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The Boundary Situation as a Space of Artification

Abstract

Artification occupies a specific place between art and non-art and is determined by giving a subjectively aesthetic meaning to the objects that previously had no such properties. We refer here explicitly to the studies and findings of Ellen Dissanayake and Ossi Naukkarinen.

The study aimed to focus on the potential of artification at the end of one's life, exemplified by reports of the qualitative study conducted in one of the hospices in Katowice, Poland. The psychological flexibility categories, extracted from artification activities, were used in this research.

Keywords: *artification, terminally ill patient, psychological flexibility*

The paper is dedicated to the memory of Stanisław, who showed us the meaning of artification.

Introduction

According to Ossi Naukkarinen, artification refers to situations as well as processes in which something that is not commonly (in the traditional sense of the word) considered art is transformed into something similar to art or into something that relates to artistic ways of thinking and acting (Naukkarinen, 2012, p. 2).

Artification refers to the processes in which art is mixed with something that merely adopts certain characteristics of art. Artified objects have a specific place

between art and non-art (Andrzejewski, 2017) and are submitted to subjective modification (Leddy, 2012), i.e., actions to which aesthetic or symbolic properties can be attributed. These objects did not have such properties before.

It can be assumed that the art/non-art dichotomy must be preserved so that the reference principle that defines the concept of artification could remain valid – artification cannot take place without art. Artification needs art as a reference point and a source of ideas and practices.

It also needs things that are not art so that they could be mixed and influence each other (Naukkarinen, 2012, p. 2). Artification can be considered from a sociological perspective (Shapiro, 2019). However, in our understanding, the art of therapeutic application will be given to the individual.

Ellen Dissanayake argues that from the beginning of their ontogeny, each human being is sensitive to proto-aesthetic sensory (visual and auditory) and cognitive aspects of the environment, which is additionally perceived by them as pleasant and satisfying enough (Dissanayake, 2018, pp. 91–129) to prompt them to become active in this direction. Dissanayake identifies artification as giving a special character to objects (making them special), which is often reduced by art scholars to evolutionary aesthetics, and therefore, “art with a small ‘a’: domestic art, amateur art, children’s artistic games and all common, though culturally, geographically and historically diverse practices of decorating the body and the surroundings” (Luty, 2021, p. 87). As we understand it, there is no room to discuss the size of “A” in defining art because, due to artification, giving extraordinary meanings to everyday life is available to each human being and is the result of their inherent competence, which makes it domesticated and egalitarian.

Therefore, art and its genesis are considered an intrinsic and psychobiological ability to artify, i.e., to use proto-aesthetic visual, vocal, or kinesics behaviours and features that first appeared in other adaptive circumstances. In a thoughtful, social and sometimes formalised way, it manifests respect for the essential concerns of human life (Dissanayake, 2001). The occurrence of change is an important moment for the symbolically understood aestheticisation of everyday life. The process of change is dynamic and constantly involves new objects and practices. Modification often adopts the dimension of extracting some component of an object or objects in space and displacing production from its initial context, which seems to be a prerequisite for artification (Shapiro & Heinich, 2012). However, this is only possible if we make a decision about this context and the modifications we want to apply.

Moreover, artification considers that the values of artworks are sometimes recognised in the act of social reception and are attributed to objects that are not perceived as art in the institutional circuit (Shapiro, 2019). Therefore, recognising

the value of artification in social exposure is crucial as opposed to arbitrary determination by experts. In addition, Dissanayake also indicates that art often adopts the form of ritual, becoming an element that strengthens the community of people united around such activities. Therefore, artification has also a role in building social relationships (Dissanayake, 2001, p. 257).

To summarise, everything can be a source of artification – each simple, everyday activity can be situated in art (Shiner, 2012) as a creative process. This human behaviour turns ordinary things (objects, activities, spaces) into works of art through searching for artefacts and symbols in everyday life, extracting and displacing an object from its original context, giving it a different role/character (an unusual meaning), symbolic actions (in a non-direct way) and activating symbol-based metaphorical thinking.

The Boundary Situation – The Application of Artification

The boundary situation, understood as “the turning point” (Portuondo, 2016, p. 51), is one of the basic concepts of Karl Jaspers’ philosophy (Grieder, 2014, pp. 331, 334). It characterises situations in which a person feels unconditionality, opens the boundaries of self-awareness and tries to understand their finitude. Jasper suggests that boundary situations involve a variety of experiences, including engaging in a struggle, contact with death, hazard, or guilt. Such situations are dominated by feelings of fear, guilt and anxiety, which somehow “shake up” human existence. These experiences shed some light on limitations, require more original knowledge and are formative primarily for the individual and, as a result, also for the society.

Paleo-archaeological research shows that social artification behaviours occurred, especially in situations of uncertainty and even hazard (Luty, 2021, p. 107), including initiation, birth, or death, bringing a reduction in tension in the face of danger, which convinced us to reach for this form of creation in hospice activities.

The Concept of Sessions Dedicated to Artification

Preparation of the workshops based on artification should include a complete understanding of the concept of artification by the person conducting such workshops. Artification is a specific, naturalistic approach to art, identified with the spontaneous, inherent psychobiological tendency of the entire human species and, therefore, each human

being. In addition, it is the propensity to make objects in the environment unique, to give them the meaning of aesthetic expression, and this ability is adaptive (Dissanayake, 2001), allowing for a sense of agency, cooperation and, importantly, affiliation.

However, artification is not about focusing on an aesthetic product in the traditional understanding but more about seeking expression in everyday life for one's aesthetic sense, which appears in the encounter with the world and other people. We will not focus on the task of "painting something beautiful," as this would imply the necessity of being skilled in art, but it would also open a discussion on the essence of beauty and the meaning of this category in art as such. Rather, we focus on reflection and characterising ordinary things with one's intervention, which gives them uniqueness. In addition, we are interested in finding one's view of the emotions that occur or illustrating the artification process.

Each meeting had a specific structure. It began with the preparation of the session. It required a thorough understanding of the target group in terms of the needs and the potential of each participant and the search for self-inspiration – clarification of the aesthetic problem, taking its existing approaches in art and the possibility of penetrating the issues in the activities of personal artification as a starting point. This search should be finalized with the preparation of a demonstration set (multimedia presentation), including the exemplification of the issues in relation to the examples obtained from the fine arts, being the work of artification done by professionals.

The organisation of the space of artification is initiated by inviting participants to undertake the observation and indicating to them the possibility of reaching out for visual, auditory and olfactory perceptions, physical sensations based on the "here and now", i.e., at a particular moment, with reference to "here", the space in which the activities take place, the objects, the colours and the surrounding light. An invitation to experiment with the existing reality, such as light-shadow, mark, space composition, view, or smells, is also crucial. Great emphasis is placed on action, i.e., experiencing the surroundings, extracting objects that can be considered components that are subject to further activities of artification, giving their own meanings as a result of change/modification of their purpose, function, or through their aestheticisation. It should be added that this is an essential moment of the activities because it provides the stimuli to undertake artification and makes the participants focus on themselves, their feelings and associations with the various elements of the perceived space.

Observation in action is followed by a presentation (e.g., in the multimedia form), i.e., referring to popular and well-known works, perhaps directly treating the topic we want to show the participants, presenting unconventional and non-obvious actions in a given topic, stimulating creative thinking and critical reflection on what is observed

in the presentation, encouraging discussion and one's evaluation of the presented works. The act of artification completes the meeting and is a suggested workshop activity by making artwork and experimenting with plants, objects in the environment, light, and the mark based on the inventions and beliefs of the participants.

Research Methodology

The study aimed to investigate the functional specificity of the participants in therapy sessions based on artification activities provided to terminally ill patients at the Cordis hospice in Katowice, Poland. A case study was applied as the research method. Attention was paid to Stanisław, who was a retired coal miner staying at the hospice due to a progressive cancer disease. He participated in all artification sessions.

Research Sample

The sessions on artification included a series of (previously described) meetings, during which the participants were encouraged to engage in activities characterised by the search for aesthetic elements in everyday life. The creation was organised in such a way as to be accompanied by a message close to Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), which involves focusing on the individual's experience, even a very difficult one, and creating an opportunity to experience it attentively and acceptingly as well as to act with commitment. It is important because a tendency to avoid unpleasant thoughts, feelings, or sensations is generally observed, focusing on avoiding, eliminating, or suppressing unwanted private experiences rather than coping with them (Gordon & Borushok, 2017). As a result, this leads to a life lived passively, out of touch with one's values and the inability to realise them.

Therefore, we sought to explore the reactivity of the residents in the situation of artification of the environment and creative aesthetic explorations within the provided materials and workshop tools.

Instruments and Procedures

To focus on coping with difficult experiences resulting from being under hospice care, we reached for the idea of psychological flexibility (Hayes et al., 2013). Its

primal component is a person's ability to make their own independent choice to act following their own needs (including goals and values), not conditioned by the emotions or attitudes accompanying them. Therefore, experiencing discomfort due to a medical condition, lowered mood, or anxiety with the existence of flexibility will not generate the disappearance of patient's activities, resignation/withdrawal from satisfying needs (Hayes & Strosahl, 2004), making contacts because flexibility makes them continue to perform activities that are important to them despite complaints (Luoma et al., 2017).

Psychological flexibility is determined by the six processes that shape it: acceptance, cognitive defusion, flexible present-focused attention, self as context, values and committed action (Hayes et al., 2013). The whole forms a model known as Hexaflex, which became an essential determinant of our exploration and was also a perspective for creating artification sessions.

Openness to thoughts, feelings, or sensations and approaching them with interest and curiosity are shaped by developing acceptance and defusion. That, in turn, allows a person to act freely according to their values and beliefs (Strosahl et al., 2012; Westrup, 2014). Attention leads to a conscious focus on how a person responds to their own experiences, which results in the ability to adapt to different situations and the readiness to engage in everyday life (Luoma et al., 2007).

The description was qualitative and was made according to the card for the analysis of the process of artification during group sessions, which includes the behaviour and verbalisations of each participant through observation. Due to their usage, it is possible to describe individual cases. The card includes categories taken from the Hexaflex model, which specifies the essence of psychological flexibility and the categories adapted for observation of the activity of the participants in an art therapy session.

Research Results.

Description of the Qualitative Data – The Case of Stanisław

The study conducted at the hospice included observations of three meetings, during which artification-based sessions were performed. All data were collected using the detailed observation sheets, which simultaneously formed part of the interpretation. The blue indicated the reference to the behaviours of the case, the red showed the occurrence of artification, and the black provided the introduction to the range of activities during the session.

Card for the analysis of the process of artification during group sessions

Enhanced Haksaflex element	Clarification of the task	Patient Reactivity	
		Patient Reactivity Session I Spring/Seed/Habitat	Patient Reactivity Session II Light, self-sufficiency, the session in the garden and the building setting
Adaptation of emotions/ Being with your own emotions	Non-verbal localisation of the feelings in relation to the features of aestheticisation (e.g., colour, brightness, shape generated by shadows, an illuminated object)	The reference to the spirit of spring – waking up to life. The beginning returns cyclically every year and brings joy and warmth. Stanislaw vividly commented on what was observed in the spring garden. Spring improves one's mood and a person wants to live.	Stanislaw said: "light and heat are inseparable – they have always been connected. Plants can live under artificial light and humans need sun. Light is life." The participants were to make a mark on the tablecloth [We create a garden and answer the question: together or separately. Do we like joining or being alone? We are based on symbiosis – this drawing was created from marks; we will continue it later]. Showing the violet he took to today's workshops, Stanislaw said: "I have already fallen in love with something else." Stanislaw returned to the earlier presentation: "The painting made by Abakanowicz reminds me of figures from other times, without heads, some figures gathered for a different purpose" [He was probably thinking of the Army of the Emperor of China]. "I have a feeling it is copied. Something bothers me about it." All the same – with or without a head."
Defusion/artification of one's thoughts (ideas)	Decoding the metaphor/ discovering the meaning for oneself/ considering the opinions	Indicating that everything around us can be a work of art if we create it. INDICATION OF THE POTENTIAL OF ARTIFICATION.	Everyone talked about their marks and commented on them. There were many self-references. This task touched the participants. Stanislaw said: "You can write 'I was here.'" This task was clearly marked by artification.

Enhanced Haksaflex element	Clarification of the task	Patient Reactivity Session I Spring/Seed/Habitat	Patient Reactivity Session II Light, self-sufficiency, the session in the garden and the building setting	Patient Reactivity Session III Together or separately
Defusion/inter-subjectivity of one's thoughts (ideas)	of other participants	Stanislaw looked at all the collected items. He immediately chose his notebook, which he had with him during the multimedia presentation. Other people just looked at them. He also commented on the multimedia presentation. While watching the slides, Stanislaw said that "we are part of Nature." Capturing the fundamental essence of the metaphor of the workshops.	<p><i>the light gives airiness; this is a breath and spaciousness. Today, I see the sun – I stuck my leg out [from under the duvet] and it is cold... My leg was cold.</i></p> <p>Stanislaw's statements indicated the ability to separate the thoughts from their referents and give them a symbolic meaning. Stanislaw commented on Christ's actions: "It is known that this river is not a cardboard box, but the island is."</p>	<p>While discussing together the work of the participants and the drawing related to the war taking place in Ukraine</p> <p>Stanislaw said: "Colour does not match the war."</p> <p>Stanislaw's statements indicated the ability to separate thoughts from their referents and give them a symbolic meaning in a similar way that the popular defusion exercises encourage, e.g., what colour does hope have?</p> <p>"And now this question mark, will this third time be the same? I wish it were and I would like it to be blue. That is all I have to say because it will not be rosy here. But it was!" (Another participant) – It used to be rosy ones.</p> <p>Stanislaw symbolically recognised (artified) a flower with some paper stuck with a stick and named the flower and treated it as a ship:</p> <p>"Sail the seas and oceans" (with visible satisfaction and a smile on his face).</p>
Attention/focus on the "here and now"/how I am feeling right now	Receptive activity/focus of attention on the product viewed. Revealing one's	Planting plants and seedlings. Stanislaw embellished the action with "male" comments, it was clear that he was interested in making some	During the presentation of the productions by Eliasson, the artist creating sculptures and installations that were unusual for sculpture, items, such as light, water and air temperature were analysed.	<p>The participants went through a sheet of paper and left a mark.</p> <p>The participants went through a piece of paper with great concentration. Stanislaw carefully covered his slippers with coal dust and left his footprints and</p>

Enhanced Haksaflex element	Clarification of the task	Patient Reactivity Session I Spring/Seed/Habitat	Patient Reactivity Session II Light, self-sufficiency, the session in the garden and the building setting	Patient Reactivity Session III Together or separately
Self-observation/ distancing oneself from rigid self-image realisation	Looking at the products that were made – evaluating them. Finding oneself in them, the record of one’s own story and other people’s stories.	<p>impression on the opposite sex. It could also be seen that he talked most fully about himself at that time, as if there was no disease. He was “here and now” in action.</p> <p>Everyone planted seeds and protected them with foil so that they could sprout faster.</p>	<p>The works of Nam June Paik, in which Nature is intertwined with technology, were also analysed. Stanislaw said: “<i>I prefer paintings from Nature rather than putting things on. The painting is supposed to be the painting.</i>” His statements also indicated attention and observation between the meetings. “<i>Today, I see the sun – I stuck my leg out [from under the duvet] and it is cold... My leg was cold.</i>” “<i>Light, warmth ... airiness – wind, movement, air, breath ... a little bit of this, a little bit of that.</i>”</p>	<p>handprints (he bent down and touched the paper).</p> <p>Paying attention to the surroundings and the weather, he said: “<i>How to include these flowers, the weather and love?</i>” (<i>watching rain and the weather outside the window</i>).</p>
Self-observa- tion/ distancing oneself from rigid self-im- age realisation	Looking at the products that were made – evaluating them. Finding oneself in them, the record of one’s own story and other people’s stories.	<p>Stanislaw was very upset because he wanted to do something different. He drew his work on paper (copying what was visualised in the cardboard box).</p> <p>“It is a drawing in perspective, as a flashlight shines, and a shadow as a shadow remains. There is a box, and you can feel the depth.”</p> <p>It was also the evidence of artifica- tion and aestheticisation of the</p>	<p>Referring with distance and humour to his artistic abilities, Stanislaw said: “And this filth is something like water, paints, and filth ... And now I have such a talent for painting filth.”</p> <p>He made his handprint and surrounded it with the shape of the heart. He made a hierarchical framing and embraced himself with affection and importance from the perspective.</p>	<p>Referring with distance and humour to his artistic abilities, Stanislaw said: “And this filth is something like water, paints, and filth ... And now I have such a talent for painting filth.”</p> <p>He made his handprint and surrounded it with the shape of the heart. He made a hierarchical framing and embraced himself with affection and importance from the perspective.</p>

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Self-observation/ distancing oneself from rigid self-image realisation	Finding the context of the completed task and referring it to one's understanding of the world.	<p>object according to one's concept.</p> <p>Finally, he was the only one who made holes in the box so that his plant could have light.</p> <p>Asked to comment on the workshops, he said: "It is hard because imagination has to work."</p>	<p>object according to one's concept.</p> <p>When Stanisław was praised during his activities in the garden, he said something that was the evidence of his thoughts not only about himself but also about a certain order related to the functioning of the hospice: "<i>People have to be praised very quickly here because they pass away.</i>"</p>	Stanisław discovered value in art-based activities: <i>"Now, I am trying to escape the shackles of the cruel death and return to the bosom of art. If someone promises me that I will be young, strong and healthy again as I used to be, maybe I will still start studying at the Academy of Fine Arts."</i> Learning, gaining knowledge and participating in workshops with commitment were important to Stanisław. In summary, Stanisław said: " <i>Now, there are half of the people compared to the first day. For me, the beginning was chaotic. I did not know what awaited me. If I had known, I would have learnt a smattering of the stuff [probably he meant preparing on the subject of art].</i> " In the end, he wrote on the sheet "I love Nature."
Clarification of values	Questions about the crucial principles of action for now and later (what I can leave behind)	Stanisław discovered value in art-based activities: <i>"Now, I am trying to escape the shackles of the cruel death and return to the bosom of art. If someone promises me that I will be young, strong and healthy again as I used to be, maybe I will still start studying at the Academy of Fine Arts."</i> Learning, gaining knowledge and participating in workshops with commitment were important to Stanisław. In summary, Stanisław said: " <i>Now, there are half of the people compared to the first day. For me, the beginning was chaotic. I did not know what awaited me. If I had known, I would have learnt a smattering of the stuff [probably he meant preparing on the subject of art].</i> " In the end, he wrote on the sheet "I love Nature."	Stanisław discovered value in art-based activities: <i>"Now, I am trying to escape the shackles of the cruel death and return to the bosom of art. If someone promises me that I will be young, strong and healthy again as I used to be, maybe I will still start studying at the Academy of Fine Arts."</i> Learning, gaining knowledge and participating in workshops with commitment were important to Stanisław. In summary, Stanisław said: " <i>Now, there are half of the people compared to the first day. For me, the beginning was chaotic. I did not know what awaited me. If I had known, I would have learnt a smattering of the stuff [probably he meant preparing on the subject of art].</i> " In the end, he wrote on the sheet "I love Nature."	Stanisław discovered value in art-based activities: <i>"Now, I am trying to escape the shackles of the cruel death and return to the bosom of art. If someone promises me that I will be young, strong and healthy again as I used to be, maybe I will still start studying at the Academy of Fine Arts."</i> Learning, gaining knowledge and participating in workshops with commitment were important to Stanisław. In summary, Stanisław said: " <i>Now, there are half of the people compared to the first day. For me, the beginning was chaotic. I did not know what awaited me. If I had known, I would have learnt a smattering of the stuff [probably he meant preparing on the subject of art].</i> " In the end, he wrote on the sheet "I love Nature."

Enhanced Haksaflex element	Clarification of the task	Patient Reactivity Session I Spring/Seed/Habitat	Patient Reactivity Session II Light, self-sufficiency, the session in the garden and the building setting	Patient Reactivity Session III Together or separately
Committed action	Getting closer in a creative activity to realising intentions with others in mind.			<p>Today, Stanislaw walked on foot using a walker, on which he also placed a flower (a violet). He said that it had been brought to him by his daughter, <i>“who was getting rid of a few things.”</i></p> <p>The decision to share his flower with others and to bring it to the workshops was part of Artification, which in this resident included the behaviour throughout his stay in the hospice, not only during the workshops.</p> <p>When he saw the first slide of the previously prepared presentation, he noted: <i>“Abakanowicz will be today ... I went to school with her.”</i></p>

Note: The comments made by Stanislaw were translated literally, and hence some grammatical inconsistencies.

Discussion

The analysis of the detailed observation sheets showed that the study participant performed the act of articulation many times. It was evident not only by his behaviour or workshop activities (experimenting with light, leaving a mark, bringing his plant, planning an art activity) but particularly in many narratives accompanying the aesthetic activity. The verbalisation stressed the participant's interpretation and search for the artification of everyday life. The participant vigorously discussed the issues and participated in the analysis of works presented in multimedia. He also defended his concept, referred to the current mood, focused on the "here and now" and showed the world of values that he found relevant. During the next workshops, he came "prepared". He brought his items (box, pencil, notebook), wanted to be active and was willing to deepen the subject matter as much as possible. His presence during the third workshop was particularly symptomatic because it was the first time, he had not used a wheelchair. Instead, he had used a walker on which he placed his potted plant. Furthermore, despite difficulties in mobility, he wanted to leave not only a footprint but also a handprint as if in spite of the limitations of his body. One could see the commitment, concentration on the issue and presentation of his perception/interpretation of the world and giving it aesthetic qualities according to his creative conception.

Of the observed aspects of psychological flexibility, the process of valuing and committed action was most evident in the actions of Stanisław. From the first meeting, it was clear that the proposal of workshops satisfied his need to realise himself, to go beyond his limitations and to transgress. Because the workshops were related to these values of Stanisław, he was able to engage extraordinarily. That was reflected in punctuality, listening to the instructors' proposals and presentations, and reactivity (asking questions, asking about the ideas behind the tasks and the future of the works). According to the theory of flexibility, which assumes that values (and the action involved in them) give meaning to experiencing even the most difficult sensations, we observed that Stanisław was able to accept difficult emotions and feelings when faced with activities that he found valuable. Despite physical pain, he was engaged in performing activities and manual work that caused him difficulty. Stanisław found it easy to enter the process of defusion. In other words, he distanced himself from his thoughts and beliefs that occurred in constantly repeated patterns. He took pleasure in symbolisation, playing with words and form, and did so readily during the mentioned verbalisations and narrations. They were also related to distancing oneself from the formed and maintained vision of oneself. In his case, it was also evident in his jokes about

himself. At the same time, he surrounded himself with care, which was visible in the symbolic drawing of the shape of the heart around his handprint.

Artification allowed Stanisław to see more things better. It created an opportunity to ask questions such as: “How do I see myself?”, “What was and is important to me?”, “What do I feel at a given moment?”. Statements and reflections were often difficult, as they stemmed from the awareness of the boundaries of his existence. However, expressing oneself non-verbally became an additional stimulus for attention and contact with one’s emotions. Increased tolerance to uncertainty or danger was also evident. Acceptance and staying with the current sensations brought the chance to experience a sense of meaning and agency, which was crucial to the patient’s well-being.

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