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Forerunners of the Polish Theory of Aesthetic Education Prekursorzy polskiej teorii wychowania estetycznego

Abstract: The article outlines the views of the forerunners of the Polish theory of aesthetic education: Janina Mortkowiczowa (1875–1960), Stefan Szuman (1889–1972), Stanisław Ossowski (1897–1963) and Bogdan Suchodolski (1903–1992). The juxtaposition of opinions on the role of art in education with elements of precursors' biographies enables a deeper understanding of these opinions. The research approach adopted also shows the evolution of thought and the process of shaping the Polish theory of aesthetic education over the course of the twentieth century.

Keywords: Janina Mortkowiczowa (1875–1960), Stefan Szuman (1889–1972), Stanisław Ossowski (1897–1963), Bogdan Suchodolski (1903–1992), Irena Wojnar (1924–2021), Polish theory of aesthetic education.

Streszczenie: Artykuł zarysowuje poglądy prekursorów polskiej teorii wychowania estetycznego: Janiny Mortkowiczowej (1875–1960), Stefana Szumana (1889–1972), Stanisława Ossowskiego (1897–1963) i Bogdana Suchodolskiego (1903–1992). Zestawienie opinii na rolę sztuki w edukacji z elementami biografii prekursorów umożliwiło ich głębsze zrozumienie. Przyjęte podejście badawcze pozwoliło także ukazać ewolucję myśli i proces kształtowania się polskiej teorii edukacji estetycznej na przestrzeni XX wieku.

Słowa kluczowe: Janina Mortkowiczowa (1875–1960), Stefan Szuman (1889–1972), Stanisław Ossowski (1897–1963), Bogdan Suchodolski (1903–1992), Irena Wojnar (1924–2021), polska teoria wychowania estetycznego.

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Introduction

The Polish theory of aesthetic education crystallised in the 1960s and 1970s, L but its sources date back to the beginning of the 20th century. Finally shaped by Irena Wojnar,² the theory became an interdisciplinary pedagogical concept, connected with other sciences focusing on man, society and culture. It has particularly close ties with philosophy, aesthetics, psychology and sociology.3 According to humanistic thinking, aesthetic education constitutes an integral and lifelong process⁴ that includes the development of the entire human potential: intellectual ability, aesthetic sensitivity, morality, empathy, critical thinking skills and creativity.⁵ Here art is perceived as part of an evolving culture and as an educational tool for pro-personal and pro-social change. In Polish theory, the traditional understanding of aesthetic education as educating people's attitudes towards art and beauty, which very often had an elitist and class character, has been exceeded. Both a narrower and a broader proposal for understanding aesthetic education have been distinguished. 6 The narrower proposal was defined as education centred on art. It consisted in introducing people to art, shaping their aesthetic sensitivity and culture and their identity as required for them to experience and understand artistic values. A broader proposal is education through art, i.e. supporting the development of the entire human personality in the moral, cognitive and social spheres, as well as developing self-awareness, imagination and creative attitudes through participation in art. In many of her numerous works, ⁷ Irena Wojnar emphasised the need

- B. Kwiatkowska-Tybulewicz, *The Educational Turn in Contemporary Art and Critical Aesthetic Pedagogy: Rethinking the Theory of Aesthetic Education*, "Kultura i Edukacja", 4 (2020) pp. 94–95, DOI: 10.15804/kie.2020.04.06.
- 2 I. Wojnar, Teoria wychowania estetycznego, Warszawa 1995.
- 3 I. Wojnar, O edukacji estetycznej głos pedagoga humanisty, in: Wizje i re-wizje. Wielka księga estetyki w Polsce, ed. K. Wilkoszewska, Kraków 2007, p. 873.
- 4 I. Wojnar, Teoria wychowania estetycznego, p. 282.
- 5 I. Wojnar, O edukacji estetycznej głos pedagoga humanisty, p. 875.
- 6 I. Wojnar, B. Szymańska, *Theory of Aesthetic Education: A Polish Perspective*, 'Journal of Aesthetic Education', 12 (1978) no. 2, p. 43, DOI: 10.2307/3332044.
- 7 Selected publications: I. Wojnar, Estetyka i wychowanie, Warszawa 1964; I. Wojnar, Perspektywy wychowawcze sztuki, Warszawa 1966; I. Wojnar, Nel campo della

to educate people to have 'open minds' that were sensitive to the diversity of beauty manifested in classic and modern art, and the need to teach young people to be critical and independent, to evaluate and make choices.⁸

It is worth emphasising that the Polish theory of aesthetic education is not a historical concept only; it is still taught at universities as a methodology and is also of interest to researchers. Currently, the scientific literature emphasises the need to revise some assumptions taking a broader interdisciplinary context (e.g. the theory of popular culture) into account, as well as the phenomenon of aestheticising reality, the aesthetics of new media, issues of aesthetic interculturalism, and the redefinition of traditional concepts, such as aesthetic experience or the aesthetic canon.⁹

As aforementioned, the Polish model of aesthetic education is rooted at the beginning of the 20th century, when a belief in the possibility of shaping better people by art went hand in hand with a belief in the possibility of making world a better place. The precursors of the Polish theory of aesthetic education came from various social environments and represented various scientific disciplines and professions. This diversity laid the foundation for the interdisciplinary nature of this theory. The most important forerunners include: Janina Mortkowiczowa (1875–1960), Stefan Szuman (1889–1972), Stanisław Ossowski (1897–1963) and Bogdan Suchodolski (1903–1992). The present article provides an outline of their biographies and their views on the role of art in education. Adopting such a perspective allows us to reveal the evolution of thinking and the process of shaping the Polish theory of aesthetic education over the course of the 20th century.

speranza razionale, "I Problemi della Pedagogia", 6 (1967) pp. 3–7; I. Wojnar, Sztuka w procesach edukacji ustawicznej, Warszawa: 1974; I. Wojnar, Bogdan Suchodolski: a Philosopher of Man, Education and Cultura, "Dialectics and Humanism", 4 (1977) no. 4, pp. 169–181, DOI: 10.5840/dialecticshumanism19774425; I. Wojnar, Estetyczna samowiedza człowieka, Warszawa 1982; I. Wojnar, Sztuka jako 'podręcznik życia', Warszawa 1984; I. Wojnar, Humanistyczne intencje edukacji, Warszawa 2000.

- 8 I. Wojnar, Podstawowe problemy wychowania estetycznego (teoria i praktyka), in: Wychowanie estetyczne młodego pokolenia. Polska koncepcja i doświadczenia, edS. I. Wojnar, W. Pielasińska, Warszawa 1990, p. 19.
- 9 K. Pankowska, Kultura sztuka edukacja w świecie zmian, Warszawa 2013, p. 171.
- 10 K. Pankowska, *Rozwój polskiej teorii wychowania estetycznego prekursorzy i twórcy,* 'Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny', 62 (2017) no. 4, p. 42, DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0010.8401.

Janina Mortkowiczowa (1875–1960)

Janina Mortkowiczowa was an author of children's books, and a translator, editor and publisher. She was born on 20 October 1875 in Warsaw. Her father was Gustaw Horwitz, son of the Chief Rabbi of Vienna, Lazar Horwitz; and her mother was Julia (née Kleinmann). She was the sister of the socialist activists Maksymilian Horwitz and Kamila Kancewicz. She graduated from the Leokadia and Bronisława Kosmowski finishing school, and then took part in a preschool education course and studied psychology at the Flying University. She attended, among others, lectures by professor of philosophy Adam Mahrburg, where she was remembered as a gifted student. Flying University lectures took place, inter alia, in the Horwitz family home, thus placing young Janina, at the very centre of the underground progressive educational and cultural movement. She worked in the free reading rooms of the Charity Society, distributing books among workers and Jewish youth. She was a member of the library catalogue committee, which assessed new publications. She delivered lectures at the meetings of the secret Women's Pedagogical Circle of the Crown and Lithuania. 11 She debuted as a writer with children's stories, which were printed in 1892 in the 'Wieczory rodzinne' magazine.

In her early youth, Mortkowiczowa found particular interest in educational issues. She read many books and pedagogical magazines that she had accessed in the Scientific Reading Room, which was founded and managed by Jadwiga Szczawińska-Dawidowa. She became particularly interested in a new movement founded in Germany called 'Kunsterziehung', which attached great importance to aesthetic education and art in the education of children and youth.¹² Mortkowiczowa was familiar with significant works of foreign literature. Among the foreign sources that Mortkowiczowa referred to are the publications of the following authors: Alfred Lichtwark, James Sully, Konrad Lange, John Ruskin, William Morris, Gustaw Geffroy, Wilhelm Spohr, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Friedrich Wilhelm Froebel, Gabriel Compayré, Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller, Robert Hebert Quick, Robert de la Sizeranne, Christian

¹¹ H. Mortkowicz-Olczakowa, Pod znakiem kłoska, Warszawa 1962, p. 10.

¹² Ibid., pp. 21-22.

Garve, Hippolyte Adolphe Taine, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, Fryderyk Queyrat, Karl Groos, Jean-Marie Guyau, Ludwig Volkmann, Théodule Ribot, Bernard Pérez, Heinrich Pudor, Otto Field or Eugène Véron. Inspiration from reading prompted Mortkowiczowa to write a work on aesthetic education. She read her manuscript during a debate in the Women's Pedagogical Circle of the Crown and Lithuania. The work aroused great interest, which encouraged her to elaborate a printed version thereof. The book was entitled O wychowaniu estetycznym and it was published in 1903 by the publishing house of Jakub Mortkowicz, whom Janina had married a few months earlier. The book secured Mortkowiczowa the position of an undisputed pioneer and promoter of education through art in Poland.¹³

The main inspiration of Mortkowiczowa's thought was the work by John Ruskin. Much like Ruskin, she believed that the need for beauty is rooted deep in the human being and constitutes the instinctive need of its soul.¹⁴ She believed that aesthetic sensitivity (i.e. the ability to feel the beauty of nature and art, a developed artistic taste and sense of style and the ability to be moved) enriches a person both emotionally and morally.¹⁵ Aesthetic sensitivity also positively influences the way people arrange space and their external appearance. Mortkowiczowa was highly critical of the quality of applied art at the time, but also the general level of the aesthetic culture in Polish society. 16 She pointed not to poverty, but the neglect of children's aesthetic development as the main cause of this situation. Referring to the research of English psychologist James Sully, ¹⁷ Mortkowiczowa argued that children have an innate aesthetic sensitivity that should be stimulated from early childhood. Mortkowiczowa thus treated aesthetic education not as an end in itself, but as a means for creating a harmonious human whole. She opposed one-sidedness in education, that is, developing only the intellectual sphere of the child. She claimed that aesthetic education should coexist with a shaping of cognitive abilities and instillation

¹³ K. Pankowska, Rozwój polskiej teorii wychowania estetycznego, p. 43; K. Kwiatkowska-Tybulewicz, The Educational Turn in Contemporary Art, p. 95.

¹⁴ J. Mortkowiczowa, O wychowaniu estetycznym, Warszawa 1903, p. 1.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 2–3.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁷ J. Sully, Studies of Childhood, New York 1895.

of moral values.¹⁸ Even though she had great hopes in pedagogical and aesthetic reform, she was aware that aesthetic education was not a remedy for all social issues and therefore she was not a utopian.¹⁹

Mortkowiczowa formulated several principles on which the model of aesthetic education should be based. Among them there are: aesthetic education is not, strictly speaking, artistic education; aesthetic education must be related to the education of intellect and morality; aesthetic theory and art history should be limited to a minimum; the level and the scope of exercises should be adapted to the child's developmental abilities; an appropriate educational atmosphere was important; the child should enjoy personal and creative freedom; the development of the senses, in particular the sense of sight, is a priority; teachers should take care of the appearance of the child's surroundings, e.g. the decor and equipment of school classes, as well as their clothes; aesthetic classes should be a source of pleasure for the child.²⁰

Observation was to form the basic method of aesthetic education in Mortkowiczowa's approach, ²¹ and the auxiliary means included drawing from nature or memory. ²² The development of visual imagination was to be supported by systematic exercises: observation of the shapes and colours of animals, birds, insects, plants, movement, perspective, lighting, and the preparation of collections of stones, crystals, butterflies, plants, etc., that were attractive due to their external features. ²³ Drawing exercises were to be adapted to the child's development stage. Mortkowiczowa called for the abandonment of the traditional methodical approach to teaching drawing. Therefore drawing ornaments, geometric figures and templates had to be abandoned in favour of free drawing from nature and memory. Furthermore, drawing should be supplemented with painting exercises (with particular emphasis on shaping colour sensitivity), clay modelling and exercises in the field of crafts. ²⁴ Children had to be

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18 J. Mortkowiczowa, O wychowaniu estetycznym, p. 11.
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¹⁹ Ibid., p. 14.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 12-18.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 24, 28.

²² Ibid., p. 28.

²³ Ibid., pp. 25, 27.

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 40-48.

acquainted with valuable works of art in a general manner, without burdening them with unnecessary details.²⁵ Free and selfless play was also extremely important, providing children with pleasure and developing their independence.²⁶ Contact with nature was to play a special role in the aesthetic education of a child.²⁷ The child should learn to admire nature and be able to notice its intrinsic beauty. Mortkowiczowa agreed with Ruskin that the basis of any upbringing must be the lofty feelings of admiration, delight and enthusiasm.²⁸ Nature has all the features worthy of aesthetic delight: an abundance of colours and shades, a multitude of shapes, harmony of proportions, shininess, softness, freshness, refinement, subtlety, smell and sounds.²⁹

On the presence of beauty in the child's environment, Mortkowiczowa referred to the views of, among others William Morris and Friedrich Theodor Vischer. In order to shape the aesthetic taste of a child, it was necessary to eliminate cheap and glittering objects from its surroundings. Simplicity, serenity, grace and light – these were the features Mortkowiczowa listed as crucial. The aforesaid conditions also applied to children's toys. What was particularly desired were pictures and picture books of high artistic and aesthetic quality, that were expressive, representative and humorous at the same time. The architecture and equipment of schools were to be harmonious, bright, clean, well thought out and devoid of randomness.³⁰

Mortkowiczowa was also in favour of democratisation of art. She claimed that every human being deserved access to the greatest creations of mankind. In her opinion, proper and common aesthetic education could contribute to the harmonious development of an individual and, in the long term, to an improved quality of social life.³¹

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25 Ibid., pp. 51-52.
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²⁶ Ibid., pp. 36-39.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 30.

²⁸ J. Ruskin, *Sztuka. Społeczeństwo. Wychowanie. Wybór pism*, tłum. Z. Doroszowa, M. Treter-Horowitzowa, Wrocław 1977, p. 284.

²⁹ J. Mortkowiczowa, *O wychowaniu estetycznym*, pp. 34–35.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 56-68.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 69-74.

Throughout her life, Mortkowiczowa conducted activities promoting aesthetic culture. Not only was she a well-known publisher in Poland, but she also wrote and translated books for children and teenagers, disseminating literature on a larger scale. Her best known translations include that of the German book by the Hungarian writer Ferenc Molnar, Chłopcy z Placu Broni³² or the translations from English of nine volumes from the Doctor Dolittle series by Hugh John Lofting. As a publisher, Mortkowiczowa always attempted to publish the works of Polish and foreign authors of high artistic and pedagogical value.³³ She also wrote literary and pedagogical articles published, among others, in the 'Przegląd pedagogiczny'.³⁴ In pre-war Poland, she had lectured in courses at the Pedagogical Faculty of the Free Polish University in Warsaw.³⁵

After her husband's suicide in 1931 she managed the publishing house herself. With the aid of fellow writers and institutions, she managed to save the company from collapse and to publish many new books. After the outbreak of World War II, Mortkowiczowa had to go into hiding. During the Warsaw Uprising, the bookstore and publishing house were razed to the ground. Mortkowiczowa was sent to a transit camp in Pruszków. In January 1945 she and her daughter settled in Cracow. Mortkowiczowa resumed the activity of the publishing house. Unfortunately, it only operated until 1950. She died on 27 December 1960 in Cracow, and buried at the Rakowicki Cemetery.³⁶

In her book O wychowaniu estetycznym (1903), Mortkowiczowa included the totality of what constituted the issues of aesthetic education at the time,

³² F. Molnar, Chłopcy z Placu Broni, Kraków-Warszawa 1946.

³³ See: J. Mortkowiczowa, Sporty, kino, radjo, a... dobra książka. Pogadanka dla młodzieży, Warszawa-Kraków 1927.

³⁴ J. Mortkowiczowa, *O książkach obrazkowych dla dzieci*, "Przegląd Pedagogiczny", 21 (1904) pp. 244–272; J. Mortkowiczowa, *O postępowym czasopismach dla dzieci i młodzieży w latach 1909–1926*, "Studia Pedagogiczne", 5 (1958) pp. 159–213. In the years of 1913–1914 Mortkowiczowa, together with Stefania Sempołowska, edited a magazine for young people entitled "Z Blizka i z Daleka," with an add-on for children, entitled "W Słońcu."

³⁵ K. Pankowska, Rozwój polskiej teorii wychowania estetycznego, p. 43.

³⁶ *Mortkowiczowa Janina*, Polin: Wirtualny sztetl, https://sztetl.org.pl/pl/biogramy/3363-mortkowiczowa-janina, accessed: October 16, 2021.

providing a comprehensive overview of the current views of numerous authors. It was the first publication in Polish that comprehensively described the subject of aesthetic education.³⁷ This book became an important stage on the way to the creation of the Polish theory of aesthetic education.

Stefan Szuman (1889–1972)

Stefan Szuman was born on 2 January 1889 in Toruń. He was one of the seven children of Eugenia (née Gumpert) and Leon Szuman. His father was a respected surgeon and the owner of a clinic, known for his participation in various charity campaigns carried out in the city of Toruń. In his family home, Szuman communed with various fields of art: music, literature, painting; and he was ensorcelled with them. In 1908, he graduated from a Prussian high school; then, at his father's request, he started medical studies in Wrocław, which he continued in Munich and Würzburg. Apart from medicine, he was interested in philosophical, ideological and artistic issues. After graduation, he practised at the University of Munich and prepared his doctoral thesis there, which he defended in 1914. When World War I broke out, Stefan Szuman, as a non-commissioned officer in the German army (he was born under Prussian rule and studied in Germany), was called up for military service and spent several years at the front as field surgeon. He was seriously wounded at Cambrai in 1917. In 1919 he joined the forces of the Greater Poland Uprising and took part in it, again as a field surgeon. In 1920, he was awarded the Polish Cross of Valour for his outstanding achievements in saving the wounded, and his initiative and courage.38

Since he was a child, he had demonstrated philosophical, humanistic and artistic interests. In 1921 he began studies in the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Poznań. He also developed his interest in art by studying at the School of Decorative Arts, where he met Zofia Szczepankowska,

³⁷ W. Kubiczek, Wychowanie estetyczne w szkolnictwie ogólnokształcącym zaboru rosyjskiego w drugiej połowie XIX i na początku XX wieku, Kraków 1996, p. 38.

³⁸ M. Kielar-Turska, Stefan Szuman (1889–1972), in: Złota księga Wydziału Filozoficznego, eds. J. Miklaszewska, J. Mizera, Kraków 2000, p. 206.

his future wife. In 1922 he started a family; he had two children: a daughter, Grażyna, and a son, Krzysztof, who later died at the age of three. In 1926, Szuman defended his doctorate based on a dissertation entitled 'Psychologia twórczości rysunkowej dziecka', and just a year later he defended his habilitation thesis entitled 'Badania nad rozwojem apercepcji i reprodukcji prostych kształtów u dzieci^{',39} In 1928, he started work at the Department of Pedagogical Psychology at the Jagiellonian University. He went to Geneva, where, at the Jean-Jacques Rousseau Institute, he made contact with famous scientists: educator Edouard Claparede and psychologist Jean Piaget. From Geneva, he travelled to Vienna, where he met Charlotte Bühler, the famous author of works in the field of developmental psychology. In the years 1929– 1939 he also lectured at the Pedagogical Institute in Katowice. In 1934 he was appointed associate professor at the Jagiellonian University. During World War II, he was a doctor in the Home Army. 40 In 1945, he became a professor at the University of Krakow again and taught at the State Pedagogical School. In the years 1950–1957 he was repressed by the authorities of the Polish People's Republic. In 1960, he was forced into early retirement.⁴¹ He passed away on 16 May 1972 in Warsaw.

In the community of psychologists, Stefan Szuman is associated primarily with pioneering research on children's speech and art and aesthetic education. Szuman put forward the thesis that children's art (drawing) is a spontaneous manifestation of a child's psyche and develops according to a specific pattern. According to the researcher, the child presents what it knows about the respective object, and not what it sees, therefore the artistic statement of the child, arising from its imagination and emotions, expresses a specific aesthetic truth, and not theoretical knowledge. It is impossible to talk about Polish develop-

³⁹ R. Polak, *Uczucia i emocje w pedagogice i psychologii Stefana Szumana*, "Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska Lublin – Polonia, Sectio J", 34 (2021) no. 2, p. 30, DOI: 10.17951/j.2021.34.2.29-41.

⁴⁰ M. M. Tytko, *Mjr prof. Stefan Szuman w walce o niepodległość Polski (1939–1945)*, "Sowiniec", 44 (2014) pp. 51–84, DOI: 10.12797/Sowiniec.25.2014.44.04.

⁴¹ M. Przetacznikowa, Życie i twórczość Profesora Stefana Szumana (1889–1972), "Psychologia Wychowawcza", 25 (1982) NO. 5, pp. 457–464.

mental psychology without considering the hundreds of works by Szuman,⁴² which position him among the most outstanding Polish psychologists.⁴³

Szuman's views on education through art were closely related to his axiological vision of cultural pedagogy, at the centre of which he located the universal values of Truth, Good and Beauty. Szuman's concept of cultural pedagogy is embedded in a realistic philosophy of life, Christian personalism and neo-Platonism. Here, man is understood subjectively as a co-creator of values: a person strives for values and realizes them through culture and within culture. Such a man can be called homo creator and homo axiologicus. In an anthropological-axiological theory constructed in this manner, subjectivity develops in three directions: intellectual, physical and emotional. Szuman rejected the concept of a unilaterally shaped human being limited to an intellectual cognition of reality and practical skill development. He proposed the concept of a comprehensively developed person, capable not only of an intellectual cognition of reality and exertion of practical influence on it, but also open to experiencing the world directly, to perceiving its aesthetic values.

Szuman emphasised that contact with art has a dual character: on the one hand, it consists in acts of one's own creativity, and on the other, in the act of experiencing artistic works. Referring to the phenomenological theories of aesthetics, Szuman assumed that the essence of the influence of art

- 42 Selected publications: S. Szuman, Spontaniczne rysunki dzieci w wieku przedszkolnym a wzory pisma w polskich elementarzach, "Szkoła powszechna", 1 (1925) pp. 34–60; S. Szuman, Cel wychowania estetycznego, "Przyjaciel Szkoły' 14 (1925) pp. 401–404; S. Szuman, Sztuka dziecka. Psychologia twórczości rysunkowej dziecka, Warszawa 1927; S. Szuman, Rysunki małego dziecka z punktu widzenia jego przeżyć, "Przedszkole", 8–9 (1935/36) pp. 169–175; S. Szuman, K. Brzychczy, Rozwój kolorystyki w sztuce dziecka, Warszawa 1938; S. Szuman, O właściwą rolę sztuki w wychowaniu estetycznym społeczeństwa, "Ruch Pedagogiczny", 2 (1947/48) pp. 89–95; S. Szuman, Wyobrażenia taneczne sugerowane przez walce Chopina, "Kwartalnik Muzyczny", 29–30 (1950) pp. 3–40; S. Szuman, Wychowawcza rola teatru ochotniczego, in: Pedagogika dorosłych, ed. K. Wojciechowski, Warszawa 1962, pp. 422–460.
- 43 M. Kielar-Turska, Stefan Szuman (1889–1972), p. 206.
- 44 M. M. Tytko, Stefana Szumana pedagogika kultury (próba syntezy), in: Pedagogika kultury: wychowanie do wyboru wartości, ed. B. Żurakowski, Kraków 2003, p. 97.
- 45 J. Kulczycki, Koncepcja wychowania estetycznego w ujęciu Stefana Szumana, in: Myśl pedagogiczna przełomu wieków, ed. T. Aleksander, Kraków 2001, p. 259.

on a person is realised in an individual aesthetic experience,⁴⁶ which is a synthesis of the act of cognition with the act of feeling.⁴⁷ Szuman wrote about the special role of a child's free creative activity, differing in this from most of his contemporaries, both psychologists and educators, who emphasised the role of teaching and upbringing.⁴⁸

Szuman believed deeply in the greatness and value of art. One of the main objectives of his concept of education through art was the inner improvement of man. In his opinion, through various works of art (works of visual art, painting, graphics, literature, music, theatre, film, folk art and artistic crafts), human spirituality and sensitivity were brought to focus on higher values. 49 His profound conviction about the importance of art in the development of an individual prompted Szuman to postulate for universal public aesthetic education. At the beginning of the 20th century, when aesthetic education in Poland was elitist and fragmented, such an attitude seemed progressive. After World War II, Szuman laid the foundations for the realisation of universal aesthetic education, reducing them to three processes: popularising art, making it accessible and making it available.⁵⁰ Popularisation is the broadest process and it should be understood as the intentional cultural policy of the state, including making art available and making it accessible. This sharing allows people to commune with a work of art (original or reproduction). Szuman based his thought on the obvious assumption that it is impossible to get to know, experience or live an artistic work without coming into direct contact with it. Only through direct contact was it possible to achieve an aesthetic experience, which was crucial for Szuman.⁵¹ Accessibility, on the other hand, entails helping someone to awaken their aesthetic interest in works of art, to update their aesthetic responses. Making works of art accessible means putting them in reach of the sensations and expe-

⁴⁶ I. Wojnar, Teoria wychowania estetycznego, p. 232.

⁴⁷ M. M. Tytko, Stefana Szumana pedagogika kultury (próba syntezy), p. 97.

⁴⁸ J. Kulczycki, Koncepcja wychowania estetycznego w ujęciu Stefana Szumana, p. 262.

⁴⁹ M. M. Tytko, Stefana Szumana aksjologiczna koncepcja pedagogiki kultury: z badań nad Szumanowską teorią edukacyjno-artystyczną, in: Edukacyjny i terapeutyczny aspekt sztuki, ed. A. M. Żukowska, Lublin 2013, p. 53.

⁵⁰ I. Wojnar, Teoria wychowania estetycznego, p. 232.

⁵¹ S. Szuman, O sztuce i wychowaniu estetycznym, Warszawa: 1975, p. 114.

riences of the recipient. This process requires the activity of the educator, acting as an intermediary between the work of art, and its recipient – the student. This in turn requires appropriate (effective) methods and didactics. This mediation process, according to Szuman, is the most difficult issue in aesthetic education. The result of disseminating art should be a broad, in-depth and meaningful aesthetic culture within the entire society. He wrote:

The aesthetic culture of a society depends not only on whether a nation has given birth to outstanding artists and great creators, but also on whether their works have found a resonance in this nation and among people all over the world, whether there has been and still is a demand for these works and whether they help everyone live and enjoy life.⁵³

Szuman emphasised that the scientific approach, i.e. focusing solely on conveying the content and generally accepted interpretations to students, should be avoided in aesthetic education. Evidently, content and form were very important, but the teacher also had to consider the expressiveness of the work, that is, its ability to stimulate the senses and feelings.⁵⁴ The duty of the aesthetic educator was to talk to students about works of art. The exchange of observations, views and various evaluation criteria for a selected work, which took place in such discussions, improved its reception and experience by recipients. According to Szuman, the ultimate objective of aesthetic education was to prepare the student for independent discovery and experiencing works of art,⁵⁵ and in a broader context, for the affirmation of life.⁵⁶

- 52 Ibid., pp. 114-115.
- 53 Ibid., p. 125: 'Kultura estetyczna społeczeństwa zależy nie tylko od tego, czy dany naród wyłonił z siebie wybitnych artystów, wielkich twórców, lecz nie mniej od tego, czy ich dzieła w danym narodzie i wśród ludzi na całym świecie znalazły oddźwięk, czy zaistniało i nadal trwa zapotrzebowanie na te dzieła, czy pomagają one żyć i radować się życiem każdemu człowiekowi'.
- 54 S. Szuman, O budzeniu i pogłębianiu wrażliwości młodzieży na sztukę, in: Wychowanie przez sztukę, ed. I. Wojnar, Warszawa 1965, pp. 123–124.
- 55 J. Kulczycki, Koncepcja wychowania estetycznego w ujęciu Stefana Szumana, p. 261.
- 56 I. Wojnar, Teoria wychowania estetycznego, p. 233.

Stanisław Ossowski (1897–1963)

Stanisław Ossowski was a great Polish sociologist, methodologist of social sciences and cultural theorist. He was born on 22 May 1897 in Lipno (near Włocławek). He was the son of Władysław and Kazimiera (née Pyrowicz). His father was a wellknown and respected doctor, founder of the departments of surgery, general and infectious diseases and a mortuary at the local hospital. Władysław Ossowski also organised free medical aid for the people of Lipno and the surrounding area. Stanisław Ossowski's father played a large role in shaping his personality. His maternal grandfather, Stanisław Pyrowicz – a lawyer by education and journalist by profession, who translated the works of Francis Bacon into Polish – was also an important figure in his life.⁵⁷ The atmosphere of Ossowski's family home was characterised by patriotism and involvement in social issues. The experiences of the 1905 revolution strengthened the national and pro-social attitude of the young Ossowski. In 1914, Ossowski graduated from the high school in Włocławek; a year later, he began studies in the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Warsaw. He interrupted them in 1918 to volunteer for the newly organised Polish troops. He fought on the Ukrainian front. In 1920 – again as a volunteer – he participated in the Polish-Soviet war. Ossowski was a representative of the socalled independence left, involved in solving pressing problems of the country and the people. Democratic and independence ideals directed Ossowski's scientific interests, determining his selection of specific research problems.⁵⁸

During his philosophical studies, his teachers were, among others Tadeusz Kotarbiński and Władysław Tatarkiewicz – outstanding representatives of the world of science. It was during this period that Ossowski became friends with a philosophy student, Maria Niedźwiecka. They married in 1924 and Maria Ossowska developed her academic career, and became a respected professor, a pioneer of research on sociology and psychology of morality in Poland. Their marriage was based on the principles of partnership, the intensive exchange of thoughts and the pursuit of similar values.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ M. Chałubiński, Stanisław Ossowski, Warszawa 2007, pp. 5–6.

⁵⁸ M. Chałubiński, Stanisław Ossowski, p. 6.

⁵⁹ Intymny portret uczonych. Korespondencja Marii i Stanisława Ossowskich, ed. E. Neyman, Warszawa 2002.

In 1933, Ossowski published U podstaw estetyki, 60 which became the basis for his habilitation, awarding him the title of associate professor. In the years 1933–1935 he stayed in London, where he continued his studies. In 1936, he became an assistant professor at the Department of Sociology at the University of Warsaw. Ossowski critically assessed the then developing fascism, national and authoritarian movements in Europe, which resulted in the publication of the book Więź społeczna i dziedzictwo krwi (1939), devoted to the sociological analysis of racial and ethnic myths. In 1939 he fought the Nazis in the rank of a platoon commander, and after Poland's capitulation in the fall of 1939, threatened with arrest, he managed to escape to Lviv. He later returned to the country; in the years 1941–1944 he was involved in teaching secretly at the underground University of Warsaw. He also participated in the activities of the Zegota Council to Aid Jews. During the war, he continued pursuing his academic work.⁶¹ After the end of the war, he was associated with the University of Łódź (1945–1947). In 1948 he returned to the University of Warsaw, where he was the Head of the Department of Sociology until his death. During his career, for several years he was politically removed from teaching (1951– 1956), for his non-conformity and his criticism of the official doctrine of Marxism-Leninism. He died in Warsaw on 7 November 1963.62

The aesthetics proposed by Ossowski in U podstaw estetyki (1933) had a psycho-sociological character.⁶³ As a sociologist, Ossowski drew attention to the multiplicity of functions performed by art in various cultures over the centuries.

- 60 Almost all the published works by Ossowski were collected in the six volumes of Dzieła, published by PWN between 1966 and 1970. These are: S. Ossowski, Dzieła. U podstaw estetyki, Warszawa 1966, vol. 1; S. Ossowski, Dzieła. Więź społeczna i dziedzictwo krwi, Warszawa 1966, vol. 2; S. Ossowski, Dzieła. Z zagadnień psychologii społecznej, Warszawa 1967, vol. 3; S. Ossowski, Dzieła. O nauce, Warszawa 1967, vol. 4; S. Ossowski, Dzieła. Z zagadnień struktury społecznej, Warszawa 1968, vol. 5; S. Ossowski, Dzieła. Publicystyka recenzje posłowie wspomnienia, Warszawa 1970, vol. 6.
- 61 M. Chałubiński, The Sociological Ideas of Stanisław Ossowski. His Life, Fundamental Ideas and Sociology in Polish and World Science, "Journal of Classical Sociology", 6 (2006) issue 3, p. 285, DOI: 10.1177/1468795X06069679.
- 62 M. Chałubiński, Stanisław Ossowski, p. 10.
- 63 S. Ossowski, The Foundations of Aesthetics, Warszawa, 1978.

Depending on the place and time, art could serve magical and religious cults, it could be a source of new ideas, a transmitter of tradition and even a weapon of revolution. Such functions of art were described by Ossowski as heterotelic and distinguished from their autotelic functions, which consisted in providing an individual with aesthetic and cognitive experiences. 64 Ossowski proposed to divide aesthetics into two kinds: psychology (dealing with the reception of works of art) and sociology (studying activities and products related to creativity, the functions of works of art, aesthetic socialisation, etc.). The characteristic feature of Ossowski's psycho-sociological vision of aesthetics was pluralism concerning aesthetic values and experiences. In his opinion, the source of an individual's aesthetic experience could be, apart from beauty, other aesthetic values, e.g. loftiness, comic qualities, ugliness. He introduced a distinction between aesthetic values (related to the reactions of recipients) and artistic values (related to craftsmanship, talent, experience, originality of the artist's view). He further believed that popular art was a source of aesthetic value, which at the beginning of the 20th century was still an extremely progressive and controversial position. Ossowski associated various aesthetic experiences with an attitude that he called 'living in the moment'. 'Living in the moment' was akin to the Kantian idea of selflessness. Only in the 'here and now', without a forward-looking attitude, without a specific objective, can we experience fascination, cathartic cleansing, hope, inner renewal. 65 Ossowski's pluralistic approach was destructive to the traditional metaphysical aesthetics and met with critical reactions. Nevertheless, in retrospect, the versatility, originality and topicality of his concepts become apparent.

According to Ossowski, the educational role of art boils down to several fundamental issues. First, art can be a source of aesthetic experiences that allow an individual to break away from reality, routine and duties. Art allows one to transfer into the world of diverse sensations and emotions. Therefore, it plays a cathartic function. Second, art can be the space for social relations. These relations can take place on three levels: recipient – fictional character (literary, film, etc.), recipient – creator of the work, recipient – other recipients (audience). Relationships established in the space of art take place beyond

⁶⁴ M. Chałubiński, Stanisław Ossowski, p. 14.

⁶⁵ S. Ossowski, Dzieła. U podstaw estetyki, Warszawa 1966, vol. 1, pp. 268–276.

the limits of place, time and social position. Therefore art opens up to diversity, shapes social skills and communicative competences, and allows us to establish an emotional or intellectual bond with a person with whom, for various reasons, we cannot have contact in everyday life. Ossowski wrote: 'Art allows us to select those with whom we wish to commune'. ⁶⁶ What is worth emphasising, the relationships outlined above are usually disinterested. An authentic friendship can be created based on common aesthetic experience, as is the case with an audience fascinated by the work of one artist. He wrote:

Well, it is the works of art that are particularly valuable goods from the point of view of social relations. These are — as Bertrand Russell once called them — non-consumption goods: they do not become scarcer with the growing number of the population that makes use of them. The social relations that are initiated in connection with these goods do not pose the risk of conflicts like the conflicts triggered by consumer works. Two people who are in love in the same melody, or with the same decorative motifs are not at risk of confrontation, which threatens people, who want the same loaf of bread or the same dwelling. That is why art is to be a factor for shaping dispositions, which in turn shape the harmony of coexistence. Leo Tolstoy ascribed art the function of emotional uniting of people, and it was only because of this function that he considered art worthy of respect.⁶⁷

Third: communing with art enriches human life with new content, knowledge, qualities, forms, motives and emotions. Art develops the mind and sensitivity, refining it. Ossowski wrote that art 'multiplies reality'; in other words,

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 345.

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 345–346: 'Otóż właśnie dzieła sztuki z punktu widzenia stosunków społecznych są dobrami szczególnie cennymi. Są to – jak je nazwał kiedyś Bertrand Russell – dobra niekonsumpcyjne: nie ubywa ich na ogół, gdy się zwiększa liczba ludzi, którzy z nich korzystają. Stosunki społeczne, które się w związku z tymi dobrami zawiązują, nie grożą konfliktem tego typu, co konflikty, które wybuchają wokół dzieł konsumpcyjnych. Dwu ludziom, którzy są zakochani w tej samej melodii albo w tych samych motywach dekoracyjnych, nie grozi starcie, jakie zagraża ludziom, którzy pragną tego samego bochenka chleba lub tej samej chaty. Dlatego także sztuka może być czynnikiem kształtującym dyspozycje, od których zależy harmonia współżycia. Funkcję uczuciowego jednoczenia ludzi przypisywał sztuce Lew Tołstoj i tylko ze względu na tę funkcję uważał sztukę za rzecz godną szacunku'.

it allows us to live different lives. Fourth: art can act as a signal, that is, it signals the existence of certain social issues and, consequently, it can be a driving force for real change. According to Ossowski, artistic visions can transform social life. Art teaches people to notice and care for crucial issues; it teaches us to look at reality from different points of view, to look the truth in the eye. And fifth: the educational role of art is also manifested in developing a creative attitude, not only in artists, but also in recipients, who by engaging in the process of interpreting a work of art become its co-creators.⁶⁸

Ossowski also saw the possibility of art having a negative impact on people's lives, manifesting itself in a situation where the fictional world replaces the real world, or where art is elitist and deepens social divisions. He still believed that a properly organised process of aesthetic education would slowly overcome these dangers.⁶⁹

Bogdan Suchodolski (1903–1992)

Bogdan Suchodolski was an outstanding Polish scientist, a humanist dealing with the philosophy of culture and education and with the history of science. He was born on 27 December 1903 in Sosnowiec. His father, Dr Kazimierz Suchodolski, was a well-known physician, widely appreciated for his commitment and selflessness. Bogdan Suchodolski emphasised that it was in his high school (he attended the Bolesław Prus high school, and later the Stanisław Staszic high school in Sosnowiec), that his personality and love for literature and philosophy developed. Suchodolski spoke with great appreciation about teachers, who cared about the intellectual and educational level of their students, enabling them to develop in a comprehensive manner. As a final-grade student, he participated as a volunteer, together with other students, in the independence movement and then in the Polish-Soviet war of 1920. After returning from the war, he passed his secondary school-leaving examination and studied in Warsaw, Cracow, Berlin and Paris. In the years 1925–1938 he worked as

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 347.

⁶⁹ I. Wojnar, Teoria wychowania estetycznego, p. 234.

⁷⁰ I. Wojnar, Bogdan Suchodolski, p. 169.

⁷¹ S. Tokarczyk, Profesor Bogdan Suchodolski: życie i dzieło, "Chowanna", 1 (1993) p. 47.

a secondary school teacher, at the same time preparing his doctoral dissertation and habilitation. He became an associate professor at the University of Warsaw, and in 1938 a professor at the Jan Kazimierz University in Lviv. During the occupation, he participated in organising secret education in Warsaw. After the war, for several years he was the director of a general secondary school in Warsaw and a professor at the University of Warsaw (head of the Department of General Pedagogy). During his career, he was a member of many national and international scientific societies. Suchodolski took part, inter alia, in UNESCO's founding meeting (1945). He also remained an expert in this organisation for many years.

Suchodolski is the author and co-author of numerous publications in the field of culture, philosophy and education.⁷⁴ All his works share the issue of the human person and the humanistic world – the world created by people and shaping people. Suchodolski understood man as a creative being, and education as a process of gradual development and enrichment of that human being, often developing hidden potential. In all his works there is a deep concern for the welfare of people and the future of the world. It should be emphasised that, according to Suchodolski, culture covers a much wider

- 72 I. Wojnar, Bogdan Suchodolski (1903–92), "Prospects", 24 (1994) pp. 573–590, DOI: 10.1007/BF02195289; I. Wojnar, Bogdan Suchodolski (1903–92), "Perspectives: revue trimestrielle d'éducation comparéen", 24 (1994) no. 3–4, pp. 597–615; M. Santos Gómez, Sujeto y educación en la filosofía de la educación de Bogdan Suchodolski, "Daimon. Revista Internacional de Filosofía", 62 (2014) pp. 87–100, DOI: 10.6018/daimon/165551.
- 73 I. Wojnar, Bogdan Suchodolski (1903–1992), "Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny", 43 (1998) no. 3–4, p. 9.
- 74 Selected publications: B. Suchodolski, *Uspołecznienie kultury*, Warszawa, 1947, ed. 2; B. Suchodolski, *Wychowanie dla przyszłości*, Warszawa 1947, ed. 2; B. Suchodolski, *Education for the Future and Traditional Pedagogy*, "International Review of Education", 7 (1961) no. 4, pp. 420–431; B. Suchodolski, *Egalite et education: problemes, methodes et difficultes des recherches compares*, "International Review of Education", 9 (1963) no. 2, pp. 182–195; B. Suchodolski, *Civilization Youth Education*, "Youth & Society", 1 (1970) issue 4, pp. 392–419. DOI: 10.1177/0044118X7000100; B. Suchodolski, *Out-of-School Education*, "Prospects' 2 (1972) pp. 142–157; B. Suchodolski, *The Future of Higher Education*, "Higher Education", 3 (1974) pp. 331–340; B. Suchodolski, *Educators and Teachers for the Sake of Peace. Shaping a New Way of Thinking*, "Security Dialogue", 3 (1987) pp. 321–329.

area than merely artistic achievements and works of art. The concept of culture also includes scientific and technical culture, social and political culture, the culture of labour and the culture of social relations, as well as the moral culture. Culture understood in this way should constitute the foundation of a person's general education, encompassing its entire personality and not just separate aspects and dispositions.⁷⁵

In Suchodolski's humanistic concept of culture, art is an element that enriches the integrated image of a man, deepens the plasticity of their mind and shapes the sensitivity and personality in the moral and intellectual scope; it is an element that strengthens the creative attitude and triggers expression and imagination. Suchodolski was convinced that by introducing man into a fictional reality, it strengthens their life force. Art can therefore have a cathartic effect. The second scope of art's activity is its compensatory function, understood as enrichment rather than as compensating for the perceived deficiencies. The third area indicated by Suchodolski is the role of art in making people more aware. Works of art can demonstrate the conflicts and anxieties of the contemporary world (as a community of people) without moralising, and can show the tragedy of human existence, stimulating people to think and deepen their sensitivity. Suchodolski did not explicitly define the concept of art itself, but he clearly linked his proposal with high culture, as evidenced by the examples of artists and their works from various fields of art that he cited.

Suchodolski introduced a distinction to Polish pedagogical thought between art education (traditionally understood as aesthetic education) and education through art. He wrote:

Education through art is something other than the traditional aesthetic education. Were we to understand aesthetic education as the shaping

⁷⁵ I. Wojnar, Bogdan Suchodolski (1903–1992), pp. 11–12, 14.

⁷⁶ B. Kwiatkowska-Tybulewicz, Świat humanistyczny i humanistyczna edukacja według Bogdana Suchodolskiego, "Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny", 59 (2014) no. 3, pp. 105–106.

⁷⁷ B. Suchodolski, Współczesne problemy wychowania estetycznego, in: Wychowanie przez sztukę, ed. I. Wojnar, Warszawa 1965, pp. 31–32.

⁷⁸ K. Pankowska, Historyczne znaczenie i aktualność poglądów Bogdana Suchodolskiego na temat wychowania przez sztukę, "Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny", 59 (2014) no. 3, p. 96.

of the so-called aesthetic attitude, as shaping good taste, the ability to communicate with works of art due to their artistic value, education through art would then require such an organisation of educational effort so that the art could have an impact on the entire personality of the student, and not just its selected section, its aesthetic part, its aesthetic sense. Education through art is not a one-sided education of a human being; it means a versatile upbringing, because art can lead to many spheres of human activity and experiences.⁷⁹

Education through art understood in this manner means inspiring a specific type of aesthetic experience that engages the whole personality of a thinking and feeling person. It is far from the passive assimilation of an unchanging tradition. Rather, it is like a dialogue with values that are timeless and express genuine humanity. Education through art should help people lead a valuable and interesting life, comprehending reality, experiencing satisfaction and intensifying their inner world.⁸⁰

Suchodolski pointed to the important social role of art. He drew attention to the necessity of access to the culture of the large masses, who had so far been deprived of this privilege. He emphasised the lifelong, permanent character of aesthetic education, which he placed in the context of the important pedagogical questions and tasks of the 20th century. He did so by asking how important it was for modern man to ask about the meaning of life and the role that can be played by conscious human activity in this world.⁸¹

79 B. Suchodolski, *Podstawy wychowania socjalistycznego*, Warszawa 1967, p. 142: 'Wychowanie przez sztukę jest czymś innym niż tradycyjne wychowanie estetyczne. Gdy bowiem wychowanie estetyczne rozumiane było jako kształtowanie tzw. postawy estetycznej, jako wyrabianie dobrego smaku, umiejętności kontaktowania się z dziełami sztuki ze względu na ich walor estetyczny, to wychowanie przez sztukę wymaga takiej organizacji pracy wychowawczej, by sztuka mogła oddziaływać na całą osobowość wychowanka, a nie tylko na jej wyodrębniony wycinek, jej estetyczną stronę, jej estetyczne poczucie. Wychowanie przez sztukę nie jest jednostronnym wychowaniem człowieka; jest jego wychowaniem wszechstronnym, ponieważ przez sztukę można trafić do bardzo wielu stref ludzkiej działalności i ludzkich przeżyć'.

80 I. Wojnar, Teoria wychowania estetycznego, p. 242.

81 K. Pankowska, Historyczne znaczenie, p. 101.

Conclusion

The objective of the present paper was to present the evolution of thought and the process of shaping the Polish theory of aesthetic education during the 20th century. It was also important to capture the influence of thinkers' life experiences on their views on the educational role of art. The precursors of Polish theory adopted various analytical perspectives: social, psychological, sociological, philosophical and pedagogical. They defined the scope of the concept of art differently, reducing it either to traditional, classical works of art or extending it to popular art. Taking a broader perspective of time allows us to see how the scope of aesthetic education has changed, and how the contents, methods and means also changed: how the theory was expanded and refined: from focusing on the child's development of drawing skills to stimulating all their potential.

Despite their differences, Mortkowiczowa, Szuman, Ossowski and Suchodolski agreed on the two dimensions of aesthetic education: individual and social. They perceived man as a creative and open being, who develops their abilities by interacting with the world they co-create. The scholars saw the unique role of art in sublimating human sensitivity, developing intellect and morality and determining the shape of social relations. They advocated the democratisation of aesthetic education. As people marked by the experience of war and deprivation of freedom, they tried to look to the future with hope. The precursors of the Polish theory of aesthetic education shared an idealistic vision of a world in which noble art shapes noble life, and one in which timeless humanistic values are realised.

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