

Relation between Art Education and Democracy from Antique Greece to the Present Day

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Abstract

Education is a set of activities that are done in order to ensure the development of knowledge, skills and abilities in human behaviours. Art emphasizes the connection between emotion and thought. Also it has an effective role in the process and development of learning. But art education is a specific process of aesthetic changes in individuals' behaviours through their own experience.

It is known that art and art education are based on very old times such as the humanity history and the reality of it's been continuously argued from Platon up to date.

Democracy which is the other concept of this research is a form of an administration whereas the art is a form of existence. While the artist exists by creating, the democracy tries to exist by will.

When it's looked from the art, certainly, the art does not have the power that brings the freedom and the truth on its own, however without art; this power cannot take a form, because the democracy cannot look at the human's pains and beauties as sensitive as the art.

Aim of this research is to discuss the relation of art education and democracy as a form of implementation and functionality from antique Greece to the present day. The method of the study is descriptive and references in literature are interpreted.

Keywords: Education, Art, Art Education, Democracy

1. Introduction

1.1. Education, Art and Art Education

Education is a process which aims individuals to have desired behaviour changes with the help of individuals' own life and deliberate domestication. There are some complementary key words such as individual, domestication, behaviour, process and life (Demirel, 2003). In other words, education is a set of activities which is carried out in order to ensure the development of skills and abilities.

In our age, education, science and art should be based on cooperation. The common purpose of art and science is to serve people and discover the new things. Development in intellectual abilities, thinking and intelligence is observed in the schools or education systems which give importance to art education and education of emotions. While art is emphasizing the connection between thoughts and emotions, it has an effective role in learning and development process.

Art education is process which aims individuals to have special aesthetic changes in their behavior through their own experience. On the other hand, art education is an education which includes all areas and forms of fine arts and takes place in-school or out of school. The purpose of art education is to educate people with qualifications to do new things without repeating. Also it aims to accustom children and adult to see, question, seek, answer, try and finalize.

In the process of art education; the behaviors of detection, getting information, thinking, designing, interpretation and expression are acquired according to aesthetic principles by using the language of arts. In this field, individuals have an opportunity to express themselves having the chance of choosing the most suitable language in the unlimited art area such as painting, music, theater, dance, poetry, short stories, novels, sculpture, ceramics, photography, creative drama, film and video.

When it's looked at the art which is the second concept of our topic, we see that it's based on very old times such as the humanity history and the reality of it's been continuously argued from Platon up to date. Art has a creative and innovative feature that we can meet in all areas of life. This also makes it easy to reach what is permanent and universal. Unlike from most cases, it is a carrier of great knowledge. This information includes everything about life and people. It helps to a person to question and have a better perception of life. In the point of questioning, the individual would have to create new options and have critical thinking. Read (1981) says "Art is the name of our independent process, follows the path of its own, lives as a sign of general forms that is lost over the time." Based on this idea, we can say that art and its education have a social feature and dialectical structure.

This feature of art education is a unique structure to shape society rather than the production of social development. The feature of being sole and unique makes it people-oriented. Although its function has changed from the primitive societies up to now, its characteristic structure is still present.

1.2 Democracy

"Public administration" is the most common definition for democracy that is written in the dictionaries. In

modern states there can be adding to this definition; the managements of states are not done directly by the citizens and they are made by representatives elected by way of freedom and equality. Democracy is meant by the word to represent what is being generally based on democracy and this means the management that is made by freely chosen representatives in the state. Democracy is the governance for the public. That is to be understood as a management in line with the demands of the people. Although it's difficult to prove by the datum's that are reached when and where the democracy appeared for the first time, it's easier to find how it was formed. The known thoughts show that democracy is a progress of aristocracy. In order to see in which way the aristocracy changed into democracy, we should look at Antique Greece, first.

In his evaluation of pre-democratic period, Parkinson claims that the peculiar side of Antique Greece is not its democratic being; it's the importance that gives to the individual at the expanse of society. When the citizens leave from clan, village or guild one by one and appear as a unit, their relations with the state get weak. And when the community bonds disappear the state gets strong (Parkinson, 1984).

The great philosopher Platon deals with democracy in his work called "The State". He says that, by intending the democratic state, "Everyone is free in such a state. Everywhere is full of with atmosphere of freedom. The citizens speak freely; do whatever they want freely... In a place where there is freedom, everyone can put his life in an order in a way that he wants... This system appears as the best among all others... Because there is freedom, that place has all systems; democracy is a fair of order; choose and get the one you like" (Platon, 1985).

In the democratic state everyone and everything are equal and free. Therefore, the tyranny arises. And someday, because of the sea of freedom in which it wants to swim it falls to the water, moreover it drowns (Platon, 1985).

Freedom and democracy are not synonyms, however it can be said that they are the concepts that are the supplementary of each other. A kind of democracy that is deprived of freedom is the despotism; and a kind of freedom that is deprived of democracy is nothing but the anarchism.

Freedom in the name of democracy cannot be infinity. The point where the freedom of a person or society is restricted should be the starting point for the freedom of another person or society. Democracy is responsible for ensuring this balance. Otherwise, the use of multilateral democracy would lead to confusion. Each of rebellion or confusion cannot be treated as the use of freedom in a democracy. The opposite is the lack of freedom makes it difficult to use the power of democracy, and puts into a rigid attitude. The concept of democracy can be more respectful only with the term of freedom.

As it's seen, this side of the democracy that aims to promote freedom annoys Platon. The reason for this was Platon didn't like the attitude of freedom that floats to the anarchism. According to him, if freedom is not controlled, it can cause dangerous consequences. For this reason, he wanted to limit the freedom. Disrespectfulness becomes courtesy, tumult is deemed as freedom, extravagance as generosity and brazenness as bravery. There is nothing to ratify in this situation.

The absence of "individual" in the democracy of Antique Greece and the absence of "society" in the democracy of the West compelled the democracy to be more complementary and unifying. In relation to this, there was a visible progress in the democracy's function and also it was begun to be considered as a model of social organisation which could become widespread until the establishment phase of the classless society. After such an evaluation, while coming towards today from Antique Greece, it's seen that new approaches also on thoughts came into being.

In the 18th century, Montesquieu describes democracy as a style of administration in which the nation is being both the ruler and the ruled. The nation that shows its will by its vote is the ruler. After Montesquieu, J.J. Rousseau describes the democracy as a perfect administration and adds: "It's a kind of administration which can be only applied at Gods' Society." According to him it's a negative situation for the laws to be made and applied by the same people. It's possible for the private interests to affect the community works (Parkinson, 1984). By these thoughts, both Montesquieu and Rousseau are as if they had lived today and then turned back to that day. Some people consider the lack of self-respect as political virtue and some people overwhelm the nation with democracy.

In the modernist understanding, the democracy is not the changing of the nation into a sovereign. On the contrary, it's making the foundation being dependent on individual and common freedom.

If it's needed to make an evaluation before passing to the relation of democracy with art, it's seen that democracy has some difficulties even in itself. Such that, claiming that the democracy is established on the equality and the freedom of human being will be a missing evaluation.

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The aim of this study is to find answer to the question of whether art and art education from antique Greece to the present day can find a liberal place in the concept of democracy or not.

2. Method

This study is a descriptive study. All the books, magazines and articles that support the study are scanned and evaluated; sometimes they have been used as a reference.

In description method; the researcher tries to identify “what?” the events, objects, groups, entities and fields are. Descriptive studies aims to explain the interaction between the relationship of current events and conditions to the previous events(Kaptan, 1995).

3. Discussion

Bernard Shaw, who redefines the democracy by the eye of an artist of 20th century, mentions that the community should be organised not for the benefit of a privileged class but for the whole people. This approach can be seen in his works. It's necessary to look at the topic from the point of art product and artist in such a democracy in which rights and freedom that peculiar to the person are in operation without doubt. Let's clarify it with a sentence: Everything that the artist produces by his effort to create the beauty in his feelings is the art. Individuals who form the society whether be in relation with the art directly or indirectly; their own cultural build up determines their evaluation of art.

When it's looked at from the point of sociology, it is necessary to accept the art and its education as a social product and also to take into consideration of the social and the historical conditions. This situation shows how the art production will be shaped in which conditions. On the one hand, the subjective, free, and creative world of the artist, on the other hand the social structure tries to affect each other all the time. When we examine the social structure which is out of the artist's own world from the point of administration styles, “at the first sight” we see the democracy as a kind of administration style which is seen in the form of agreement with art, by providing its development. Instead of showing the world a beautiful place, art aims to enhance the beauty. Because when the values about human and values dependent to human are considered, the world becomes more liveable. It is possible to make the world more beautiful with art as well as the vision, perception and interpretation of the rulers. The only way to reach to this aim is art education. Art education has the power to make it. Self and the formal power of art will activate the people and the community where the people live in. Democracy that is created by society will have a contemporary identity and will correspond to the changing conditions of the day. Thus art and education will not be an obstacle; it will be able to respond to the needs.

The negative sides begin to appear when the relationship between these two cases being considered. One of them is the look from art and education to democracy and the other is the look from democracy to art and education. Democracy is a form of administration. The art is a form of existence whereas art education is the usage of this existence. While the artist exists by creating, the democracy tries to exist by will.

When it's looked from the art education, certainly, the art and education do not have the power that brings the freedom and the truth on its own, however without art; this power cannot take a form. The society has not the art and the freedom that it requires will not be able to rescue from the “discourtesy” in any case, because the democracy cannot look at the human's pains and beauties as sensitive as the art.

Perceptions of today and tomorrow dependent on human values and human can only be possible with the art education. There is not such a universal democracy idea. However, the progress in the art and art education is directly dependent on the social life and progress.

Platon is the philosopher who first considered the relationship between arts, education, society and state that is the sociological functions of art. Because oligarchy or democracy is one sided administrations, according to Platon the happiness “can be provided by a rational state that can be considered as a pure idea.” He asks the question of what will the place of artists be in such a reason and moral state. According to him the organiser of the state is reason, and the creator of art is our feelings and emotions. The conflict between reason and feeling turns into the conflict between the state and the art. The point that both of them meet each other is that they're directed to human. When it's looked at from the art point of view, the concept of democratic state and the art do not seem that much positive. The demand of any kind of help and freedom from the state on the one hand, and being open to the social leadership and innovation on the other hand makes the art education be contradicted in it. From the point of democracy, according to Platon, there's order where there's reason and there's complexity where there's feeling. “The art, as comparer and imitator keeps people away from reality, destroys their virtues by slipping into their souls, and when the sense and the excitement take the place of reason in a state, the spoiling begins there. The state loses its characteristic of being a regular and moral society.” Because of these opinions it can be considered that he is against the art education; but for Platon, the real art education is social, educational and useful.

Cultural, historical, political, religious and educational characteristics of societies form their belief and thoughts. While the art education was inclining towards human and the society, it felt the difficulties of differences in society and wanted to direct them at the same purpose of forming one society by creating a common art language that is used by all people from every part of the society: To live as human being.

According to Sezer Tansug, analysing the relation between art and society from the point of society administration, it's seen that it's not so much important for the power to be democratic, oligarchic, monarchic, or theocratic (Tansuğ, 1982). At this context, the art education tries to continue its functionality and necessity at every period and system. At societies which is dominated by democracy, it's considered that the art will develop and spread faster with the help of education, and in this societies it's easier to move to the community order in

which everything is considered for human.

“The freedom” that we consider as the essential value and principle for the humanity is also important for the art and education. Perhaps the first point of intersection between the democracy and the art education is the freedom. In democracy one of the essential duties of the state is preparing the environment of the art education and the conditions which is suitable for its development and leaving the education free.

If there is a lack of freedom, the communities that include the people who couldn't complete their individuality have difficulty to keep pace with developments. Their expectations may not be art or science. They always choose to be away from taking social responsibility. However, facts surrounding the event and cannot remain indifferent.

If the individual is using art as a means of expression (the creator of art or art as a consumer), he/ she should be free from fear, because the art is one of the mainstays in the individual's life. Art is the most powerful tool for the individual's being philosophical asset educationally and socially. The individual defines himself with the help of the art tools and expresses his thoughts. Because of that, the democracy should form an administration structure which provides the art its natural needs of free environment for discussion and criticism. And this is related to its developing itself and the society. The exterior effects which would be occurred at the process of progress might cause democracy to get away from its aims. In order to protect from this, it is important for individuals to have democratic attitudes.

4. Conclusion

The nature of art will remove the barriers which are in front of the idea of working for democratic society. Because on the one hand an art shows the existing, on the other hand it gives information about what it shows. The existence of democratic attitudes should continue. The most important indicator is the perspective of individual to art and art education. According to objective and subjective approach, art is described different. In objective approach, art is created by the social influences; in subjective approach, it is created by only individualism. But in both of them the educational dimensions of art are inevitable.

People who don't have enough art education do not have comprehensive and balanced general education. At first art education focused on field, but then it has shifted to child- focused education. As an extension of this approach, “free expression” and “self description” began to be very effective in art education

On the other hand, those keeping the existence of democracy, what they understand about art, how much benefit they get from the educational side of art, should be investigated. It can be seen that the people who have a role in the formation of democratic attitude received more than their share of art. But how much and what quality the individuals who do not have a democratic attitude of art are the consumer of art? This question may be the subject of an independent study. However, the features of art criticism, self- criticism and re- interpretation of art that can be seen in individual's development are the indicator of democratic attitudes. Art education reflects these indicators.

The prejudices will increase if you move away from the democratic attitudes. So the quality of the artistic perception will reduce. On the other hand, while the artist with himself and the community, he/ she shows the democratic attitude. But the democracy can have difficulty showing the same sincerity every time and everywhere. Especially in undeveloped or less developed societies, the development process of democracy is longer. On the other hand, in order to realise democracy's elements of freedom and equality one should want to destroy the exploitation without making any differentiation among the people who are known as free, and obliged to understand today's fact of democracy.

A democratic society can support the art and art education but should bring neither the decisions that determines the value of efforts of art, nor the censor the narration of art. In response to that the art should have the responsibility of continuing its creativity without slipping into conformism. Otherwise, at the last stage the democracy, with the power it claimed from the right of administration, takes the art and art education into its guidance.

The main contribution that's expected from democracy to make for art education is: the freedom of creating, experiencing, and making rich the sense and thoughts of the person. Otherwise, the ones, who capture the administration by free will, will spread out their own understanding with “the right and the authority” that were given to them by democracy, and when they were resisted they will restrict the freedom, even they won't know “the democracy”.

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