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THE PROBLEM OF CREATIVITY: WITH WHAT IMAGES DO YOUNG PEOPLE COME UP?

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the problem of perception of television and media images and the youth creativity. The study conducted by G. Seputis on the applicants of art colleges is reviewed, the study's sample consisted of 80 boys and girls at the age of 18. The aim of the study is to analyse what kind of images emerge creating the storyboard on neutral theme "silence". We analysed popular media content during the years of kids' formation and tried to benchmark obvious ones similarity with film — television images. It is concluded that the neutral theme "silence" leads to the use of negative images in the drawings. The method of comparative analysis of drawings and TV images was used. The article presents correlation between drawings and TV images and clearly confirms the youth's response to the neutral stimulus "silence" with the reproduction of negative media images. It is concluded that it is necessary to create educational programs for adolescents. The article discusses studies of psychologists lead to the conclusion that viewing TV does not always cause a positive effect. The authors emphasize a high degree of negative behavioural problems in Lithuanian youth is made apparent. The influence of information created with the help of media channels on

the development of the creativity in children and adolescents is discussed. The authors invite to use educational methods aimed at developing creativity in youth.

Keywords

Media Image, Communications, Information, TV and Youth, Influence on Consciousness, Creativity, College Applicants Drawings, TV Shows, Ratings, Beauty

1. Introduction

The official statistics is rather worrying. According to the World Health Organisation, suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15-29 year-olds in the world (World Health Organisation, 2017).

A survey of one thousand of 15-29 year olds in Lithuania showed that 40% of them demonstrate suicidal behavior meaning that every third young person in age 15-29 either thought, made plans or tried to commit the suicide within the period of 12 months (“Gąsdinantys skaičiai [Scary Figures]”, 2017).

According to research conducted by Lekečinskaitė & Lesinskienė in 2017 (Lekečinskaitė & Lesinskienė, 2017) a lot of diseases attack patients at a younger age but the most frequent cause of death among adolescents in Lithuania remains voluntary death. In 2010–2015, 197 persons under 20 years old committed suicide in Lithuania. The highest suicide rate was in the 15–19 age group. In the 5–19 age group the suicide ratio in boys was approximately 2.5 higher than in girls but in the 10–14 age group the suicide ratios in both boys and girls were about the same (Lekečinskaitė & Lesinskienė, 2017). Research conducted by six universities revealed, that Lithuanian, Hungarian and Austrian politicians are more prone to see suicide as relation caused than their colleagues from the Nordic countries. This can be interpreted as some kind of simplification of suicide causes and an underestimation of the complexity of the phenomenon, which is rather worrisome in light of high suicide rates in these countries. Simplification of suicide causes may lead to “simple solutions” in prevention, which rarely (if at all) can be successful. (Paulius Skruibis, et.al., 2010)

Psychologists sound the alarm: young people do not demonstrate any negative attitude towards suicide! “Suicide is contagious,” psychologists say, “when TV channels or magazines talk about it to teenagers they only spread the virus.” But today media no longer plays the major role in this process; teenagers themselves spread the information via social networks. Lovely bright hearts, candles, touching farewell notes ... All this spreads via social networks, and the tragedy makes a hero out of an ordinary schoolboy. Not for too long, of

course ... The most important question we ask is “why?” Let's try and find the answer. Where does the suicide virus come from, how does it infect the younger generation? Let's start with communication.

A lot of attention is given to the problem of human communication in the modern world. A prominent American psychologist, Charles Cooley, wrote that communication is here meant the mechanism through which human relations exist and develop all the symbols of mind, together with means of conveying them through space and preserving them in time. (Cooley, 2017). Communication includes facial expressions, attitude, gestures, tone of the voice, words, writing, as well as the latest achievements in the conquest of space and time.

Communication always serves definite purposes. There are several participants who exchange messages in a communication act. It is not always that they are aware of their communication goals, but they always use certain communication channels. Another important point is that participants of communication exist in a context, which also has a certain effect on the sender and the receiver of the message. So, the suicide virus is spread via media or the Internet infects us, whether we like it or not! Information shapes both the context and the participants of communication.

An individual exists in the information space; we are surrounded and saturated with a huge amount of information. It is becoming fundamental to the well-being of each of us. Exchange of information has no spatial or temporal boundaries. We perceive information but do not always develop full awareness of what we perceive.

How do we receive information? We have the five senses, there is no other way to understand the world if we first do not perceive it through the radar of our senses. We can infinitely enhance our senses with the help of different tools, but we cannot get to know something that is beyond them. The most important channel of information perception is visual. Dr. Pradeep A. K. states that about one-fourth of human brain is involved in visual processing, much more real estate than is devoted to any other sense. About 70 percent of the body's sense receptors are in eyes. (Pradeep, 2010). Information exchange is a global phenomenon that goes beyond usual human communication. When a person receives information, he, first of all, interprets it. Interpretation depends not only on the content, but also on the individual experience of the receivers, their knowledge and general intelligence level. So, it is not only external information that influences the formation of an image, but also the experience of the person who sees and interprets this information! Wheeler K. S. in television viewing behaviour research investigates the relationships between the psychological factors of relationship attachment, depression, loneliness, and psychological

well-being, and the television viewing behaviours of university students, including viewing motives, affinity, and binge-watching habits. The psychological characteristics of attachment anxiety, loneliness, and depression were found to have significant positive relationships to some of the television viewing behaviour variables, including both instrumental and ritualistic motivations and frequency of binge-watching behaviours. (Wheeler, 2015)

2. Previous Studies Review

A significant number of works of modern psychologists is dedicated to research on the influence of television images on a human consciousness. With a common understanding of the negative impact of TV programs on the viewer's psyche these studies are conducted in several areas. For example, the issue of motivation is of particular interest; why does a person want to watch TV (Reiss & Wiltz, 2004) , the problem of TV influence on the human psyche (Robin et al, 2003), the problem of having a TV in children's bedroom (Gentile et al, (2017).

TV viewing is directly or indirectly associated with the neurocognitive development of children. At least some of the observed associations are not beneficial and guardians of children should consider these effects when children view TV for long periods of time. (Takeuchi, 2015)

There is an increasing interest by psychologists in studying the influence of television images on the consciousness of young people. For example, the negative impact of watching TV programs is looked at from the point of view of increasing aggression and feelings of loneliness or feelings of belonging (Frey, Benesch, & Stutzer, 2007; Wartella et al., 2016). Shahid and Sumbul discovered: majority of respondents agreed that quality of content that is viewed through online media effect the child behaviour. Children tend to get aggressive and out of control by viewing violent content. (Shahid & Sumbul, 2017). In the population-based approaches the communications are designed to inform, enable, motivate, and guide people to effect personal and social changes (Bandura, 2009). So, children who constantly witnessed their favorite TV "heroes" incorporate aggressive acts into their own use in conflict situations (Powell III & Roberts, 2014). Impact of television on the consciousness of youth shows that there is a problem in communication of modern human and television, as a human is in a situation of constant hyper-stimulation, information stress and communicative pressure. There are many scientific works by established as well as by young Russian psychologists and sociologists showing the influence of television discourse on visual processing in youth, that manifests itself in attitudes and behavioral stereotypes (Matveeva, Anikeeva & Mochalova, 2004; Chudinova, 2009; Chernih, 2014; Molodtsova & Konstantinova, 2014). The main conclusion drawn by the authors can be defined as negative influence of television

on the psyche and the consciousness of the younger generation. Copying the behavior of TV heroes results in losing the fear of death and increasing the risk of suicides (Davydova & Makarenko, 2017)

In 'media', kitsch unveils the shameful inventory of 'paid news' fostered by the drive for 'sensationalism'. It moreover indicates the upsurge of various TV Shows ('reality' shows such as the Master-chef series/Roadies/Splits-villa) that cater to mass-sentiment, hankering over images of love, terror and horror. Finally, it pinpoints the ceaseless fetish of the masses to emulate the life-style of celeb-gods in "popular cinema" (A. Lewis & S. Lewis, 2018)

The results of numerous studies allow us to conclude, that the full impact of information technology on a human is currently not clear and raises more concerns than optimism about its effects. There are three main types of negative consequences from active consumption of screen violence by teenagers: — decrease in sensitivity to violence on the screen as well as its manifestations in real life; — the notion that violence is a perfectly acceptable means to resolve conflict situations; — distortion of ideas about social reality under the influence of the world view provided by television (Zorin, Kiseleva & Bykasova, 2014).

When conducting a study of the influence of image selection on behaviour of young people, we used the interpretation of image by an Italian psychologist A. Meneghetti. According to A. Meneghetti, "All serious defeats and failures of a scientific process in any sphere of human thought, always and up to now days have been determined by the lack of conscious understanding of an image" (Meneghetti, 2004, p.18).

Image, representing a carrier and the differentiating structure of the energy quantum is a code determining the existence or non-existence of a certain energy mode, it is the alphabet of meaning for energy discourse in the universe and in a concrete human being. The study carried out by us confirms that a human consumes images and becomes what he sees and chooses (Meneghetti, 1997).

3. Study's conclusion

What is an image? The concept of an image is widely manifested in the language we speak: to imagine, to do the worst thing imaginable, to fit into an image, imaginary, the spitting image of somebody, to imagine things, imaginative, image thinking. We live side by side with images. Every day we are assailed by the images surrounding us. The concept of an image is inseparably linked with action, a visible change of something (Meneghetti, 2004). Moreover, an image underlies this action, often remaining invisible. An image can create a reality, for example, a person looking in the mirror starts to smooth his clothes or tidy his

hair. In fact, there is nothing behind the mirror, but the form that the person sees in it changes his behavior, and he starts to act in accord with the information conveyed by the mirror.

Are these images always positive from the recipient's perspective? Of course, not! Let's take the research conducted by Gintaras Seputis as an example. Gintaras says, "It all started with the fact that every summer, 5 years in a row, I was invited to be the chairman of the admissions board selecting future students. And all the five years I had to have a kind of a week's detoxication after those examinations. It worried me because, after I had looked through 10, 300 works, I felt somewhat sick at heart. I asked some psychologists, acquaintances of mine, "Why don't you examine me, why don't you study the case?" Everyone said, "Yes, it's interesting," but no one took up this research. And all this ended up in me conducting it."

At the entrance examinations of 2014 the applicants were given "silence" as the topic of their works. 80 applicants were to write a script on the topic of "silence". This particular topic was chosen because it seemed neutral and rather abstract. Interpreting a topic like this, one can't but be guided by his own judgments, life experience and emotional state. Gintaras looked through 80 works of students born in 1996, i.e. at the moment of research they were 18 years old. These young men and girls were applying to the course, which was directly related to work with an artistic image — photography and the media. The results of the works analysis turned out to be really horrifying.

Silence triggered more negative than positive associations. The following ones may be referred to as negative: death, illusion, keen sorrow, suffering, boring routine, something absurd and incomprehensible, anxiety, violence, misunderstanding, escape. There were far fewer positive associations: meditation, peace, an opportunity to hear yourself, intuition. A neutral, in fact, image of "silence" evoked negative associations in more than 50% of future authors of artistic images. 16% of applicants depicted death, 9% featured bullying and violence, and 4% showed suicide in their scripts. As the applicants themselves said, "Silence comes only after death."



Figure 1: Example of applicant storyboards on theme SILENCE

Where do these scary images come from, how do they get into children's minds? Speaking about contemporary art, many authors promote the idea that negativity in contemporary art is nothing but the author's creativity! So perhaps, this really was the creativity that manifested in children's works? Creativity has become a fashionable topic nowadays! This question Gintaras Seputis asked himself. What he discovered was that there was hardly a trace of creativity in the applicants' works. All the images they drew on came from the reality they lived in. They did not create anything new. Most of the images came from TV shows, the rest stemmed from the wide-spread clichés, some of the teenagers processed other people's ideas. Where is their creativity? We all know that children are creative by nature, don't we?

According to the data that Gintaras Seputis refers to 98% of children under the age of 5 are creative, only 30% are creative at the age of 10, 12% — at the age of 15, and only 2% in adulthood (Land & Jarman, 1993). In 1968, George Land conducted a research study to test the creativity of 1,600 children ranging in ages from three-to-five years old who were enrolled in a Head Start program. This was the same creativity test he devised for NASA to help select innovative engineers and scientists. The assessment worked so well he decided to try it on children. He re-tested the same children at 10 years of age, and again at 15 years of age. The results were astounding:

- Test results amongst 5 year olds: 98%
- Test results amongst 10 year olds: 30%
- Test results amongst 15 year olds: 12%

Same test given to 280,000 adults: 2%. In adulthood, 30000 people were tested. "What we have concluded," wrote Land, "is that non-creative behavior is learned." (Land & Jarman, 1993) Is it only creativity that vanishes with age, and why is it so important?

Russian psychologists have traced a connection between the creativity of children at a young age and high intelligence in adolescence. It turned out that the level of intelligence in the older age depends on the level of creativity in the younger age. But it doesn't work contrariwise — creativity at the older age does not depend on the intellect in the younger. It means that to learn solving standard problems one needs to make creative efforts, first. Without them a child will not be able to develop high intellect in future. As it comes out clearly, it is very important to develop creativity in children! Unfortunately, even among artists and people working with artistic images there are still very few really creative people.

Where does the creativity of a modern man come from? The great creators of the Renaissance, for example, sought inspiration in the images of nature, a human, and the

golden section. What images inspire modern youth? The images conveyed by television and social networks.

Social networks are full of images, which are posted and reposted. Images are created and described by the users. Modern studies of social networks offer techniques for creating the image of “a successful person,” “a good friend,” “a romantic person”. Social networks are not just means of communication; they also offer ways to earn money and even to lose weight. Everyone chooses his own. We are all users of social networks, so different in age, status and place of residence. What do we have in common? Our view of the world is built on common associations and images existing in social networks. According to Russian researchers there are “viral images” characterised by some specific features. R. Dawkins calls them memes (Dawkins, 1976).

Russian author analyses, how to work effectively with them, because memes today live around us. We express memes, quote them, send them to each other in social networks (Shomova, 2018).

These images travel through social networks and the media infecting the users who are not very particular about the content quality.

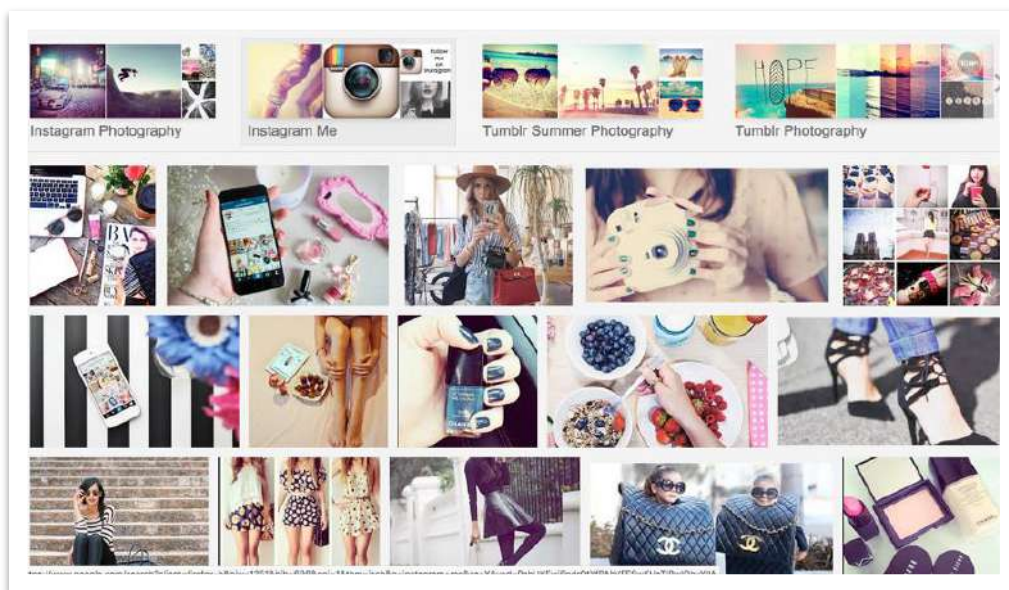


Figure 2: *Examples from social media*

Modern Instagram, for example, is often seen as a technological window to the soul. Images have long become icons, there is history, lot of information, a story behind a photograph. And they are likely to affect a lot of generations but mainly young people who are very active users of social networks. DNS data for 2015 says that almost 90% of the

audience from 15 to 19 years old are Internet users. What memes do young people choose? What images are spread via social networks?

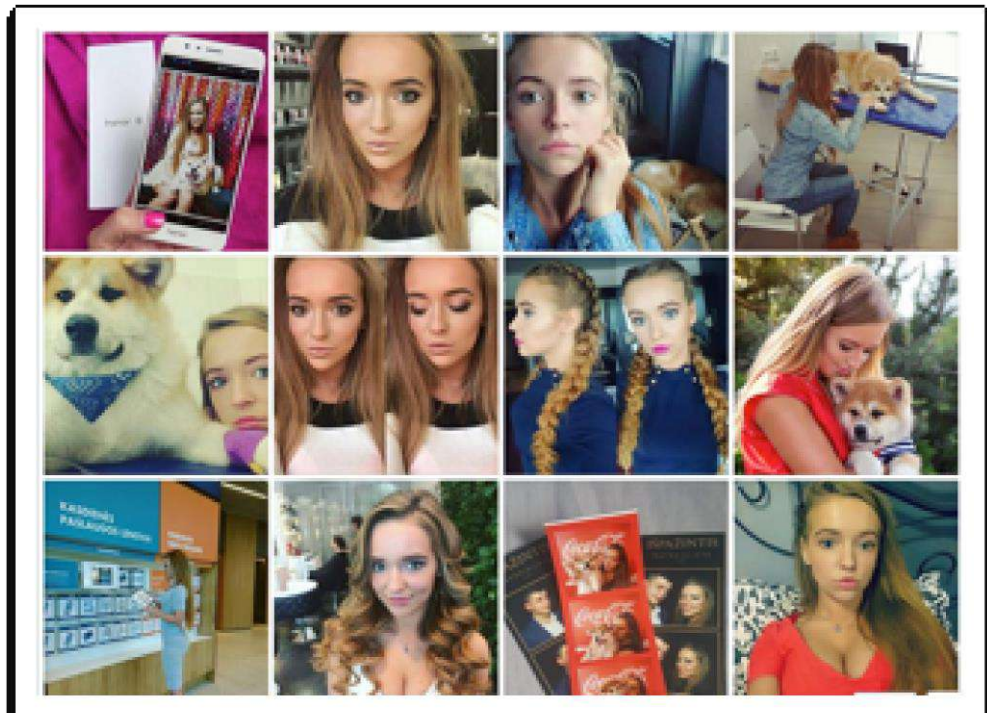


Figure 3: *Instagram photos*

Here is, for example, one of the most popular girls of social networks in Lithuania. Very similar girls are the ideal Facebook, VKontakte and Instagram stars in Russia.

Besides the Internet there is another powerful means of communicating images. It is television. Television and films feed the imagination of people all over the world. Gintaras Seputis told us about the research carried by R. Usiene and J. Tominiene in 2005 (Jusienė & Tominienė, 2005). They interviewed more than a thousand children aged 11 to 14 years trying to find out how many hours a day children watched television. The result was 3,8 hours per day. The children said they watched TV secretly from their parents, who did not always know, which programs their children chose. The study conducted by R. Usiene and R. Siautkulis in 2006 (Usiene & Siautkulis, 2006) shows that children most often watched comedies — 34%, then came horror films — 19%, then animation — 17%, and, finally, action movies — 14%. Gintaras states, “They watch comedies because the easiest thing is to laugh at others, they choose horrors because there is a dark side in each of us, animation is in this top four because things that are impossible in the real world can happen in the world of make-believe, and action movies are popular because if you want to achieve something, you have to go beyond the limits, do the impossible.”

Let's take another example from the research conducted by R. Jusienė and J. Tuominienė in Lithuania in 2005 (Jusienė & Tuominienė, 2005) about watching TV in regard to psychological adjustment of school-aged children.

The films and programs were rated in accordance with the answers of children under the age of 14. All the films mentioned are shown in the table.

Table 1.1 *TV movies rating based on the answers of children up to 14 years of age*

	Name	Channel	Genre
1	Home Alone III	TV3	Movie
2	Home Alone	TV3	Movie
3	Friday Night Movie/ Ice Age	TV3	Animation
4	Home Alone II: Lost in New York	TV3	Movie
5	Friday Night Movie / Problem Child III	TV3	Movie
6	The Way to the Stars. The Golden Final	LNK	Reality Show
7	Charity concert and a fund-raising event “Dreams Come True”	TV3	Music TV Show
8	Friday Night Movie / Back to the Future II	TV3	Movie
9	Friday Night Movie / The Mummy Returns	TV3	Movie
10	Friday Night Movie/Ever After: A Cinderella Story	TV3	Movie



Figure 4: Most popular TV Content in Lithuania 2005 – 2014 (%)

Also, all the respondents mentioned such programs as "Golden Onion", a top-rated comedy TV show, and matches of the Lithuanian national basketball team as very popular. Eurovision broadcasts were also mentioned.

This is very similar to what the applicants showed in their scripts. So, do these films underlie the “creativity” of our children? Do they cause the emergence of the theme of death in the child’s psyche?

Let’s take one of the most famous and popular films "Home Alone". There are some deadly stunts performed in this film and it is full of violence. Gintaras Seputis claims that the film, which can be seen on TV every Christmas, conveys, among other, the message that silence is scary. The connection is more than obvious from his point of view. Children are afraid of silence and this fear is amplified by the frequent showings of the movie.

Gintaras Seputis showed how the ideas from films got into applicants’ scripts using their works as an example. For instance, Eurovision TV show is extremely popular with the entire audience, including the youth. And we can see a character strongly resembling Arnas Lukosius, a Lithuanian showman, in the applicants’ works.

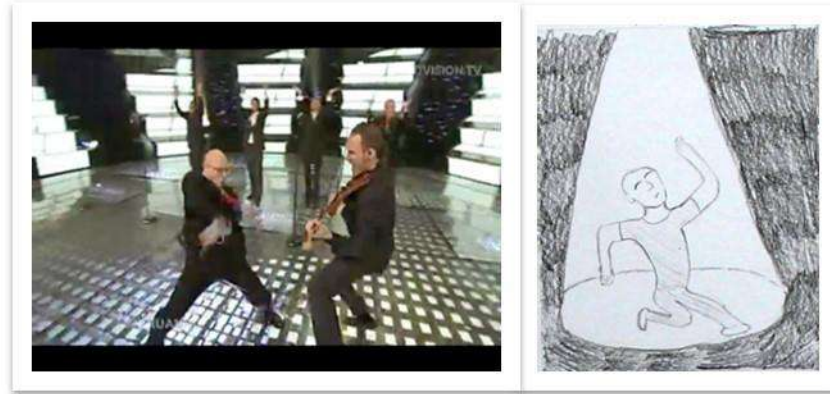


Figure 5: Example of use of Eurovision images

Quite a lot of applicants' works featured girls with wings. Where did this come from? There was a very popular TV show in Lithuania, where the dancers, the show presenters were wearing wings. A photo session was dedicated to the popular "Golden Onion" show. And immediately wings have become top-fashion among young people!



Figure 6: Example of use of "Golden Onion" show images

TV3 Channel named "Six Feet Under" film of the year. In the Figure 7 we can see images of from the film in children's drawings.



Figure 7: Example of use of TV3 images

A script similar to the plot of “Problem Child III” impressed Gintaras most of all. The movie and the main character are very popular with kids. The public service ad of 2014 and correspondingly its script, touching upon the topic of silence, are also very popular.

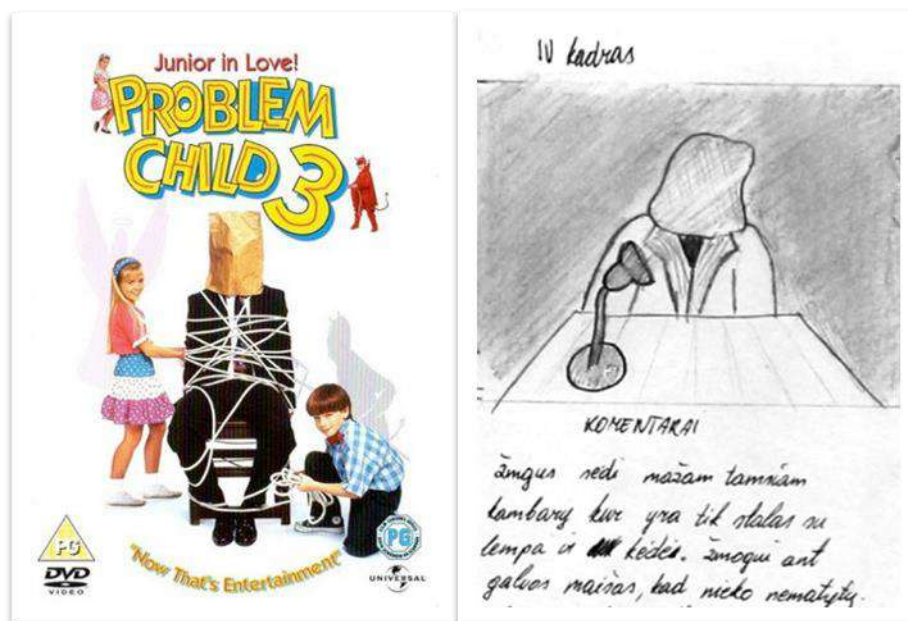


Figure 8: Example of use of “Problem Child III” images

And another fact: 6% of the applicants associated silence with the "mystical silence box." They believe that there exists some mystical silence box, the image that emerged in a number of works. A screaming wife annoys her husband and he digs out the silence box, etc.

Here are some more examples of how movies influence the scripts written by teenagers.



Figure 9: *Example of use of TV images in drawings*

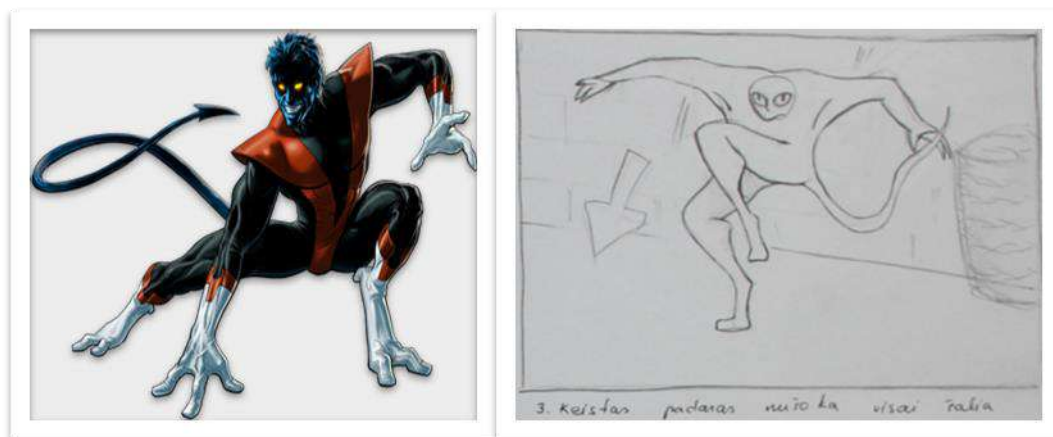


Figure 10: *Example of use of TV images in drawings*

And here is another familiar character! It is obvious, no explanation needed! No wonder suicide rates are growing every year not only in Lithuania, but also in Russia, as these characters are international.

Another example is social advertisement of 2014, which was very popular in Lithuania. Some of the applicants came up with a script employing a similar approach to the topic of silence.

For instance, a girl thinks about all the troubles of the world contrasting them to her own problems. There is also reference to the events of January, 13 in this script.



Figure 11: Example of use of images from social advertising



Figure 12: Example of use of images from social advertising

What is happening to our youth? Hadeel Al-Alosi in his paper seeks to challenge the view that young people are simply passive recipients of sexual messages in the media by highlighting the role that young people play as producers of media content, in particular through the production of fan fiction (Al-Alosi, 2016). It also highlights that while it may be indeed important to “think of the children” by protecting them from harmful content, young people may themselves be authors of what might be deemed “age-inappropriate” materials. (Al-Alosi, 2016). These are the people who will create the visual culture of the future. G. Seputis notes that the better a person draws, the more clichés and stamps he takes from the Internet and television and the more creative the drawings are, the worse the technique is. “Unfortunately, they are the creators of the images of our future,” says Gintaras!

4. Conclusion

A question comes up naturally — what can be done about it? The problem is turning into a disaster. Should we start working with the family, where the kids are brought up? But we can't assign a consulting psychologist to every family, of course. Or should we provide school teachers with special training? It is not easy, however, to make the naïve teachers believe that all this is happening right here and right now. "Everything is fine, it's not about us, it has nothing to do with us," is what they say. What makes them so naïve and idealistic?

We think that it is necessary to start with the education system. Considerable preliminary work is needed to educate a person. The biggest mystery of life is the human and, like it or not, the human inherently strives for perfection. How do we help our children regain the desire for perfection? We've got to speak with them about existential things — about life, death, loneliness, and meaning. These questions cannot "dissolve". We need a program that will work in educational institutions.

What can this program be like?

"Beauty will save the world," said the character of F.M. Dostoevsky's novel (Dostoevsky, 1874). He set a riddle, which the posterity has been trying to solve ever since. What did he mean by "beauty"? Who should beauty save the world from? "Awareness of Beauty will save the world," (Roerich, 2007, p. 880) explained, in just one single word opening to us all the complexities and joyous discoveries of the inexpressibly long and painful path of the evolution of consciousness. Trying to be authentic, true and creative, continued A. Meneghetti, it is important to distinguish between beauty and ugliness, in order not to let inside yourself something that contradicts the higher order of life. Beauty is integrity; it is the order of harmony. Beauty is the absence of error (Meneghetti, 1997).

The most comprehensible and efficient dialogue should be about art. We need to talk about it with young people. Psychologists claim that daily impact of art accumulates in the human psyche (unconsciously as well); it creates an emotional tone and can lead to qualitative changes in the general mood, attitude, values and even people's behavior. It is necessary to teach children to see and understand beauty. The easiest way to do this is through art, because it can teach without being edifying. It is common knowledge that teenagers can't stand moralising, they want to figure everything out on their own. They care about love, friendship and our task is to show these in art through beauty. We need teachers who are competent to do it. Time and effort should be spent to train such teachers, professional psychologists and art historians should be involved in developing the training

course. It is necessary to give the creative youth a chance to get together and create. It would be great if the source of young people's Creativity wasn't the Internet or television, but nature, as it was the case with the geniuses of the Renaissance. Classes set in beautiful places of the city, in the open air might be a way to understand what "genius loci" is, and how it can stimulate intuition and creativity. Aesthetics, as well as sensory perception of beauty, cannot rely on experience. One perceives everything anew every time and every time the effect is different. Therefore beauty is an internal criterion for creating an image. It all depends on the person. Inner order and health based on a person's mental activity allow for the ability of creating an image in its high understanding.

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