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Identity, Creativity and Alienation in the Context of Child and Art

Tożsamość, kreatywność i alienacja w kontekście dziecka i sztuki

Abstract

The child avoids reflecting judgment on the specifics of what s/he sees because many things can change in the child's eyes. The importance of exposing children to art early on and helping them to develop an aesthetic sense cannot, therefore, be overstated. Since they can focus on the details because they cannot grasp the whole, children can be excellent artists. However, many children are hesitant to share their creative thoughts and innovations due to the fact that they are concerned about how others might reflect on them. This study was motivated by the experience of writing a story after taking part in art and aesthetic sessions with elementary school pupils in an underprivileged area. There seem to be many similarities between what kids experience in the real world and the virtual one they create. The research's findings indicate that children's loneliness, alienation, and identity issues were reflected in their narratives.

Keywords: creativity, alienation, art, aesthetics, childhood

Streszczenie

Dziecko potrafi dostrzec wiele cech przedmiotów, a osąd tego, co widzi, szybko się zmienia. W tym kontekście należy zwrócić uwagę na znaczenie wczesnego wystawiania dzieci na sztukę i pomagania im w rozwijaniu zmysłu estetycznego. Ze względu na specyfikę dziecięcego ujmowania rzeczywistości, spostrzegania przedmiotów, centrację dzieci mogą być doskonałymi artystami. Jednak wiele dzieci niechętnie dzieli się swoimi kreatywnymi myślami i innowacjami, ponieważ obawiają się, jak inni mogą je postrzegać. Motywacją do przeprowadzenia prezentowanego w artykule badania było doświadczenie udziału w sesjach artystycznych i estetycznych z uczniami szkoły podstawowej w ubogiej okolicy, po których uczniowie pisali własne historie. Wydaje się, że istnieje wiele podobieństw między tym, czego dzieci doświadczają w świecie rzeczywistym i wirtualnym, który tworzą. Wyniki badań wskazują, że samotność, wyobcowanie i kwestie tożsamości dzieci znalazły odzwierciedlenie w ich narracjach.

Słowa kluczowe: kreatywność, alienacja, sztuka, estetyka, dzieciństwo

Introduction

Youngsters' artistic talent is evident when they capture and concretize the images that are present in their minds. This concretization can be expressed through a narrative or another creative endeavor, such as music, dance, painting, or pottery. There may be differences between the child's genuine imagination and what he can

imagine regarding the artwork. The child's amorphous, immature mental and physical abilities, as well as the fact that his or her perceptions are not yet crisp enough to be translated into anything tangible, maybe the cause of these discrepancies.

Young students who are learning to express their feelings, thoughts, and observations require assistance. To be able to create even better examples, they must first encounter good ones. It is also crucial to observe and assess the students. There is no alternate way to discover more about their aptitude, inclinations, and potential for success in the future. One might be surprised by how much their artwork may reveal. With their works, they could also unveil things about what they see, how they feel about themselves, whether or not they are having problems, etc. Since their productions can be in many forms, these assessments could be interdisciplinary. For example, the authenticity of literary, artistic, and musical performances cannot be evaluated in the same manner as architectural design. The seven disciplines of art are, as everyone knows, architecture, sculpture, painting, literature, music, theater, and film. And any student might be gifted in at least one of these areas.

Schraver explains how difficult it could be to teach young writers to anticipate readers' needs¹. This demands a creative process that calls for sophisticated abilities including the capacity to empathize with others, comprehend their range of emotions, and dream and communicate these emotions to others. Writing demands consistency and a sense of familiarity, which is one aspect of its requirements. However, writing imparts the capacity to perceive and comprehend through the eyes of others. While there might be a "reader-oriented" evaluation methodology that aims to assess the impact of the author's work on the reader, there might also be an "author-oriented" approach that emphasizes the author's style of expression. On the one hand, linguistic talents, metaphors, use of patterns, rhymes and other language arts influenced by contemporary culture become more significant when it comes to writing. However, it is also essential to discuss a timeless writing and expressive approach as well as a classic style. The study of texts brings together a theoretical dimension that also exhibits the results with the theories and practices related to other studies in the context of children and art recently. It also includes the analysis of product as the data within the framework of structural (Todorov)², fictional (Genette)³, semantic (Pierce)⁴, and semiotic (Barthes) perspectives. The handling of the stories in terms of the linguistic relativity hypothesis (Humboldt)⁵ and social memory (Hjelmslev)⁶ reveals interesting results.

¹ K.A. Schraver, *Teaching writers to anticipate readers' needs: A classroom-evaluated pedagogy*, "Written communication" 1992, 9(2) pp. 179–208.

² T. Todorov, *The origin of genres*. In *Modern genre theory*, Routledge, 2014, pp. 193–209.

³ G. Liestøl, *Wittgenstein, Genette, and the reader's narrative in hypertext*, "Hyper/text/theory" 1994, pp. 87–120; G. Genette, *Narrative discourse revisited*, Cornell University Press, 1988.

⁴ E. Karaman, *Roland Barthes ve Charles Sanders Peirce'in Göstergibilimsel Yaklaşımlarının Karşılaştırılması*, "İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi Dergisi" 2017, 9(2), pp. 25–36.

⁵ B. Akarsu, *Humboldt'ta Dil-Kültür Bağlantısı*, 1984.

⁶ H. Parret, *Peirce and Hjelmslev: The two semiotics*, "Language Sciences" 1984, 6(2), pp. 217–227.

Aim and methodology

New mass media platforms provide models of new expectations, lifestyles, and methods of production, consumption, and action for individuals and communities. People and society are absorbing the function and content of those models without truly understanding what they are eating because these examples are provided so rapidly and eclectically. They modify their habits and internalize those models in addition to simply consuming. Mass media have a significant impact on people's lives, with children being the most affected, aside from the fact that they compete with other communication channels and with one another. Children are immediately exposed to forced communication applications before they ever understand what communication is, and because of this, their communication skills replace practical life skills, and they find themselves in virtual environments before they can even create abstract thoughts. For this reason, it is critical to cultivate an appreciation of writing in people from an early age and to help them become producers rather than just consumers. This study aims to assess previous research on primary school students and their creative writing. How youngsters internalize heroic figures, and the concept of hero and heroism were questioned within the scope of this study. Furthermore, the examples in their creative writings and the way the hero characters exposed to them via the media were compared and contrasted. The main goal of our research is to explore how children's written communications reflect the impact that the media has on their conception of heroism.

During the research, the language teachers (Turkish) were engaged in powerful lectures and dialogues about the value of reading and language use, as well as how individuals may survive using their own language, in every classroom they visited during the study. The youngsters were given a piece of art and a visual reference point, and it was announced that they would produce a publication together once it had been determined that they were sufficiently motivated. Every pupil had a unique source of inspiration and motivation. After writing stories based on these, the kids initially shared them with one another. Finally, they wrote their own stories to wrap up the study.

Findings and conclusion

Current research indicates that average adults think at a rate of around 450 words per minute, but only employ 150–175 of those words when speaking. We do not really take the time to express ourselves; we just think and listen all the time. Writing skills make up only 14% of our regular communication abilities. As a result, it is crucial that we encourage kids to write and leave an imprint by encouraging them to create and write their own stories. Furthermore, the research

indicates that speaking requires 16% of our skills while reading requires 17%. In face-to-face communication, we listen actively for 21% of the time and passively for 32% of it. Stated differently, the media consumes all of our time.

In a landmark study in 1926, Rankin investigated the percentage of daily time that adults spent in each of the four primary communication modes. His often-cited results revealed that people listen 42% and speak 32% of their daily communication time. This contrasts with 15% of their time as readers and 11% as writers⁷. Only recently has multitasking with media become an issue, and its impact is just beginning to be assessed by social scientists and educators⁸. In fact, multitasking is said to be one of the most dramatic shifts in the way children communicate, with one-fourth to one-third of children stating that they use two or more media simultaneously “most of the time”.

Nobody has the time or patience to listen to each other and comprehend them, and they do not think that if they do, they will be able to tolerate what they hear. Our daily exposure to heroes via the media causes us to observe, hear, and think about other people’s issues as well as feel concerned for them. We start to think, listen, and admire others and slowly we become like them. We shall be surrounded by individuals who do not communicate or engage if we do not provide the atmosphere and chance for sharing, listening, and self-expression. Currently, the greatest risk that kids face is not knowing how to express themselves before they learn how. The development of children’s communication skills is an irreversible process. We will refer to them as “shadow children”. They become the shadows of the heroes they admire and emulate from the media. However, in addition to being exposed to the communicational scripts disseminated by the media, students ought to come across other written and spoken forms of expression as well as artistic creations. The notions they employ will have their own opinions about a subject, and this finding will assist them to broaden their view. To help them realize their potential and to give them the bravery to become heroes and save others, we must push them to produce. A person may experience warped outcomes from the idea of belonging, such as group submission or imitation, which encourages people to follow society’s lead rather than think for themselves. The only way to fix what is incorrect is to create, employ conscious expression techniques, and have self-awareness.

In summary, kids are imitating the model heroes they see in the media and begin to act and approach life’s challenges in a similar manner. It is nothing new for kids to imitate characters they read about in books or watch on TV. But the issue with today’s kids is that they do not have enough time for self-expression since

⁷ P.T. Rankin, *The measurement of the ability to understand spoken language*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1926.

⁸ C. Wallis, *The multitasking generation. They’re e-mailing, IMing and downloading while writing the history essay. What is all that digital juggling doing to kids’ brains and their family life?*, “Time” 2006, 167(13), pp. 48–55.

they spend so much time with mass media. They are interacting with people less and less. As a result, they lack both the social context and the requisite expressive ability. Under the influence of the media, they spend a lot of time in front of TVs, computers, and videos; this prevents them from reaching their full developmental potential. As a result of their inability to break free from their attachments and their inability to engage in social activities to finish the socialization process, these children run the risk of developing into people who are unable to express themselves. People typically resort to violence and rage to solve problems when they are in a communicative setting, as they often witness on screens. Since their creativity and devotion are focused solely on themselves, they are unable to build empathy. This generation poses a threat because it lacks the understanding necessary to address real-world issues and instead looks to others to take on responsibility and provide solutions. It is important to encourage this generation to think, act, communicate, and create as much as they can.

Although stories appear to revolve around magical abilities, it is crucial that kids are utilizing authentic, human emotions. However, the fact that happy endings occasionally follow a character's death is a sign of how bleak kids think the future will be. A further point to emphasize is the usage of material components. Since they require examples to form their own ideas and would really like to learn about the imaginary future, children may have a strong fondness for dystopian literature. Examining the risks brought about by modern techno-economic development, rapacious international politics, and capitalist excesses in consumption, they confront the issue, "What type of children can survive in dystopia in the absence of a happy ending for western civilization?"⁹

Theories of communication make intriguing claims about how humans create messages and personas. The one concerning ideals and behaviors is the most significant. Children in particular are more likely to apply the action they see on screens to real life since their minds are action-oriented. Like the adult world, the world of youngsters is extremely competitive, and even if this is not visible to the outside, everyone aspires to be the first to act or perform. For a child, it matters a lot to be the first to say something funny, use a product from a well-known brand, or do a certain activity.

Appropriating oneself with the movie heroes is not something that happens during the movie. When movie characters emerge in front of a child, they do not look like real-life heroes; rather, they appear as distinct concepts. It is not a sequence of events or a specific individual who needs to be recognized and accepted as a model. Heroes acquire their traits from abstract hypothetical deeds and from fictional dialogue contexts, but they are also so real that they allow kids to experience themselves "as if".

⁹ E. Bullen, E. Parsons, *Dystopian visions of global capitalism: Philip Reeve's Mortal Engines and MT Anderson's Feed*, "Children's Literature in Education" 2007, 38, pp. 127–139.

Depending on how much new forms of communication impact media messaging, the distance between parents and their message-giving children remains constant. However, this relies on the child's familiarity with these messages and readiness to receive them. Determining whether or not the options presented to the audience within a specific time frame are appropriate for them is another problem.

Rapid technological advancements are creating heroes at an accelerated rate, allowing computer gamers to select and embody the characteristics of their own heroes. As a result, any person can be the hero they want to be and build their own hero. The reality of today's media is that it does not provide children with heroes to appropriate themselves. The creative generation, unable to discover its real-life hero, escapes by misappropriating itself and identifying the self with virtual heroes. Adults as much as children are affected by the need for "good" heroes in the media.

Happiness vs Unhappiness

The idea of happiness will be the first issue to be covered. Heroes typically conduct actions that bring happiness to those around them. This is why it is critical to consider whether the stories' endings are happy and to consider happiness in the narratives. It was considered crucial to assess if it was complete happiness or not.

The works created during the study comprise a great deal (250) of stories that are too many to be taken into account within the parameters of this study, but in which signs, substance, and function can be examined. As a result, the study primarily addresses three ideas that was deemed adequate. It is evident even from a very basic viewpoint that not all of the events in children's books and hero actions have happy endings. With the younger group, 21% of children's stories end unhappily. There are two ways to view this predicament: either the child is feeling unhappy and powerless, or the situation is a result of the inevitable agony in well-known stories. It is evident that primary school pupils' writings contain a great deal of unhappy aspects, and that the enjoyment that results from these occurrences is invariably "despite something" and somewhat bittersweet.

It is evident that although the stories' happy percentage stays at 72%, the unhappiness percentage rises to 28% for the older group. Even though the research studies were conducted at different periods and in different primary school classrooms with no prior knowledge of one another, it is astonishing how similar the ratio of happy to unhappy endings is in almost every class. A few of these tragic conclusions are rife with agonizing suffering. All of these could be accurately categorized as the impact of mainstream media on youngsters. Because the stories that youngsters are exposed to in the mass media are incredibly melancholic and filled with violent, irrational, and horrific scenes.

Extraordinary Images vs Reality

It is fascinating to see that approximately 39% of the happy endings in children's stories involve superhuman abilities. Sixty-one percent of stories with happy endings after many negative events depict a realistic world. When we look at the stories, 15% of the unhappiness is caused by extraordinary forces. Realism lies in 85% of it. From this perspective, it is evident that kids genuinely believe the world to be a place of suffering and sadness, and that in order to escape its unpleasant consequences, they seek solace in the enigmatic realm of the extraordinary. Taking into account younger people, the percentage of happiness attained by the use of extraordinary powers rises to 85%, while the percentage of realism stays at 15%. This rate becomes 93% for amazing powers and 7% for realism after peer editing. It is evident that remarkable factors contribute to 22% of the unhappiness in the stories, even though they account for 100% of the protagonists' happiness.

Regarding youngsters in the most recent storylines, the percentage of scenarios where happiness is attained through extraordinary capabilities rises to 39% while the percentage of realistic circumstances falls to 61%. However, after peer review, the unhappiness rate is 10% despite the lack of extraordinary powers. This illustrates the possibility of learning, teaching, attempting, and experiencing the concept of happiness. Since it is evident that the happiness rates have grown after the peer reviews, one could argue that this is attainable.

Native vs Non-Native

The fact that the stories are set in both foreign and domestic settings and that the heroes' names are either foreign or local is one of their most remarkable features, which may be better understood with examples. This criterion was therefore considered to be important to take into account while discussing the narratives. It turns out that reflection is a crucial idea when examined from the standpoint of child development and communication theories. Because of this, when narrating unfavorable occurrences, it can be crucial to utilize foreign locale and hero names. However, we cannot exclude the fact that a child who interacts with immigrants will encounter them through both local and foreign lenses because of what the media shows them. The stories for the younger audience feature 70% foreign heroes and 30% local heroes. More astonishingly, this ratio changes to 6% locally and 94% foreign heroes after the workpieces have undergone peer review.

The heroes in the narratives for the older students' group are made up of 11% local and 89% foreign heroes, and when the stories have peer editing, the rate goes up to 48% local and 52% foreign heroes overall. This leads to a conclusion that can be summed up as follows. New mass media and digital media present children

with heroes and situations that are drastically different from each other for the sake of globalization. The media should not, however, be the only source; speaking and reading contexts and reading materials must supplement what the media has to offer. Through increased reading, education, sharing, and encouragement of knowledge, students may gain information that is more applicable, grounded, and suitable for their own community.

Many people are worried that kids who are solely exposed to the media's so-called "global" broadcasts will grow up to be self-oblivious people who only exhibit the attitudes and behaviors that have been instilled in them. This presents us with a world where, on average, between the subject and control groups, there are 32% local heroes and 68% foreign heroes. This is highly unexpected, as it nearly matches the percentage of foreigners and locals in the 250 stories that elementary school students wrote.

Children's imaginations of local heroes offer them a valuable resource for feeling strong and safe. A child living in a world full of foreign heroes and images can believe that he will never be able to fully develop himself and that authority and support could come from somewhere else entirely different. Similarly, the situation becomes even more dangerous if this outcome results from personal impotence or powerlessness and projections like "it happened to him, not me", rather than from the helplessness of people who are surrounded by media and marketing and consoled by so-called heroes. In this situation, people will have to endure the suffering of constantly degrading themselves and worrying about the others.

In conclusion, kids grasp the heroes that the media presents to them, imitating their actions and approaches to real-world issues. Children's tendency to imitate TV characters or fairy tale heroes is not a recent problem. But the risk today is that kids are consuming so much media that they do not have the time or space to express themselves, and they start interacting with people less and less in person. They will not be able to adequately complete their own development process as a result of not spending enough time in real social settings that help them polish their expressive abilities, which become muted when exposed to television, computers, and videos. It is critical to highlight the conceptual shift in hero traits. Whereas in the past the only superheroes with superhuman abilities were Spider-Man and Bat-Man, today's six-year-old child's hero may be a shape-shifting genie. But it is nice that the real world components are still significant, at least for the time being, just like they are in everyday life. The existence of human heroes in the stories, as well as how they handle routine, everyday chores, are signs of children's ability to observe and assess as well as contact with real life. The idea of "friendship" and the "sacrifices" made for friends are two more significant ideas that the narratives should emphasize. Children of this generation will also have heroes, both good and evil, and will occasionally choose one over the other, just like in every other period. Nonetheless, the fact that most of the tales and images are pleasant is incredibly

important information. Even though there are happy endings to stories and fairy tales, people who understand and support one another, and children who are aware enough to draw lessons from events, despite the difficult times in which people live today, are pleasing outcomes. Particularly in younger group narratives, the use of traditional rhymes at the beginning and end of the tale is another very important clue. The fact that youngsters include genuine, human feelings in their narratives is a really important indication, even if their stories tend to be overshadowed by some extraordinary powers. The notion that some happy endings could occur in spite of numerous setbacks or fatalities indicates a pessimistic outlook on the future. The stories make remarkable use of material elements. Strong heroes never overlook tangible values, even in strange settings and circumstances. Every chance one gets, it seems, to underline that heroes can also be regular people. It is just as necessary to mirror the personality traits of the stories to the heroic traits of real life as it is to reflect the heroic qualities of dreams to the heroes of fiction.

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