

Applied Education
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MUSEUM EDUCATION: PURPOSE, BENEFITS, LEARNING SOLUTIONS

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Abstract. The purpose of our present paper is to create an inventory of the specific characteristics and virtues of museum pedagogy, by underlining the status of this topic in the context of educational sciences, by insisting on the importance of the objectives of the mentioned discipline, on the main topics which raise questions and also on its contribution concerning the maximization of the educational dimension. A museum should be understood not only as a formative environment – in itself or in connection to school – but also as a way of didactic cognition and reinterpretation of reality.

Keywords: museum pedagogy, museum education, museum values, formal education, informal education

1. The importance and purpose of museum pedagogy

In a context where education is expelled at so many levels, the talk about museum pedagogy becomes a challenge not only at a theoretical level, but it is also the expression of an opportunity of shaping efficient practices having a formative purpose that would complement what is done through current school activities. This happens because formal education tends to more and more explicitly subsume new paths and learning contexts, such as the exhibition room, the museum, the cultural-historical institutions of all types. We do not mention here the fact that a series of other institutions have been independently developed and are based on a series of educational programs for the entire community and their own benefit.

Museum pedagogy has as objective the identification and validation of some strategies that would lead to the maximization of the formative virtues of the space of the museum, its aim is that of stimulating the educational interaction between a museum and a school, preparing specialists, but also public categories for capitalizing the educational potential brought by this cultural environment. Just like any other type of normative discourse, the purposes of this branch of pedagogy are the delimitation and proposal of specific objectives of museum education, underlining possibilities of circumscribing contents (themes, ideas, values) which can be transmitted especially in this area, by the proposal of some mediation

strategies of these value predispositions, of projecting activities having a cultural-educational environment and of thematizing the possibilities of strengthening and feedback regarding perception in connection with different categories of public.

Thus, at its origin, one of the major functions of a museum is the educational one, involving the presentation, promotion and perception of concrete values in a specific field of manifestation – painting, sculpture, literature. In the end, the detection of values is done not only through abstract ideatic reporting (to "Beauty", "Good", "Truth"), but by the knowledge, assimilation and experiments on their new "embodiment" at the level of objects, people, facts. Moreover, the museum is also a good area of cultural memorizing, "presentifying" or transmitting some cultural experiences, of prolonging their influence at the level of human being and present time. The museums, just like the school, are ancient cultural institutions; it is interesting the fact that only nowadays (and explicitly), the problem of educational collaboration has been explicitly stated.

Concerning its final objective, museum pedagogy is focused on the following (Cojocariu, Barabas, Mitocaru, 1998, p. 21): a) the generalization, synthesis and capitalization of the experience of specialists from a museum, by integrating it in a coherent epistemological endeavour; b) theoretical substantiation and the ability to distinguish the formative dimensions of museum activities; c) efficiency regarding the practical activity of culturally-educationally influencing practice of the institution of the museum. The museum itself needs to appeal to specialists in education sciences, their performance is the basis for identifying and facilitating the transmission of educational experiences, maximizing the potential of this perimeter only. I have been pleasantly surprised to notice that, among my periphrasis through the great museums of the world, in specific days, these spaces are filled with groups of pupils and students that took part in "live lessons", carefully planned and held by museum specialists, on matters which are among the most diverse, from colour or writing technique to evocations of history or theory of art.

The purpose of museum education is that of opening, among other things, the museum for all people who want to be educated, helping them conquer new worlds of values. The education acquired in this area forms their sensitivity (Ansart, 1991), it helps them develop positive feelings concerning objects and the surrounding world. The museum forms and develops perceptions and feelings as far as time and temporality are concerned, the young become responsible towards a specific tradition, thus contributing to shaping individual and collective identities through respect and self-discipline. Of course, the museum is not the only place where respect is taught, self-control, self-discipline. But the museum offers a set of elements such as the opportunity and the moment when one decides to conduct an experiment, consuming a personal pleasure, satisfying one's curiosity, this thing imposes an exercise of disciplinating pleasure, it is a matter of self-control and autonomously making a decision.

The museum can become a more objective and pertinent universe of proofs, less exposed to the presented ideologies which, in most cases, guide the educational system (through the way the programs, the textbook have been designed...). In specific circumstances, it can be considered, in specific circumstances a source "of degree zero", a "packing" of the past, but also an evocative forum regarding "true history". „There are then two pasts: the temporal one that passes and is gone and the metaphorical 'past' that is held in the memories and traditions of a society and its surroundings. It is this diverse and ever-changing past, part of the multifarious world of ideas and personal and collective agendas of a society, that we encounter in our daily lives and through which we must work"(Molyneaux, 2006: 2). This type of referential, thesaurized by the museum can counteract the myths that appear both when interpreting history and while teaching it in the context of formal education.

The purpose of museum education is to facilitate the child's discovery of some different worlds, remote in time and space. The richness of a museum that has these cultural tracks leads to the human enrichment of the people who enter it, through the presentation and discussion of some behaviours that were edited once. It is held responsible for specific human constants, differently configured in time and space. The educational offer of museums can be directed towards another type of public, such as retired people, children with special needs, imprisoned people. Beside the cultural or educational purposes, collateral purposes can be activated, such as recovery or social re-integration, ensurance of complementary therapies, the avoidance of complementary therapies, the avoidance of marginalization, spending time in a positive way.

2. Museum education – valences and objectives

Beyond its functions (of purchase, conservation, research, capitalization), the museum also has functions which are specifically formative. It should privilege different types of "consumption", more or less specialized. The same sector of a museum can be a technical referential landmark for the specialized public (for example, for pupils or students at art), one of research/documentation (for experts, researchers), a pedagogical one for children and young people (this occasion is used for creating applications or extensions of some education disciplines in school), one of spending leisure (one for the large audience), a touristic or economic one (for those interested in knowing and assimilating new cultural landmarks). One and the same cultural space should allow more reporting scales of reading or perception and it should answer, through its appearance or influence, to many requests and interests.

What are the educational and didactic values of a museum?

Firstly, a museum is a living reality, an extension in time of a cultural fact, a concrete universe in which art/science/culture were born or where they subsist. Nothing can activate receptivity more than the natural environment of generating a cultural product, the living intuition of some tracks or the authentic remains of an

author's life and activity, breathing an atmosphere which matches the value profile of that specific product. It is one thing to speak about a painting in a classroom or to hear a recited poem and it is something else to discover them "on the spot", in the workshop of a painter or the house of a well-known poet, even if they are long gone. In this case, the perceptive luggage is "of point zero", assuring the propensity towards an appropriate interest and receptivity.

Secondly, the museum perimeter offers a concentration and specialization on cultural stimuli on a specific unique direction (we are either in a museum of painting of a specific kind or in the memorial house of a specific writer or artist). It is a spiritual "concentrate" on a specific direction. This type of unity or uniqueness enables learning through putting someone in that situation, through discovery and it fixes some anchors in the affective or intellectual memory of the participants, anchors that can hardly be erased. In many cases, this type of participation is a memorable story from that individual's existence, taking place rarely or only once (maybe you have only one moment in time, in your lifetime to enter the house in Malaga where Pablo Picasso was born, for example).

Thirdly, the museum offers professional guidance, applied according to the specificity of that work. If the person responsible for this has solid general knowledge and pedagogic tact, that specific action of presentation is transformed into a privileged occasion, into a cultural joy through which the attachment towards values and their interiorization become maximum. No matter how talented a literature teacher may be, one cannot replace the person who lives and presents daily the life or work of an author. The museum curator is much more connected to the promoted work or artist. The atmosphere created in the perimeter of a museum cannot be easily recreated in the classroom.

Fourthly, this institution can convert into a new educational environment which is complementary to school. The museum can become an efficient means, an "appendix" of school, facilitating the collaboration and co-participation in the educational process of some factors which traditionally act separately or out of time. We do not exclude a series of collaborative projects between school and museum, on long or short term (at the level of year or school cycle), during which each of the partners could assume new roles, complementing abilities, implication or mutual challenges.

The stakes of museum education are of several types and they can be activated depending on requests or circumstances:

- the completeive stake, in connection to the objectives or school curriculum; the museum can become an extension of school, a place of getting accustomed to the new value elements and of practicing some competences;
- the applicative stake; the museum becomes "an application field", through research, experimentation, involvement;
- the particularization stake, of "local" embodiment of the cultural content of

learning; it is an occasion of integrating new informative or formative elements in the curriculum, having a concrete character, connected to the area where that person is active, beyond the "general" planification, which becomes "mandatory" and similar to a uniform;

- the stake of shaping the individual's cultural identity, at a local or national level, through knowledge, interiorization and assuming of some emblematic values of the social space which the person will be integrated in;

- the stake of discovery of ego by underlining some dispositions or individual interests that are not envisaged by school.

3. Pleading for a "didactic" of the museum space

The didactic function can insinuate itself even at the level of the issuer, of the museum institution itself. The didactic character of the exhibits is mostly implied, potential, through the way objects are highlighted, through the relationships of proximity or contiguity among these, through the connection created between the exhibit and the tag/text that presents it, in a rhetoric style – to be found in flyers, brochures, albums – that can be derived at the level of a museum. It is not excluded the creation and design of areas having an interactive character, the public being involved in interventions. Even if the museum bans the interaction with objects (touching them), there can be created sectors or activities which stimulate modelling, coloration, confection, simulated intervention in the structure or composition of objects or arrangements. The museums which respects itself does not only allow for practical demonstrations (through the performance of painters, sculptors) or having specialized practice (creating copies after famous works, by students from painting), but also permanent or periodic workshops in order that children/pupils practice some skills having an artistic character. There are situations when the exhibits can be not only seen, but also studied, manipulated, thus interaction receives another dimension. The public can practice or experiment on ways and sequences of the process of creation, people can have the tutelage or reproduce a scientific experiment, producing new relationships of determination or combinations of the exposed objects.

In any case, the referentials (the exhibits) from a museum do not have a presentation which is similar to didactic logics, they are not necessarily prepared so that the educational dimension becomes prevalent, generalized, compulsory. After all, a museum is different from a school. If we deal with the didactic content in our educational system, "beautified", selected and configured according to psychopedagogical principles, especially prepared to be assimilated by specific age categories (I refer here to knowledge, habits, learning tasks), different objects in a museum have different vectors of description, other spacial-temporal structures of exposure, allowing interactions with visitors of a specific type that do not explicitly envisage compliance with didactic principles. "The task of a museum curator is that of

«translating» objects and their contexts, offering an educational meaning, transposing them from objects with a material value into living objects that can «tell a story»s (Alexandra Zbucea, 2006b). In order to gain educational power, they need further intervention, through the performance of some educational services and specialised trainers that, depending on the profile of the public or on the context, convert and value some exhibits in a didactic manner. I do not refer to an intrinsic pedagogical value, but to a build one which is added and applied according to the new context of learning. Excessive "pedagogization" can put the specificity and functions of a museum in danger. The didactic logics can lead to the alteration of the objective of this institution. It is not normal that the entire public is subject to a unique treatment, but each segment should have the needed availabilities reserved.

Several hypostases of activities in a museum can be identified, they should be re-thought from a pedagogical perspective. The elements which can become landmarks for underlining the specificity of museum education can be the following (Allard& colab., 1996, p. 3):

- the nature of the proposed activities (guided tour, traditional interactive tour, tour with a personal guide, free visit);
- formulas of pedagogical assistance for pupil-visitors (exhibits, tags, panels with an explanatory text, audio-visual and interactive tools);
- demeanours/acquisitions of reporting oneself to museum values (knowledge, abilities and attitudes);
- applied strategies (listening, observation, manipulation, execution of actions, role play);
- the deliberate character or not of the visit at the level of the museum (this endeavour implies a preparation phase which is more or less intensive or a posterior capitalization phase of the undergone experience which is more or less consistent);
- the duration of the activity inside the museum (one day, two);
- the more or less obvious intervention of the educational service, of the museum curators or of teachers in schools;
- the status of the visit at the museum in the context of the present or future study curriculum (optional, compulsory);
- intellectual abilities underlined or trained by the visitor pupil during a particular activity;
- the effect of the visit on the pupil regarding the learning of concepts, significance of events, understanding facts;
- the influence on changing the perception of pupils regarding the positive effects of the museum on learning;
- the collaboration between the representatives of the museum and school regarding the elaboration, creation and evaluation of activities specific to a visit at the museum.

The didactic levels of the learning activity in a museum can be connected to scenarios similar to those promoted in school. They are very much different from the prescriptive character of the latter, the possibility of adapting them according to requirements and needs, the assurance of differences or customization depending on the public's needs and interests. The aimed learning objectives will be correlative and not identic compared to those promoted by school and they will be centred more on the formative axis than on the informative one. They will be focused on forming some attitudes and evaluative demeanours, on broader cultural competences, of significance or integration of new values or learning experiences. We provide an example of envisaged competencies below in order to have a clear idea on their diversity:

Generic competencies with subsequent dimensions (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007: 51)

Knowledge and understanding

- Subject-specific (e.g. history, science)
- Between and across subjects
- Specific artefacts, books, documents (Chinese scroll, vase)
- Site-specific (history, geography, use of sites)
- Locality, neighbourhood, region, country
- Self, personal matters (my family)
- Others (my neighbours' past and present)

Skills

- Subject-specific (mapping, estimating, painting)
- Site-specific (how to use a library, archive, museum)
- Practical (craft-based, manipulative, bodily–kinesthetic)
- Transferable (working in teams, using a computer)
- Key (numeracy, literacy, communication)
- Critical and ethical thinking
- Other cognitive skills
- Emotional skills (managing anger or powerful feelings)

Values, attitudes, feelings

- Motivation (to learn more, become interested, feel confident)
- About oneself (positive personal identity, self-esteem, self-respect, confidence,

independence, sense of personal achievement, sense of self in the community)

- About the others (tolerance of difference)
- About museums, archives, libraries

Creativity, inspiration, enjoyment

- Personal enrichment
- Fun

- Making new connections, lateral thinking
- Generation of new ideas or actions
- Making and producing things
- Invention
- Experimentation

Behaviour (now and in the future/looking back)

- Doing more of something (reading, visiting an achieve, learning)
- Doing something different (visiting a museum for the first time, going to college)
- Bringing others (family, friends)
- Working in teams
- Employment, workplacement.

Fixing or strengthening the accumulated experiences will not be done through the same types of evaluation devices such as the ones from school (through listening, taking notes, docimologic tests), but formulas of motivation will be elaborated through the creation of some papers, creating portfolios, research for publicly presenting some communications or debates. The evaluation of abilities becomes a problem (Jacobi Daniel, 1995: 18), but in all cases, this is the starting point for reforming the educational services of museums or in rethinking their cultural policies. In the same time, we must take into account the fact that we are witnessing some changes regarding the museum's program of learning that activates other internal structures of learning that those seen in the class, other motivational levers, other types of demeanours or abilities and that there is an action difference between what is done before, during and after the visit, each moment predisposes at different formative contributions (Allard, 1994). The museum "can facilitate the voluntary learning of a variety of cognitive skills such as divergent thinking, critical analysis, better understanding of the past, the complexity of natural world and critical environment issues", it can stimulate "voluntary learning in a variety of cognitive behaviours such as forming divergent thinking, critical analysis, a better understanding and representation of the past, understanding the complexity of the natural world and forming a critical vision regarding the environment" (Screven, 1993). Furthermore, museum experience, guided by pedagogical alignments, forms attitudes, the taste for values, evaluation and self-estimative abilities. The forms of organisation of educational activities, developed in connection to the museum, are multiple, flexible and they can be "glued" to school didactic activities in a natural, normal way. Among these, the following hypostases can be spotted (Cojocariu, Barabas, Mitocaru, 1998: 121 – 128): organised visit, thematic visit, circles organised by the museum, museum trip, itinerary of the thematic trip, contests, symposium, round table, scientific saloon, musical soirée, museum camping.

Each form can be known in depth and refined, being both a theoretical stake and a practical one. For example, the study visit which is the most used form of learning in a museum, underlines more problems which could be starting points in museum pedagogical research (Screven, 1993):

- Some exhibition formats work better than others (e.g. interactive fliplabels, question strategies, game strategies). What specific features of these more effective designs are responsible for their effectiveness? Are some formats better suited for particular educational goals?
- What pro-active exhibit strategies are best suited to change the visitors' nonproductive attitudes, or correct visitors' misconceptions?
- How can the diverse individuals that make up exhibition planning teams work together more effectively?
- Do the reading levels, knowledge of a topic, misconceptions, learning style, time constraints or other visitors' characteristics affect post-visit activities and attention?
- What is the long-term impact of museum visits on schoolwork, lifelong learning, vocational choices, environmental attitudes, family activities?

4. The formal-nonformal-informal relationship in museum education

The museum can become an educational source either as a nonformal environment, or an informal one of learning. The difference between these two occurs depending on the degree of intentionality, the connection with knowledge from school and the degree of involvement of the trainer and the trainee. In the case of the nonformal, museum education becomes a "prolongation" of school education, it is programmed, intentioned, carefully planned, made by pedagogy specialists, but the presence of children to these activities becomes compulsory. In the case of the informal, museum education is left to the trainee, it is optional, accidental, self-conducted and it can occasionally be fructified at school. It definitely leads to a supplementary culturalization of the educated person, but it is not always ratified, capitalized, evaluated at the level of formal educational activities.

The connection between formal and nonformal museum education is ambivalent, it can vary from continuity, complementarity and mutual strengthening going towards discontinuity, inhibition or opposition between these elements (Lucas, 1987). It is important that these continuities or tensions stimulate each other, leading to broader knowledge or experience, even if sometimes these reports lead to interrogation, problematization, research (Zbucnea, 2006a). Any form of completeness can subsume some sequences that, at least at a specific moment, do not match. If a pupil, for example, finds out at school about a writer and one is told something else or one notices different information in the memorial house of that writer, the only thing left to be done is to research on one's own or with a group of

colleagues and find a solution. Irrespective of the area of manifestation, education cannot be total, unique, final.

The museum as a place or resources *réservoir* can strengthen, extend or constitute a proof for school teaching sequences. It can become a territory for fixing knowledge, for assuring integration, correlations having a conclusive or transdisciplinary character or for stirring interest, diving in the complexity of the phenomenon in order to motivate and arousing the joy for learning. Prolonging "the teaching" of some content elements in the museum is connected to the thematic specificity required by the curriculum (aimed competencies, content elements), to the availability and the offer of the museum (the presence and capitalization of the exhibits), but also to the resourcefulness and didactic talent of the teacher whose responsibility is to know and inventorize this potential, to previously inspect or collaborate with the representatives of these cultural spaces. The creation of brotherhood or partnerships between school and museum represents an institutionalized formula of foreshadowing this formative complementarity. Of course, this type of opportunity cannot be identified everywhere (it is one thing to educate in a cultural city, another one in a remote village), but only in the geographic areas where there are museums, their capitalization should be done by the school. To put it differently, inside a museum, other types of activities can take place, implicitly or explicitly, such as the support of some thematic conferences, the creation of some laboratories or research centres, the editing of specialized magazines.

5. The museum – a medium of generating the didactic knowledge of reinterpretation of the world

Didactic knowledge does not oppose scholar knowledge, but it is based on it and it derives from it, it is a form of redevelopment in connection to the circumstances of teaching. It is generated by scholar knowledge, but it is redimensioned according to psychological, pedagogical, deontological, logical, epistemological, praxiological principles. Furthermore, didactic knowledge should always keep the contact with reality, with the area of emergence or stocking knowledge, it should be open to those fields where knowledge is alive, it pulses, it is produced. A museum is similar to a *réservoir* of precious experience that should be the target of school.

The museum can facilitate the knowledge of our past and present and also of other people and it can be the basis of the development of intercultural types of behaviour. It is polarizing or "detonator" of other and unprecedented spiritual development. The escape from a specificity or a faulty closing does not put its identity in danger, on the contrary. It is the interface between two worlds, becoming a "meeting space between non-specialists and professionals/artists/scientists. Museums are those that "translate" the academic discourse, making it accessible for a larger public" (Murgoci, 2005). It can play the role of cultural referential and facilitator starting with pre-school children's education and going to the education of adults. It is not

only depositary of cultural goods, but also of significances (cf. Schouten, 1992). The museum pre- or re-interprets the world through the way it focuses on the exhibits, on the way it gathers them, it brings them together, it offers them a significance, it presents them (the interpretations of the visitors will be added). It installs meanings, it concludes, it shows directions – for those capable of perceiving these things. It is a resonator of this world, it is sensitive to the present, but also careful towards the present. People who prepare and exhibition or are managers of museums also need education and also the people who enter them.

Pupils and students, through experiences collateral to school, can extend the understanding of the field of knowledge and values beyond the inherent borders of some disciplines taught in school. A museum is the perfect occasion for thoroughgoing study of some meanings and the identification of new ones. Some consider that a semiotic type of pedagogy could enlarge understanding and ascriptions of permanent meanings in museums and schools, thus enlarging the borders of education. This type of semiotic pedagogy "is cooperative, active, experiential, and non-predictive in the sense that there are no limits to the amount or type of inquiry which might be necessary to bring a task to closure after spinning interpretants" (Deboral, 1995). Furthermore, learning in a museum is a territory which is closer to new learning theories (for example, the constructivism or the paradigm of "experiential learning"), which values the activism of knowledge structures for humans.

There are several layers of generating knowledge and ascription of meanings in a museum, each level supposes specific pedagogical processing. There is an explicit level, that of the exhibits themselves, of tags or the appropriate explanation literature, of the speech of the museum curator, but there is also an implicit level, built from the meanings of spacialization, disposal and highlighting objects, the relationships of proximity, the situations which can pre-value objects and their importance. "Museum education is structured first of all through the means of a discourse built by first of all, the usage of the tool of museum presentation and secondly, through the means used in order to communicate this discourse. It creates a favourable environment for learning where visitors create and add their own interpretation strategies" (Hooper-Greenhill, 2001, p.41). To the elements "told" by the museum, the interpretations of those who visit this space are added, so that the final message is cumulative, co-built, dynamic, open.

Like any other cultural product, the museum can have significance, but others are added on the way. The surplus of meaning can come from the context, from the usage, from the visitors. "Les objets entretiennent des relations ambiguës et variables avec le sens. Ils sont muets à cet égard, leur signification permet plusieurs interprétations. Ils peuvent être perçus à partir d'un éventail de points de vue qui diffèrent selon l'époque ou la culture spécifique. Différents types d'individus peuvent introduire ces objets dans une conversation et ce, au moyen de diverses

stratégies faisant en sorte qu'ils aient un sens. Les objets peuvent être compris à l'aide d'informations factuelles ou peuvent être investis d'une signification émotionnelle. Ils possèdent leur propre histoire connue, inconnue ou maintenant oubliée, et se prêtent à des interprétations multiples et quelquefois contradictoires" (Hooper-Greenhill, 2001: 41). The exhibits can generate new interpretations depending on research, the dynamic of cultural context, the varied expectations of the visitors. Meanings are not structured forever, but they are open to time and some indeterminated consumption.

A museum can have its own history, creating additional meanings that come to complete the ones initially introduced. A museum can bring proofs about itself, about the avatars of its transformations, sequentially becoming a museum of the museum. The museum can speak not only about what it accomodates, but about itself. "Le sens se situe alors dans les relations entre les objets et les autres éléments ; il est combinatoire et relationnel. Les idées que l'on cherche à communiquer par la mise en scène du dispositif de présentation muséale sont souvent - mais pas toujours - clairement suggérées dans les textes de l'exposition. Il se peut que le visiteur préfère interpréter par les textes plutôt qu'à l'aide des différents éléments visuels. Toutefois, l'expérience du visuel est différente de l'expérience du texte ; elle est plus ouverte et, en même temps, il est plus difficile d'en discuter (Hooper-Greenhill, 2001: 41 - 42). Under no circumstances can the objects from a museum - and the museum itself - be substituted by the rhetoric connected to these. Thus, we would be content with the literature created around it, with what it "tells" about itself, to the detriment of real, perceived, intuitive, impressive richness.

Didactic "virtues" of a virtual museum

The museum can acquire new faces and dimensions in nowadays's informational society. Far from remaining a conservative territory, inert and closed to modernization, it can develop new educational opportunities in the society of knowledge. The real museum is doubled, in most cases, by its virtual version. On the whole, "the virtue" of this presence consists in the fact that the museum comes towards us, there is no need for us to physically move inside it, we can have virtual visits, irrespective of the hour and place where we are. De-localization and de-synchronization are the great advantages over any virtual reality. This place supposes the building of a virtual "face" of the museum, according to didactic rules or principles, so that this means can be (also) capitalized on the whole or sequentially, for school teaching-learning purposes. For the possibilities of movement for school public are limited, including the point of view of costs, it is more economical to bring the museum in the classroom. This type of usage leads to a revision of didactic strategies and supposes a specific method which is on the verge of being made clear.

The virtual space could not neglect the area of the museum, integrating lines of reference to its presence. Beyond the quality of medium of transmission, internet

can also become a pedagogical tool that can facilitate educational processes regarding teaching arts in schools, but also aesthetic education (Carnall, CookBeth, 2010). A virtual program of visiting an art museum, for example, uses a combination between the visual and movement, creating the premises of a liberty and a minimal interaction with real space, surpassing the standard situation in which only the sender has initiatives. "A virtual museum would allow visitors to interact with the objects in a reconstructed museum context. Combining both real and virtual museums would allow for more complete understanding of objects. By viewing and handling the object we can assess its texture, weight, size, colour and smell. By interacting with it virtually, we can put it into a context, see how it moves (or sounds in the case of instruments) and how it works. The technology will progress and become more affordable and virtual worlds will become more readily accepted in their own right and be seen as valid educational tools. This potentially has the power to transform how we interact with objects and how we interact with each other" (Carnall, CookBeth, 2010: 173 – 174). The virtualization of perception raises not only technical problems, but also pedagogical ones, for it is modified the relationship with the cultural object. The new environment of transmission brings new challenges both in connection to the way we can translate a reality at the level of an artificial construction, but also when we refer to the way we decrypt a cultural content at the level of "users".

The advantage of using the virtual world near a museum cannot be neglected. The cost can be high at the beginning (sufficiently powerful hardware supports, programs of accurately "packing" the space of the museum, computer science specialists, specialized teachers), but the efficiency and the impact on the public is worth the effort. As people become more and more confident and they use technology in daily life, this method can become generalized and it can be refined. It is not excluded the idea that in a short while, the "at distance" interaction with the cultural object can have other surprises ("the entrance" and the inspection of the material structure of the work, its transformation or "recreation" according to the public's incitement, the possibility of modelling or 3D "replication" of some objects). The "virtualization" of the museum will take into account the public's appetite and availability towards new technologies, the evolution of cultural techniques, the transformations that concern the experiences and predispositions of the beneficiaries concerning "secondary" realities, the fact that the public is already prepared for this type of digital stimuli.

6. The specific differences between school and museum education

Beyond the interferences or the superpositions from an educational point of view, the two cultural universes continue to preserve their autonomy, each of them performing different competencies which, at a specific moment, prove to be complete, correlative, mutually stimulative. Mutual "contamination" is allowed and

encouraged up to the point when it does not lead to the abolition of the characteristics, but to an inversion of responsibilities. School cannot become a museum (except for unique cases), while a museum cannot do what school has to do.

When we speak about museum education, we must become aware of the specific differences between school and museum and the projection of activities should take into account these inherent limits (cf. Allard & colab., 1996). School is the institution whose primary objective is to instruct and educate. The purpose of the museum is that of collecting, keeping, studying and presenting material proofs about the human individual and one's medium of development. School is compulsory, it is based on captive and stable clients. In a museum, the client is free to come or not. The museum contains a number of objects which are more or less temporary. Regarding the offer, school is a much more stable institution (sometimes, inert). The school tries to satisfy a client classified depending on age or level of preparation. The museum is open for all age groups, irrespective of preparation. The museum has its own collection and it also hosts itinerant exhibitions. One cannot reproach why it does not report itself to other collections, to other museums. "Museums have no national curriculum – each museum may present a different view of a specific matter; they have no formal systems of assessment and no prescribed timetables for learning. Learning in museums is potentially more open-ended, more individually directed, more unpredictable and more susceptible to multiple diverse responses than in sites of formal education, where what is taught is directed by externally established standards (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007, pp. 4 – 5). School should have a unique program, imposed at a national level. The educational endeavour is projected for uniform activities with the class group. The museum is organized for an activity which, usually, is done individually or in small groups. The school receives its clients for at least one year, the visitors of the museum will stay there for one hour or two. The activity in schools is based, mainly, on words and books. The activity of a museum is especially based on observation and research of an object (Allard & colab., 1996).

Moreover, there are specific things connected to the profile of the trainers in these two educational situations. In schools, the teachers qualified for this job will teach, in the other situation – museum curators with additional preparation of psychopedagogical nature. The museum curators which are teachers can be active both in a museum and a school for a series of nonformal activities. We do not exclude the implication of artists, for example, in this formative endeavour whose activities could give new incentive meanings having powerful and shaping reverberations on the receivers. In specific conditions, they can become both creators and also commentators of the artefacts produced by them or by the others. The opinions of the interviewed artists and teachers are gathered in a collection of studies (cf. Pringle, 2009) and specific connections have been identified between "artistic" knowledge or their expertise, on the one hand and forms of pedagogic engagement, on the other hand. Thus, it could be proved the fact that there are connections between the creation of an artistic product, as a concrete process of *mise en forme* (of a painting, for example), and the

conceptualization and significance offered by the creator, in the same time, through a dialogical process of teaching and learning in the case of other future practitioners. Moreover, the above-mentioned studies have revealed the fact that there are problems regarding the practical part of co-constructive learning, especially in the gallery, and contradictions have been underlined between the way in which these educators – artists perceive other professionalists (teachers of painting, art historians, for example) and their teaching experience in art institutions and beyond art. In this respect, these findings draw the attention on the complexity of the pedagogy of the artist, but also the fact that this practice can have positive effects on the ones who learn.

At least in the Romanian psycho-pedagogical literature, the thematization of museum education is at its beginning. We expect that topics such as the following will be developed: rethinking and adequacy of some contents of school programs according to the educational potential of the museum, the elaboration of a special didactics concerning the organization of some educational activities in this institution, the refinement of teaching methods and didactic interaction in the new environment, the preparation of some categories of teachers having in view training inside and through the museum, the elaboration of some forms and strategies of evaluating the specifically acquired competences. Definitely, a collaborative, cumulative, creative effort is needed. Of course that the ideas suggested in the present text will be problematized, continued, refined both by ourselves and by other colleagues.

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