Chapter 4
The Theory of Artistic–Aesthetic Education versus Didactics of Arts

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ABSTRACT

Teaching and learning of literature and of the arts in school is assimilated to scientific knowledge, which neglects the identity of the arts. A didactics of the arts could solve this problem. Philosophy of art shows that beauty has the capacity to capture the essence of human being and that puts the arts in a special position in the educational practice. Existence of artistic and esthetic knowledge demonstrates the need to constitute, recognize and implement a didactics of arts. The author offers a first definition of artistic-esthetic education based on examination of its gnostic origins and of the subsequent historical developments of the term and of the field of artistic-esthetic education. Principles of artistic-esthetic education as a branch of science education are used to exemplify the definition. Ideas, concepts and principles examined and developed by the author are illustrated with theoretical and praxeological developments from the East-European educational space.

INTRODUCTION

Does the human capacity to create and to receive artistic beauty, to become more cultured from artistic and aesthetic point of view increase along with the technical, scientific, social and cultural progress of humanity? Did entering the century of information and communication make the man more interested in literature and art? Did he become more sensitive to the beauty of nature, of social relations and thinking? Did beauty achieve the status of law in human life or did the use of social networks replace reading, contemplation of works of art and the beauty of direct communication with other people and nature? These questions are addressed to the audience of this chapter, school and university teachers, students and researchers in the field of *art pedagogy*.

At least two things give us an unsatisfactory answer to these questions: today it is significantly less read than two decades ago and theatres, and art exhibitions are visited by a smaller number of

people. That artistic folklore is ignored and not practiced has became a standard for the populations of all economically and socially developed countries. As a result, the number of people who are able to decipher elementary artistic symbols and images decreases progressively, while production and use of kitsch increases progressively in all spheres of human life: non-cognition and sub-cognition produce fake, horridness and disharmony. It is not an accident that in the XXth century some of the most commonly used words have become indoctrination, terror and fundamentalism.

In the same general context it is also enlisted the modern education, which, although it identified itself in the XXth century with the concept new educations, launched on global scale by Rassekh and Vaideanu (Rassekh & Vaideanu, 1987), called to settle contemporary world problems, is not able to offer neither a sufficient training nor a correct one to pupils for the activity pertaining to artistic-aesthetic human being.

It is true that our urban, professional and family-related habitat is indisputable and more organized, more harmonious, thus more aesthetic, but the merit for organizing aesthetic living space belongs today as at the beginnings of human culture to a small number of people. Other people prefer to support the condition of servants of technologies created by the elite and to splurge in the state of goods consumers of modern civilization.

Determined in a congenital manner to live simultaneously in two existences — physical, materially conditioned, and metaphysical, continuously created by its spiritual activity — the human being becomes as such through a complex and complicated education, to which the entire world participates. A modern research of any educational issue claims a holistic approach of its phenomena. From this perspective, the appearance on the education universe of an *arts didactics* is favored and conditioned by a series of major factors such as:

1. Globalization and Europeanization (Hussar, 1993), as processes that unifies the world not only economically, politically and socially, but educationally too;
2. Progression of the freedom principle in education at the rank of modernization of educational ideal (Albu, 1998);
3. Institution at global, European and national scale, of an educational concept centered on the educated person, on information and communication (Albu, 1998; Cristea, 2000; Cucoş, 2014; Dewey, 1992; Stones, 1966);
4. Epistemic reconsideration of school disciplines, domains and types of education in relation to human types of knowledge (Aristotle, 1994; Gagim, 1996; Von Humboldt, 1985; Pâslaru, 2001, 2013; Radu 1989);
5. Elaboration and implementation of the theory of artistic-aesthetic education (Burov, Kviatkovscki, 1987);
6. Elaboration and implementation of the theory of literary-artistic education (Kushaev, 1985; Pâslaru, 2001, 2013);
7. Elaboration and implementation of the theory of musical education (Gagim, 1996), of concepts and artistic-plastic education principles.

Elements of arts didactics are found however in the majority of concepts and educational experiences, at all the development stages of practical pedagogy and education sciences, because education means knowledge, knowledge means truth acquirement but the truth acquirement, according to M. Heidegger, means man initiation to being creation, Plato asserts, it is also realized through and due to beauty: "beauty makes that the human being lights <...>, at the same time he induces that man, beyond himself, towards himself (Heidegger, apud: Plato, 1993, p. 44). Even Plato promotes the principle of the unity of beauty, enjoyment and

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