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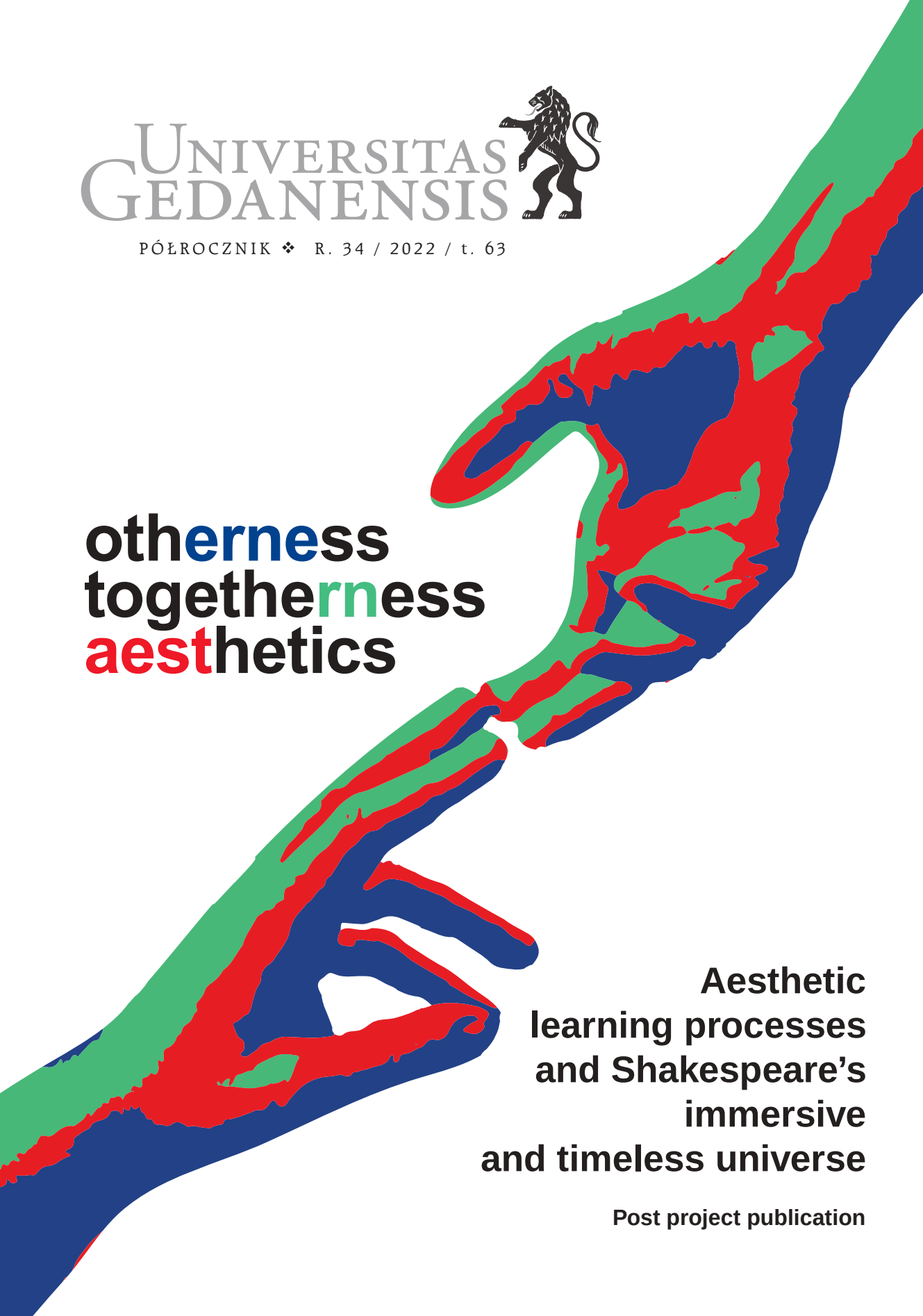

Aesthetic learning processes and Shakespeare's immersive and timeless universe

Post project publication

UNIVERSITAS GEDANENSIS

PÓŁROCZNIK ❖ R. 35 / 2022 / t. 63

OTHERNESS-TOGETHERNESS-AESTHETICS

Aesthetic learning processes and Shakespeare's immersive and timeless universe

WYOBCOWANIE-WSPÓLNOTA-ESTETYKA

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INTRODUCTION

At the Gdańsk Shakespeare Theatre's Education Department, we often repeat this fundamental thought: true collaboration happens when each partner has something to offer the others, with each having the potential to gain something valuable for themselves. It is not only about balance but, most of all, about the sense of accomplishment in each institution engaged in the project activities. It is about knowing that what we do matters. These wise words are always worth following in practice. But it is absolutely vital to follow them in a project that takes two years and has six partners altogether.

In the project entitled *Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics. Aesthetic learning processes and Shakespeare's immersive and timeless universe*, we were presented with a huge opportunity to establish such collaboration but also with a huge challenge and responsibility associated with the subject matter we have undertaken. Have we succeeded? We hope that this question will be answered for you when you read this publication!

But in order to better understand the context of the articles published here, let us have a brief look back on our story and our goals. Actually, our adventure began many years ago. Back in 2016, in fact, when representatives of the Gdańsk Shakespeare Theatre went on a study visit to the campus of the University of South-Eastern Norway in Notodden, i.e. our future Norwegian partners (although we were not aware of that fact at the time). The topic of otherness, meeting the other and different views on universal topics depending on the differences and experiences of specific cultural communities interested us right from the start. So much so that we held a series of meetings there and then, aimed at launching collaboration in that area in the future.

However, several years passed before the idea crystallised enough for us to decide to act. Significantly, in the meantime, the ForEst Research Group was actively developing at Campus Notodden, centred around educational methods, with their name – aesthetic learning processes – sounding rather mysterious to a Polish audience at the time. And what a massively intriguing mystery it was!

Since its very inception, the Gdańsk Shakespeare Theatre has been developing what can be referred to as teaching through Shakespeare. That is because we did not aim to provide information about Shakespeare and his work (teaching Shakespeare) but to use the subject matter of Shakespeare's plays to teach humanness (in its broad sense) in schools and universities. To teach empathy, collaboration, responsibility, curiosity of the world and other people, and concepts such as power, love, fear, hope, good and evil (and many more). For years, we have also been working in that field of education with leading Polish research centres and – we won't hesitate to use the term – with top experts from the University of Gdańsk, University of Warsaw, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań and the Józef Tischner European University in Cracow.

This is how the idea was born to join forces in 2020. Our partners from Norway were to design a cohesive concept of aesthetic learning processes. These processes refer to, as we have learned, the various ways of using art and artistic methods in teaching – not only art but also any other topic.

The next important step was to instruct the Polish partners in these methods and to carry out observation and evaluation of the effects of using them, not only in our daily work but also in a long and very important process of creating new university subjects at all the partner universities in Poland. The project was to culminate in an international Shakespeare Camp for students who had taken part in these specially designed activities.

At the same time, the Polish experts designed, demonstrated to each other and shared with our Norwegian partners what we, in Poland, understand as teaching through Shakespeare and how we use these universal texts in our work. This is how we were also able to ensure a common denominator for all the project outcomes. They have the same textual basis and are, therefore, a very attractive framework for other researchers and practitioners not only from our two countries but, in fact, from the world over. For the first time on such a scale, we implemented these methods based on drama, film, psychology, sociology and dialogue in the curricula of universities in Poland.

The project resulted in a permanent and valuable networking of Poland's research (and student) community. After the extraordinary adventure of this project, we grew close, not only in the academic sense. The contribution from the Norwegian partners compelled us all to ask ourselves a number of

difficult but crucial questions about the methods we use, our responsibility for the process and students, and our choice of subjects. It also encouraged us to be daring in further education-related quests and to disrupt the standards of university teaching.

Together, we created an extensive database of teaching materials (in particular, videos from classes), which can be accessed under a free license by all project recipients and any individuals interested in these topics.

Our Polish-Norwegian adventure concluded with an extraordinary conference in Notodden. That is when we presented the effects of our work but also had the opportunity to listen to and absorb the knowledge from the large international community of experts in aesthetic learning processes gathered at the event.

This publication is not only a record of the process itself. Here, you will find recollections, essays and contributions from researchers, practitioners and students, alongside systemic and academic papers on the subject.

We are proud and grateful that so many wonderful people have contributed to this project. And we would like to thank everyone who has decided to share their thoughts and conclusions about it with you and with us. Because that is what our work is really about. About people and their experience. About being able to make the world a little better in the future.

With Shakespearean regards,

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AESTHETIC LEARNING PROCESSES AS A CONCEPT, EDUCATIONAL TERM, RESEARCH FIELD AND PRACTICE. A SHORT INTRODUCTION

ESTETYCZNE PROCESY UCZENIA SIĘ JAKO KONCEPCJA, TERMIN EDUKACYJNY, POLE BADAWCZE I PRAKTYKA – KRÓTKIE WPROWADZENIE

Keywords: aesthetic and learning, aesthetic learning, education, aesthetic practice.

Słowa kluczowe: estetyka i uczenie się, aesthetic learning, edukacja, praktyka estetyczna.

Abstract: The paper, through a broad approach, gives an overview of the phenomenon aesthetic learning processes by describing it as a concept, educational term, research field and practice. As a concept it is described through different relational commissions of aesthetics and learning, and through associated concepts. As an educational term it is described through how it is used in teacher education programmes in Norway. When aesthetic learning process are defined as a research field the focus is on how the research field emphasizes the relation between content and the form of teaching. As practice this phenomenon is described through practice connected to the research project *Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics*.

Abstrakt: Artykuł ten, dzięki szerokiemu zakresowi tematycznemu, zarysowuje fenomen estetycznych procesów uczenia się (aesthetic learning processes)

poprzez opisanie ich jako koncepcji, terminu pedagogicznego, obszaru badań i ćwiczeń praktycznych. Jako pojęcie został opisany poprzez różne relacje i połączenia między estetyką i nauką oraz poprzez pokrewne koncepcje. Jako termin pedagogiczny został opisany poprzez to, jak jest używany w programach kształcenia nauczycieli w Norwegii. Gdy zaś definiowany jest jako obszar badań, nacisk został położony na to, jak ten obszar podkreśla związek między treścią a formą estetyczną nauczania. Zostało również opisane jego praktyczne zastosowanie w projekcie *Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics*.

In this paper, we would like to present aesthetic learning processes as a concept, as an educational term and as a research field which we have based the design of our workshops for the Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics project upon. Because aesthetic learning processes are an unknown approach in the Polish educational system, this short introduction can give the readers a background for exploring the project's content that relates to this teaching method.

Aesthetic learning processes as a concept

The concept of aesthetic learning processes is based on and closely linked to related concepts such as aesthetic experience, aesthetic cognition, and aesthetic learning. It derives as well from the long philosophical and artistic tradition that, in various ways, defines and explores how working with art and aesthetic expressions can be a form of knowledge production (Lindstrand and Selander 2009; Fink-Jensen and Nielsen 2009; Hohr 2013, 2015, 2018). The concept also is linked to the following relevant terms and theory related to them: creativity, exploration, engagement, presence, improvisation, and the collective (Sæbø 2016). Aesthetic learning processes can be briefly explained as the sensory, bodily, emotional, and cognitive learning that takes place through working with different aesthetic forms[1] (Austring and Sørensen 2006, 2009; Hohr and Pedersen 1996; Illeris 2012). Fundamentally one of the most important premises of aesthetic learning processes is the relation between the content of what is taught, and the aesthetic form applied to frame this content in a learning environment. Next, the concept of aesthetic learning

[1] Narrative, tableau, performance, dramatisation, land art, drawing, film, images, installations, songs, rhymes, comics, poems, literature and more.

processes should be placed within our context: the Norwegian education programmes and Nordic research field.

Aesthetic learning processes as an educational term

Aesthetic learning processes have been, first and foremost, developed in connection to teacher education programmes in Nordic countries (Illeris 2012). They are applied by educators as an approach to learning in primary and secondary schools, and within higher education, teaching various subjects. In work with aesthetic learning processes, forms of expression are taken from the aesthetic subjects (Drama/Theatre, Arts and Crafts, Music, Dance, Language Subjects, Film), while the content/learning material can be taken from all subjects (Languages, Biology, Social Studies, Mathematics, History, Geography), as well as all the interdisciplinary themes that are a part of the Norwegian school reform: Sustainability, Democracy and Citizenship, Health and Life Skills.[2]

The Norwegian Report to the Ministry of Education entitled *Estetiske læringsprosesser i grunnskolelærerutdanningene: Helhetlig, integrert og forskningsbasert?* [Aesthetic learning processes in primary and lower secondary teacher education. Comprehensive, integrated and research-based?][3] (By et al. 2020) mapped and identified, through a broad and diverse understanding of the concept, how aesthetic learning processes were taught in teacher education programmes in Norway. Ingvild Margrethe Birkeland, one of our team members, was part of the appointed committee that wrote the report. The committee describes aesthetic learning processes as "processes where the experimental, sensory-based and symbolic are emphasised" (By et al. 2020, p. 14). They link them to concepts such as the aesthetic, aesthetic dimension, aesthetic subjects, the creative, in-depth learning, the method aspect, and instrumental use (By et al. 2020, p. 14-19). Furthermore, the report was meant to be a resource for developing well-functioning methods and a way of sharing experiences and competence between teacher education programmes

[2] https://www.udir.no/lk20/overordnet-del/prinsipper-for-laring-utvikling-og-danning/tverrfaglige-temaer/ (accessed 4 February 2023)

[3] This and all the other references to and quotations from non-English sources translated by the authors.

in Norway. There were several interesting findings in this report. What is important in the context of this text is how the committee defined aesthetic learning processes as a cross-disciplinary concept. In Norwegian teacher education programmes, all teacher students, regardless of subject choice, must gain knowledge of aesthetic learning processes. When concluding their teacher education, the students are expected to be able to use aesthetic learning processes as an approach in all the subjects they are going to teach. For example, if you are a Social Studies teacher, you should be able to teach the learning goals of the subject of social science by using aesthetic learning processes as a method. This makes this field of research vast and diverse, in both disciplinary and interdisciplinary terms.

Aesthetic learning processes as a research field

As a field of research, "aesthetic learning processes span across art and artistic practices, aesthetics and aesthetic activities, science and research practices" (Lindstrand and Selander 2009, p. 122). It can be said that there is tension within this research field, considering the different theories and definitions of aesthetic learning processes as well as different understandings of what the concepts of art, aesthetics and knowledge are. The research field presents a variety of aesthetic perspectives with different epistemological implications (Hohr and Pedersen 1996; Austring and Sørensen 2006, 2019; Illeris 2006, 2009, 2012). This complexity presents no concrete or straightforward definition of aesthetic learning processes but rather a dynamic field of research in constant theoretical, practical, ontological and epistemological development.

In the call for papers for the thematic issue on aesthetic learning processes in Journal for Research in Arts and Sports Education,[4] to be published in 2023,[5] aesthetic learning processes were outlined as follows:

> Aesthetic learning processes are an established concept in various educational contexts. Research in the field examines how art and widely understood aesthetics can form the basis for complex learning processes,

[4] JASED is a Nordic and international, open-access, peer-reviewed journal.
[5] Tone C. Krosshus and Lars Frers, our team members, are guest editors on this issue.

> and how imagination and sensual and relational forms can be incorporated into teaching. Aesthetic learning processes can be explored as a concept, phenomenon, perspective on knowledge or practice, and can be developed through various methodological approaches; artistic, or in social science and the humanities. (Definition of the research field in the call for abstract https://jased.net/index.php/jased/announcement/view/124; accessed 12 February 2023)

Within the research field, it can be said that there are at least two prominent viewpoints on aesthetic learning processes: the view on knowledge and the view on art and aesthetics. Sakariassen (2021) addresses precisely this when she presents two ways of understanding aesthetic learning processes. The first one deals with aesthetic learning processes oriented towards knowledge and understanding, and the second one deals with aesthetic learning processes oriented towards art production and reception (Sakariassen 2021). The said relation between content and the form of teaching is also of importance.

Otherness-togetherness and aesthetic learning processes as a practice

Through the various methods, aesthetic learning processes present a possibility to work with different topics and different subjects, using art, literature and theatre, among others, to convey the content. It is the forms of expression, texts and tools of the various aesthetic subjects and contemporary art forms that create the possibilities to do so. Through Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics, we were able to immerse ourselves in Shakespeare's universe in different ways and explore topics like otherness and togetherness through aesthetic learning processes. Our approaches to designing the workshops for the meeting in Gdańsk derived from art pedagogical strategies associated with contemporary art, drama and theatre and digital competencies. These were staging, performative, dramaturgical and theatrical strategies (Østern and Knudsen 2019; Sauter 2008; Szatkowski 2019). Principles such as improvisation, interaction, participation and collectivity are fundamental in all methods working with aesthetic learning processes (Austring and Sørensen

2006, 2019; Fink-Jensen and Nielsen 2009; Illeris 2006, 2009, 2012; Lindstrand and Selander 2009; Neelands and Goode 1990; Sæbø 2016). The workshops we presented were, therefore, examples of three very different aesthetic learning processes, using, respectively, contemporary art, drama and theatre and digital technology/analogue techniques as an approach. We emphasised that everyone had to participate, be included in the process and create together in all the workshops; and that togetherness and otherness were addressed as topics both through the content and the framing.

For example, Bøen-Olsen investigated through her workshop how an open and exploratory approach to tasks impacts the way the participants (collectively) work towards and find different solutions. Working together in groups, the workshop participants learned from each other both what the digital tools could be used for and how interchange between analogue and digital expressions could be achieved. In that way, she wished to exemplify how one can facilitate aesthetic learning processes using both digital and analogue tools.

Krosshus and Birkeland designed their workshop so there was a real possibility to switch places and become the others, in this case, citizens of a fictional country. Starting out as a new government, the participants then went through an exercise as fictional characters and, in the end, became the citizens pleading for understanding from the government. Changing positions and perspectives is an important part of the performative level in aesthetic learning processes, as defined by Illeris (2012). In that way, the participants could directly experience the difference between being in power and being powerless.

The Joker in Magierecka's workshop created a powerful feeling of otherness. Her approach aimed to create a framing where the participants worked together against the other—the Joker. With an emphasis on learning autonomy (Sierens et al. 2009), Magierecka withheld a lot of information, letting the participants become frustrated and still leading them towards a common goal of creating their own understanding and applying it to and through fictional framing. This workshop focused on contemporary art strategies, using the interweaving of different and divergent elements as a method (Paavolainen 2015).

What was present in all three workshops was Shakespeare's immersive and timeless universe. We all used his works as inspiration, material for the design, fictional framing and reference. This we had in common with our Polish participants: our Shakespeare became our 'togetherness' across different understandings of learning strategies.

In this paper, we briefly introduced the readers to aesthetic learning processes as a concept, educational term, research field and practice, using examples from our contribution to the Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics project. In many ways, our workshops did represent our view on knowledge through aesthetic learning processes, the different aesthetic approaches we relied upon, and the relationship between the content and framing of them, while addressing the topics of otherness and togetherness.

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Bio

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STRUCTURING PRACTICES OF AESTHETICS: THE NORWEGIAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROJECT
STRUKTURY PRAKTYK ESTETYCZNYCH: WKŁAD PARTNERA NORWESKIEGO W PROJEKT

Keywords: aesthetic learning, teacher education, aesthetics, togetherness, otherness.

Słowa kluczowe: aesthetic learning, kształcenie nauczycieli, estetyka, wspólnota, inność.

Abstract: This paper outlines how the Norwegian team contributed, through different stages, to the project Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics. We present our theoretical background, methods approaching the research within the project and the phases of exploring aesthetic learning processes with Polish university teachers and students. The paper is concluded with short description of the international conference held at Campus Notodden fall 2022.

Abstrakt: Artykuł opisuje elementy wkładu norweskiego zespołu w realizację projektu Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics. Przedstawione zostały: tło teoretyczne, metody podejścia do badań w ramach projektu oraz fazy eksploracji estetycznych procesów uczenia się, z udziałem polskich nauczycieli akademickich oraz studentów. Tekst wieńczy krótki opis międzynarodowej konferencji podsumowującej projekt, która odbyła się w Notodden jesienią 2022 roku.

Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics has been a comprehensive project for us, the research team from the University of South-Eastern Norway, Campus Notodden, through formulating research designs and workshops, conducting them as well as visiting the participating universities, and finally preparing and conducting the artistic workshop and performance in Gdańsk and organising the conference in Notodden. In this paper, we would like to present a brief description of the whole body of our work within this project. The content was written by all the members of our team at various stages of the project and edited by Joanna Magierecka.

Aesthetic learning processes

The present is complicated, unpredictable and unmanageable. ForEst, the Research Group for Aesthetic Learning Processes, defines aesthetic learning processes as a concept representing a complex view of learning, where body, mind, senses and emotions are activated as a prerequisite for learning. Learning processes are created through the various aesthetic subjects' forms of expressions, texts and tools. Deep, ambiguous and multidisciplinary learning takes place within those. The aesthetic learning processes are complex processes that do not provide unambiguous answers but, in them, the individual's and community's understandings are explored, challenged, and developed.[1]

BOX: The Research Group for Aesthetic Learning Processes aims to develop theoretical and practical knowledge about aesthetic learning processes in and across subjects and disciplines. The group is interdisciplinary and consists of 17 members who are engaged in various projects at kindergarten, primary school and higher education levels. Knowledge of the relationship between art and aesthetics alongside formative and learning processes are developed through multiple epistemological approaches deriving from social sciences, humanities and art-based research, as well as from the intersection between them.[2]

[1] https://www.usn.no/forskning/hva-forsker-vi-pa/barnehage-skole-og-hoyere-utdanning/estetiske-lareprosesser/ (accessed 6 February 2023) ForEst, the Research Group for Aesthetic Learning Processes.

[2] https://alt.usn.no/conference-booklet/ (accessed 13 February 2023).

Hence, the research field aesthetic learning processes span across art and artistic practices and are characterised by many different aesthetic perspectives (Lindstrand and Selander 2009, Hohr and Pedersen 1996; Austring and Sørensen 2019; Illeris 2012).[3] In designing aesthetic learning processes, the focal point and outset are the aesthetic forms of expression.

The report *Estetiske læringsprosesser i grunnskolelærerutdanningene: Helhetlig, integrert og forskningsbasert?*[4] [Aesthetic learning processes in primary and lower secondary teacher education. Comprehensive, integrated and research-based?][5] (By et al. 2020) recommends ensuring a comprehensive and integrated educational approach in the development of aesthetic learning processes in teacher education. The committee conducted a survey at 13 higher education institutions that have primary school teacher education programmes. This approach should also ensure progression and cohesion and should be research-based. Hence, a recommendation of stimuli for academic environments at the specific institutions that contribute to the development of teaching methods and research was suggested. The Ministry of Education and Research has given the same recommendation.

Through this report, the Government aimed to develop new teaching methods and contribute to a new curriculum working towards 21st century skills in teacher education programmes. Although practised for years, aesthetic learning processes have been underestimated in both research and education. The general part of the Norwegian school reform, *Fagfornyelse*[6], emphasises interactive teaching methods and extended learning. The new Norwegian teacher education reform highlights aesthetic approaches towards learning. Here in Norway, we regard and work with aesthetic learning processes as an essential part of the educational system and the formative process in children and young adults learning through aesthetic experiences – or aesthetic learning processes. Through our cooperation with Poland, we wished to share this approach, our research and methods with our Polish

[3] See page 10 in this book, in the text *Aesthetic Learning Processes as a Concept, Education Term, Research Field and Practice. A Short Introduction*.

[4] https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/ea18f23415a14c8faaf7bc869022afc2/estetiske-laringsprosesser-i-grunnskolelarerutdanningene.pdf (accessed 8 February 2023).

[5] This and all the other references to and quotations from non-English sources translated by the authors.

[6] https://www.udir.no/laring-og-trivsel/lareplanverket/fagfornyelsen/ (accessed 14 February 2023).

partners. At the same time, Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics presented a unique possibility to conduct research in this area on an international level, as recommended by the report.

Researching through Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics, we wished to investigate which methods, theories and educational policies can highlight what characterises the unique qualities of aesthetic learning processes.

Otherness and togetherness are important aspects in the development of democracy (Tjora 2018; Heggstad et al. 2017; Sæbø et al. 2017). Aesthetic learning processes use various methods, forms of expression and tools that can explore those topics through the transformative and/or performative possibilities of aesthetics. Therefore, we wished to examine different approaches to aesthetic learning processes that explore otherness and togetherness. Those approaches derive from art pedagogical strategies associated with contemporary art, drama and theatre. Amongst those, there are staging, performative, dramaturgical and theatrical strategies (Sauter 2008; Szatkowski 2019; Østern and Knudsen 2019). All of them are collective strategies, where the relational interaction between the participants' bodies, cognitive and emotional processes, and text, space and time is important. We have chosen Shakespeare's universe as our starting point because there we find a thematic richness and human complexity that transcends historical periods, communities and cultures.

BOX: We asked The Gdańsk Shakespeare Theatre for help and their expertise in finding suitable material from Shakespeare's plays for our workshops. We wanted specific situations, characters and spaces that related to otherness and togetherness as phenomena in Shakespeare's work. In this book, we have included our online conversation in a text entitled Shakespeare's immersive universe as a starting point for aesthetic learning processes: *The Reques*t.

Method

Our aim was for the project to revolve around devising didactics based on concrete aesthetic practice and linked to aesthetic and practical methodologies such as art-based research (Barone and Eisner 2011; Green 2006, 2011; Bresler 2006), performative research and theories of performativity (Østern and Knutsen 2019; Haseman 2006; Ulvund 2012); how knowledge

is acquired through an aesthetical approach (Rasmussen 2013, Borgdorff 2011), considering at the same time dramaturgy (Knudsen 2018; Szatkowski 2020), as well as phenomenology and social constructivism as the theoretical backdrop.

It is possible to apply these different approaches separately or combined. Art-based research can be defined as a methodology that, at an overall level, is about providing space for artistic and aesthetic activity in various ways: as an empirical research method and a form of communication (Rasmussen 2013, p. 262). We have acquired our definition of performative research as a research paradigm from Østern and Knudsen (2019). Hence, we use "art as lenses to understand the world and provide new and exciting sites for theory production, research, teaching practice and education" (Østern and Knudsen 2019, p. 1).

Methodologies highlight results from empirical findings through analysis as well as reflective and theoretical considerations. More advanced methodological models of exploration through aesthetic practice constitute possible research results moving forward. In our case, the main goal has always been to achieve new insight into and knowledge about how aesthetic learning processes can explore the themes of otherness and togetherness through Shakespeare's universe. Prior to the workshops, we outlined a preliminary categorisation of the connection between the developmental work and possible research topics. We have chosen *Eight "Big-Tent" Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research* (Tracy 2010) as our guideline. The research project produced abundant data (Tracy 2010) that currently forms the basis of two scientific articles, with more to come.

BOX: Tone and Joanna are currently working on a paper based on a thorough analysis of the videotape from the first meeting in Gdańsk, *Fiction and interaction as parameters in designing aesthetic learning processes. Strategies and tactics*. Elin is working on her PhD in aesthetic learning processes. Ingvild and Tone are analysing syllabi collected from the universities participating in the project. A description of the latter publication is a part of this book.

Meeting in Gdańsk: The Educators

During our first meeting in Gdańsk, our team prepared three workshops introducing different aesthetic learning processes to educators and researchers from the four universities participating in the project.

THIS GAME IS NOT A GAME/JOANNA MAGIERECKA

The workshop was designed with two purposes in mind: letting the participants explore aesthetic learning processes as a method and challenge their understanding of how teaching can be conducted and how learning, with emphasis on autonomy (Sierens et al. 2009), can be conveyed. The workshop was divided into three sessions to advance the aspect of autonomous learning and cooperation. In between the sessions, the participants had the possibility to work together and interpret the tasks given by Joanna, the teacher-in-role (Heathcote and Bolton 1995). Joanna conducted the whole workshop as a fictional character.

TOUCHING SCREEN AND CUTTING PAPER: EXPLORING OTHERNESS AND TOGETHERNESS IN A DIGITAL AND ANALOGUE ENVIRONMENT/ELIN BØEN-OLSEN

The aim of the workshop was to give new examples and inspire the teachers to think outside the box by combining digital and analogue tools and strategies within an aesthetic learning process. The workshop was designed in a hybrid format, led online from Norway, with the rest of the participants together in Poland. The framing of the workshop was a digital universe where the participants interactively explored a digital room, solved tasks in groups with digital and analogue tools and strategies, and reflected on topics from Shakespeare's immersive universe. At the end of the workshop, the participants held a concluding artistic performance and a collective reflection on the learning process. The didactic framework of the workshop built upon theories about aesthetic learning processes.

FIGHTING FOR TOGETHERNESS/INGVILD M. BIRKELAND AND TONE C. KROSSHUS

A teaching event where the fictional frame begins with the idea that the king of a certain kingdom has retired. The participants of the workshop take roles as the kingdom's new leaders. The new leaders must determine how and if they can work together to lead the new kingdom. The workshop consists of five sequences: Entering the Universe, The Mission, The Map, The Law, The Others and Exiting the Universe. It is built upon a classic dramaturgy with a turning point when the participants take the roles of the others. In this workshop, togetherness and otherness are explored as both content and form.

Because survival is not enough: The Students

As a part of the project, Joanna Magierecka was tasked with preparing and conducting an artistic process that would also present the method of working with aesthetic learning processes. Joanna chose to work with contemporary art expressions and participatory strategies involving the audience. This time, it was the students from the universities that participated in the process. They were fictional survivors of a pandemic that had wiped out almost the entire human population. The book Station Eleven by Emily St. John Mandel (2014) was the inspiration for this scenario. The survivors had to create groups with a specific purpose within this post-pandemic society – for example, the medics, the survivalists or the historians. The groups then had to stage and design a meeting with the audience to gather knowledge and include the participants in the event as a part of the new society, the survivors.

The experience was rare in its expression: the students created a rich, potent staging full of participatory strategies. It was very exciting to watch the meeting with the audience and to hear the participants talk about it after the event.

Aesthetic learning processes and togetherness: The Conference

At the conference, we wanted to explore the manifold tensions, opportunities, obstacles and wonders that unfold in aesthetic learning processes. While aesthetics and learning `often located in a more-or-less cognitive or more-or-less embodied individual, we wanted to approach aesthetic learning processes as collective phenomena.

The otherness-togetherness pair served as our conceptual point of entry to this highly complex and dynamic collective dimension. Being together and being apart, being included and being excluded, to be or not to be ignored are fundamental and difficult-to-handle experiences that can serve to unlock great potential or cast both learners and teachers into a dark place. More than that, being on the outside, on the edge of something, can also be positive and right. Which position is more controversial in today's society? We wanted to encourage asking difficult questions with no clear-cut answers and wanted to provide an open and respectful forum to discuss them.7

At the international conference in Notodden, at the end of November 2022, the participants from Poland and our team presented papers about the project. Additionally, Lars Frers, Helene Illeris and Merete C. Sørensen joined us as our esteemed keynotes. They presented their research connected to the conference topic and contributed to the workshops. Nineteen carefully selected researchers and presenters from Denmark, Sweden and Norway, representing different disciplines and research fields, presented their papers about aesthetic learning processes and togetherness.

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Bio

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Tone Cronblad Krosshus – Associate Professor at the University of South--Eastern Norway (USN). Research related to aesthetic learning processes, applied theatre, art as knowledge, aesthetic practice and democratic formation, and art mediation. Participant in different research projects such as: Drama-theatre-democracy (2014-2017), OTHERNESS-TOGETHERNESS--AESTETHICS (2021-2023) and Art as knowledge (2020-dd). One of four directors of Notodden Children's and Youth Theatre, which among other things received Notodden's cultural prize 2019. Project manager for DKS + lærerutdanning = sant (?!) – a collaboration between Kulturtanken, DKS Vestfold Telemark and USN. Co-manager of the Research Group for Aesthetic Learning Processes (ForEst).

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Lars Frers – Lars has been an important part of the process of developing a research design for Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics. Lars`s knowledge of aesthetics, methodological knowledge about artistic and arts-based research as well as basic explorative approach to research and exploration are combined with his professional background and position as head of the university's PhD program in culture studies. Lars Frers is Professor at the Department of Culture, Religion and Social Sciences, University of South-Eastern Norway, Campus Notodden.

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OTHERNESS-TOGETHERNESS-AESTHETICS AND WHAT KIND OF AESTHETIC LEARNING PROCESSES? A DISCUSSION OF HOW AESTHETIC LEARNING PROCESSES ARE EXPRESSED IN FOUR DIFFERENT SYLLABUSES

OTHERNESS-TOGETHERNESS-AESTHETICS – CZYLI JAKI RODZAJ ESTETYCZNYCH PROCESÓW UCZENIA SIĘ? JAK SYLABUSY CZTERECH UCZELNI WYŻSZYCH OPISUJĄ WDROŻENIE ESTETYCZNYCH PROCESÓW UCZENIA SIĘ – DYSKUSJA

Keywords: in-depth learning, university courses, Shakespeare's immersive universe, otherness and togetherness, performative learning.

Słowa kluczowe: pogłębione uczenie się, kursy uniwersyteckie, immersyjne uniwersum Szekspira, inność i wspólnota, edukacja performatywna.

Abstract: This text is examining what kind of aesthetic learning processes we can find in the different syllabi of the four courses that were produced as a result of the project Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics. In the four syllabi: *Otherness--Togetherness-Aesthetics: The Merchant of Venice*; *To inter-be? Otherness and togetherness in Shakespeare's "To be or not to be" soliloquy: An aesthetic learning approach*; *How to be together?*; and *From Shakespeare with love. How to cope in the modern world*, we find two dimensions on which to differentiate the

use of arts, and three different approaches to aesthetic learning processes. The two dimensions are learning in the arts, and learning through arts. The three approaches to aesthetic learning processes are *The activated subject, Knowledge viewed as performative*, and *Productive and receptive access*. The text also points out that social aspects of aesthetic learning processes are essential and could be a perspective to follow in future research.

Abstrakt: Niniejszy artykuł bada, jakiego rodzaju estetyczne procesy uczenia się możemy znaleźć w sylabusach nowych przedmiotów na czterech polskich uczelniach wyższych, które powstały jako efekt projektu "Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics". W tychże sylabusach: *Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics: The Merchant of Venice*; *To inter-be? Otherness and togetherness in Shakespeare's "To be or not to be" soliloquy*: *An aesthetic learning approach*; *How to be together?*; *From Shakespeare with love. How to cope in the modern world?* znajdziemy dwa czynniki, na których można różnicować wykorzystanie sztuki, oraz trzy różne podejścia do estetycznych procesów uczenia się. Te dwa czynniki to uczenie się o sztuce i uczenie się poprzez sztukę. Trzy podejścia do estetycznych procesów uczenia się to: aktywowany podmiot, wiedza postrzegana jako performatywna oraz produktywne i receptywne podejście. Artykuł wskazuje również, że społeczne aspekty estetycznych procesów uczenia się są istotne i mogą stanowić perspektywę do zgłębienia w przyszłych badaniach.

The scope of the project

Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics focuses on how aesthetic learning processes and Shakespeare's immersive universe can be used to get students to learn in-depth about otherness and togetherness. The Norwegian participants in the project came from the University of South-Eastern Norway in Notodden and were invited to teach about aesthetic learning processes as practised in Nordic countries. The Polish participants in the project came from four different Polish universities: Józef Tischner European University in Cracow, University of Warsaw, University of Gdańsk and Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, and were invited to teach about Shakespeare. In a workshop week in Gdańsk in August 2021 (13 August–17 August)[1] the Norwegian team delivered three workshops2 that used aesthetic learning

[1] Before the workshop week, the Norwegian team sent the video lesson *Aesthetic learning processes: A short introduction* (by Tone Cronblad Krosshus).

[2] The titles of the three workshops delivered by the Norwegian team: 1) *This game is not a game: The possibilities of developing self-educational strategies through aesthetic learning processes* by

processes created through art pedagogical strategies associated with contemporary art, drama and theatre to explore otherness and togetherness. The Polish participants presented five workshops[3] examining how Shakespeare's works could be used to explore different aspects of otherness and togetherness. During the following autumn and spring semesters, the Polish universities developed unique courses that used Shakespeare and aesthetic learning processes in various ways to explore students' perspectives on otherness and togetherness. The Norwegian team assisted the Polish educator team from each university in two rounds, once on Zoom at the start of the course and once by being present in a teaching situation.[4]

In addition to collaborating in teaching and offering insights about using aesthetic learning processes as an approach to teaching, the Norwegian team in the Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics project also aimed to develop new knowledge about aesthetic learning processes. We wanted to further investigate what exactly characterises the qualities of aesthetic learning processes that came into play in the context of this project. In this text, we engage with our desire to develop new knowledge by examining what kind of aesthetic learning processes we can find in the different syllabi of the courses that were produced as a result of the collaboration.

To investigate the issue, we have examined the four course descriptions provided by the Polish partner institutions. Since the material provided took different forms, we decided not to try to follow a specific methodological formula in our analysis. Instead, we engaged with the material in-depth, in different ways intended to build on each other and complement each other.

Joanna Magierecka; 2) *Fighting for togetherness: Aesthetic learning processes as a kind of card game* by Ingvild Margrethe Birkeland and Tone Cronblad Krosshus; and 3) *Touching screen and cutting paper: Exploring otherness and togetherness in a digital and analogue environment* by Elin Bøen-Olsen.

[3] The titles of the workshops delivered by the Polish team: *Adapting Otherness and Togetherness* by Jacek Fabiszak (Poznań), *Play me like a flute—How to use Shakespeare to promote critical thinking amongst university students—A drama-based workshop* by Adam Jagiełło-Rusiłowski (Gdańsk), *Meeting the other or how to read Shakespearean dialogue* by Marta Gibińska (Cracow), *Shakespeare as a window to the students' views on the contemporary world* by Tomasz Kowalski (Poznań) and *Macbeth—A being made of flesh* by Małgorzata Grzegorzewska (Warsaw).

[4] Joanna Magierecka supervised Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań on Zoom 13 January 2022 and on campus 22 March 2022; and University of Gdańsk on Zoom 4 February 2022 and on campus 26 May 2022. Ingvild Margrethe Birkeland and Tone Cronblad Krosshus supervised Józef Tischner European University in Cracow on Zoom 22 Feb 2022 and on campus 11 May 2022; and University of Warsaw on Zoom 22 February 2022 and on campus 10 May 2022.

We did this as a team to benefit from different perspectives and interpretive angles (McClunie-Trust et al. 2022). First, we had an open reading of the syllabuses, both individually and together. It became evident that the syllabuses together represented a broad understanding of aesthetic learning processes. To make this broad understanding more accessible to analysis, we categorised it into three approaches, each highlighting distinct aspects of the aesthetic learning process.

After briefly describing the four courses, we will provide an overview of the Scandinavian research field of aesthetic learning processes. In the next step, we will briefly present the three approaches and discuss how they become present in the syllabuses of the four courses.

The four courses

The lecturers at the universities that developed the courses represented different professions and disciplines, such as Philology, Sociology, Drama, and Psychology. The students who participated in the courses also came from various study programs, such as Scandinavian Studies, English, Literature, Economy and Theatre Studies. Hence the four courses represent diversity in relation to subjects, disciplines and topics. For the Norwegian team, the courses were intended to be open to this kind of diversity, as it was part of exploring the themes of otherness and togetherness in various educational settings.

Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics: The Merchant of Venice (University of Warsaw):

This course is presented as a combination of "aesthetic learning processes with 'the timeless universe of Shakespeare's plays' with topics such as identity, beliefs, relationships, community and the complexity of social interactions" (*OTA: The Merchant of Venice*). The course consists of an in-depth reading of Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice*, where the students engage with the play to define the phenomenon of otherness and togetherness. The students' task was to look at the play's dialogues in light of the different ob-

stacles represented by the characters and the environment around them. The methods for solving the task were, first and foremost, an in-depth reading of Shakespeare's play including contextualisation of theatrical, historical, philosophical, religious and juridic texts, as well as investigation of adaptations of the play in film and theatre.

To inter-be? *Otherness and togetherness in Shakespeare's "To be or not to be" soliloquy: An aesthetic learning approach* (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań):

This course used the line from Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*, "To be or not to be," to understand "the soliloquy's social and aesthetic ramifications in the contemporary world" (*OTA: To inter-be?*). In the course, the students' task was to analyse different representations (theatrical, cinematic, videogames, comic books) of the soliloquy and re-do the soliloquy using methods such as: re-writing, re-telling, re-citing, re-acting and re-playing. They were encouraged to use the pandemic situation in their aesthetic interpretations of the monologue. Other methods presented in the curriculum are brainstorming, close reading in class, theoretical approaches, analysis of Act Three, discussions in class, practical work on reciting the speech and writings such as socially sensitive re-writings (email, text messages). The students could also present and adapt the soliloquy into an art form, such as a poem (lyrical or narrative).

How to be together? (Józef Tischner European University in Cracow):

The course was based on working with the antonyms exclusion – community, both in social phenomena and literature. One of the main goals was to build student competence in the context of social activity. The course introduced literature as a didactic material to explore essential subjects in social science and provided tools which allowed the students to utilise literature and theatre for the purpose of developing social skills. The course consisted of three modules[5] which included teaching methods, such as lectures, workshops, discussion (detailed discussion), analysis, presentation of

[5] Module 1: *Shakespearean aspect based on the play* A Midsummer Night's Dream – *How to be together – Theatre, comedy and us in the 21st century*. Module 2: *Socio-literary aspect based on modern literature*. Module 3: *Socio-psychological aspect using methods such psychodrama, role-playing, games and simulation*.

the students' creative, aesthetic and personal projects, acting out dialogues, staging, group reading, creative writing, mutual feedback, drawing, playing games and taking part in a simulation.

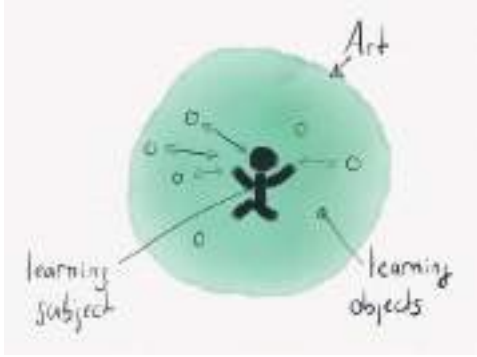
From Shakespeare with love. How to cope in the modern world (University of Gdańsk):

The course stated that its main goal was to give students social skills through a deeper understanding of the human, social identity and dynamics of social structure, and mutual dependences between groups and individuals. It was based on providing students with opportunities to "explore various ways of dealing with uncertainty in diverse social groups and roles" (*From Shakespeare with love*) by working creatively and analytically with selected texts by Shakespeare. The course consisted of teaching methods, such as discussion, group work, multimedia-based lectures, text analysis and discussion and preparation of artistic and social projects.

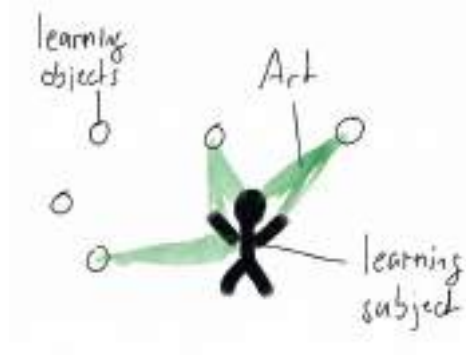
Aesthetic learning processes in Scandinavia

Aesthetic learning processes have been established as a research field in which arts and aesthetics are examined as central aspects of learning processes (Austring & Sørensen 2006, 2019; Hohr and Pedersen 1996; Lindstrand and Selander 2009; Illeris 2006, 2009, 2012; Sæbø 2016). The concept of aesthetic learning processes draws on various theories which highlight how art and aesthetics can lead to cognition, learning and reflection (Dewey 2005; Schiller 1965; Cassirer 1994; Langer 1942), and upon various theories about how art and aesthetics can be understood: relationally, pragmatically and performatively (Bourriaud 2007; Schusterman 2000; Schechner 2013). The concept is also evolving both practically and theoretically, as it is employed in different Scandinavian art subjects such as Drama and Theatre, Arts and Crafts, Music, Literature and Dance (By et al. 2020). Hence, the research field of aesthetic learning processes spans across many different aesthetic theories and practices connected to different associated learning perspectives. In the context of this text, we want to highlight that aesthetic learning processes have two main dimensions related to the learning side

of aesthetic learning processes (Bamford 2006; UNESCO 2006; By et al. 2020). The first (dimension 1, see image below) is learning in art, aesthetic and arts subjects, while the other (dimension 2, see second image below) is when art, aesthetics and arts subjects are used as a method of or approach to learning other subjects. The premise of the entire project is based on the second dimension and the assumption that aesthetic learning processes and Shakespeare's immersive universe can give us knowledge about otherness and togetherness. As we shall see, it also is a prerequisite for the four courses from the Polish partners that, while learning about Shakespeare, the students also learn about interpersonal topics. They acquire social skills and reflect on ethics through Shakespeare, or vice versa: when learning through experiencing and performing Shakespeare's art, the students also learn about Shakespeare's works and their aesthetic form. In the four courses designed by the Polish partners, we see that both dimensions overlap.



Dimension 1: Learning in the arts



Dimension 2: Learning through arts

The first approach: The activated subject

This approach is based on the premise that aesthetic learning processes incorporate the learning subject as a subject that contributes to creating meaning in the learning situation (Fink-Jensen and Nielsen 2009). This approach focuses on what is activated in the learning subject when meaning is created. Aesthetic learning processes presuppose that, in an experience of art, our body, senses and emotions are woven into the cognitive (Sæbø 2016).

This means that the learning subject (the student) is contributing with their own experiences, attitudes, values, knowledge, thoughts, feelings and preconceptions in the process of giving meaning to what is learned (Fink-Jensen and Nilsen 2009, p. 194). The learning subject uses their creative abilities and means of action to convey all of this through the art subjects' forms of expression.

All four syllabuses state that meeting with and experiencing Shakespeare's texts is central. This implies that experiencing the literature itself is necessary to access the themes to be investigated. The students' personal opinions, feelings and understandings are activated in distinct ways in the different poetic adaptation techniques, where the students choose various means to express their own interpretation of the text. In this process, the students should activate their personal opinions, feelings and understandings but they also should reflect on them and investigate them. This is not only a process that happens for the students as individuals. The students shall attend class together and share class activities, such as presentations and performances, with each other. They are literally brought into social activity to develop social and interpersonal skills, which will be coloured by the here-and-now conditions relevant to each of them. All of this is activated in a shared space, even if the actions happen in a fictional frame and with fictional characters. It is repeatedly expressed in the syllabuses that the students shall participate in ways that include their personal experiences, references, opinions and attitudes, for example when it is proposed that the students should relate to the ongoing pandemic situation, practise creative writing, drawing and explore practical ways of dealing with uncertainty in different groups.

The second approach: Knowledge viewed as performative

The second approach to aesthetic learning processes focuses on an openness to the learning outcome. This openness can be defined as performative (Illeris 2006, 2009, 2012; Østern and Knudsen 2019). Seeing knowledge as performative emphasises that knowledge can be understood as dynamic, relational and created in the encounter between an individual, the topic and the material in a teaching event. It is this performative understanding

of knowledge that the Research Group for Aesthetic Learning Processes at the University of South-Eastern Norway expresses when they declare that aesthetic learning processes provide ambiguous answers (USN 2023). This approach relates to a perspective that knowledge should not be transferred from teacher to students but that it is to be created in a shared process between the teachers, the students and the learning material. Aesthetic learning processes can, in this way, give productive opportunities for exploring, challenging and developing knowledge. This openness regarding learning outcomes is particularly relevant when the main goal is to learn about multi-faceted topics such as otherness and togetherness.

The performative understanding of knowledge is expressed in several places in the four courses. Openness connected to the outcomes is expressed, for example, when words like explore, construct, revealing, performing, re-doing, consciously participate and open are used in relation to the outcomes in the syllabuses. And it is expressed in sentences dealing with outcomes, such as "Interpretation of literary works, allowing for the comprehension of social phenomena" (*How to Be Together?*), "be open to cultural difference" (*How to Be Together?*), "[…] establish how the isolation and the ubiquitous shadow of death have informed our perspective on the reception of 'To be or not to be'" (*OTA: To inter-be?*), " is sensitive to cultural differences" (*OTA: The Merchant of Venice*), "dealing with uncertainty in diverse social groups […]" (*From Shakespeare with love*) and "creative interpretation of selected texts by William Shakespeare" (*From Shakespeare with love*). We see that the performative understanding of knowledge is expressed in all the courses and we see that art, aesthetic and exploratory methods are often used to make the students construct this knowledge together.

The third approach: Productive and receptive access

In aesthetic learning processes, students can learn in two different yet related ways: through experiencing art and aesthetics, and through creating art and aesthetics. In the research field, this is expressed as the productive and the receptive aspect of learning processes (By et al. 2020; Birkeland and Uhlin-Engstu 2021). Hence, aesthetic learning processes can be defined as

learning both through the reception and the production of aesthetic expressions such as literature, music, theatre, dance and visual arts. The two kinds of access are expressed in different ways; for instance, in some contexts, the side of the learning subject's own expressions, articulations and practical activity is emphasised, then often described in terms such as "learning through experimenting" or "creative learning." At the same time, when speaking of aesthetic learning processes, pedagogical thinking also emphasises the experience of aesthetic objects. On this side, it is stressed that the reception approach does not describe a passive position but rather involves a process where the learning subject relates to the world through sensory experiences that activate feelings and thoughts. Productive and receptive sides can, of course, also exist simultaneously and unfold in the same teaching event.

The four courses display different kinds of productive and receptive access to aesthetic learning processes. All the courses encompass a poetic-aesthetic approach to literature (not only an analytic approach), sometimes by experiencing literature and other art forms (first and foremost related to Shakespeare's immersive universe), sometimes by creating literature and other art forms (first and foremost related to Shakespeare's immersive universe), and sometimes by experiencing and creating at the same time (first and foremost related to the student's own creative work). Receptive access to aesthetic learning processes is expressed, for example, when literature is used to give an art experience as a starting point for learning and to motivate, engage or activate the student. Receptive access is expressed when literature is used to point out, vary or highlight, specific and complicated situations and possible understandings concerning otherness and togetherness. Receptive access to aesthetic learning processes in the courses is put into the context of motivating learning and providing in-depth learning. All art expression and art methods that the courses use to give the students aesthetic experiences include, in addition to literature, other forms of artistic expression such as theatre, film, visual arts, music and gaming (*From Shakespeare with love*; *How to be together?*; *OTA: The Merchant of Venice*; *OTA: To inter-be?*). Productive access to aesthetic learning processes is expressed when students are asked to communicate, reflect and argue about different perspectives on otherness and togetherness through aesthetic expressions and forms. This approach is also shown in the syllabuses when the students are asked to express their

thoughts, meanings and themselves through dialogue in poetic form. Thus, they produce highly specific aesthetic forms for learning about otherness and togetherness.

The social aspect and future research perspectives

The two dimensions (learning in the arts; learning through arts) and the three approaches to aesthetic learning processes discussed above are, as we have seen, effective in different ways in the syllabuses that we have investigated. In addition, we have so far only hinted that a social aspect of aesthetic learning processes is also present in the two dimensions and that it is also part of the three approaches. We will not be able to discuss this social aspect in depth in this text but we can see that it activates and is activated by the learning subject. Social aspects permeate both the constructed and the performative knowledge that is created. Moreover, the social aspect is an important part of reception and production, as it is activated when the students create or experience together with others and in their presence. The social aspect can also create resistance, uncertainty and unwillingness, even if it can simultaneously create courage, safety and motivation. The social aspect is an uncontrollable, moving scope that would need more in-depth attention and more suitable research material or data for a substantial analysis. Because of that, we have limited ourselves to only pointing out that aesthetic learning processes are also characterised by uncertainty about how the process will unfold and what meaningful knowledge will be connected to the social aspect. We notice that the social aspect is expressed in several places in the four syllabuses. Still, we do not know how this appeared in the various specific learning situations and the whole experience of the different courses. We would like to point out that it would be of great interest to examine the social aspect of aesthetic learning processes closely, especially in the context of topics such as otherness and togetherness that are inherently social.

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Bio

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Lars Frers – Lars has been an important part of the process of developing a research design for Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics. Lars`s knowledge of aesthetics, methodological knowledge about artistic and arts-based research as well as basic explorative approach to research and exploration are combined with his professional background and position as head of the university's PhD program in culture studies. Lars Frers is Professor at the Department of Culture, Religion and Social Sciences, University of South-Eastern Norway, Campus Notodden.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH-EASTERN NORWAY

SHAKESPEARE'S IMMERSIVE UNIVERSE AS A STARTING POINT FOR AESTHETIC LEARNING PROCESSES: THE REQUEST

IMMERSYJNE UNIWERSUM SZEKSPIRA JAKO PUNKT WYJŚCIA DLA ESTETYCZNEGO PROCESU UCZENIA SIĘ – PROŚBA

Abstract: This paper is a form of record of exchange of ideas leading to the preparation of a series of workshops using aesthetic learning processes in exploring togetherness and otherness through Shakespeare's texts. It presents the communication between partner institutions towards designing the workshops by the Norwegian team.

Abstrakt: Niniejszy artykuł to zapis wymiany pomysłów, które doprowadziły do powstania serii warsztatów, wykorzystujących estetyczne procesy uczenia się w badaniu głównych pojęć projektu tj. „togetherness" oraz „otherness" - poprzez dzieła Szekspira. Przybliża proces, podczas którego zespół z Norwegii, poprzez nawiązanie dialogu z instytucjami partnerskimi, przygotowywał zajęcia dla osób zaangażowanych w projekt.

In January 2021, the Notodden Team was about to start developing various aesthetic learning processes for the workshop week. The Gdańsk Shakespeare Theatre has a vast knowledge of Shakespeare's immersive and timeless universe. Therefore, we asked them for help and their expertise to find suitable material from Shakespeare's plays for the purpose. We wanted specific situations, characters and spaces related to otherness and togetherness as phenomena in Shakespeare's work. We wished for the request to serve as an inspiration for our workshops, and it did. We hope that the questions and answers, which we reproduce in this text, can also inspire whoever is reading this to delve deep and explore Shakespeare's inexhaustible well full of specific and complex expressions of human phenomena.

FIRST QUESTION FROM THE NORWEGIAN TEAM

Can you give us five characters in Shakespeare's universe who fail or die because they doubt their own individuality/own identity that defies the collective?

FIRST ANSWER FROM THE GDAŃSK SHAKESPEARE THEATRE*

Othello, Angelo, Leontes, Jacques, Malvolio, Don John.

SECOND QUESTION FROM THE NORWEGIAN TEAM

Can you give us five characters from Shakespeare's universe who stand up for themselves and go their own way so that it becomes their downfall?

SECOND ANSWER FROM THE GDAŃSK SHAKESPEARE THEATRE

Brutus, Caesar, Hamlet, Antony and Cleopatra, Shylock, Richard III, Titus Andronicus, Aaron, Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth, Katherina (*The Taming of the Shrew*), Richard II and Coriolanus.

THIRD QUESTION FROM THE NORWEGIAN TEAM

Can you give us five characters from Shakespeare's universe who succeed and survive because they defy themselves and become part of/get assimilated into the collective?

THIRD ANSWER FROM THE GDAŃSK SHAKESPEARE THEATRE

Rosalind, Viola, Jessica, Edgar, Kent, Prince Hal, Beatrice, Benedick, Oliver (*As You Like It*), Alonso (*The Tempest*).

FOURTH QUESTION FROM THE NORWEGIAN TEAM

Can you give us five situations from Shakespeare's universe where otherness is described?

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* Education Department of the Gdańsk Shakespeare Theatre has asked for help in preparing answers to this and subsequent questions: Jacek Fabiszak, Marta Gibińska and Małgorzata Grzegorzewska.

FOURTH ANSWER FROM THE GDAŃSK SHAKESPEARE THEATRE

Otherness of nationality, race and culture: *The Tempest*: Ariel, and Caliban vs Prospero, *Merchant of Venice*: Shylock and Antonio, both stress the otherness of Jews, *Othello* in the

eyes of Iago, *Titus Andronicus:* The Goths vs the Romans, *Antony and Cleopatra:* Egypt in the eyes of Rome, Rome in the eyes of Egypt.

Otherness inside a country and otherness of language: *Henry V*: His captains, Gower, Fluellen, Macmorris, Jamy (III.2. – otherness stressed by language chiefly but also references to "my nation"), (III.4 – Katherine taking lesson in English – again otherness is language). Gender otherness: *Taming of the Shrew* and *Much Ado About Nothing*: The situation of the respective heroines, Katherine and Beatrice: the otherness of women in the male world, *Twelfth Night:* The otherness of gender.

Generally scenes from plays in which characters considered 'others' appear: Othello and Aaron (as Moors), Shylock (as a Jew), Caliban (as barely human), but also Ferdinand in the eyes of Miranda in *The Tempest*.

FIFTH QUESTION FROM THE NORWEGIAN TEAM

Can you give us five situations from which togetherness is described?

FIFTH ANSWER FROM THE GDAŃSK SHAKESPEARE THEATRE

As You Like It: The exiled king's party in the forest, *The Winter's Tale*: Final resolution of the play, family reunion (*Pericles* – likewise, father, daughter and mother reunited), *Twelfth Night*: Festive and drinking togetherness of the revellers (Sir Toby, Maria, Feste, Sir Andrew) in opposition to the otherness of Malvolio – Happy reunion of the family at the end of *The Comedy of Errors, Henry V*: The Crispian speech in IV.3 (eve of the battle of Agincourt: "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers"), *King Lear:* Tragic and momentary togetherness of King Lear and Cordelia, of Gloucester and Edgar, wedding unions, final scenes of *As You Like it,* or *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

SIXTH QUESTION FROM THE NORWEGIAN TEAM

Can you give us five locations in Shakespeare's universe where otherness unfolds?

SIXTH ANSWER FROM THE GDAŃSK SHAKESPEARE THEATRE

Venice in *The Merchant of Venice,* Venice and Cyprus in *Othello,* Verona in *Romeo and Juliet*, The Island in *The Tempest*, England in the chronicle plays, Illyria in *Twelfth Night* for the otherness of gender, heath (in *King Lear*).

SEVENTH QUESTION FROM THE NORWEGIAN TEAM

Can you give us five locations in Shakespeare's universe where togetherness unfolds?

SEVENTH ANSWER FROM THE GDAŃSK SHAKESPEARE THEATRE

In happy comedies togetherness unfolds at the end, even if there is no guarantee that it will last: Athens in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Messina in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Ephesus in *The Comedy of Errors*, Illyria in *Twelfth Night*, The Forest of Arden in *As You Like It*, Sicily in *The Winter's Tale*, battlefield in *Henry V* (Agincourt, Shrewsbury), Navarre in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Dunsinane in *Macbeth*, Rome in *Coriolanus.*

EIGHTH QUESTION FROM THE NORWEGIAN TEAM

Can you give five characters from Shakespeare's universe who have come to a moment in their life where there is 'no point of return'?

EIGHTH ANSWER FROM THE GDAŃSK SHAKESPEARE THEATRE

Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear, Coriolanus, Romeo, Juliet, Othello, Richard III, Leontes.

NINTH QUESTION FROM THE NORWEGIAN TEAM

Can you give us five scenes/situations in Shakespeare's universe where the main character (or another character) has come to a moment in their life where there is 'no point of return?'

NINTH ANSWER FROM THE GDAŃSK SHAKESPEARE THEATRE

Hamlet when killing Polonius (III.4.), Macbeth after killing Duncan (II.2.), Macbeth at the end of the banquet scene when he says: "I am in blood/ Stepped in so far, that, should I wade no more,/ Returning were as tedious as go o'er' (III. 4. 136–8)." King Lear when thrown out into the storm (II.4.), Coriolanus betraying Rome (IV.5.), Romeo when Tybalt is killed (III.1.), Juliet when threatened with the marriage to Paris (III.5.), Othello when yielding to Iago's "ocular proof," Richard III in the opening soliloquy of the play, Leontes in the scene of Hermione's trial.

TENTH QUESTION FROM THE NORWEGIAN TEAM

Can you give us five scenes/situations in Shakespeare's universe where either the main character (or another character) in Shakespeare's plays comes to recognition/comes to a deep realisation: 'The moment of truth?'

TENTH ANSWER FROM THE GDAŃSK SHAKESPEARE THEATRE

King Lear: Lear in the storm scenes (III.2. and III.4.), King Lear (IV.7.) "I am a very foolish fond old man," Gloucester and Lear when they meet as outcasts (IV.6.), *Macbeth*: when Macbeth looks at his bloody hands (II.2.), when he sums up the achievement of his life in Act V; (V.10.), when meeting mano a mano with Macduff, Lady Macbeth (III.2.) "Noughts had, all's spent;" and the sleep-walking scene (V.1.), *Twelfth Night*: Viola – "Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness" (III.2.), *As You Like It:* Duke Frederick when he is 'converted' by a hermit (reported), *The Tempest:* Alonso (V.1.) when he learns that Prospero and his son are alive, *Timon of Athens:* Timon when rejecting his false friends (IV.7.), *Othello:* Othello (V.2.) when he learns about Desdemona's innocence and Iago's scheming.

ELEVENTH QUESTION FROM THE NORWEGIAN TEAM

Can you give us five scenes/situations in Shakespeare's universe where either the main character (or another character) goes through a great transformation in attitude (big change)?

ELEVENTH ANSWER FROM THE GDAŃSK SHAKESPEARE THEATRE

Hamlet: Hamlet after meeting the Ghost (I.5. and after the Mousetrap III.2. "'Tis now the very witching tome of night"), *King Lear:* Lear (as above III.2 and III.4.), *Macbeth:* Macbeth in I.7. when he finally gives in to the idea of murder, Lady Macbeth in the sleep-walking scene, *Titus Andronicus:* Titus Andronicus seeing the mutilated Lavinia (III.1.), *Julius Caesar:* Brutus when joining the conspirators (II.1).

In comedy: *The Tempest:* Prospero when he decides to give up the idea of revenge and his magic powers (V.1.), *The Winter's Tale:* Leontes when he loses his son and wife (III.2.), *As You Like It:* Oliver at the end of the play when he is rescued by Orlando, *A Midsummer Night's Dream:* Demetrius in (IV.1.) when 'coupled' with Helena (though the change is magically induced), *Pericles:* Pericles in scene (V. 21.) when miraculously reunited with his daughter Marina.

TWELFTH QUESTION FROM THE NORWEGIAN TEAM

Can you give examples of scenarios, with an overall theme of "the end of the world as we know it" – an apocalypse emerging, where: A dinner/supper is the framing of a conversation?

TWELFTH ANSWER FROM THE GDAŃSK SHAKESPEARE THEATRE

The Merchant of Venice: Invitation to dinner with Antonio, Shylock's reaction and decision, *Titus Andronicus:* The final scene.

THIRTEENTH QUESTION FROM THE NORWEGIAN TEAM

Can you give examples of scenarios, with an overall theme of "the end of the world as we know it" – an apocalypse emerging, where: A secret meeting is taking place – a conspiracy?

THIRTEENTH ANSWER FROM THE GDAŃSK SHAKESPEARE THEATRE

The conspirators in *Julius Caesar* (II.1., Brutus meets with Cassius, Casca, conspirators, etc.), the comic conspiracy to make Beatrice and Benedick fall in love in *Much Ado About Nothing*. *The Tempest*: Caliban conspiring with Trinculo and Stephano (a comic version of it).

FOURTEENTH QUESTION FROM THE NORWEGIAN TEAM

Can you give examples of scenarios, with an overall theme of "the end of the world as we know it"—an apocalypse emerging, where: Witchcraft is at hand?

FOURTEENTH ANSWER FROM THE GDAŃSK SHAKESPEARE THEATRE

Macbeth: Macbeth twice meeting the witches (I. 4.).

FIFTEENTH QUESTION FROM THE NORWEGIAN TEAM

Can you give examples of scenarios, with an overall theme of "the end of the world as we know it" – an apocalypse emerging, where: A promise of a new beginning is born?

FIFTEENTH ANSWER FROM THE GDAŃSK SHAKESPEARE THEATRE

The conclusion of *Romeo and Juliet,* the end of *The Winter's Tale,* Fortinbras at the end of *Hamlet*.

SIXTEENTH QUESTION FROM THE NORWEGIAN TEAM

Can you give examples of scenarios, with an overall theme of "the end of the world as we know it" – an apocalypse emerging, where: A coup d'état is taking place – ever so peacefully?

SIXTEENTH ANSWER FROM THE GDAŃSK SHAKESPEARE THEATRE

Richard's deposition in *Richard II?* But is it peaceful? *The Tempest* (Caliban and conspirators).

THE LAST QUESTION FROM THE NORWEGIAN TEAM FOR NOW

Can you give examples of scenarios, with an overall theme of "the end of the world as we know it" – an apocalypse emerging, where: A call to arms is taking place – ever so bloody?

THE LAST ANSWER FROM THE GDAŃSK SHAKESPEARE THEATRE FOR NOW

Henry VI all three parts, *Henry V,* this is the scenario of all chronicles and such tragedies as *Titus Andronicus*, *Macbeth*, *Coriolanus.*

THE NORWEGIAN TEAM

Thank you so much! Thanks to you we will now start developing workshops using Shakespeare's immersive universe as an inspiration. His world is endless, we understand.

THE GDAŃSK SHAKESPEARE THEATRE

Thank you! We look forward to seeing you in Gdańsk!

THE NORWEGIAN TEAM

Yes, so do we!

THE GDAŃSK SHAKESPEARE THEATRE

Bye

THE NORWEGIAN TEAM

Bye

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OTHERING / BRINGING TOGETHER WITH "TO BE OR NOT TO BE"
WYKLUCZENIE I WŁĄCZENIE W/Z „BYĆ ALBO NIE BYĆ"

Keywords: Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 'To Be', aesthetic learning processes, pronunciation, stage and film productions.

Słowa kluczowe: Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Być albo nie być, aesthetic-learning processes, wymowa, adaptacje sceniczne i filmowe.

Abstract: The paper analyses the results of a class which combined Shakespeare studies with aesthetic learning processes taught at Adam Mickiewicz University within the project: Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics. We set ourselves (teachers and students) the following tasks: how aesthetic learning processes can be incorporated into academic teaching, how the material taught can be linked with socially-sensitive issues and how these two goals can be achieved in a study of the most famous of all Shakespeare's soliloquies: 'To Be or Not to Be'. Consequently, the 22 students from two faculties participating in the class co-taught by three teachers with a different academic background (a Shakespeare scholar, a linguist and a theatre scholar) were asked to come up with creative interpretations of/responses to the speech and point at the most urgent problems they were struggling with. The teachers attempted to combine aesthetic learning methodology with Shakespeare studies, theatre studies and pronunciation, with a varying degree of success.

Abstrakt: Celem artykułu jest refleksja nad zajęciami, które łączyły badanie twórczości Szekspira w kontekście aesthetic learning processes. Zajęcia miały miejsce na Uniwersytecie im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu i były częścią projektu grantowego Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics. Studenci i prowadzący wyznaczyli sobie następujące zadania: analiza tego, jak można włączyć aesthe-

tic learning processes w nauczanie akademickie i studiowanie, jak nauczany materiał można powiązać z ważnymi i wrażliwymi społecznie kwestiami i, wreszcie, jak te cele można zrealizować analizując najsłynniejsze solilokwium Szekspirowskie: „Być albo nie być". W zajęciach, prowadzonych przez troje nauczycieli (szekspirologa, językoznawczynię i teatrologa), wzięło udział 22 studentów, których zadaniem było w sposób kreatywny zinterpretować albo odnieść się do solilokwium Hamleta oraz przy jego pomocy zdiagnozować najbardziej palące problemy. Cele – połączenie metodologii aesthetic learning z zagadnieniami literaturoznawczymi, teatrologicznymi oraz fonologicznymi (wymowa) – udało się osiągnąć w różnym stopniu.

The aim of the paper is to look at how 22 BA students of Adam Mickiewicz University, from the Faculty of English and the Theatre Studies Department, responded to three issues which a class held under the Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics project attempted to tackle. One question was the implementation of aesthetic learning processes into an academically-oriented form of teaching; another addressed socially-sensitive problems of alienation and dangers to which human life can be exposed; finally, processing the issues through Shakespeare's soliloquy "To Be or Not to Be" from *Hamlet*, arguably the most famous dramatic speech and a specific work of art (poem) that still challenges interpretation and kindles the imagination, at the same time touching upon the most fundamental existential problems.

The teachers got acquainted with the aesthetic learning process approach during the workshops carried out in Gdańsk in August 2021, consultations with Ms Joanna Magierecka (online and in person during her visit to Poznań) and, together with students, when discussing Helene Illeris's article *Aesthetic learning processes for the 21st century: Epistemology, didactics, performance* (2012). The key challenge here was the introduction of the new teaching/learning methodology into a typically academic curriculum and combining it with academic forms of teaching (class, seminar, lecture, etc.). In the case of the Polish staff and students, more particularly those at Adam Mickiewicz University, this process involved primarily changing the traditional ways of thinking about studying in academia by making both parties (educators and students) aware of the artistic agency and independence of students, who found it difficult to accept a situation in which they are required not only to read/watch the assigned material and discuss it in the class (which was

technically a seminar) but to creatively draw on Shakespeare and produce adaptations of Hamlet's soliloquy as well as (in groups) design questionnaires which, inspired by "To Be or Not to Be," were supposed to address issues of alienation, life, death, being together, etc. What we failed to achieve, though, due to the lack of time and practices that tilted the nature of the classes towards more traditional ways of teaching and learning, was to post the questionnaire online. The designed target group of respondents was supposed to be young people the age of the students participating in the seminar.

It must be acknowledged that some of the meetings, particularly the ones concerned with how *Hamlet* and the soliloquy can be approached and interpreted, alongside the ones dedicated to a survey of theatrical, film and comic book renderings of the speech as well as the manner it can be pronounced in historically changing dialects (after all, it is a poem to be performed out loud), had, for the most part, a rather traditional character in that both the teachers and students had a tendency to assume the roles they had been used to. At the same time, effort, too, was made to incorporate aesthetic learning process techniques in those sections of the syllabus which 'naturally' allowed for it: in discussion, by means of questions addressed to the students and through home assignments given before a seminar. The seminar began with a more academically-oriented discussion of the nature of the soliloquy as a dramatic device and its role in Shakespeare's tragedy.[1] The classes in which aesthetic learning constituted the core of the study were those in which the students were asked to re-do the soliloquy in whatever form they found fit: by rewriting the poem, by creating a graphic response to the soliloquy, the issues of othering / bringing together, as well as by creating podcasts, etc.

Six students decided to re-do "To Be" into graphic forms, images (computer-generated, painted, drawn, etc.) in which they symbolically interpreted the soliloquy, emphasising existential choices, loneliness (rather than being together), life vs. death, ecological problems (sic!), roles/Hamlets they need to play. Three students wrote original poems (in English and in Polish) inspired by Hamlet's speech, which also explored such issues as what it takes to be a student, memory and remembering (being together with the dead ones, continuity of life beyond the grave), taking the risks of living one's own life and the role of a woman in a patriarchal world. There are two commentaries

[1] See the References for a list of critical sources used in these discussions.

on "To Be," with one being an 'annotated' soliloquy (with topical insertions) and the other a prose interpretation of the speech, emphasising a personal relationship with Shakespeare's text. Among the written forms, there is also a brief scene from a(n Elizabethan) play, a blend of Shakespeare's original lines (from *Hamlet*, of course) and a modern narrative in the form of stage directions. Three students decided to recite the soliloquy: two of them provided audio recordings, one a video performance which, in its visual aspect, contains a commentary on the interface between life and art. The recitations were in Polish (one) and English (two). Last but not least, there was a podcast containing an interview with three foreign students studying at AMU on their interpretation of "To Be;" interestingly enough, it was an 'artistic' podcast in which the Polish and foreign students recited the first line in their native tongues and provided brief comments in English.

The reason why the "To Be" soliloquy was chosen for this seminar was not only the text's popularity and its multiple adaptations into different languages and forms of art. We decided to use the speech / poem as it addresses major existential and universal concerns, which everyone needs to address at various stages of their lives and which call for topical updating. Furthermore, inspired by a Buddhist reading of the poem in Almereyda's *Hamlet* as 'inter-be' because "it's not possible to be alone, to be by yourself, you need other people to be,"[2] we found the speech especially suitable to use in a class whose aim was to deploy aesthetic learning processes in teaching Shakespeare as well as togetherness and otherness. Our aims were partially achieved: on the one hand, the students focused mainly on issues of life and death, including suicide, which, as it turned out, they realised was a very severe and widespread problem; on the other, it was in the context of the discussion of suicide that they considered the questions of togetherness and otherness. Naturally, the conversation extended beyond the soliloquy itself as Hamlet's position in the play, among other characters, was also actively debated. Yet another, artistic, aspect of the soliloquy became the subject of in-class discussions: the nature of Shakespeare's poetic skills, his use of blank verse, choice of metaphors and the sonic flow of the words. Since teaching Shakespeare was, too, a very important element of the seminar, we believe we

[2] *Inter-be - Ophelia – Hamlet 2000*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BnzwbKbLuXk (accessed 17 December 2021).

managed to remind the students of the playwright's significance and ability to talk to us across the ages and make the students aware of the philosophical and aesthetic complexity of his texts.

The artistic and social significance of the soliloquy was also made manifest in classes showcasing *Hamlet* on Polish stages and the variety of ways in which the speech can be pronounced. As a result, the former focused on some of the most significant Polish productions of *Hamlet*. Although it was partially designed to give the students an insight into the play's stage history, it was not the history itself that we found important but a particular trait of the Polish theatrical reception of *Hamlet*, which for more than two hundred years has made it possible to treat the play as a means of pondering upon major social, political and axiological issues. The iconic statement by Stanisław Wyspiański in *The Hamlet Study* (*Studium o Hamlecie*, published in 1905), "In Poland the Hamlet riddle is this: what is there to think about—in Poland,"[3] has become emblematic for such a reading of the play. This was followed by Jan Kott, over half a century later, when he famously stated that *Hamlet* "is like a sponge" as "it immediately absorbs all the problems of our time."[4] In the light of this long-lasting tradition of appropriating *Hamlet* in Poland, we found it interesting to examine some of the directors' ideas from the past from the current perspective and see whether they appeal to the students' sensitivity.

Two productions seemed particularly worth discussing and relevant in terms of the main topics of our course. The first one was *Hamlet Study*, directed by Jerzy Grotowski in 1964 and performed by the Laboratory Theatre of 13 Rows in Opole. In this production, Elsinore became the Polish countryside, the courtiers were presented as coarse, drunk, and violent peasants, and juxtaposed against Hamlet, an intellectual driven by totally different values, who, in Grotowski's vision, became a Jew. He differed from the other characters not only in his costume but also in his demeanour. He spoke with a distinctive accent, which amused the peasants, who jeered at and ridiculed him. The performance was created in a specific political context, at a time when the communist party was using nationalist and anti-Semitic rhetoric with more and more frequency and intensity. Still, as a starting point for

[3] S. Wyspiański, *The Hamlet Study and The Death of Ophelia*, transl. B. Bogoczek and T. Howard, London 2019, p. 93.

[4] J. Kott, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, transl. B. Taborski, New York 1964, p. 84.

our discussions, we used a more universal reading proposed by Eugenio Barba, who stated that "Hamlet is the 'Jew' of the community, regardless of the meaning we ascribe to this word: the 'Jew' in terms of ideology, religion, society, aesthetics, morality and sexuality."[5] Thus, the matters of inclusion and exclusion, the mechanisms of othering and the possible ways of overcoming them were brought into consideration.

As Hamlet is often perceived as a rebel who despises the situation at the court and yearns for a better, more righteous world, it also seemed advantageous to confront the students with a production in which the main character manifests his lack of belief in any action to such an extent that his "To Be" soliloquy is delivered by the amateur actors who take part in a casting for the role. The performance in question was *H.* directed by Jan Klata in 2004. It was staged at Gdańsk Shipyard and was specifically preoccupied with the social and economic aftermath of the fall of communism and the political transformation in Poland. This led to a discussion on the possibilities of finding togetherness in a capitalistic reality and the purposefulness or uselessness of opposing the economic mechanisms in the contemporary world.

The main idea of the class dedicated to ways of pronouncing the soliloquy was to present different interpretations of the speech, concentrating on the pronunciation and the prosodic features of English to emphasize the importance of melody, tone, pitch and breath pauses on its understanding, reception and bringing out different types of emotional response in the audience. The choice of actors performing the soliloquy ranged from Richard Burton, Christopher Plummer and Adrian Lester to Ben Whishaw.

The final performance was by Ben Crystal, whose Hamlet's soliloquy in approximated original pronunciation made a big impression on the students. The performativity and complexity of pronunciation can be used to influence the desired effect by a performer seducing, persuading, informing, warning, luring one into doing something one might otherwise never have thought of doing, empowering or claiming to have the upper hand in decision-making. The students illustrated the power of performative aspects of pronunciation in their seminar projects via a vast array of artistic means with very interesting results.

[5] E. Barba, *Ziemia popiołu i diamentów. Moje terminowanie w Polsce* [The Land of Ash and Diamonds. My Apprenticeship in Poland], transl. M. Gurgul, Wrocław 2001, p. 103.

Overall, it is very important to realise that the manner of speaking, the pitch and tone, emphasis and pauses which we use when addressing issues or just talking to someone, greatly strengthens the feeling of either otherness or togetherness as perceived by our interlocutors. Hence, it is an important aspect of the aesthetic learning processes, with its role not to be underestimated. It should be considered a vital and natural teaching technique regardless of the subject taught. Especially that, in today's troubled world, aesthetic learning may provide students with self-confidence and reassurance of the importance of universal values and principles such as honesty, truth, caring, tolerance and support, among others, and make them believe in the values and the people who surround them.

Hamlet's soliloquy has proved a useful tool in a classroom in which traditional academic instruction was combined with the innovative, aesthetic learning approach. Owing to its specific nature as a dramatic device and a poem in its own right within the context of Shakespeare's most famous play, as well as its pop-cultural significance, the speech could be academically discussed from different theoretical and practical perspectives; furthermore, it triggered the students' aesthetic and socially-oriented sensitivity, which resulted in a variety of creative projects.

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Bio

Jacek Fabiszak – teaches cultural history theory, theatre history and Shakespeare at the Faculty of English, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland. He has published on English Renaissance theatre and drama and their stage, televisual and filmic transpositions (Polish Televised Shakespeares). He also applied linguistic and sociological tools in the analysis of Shakespearean drama (Shakespeare's Drama of Social Roles). He co-authored *Szekspir. Leksykon* [*Shakespeare. A lexicon*. 2003], co-edited *Czytanie Szekspira* [*Reading Shakespeare*] and wrote on Christopher Marlowe, both on his plays (focusing on imagery) and their screen versions (especially Edward II). He is head of the Department of Studies in Culture at the Faculty of English, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań.

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MOCKING (UN)CERTAINTY WITH SHAKESPEARE AND SERVICE LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY. COLLABORATIVE INSTRUCTORS' AND STUDENTS' SELF-STUDY REPORT

WYKLUCZENIE I WŁĄCZENIE W/Z „BYĆ ALBO NIE BYĆ"

Keywords: uncertainty, PUNC, service learning, innovative teaching techniques, Shakespeare.

Słowa kluczowe: niepewność, PUNC, uczenie poprzez zaangażowanie, innowacyjne metody dydaktyczne, Szekspir.

Abstract: The main objective of this study was to share the instructional experience gained through OTA project as well as to understand how aesthetic and service learning can be integrated at university, balancing multiple dimensions of the world full of uncertainty. Authors present pedagogical rationale for relating emotions triggered by scarcity of information and divergent challenges to their aesthetic explorations. They describe the professional uncertainty framework (PUNC), examples of Shakespeare-based activities and the use of aesthetics learning within the framework of service learning. The results of e-portfolio analyses include students' conceptualizations sustainability, their meanings of professionalizing uncertainty in the context of intercultural communities of practice. The study emphasizes the importance of student motivation and active participation in the educational process, with emancipatory and sustainability intentions, guided by principles of freedom, care and responsibility. The valorization of individual and collective interests that are identified, discovered and incited, stimulates the construction of their community-based projects, going beyond a person-centered perspective.

Abstrakt: Głównym celem tego artykułu było podzielenie się doświadczeniem pedagogicznym zdobytym w ramach projektu OTA, a także zrozumienie, w jaki sposób można zintegrować nauczanie estetyczne i service learning na uniwersytecie, równoważąc wiele wymiarów świata pełnego niepewności. Autorzy przedstawiają pedagogiczne uzasadnienie odnoszenia emocji wywołanych niedostatkiem informacji i rozbieżnymi wyzwaniami do ich poszukiwań estetycznych. Opisują model niepewności zawodowej (PUNC), przykłady działań szekspirowskich oraz wykorzystanie uczenia się estetyki w ramach service learning. Wyniki analiz e-portfolio obejmują koncepcje studentów związane ze zrównoważonym rozwojem, ich znaczenie profesjonalizacji niepewności w kontekście międzykulturowych społeczności praktyków. W opracowaniu podkreślono znaczenie motywacji uczniów i aktywnego udziału w procesie edukacyjnym, z intencjami emancypacyjnymi i zrównoważonego rozwoju, kierując się zasadami wolności, troski i odpowiedzialności. Docenienie indywidualnych i zbiorowych interesów, stymuluje konstruowanie ich projektów opartych na społecznościach, wykraczających poza perspektywę skoncentrowaną na osobie.

Introduction

Sustainability is the social effort to transform organisations and policies to ensure that humanity has a chance to continue its presence on planet Earth for the indefinite future. On a systemic level, it means "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Benson 2011, p. 5). Both employers and students call for innovation competencies for more than just mitigation and short-term prevention of bombarding challenges. Their needs include transformative competencies for change-makers, especially resilience, courage and uncertainty management (Boyatzis et al. 2006).

Understanding the concept of transformative leadership development allows the introduction of more experiential methods for young change-makers' education (Libby et al. 2006). Young people's leadership requires sustainability attitudes, behaviours, initiative and engagement (Arnold et al. 2009). Sustainability needs self-organisation, emergence, bottom-up change and understanding that some conflicts are unresolvable, and that there are no definitive solutions to major threats. Uncertainty is unavoidable and must be integrated into the concept of sustainability, which otherwise would remain romanticised (Diwekar et al. 2021). Educational researchers (Ells-

worth 2005, Robinson and Aronica 2015) claim that educators must increase their focus on the students' inner development as empathic leaders, putting human needs before their own advantage through the aesthetic study of intercultural heritage. Biesta (2006) suggests that the self-sufficient ideal of the opportunistic person can be ethically opposed through the education of the subject in action, a relational subject of becoming that unfolds, not as an isolated, competitive individual but "in our being with others through common aesthetic experiences and reflection" (p. 137). The main objective of this study is to share the instructional experience gained through the Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics (OTA) project and to understand how aesthetic and service learning can be integrated at university, balancing the multiple dimensions of a world full of uncertainty.

Emotions related to divergent challenges and their aesthetic expressions are the gateway to using an integrated approach for students, the future leaders for sustainability. Students should be capable of addressing the needs of various current and future communities, leading transformative projects and working in multidisciplinary ways. This requires an empathic consciousness, self-regulation and relationship management under constant uncertainty. The pedagogical work goes beyond academic content and interpersonal dimensions of emotions. It seeks the development of a critical awareness of the society in which the students live, by participating in broader social and institutional processes and opening up to cultural perspectives different from the dominant culture they belong to. Therefore, each class was designed and facilitated collaboratively and was open to the unpredictable that concerned the students' personal, social and cultural environments, boosting those opportunities even further.

Pedagogical rationale

Dewey locates aesthetics not from within the constraints of beauty, taste or judgment but rather via a "detour" (1934, p. 4) of transactional experience between the objective qualities of our natural world and our subjective internal qualities. He distinguishes an ordinary experience (incoherence and indistinction) from an aesthetic one (unity and consummation). The latter

form of experience is imbued with aesthetic qualities (heightened perceptivity, vitality and emotion). His explication of aesthetic experience is particularly germane to this inquiry because it locates the immediacy and significance of it in everyday experiences.

The pedagogical approach also draws on cultural practices based on the ethics of care and responsibility in relation to the Other (Levinas 2003, Gilligan 2008). Practices of applied creativity, improvisation and flow are also identified as those supporting social and emotional learning (Carvalho et al. 2017). This approach, engaging Shakespeare, places importance on the dynamic relationship between emotions and other (i.e. ethical) dimensions that are linked closely and dynamically (Goleman et al. 2019, Saarni 2015). Ethical values, reflections and individual dispositions have an impact on competencies. Emotions are constituents of our experiences and influence our ethical decisions (Lee and Selart 2014). This approach encourages teamwork, critical thinking and mutual support.

Professional Uncertainty Framework

Uncertainty may be defined as limited knowledge about future, past, or current events (Walker et al. 2003). Fig. 1 shows four different quadrants of information leading to uncertainty. Sustainability systems and issues extend to all quadrants of information, whether the problem concerns community, manufacturing, regional or global sustainability or sustainable economics.

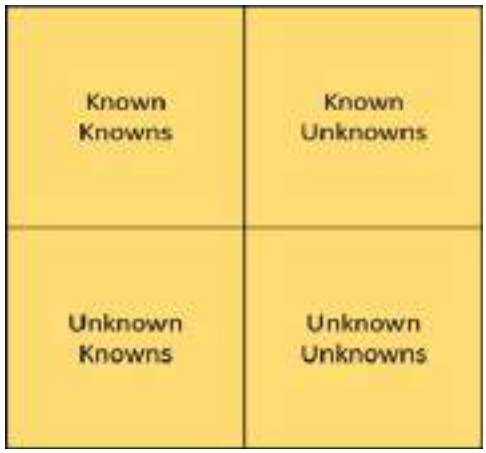

Fig.1. Types of Information: known--knowns (known to exist, information is available), known-unknowns (known to exist, no information is available), unknown-knowns (not included in the analysis, the information is available if it was) and unknown-unknowns (not known to exist, no information is available if it was) (Marshall et al. 2019).

"Not-knowing" and "unknown unknowns" elicit feelings of uncertainty that might be superficial or profound, stable or swiftly shifting (Hillen et al. 2017). Too much uncertainty can make it difficult to take action and disrupts one's learning, work, etc. However, it can also trigger creative thinking, problem solving and solidarity. To be able to contribute to the sustainability effort, it is critical to understand the nature of the perceived uncertainty, what causes it and what the stakeholders require (knowledge, skills, and attitude) in order to deal with it successfully.

Uncertainty as "not knowing" serves as a catalyst for sensemaking (Cramer et al. 2004; Weick 1995). When typical routines and mental systems fail to make sense of reality, one might respond via inquiry, study and contemplation. Consequently, uncertainty can aid in adopting new beliefs, values and conceptions, and in facilitating innovative problem-solving (Jordan 2015). A dynamic degree of certainty aids in preserving ethical fibre and in developing a critical thinking mindset.

Professional UNcertainty Competence (PUNC)[1] is an ability to acknowledge, explore and handle uncertainty in a productive way. The need to manage uncertainty can focus on different stages in a professional process. The three-stage strategy (Fig. 2) was applied to discover where the main need resides: Is it about acknowledging, exploring or handling uncertainty?

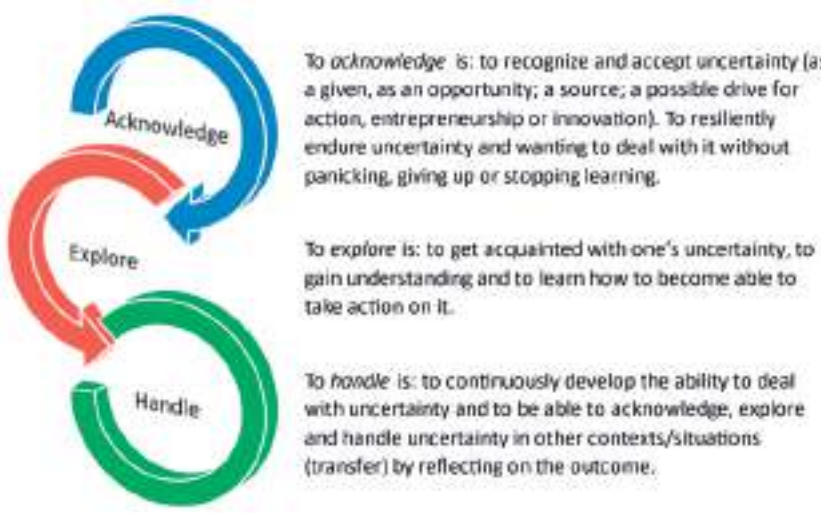

Fig. 2. The three-stage strategy to diagnose the main need of uncertainty.

[1] The authors are also part of the Erasmus+ PUNC project (https://punc.ug.edu.pl/).

The competence, in general, contains elements of knowledge, skills and attitude (cf. Bollinger and Van Rooijen 2022, p. 8–9). A student can define a specific need related to a sustainable way of dealing with uncertainty that they want to develop.

The focus on those elements helps students engage in learning situations. The pilot curriculum at the University of Gdańsk under the Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics project by the Gdańsk Shakespeare Theatre was inspired by the project framework and some of the tools, including status games, applied creativity tasks and improvisation. Its primary focus in terms of methods was character analysis (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), role play, installations, forum theatre, positional drama and elements of directing/performing Shakespeare. The students were also introduced to community-based research techniques as part of service learning.[2] In groups, they chose specific parts of a community (juvenile offenders, the elderly, couples to be married, eco-activists etc.).

Research methodology

In the OTA pilot curriculum, *From Shakespeare with love*, we undertook a process of collaborative self-study (Akinbode 2013, Koster and Berg 2014, Loughran 2009) to evolve the training experience and develop knowledge about it (e.g. Sobral and Caetano 2022). As we co-designed and facilitated the sessions together with the students, we analysed and reflected upon what we experienced and planned. We explored the dilemmas that arose within the training, looking critically at our own practice and conceptions influenced by what had happened in the class and beyond during the service learning activities.

According to LaBoskey (2004), we analyse and re-examine our facilitation of the students' learning in order to enhance it. Using multiple sources and methodological techniques, we also try to provide exemplar-based validation to establish trustworthiness. This report documents a dialogue between the analysed data from field notes from two teachers' diaries and the students' e-portfolios.[3] The facilitators defined goals and training strategies with the

[2] *SEA EU: O service learning w Splicie*, 2022, https://ug.edu.pl/news/pl/3466/sea-eu-o-service-learning-w-splicie (accessed 18 January 2023).

[3] PUNC Strengths, https://sites.google.com/d/1xJrFMCCjyps1JksGlaBpxprE_05_f2vt/p/1mxQMDRurc6-iFK6EzagjB3g-5Xn7qQBr/edit (accessed 12 October 2022).

students. The students were informed about their right to keep the content of their e-portfolios private, share only the parts they wanted to make the object of feedback, withdraw or give their informed consent to participate in the study. They were informed about the project aims and research procedures.

The students designed their own individual learning plans, i.e. the process of self-diagnosed needs/desires, competence development, self-monitoring and community-based research projects. Projects based on mutual service learning target groups led to programme adaptations, new proposals for activities and even the adoption of a different set of learning outcomes. The students captured their thoughts and learning process in e-portfolios and received regular feedback.

Data presentation and discussion

The students' conceptualisations of productive uncertainty are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The students' conceptualisations of productive uncertainty.

SKILLS being able to...		ATTITUDE being willing to...	
During the main course activities	*After experience of service learning*	*During the main course activities*	*After experience of service learning*
1. Assess a situation		**1. Embrace doubts**	
see an opportunity instead of threat	select a role to use one's strengths	Relax and not to panic	appreciate doubts as gut feelings
2. Investigate sources of uncertainty		**2. Show feelings**	
Not to be irresponsible Not to risk losing face	Diversity of personalities Known Unknowns Unknow Unknowns	Stay cool, neutral face, smile, show enthusiasm	Be yourself, no control or judgment
3. Ask questions		**3. Endure**	
It is not rude to ask the ones in the known Question is not a sign of weakness or ignorance	Divergent questions invite answers reducing uncertainty and create opportunities for innovation	Replace avoidance, sabotage or open aggression with openness and patience for emerging ideas	Withhold judgement, be not discouraged by, do not respond to aggression, engage diversity
4. Find, value, interpret and use or share relevant information and resources		**4. Take initiative**	
Access group secret knowledge to solve a problem Offer information and see if it is used	Connect the dots, look in new places, question the obvious Appreciate offers, welcome questions, clarifications	Modify your offer if rejected, find your voice, demonstrate what you mean, seek support for your ideas	Say YES and..., avoid BUT Encourage the quite Start acting, experimenting
5. Understand causality		**5. Take responsibility&ownership**	
Inaction, avoidance, spreading panic only enhance uncertainty	Uncertainty moves people to action, caring about others and the planet	Trusts leads to commitment. Once engaged you show you can be trusted	Choosing action yourself brings the sense of owning and belonging

6. Prioritize		**6. Take leadership**	
Not all the steps at the same time. Failing or losing some things is unavoidable	Start with your strengths Understand what others value most	Lead only when you are in the right role	Lead with empathy
7. Explore in-depth		**7. Take risks**	
Ask "why" more than once	See what knowledge is hidden on purpose Find excluded experts Empty your head to make more space for the unknown	Prepare soft landing Hold hands with friends when making leaps	Risk to gain advantage for the world not yourself Risk with surplus
8. Deal with incomplete information adequately		**8. Make sense of uncertainty**	
Hypothesize and test	Speculative design	Neglect has no excuse in uncertainty	No uncertainty means no freedom, no love or even friendship
9. Strategize		**9. Empathise with different perspectives**	
Reframe problems, create predictability in small doses, imagine positive scenarios	Engage all as changemakers Improvise Visualize future and go backwards to the entry point	Ask rather than assume Give first Stay curious	Show understanding by rephrasing values Be compassionate unconditionally
10. Build a supportive network		**10. Connect socially**	
Get what you give Appreciate unbiased perspective Stay visible, active	Be authentic, lead with value Offer support to changemakers	Listen to find common values Deal with rejection	Quality over quantity of interaction (empathy, intimacy)
11. Accept unpredictability		**11. Be mindful**	
Cut off from catastrophic narratives Express yourself creatively Focus on controlling your controllables	Go where the others are afraid to go Know what failure is	Stop reading minds, be for the others Smile is contagious Recognize and allow emotions	Peace in your body, peace in your mind Be curious about inner experiences to use them for leading with empathy Nurture, give yourself grace

The most important conclusions are:

1. The choice of the learning outcomes and the tools depends on multiple character traits. The students benefitted from the activities offered by dropping destructive behaviour (panic or sabotage) and trying to control the controllables, sharing knowledge/accepting roles based on spontaneously revealed strengths. As the class progressed, they started to choose more challenging tools, engage in long-term commitments (service learning) and achieve higher order outcomes: designing leading skills and mindsets for engaging diversity to innovate and empathy.
2. Education for sustainability: the students' progress empowers them to choose tools that are more helpful in regeneration and transformative innovation, not just mitigation. Sustainability becomes conceptualised as putting (inner) resources to the best potential use through selfless service leadership, providing empowerment and a sense of ownership to the excluded groups and abandoned spaces.

3. The use of the aesthetic tools: training the students in handling uncertainty with distancing without changing attitude or character traits. Table 1 shows that the course provided a safe environment to acknowledge, explore and deal with uncertainty in the broader sense. The aesthetic learning processes may not be directly transferable to knowledge, skills and attitudes as such a process is not always linear. However, it is important to go through with it to reach the point of understanding of what the student needs and to formulate individual learning objectives.

During the data analysis process, questions and dilemmas emerged on how to meet the students' desire to manage uncertainty more productively and stimulate new paths. At the beginning of the course, the students were invited to reflect on competencies based on the Shakespeare characters' choices in reference to the four quadrants of information type (Fig. 1).

They were encouraged to use drama tools for the self-assessment of goals set towards improvement or change. There are points of confluence to some aspects pointed out by the students regarding competencies, social and emotional traits (i.e. self-awareness, self-regulation of emotions, social consciousness, relationship management). The students were aware that the communication covered both verbal and nonverbal expression. They alluded to the necessary interventions and presentations but also to professional demands. It appeared that they considered emotional regulation under uncertainty to be a threatening task (instability and reactive feelings: impulsivity, nervousness, anxiety). Empathy was revealed as an ability that links us to the Other, calling for appreciation/recognition and tuning in with emotions, particularly when facing uncertainty.

The teachers sought to address the self-diagnosed students' needs and desires by proposing and carrying out several activities in class. The e-portfolios contain many reflective records that indicate how the students valued this strategy, having considered it a challenge at first, e.g.:

> I knew this course would represent a challenge, to the extent that the title suggested much more than typical academic content, it appealed to emotions, something more creative. Several times I had to expose myself in activities & I had to learn how to express my feelings. This was one of my major difficulties and, simultaneously, one of the largest blessing.

> Nowadays, I know how to better identify physical & emotional reactions, & I try to get to the root of the problem, not to find an immediate solution, but to reflect upon what's happening & why. This development, to be able to do so, becoming richer with every activity that we did. All with a different dynamic & purpose, all interesting & helpful. Working with the community as part of service learning was even more transformative personally & professionally.

Regardless of the student self-diagnosis, the training process not only focused on providing the environment for developing self-awareness and personal learning outcomes in a service learning format but mainly opened a space where the students had to engage with unpredictable situations. Surprisingly, their proposals and engagement kept emerging. For instance, using shoes as artefacts that express relationships led to a performative practice for very intimate self-expression and feedback among the students. All the aesthetic learning practices were important but the students needed training, persistence and extension to other contexts to integrate relevant competencies. Hence, the students would benefit from extending these practices into their community-based projects, given their importance in developing the perception and regulation of uncertainty. Those practices were usually articulated during the class with broader themes and reflections.

Scenes from Shakespeare helped the students redefine the classification of emotions and reconsider rejecting the so-called negative ones. The transformative potential of each emotion appealed to their sense of compassion. The suffering of the human and non-human characters was acknowledged, negative emotions were transmuted and what students understood to be positive emotions was framed dramatically. After each scene was analysed, the students wrote 1–2 sentences about what they had experienced and reflected on difficulties or benefits. The facilitators did not impose any particular sequence of predetermined practices, which presented a bigger challenge since they tried to link the class content and the students' evolutive learning process, experiencing Shakespeare and balancing them with cultural contexts.

The cultural dimension of dealing with uncertainty was considered especially important, while the approach to educational and cultural practices in the context of Shakespeare's mocking of the human attachment to certainty included some of the activities carried out to open the students' minds to

other values and philosophies of life. Diversity is also a search to avoid being captured within a closed vision. The activity that seemed to have had the most impact was a dance improvisation in which three groups representing Shakespeare's aristocrats, mechanicals and fairies travelled between their spaces to learn the movements quickly. Then the fourth group's choreography was declared the "most sublime" and the promoters of that new culture travelled to the original groups but failed to teach them the perfect movements. This was the proposed activity that left everyone feeling hesitant: What gives us the right to claim cultural superiority and how mainstream rituals may force minorities into submission? Overall, this activity prompted the students to look differently at each other, to seek what they had in common through sharing and to develop ethical relationships.

The students' service learning projects caused some of them to participate in a scientific endeavour (community-based research) and provided an opportunity for reflection and ethical practice about handling uncertainty in a productive way. Despite the apparent motivation to develop this collective project, many questions still remained open because, as facilitators, we feared that the motivation was more extrinsic than intrinsic for some students. This collective project led students to consciously reflect on the messages raised by Shakespeare's scenes or images that represented their experiences in daily life. The aesthetic learning perspective enabled a critical reflection on society and culture. Groups succeed by articulating the individual, collective and institutional levels all at once since they were given a chance to work on their interests in collaboration with their fellow students, while being actively involved with specific communities. However, we were always in doubt about the level of critical awareness favoured by these practices and whether they were not mere epiphenomena in institutional academia where students are more concerned with declarative knowledge. Despite that, we remained committed to bringing more discussion into the learning space, around difficult topics such as racism, oppression and social injustice, and to developing the so-called pedagogy of discomfort "that makes it possible for teachers and students to use their discomfort to construct new emotional (co-)understandings" (Góralska 2020, p. 117).

Conclusions

The study emphasises the importance of student motivation and active participation in the educational process, with emancipatory and empowerment intentions guided by the principles of freedom, care and responsibility. The valorisation of individual and collective interests that have been identified, discovered and incited, stimulates the construction of both their personal and community-based projects, going beyond a person-centred perspective: without losing each individual contribution but integrating them in a more holistic and critical approach. Likewise, solidarity develops with the practice of facing uncertainty through taking care of each other, building greater social cohesion among small groups within the entire class and broader, especially underprivileged communities.

In this report, we have highlighted the aesthetic dimension of emotional experiences and the range of different ways of integrating them into academic and professional life, some inscribed in the ancestral traditions of cultures largely unknown to our students, others involving students in contemporary events that go beyond the academia to have them think about the community where they live, placing them in relation to manifestations of a different order, namely one of an artistic nature. In this way, they became involved in the discovery and experience of values, visions and cultural practices that had been unfamiliar to them. We were committed to engaging in an aesthetic experience of enjoyment and contemplation, in critical reflection on our societies and in speculative design. As facilitators, however, we were aware of how much of a challenge it was for the students and realised that it was a greater concern for our colleagues and ourselves.

The pilot was a challenge to our collective creativity, unrepeatable in its particularities, but at the same time an opportunity to test our principles and find ways to deal with the problems and dilemmas we face under uncertainty. We are also aware that some terrible problems are probably unsolvable and that our concerns and dissatisfactions constitute a reason to continue the search, to improve and perhaps achieve deeper and more lasting changes in individuals and institutions. Finally, we stress the collaborative process in which both of us, as educators, built this course. It was collaborative both by the very nature of it being a joint self-study and through our engagement

with a team of researchers involved in a broader project. This collaboration enabled us to experience and reflect together on some of the activities we proposed to the students, which also gave us the confidence to take risks.

We reinforced our conviction that in higher education, as well as at other levels of education, it is necessary to develop joint working dynamics, networks and communities of practice (Wenger 2001), to advance and strengthen a collaborative culture that may become contagious to facilitators and students alike. Our wish is for this work to be an inspiration to introduce this dimension of professional uncertainty for sustainability in a more structured way in the training of professional educators, to create the curricula in a way that is open to the participation of students and to integrate this aesthetics learning perspective, where personal, cultural and societal dimensions are integrated and deepened.

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Bio

Adam Jagiełło-Rusiłowski – PhD, a Senior Academic Advisor at Innocamp.pl and a former Deputy Dean for International Programs at Faculty of Social Sciences at University of Gdańsk. He specializes in social innovation research and development projects. As Ashoka and Ford fellow he advised governments and nongovernmental institutions world-wide on using applied creativity approaches and Artificial Intelligence to teaching intercultural competencies.

Adam Jagiełło-Rusiłowski – dr, jest innowatorem społecznym (ASHOKA), doradcą naukowym INNOCAMP PL. Pracował jako dyrektor programu przedsiębiorczości społecznej, Prodziekan Wydziału Nauk Społecznych ds. studenckich i szef Biura Międzynarodowego Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego. Jest badaczem dydaktyki innowacyjności, rezyliencji w edukacji oraz rozwoju kompetencji społecznych poprzez projekty kreatywne i e-portfolio.

Marta Witkowska – is an academic teacher, researcher, practicing medical neuropsychologist and sport psychologist. She holds MSc in psychology, PhD in medical neuropsychology and postgraduate certificates in Research and Development Management, Sport Psychology and Clinical Psychology with a specialization in Neuropsychology. She specializes in creativity trainings, and innovative teaching methods.

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(AESTHETIC) LEARNING WITH SHAKESPEARE: RESPONSE AND RESPONSIBILITY
ODPOWIEDŹ I ODPOWIEDZIALNOŚĆ. CZEGO MOŻEMY NAUCZYĆ SIĘ OD SZEKSPIRA

Keywords: William Shakespeare, literary theory, education, aesthetic learning processes, subjectivism, decentring.

Słowa kluczowe: William Szekspir, teoria literatury, edukacja, subiektywizm, decentracja.

Abstract: The tendency to focus primarily on the personal appeal and relevance of an experience, observed by some theorists of aesthetic learning processes among young people, poses a challenge in didactic processes. An educational response to young people's "subjectivising self-centredness" proposed by Thomas Ziehe is the playful "decentring" of the self and search of other states of oneself as a challenge to a fixed perspective. This paper aims at demonstrating that a study of William Shakespeare's great tragedies may offer a different answer to the challenges of self-centredness – perceived there as a tragic flaw. I would argue that instead of playful "decentring", re-inventing or positioning of the self, the playwright teaches to take responsibility for the other.

Abstrakt: Badacze analizujący procesy uczenia się zwracają uwagę na tendencję do koncentrowania się jedynie na subiektywnym odbiorze doświadczenia i jego znaczenia dla jednostki. Zdaniem Thomasa Ziehe subiektywizująca koncentracja na własnych odczuciach, egocentryzm poznawczy, stanowi wyzwanie w procesie edukacji, a przeciwwagą dla niej jest próba decentracji, która polegać ma na wyjściu „poza-ja", poprzez pozycjonowanie, odgrywanie różnych ról, które stanowić ma rodzaj gry pozwalającej na zmianę punktów widzenia. W artykule próbuję pokazać, że problem subiektywizacji – choć postrzegany w kategoriach moralnych, a nie psychologicznych czy epistemologicznych – leży u podstaw wielkich tragedii Williama Shakespeare'a, a renesansowy dramatopisarz zdaje

się uczyć nas, że przeciwwagą dla koncentracji na własnym ja może być jedynie postawa odpowiedzialności wobec „innego".

In his film *Looking for Richard*, Al Pacino asks random New Yorkers what they know about Shakespeare. One of the respondents, a homeless man, offers him a fiery speech about Shakespeare and feelings and how Shakespeare instructs us to speak with feeling. Although we hesitate whether to take his passionate words seriously or not, I hope to demonstrate that these remarks may have special significance for discussing Shakespeare's work in the context of aesthetic learning processes; on condition that their meaning is not reduced to – the fortunate or fatal – conjunction of literature and feelings.

In Hansjörg Hohr's theory of aesthetic cognition, which lies at the foundation of the concept of aesthetic learning processes, the division of human knowledge into "artificial boxes" of feeling (intuition, subjectivity) and thought (analysis, rationality) has been abandoned. As Helene Illeris points out, "Hohr believes that the special characteristic of aesthetics is that it is a way of interacting with the world which can bind together the two separated parts, feeling and analysis."[1] In the discussion of aesthetic learning processes, Hohr's epistemological concepts have been translated into a didactic process, changing the central idea of experience into individual practice, yet keeping the importance of both sensation (feeling) and reflection (analysis) as crucial elements of the didactic progression.[2]

Literature is unquestionably a form of artistic expression and, as such, a field where the theory of aesthetic cognition and aesthetic learning processes can naturally be applied. However, for a long time, in modern literary theory (very much related to academic teaching of literature), the dominant trend was to separate the subjective response to literary works from the 'serious' objective study of them. In the first decades of the 20th century, hard times came for those who believed that what we should look for in literature is an expression of the author's feelings or intentions. This belief was proclaimed a heresy by the New Critics, just as the parallel conviction that would allow the reader to rely solely on their emotional response to a work of art. "Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion," insisted a young T. S. Eliot, "but an escape

[1] H. Illeris, *Aesthetic Learning Processes for the 21st Century: Epistemology, Didactics, Performance*, "Journal of the International Society for Teacher Education" 2012, Vol. 16, No. 1, p. 12.

[2] Ibid., p. 13–14.

from emotion,"[3] and a poem is an autonomous aesthetic object that belongs neither to the author nor the reader – an aesthetic object to be analysed rather than 'experienced.' And yet, the tide turned in the second half of the 20th century. While the 19th century belonged to the author and, for most of the 20th century, the spotlight was on the work (perceived as autonomous or as part of a system), the last few decades have been the era of the reader. The reader, who is not only allowed to have feelings about literature but also play with the text; construct (rather than construe) or deconstruct it; write it, if it's writerly; wake it with a kiss as the prince wakes the Sleeping Beauty, and give it life out of their desires; star it; break it; use it (and abuse it); but most of all enjoy it to the point of jouissance.

In his classic reader-oriented study *Readings and Feelings: An Introduction to Subjective Criticism* (1975),[4] David Bleich asked his students to spontaneously respond to literary texts and record their first perceptions of what a poem says, the feelings experienced while reading it, and associations or memories that it brings. Even though Bleich observes that the students tend to turn their most personal responses into general truths when they share them and thus try to objectify what is subjective or personal, one may venture a claim that the whole experiment, as the title of the book suggests, boils down to the subjective approach to literature and to the question, "What does this mean to me?"

When related to the aesthetic learning theories, the shift from the objective (thinking of text as an object) to the subjective and affective that took place towards the end of the 20th century in literary studies seems to me to resonate with the concept of "subjectivation" proposed by Thomas Ziehe (and discussed by Helene Illeris),[5] which he defines as a tendency observed in the young people of the 1980s and 1990s to focus on their inner self as a measuring standard and allow their idiosyncratic preferences and sensations to rule their interactions with the surrounding world.[6] The self-centred approach brings to the fore the personal appeal and relevance of an experience. Yet it seems to pose a challenge in didactic processes. Before I comment on

[3] T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays*, London 1948, p. 21.
[4] D. Bleich, *Readings and Feelings: An Introduction to Subjective Criticism*, Urbana 1975.
[5] It has to be noted that Ziehe's use of the term is clearly different from Foucault's concept of the same name.
[6] Thomas Ziehe, in: H. Illeris, ibid., p. 15.

Ziehe's proposition of educational response to the subjectivising self-centredness, let me venture a claim that the phenomenon of "subjectivation" did not emerge in the 20th century due to cultural liberation, an overabundance of role models or development in new forms of consciousness. Travestying Freud's famous saying, "Shakespeare was there before us," especially in his tragedies, which focus on the individual (and their downfall) much more than comedies or history plays.

We all know the young man who declares that, to him, "this goodly frame, the earth, seems […] a sterile promontory, […] this brave o'erhanging firmament […] a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours" and this wonderful "piece of work," man, "the paragon of animals" to him is only a "quintessence of dust;" who wonders at an actor's ability to passionately respond to and imitate the distress of a fictional character ("What's Hecuba to him?"), and bitterly reproaches himself for lack of a similar response in a much graver matter, when, instead of acting, he wallows in self-pity and "like a whore, unpack[s] [his] heart with words;" who, when faced not simply with a demand for a response but primarily with an urge to assume responsibility, "to set […] right" the time that is "out of joint," sees that obligation as a curse, a "cursed spite." Thus it seems that the stubborn turning towards the self, seeing things "in the mind's eye," is already present in Shakespeare's tragedies; but more importantly, in most cases, a character's "self-centred subjectivised"[7] perception of the world is coupled with a wish or an attempt to shun responsibility. Hamlet's disgust with humankind and the world equals a reluctance to take revenge, which he believes is his obligation to his dead father. And in the eyes of ancient heroes (like the Senecan avengers), he might truly seem the villain or coward he calls himself. But Hamlet seems torn between "I know how much this should mean to me" and a question in the back of his head, "But what does this all mean to me?"

This turn inward into the "nut shell" of the self ("O, God, I could be bounded in a nut shell and count myself a king of infinite space," as the hero assures us), tantamount to an escape from responsibility, is not only true about the representatives of the young generation in Shakespeare (like Hamlet) but also about the old, like King Lear. He withdraws from royal duties, escapes from his political body and public persona and finds himself

[7] I am aware how anachronistic this term seems when applied to an early modern subject.

bare, an "unaccommodated man," the reflection of himself he sees in Poor Tom; maybe he cannot look into himself yet and needs others to show him who he is as in a mirror; just as he tried to see himself in the flattering mirror of his daughters' praises.

However, it is Macbeth's constant murky self-scrutiny verging on the delusional that is probably the extreme case of "self-centred subjectivation." Yet even he himself is aware at first that there are 'objective' external factors and obligations which define him and demand his response; he has "bought golden opinions from all sorts of people," why cast them aside? But the inner self urged by "vaulting ambition," fed with imagination, driven by the instinct of self-preservation and finally destroyed by self-delusions, dominates Macbeth's interaction with the world or, rather, his complete dissociation from it.

And Othello? He is so self-conscious that he cannot believe someone can truly love him; persuaded that his senses would give him the best testimony of what his fear conjures up, it is actually his senses that delude him most. When he realises how mistaken he was, he takes responsibility for his bloody deed, yet, at the same time, as T. S. Eliot writes, he "cheers himself up"[8] saying it is the other in him, Othello-the-Turk, Othello-"the-circumcised-dog," who is guilty and whom Othello-Venetian stabs and saves the coherence of his self, which now will be a proper subject of a narrative: "When you shall these unlucky deeds relate/ Speak of me as I am." Similarly Hamlet: "O good Horatio," he implores his friend, "in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,/ To tell my story." And only 'the extremist' Macbeth realises his dissolved self is now beyond the point of narrative constructing or "fashioning," to use Greenblatt's term, so it can only be "a tale/ Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury/ Signifying nothing."

I think it is not without significance that, in the resolution of most of Shakespeare's great tragedies, there appears or speaks someone who is now supposed to take responsibility for what is left of the wreck: Fortinbras, whom we may despise but who "embrace[s] [his] fortune" albeit "with sorrow;" Malcolm, the rightful heir to the murdered Duncan, who promises to make amends to his subjects ("We shall not spend a large expense of time/ Before we reckon with your several loves,/ And make us even with you"); only in *King Lear* is the "weight of this sad time" so heavy that there seems to be

[8] T. S. Eliot, ibid., p. 130.

no one eager to take up the burden. But when Albany abdicates and Kent is bound to follow his dead master, Edgar seems the natural candidate. And Othello? Interestingly, his bloody deed and tragic end do not seem to require any volunteer to take over; instead, Lodovico's arrival reminds us that, while "the green-eyed monster" of jealousy fed on the flesh of those who got stuck in Cyprus (the marginal, off-centred, irrational domain of Aphrodite), the Venetian authorities have been holding strong and now they will simply clear up the mess and enforce the law.

It seems then that Shakespeare links the tendency towards turning your back on the world and focusing on the inner and subjective with a guilty wish or an attempt to shirk responsibility towards the other and the world in which the subject is fashioned. For Shakespeare, this tendency grows into something like a tragic flaw that may, at best, lead a character to indolence and the action to a stalemate (*Hamlet*) and, at worst, to self-destructive delusions and the dissolution of self (*Macbeth*). So, while Ziehe and Illeris view self-centredness primarily as an obstacle in the learning processes, for Shakespeare's characters this is a road to perdition.

As Helene Illeris points out, "as an educational response to young people's subjectivising self-centredness," Ziehe proposes "decentring" of the self, stepping out of "oneself," looking for other states of oneself in order not to be locked into one perception of identity – an activity that one will find pleasurable.[9] Indeed, the playful "decentring" of the self is a challenge to self-centredness obsessed with its fixed perspective. Yet, isn't this joyous looking for other states of oneself, even if somehow relationally and socially determined,[10] still just 'looking for myself' and 'into myself,' but now 'myself' multiplied, spawning like fish in the sea of endless possibilities? How, in this plurality, plasticity, dismantling, destabilising, re-inventing and positioning of 'myself', can I ever open to the other? The other understood not as another state of myself but the other that I will face, the other that will demand response, which will be tantamount to assuming responsibility. It seems that, in order to face the other, I have to stop the flow of changing

[9] H. Illeris, ibid., p. 15.

[10] Illeris discusses the concept of positioning, in which "positions are social products to be played with" and they are "relationally determined". One can position oneself, be positioned, or change one's position "without constantly wondering whether what one does or says is in harmony with oneself." H. Illeris, ibid., p. 16.

positions or roles, stop the sliding of the signifier, take a fixed perspective, take a stance and take responsibility.

In *Looking for Richard,* what Al Pacino's interlocutor speaks about is not our feelings or how joyous an experience it is to read Shakespeare's plural text, or "what it means to us;" instead, he insists on the lesson of how to feel, how to respond to the other that Shakespeare instructs us in: "When we speak with no feeling, we get nothing out of our society. […] We have no feelings. That's why it's easy for us to shoot each other. We don't feel for each other, but if we were taught to feel, we wouldn't be so violent… If […] we have no feelings in our words, then we say things to each other that mean nothing. But if we felt what we said, we'd say less and mean more."[11] What the man says is actually a lesson much older than Shakespeare's: "If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal."[12] In the King James Bible, the Greek *agape* is not translated as *love* but as *charity*, *caritas*, the Christian love of humankind. And at the end of the clip from Al Pacino's film, the man asks the crew, "Spare some change?," which is barely audible in the film – this is a demand for charity; this is a demand that the other makes, a demand for response, which translates to responsibility and love. And it is this type of responsibility to the other (more than role-playing or plurality) that we should learn from Shakespeare today.

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[11] *Looking for Richard*, dir. Al Pacino, perf. Al Pacino, Frederick Kimball, Michael Hadge, Fox Searchlight 1996.

[12] 1 Corinthians 13, *The Holy Bible: New International Version*, https://biblehub.com/niv/1_corinthians/13.htm (accessed 22 November 2022).

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'A POUND OF FLESH'. THE UNEXPECTED GORE AND SYMBOLISM OF SHYLOCK'S PROPOSAL, THROUGH THE EYES OF CONTEMPORARY GORE AESTHETIC

„FUNT MIĘSA". NIEOCZEKIWANA BRUTALNOŚĆ ORAZ SYMBOLIZM PROPOZYCJI SHYLOCKA, OCZAMI WSPÓŁCZESNEJ ESTETYKI GORE

Keywords: gore film, Shakespeare, flesh, taboo, retributive justice, ethics.

Słowa kluczowe: kino gore, Szekspir, ciało, tabu, sprawiedliwość karząca, etyka.

Abstract: This article examines how Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (1600) connects with James Wan's Saw (2004) movie franchise. The focus is on the two antagonists – *Merchant's* Shylock and *Saw's* Jigsaw, who are executing their ideas of justice and ethics on the other characters. The article sheds light on the importance of the horror genre's aesthetics and philosophy, and how the two resonate with classic literature's vision of morality and fairness.

Abstrakt: Ten artykuł bada, jak *Kupiec wenecki* (1600) Szekspira łączy się z serią filmów *Piła* (2004) Jamesa Wana. Artykuł skupia się na dwóch antagonistach – Shylocku z *Kupca* oraz Jigsaw z *Piły*, którzy działają zgodnie ze swoimi wizjami tego, co sprawiedliwe i etyczne wobec innych postaci. Artykuł rzuca światło na to, jak istotna jest estetyka oraz filozofia kina z gatunku gore, oraz jak ów rezonuje z ideami moralności i sprawiedliwości zawartymi w literaturze klasycznej.

When presented with the iconic bond proposition, a pound of flesh, it is hard not to get a visceral reaction. This paper will argue that there is a strong connection between Shylock's proposal and the contemporary idea of gore, its aesthetic and the morality behind it.

William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* discusses the Other and moral relativism when faced with the Other and with ethical dilemmas. Shylock is a Jewish moneylender and an outcast in the Venetian community. Antonio, the eponymous merchant, borrows money from him and agrees to Shylock's controversial bond, namely a pound of flesh. When Antonio is unable to pay off the debt, Shylock demands what he is owed. The bond suddenly becomes immoral and controversial in the eyes of the public.

The body, as an entity, has always been crucial for creating tension and causing dilemmas for literary characters. The body's autonomy and taboos surrounding it are often at the centre of moral problems and conflicts. When Shylock presents the bond:

> "[...] equal pound
> Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken
> In what part of your body pleaseth me"[1]

the reader is left rather shocked. The idea of cutting and tearing the flesh of another human being while they are alive is certainly a form of taboo. In his book *The Style of Sleaze*, Calum Waddell argues that breaking social and cultural taboos is strongly connected to acts of violence and some sort of abnormality.[2] This tendency is explored in Shakespeare. One of the more peculiar interpretations of *The Merchant of Venice* was Krzysztof Warlikowski's *The African Tales by Shakespeare*, which premiered in December 2011 at the Nowy Theatre in Warsaw. The play showed Shylock as a butcher, chopping meat and talking about cutting a piece of flesh out of Antonio's body.[3] Warlikowski's interpretation of the character truly makes him villainous and somewhat deviant. Shylock is not only a butcher of animals but also humans. This take on the play touches upon the ultimate taboo: cannibalism. Such an idea truly matches the paramount characteristics of taboo-breaking gore, which draws on aesthetic depictions of blood and torture. After all, the idea of cutting out a piece of flesh from a living human is cruel and torturous.

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[1] W. Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, B. A. Mowat and P. Werstine (ed.), s.l. n.d., p. 37, Folger Shakespeare Library https://shakespeare.folger.edu/ (accessed 27 June 2022).

[2] C. Waddell, *The Style of Sleaze: The American Exploitation Film, 1959–1977*, Edinburgh 2020, p. 15.

[3] K. Warlikowski, *The African Tales by Shakespeare*, Warsaw 2011.

This article makes a connection between *The Merchant of Venice* by Shakespeare and James Wan's *Saw* horror film (the first instalment was released in 2004, while the whole series continues till the present day, with eight films and counting). in his article *The Problem of* Saw*: 'Torture Porn' and Conservatism of Contemporary Horror Films*, Christopher Sharrett argues that "excruciating forms of torture and free-form bloodletting seem to be [the genre's] chief draw."[4] However, Sharrett claims that the moral depth and ethical dilemmas are not to be found in the movies, with which this paper disagrees. Sharrett could not be more wrong. His analysis of the *Saw* franchise is on point when it comes to the gore genre; however, the moral complexity and dilemmas are very much present and they draw on classic cultural constructs of choice, free will and morality.

Shylock as a character, and various interpretations of his persona, prove the complexity and ambiguity of this Shakespearean man. John R. Cooper, in his article *Shylock's Humanity*, points out a very interesting aspect of the moneylender. The author claims that Shylock's intended villainy is self-justified.[5] It is vital to note that Shylock can be characterised as utterly self-righteous, which makes him very ambiguous. On the one hand, Antonio fully agrees to the pound-of-flesh bond so there is no rational reason for him not to comply with the terms of the deal. On the other hand, during the trial scene, when Shylock demands what he was promised, rationality no longer matters. Many components contribute to the shift in judgment, both for the play's characters and the reader: Shylock's Jewishness, his alienation and exclusion from the Christian crowd; Portia's speech, the prevalent prejudice, etc. Suddenly it seems that morality stands in opposition to fairness and reason. However, it is the self-righteousness, and Shylock's sense of justice, that determine his image full of antagonism and even immorality.

Shylock's idea of utter justice and his flesh-cutting measures truly resonate with the gore horror genre, which presents its characters with moral dilemmas and life-or-death situations. As a horror genre, gore can be easily identified, with its primary and literal assumption being bloodshed and tor-

[4] C. Sharrett, *The Problem of* Saw*: 'Torture Porn' and the Conservatism of Contemporary Horror Films*, "Cinéaste" 2009, Vol. 35, No. 1, p. 32, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41690851 (accessed 6 March 2023).

[5] J. R. Cooper, *Shylock's Humanity*, "Shakespeare Quarterly" 1970, Vol. 21, No. 2, p. 118, https://doi.org/10.2307/2868824 (accessed 27 June 2022).

ture. In that manner, Shylock's monologue quoted earlier resonates with the idea of gore. After all, he speaks of taking pleasure in tearing flesh, which is symptomatic of torture, sadism and carnage. Therefore, Shylock's persona can be compared to the sadistic antagonists of the horror genre. In particular, Shylock resembles the cult *Saw* franchise's antagonist, John Kramer, also known as Jigsaw. It seems a crazy idea to compare a sixteenth-century Shakespearean play with a twenty-first-century torture-porn horror film saga but some tropes are truly timeless and universal.

Jigsaw is infamous for forcing his victims to often cut out or cut off a piece of themselves as a life-saving deal. Jigsaw's philosophy is to put morally-challenged people into situations where they have to decide whether they could sacrifice a piece of themselves in order to survive. The victims are usually people who verge on deadly situations and, in the perpetrator's mind, agree to his conditions. As the franchise develops, Jigsaw's idea of bringing justice to the lives of his victims draws more and more attention from the public. Also, it engages the audiences in moral dilemmas that challenge their view of right or wrong, the reasonable and the absurd. It also challenges the image of the antagonist and the idea of retributive justice: who has the right to decide what is good or evil? Who can establish what constitutes fair punishment? In this aspect, Jigsaw and Shylock are similar. They both believe they are doing 'the right thing,' they both are outcasts in their communities and they both see themselves as righteous agents of justice, who simply act in the name of a greater good. Last but not least, Shylock and Jigsaw both seek to get what is rightfully theirs: the proverbial pound of flesh. In her article *The Saw Franchise: Personal Philosophy and Perverse Vigilante Justice*, Cara Popovich rightfully points out the perverse and deviant aspect of Jigsaw's twisted idea of what is fair.[6] Hence, Shakespearean Shylock and gory Jigsaw share similarities and philosophy, and are perhaps even archetypically related.

The significance of the torn-out gory bond (a pound of flesh) is both physical and symbolic. In his article *The Bonds of Flesh and Blood: Having It Both Ways in* The Merchant of Venice*,* Clayton Koelb highlights the importance of corporeal symbolism in the eye of justice. The author underlines how crucial and inseparable "flesh" and "blood" are, how inherently they are

[6] C. Popovich, *The Saw Franchise: Personal Philosophy and Perverse Vigilante Justice*, 17 May 2021, https://phasrmedia.com/philosophy-in-saw-franchise/ (accessed 27 June 2022).

connected and how blood carries cultural and biological meaning. Therefore, when shed, it is a loss of "the currency of highest value."[7] This idea actually corresponds with the gore aesthetic on many levels. Shedding blood and violating bodily autonomy is a form of executing power by inflicting pain and suffering, and causing humiliation. Such a violation perpetrated by Shylock demonises him, putting him on the side of evil as an inhuman antagonist devoid of morals. This manifestation of power is also phrased in Shylock's last line: "In what part of your body pleaseth me,"[8] which clearly indicates some threat to Antonio's masculinity since the moneylender can decide to cut off a part important to his manhood.

In conclusion, though Shakespeare and gore seem to exist far away from each other, they actually draw on close concepts. In the centre of these moral disputes and tragic conflicts is the body – with its sanctity and all physiological qualities. Everything starts with the body, how it can be used as a symbol in culture and what meanings its qualities carry. Violating certain spaces and ideas has always been a cultural taboo, which clearly still stirs exciting debates and can disturb, fascinate and disgust all at once. Blood, flesh and body carry meaning that has unwavering connotations, while exploration of what could happen when fiction pushes the boundaries of aesthetic decorum simply remains fascinating, both in Shakespeare and in the gore genre.

Gore cinema and the gore aesthetic often tend to be neglected or dismissed in literary criticism. This paper has sought to prove that gore's themes and the questions it poses are relevant and applicable to literature and to the ethical problems presented in it.

[7] C. Koelb, *The Bonds of Flesh and Blood: Having It Both Ways in* The Merchant of Venice, "Cardozo Studies in Law and Literature" Spring 1993, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 109–110.

[8] W. Shakespeare, ibid., p. 37.

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WHAT AESTHETIC LEARNING CAN LEARN FROM ROLE-PLAYING GAMES
CZEGO AESTHETIC LEARNING MOŻE SIĘ NAUCZYĆ OD GIER FABULARNYCH

Keywords: role-playing games, aesthetic learning, safety, education, lines and veils.

Słowa kluczowe: gry fabularne, aesthetic learning, bezpieczeństwo, edukacja, linie i zasłony.

Abstract: The article discusses the use of role-playing games (RPGs) as an educational tool for aesthetic learning. The collaborative creation of fiction in space's benefits can be ruined by its threats, as emotional involvement in the game can leave players vulnerable. Several tools developed by RPG practitioners, such as Lines and Veils, checklists, and X-cards, are presented, as a way of setting a framework that ensures players' safety and comfort while allowing them to experience a range of emotions.

Abstrakt: Artykuł omawia wykorzystanie gier fabularnych (RPG) jako narzędzia w ramach aesthetic learning. Zalety wspólnego tworzenia fikcji w przestrzeni mogą być niweczone przez zagrożenia, które ze sobą niesie, jako że wraz z emocjonalnym zaangażowaniem w grę pojawia się wrażliwość. Przedstawiono kilka narzędzi opracowanych przez praktyków RPG, takich jak Linie i Zasłony, checklisty i karty X, jako sposób na ustanowienie ram, które zapewniają graczom bezpieczeństwo i komfort, pozwalając im jednocześnie doświadczyć szeregu emocji.

Role-Playing and Learning

Role-playing games (RPGs) are being used by educators around the globe, both in and outside of classrooms. They help students engage and develop their social skills, strategic thinking, and communication capabilities (Prager

2019). In the context of aesthetic learning processes, the collaborative creation of a fiction in space, as exemplified by the workshop conducted by Joanna Magierecka in Gdańsk in 2022 (*Shakespeare Camp* 2022), can be analysed as a form of a role-playing game and use collective experience from outside of the field of education to avoid pitfalls and develop strategies.

Dangers

Alas, games are not always all fun and games, as illustrated by the following anecdote instanced by Andrzej Sapkowski, one of the first popularisers of role-playing games in Poland:

"Nie trzeba mówić, jak ciężkim jest to [śmierć postaci] przeżyciem dla gracza, który zżył się ze swoim bohaterem. Jedno z moich pierwszych zetknięć z role playing to była sekretarka pewnej francuskiej firmy, która pytana, czemu jest dziś taka przygnębiona, odrzekła pociągając nosem, że wczoraj wieczorem aligator zagryzł ją na śmierć."

[It goes without saying how difficult it [a death of a character] is for a player who has grown close to their protagonist. One of my first encounters with role-playing was a former secretary of a French company, who, when asked why she was so depressed one day, replied, sniffling, that an alligator had chewed her to death last night.] (Sapkowski 1999, p. 143, transl. RK)

This example is brought up by the author not as an amusing story but rather as a cautionary tale. Whether the participants play with friends for entertainment or take part in a drama-driven exercise in an educational context, such a "visceral, emotional and intuitive" embodied experience (Greenwood 2011) leaves them vulnerable. While being devoured by a wild animal might be a far enough removed scenario for most of those in developed countries, there are plenty of more relatable misfortunes that may befall a character and, by extension, result in psychological harm to the player. As RPGs come to be treated as a serious medium for exploring serious issues, it is not uncommon for scenarios to delve into themes not only of death but also of violence and sexuality, sometimes both at the same time. Participants may overstep each other's boundaries, even with no ill will, simply because boundaries as such are highly subjective and individual. Whatever the

context of a given role-playing session is, then, it is paramount to establish a framework for keeping all present safe and comfortable, while allowing them to experience the range of both positive and negative feelings on their own terms (Krupińska 2020).

Safety Tools

Throughout the years, the role-playing community has developed an assortment of strategies for dealing with precarious situations in-game. Preventive measures implemented during Session Zero, before the actual game starts, may make it possible to avoid any turbulences in the first place. If that safeguard fails, there is the safety net of response-type tools.

Lines and Veils are akin to self-censorship in films. Depending on the target audience, the director may want to omit certain themes altogether: no swearing in kids' movies, no depressing endings in light-hearted comedies, etc. The same way players discuss and agree upon Lines they do not want to cross during the play. The rule of thumb here is the lowest common denominator; if there is just one person not comfortable with a subject, it is pushed behind the line. Veils, on the other hand, are more like things that happen off-screen. We do want them in our game but we do not want to look directly at them. A couple might disappear into a hotel room but what they do there is hidden behind a Veil (Edwards 2003, p. 11–12).

Another kind of preventive measure are checklists. Before the play, the Game Master gives their players copies of a comprehensive list of triggers, ranging from spiders, clowns, and heights to sexual violence and terminal illnesses. With a simple tick, each player can provide information on which topics they would rather avoid, and to what extent. The act of filling in the questionnaire together itself provides an opportunity for discussing potential problems and setting up the foundation of safe play (Krupińska 2020).

Should any of the players feel uncomfortable with the direction the game went due to its inherent unpredictability, they can communicate the need to change direction or stop altogether in a number of ways. The simplest one is to get up and leave the room. Obvious as it may be, it is not easy to do under pressure to perform as a player and not spoil the fun for others.

As with previous tools, the key to success is Session Zero. The participants need to be assured that saying "no" at any time for any reason will be met with acceptance and understanding and that their well-being is the priority. A similarly simplistic ad hoc solution is the X-card. Placed in the middle of the table, it functions as a panic button. Touching it at any point signals the need to stop without having to verbalise the particulars of one's discomfort (Krupińska 2020).

For a less Boolean approach, one should look no further than the colour safeword system, usually referred to simply as Red–Yellow–Green. As the wording suggests, it has been adapted from BDSM practices (Sihvonen and Harviainen 2020). Useful especially in Live Action Role-Playing, where participants embody their characters and interact physically, this triad allows for nuanced meta communication between players. Red is a hard "no, back off." Yellow – "this is still OK, but not a step farther." Green – "this is totally fine, go on." Compared to previous methods, its main advantage is that it equips players with a tool to encourage others when they are unsure and afraid of overstepping someone's boundaries.

Conclusion

The tools listed above are merely an extension of the overarching attitude that should characterise all role-playing sessions. Setting the well-being of participants as the priority and making sure that they are well aware of it plays a pivotal role in the experience and serves as the starting point for all more elaborate measures. If implemented with care and skill, role-playing can allow 'living a thousand lives,' with all the wisdom and empathy that come from assuming different perspectives. It is an invaluable asset in every teacher's toolkit. The role of an educator, however, not unlike that of a game master, is to provide guidance and a safe environment for students to follow their innate human curiosity. Exploring difficult themes, be it with friends or in the context of an aesthetic learning workshop, does not need to and must not involve causing emotional harm.

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Bio

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ART AS A FLAME. REFLECTIONS ON AESTHETIC LEARNING PROCESSES
SZTUKA JAKO PŁOMIEŃ. REFLEKSJE NA TEMAT PROCESÓW KSZTAŁCENIA Z ELEMENTAMI ESTETYKI

Keywords: aesthetics, teaching, learning, school curriculum, theatre.

Słowa kluczowe: estetyka, nauczanie, uczenie się, program nauczania, teatr.

Abstract: This article focuses on the positive and potentially beneficial effects of introducing aesthetics and art into the lives of young people in the school environment. It is a collection of reflections being the outcome of participation in the Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics project and author's personal school years experiences. The aim of the paper was to demonstrate how substantial and beneficial in developing the full potential of young people, thus our future, it is to implement aesthetic learning processes into the school curricula.

Abstrakt: Niniejszy artykuł skupia się na pozytywnych i potencjalnie pożytecznych skutkach wprowadzania estetyki i sztuki w życie młodych ludzi w środowisku szkolnym. Jest to zbiór refleksji sformułowanych/zrodzonych pod wpływem uczestnictwa w projekcie Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics i własnych doświadczeń z lat szkolnych. Celem pracy było zademonstrowanie jak istotne i korzystne w rozwoju pełnego potencjału młodzieży, a co za tym idzie naszej przyszłości, jest włączenie do programu nauczania elementów szeroko rozumianej sztuki.

When we consider aesthetic learning, it is of great value to first establish what we understand by this term. During the *Aesthetic learning processes and togetherness* conference, many researchers took on this task, presenting their outlook on what aesthetic learning is, how important it is in the school environment, how to incorporate it into school curricula and how this con-

cept may be useful in overcoming otherness and working towards achieving togetherness. In my opinion, the practice of aesthetic learning should be further developed, as I believe it can produce surprisingly good academic results, as exemplified by my own experience with my school theatre presented further herein.

In this paper, I will try to share my reflections formed through my participation in the *Aesthetic learning processes and togetherness* conference, as well as throughout the Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics project workshop. My aim is to demonstrate how aesthetic learning can become a great tool for engaging students in the creative learning process, opening people up to new opportunities, as well as promoting cognitive and psychological well-being. What seems to me the most interesting is the feeling of engagement that art can spark in a spectator or an artist, and how to use it for the purpose of effective learning.

History is well acquainted with cases of art admirers being under such an overwhelming impression of the beauty and magnificence of a painting or a sculpture that they felt physically sick; they felt the art. This phenomenon has been described as the Stendhal syndrome, "the giddiness and confusion supposedly caused when one looks at a great work of art."[1] Giddy or not, we can probably all relate to that feeling of connection with the artist just by looking at their work. We might wonder what they were thinking while creating, whether they also felt what we're feeling right now or what sort of person they were to have produced such a piece of art. Questions like these are countless. We sometimes even feel like the best friend of the artist whom we couldn't possibly have known, just because their work resonates with us so much. It is impossible from the objective point of view; however, when one's subjective artistic experience is concerned, we are engaged, we emphasise, we are invested in someone else's art. And what could be more sought after in modern, highly fragmented society than the feeling of connection to another human being?[2] I believe that the example quoted above goes to show that we, as human beings, are not indifferent to art or

[1] N. Squires, *Scientists investigate Stendhal Syndrome—fainting caused by great art*, "The Telegraph" 2010, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/italy/7914746/Scientists-investigate-Stendhal-Syndrome-fainting-caused-by-great-art.html (accessed 14 January 2023).

[2] The University of Manchester, *Growing Social Fragmentation Driven by Rising Single People and Private Renters*, 2019, https://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/news/growing-social-fragmentation-driven-by-rising-single-people-and-private-renters/ (accessed 14 January 2023).

to aesthetics and that artistic creation, as well as art reception, is a typically human endeavour that can be utilised in school curricula to engage students in learning and in being creative on that spiritual and cognitive level that is typical of interacting with art.

In her paper dedicated to introducing and promoting aesthetic values in education, Professor Marit Ulvik provides an insight into what she believes to be the core of aesthetics and aesthetic learning. She argues that "[a]esthetical learning has to do with how life is experienced, how it feels and is perceived."[3] She goes on to elaborate, stating that "[a]esthetic expressions can be communicated through symbolic forms like theatre, dance, poetry, and images."[4] We all know that people perceive the world in different ways, yet we all have to somehow communicate and interact in order to communicate and properly function in a society. Introducing theatre or art classes into school curricula could stimulate students' interest in asking questions such as what they are feeling in a given scenario, what is important to them or what mechanisms can be used to express their point of view. What is more, it also involves them in a project that requires them to master soft skills such as creative thinking and engaging in dialogue, despite their differences. One could argue that any group school project sets this goal for its participants but, arguably, this engaging quality of art is really helpful in achieving this goal. If students can engage in something on both an intellectual and emotional level, they will be more likely to actually put in the effort to complete the project with good results and learn important lessons in the process.

What is worth mentioning is that this project has adopted an interdisciplinary approach to aesthetic learning. From the point of view of improving school curricula, it is crucial that this new strategy of learning and teaching is not limited to the realms of the humanities. More creativity and thinking outside the box, thus coming up with new solutions to existing problems, is beneficial in all sorts of majors and, further on, in various occupations. This point is especially important when one has to counter the idea that aesthetic learning only has a place in groups of artists in the making, such as future poets and painters. This perspective is quite limited. Aesthetic learning and

[3] M. Ulvik, *Promoting Aesthetical Values to Education*, "Frontiers in Education" 2020, Vol. 5, p. 2, https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/feduc.2020.00034/full (accessed 13 January 2023).

[4] Ibid.

art help boost creative thinking, which is equally important in the market as it is in the theatre.

As far as the market and economy are concerned, Izabela D. Tymoczko provides an argument for the above statement. In her analysis of start-up bankruptcies, she points out that creativity and flexibility play a key role in economic growth. She argues that "[t]he higher the level of education, both in terms of hard and soft skills, the greater the likelihood that technologically advanced solutions will be developed. Constructive cooperation, creativity, intuition, creative problem-solving, that is, features only possessed by humans, lay at the heart of innovation."[5] In the free market, it is impossible for the business to prosper when its leaders are incapable of catering to customers' needs or enticing them to buy the goods that they are offering. But in order to do that, one has to be not only very observant and creative but also capable of identifying customers' reactions and emotions regarding the given product. To do that, one has to be sensitive to such intangible signals. This may be taught and aesthetic learning processes seem suitable for that purpose.

On the second day of the conference, Professor Merete Sørensen began her presentation speaking to quite a partitioned audience. There were teams and listeners coming from different organisations and different countries. As one does, we, for the most part, stayed close to those who we already knew. As a warm-up, she asked us to act out the short scenarios she had given us or feel the emotions she had named. I think one could say that this was like a school drama. One moment she asked us to imagine being in love with our neighbour (the person to our left or to our right), to greet them, show them how we felt and act out what could be going through our heads in a situation like this. That alone was a genuinely liberating experience because we got to act silly in front of each other, thus limiting the natural distance that usually separates strangers. It also made us enter the sort of mindset that you might expect a brainstorming session requires. I mean the confidence to face the others and express our feelings and opinions. All of that was achieved using words only. But these words spoke to our imaginations and ignited very true emotions. I believe that was a very good example of group integration using the aesthetics of the theatre.

[5] I. D. Tymoczko, *Economic Growth Depends on Knowledge and Creativity*, www.obserwatorfinansowy.pl 2019, https://www.obserwatorfinansowy.pl/in-english/macroeconomics/economic-growth-depends-on-knowledge-and-creativity/ (accessed 14 January 2023).

At one point during the conference, we were told that this very year Campus Notodden at USN would be staging their adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. This evoked many memories from my childhood and made me really think about what theatre and art in general can do for children. I would like to tell here a personal story that I had shared with some of the professors present at the conference.

In primary school, I was a child with many learning difficulties, struggling even to pass from class to class. My biggest difficulty was English, the most boring of all subjects to me. I was so bad at it that I nearly repeated the year. All this changed when I discovered Edgar Allan Poe's short stories collection (first in Polish and, when I got more involved, also in English) and joined an English-speaking theatre troupe in my school shortly afterwards. My first role was that of Ebenezer Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*. I was not given the part because I was the best person for it but because I was so eager to play this character that the performance director, our English teacher, agreed to give it to me in spite of my poor English. It was the sort of eagerness I had never displayed in the class before and it must have persuaded her. I was more than happy to meticulously translate every word in Poe's poems and learn my lines for the play by heart. I believe it was possible because I felt neither of them was like conscious studying or working at all. It was more of an all-consuming artistic experience rather than a learning process. Even though I didn't know it at the time, I had thus taken part in an aesthetic learning process, which not only improved my English but also helped me to work through my feeling of otherness and to get engaged in a school project, making me part of a group. I have been in love with English ever since and did my fair bit of learning the hard parts afterwards but I truly believe that it was through literature and theatre that I genuinely opened myself to that journey. Because that's what art is great at doing: sparking a flame that later may or may not become a fire.

I am also convinced that there are many other students whose full cognitive and psychological potential is dormant, and the way to awaken it leads through an aesthetic learning experience. It would be a shame not to do it. As I tried to demonstrate, such waste of potential would be of great loss to the effectiveness of the education system and, on a larger scale, to many sectors of the economy, which could profit immensely from more creativity within its structures.

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OTHERNESS-TOGETHERNESS-AESTHETICS. LEARNING FROM SHAKESPEARE HOW TO BE TOGETHER
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Keywords: philosophy of dialogue, sociology, dramatic art of dialogue, Shakespeare.

Słowa kluczowe: filozofia dialogu, socjologia, dialog w dramacie, Szekspir.

Abstract: The paper presents three aspects of the pedagogical practice employed in the seminar "How to be together" within the project Otherness-Togetherness--Aesthetics. The three aspects are sociology which helps to understand togetherness, philosophy of dialogue which sheds light on otherness, and Shakespeare's dramatic art which is an excellent representation of various complications of the issues concerning the answer to the question how to be together. The pedagogical effort of the seminar concentrated on preparing students to understand their position in society and accept the values of understanding, acceptance, and tolerance through art. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was selected in view of the play's presentation of a society consisting of three very different groups of characters, so the students had access to three groups of *others* who must exist together. Studying their relations complicated by the development of the narrative and the way particular groups discover *otherness* and deal with the difficult art of *togetherness* was a fruitful material for discussions. methodological framework of the seminar was based on the ideas of Hohr how to move students from a passive position to active participation in receiving a work of art; this demanded three pedagogical actions – epistemological, didactic and performative. The seminar carried out on these lines has proven to be most successful.

Abstrakt: Artykuł przedstawia trzy podstawowe działania pedagogiczne w ramach seminarium "Jak być razem", które przeprowadzono w międzynarodowym projekcie "Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics". Były to zagadnienia związane z filozofią dialogu, socjologią i dramatem szekspirowskim. Głównym celem było przyciągnięcie uwagi studentów do zagadnienia ich własnej pozycji w społeczeństwie wraz ze zrozumieniem i akceptacją nieodzownej różnorodności. Sztuka *Sen nocy letniej* Szekspira została wybrana z racji różnorodności przedstawionej w niej społeczności. Ramy metodologiczne seminarium oparto o propozycje Hohra, aby proces pedagogiczny rozwinąć w trzech stadiach – epistemologicznym, dydaktycznym i performatywnym, zapewniając w ten sposób zmianę postaw pasywnych wobec omawianego dzieła sztuki do aktywnej partycypacji w sztuce. Tak przeprowadzone seminarium okazało się prawdziwym sukcesem.

The project's general title, *Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics*, introduces into the instructional practice three aspects which will be briefly addressed below. Togetherness directs us towards sociology, otherness towards philosophy and aesthetics towards instructional efforts to prepare students to understand their position in society and accept the values of understanding, acceptance and tolerance through art.

The issues of meeting otherness continually mark our life, forcing us to re-orientate and make new resolutions with the result that our private, political, social and/or economic environment appears to be a highly unreliable structure within which we have to deal with both acceptable and unwanted values, opening up feelings of disharmony and doubt, if not of straightforward antipathy. Facing otherness means coming in contact with a human being or a human group whose physical looks, mental set-up, language and behaviour may make us cower and take a defensive position precisely because we recognise that person(s) as 'not me'. It is a situation in which direct communication and acceptance are difficult or sometimes hardly possible to achieve.

1. The philosophical perspective on otherness

Communication, negotiation and dialogue seem to be the only ways to deal with otherness. The philosophical ideas of Martin Buber, Emanuel Levinas and Józef Tischner have developed the branch of philosophy known

as the philosophy of dialogue. Their ideas may be a useful key to unlocking the issue of otherness.

The philosophy of dialogue concentrates mainly on relations between people, though the early interest touched on the metaphysical relationship between Man and God. Eventually, the philosophers of dialogue focused on the meeting between two human beings. Thus the term dialogue suggests communication between I and You (Martin Buber), The Self (Ipseity) and The Other (Emanuel Levinas) or The Questioning and The Questioned (Józef Tischner).

Martin Buber (1878–1965) was the first to formulate dialogical existence, which he described in his book *I and Thou*.[1] I–Thou or I–You as a relationship, a concrete encounter, an authentic existence. In his perspective, the meeting of I–Thou is a situation in which the two parties are not divided by 'otherness.' His somewhat idealistic concept stresses the mutuality of good will in the encounter. Without that mutuality, the meeting will not take place. I and Thou will not get in dialogue. This seems to be an important step towards understanding the condition of togetherness, even though we are not ready to reject otherness.

The Other was coined by Emanuel Levinas (1906–1995) in his work *Totality and Infinity*,[2] where he invites us to look at the encounter of two totally different human beings: The Other means a person essentially different from and foreign to The Self and irreducible to The Self. To him, such a situation means an ethical obligation in which The Other is understood as an ethical Teacher. Meeting The Other entails an opportunity to learn how to be in face of The Other. Levinas describes the true meeting essentially as seeing a human being without a mask, without a protective screen; it is a case of standing truly face to face, confronting the truth of The Other, which is the condition for confronting the truth of The Self. In that sense, The Other is an ethical Teacher. Resolving the crisis of otherness means learning from and about The Other; it is the condition in which The Self is ready to accept The Other. We must understand Levinas's ideas on being together with The Other in terms of ethical symmetry, which means that in

[1] M. Buber, *Ich und Du*, Leipzig 1923. English translation: *I and Thou*, transl. R. G. Smith, New York 1958.

[2] E. Levinas, *Totalité et infini. Essai sur l'extériorité*, Paris 1961. English translation: *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, transl. A. Lingis, The Hague/Boston/London 1979.

the real encounter we have to make an effort to recognise the values of The Other, expecting that our values will be equally considered. This in itself demands considerable effort on both sides.

Józef Tischner (1931–2000) developed his ideas of meeting The Other within the frame of philosophy of drama in *Filozofia Dramatu*.[3] Though first published in Paris in 1990, the work is in Polish. For Tischner, Man enters into relations with the World (i.e. the stage of action) and with The Other. The relation human being-to-human being introduces the situation of dialogue in which one asks questions and functions as The Questioning, thus putting The Other in the situation of The Questioned. The question makes The Questioned a participant in that situation; it is an invitation to dialogue. The question means one realises the presence of The Other. In this analysis of the meeting, the functions are interchangeable, and that is why each party gains the conscious recognition of the other, which is the condition for the dialogue to take place and eliminate the situation of crisis. To Tischner, the situation of the dialogic encounter is also ethical, as a meeting of two sets of values. The success of the meeting depends on the readiness to enter the dialogue and respond to the values of The Other on both sides. The negotiation is a condition without which no resolution can take place. Tischner follows the ethical ideas of Levinas but expands the responsibility to both parties. His reading of the basics of human existence opens the way to considering drama as a useful material to study the encounter with The Other and to probe through dialogue the state of togetherness.

2. Defining Otherness – the sociological perspective

The idea of otherness is central to sociological analyses of how majority and minority identities are constructed. With the dynamic development of cultural studies, along with the ideas of Antonio Gramsci (in particular his reflections on the cultural and political concept of hegemony) and Michel Foucault (in particular his ideas on the role of discourse in involving society in accepting power structures), otherness is generally discussed within the framework of power relations. The representation of different groups within

[3] J. Tischner, *Filozofia Dramatu*, Kraków 1998.

any given society is seen as controlled by groups with greater political power. In order to understand the notion of The Other, sociologists first seek to put a critical spotlight on how social identities are constructed. Identities are often thought to be natural or innate – something that we are born with – but sociologists highlight that this taken-for-granted view is not accurate. The focus is on social identities that reflect the way individuals and groups internalise established social categories within their societies, such as their cultural (or ethnic) identities, gender identities, class identities, and so on. These social categories shape our ideas about who we think we are, how we want to be seen by others, and about the groups to which we belong.

George Herbert Mead's (1863–1931) classic text, *Mind, Self and Society*,[4] established that social identities are created through our ongoing social interaction with other people and our subsequent self-reflection about who we think we are according to these social exchanges. Mead's work shows that identities are produced through agreement, disagreement and negotiation with other people. We adjust our behaviour and our self-image based upon our interactions and self-reflection about these interactions (also known as the looking glass self).

The ideas of similarity and difference are central to how we achieve a sense of identity and social belonging. Identities have some element of exclusivity. Just as when we formally join a club or an organisation, social membership depends upon fulfilling a set of criteria. It just so happens that such criteria are socially constructed (that is, created by societies and social groups). As such, we cannot belong to any group unless they (other people) belong to our group. Sociologists set out to study how societies manage collective ideas about who gets to belong to our group and which types of people are seen as different, the outsiders of society. This really opens up the complicated layers of our project of togetherness and otherness.

Zygmunt Bauman (1925–2017) believed the notion of otherness to be central to how societies establish identity categories. He argued that indentities are set up as dichotomies:

> In dichotomies crucial for the practice and the vision of social order the differentiating power hides as a rule behind one of the members of the opposition. The second member is but the other of the first, the

[4] G.H. Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society*, Charles W. Morris (ed.), Chicago 1934.

> opposite (degraded, suppressed, exiled) side of the first and its creation. Thus abnormality is the other of the norm, deviation the other of law-abiding, illness the other of health, barbarity the other of civilization, animal the other of the human, woman the other of man, stranger the other of the native, enemy the other of friend, 'them' the other of 'us', insanity the other of reason, foreigner the other of the state subject, lay public the other of the expert. Both sides depend on each other, but the dependence is not symmetrical. The second side depends on the first for its contrived and enforced isolation. The first depends on the second for its self-assertion.[5]

The concept of The Other highlights how many societies create a sense of belonging, identity and social status by constructing social categories as binary opposites. This is clear in the social construction of gender in Western societies or how socialisation shapes our ideas about what it means to be a 'man' or a 'woman.' In the early 1950s, Simone de Beauvoir (1908–1986) argued that "Otherness is a fundamental category of human thought. Thus it is that no group ever sets itself up as the One without at once setting up the Other over against itself."

De Beauvoir argued that the woman is set up as The Other of the man. Masculinity is, therefore, socially constructed as the universal norm by which social ideas about humanity are defined, discussed and legislated against.

> Thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being […] She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other.[6]

This reading of gender otherness is clearly located in the power structure hidden under the notion of the natural order. Dichotomies of otherness are set up as being natural and, so often in everyday life, they are taken for granted and presumed to be natural. But social identities are not natural: they represent an established social order, a hierarchy where certain groups are established as superior to others. Individuals have the choice (or agency) to create their identities according to their own beliefs about the world. Yet

[5] Z. Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*, Cambridge 1991, p.14.
[6] S. de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, London 1953, p. 15–16.

the negotiation of identity equally depends upon the negotiation of power relationships.

Social institutions such as the law, the media, education, religion, etc., hold the balance of power through their representation of what is accepted as 'normal' and what is considered Other. British sociologist Stuart Hall[7] argues that visual representations of otherness hold special cultural authority. In Western countries with a colonial history, like the UK, the difference portrayed positively or negatively is judged against the dominant group, namely white, middle-to-upper class, heterosexual Christians. The notion of otherness is used by sociologists to highlight how social identities are contested. This concept is also used to break down the ideologies and resources that groups use to maintain their social identities. Sociologists are therefore interested in the ways in which notions of otherness are managed in society. For example, we study how some groups become stigmatised as outsiders and how such ideas change over time.

Both philosophical and sociological ideas on otherness make us aware of the complicated structure of relations behind the title of the project. Naturally, one has to take up only one possible facet to make sense of the pedagogical process in which the teacher aims at alerting students to the problem of the inescapable fact of living together with others. Since our project introduces art as a medium, the recognition and reception of which should be an effective way to induce in students their own understanding of social realities and initiatives in order to improve their relations with the world, the choice of drama, and particularly the choice of a Shakespeare's comedy as the reference point of the seminar, was associated with the philosophy of dialogue. Plays consist of dialogues whose specific interpretation is strongly connected with the art of performance. In this case, the decisive role is not reading but speaking, i.e. an action in which pitch, tone, stress, speed and intonation may offer an astounding range of varied interpretations of the same words. Recognition of this and the skill with which one can read meanings into dialogues equals recognition of how people communicate with each other and build relations depending on the force of not only what they say but also of how they speak.

[7] S. Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices (Culture, Media and Identities Series)*, London 1997.

These considerations do not exclude the sociological aspect of understanding togetherness and otherness, as will be seen in what follows.

3. The *How to Be Together* seminar at the Józef Tischner European University, Cracow

I started planning the seminar for the project by selecting material for the third component of the title. The decision to work on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was dictated by the following reasons:

1. The play presents a society which consists of three very different groups of characters: the court members, the artisans and the fairies. Thus, the students get three groups of others who must exist together. Studying their relations complicated by the development of the narrative and the way specific groups discover otherness and deal with the difficult art of togetherness seemed to me a very promising material for the seminar, especially in view of the social realities of the students' own social environment.
2. Plays are texts which demand a specific way of reading which must lead to the understanding that each word uttered by the characters has to be treated not as saying but as speaking. The distinction is crucial because it means the reader must involve his/her invention, imagination and own experience to read action into each word: speaking means the use of voice, tone, pitch, intonation; speaking means directing the word at somebody, which in turn depends on what actually is going on between the characters, how they treat each other, what the emotional temperature of the moment is like, etc. Therefore, drama is an ideal material for analysing personal and social ties, divisions and ongoing processes between people.
3. Studying a play is accompanied by the awareness that its real life takes place on the stage. Therefore, watching various productions of the same play uncovers endless variations in interpreting characters, specific incidents and the whole plot. This, in turn, leads to activating students' own interpretative skills, offering a space not only for comparisons of various productions but also for formulating their own understanding of what they find in the work of directors and actors.

Having selected the material, I had to turn my attention to methodology: how to lead the students to active participation and to formulating their own judgement of both the play and the issue of building social ties, and interpersonal relations in real life. How to move them from the object of study to understanding their own situation, identity, possibilities and, last but not least, emotions. Here, I used the ideas from the article by Helene Illeris (University of Agder, Norway), in which she presents aesthetic learning processes in terms of epistemology, didactics and performance. I found particularly useful ideas in what Illeris repeats after Hohr (1992), who constructed a methodological model based on the assertion that one must experience one's own distinctiveness and uniqueness – one's own otherness – and, at the same time, develop active skills enabling people to live together with others. For Hohr, leading students from the passive position of only watching a work of art to the active position in which one participates in the aesthetic moment was a key to a positive, active development of the self. To achieve this, the didactic process should move through three stages: epistemological, didactic and performative. The epistemological stage is the time to experience one's own cognition of the object of art and to analyse the first impressions through discourse. This should lead to the next stage, a didactic one, in which the teacher must lead students to confronting their individual reaction to art with that of others, to reflecting on the difference and eventually to analysing and correcting/enlarging their respective positions. The third, performative, stage is the time for full individual formulation and performance, i.e. of action in which the students may express themselves individually and independently and, at the same time, relative to the social context at hand. In other words, having fully positioned themselves, students should achieve the skills to elaborate their own strategies in order to meaningfully participate in the outer world.

Moving along the three stages, I first encouraged the students to react spontaneously to the play. My students had very little experience of Shakespeare, certainly no skills in reading drama and scarce experience of Shakespeare's plays in theatre or cinema. The individual, quite private, non-analytical impressions led to an interesting exchange among students discovering a variety of tastes and abilities to deal with the text. This epistemological stage was completed with basic but indispensable knowledge

of the Elizabethan theatre, which was the natural environment for the play and dictated in many ways the shape of the dramatic text.

The didactic stage comprised reading selected passages in order to learn how to change words into action and how to interpret the action. This was really an analytical process but its aim was to make students aware of the possibility of very different interpretations of the action at hand. Our main passage was the opening scene in which Theseus and Hippolyta talk about the wedding: students were fascinated by the fact that going beyond words may open a whole scale of relations between the two characters. This, in turn, led to a discussion of the relations between other characters in the play: students got involved in following the idea of togetherness and otherness and came to the conclusion that togetherness must include otherness and that the opposition to togetherness is division and exclusion. Achieving this was certainly a high point of our work together.

Naturally, following the relations between characters and interpreting them in the play, the students had the opportunity to think of paternalism and institutional oppression, of social divisions and ensuing power hierarchies, which meant for them the discovery of the universality and impressive contemporariness of Shakespeare's work relating directly to their own experience.

The final, performative stage was the time for students to work on their individual projects in which they would present otherness–togetherness. I left them with a broad spectrum of what they might think of. I did not insist on a critical reading of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* but, of course, I encouraged them either to think about the semantic richness of the play or to consider different theatrical interpretations of a selected incident, paying attention to how the actors interpreted the relations between the characters. As for other possibilities to engage in the topic of togetherness–otherness in their own projects, I suggested fine arts in terms of painting, posters and photographs combined with one's own comments. The final presentation of the projects was a very successful event. Students were quite enthusiastically engaged in their work and presented the results with energy and satisfaction. The projects varied, mainly due to the students' temperaments, interests and passions. They were truly interested in their peers' work and warmly applauded the results.

4. Conclusion

My conclusion as to the whole process is as follows:

1. The students who, at the beginning, did not know each other at all or knew each other just slightly, by the end of the course formed a well-integrated group who found enjoyment in working together even though they represented very different individualities and followed various academic paths in our school. So the course became an experience of true togetherness with accepted otherness.
2. The students expressed great satisfaction in learning things they had not known before and even greater satisfaction in getting a platform for showing themselves as individual human beings who can do new things. They clearly enjoyed otherness in togetherness and appreciated otherness in their colleagues.
3. To all of them, the experience of the summer workshop in Gdańsk was a continuation and expansion of what they had learned, experienced and done during the course in winter.

As an educator, let me express my great satisfaction here with being able to take part in the project. It was a great pleasure to watch how the students, at first uncertain and shy, got involved in the seminar, how they contributed to the ideas and clearly developed satisfaction in both working together and preparing their individual projects to illustrate the ideas we discussed.

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Bio

Marta Gibińska – prof. dr hab., worked until 2012 at the Jagiellonian University; at present she teaches at the Józef Tischner European University in Krakow, Poland. Her special fields are Shakespeare studies and translation studies. Her publications include, among others, *Functioning of Language in Shakespeare's Plays. A Pragma-dramatic Approach* (1989), and *Polish Poets Read Shakespeare* (2000). She has also published extensively on theatrical history of Shakespeare in Poland and on Polish translations of Shakespeare.

Marta Gibińska – prof. dr hab., wykładała literaturę angielską na Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim do r. 2012. Obecnie zatrudniona jest w Wyższej Szkole Europejskiej im. Józefa Tischnera w Krakowie. Jest specjalistką w zakresie angielskiej literatury od renesansu do wiktorianizmu. Szczególnym polem badawczym są utwory Szekspira. Publikowała na tematy związane z interpretacją dramatów Szekspira, charakterystyki języka wielkiego dramaturga, historią Szekspira w polskiej kulturze, oraz z przekładami sztuk Szekspira.

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HOW TO BE TOGETHER THROUGH THE EYES OF AN INTROVERT
JAK BYĆ RAZEM – OCZAMI INTROWERTYCZKI

Keywords: introversion, stream of consciousness.

Słowa kluczowe: introwertyzm, strumień świadomości.

Abstract: By definition, introversion shows us an approach to interpersonal contact, deploying typical personality and behavioural traits for this social group, through which we can compare our lifestyle, including social life. However, is it possible to ‚be together' while being a loner type by nature? Is it possible to create community while preferring solitude? In my paper, I introduce the term introversion from my own experience and try to eliminate the stereotypes associated with the concept. I am proving that topic that may seem familiar to us often turns out to be a concept worth refreshing and useful to be included in scientific works and psychological-philosophical contemplations. Does introversion facilitate the extraction of artistic skills in relation to richer inner experiences? How does introversion relates to Shakespeare? Is there anything we can learn from introverts? What did the OTA project gave me, as introvert, and what did I get out of it?

Abstrakt: Introwertyzm z definicji ukazuje nam podejście do kontaktów międzyludzkich, podpierając się typowymi cechami osobowości i zachowań dla tej grupy społecznej, dzięki którym możemy porównać swój tryb życia, w tym życia społecznego. Jednak czy można „być razem" będąc z natury typem samotnika? Czy można tworzyć wspólnotę, preferując samotność? W mojej pracy przybliżam termin introwertyzmu z własnego doświadczenia oraz staram się wyeliminować stereotypy związane z tym pojęciem, udowadniając, że z reguły znany nam temat okazuje się być pojęciem wartym odświeżenia oraz przydatnym do uwzględnienia w pracach naukowych i psychologiczno-filozoficznych kontemplacjach. Czy introwertyzm ułatwia wydobycie artystycznych umiejętności względem bogatszych przeżyć wewnętrznych? Jak introwertyzm łączy

się z Szekspirem? Czy od introwertyków możemy się czegoś nauczyć? Co mi, jako introwertyczce, dał projekt OTA i co z niego wyniosłam?

All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players:
they have their exits and their entrances;
and one man in his time plays many parts […].

William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, Act 2, Scene 7

The quote I chose to include in my speech[1] is not only related to the very theme of our project and togetherness as such but also speaks to me in terms of my interpretation of the issue of being an introvert. I absolutely agree with this vision of our existence where each of us is given a different role to play, easier or more difficult, but sometimes we play several roles. As an introverted person, I can see a connection between the two aspects. Introversion, often mistaken for shyness, diminishes the uniqueness of having such a personality. Introverted people draw their energy from their inner life; they do not need many impulses from the outside world because they feel most comfortable alone and direct their attention to their thoughts and feelings.

In preparing this speech, I found many synonyms for the word introvert which can be very disrespectful and even painful for such people. Words like hermit or misanthrope have only highlighted the problem that others do not understand this personality. However, my experience relates to Polish society and the Polish websites that concerned me. I am also aware that I often misused the word introvert in social situations and tried to justify my actions and decisions with this personality type. I created my safe haven around this word, a kind of protective shield that would allow me to survive unpleasant social gatherings.

That's why it was difficult for me at the beginning of the Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics Workshop. I usually avoid such projects out of fear of situations that make me uncomfortable and it's quite stressful to work with a large group of people. But deep down, I've always dreamed of giving speeches like this and working creatively on myself like I did under the OTA project. The acting assignments during the workshop were a great relief for

[1] Text was presented in this form at a scientific conference "Aesthetical learning processes and togetherness" in Campus Notodden on 29.11.2022.

me. I had an opportunity to participate in them by playing Ophelia, modified by my own idea of the character. Ophelia allowed me to bring out my inner artistic needs and put them to paper, to implement them and strengthen my self-confidence owing to the whole workshop. One of the creative tasks I had in Gdańsk resulted in a poem or short story that came to me when I took on the role of Ophelia. The liberating element of my writing workshop was that it was written in a stream of consciousness.

Now I want to show you what I created during the workshop when I slipped into the role of the character that was instructed to live in a post-apocalyptic period:

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INSPIRATION?

The people are gone and I am standing in the garden, the flowers in my hair are giving me courage.

I am trying to sing but I don't have a purpose to do that anymore. I am afraid, my only friends are waiting in the castle,

worrying that I am dead.

We are the only seven people on the Earth.

Without purpose, without music, without inspiration to grow, how can I live happily ever after?

I don't have much more hope for the future—

I think I am slowly dying inside; my mind is already gone,

I think about dying every day; the waters call me softly. I am scared, mother, help me,

please give me an answer. How can I live without inspiration? I always had inspiration after talking with strangers,

after hearing a new tune, a new piece of literature,

a new conversation or a new perspective.

The Earth has lost its purpose, heaven is crying with big, ugly, fat tears; sometimes, I see them in a black palette of suffering.

Mother, I am calling you!

Where are you?!

I don't know what to do, please I am begging you, give me a sign from heaven.
Pour into my mind the knowledge that I need.
Otherwise, I will die; I am standing in the cold water right now, waiting for someone to save *me before I kill myself.*
The gods are calling me—

The ability to express oneself, be creative and realise oneself helps introverts find themselves. It also helps to put to paper what we have in our minds. The power of being introverted is the power to feel what surrounds us, compared to others; it is the power to be quiet for artistic purposes, not just socially. Being able to convey what we feel through art. I call it the beauty of quiet communication. One in three people on our planet is introverted, one in three! What does it mean then? Why are we familiar with the subject of being introverted and yet value group work more in our society? From my experience, I know how painful it was for me, it often clipped my wings and my creativity, which I wasn't then able to develop and work on. Every extroverted, ambivalent and introverted cog has its place inside this machine that we are in and everyone contributes just as much to the team. I watched a speech from Susan Cain[2] in which she talks about the power of being introverted, about the need for balance and the right environment for us so that we can all make the most of our potential.

She used a metaphor of a suitcase full of books that may be stereotypically considered introverted at first but, in my opinion, has a symbolic reference to the way introverted people approach life. Susan Cain encourages us to share her thoughts with her, look at our life's baggage and think about it so we could tap into it and what we have already become. This will help us understand ourselves and how to use this as our strength.

And this is what I wish for you as well, that each of you can look at your baggage of experiences and see what we have been packing there all our lives. And I am sure that there will still be room for new experiences, just as I have found room for extraordinary experiences in the OTA project. Being here today and speaking as an introvert with shaky legs, sharing what I was

[2] Susan Cain: The Power of Introverts Ted Talk, TED2012 https://www.ted.com/talks/susan_cain_the_power_of_introverts?language=enin (accessed 25 August 2022)

able to prepare during the classes in Gdańsk, I know that my role on the stage of life is still a work in progress.

Bio

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THE IMPORTANCE OF AN OPEN MIND IN IMPARTING KNOWLEDGE
O WAŻNOŚCI ZACHOWANIA OTWARTEGO UMYSŁU PODCZAS PRZEKAZYWANIA WIEDZY

Keywords: open mind, education, student, knowledge.

Słowa kluczowe: otwarty umysł, edukacja, student, wiedza.

Abstract: A short contemplation by a young teacher on the importance of keeping an open mind when receiving and imparting knowledge. It outlines how our education comes full circle and how our learning experiences can affect us and our future students. The disquisition also contains memories of the author's experiences acquired during the participation in the Otherness-Togetherness--Aesthetics project, and how they opened her eyes and mind.

Abstrakt: Krótka kontemplacja młodego nauczyciela na temat ważności utrzymania otwartego umysłu podczas przyjmowania i przekazywania wiedzy. Nakreśla to, jak nasza edukacja zatacz a koło oraz jak nasze przeżycia w trakcie nauki mogą wpłynąć na nas i naszych przyszłych uczniów. Wywód zawiera również wspomnienia z doświadczeń autorki nabytych w trakcie udziału w projekcie *Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics*, opowiada również o tym, jak otworzył on jej oczy i umysł.

The Importance of an Open Mind in Imparting Knowledge – a very nice title for something rather simple, yet beautiful, in my opinion.

Well, I believe that everyone has met a teacher on their educational journey who has left a bitter taste in their mouth, I sure have. Thankfully, that was not the case with the Otherness-Togetherness-Aesthetics project and I would like to explain why, as I think that the processes I have noticed illustrate aesthetic learning really well.

The quality that I have always cherished in educators the most is the ability to say "I don't know," which may sound counter-intuitive. Because, you know, they are the educators, they are supposed to know, they are supposed to teach and we are supposed to learn from them. So why admire a teacher who says, "I don't know?" Well, in the case of all of the teachers who have changed me, I think, in the best ways, the "I don't know" was always followed by either "But I would like to" or "But I will find out." That showed me that the teacher also wants to be the student or at least is willing to learn new things from the students and for the students.

I remember our first OTA class with Professor Marta Gibińska when she said that, before we get to know Shakespeare, we should get to know each other. And then, she instructed us to have an exercise that involved having a conversation with a stranger from our group and then introducing ourselves to the rest of the group as our interlocutor. To my surprise, we were given the same exercise in Gdańsk during our Shakespeare Camp, by Ms Marzena Nieczuja Urbańska, who was conducting our integration workshop and conducted the teachers' integration workshop the year before. And I remember myself being in awe, thinking about my teacher, Professor Gibińska, a Shakespeare expert, who could do a lecture on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to a piglet and it would understand it with ease; how she would learn something new, find an interesting way to help students interact with one another and use it herself. Seeing my teacher being so open-minded influenced me a lot. And I will add that I use that method during every first class that I have with my own students because it works.

When talking about an open mind, I cannot omit a very mind-opening exercise presented to us by Professor Joanna Magierecka during our camp in Gdańsk, called Post Modern Interview. She marked out a few spots in our working space and instructed everyone to add something, a picture, a quote, etc., to every spot but not to move the things that someone else from the group put there. I remember the conversation we had after the exercise and some fascinating conclusions that we drew but I mostly remember myself thinking, "Oh my, it would be such a great method to teach students grammar and vocabulary in a language class because it uses hand-eye coordination to an even bigger extent than filling in tables and diagrams!" And I have already planned to use that in my teaching as well.

What I also really appreciated was the fact that, after the whole experience of the Shakespeare Camp, Professor Magierecka sat with us and asked, "What could I do better?" And that is something I feel every teacher should ask themselves. But also, in my opinion, every aspiring teacher should ask, "What could my teachers have done better?" because when we think about their mistakes, we can learn from them, do better ourselves, see what they have done well and use it in our teaching.

My journey in teaching others professionally has started recently and I took the said approach very seriously. I teach my students the way I have always wanted to be taught, I hope. I still listen to their suggestions but I share with them all of my language-learning tricks, explain the complex structures in the most straightforward ways possible; I try to remember all of the questions my classmates and I asked our teachers when we were in school and I answer them in advance, I try to give my students everything that helped me learn in the past. And the absolutely best thing is feeling that it has actually paid off and, recently, I have had an experience like that. We had a quiz with my students in a private language school and one of them spotted every trick I put in the questions and answered them correctly. All of the other students and I were so surprised, myself pleasantly, of course. We asked how come he knew all the right answers and he replied, "Miss, I remember we did it during our class with you. In school, I got the worst grade on a test in this subject; I only understood it thanks to you." And, well, that made my heart melt. The OTA workshop really helped me to achieve that, have a more open mind and do better.

This situation is also a nice portrayal of what I want to present here, namely how big of a change the aesthetic learning processes can make. Because my teachers were so open-minded that they were willing to learn, they taught me better, opened my mind and made me draw my own conclusions. This helped me become a better student and a better teacher and thus allowed me to open the minds of my students so they would be willing to learn too. Those processes help us better understand ourselves, our teachers and our students, even if only a little. I am sure that my students will teach me something as well, making it a nice educational full circle. I am sure that I will notice it if my mind stays open. So please keep an open mind so that your students can too.

Bio

Julia Trychta – a student of Scandinavian Studies at Józef Tischner European University in Cracow, passionate about cultures with a special love for the ancient ones. Fascinated by onomastics. She takes the first steps in her teaching career. Enchanted with the process of learning languages, she tries to learn and teach them as best as possible. She pays special attention to the educational needs of teenagers to better get through to them and help them understand the confusing world of learning a little better.

Julia Trychta – studentka skandynawistyki na WSE im. ks. J. Tischnera w Krakowie, pasjonatka kultur ze szczególnym umiłowaniem tych starożytnych. Zafascynowana onomastyką. Stawia pierwsze kroki w karierze nauczycielskiej. Oczarowana procesem nauki języków, stara się uczyć i nauczać ich jak najlepiej. Szczególną uwagę przykłada do potrzeb edukacyjnych nastolatków, aby lepiej do nich dotrzeć i pomóc im zrozumieć konfundujący świat nauki nieco lepiej.

PHOTOS FROM PROJECT EVENTS


COSTA

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otherness togetherness aesthetics

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UNIWERSYTET WARSZAWSKI

USN University of South-Eastern Norway

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