considered opinion leaders.

In the workshops with my design team we created social system maps (education, peers, cultural, recreational), which helped to identify effective openings (see Fig. 1) within the systems where design outputs can assist change agents to attract youth to PYAC programs.

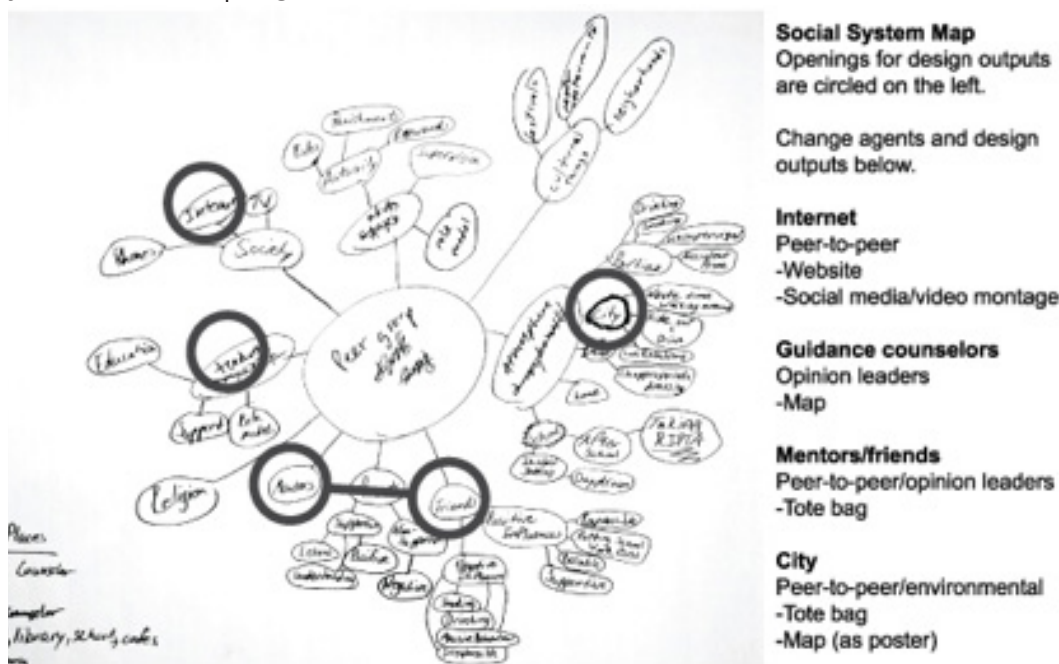


Fig. 1, social system map, “openings” circled, agents and outputs on right

The visual outputs

I surveyed the PYAC members at the beginning of the design process to learn what they thought was an appropriate visual tone for the work. The keywords derived from those surveys included; urban, loose, serious, playful, not centralized, and transparent. These words along with the *Diffusion of Innovations* model drove the mood and method of the design outputs described below.

The primary elements of the visual identity are the visual language and the logo. The logo I designed represents the six members of PYAC through the use of six dots, which are connected by gradient-filled lines forming a network that expands into space to create a metaphor for idea exchange. The star suggests that their unity is greater than their individuality.



Fig. 2, visual outputs, visit the website at: www.pyac-ri.org

Together with my design team we created an icon family to represent the PYAC's offerings. The icons communicate on a purely visual level and are core elements to the visual identity.

The website was an intensive editing process to choose images that appeal to all stakeholders (youth, members, nonprofits, and funding agencies). It provides information about PYAC offerings for potential students. To utilize peer-to-peer influence and guide people to the website, we decided tote bags would be effective as they can be a reusable and wearable object by innovators and early adopters. To engage with the audience, the tote bags carry a question: "What Can You Do?" which is surrounded by the words; music and theatre, film, visual arts, and dance.

Informal interviews with about thirty youth at New Urban Arts, led my design team to conclude that social media is a prevalent means through which youth receive information. Considering this, I made a video montage that tells a diverse visual story of all of the PYAC offerings and others successfully engaging in an artistic activity. This resides on the website and on a social media outlet for peer-to-peer sharing and viral influence.

We designed a map that charts the PYAC member locations in the city and describes their offerings. It doubles as a poster and a hand-out. It was sent to guidance councilors and PYAC members with the intention to utilize both peer-to-peer and opinion leader influence. It was printed on paper made of 100% post-consumer content and with low toxicity inks. The map is a form of empowerment as it informs youth of free arts opportunities. It has received much praise from PYAC and the Providence public school system. Based on meta-analyses of similar outreach campaigns the intended effect of this project on the Providence public school youth community is expected to be 5% or less [6].

Toward an alternative teaching model

The following reflections are offered to those interested to bring similar work into their classroom. Designing for the greater good benefits from holistic considerations in a process that addresses larger macro concerns of community and social improvement and micro issues of environmentally friendly materials. A clearly defined and realistic set of objectives that state the desired change in the beginning of a project will help focus and guide the work. Systems mapping will help develop an overview of the social terrain and to identify openings for influence and intervention with graphic design. Community engagement throughout the design process ensures the work maintains its purpose and provides a forum for feedback.

Define a point-of-view to approach the objectives from a position. Students would benefit from a four-part process of reading, writing, interviewing, and making. They are mutually dependent for ideas to develop in critically informed ways. Design for change to unfold gradually over time. Peer-to-peer influence and opinion leaders have proven benefits of influencing change [7]. Surveys are a valuable form of feedback and measure both before and after the design work.

Choose methods and materials that are ethically produced and environmentally sound, such as recycled and sustainably manufactured papers and ink without toxic metallic components. The printing industry is the third largest producer of waste [8] so there is a lot of potential to minimize any environmental impact in the production aspect of the work. Low toxicity plastic like #2 (HDPE) is a good choice and has a high recycling rate, while #3 (PVC) is one of the worst both in toxicity and recycling [9]. Plan ahead to avoid overnight air shipping as it contributes to five times more CO2 emissions than ground transport [10].

Conclusion

This project adds to the ongoing conversation on the social value of art and design with hopes that sharing my process will further extend this project's mission. It offers an alternative thread to weave into the fabric of art and design education. Expanding the definition of the design process to include upstream and community engagement is a needed alternative in the practice and could be an integral component of high school and undergraduate visual education. This alternative method coupled with grant writing skills would provide students with tools to start self-initiated projects and lead to new models of community-based design practices.

Design is a social art. We use it to shape how we live and understand the world around us, and we are shaped by it in return. By teaching art and design in ways that deal curiously and critically with our world, we can empower students to change it.

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ART AS A TOOL FOR INTEGRATION AND GROUP DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

When we talk about change in society and we express our desire to live in a better world we often forget what exactly we would like to see around us and what exactly are the things that we can do in order to make our desires come through. With this paper I would give an example on how practicing art could be a manageable and at the same time creative solution in such a process. Following some basic guidelines and a clear vision we can live up to our mission and we can enjoy our creative contribution in a deliberated way while developing children, adults and making a significant change in society. This is what the European MUS-E network provides together with the Art4Rom project, both initiated by the International Yehudi Menuhin Foundation in 1993 and 2012.

MUS-E (Music for Europe) gives the platform for all those artists who can imagine to bring and share their skills in the elementary schools, maintaining their original role in society which is to provoke emotions and actions, make people think and experience catharsis and last but not least to give an example of collaboration, “una convivenza produttiva” in every sense.

Art4Rom is a particular program. It's an example of how integration processes could be planned developed and delivered while creating new methodologies of art mediation dedicated specifically to Roma and non-Roma children with under-privileged circumstances. MUS-E Napoli, MUS-E Hungary, ETP Slovakia has done a six months piloting program with the support of the Spanish Union Romani and other partners and experts in order to develop methodologies and a collect good practices of integration and collaboration.

Both initiatives use the universal language of arts and demonstrate the impact of arts on society in a manner that it could be beneficial for ourselves and for the next generations too.

Introduction

Thank you for the possibility to address you by the occasion of the ARTES conference in one of the most beautiful Italian cities of the richest cultural heritage. We are here to talk about art, about how art could be used and applied in various ways beyond its original objective. Today we can discover and share how art can not only amuse people, but how it is one of the most important tools to touch, to involve, to encourage society and how this tool can really make a change in the long term.

Change

Let me start my presentation with the question of „Change“. We hear very often, that „people should be changed“, or „the society that we live in is now changing the lot“. With both phraseology, we talk about change as passive observers and we hope that our leaders, teachers and artists would come and make that change for and with the society. We sometimes express also our thoughts that we appreciate the activity of several organisations and initiatives, because they are going to make a change. So from this point of view always others make the changes.

In fact it's a trap, as all the changes can be made only on the level of the individual and for that the individual has to decide to be part of a change process and the individual has to make steps for change and development, or – if we want to use the model of Steven R Covey – the individual has to be proactive and stay in the circle of influence in a change process.

This is the point where art comes in. Art is one of the strongest tools to address the individual and to provoke action and/or reaction. Art has the magical power to involve people emotionally and motivate any stakeholders for self-expression, acceptance, further activities and after all further development.

So through arts the individual can be fully part of the common change process and this way change is not only the responsibility of our leaders, teachers, artists-“magicians“, but it could be the responsibility of all the group of individuals even if they are adults or children, teachers or parents, or coming from any kind of cultural background.

When we talk about “Art as a tool” it always reminds me a workshop of a shoemaker with simple and handy tools that could be properly applied in all the critical situations. So if art is a tool, it should be practical, efficient, handy and easy-to-use, like all the good tools we use and this is how the MUS-E model works, helping children, teachers and artists to stay in the circle of influence therefore being able to influence their change processes.

The MUS-E project

It's obvious now that at this point we speak about the MUS-E (Music – Europe) program a little bit more in details. Lord Yehudi Menuhin, a world famous violinist and humanitarian from the heart launched the MUS-E program 21 years ago in 9 countries in Europe in order to propose an alternative development process through the arts. You are going to hear about the MUS-E program more in details today nevertheless it makes sense to understand a bit more the basic ideas. MUS-E is not an art education program but it's an educational program through arts. MUS-E doesn't want to change the children, but would like to help children to change and develop. MUS-E doesn't want to tell you who/what is good or bad but would like to help you to be able to express yourself, to accept others and thus to be able to collaborate. Following these principles and four years of piloting in 9 countries the MUS-E methodology was set up and improved in Europe.

The idea was to provide art animations for children (between the age of 6 and 10) in under-privileged urban areas and schools on a regular basis, in order to ad-

dress social issues (just like integration, acceptance, cultural awareness, respect etc.) and provide better quality development for the children. All this inserted in the scholar curriculum on a mandatory basis.

Why are these characteristics fundamental for the MUS-E program and how art can become a really clever tool in the scholar system?

- Because art shows different dimensions of reality and it helps to work on difficult issues in a different and playful way so solutions could emerge in such a natural way that we don't even notice them.

- Because if we work with children between 6 and 10 it is the proper age to influence the way of thinking and the way of behaviour. This is the time when children seek for development and they open up their minds to absorb new knowledge. Whatever new they learn during this period becomes fundamental knowledge and basis of their interests, attitudes and values. This is the time when we can draw the attention of children to the joy and beauty of logical thinking, language and environment; therefore with systematic and well-constructed art activities we can support the acceptance of the regular disciplines of the regular curriculum.

- Regularity and standard frequency plays an important role. MUS-E children all around Europe meet professional artists of four art-forms (music, dance, theatre and fine arts) at least two times a week from 1st October till the end on May on regular basis and as part of their curriculum. In the framework of a school year children work with the same two artists and in the arch of 4 years they meet all the 4 main art-forms. This means that they experience consistence and continuity in practicing arts thus it becomes natural that dealing with arts, creativity and culture can be part of their lives in a very smooth way.

- One of the biggest issues of our school systems that children – mostly because of the lack of support of their families – don't show interest enough towards the school activities. MUS-E can give an answer to that as it's the first discipline in elementary school that helps children learning by doing and with pleasure as practicing arts can be so attractive for a child in the safe and supporting community of the classroom, that – this way – can really become the temple of knowledge joy and development which one would visit every day with faith and pleasure.

- Last, but not least the biggest advantage is that through MUS-E we can provoke a long-term change in society by developing different groups in connection with each other. Let's see that a little bit more detailed.

Group development

At his section we can understand better how art in the school environment can make a change in society and how it can go beyond the individual development of the child.

The most elementary nucleus of the MUS-E program is the classroom. We concentrate on the perfect delivery of the CAT model which is the guarantee for the prosperous collaboration between Children – Artists – Teachers.

Above we mentioned the benefits of the children, but it's also important to mention the learnings of the participating artists and teachers. In these kind of programs artists are not only producing and/or reproducing their art, but they meet a different audience: the children and the teachers. This community is much different than the regular audience who buys the tickets to a performance, or the artwork itself from the artists. These audiences often influenced by trends, commercials, or the overall opinion of the society, therefore often their behaviour is dishonest or pretentious. When an artist goes to the classroom, suddenly they meet and discover a very open, natural and honest audience. One might say that it's pure joy, but very often it happens that this "audience" is the cruellest one and can easily destroy the self-esteem of the artists. In fact, the biggest advantage for the artists is this unfiltered/honest feedback, so they can really put in consideration the strengths and the weaknesses of their method.

The teacher in the classroom is used to lead this small community in a certain way and is used to keep discipline, forward knowledge and develop children according to the scholastic curriculum that was learnt at the various universities for teaching. All of a sudden an artist arrives in the classroom and starts artistic processes with a different attitude, often in a very different way from the pedagogical standards. Of course it's "shocking" and generates tension, but step by step it turns out that these unusual activities and unusual way of communication and collaboration creates a new language in the classroom and a new code of behaviour and new standards in this community. This way the teacher is also a developing element of this nucleus.

We talked about children before, but also remember that when the children see that besides the models of teachers there is another model of the artists, they can learn not only to differentiate, but to discover that there are alternatives in learning and we have the choice to choose whenever we make a decision.

The point is that we should understand that beyond the individual benefit of children, artists and teachers there's a need and a must to develop this small community by collaboration. This could be an extraordinary example and model of cooperating with each other which can be hardly seen these days even in the families and working communities.

If we go beyond the classroom, we can't avoid the influence in the families. Parents or people who take care of the children start seeing their kids behaving in a different way. This provokes questions and reactions. When parents meet the irresistible positive changes of their children they start to be curious and interested of what is happening in the classroom, or in the school. This means that they get involved and the school can have them as new collaborators and (even theoretical) supporters of the education system.

As we go further we inevitably meet the group of organisers (schools, monitoring and quality institutions, organising associations or foundations, sponsors and supporters) who wants to make this initiative work well and prosperously. If they want to fulfil a meaningful job, they have to develop transparent and efficient communication between each other, rely on each other's resources and tal-

ents, and again collaborate with each other and with the schools and classrooms where the “real” activities are taking place. By visiting the classroom and seeing the evidence of the positive effect of art activities a sponsor/donor can become an activist and the volunteers can turn into real apostles of such an initiative. With this expansion we can create a chain of influence or a movement and provoke collaboration between various stakeholders of our society members. Let’s go further and examine one of the most interesting collaborations of this kind in the last two years.

Art4Rom

Art4Rom was created and launched in 2012 by the International Yehudi Menuhin Foundation (Brussels) involving 8 collaborating partners from Europe. The Art4ROM project aims fostering intercultural dialogue, mutual understanding and social inclusion among children (both Roma and non-Roma) aged between 5-10, by using an innovative educative methodology based on the practice of the arts in school and non-school environments.

When we talk about collaboration we have to highlight assertive behaviour as a goal in particular in the framework of the Art4Rom program. Why is it so?

Assertive behaviour is about self-representation, is about acceptance and as a consequence collaboration. When this project was launched the partners wanted to provide tools for children and their families of a specific cultural and ethnic minority (the Roma) in order to help them developing and improving their self-esteem, their ability to express and represent themselves, just as to create understanding and acceptance between them and other players of society. All this facilitated by the means and the practice of arts as a genuine resource of cultural content.

When people behave assertively they become respectful, they can replace blaming with equal responsibilities, they become constructive and engaged instead of blaming each other. Competition can be replaced by collaboration and stigmatization can be replaced by being equally different. The main goal of the Art4Rom program was to make these principles understood and applied in Roma and non-Roma communities, schools, policy makers and wider circles of society and the most important tool for this was the collection of good practices and an innovative methodology handbook to be applied.

Art4Rom was developed and tested in different realities, always with the participation of significant numbers of Roma stakeholders. During the piloting phase project members wanted to compare the impact of the methodology in different European cities with different social and political circumstances. Let me give you a couple of examples of conclusions that partners could make after the experience of the piloting.

In Naples the piloting was focusing on children of a very problematic community (Scampia) where violence, immigration and discrimination is an everyday phenomenon. With a big percentage of Roma participants the Italian partner was focusing on the multicultural and the scholastic element of the experiment by applying fine arts, poetry and music as art forms. This local piloting proved that

learning by doing (practicing arts) can be more easily adapted by children and they improve their curricular knowledge in a more efficient way.

In Hungary the methodology was tested in various cities of the country providing urban and provincial circumstances. Mainly through fine arts, music and theatre we could understand that practicing arts could create a bridge between more developed and under-developed areas of the country. The universal language of practicing arts helps teachers and institutions to apply such methodologies without making an extra effort adapting the methodology.

In Slovakia the program was delivered and tested mostly in community centres dedicated to the Roma community. With these circumstances it turned out that these actions were very often the first inspiration for intellectual development and maybe the only tool participants could have as a resource of self-esteem and self-identification. When a minority lives in deep poverty and depression it is crucial to provide the members of this minority the basic inspiration to live their lives with a more positive and constructive attitude in order to be able to make a change themselves. This issue falls back to the circle of influence and the big lack of this approach in the Roma communities. Dance and fine arts animations proved to be very efficient to address these issues in the Kosice area in Slovakia. As a conclusion we can say that in all cases arts, or practicing arts gave a purpose, a special meaning and a tool for youngsters and their parents to develop, to be able to express and represent themselves just as to be accepted in their environment by the means of collaboration.

General values and outcomes:

- Art4Rom provided the possibility to make a research and create a repository on Roma culture available in 8 languages;
- Art4Rom worked on specific topics and issues connected to Roma culture, just as independent topics and materials at the same time;
- Art4Rom put a huge emphasis on addressing the curricular disciplines and facilitate learning by practicing arts;
- Art4Rom gave the chance to artists and teachers to develop and fine-tune topic and lesson plans that can be used in various circumstances where people live in minority.

When we say this, we can come back to one of the main missions of Yehudi Menuhin and his international foundation: "Give voice to the voiceless". This quotation from the maestro is the strongest drive when we talk about the social inclusion of minority groups. Therefore we can use the Art4Rom methodologies as a flagship process that can be multiplied in several circumstances addressing several minorities.

As a matter of fact the biggest outcome and result of the Art4Rom project was to create an innovative methodology and collect the good practices of its piloting. This material is available and can be applied in every initiative that addresses intercultural dialogue, social inclusion, and fostering collaboration.

In order to conclude with this study let me draw your attention to the sustainability of such initiatives where practicing arts in the school environment is one of the key issues. If we want to have long term results and we really care about a change in society we should fulfil the needs of the stakeholders in order to behave as a coherent group or entity:

We have to be clear when we communicate the tasks and we have to monitor and follow up the results so the participants can see the process transparently. We have to focus on the group dynamics and fulfil the group needs, just as setting up the standards, coaching the participants, maintain good communication and be the first to motivate the others. This is all too little if we cannot fulfil the needs of the participating individuals so they can be motivated and really involved in the project.

With these words I wish you success in applying arts and their beautiful values in the development of our children, the future adults of our societies.

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COMMUNITY ART AND SOCIAL INCLUSION: FAR FROM A MATTER OF COURSE

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ABSTRACT

While community arts scholarship has been steadily expanding in quantity - and improving in quality - over the past fifteen years, some of it still tends to be partisan rather than rigorously researched and critical or to exclusively measure social effects without considering artistic aspects. This is partly due to what Miwon Kwon has called 'the halo-like armature of social do-goodism' (1996, 31), which some community artists adopt to avoid serious criticism, to cover up their own artistic imperfections, or to protect their future chances on the participatory arts market. To complicate matters, artists with an already respectable status in the mainstream are also discovering 'the community'. They include them as extras in aesthetically-driven stage productions or films, or even enter the homes of immigrants in semi-commercial site-specific promenade enterprises. At either end of this fascinating community arts spectrum - and all points in between - burning questions of an ethical nature lie begging for answers. It may be true, as Jan Cohen-Cruz has argued, that too many people still assume community arts 'is necessarily high on the useful end of the spectrum, but also that [this] usefulness is in inverse proportion to aesthetics' (2010, 8). However, the 'softening of boundaries' between user-driven and aesthetics-driven projects, which she proposes, may not be enough to emancipate community art. A clearer formulation or a hardening of boundaries, with regard to ethics is equally necessary to separate the wheat from the chaff. This need has become particularly acute now that in many western European countries the welfare state is being efficiently dismantled in favour of increasing citizens' involvement in their own well-being under what the Dutch government is already calling the 'participation society'. In several recent projects in which they emphatically proclaim to include the excluded, Dutch artists are demonstrating their eagerness to jump on the participation band wagon. In the mêlée of styles, approaches, and artistic disciplines, sincere or professed motivations - not to mention wishful thinking - in this rapidly expanding field, it is hard to distinguish opportunism from genuine integrity. This paper hopes to provide at least some clarity by first sketching a theoretical frame of reference with regards to keywords like 'participation' and 'empowerment'. Combined with an expanded checklist of aesthetic, social and ethical criteria, the theoretical considerations will then be integrated into a discussion of a troubling recent Dutch community arts project. This paper thus seeks to construct a new way of looking at - and through - community (or participatory) arts.

Introduction

At the end of March 2014, I witnessed a community-based theatre performance that, to my dismay, confirmed many of the prejudices those who are not familiar with this kind of work all too eagerly embrace: in terms of theatre making it was flawed and ethically the production was suspect: it placed unprepared, unaware, and vulnerable people on display on a large stage before a mixed audience of local spectators and an international crowd of seasoned community arts professionals, many of whom - despite having seen it all - were embarrassed by the spectacle. Earlier that same day and only a few miles north from where this ill-fated theatre show was being performed, a much more modest presentation was held in a retirement home. Although originally it, too, had been intent on attracting an international audience, halfway through the process the coordinating artist wisely decided to downplay her own artistic ambitions and to limit access. She had realized that the participating residents were much more vulnerable than she had anticipated and did not want to turn the event into a sideshow. Instead, she opted for an intimate live performance for no more than forty people (most of whom were fellow residents and family). In addition she commissioned the creation of a supplementary 15-minute film documentary, which - well after the event - effectively captured the beauty of the senior citizens and the process of their fascinating interactions with professional musicians and dancers, which a casual outsider would not have been able to detect during the live event.

From the tone with which I have described these two initiatives it is obvious where my sympathies lie. It suggests as yet unarticulated artistic, social and ethical criteria with which I apparently judge this kind of work. Between the lines, it also expresses an implicit critique of arts organizations and their institutional sponsors who all too easily equate participation in the arts with social inclusion. The logic seems to be: just provide an aesthetically framed platform for under-represented groups to express themselves and you will have made a substantial contribution to their social empowerment and integration. This is essentially the position of the advocates camp, represented in a recent paper called 'Academy of Participation: Capacity Building for a Culturally Inclusive Europe'. The authors claim that "participation in culture not only enriches individuals but also strengthens their social networks and brings about greater engagement with civil society" [1], citing a 2006 study from the Institute of Public Policy Research as evidence [2]. Wish it were only that simple. However, a virtual explosion of publications on participation in the arts, in development processes, or in politics tells us otherwise, or at least warns us to be more careful when making such grand claims.

The Participation Debate

The limited scope available for this essay prevents me from providing a comprehensive overview of critical views on 'participation'. The concept has been thoroughly scrutinized by political scientists, sociologists in the field of development studies, philosophers, and art scholars. Titles like *Participation: the New Tyranny?* [3] and *The Participation Nightmare* [4] explore the many pitfalls that potentially await naive facilitators in a quagmire of messy power relations and all manner of complexities underlying simplistic rhetoric that suggests participation is innately good (See also Cornwall's *Participation Reader* [5]). The discussion is intricately linked up with notions of empowerment, ownership, and community, all terms

that tend to be used rather lightly by both artists and policy makers. In her introduction to the participation section of *The Applied Theatre Reader*, Sheila Preston, summarizes the challenges as well as anyone: "participation, even if liberatory in intention and highly desirable, is far from trouble-free in practice; to achieve genuine participation is in itself complex and difficult amidst the myriad of agendas, power relations and competing ideological interests rife in most projects and settings". She usefully points to the need to look at the dynamic relations between participatory processes and the hegemony in any given context - and how participants and facilitators 'who are themselves embroiled in culture and its influences' figure in them [6]). For this reason, development expert Majid Rahnema even questions the very possibility of genuine egalitarian and value-free participation [7]. Korean-American art theoretician Miwon Kwon possibly formulates the most sobering reminder of all when it comes to overly romantic views on community arts and its inevitable empowering effects:

Underlying decades of public art discourse is a presumption that the art work – as object, event, or process – can fortify the viewing (now producing) subject by protecting it from the conditions of social alienation, economic fragmentation, and political disenfranchisement that threaten, diminish, exclude, marginalize, contradict, and otherwise "unsettle" its sense of identity. A culturally fortified subject, rendered whole and unalienated through an encounter or involvement with an art work, is imagined to be a *politically* empowered social subject with opportunity (afforded by the art project) and capacity (understood as innate) for artistic self-representation (= political self-determination) [8].

The fallacy lies precisely in this superficial equation of active involvement in an arts process with increased - and more effective - participation in political or social processes afterwards. For one thing, this causal relation has seldom been empirically investigated over a longer period of time. (In fact, the only study I know rather proves the reverse: that prior to their involvement in arts projects most participants were already disproportionately active as volunteers in social projects [9]). For another, it would require much more space than I have at my disposal here to explore the ins and outs of participation in society and politics, which obviously involves more than ticking a box on a form in a voting booth once every four years [10].

Yet, despite their understandable misgivings, neither Kwon nor Preston are completely pessimistic about participation. They are joined by an increasing chorus of scholars from a variety of disciplines who, like them, argue for less idealism and more realism. Art theoretician Grant Kester, for example, while largely positive about the potential of participatory art to "challenge dominant representation of a given community" also warns that it can "lead to a patronizing form of tourism in which the artist uses the other's culture as a romanticized site at which to parade his or her own fluency with difference" [11]. In combination with a rather superficial appeal to an idealized notion of participation and social inclusion, it was particularly this latter point which ticked me off in the Dutch project I referred to at the beginning of this paper.

Artistic Ambition

In what follows, I will omit any details that might identify the individuals involved. I will describe it as a hypothetical case rooted in reality. So: imagine a project led by professional theatre artists who toured internationally with avant-garde productions before settling in a lower income area in Amsterdam intent on collaborating with local residents. They have been working there now for over a decade and have established a solid name for themselves in this neighbourhood as well as nationally with accessible, informal arts education activities and popular events in which performance and food are combined. On the basis of these local experiences, which were lavishly documented, the company created project formats (e.g. short-term residencies leading to food and performance events) which it has tried to implement in other places. Because of time constraints, these income generating outreach enterprises have been less successful, as the artists involved have admitted to me privately. As is so often the case in this line of work, however, the official story they communicated publicly was much more positive. So much so that they received a prestigious social award for their efforts and, as a result, managed to interest one of Holland's leading mainstream theatre companies to collaborate with them. (This interest was undoubtedly fanned by the recent hype surrounding a nationally known theatre artist who had generated national media attention for *The Neighbourhood Safari*, a smartly produced site-specific show involving professionals and locals.) In addition to continuing their regular activities in the neighbourhood where they are based, the ambition now became to produce high-profile productions involving a mix of professional performers, some of the more talented neighbourhood actors they had been working with for years, and inexperienced (and vulnerable) locals they would find through short-term residencies in the cities they wanted to tour to. The explicit aim, expressed in the grant application, was to numerically increase participation in community performance projects through a repeatable format, and to enhance empowerment of the local participants (who were expected to remain active once the company had moved on). Implicitly, the ambition was also to impress the mainstream with a high quality theatre show.

The process began at the company's home base with their core group of professionals, their own experienced neighbourhood performers, and a young playwright. The latter was commissioned to write a script based on the participants' personal political opinions and to structure it around Shakespeare's Roman Tragedies, which the aforementioned mainstream theatre company was also putting on at the time. The script was supposed to leave an opening in the second half of the show so local community acts could step in (e.g., a choir, a belly dancer, a poet). Artistically speaking, the result was unfortunate. In the script, personal stories and references to Shakespeare were brought together in a confusing mix in which both the professional and neighbourhood performers from the core group appeared lost. When the performance allowed the local acts to enter, things only got worse. From its premiere at the home base, the production first toured to other areas of Amsterdam, playing in regular theatres as well as in community centres. Then the project moved to Rotterdam with the hope of later also exporting the format to other cities.

Had this production remained in its own comfort zone as part of low-key, unpretentious events in community centres, it would have been less problematic - although the methods for working with the inexperienced neighbourhood participants would still remain questionable. By the way, this is not to say that participatory art productions should never be taken out of the communities where they originated. On the contrary, there are many good reasons to do so if socially inclusive art is not to lead to more effective exclusion in the margin. But if you do, the work has to stand up to rigorous criteria to avoid confirming prejudices that are already far too widespread about this kind of work.

Socially speaking, the quality of the relationship between artist and participant is crucial. Key terms here are empathy, equality, genuine concern, reciprocity, and sufficient time to avoid, as Pollock and Sharp put it, "timetables for deliverables and outcomes not necessarily melding with the nuanced process of building trust" [12]. Determining how artists work with people, how they uncover and develop talent, how they build confidence so participants can present themselves publicly in all their vulnerability (or to protect them against themselves if necessary), how they tackle the ever-present contextual challenges, and how they create aesthetically and technically sound works of art with substantial input from non-artists: that is how community art should be assessed - as an enterprise in which social and artistic dimensions (process and product) are integrated. And if you do opt to expose it to the scrutiny of the mainstream, you should do so for the right reasons (with recognition for the professional artist coming last in line). In that case, finding an aesthetic articulation that both satisfies those directly involved in the creative process and those who were not, is the true challenge [13]. Regardless, the work should:

- be skilfully constructed;
- contain beauty, poetry, honesty, authenticity;
- stimulate the beholder emotionally and intellectually;
- offer an alternative look on reality and on the lives of people who are seldom seen or heard in public.

Wouter Hillaert, a Flemish art critic, believes that particularly when inexperienced community performers are put on stage (as was the case in the local act segment I am so critical of), energy, credibility, necessity and especially dignity are crucial criteria. An inarticulate or otherwise clumsy performer only confirms his lack of dignity, he argues: "creating social-artistic work is like any other creative process. On the basis of the available material you search for the right form. In the right form you recognize the dignity of the actors. As a spectator you look up to them rather than down upon them. You don't feel embarrassment but fascination" [14]. I am convinced that with the frank application of the above criteria and with a more realistic understanding of participation in relation to their own abilities and personal ambitions, those responsible for the project I criticize so harshly in this paper, would have realized that in this form it should never have been allowed to go on the big stage.

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