ART AND AESTHETIC LAWS FROM A CONSONANTIST PERSPECTIVE. CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS IN CONNECTION WITH THE PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME

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Abstract

While attempting to approach the aesthetic laws starting from the psychological laws, this article focuses on consonance, which is the fundamental concept of Odobleja's theory, whereas the reversible inductive-deductive approach emphasizes consonance in art. At the same time, child psychology highlights specific psychopathological elements using exemplifications and direct applicability. Drawing and colour represent the clinical indicators for this purpose. It is a guiding initiative in assessment, psychodiagnosis and medical psychological intervention, but especially in knowing and understanding human beings through art. The description of the context and the interaction, are achieved through multiple interdisciplinary connections, by reference to Odobleja's laws, in a psychodynamic way which allows us to acquire knowledge regarding the individual's needs for the soul.

Keywords: *art*, *aesthetic laws*, *children's drawing*, *consonance*, *parental alienation*.

1. PART I

Preliminaries

At the international congress entitled "80 years from the appearance of consonantist psychology" I gave a speech on this topic, presenting some opinions about the novelty aspects of art and its aesthetic laws from a consonantist perspective. At present, it is known that the general consonantist laws apply to many fields, including psychology and medicine, the feed-back being present. In the first part we stated some of these ideas, attempting to order and highlight them and in the second part we tried to argument their usefulness, referring to the image of the children in the parental alienation syndrome. Our argumentation started from Stefan Odobleja's consonantist laws, who achieved a system which presents the undisputable contingencies with art, including not only the fine arts, but also the art to create, the heuristics, logical and pedagogical arts. In his vision, when chaos, confusion and lack of balance appear, we no longer speak about beauty, but about ugliness, mental health is no longer in question, but illness. Beauty represents the cause of beauty, the determinant of the aesthetic emotion, it gives us aesthetic pleasure and we find it divided into physical or mental beauty, general, universal or special, individual.

Art represents a need for beauty and beautiful, order and balance, coherence and harmony, being defined as an aesthetic emotion, a pleasure or a complementary exercise. It is an indicator of optimal mental functioning, it somehow satisfies the natural tendency of mental self-conservation, in Odobleja's vision. Aesthetic laws govern fine arts, and the author of consonantist psychology intuits the mechanisms for satisfying the human needs and he allows us to understand that art is situated at the top of the human motivational pyramid. At the same time, art represents the effect of the aesthetic activity and its virtual cause. It represents the product or the expression of beauty, meaning that expressed beauty may represent a product that people like, arts is a means of communicating emotion (ODOBLEJA, 1982).

We may add that art is also a language, a nonverbal dialogue and, in the case of children, it represents their fundamental message for the adult world. It is an expression of human personality and of self-image, regardless of age. The dialogue with art and also art as an expression of the human soul, the visible or invisible forms and forces are represented by complex relationships of interdependence. Through art the individual manages to understand his own being and art always enriches the knowledge of the individual. In a non-ethical plan, it represents a fundamental spiritual need, which manifests under different forms, in an ideal manner in consonance and full resonance, in truth and authenticity, as an intrinsic value.

Processuality and consonantist dynamics in art

Art represents the product and the expression of the individual, of the society that generated him, and it influences them, the manifestation of reversibility is seen as a corollary of consonance. Therefore, a brutal aesthetic emotion can be unpleasant in relationship to another emotion which appears in a progressive contact, the more progressive it is, the higher the intensity that it reaches, according to the law of progressivity. Speaking about the gold section, the aesthetic qualities of the 3:5 and 3:8 ratios, one can state that they refer to the proportions of the human body, these rations being attributed to resemblance and they could be applied in a vertical sense, the individual being seen as the measure of all things.

Although specific references are missing, without speaking about the line and point, there are references to form, surface, colour and possible metamorphosis. The expressivity of the elements of plastic language is reduced, vague. However, the author offers a number of dichotomic bipolar varieties of art division: receptive and reactive art, sensorial and representative art, cognitive and affective art, spatial and temporal art, imitation and tendency art, militant, spontaneous, local, general, particular and universal art, simple and complex art, superior and inferior art, moral and immoral art, primitive and derived art, ideal and minor art, pure and mixed art, extrospective and introspective art. Arts were also divided according to the material used, but from an affective point of view there are, according to his vision, the art of joy and sorrow, the art of pleasure and pain, the art of love and hate, the art of force and weakness, exciting and calming art, the art of the small and of the great. As a way of reception there are tactile arts (erotic art, dance), visual arts (drawing, picture, sculpture, decorative arts), auditive arts (music), olfactive arts (the art of perfumes) and gustatory arts (culinary arts, gastronomy). From the point of view of their expression there are phonetic arts (of the word), manual arts (of the gesture), physical arts (of dance, sports, game) and many others included in those presented above.

Stefan Odobleja offers aesthetics a series of critics, defining it as being obscure and mystical, at the same time, transcendental, confuse and ambiguous. He states that it is, at the same time, pedant and presumptuous, dogmatic and absolutist, exclusivist and unilateral, superficial and dilettante, subjective and impressionist, descriptive and particularistic, verbal and prolix, brutal and detailed. Therefore, we are tempted to believe that it somehow does have an unwanted trajectory, reaching the praise of the malefic in and through art, in the artistic creations which are close to the proximity of an apocalyptic, conflictual world, meaning with agreement, in relational dissonance and without social resonance. Nevertheless, he claims that aesthetics is one of the most exact and mathematical deductive sciences, it obeys some specific laws and that it is easy to express its psychological derivation. All aesthetic species as psychological species present dichotomic divisions and are defined through their resemblance.

Therefore, beauty can be divided and it obeys the law of consonance, meaning synthesis, harmony, agreement, homogeneity, unity, therefore referring to health. It is certain that ugliness refers to dissonance, disagreement, conflict, heterogeneousness, multiplicity, meaning disease, weakness and that is why it abhors.

Talking about the exuberance of the vegetal life, about flowers and the beauties of nature, Stefan Odobleja claims that they exalt in the human being the pleasure to live, awakening in us deep human feelings of goodness, freshness and welfare. He highlights the idea that the beauty of nature does not only exercise sympathy, but all our feelings: pride, the propriety instinct, humiliation, admiration, reverence, imitation, ambition, friendship, pity, melancholy and sexuality, the latter being connected with sincerity, loyalty, dignity, calm, trust, vitality and warmth. As an aesthetic emotion, beauty is directly connected with mental energy, training and aesthetic culture and, at the same time, with the mental concentration on the aesthetic

emotion, with the contrast towards the previous stage, with the found or triggered consonances (ODOBLEJA,1982).

The work that he refers to somehow invites the reader to reanalyse things on his own, the presentation being descriptive, scholar, with a kind of speculative verve, at times even sensitive. In the field of art, the construction is ingenious and it does not lack the instructive-applicative functions and we can try to understand and interpret these ideas in connection with their author. Beauty is somehow directly proportional with the mind of the human being, with the accumulated information and this is why the big existing qualitative differences become easy to understand, both in their artistic expression and in the financial investments, from a work of art with high aesthetic refinement to the vile, cheap, grotesque and totally anaesthetic kitsch. Here is where the variety and the relativity of the consonance stems from, as a personal response to an intrinsic or extrinsic aesthetic impulse.

The laws of aesthetics in Odobleja's view

From a consonantist perspective, the laws of aesthetics are easy to deduce mainly from the laws of psychology and also from the universal laws.

According to the author, the law of relativity can represent an aspect of the law of consonance, since any pleasure is relative and it depends on a number of factors. Through consonance, beauty is not seen as universal or eternal, but relative. Therefore, today's beauty can represent tomorrow's ugliness and disgust, for the same person. It is also emphasized the idea that beauty is contextual, whereas the subjectivity and relativity of beauty is due to the consonance. However, we cannot feel the beauty and its effect if we do not understand it and we do not live in harmony with it.

The law of balance, a law in which aesthetic emotion represents a luxury activity, states the need for some progressive stimulations in terms of intensity and with pauses in relationship to the aesthetic stimulus, the more powerful it is the longer the pause, as a psycho-hygiene exercise, because excesses often lead to the feeling of emotional tiredness, satiety, decrepitude and lack of power. The law of compensation indicates the fact that in order to enjoy an aesthetic pleasure with maximum intensity one has to focus exclusively in this direction and unity, simplicity, homogeneity increase the aesthetic effect of the work of art. Aesthetic activity can represent a compensation, neutralisation, a normalising cathartic activity.

The law of reaction shows that everything which goes into contradiction with it is anaesthetic, referring to everything that we possess in excess and that we are disgusted about. For every individual, for every aesthetic exercise there is a maximum amount, beyond which the agreeable aesthetic effect is followed by an unagreeable, anaesthetic effect, a sort of aesthetic toxicity.

The law of contrast highlights the fact that beauty is more beautiful after the ugliness, as well as ugliness is uglier after the beauty, a situation in which *the law of variation* is being imposed, as a way of reacting against the ordinary, the stereotype, the monotone, the boring and the tiring.

The law of reversibility refers to the fact that beauty produces beauty and that beauty produces beauty, the game of creation produces a work of art which produces the aesthetic emotion of the beauty. At the same time, health and physical and mental balance produce beauty and the other way around.

The law of training indicates the fact that through permanent repetition aesthetic pleasures can become passions. Aestheticism can represent a professional need for the others, a harmful hypertrophy. Aesthetic consumption represents the object of normative aesthetics. According to Ştefan Odobleja, there is no unique criterion, but only multiple points of view in order to choose and indicate the best aesthetic exercise. In this choice there are also non-aesthetic considerations: temporal, for the future (pedagogical, training) and spatial, extensive (morale and social). The ideal would be to satisfy them, in order for art to become a tool in the service of life, it must not act against its natural purpose. Art for art does not have to lead to independence and supremacy, the author adds that it must also not lead to arrogance and desuetude.

The law of alternance explains the aesthetic phenomenon as an opportune variation, a useful functional change, the rhythm being an essential element. The alternance of the variation represents the condition for any aesthetic pleasure, either spontaneous or triggered, alternating aesthetic opposing couples are being detailed and we remember a few for exemplification: force-weakness; simple-complex; love-hate; respect-disrespect (ODOBLEJA, 1982).

2. PART II

Applicability in the clinical psychology of the child from a consonantist perspective

We noticed during the 20 years of clinical psychological practice and during the clinical psychological judicial expertise that these polarities can be highlighted either as a predetermined psychogenic substratum of the disease, or as a direct somatisation of the feelings through conversion, sometimes as a psychic expression of an authentic existential context or as a plastic and psychic projection in drawing and colour. Both aesthetic and psychological arguments present high validity in Stefan Odobleja's work, although his medical training prevails, the connection between beauty and the psycho-physiological dimensions of the affective life remain certain. Even if, at times, the author seems to highlight the subjective nature of beauty, somehow ignoring the objective one, his analogies are not at all forced. Both beauty and ugliness trigger emotions of certain intensity and they can lead to physiological, mental or somatic changes, more or less noticeable in a particular existential context, in a certain person.

In his view, the contact with beauty has a powerful impact on the mental and bodily level, until the creator or the receptor of artistic values feels some profound changes in the somatic plan, the psychotherapeutic background of art. However, things do not reduce only to therapy, but there is a need to satisfy certain superior level needs, the spiritual needs being at the top of Maslow's pyramid. We therefore understand that the need for beauty cannot enter fiction if the other basic needs are not fulfilled and this is the only way in which one can reach aesthetic satisfaction.

Stefan Odobleja refers to other human needs as a source of pleasure, satisfying the need for beauty is no longer seen as something mysterious or supranatural. At the same time, aesthetics defines it as a hygiene of the spirit, a science of balance and of mental balance and not only as an affective linguistics, a branch of psychotherapy. In this way, there is a specific dynamic and a permanent independence between aesthetics and therapy, one inspires the other in almost every detail, having superimposed laws and rules, and they borrow from each other. The applicability in medical psychology of the influence of the psyche on the somato-physical creates rules of intervention both in psychological counselling and in psychotherapy, as well as in therapeutic interventions. It means that we have to fortify our affective feelings in order to strengthen and give back a state of health to a particular individual. The laws of psychotherapy are identical to the laws of current therapy, which in their turn are identical to the universal laws and they represent some trivial truths (ODOBLEJA, 1982).

In the same order of ideas, from an existentialist perspective, one could say that the non-ethical needs include the aesthetic needs, representing the needs of meaning and of becoming, and they reach the highest fundamental and motivational level, being conditioned on the basis of satisfying the need to be, to like and to have value. Therefore, there is a basal level of consonance, which is achieved through self-acceptance and acceptance for the others and it refers to interhuman relationship, valorisation and positive feed-back of the self-image. Management, the answer to self-becoming, reflects the resonance phenomenon, expressed in the choice of the social values, of a purpose, and all together define an existential meaning, in pathology the purpose is often confused with the meaning of life.

How does this syndrome reflect itself in the consonantist perspective through the above-mentioned laws?! How do they reveal to us through art or even drawing and colour?! What would be the meaning of those seen so that we avoid serios mistakes, fulfilled prophecies and not to become stuck in our own ideas and attached to them, just because they belong to us!? In the field of clinical psychology, in assessment and psychodiagnosis we took into account only the cognitive development and the affective balance expressed through drawing and colour, which trigger the relationships and social adaptation capacities, ignoring the aesthetic qualities. Only a few specialists came up with studies regarding pathoplastic art and some psychological theories were misinterpreted, often being pathologizing, evading the creative capacity of the individual through art. There is a series of clinical indicators in children using drawings and colour and one could notice the dichotomic aesthetic expression of love and hate in divorce situations and in the syndrome of parental alienation.

Odobleja's aesthetic antiposes in parental alienation

As tempting as it is to extrapolate these ideas, we stop at the couple of alternate aesthetic antiposes love-hate, clinically highlighted in the syndrome of parental alienation or in the sexual abuse of the underage, as well as in other situation in which their trust was broken. Psychiatrist Richard Garner introduced, in 1987, in the field of psychological expertise the term "Parental Alienation Syndrome" (GARDNER, 2005) and he reached the conclusion that this syndrome does not only deprive the child of a relationship with the target parent, but it also triggers the long term psychiatric turmoil of the child. Through drawing and colour, children can express what they feel and think, they can communicate to adults everything that cannot be expressed through words, they make their world accessible, a world in which good and evil are often confused. The unimaginable becomes imaginable, both for them and for us.

It seems quite paradoxical the fact that these parents are usually aware of the poor psychological health of the youngsters, of the harm caused, when they are in a major conflict. The development of the above-mentioned aesthetic antiposes, from simple to complex, from respect to disrespect, from love to have, is often achieved rapidly and psycho-traumatising. In this regard, it is necessary to define what is psychologically understood through trauma: any kind of shocking situation with deep negative resonances on an emotional level that the child may experiment at home or in other circumstances and the reactive states represent pictures of mental suffering following a high intensity trauma of certain lengths. There is research in the field which shows that the death of a parent triggers less long-term development problems for the child than if he loses a parent because of a divorce. We can therefore say that not the absence of a parent, but especially the circumstances which triggered this absence are responsible for the reactions of the child (PIVNICERU & LUCA, 2016).

Therefore, marital conflict is considered one of the most pathogenic influence when it comes to the psychological development of children. Family relationships alter gradually and they usually devalue each other, basically there is no longer any agreement or acceptance. The meaning of family unity fades away and it is replaced by inadequate, selfish or individualist purposes. There is no longer any common interest in the interest of the other, neither consonance, nor resonance. Unfortunately, there are situation in which we could talk about a series of repeated high intensity traumas, extremely painful and pathologizing.

Expression of the consonantist aesthetic laws in children

The graphic representation manner and the psychosomatic manifestations in the above-described situations are to be included in these consonantist laws.

The law of reaction is reconfirmed both psychodynamic and on an aesthetic plan in the clinical cases existing pathoplastic works, some even with elements of psychotic intensity. One can graphically observe the presence of posttraumatic stress elements, which, together with the progressive alienation attitude, certify the fact that in the life history of those children there were elements with a psycho-traumatic content. We can talk about the complete absence of a parent in the drawing, of some parts of the body, thickening and erasures, atypical embodiments, distances and other particular details of the elementary symbols representing clues of psychopathology.

The law of balance presents exactly the lack of balance produced when children try to make an adaptation effort. This prolonged war between parents, this major marital conflict, represents a threat to their integrity from a mental, psychological and physiological point of view and they often perceive a sort of temporal deformation, a dilation over time, which seems never to end. This law imposes a psycho-hygiene, the excesses leading to lack of power, satiety and fatigue and many times children encounter difficulties in the graphic representation, present a cognitive regress, feel helpless and do not complete what they set out to draw or uniform and they colour the entire page, most often in black or brown.

The law of progressivity indicates the fact that precisely because of the development of the intensity and the chronicling of the conflict, of the violent states associated with this conflict and the time lengths children are exposed to, including because of the repeated confrontations with the judicial organs, their physical and mental health is in danger. Some children develop graphical messages such as S.O.S. or write above the characters the imperative "help!", but usually they erase or redefine a fur cap or a turban over the initial writing, with an increased anxiety and, in some cases, with an extreme unrest, of psychotic intensity.

The laws of alternance and progressivity analyse the progressive development of parental alienation, the ambivalent alternance between the feelings of love and hate. This is highlighted in the direct somatisations of the feelings, on a corporal or mental plan, and this leads to the need for therapy through art, this therapy being efficient in reducing language, conduct or emotional disturbances and it can prevent school dropout.

The law of relativity can be understood throughout this endeavour of parental alienation when, though drawing and colour, children express existential, relational and emotional realities. However, love, exactly like beauty, is neither absolute nor eternal and we notice that it can transform according to the consonantist principles into hatred. We can encounter the completely furious reactions of the drawings, either by tearing up the paper support or the graphical instruments, or by repeatedly, obsessively-compulsively, drilling the graphic representation of the rejected parent, holding the pencil in his hand as a dagger. The relationships of the children with their parents following their separation or divorce can be conceptualized over a continuum, from positive to negative, and they take place like this: positive relationships with both parents, affinity with one parent, children who team up together, children who become estranged, alienated children. The positive pole is represented by the positive relationship with both parents and the negative pole is represented by the alienated child (PIVNICERU & LUCA, 2016).

The law of reversibility, in the sense of feedback, is observable when health and beauty trigger mental balance and the other way around. Although initially the rejected parent is drawn, he later is presented with the help of multiple shadings, sometimes up to being presented all black. This ambivalence refers to the child's conviction that the estranged parent is completely bad, as well as the capacity to show or receive love. Naturally, ambivalence is not healthy, meaning that is represents a schizoid feeling which joins love and hate, but, in such divorce or major conflict situations, it represents a discrimination criterion between alienation and estrangement. In this case it represents a psychological defence reaction, a confuse resonant answer, to the discordant, dissonantly alternant stimuli. In the background, these psychodynamic interactions are expressed in the art of the children as something completely disagreeable and toxic, sometimes completely void of consonant and therefore of affective resonance and finally, some children end up hating both their parents, or even hating themselves.

When the phenomenon described by Gardner as "free-thinker" appears, the child considers the decision to reject the parent completely belongs to him and that he is not influenced by his favourite parent. Often atypical, bizarre, sometimes paranoid, graphic concepts with the exaggerated size of body parts are outlined, especially of the eyes, mouth and ears, removing the excluded parent from the graphic space through erasing or maybe the excessive detailing or the ornamentation of the favourite parent. We remind that the subjectivity the relativity of the beauty is due to consonance and it is temporal and changing, never eternal. Children's drawings can become more colourful after some time or, on the contrary, more temporal, not so messy or sober in colour, versus fauvist, violent, without any perspective. After the end of the marital war, positive affective energies arise, chromatically balanced and Odobleja's law of contrast makes us understand, as the author himself states, that in art as well as in life beauty is much more beautiful than ugliness and that ugliness is much uglier than beauty.

The law of compensation firstly be graphically expressed through the fact that the rejected parent will never be drawn. The child becomes allied only with the other parent, however an alliance between the parent and the child appears exactly due to an intense marital conflict. The child being uncapable of tolerating the tension caused by the divorce chose to get away from this tension by choosing the alliance with a parent, therefore avoiding to make contact with the other parent. It is necessary to say that children who become estranged present a history of violence, abuse and neglect. The major parental deficiencies are caused by the excessive use of alcohol, drugs, psychiatric disorders or a parental style characterised by anger, rigidity and restrictions. Usually, estrangement precedes alienation, but it is not compulsory to get to alienation, as well as dissonance precedes disease and through psychological intervention, even art-therapy one can improve individual and family endurance, therefore creating a climate of minimum consonance.

The law of compensation and that of the justified reaction justify the fact that estrangement represents a healthy answer on behalf of the child in relationship with the parent who presented inadequate and abusive behaviours. The graphical representation of the personal distances, the attitude, the direct vectors and the design may offer clues in this regard. Everything has a cathartic normalizing effect, some children draw themselves repeatedly, obsessively, together with only one parent who they ally with. Usually, parents with parental deficiencies present an obvious need for psychological intervention. Therapy through art might also refer to the law of training for the parents, meaning to draw alongside their children, even when it comes to common drawings. Moreover, these "artistic exercises", from a consonantist perspective, of permanent rehearsal, can turn into passions for the children. Exactly because of the substitutive channelling of energies and information does the aesthetic activity represent a compensation, a lucid neutralization, normalising activity in search of the consonance, of the answer that could be in accordance and in resonance with their affective needs.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Children naturally feel the need to love both their parents and the feedback is no longer normal or possible when the parents get divorced, not even in the most amiable situations, the principle of family unity being destroyed. The parental alienation syndrome certainly expresses the entire dissonance and lack of resonance in the family, individual or existential dynamics, at a certain moment and there are always both short as well as long-term effects. This constant and progressive misinformation has the clear purpose of alienating the beloved parent, oftentimes in an unreasonable manner by means of lie and manipulation. Tragically this is also achieved through blackmail, threat and terror and it often leads to rejection, visceral anger, devastating feelings and mental or somatic diseases, such as: asthma, allergies, infections etc. Breaking some maternal or paternal ties destroys a vital network of family dynamics. The new disorganised family, lacking order, balance, unity and coherence, progressively drifts. A pathologizing war begins, anti-consonance and anti-resonance, when love turns into hate.

Once again, compensatory or not, male children graphically represent themselves with armours, in straitjackets with swords, guns and grenades. Meaning in the shoes of real vigilantes or as prey beasts, offering details of cruelty, this being a rarely encountered hint and usually pathological. We consider that it is completely inadequate and unprofessional to psychologically analyse a drawing while analysing the child when he draws, especially since the child might erase some essential elements. The way in which he moves and his graphical metamorphosis are relevant for an adequate understanding and for a correct interpretation. Children's drawings capture these purposefully hidden realities, erroneously presented by the alienating adults. No matter how ordinary they seem, they manage to capture their dissonant feelings, the disagreements and this existential family disaster that can tear them down completely.

We once again stress the fact that, in Stefan Odobleja's work, art represents a specific human need, an imperious need for physical and mental well-being, order and coherence, balance, beauty, harmony and this is reflected through the creative act in creation, happily in his work. Of course, that we do not have a clear or complete definition of art and this would not even be possible and we did not even discover the formula for the clinical diagnosis through the lawfulness expressed here. However, it is undoubtedly that the systemic consonantist approach helps us understand more profoundly the elements specific to the problems exposed. Both to those psychodynamic in relationship with the creator and the beholder and to those we can identify ourselves with and some limits to our own mental capabilities, of perception and reception, information stocking and interpreting, of plastic expression. In this way, maybe we could manage to better present the meanings, the subtle

motivations, the personal or family history of the children through their drawings. We could also interfere in their superior interest, if it were the case. The study of art represents an indispensable part of the study of man (ARNHEIM, 2011). In our opinion, this statement is true not only for specialists, but also for all those who are interested in human communication and knowledge. By trying to better understand the individual and the art, maybe we shall more easily discover some of the creative resorts of the human soul, in a particular existential context.

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