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THE CATEGORY OF "PERCEPTION" IN THE PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY OF A SOCIAL WORKER (AESTHETIC ASPECT)

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Abstract. The professional activity of a social worker is multifaceted, in which the aesthetic aspect has a special place. The key reason is that it aims to reveal the personality with special needs, the beauty of human existence, its inexhaustible possibilities of cognition and self-knowledge, development, and self-improvement. It is especially important for a social worker to help such a person perceive this world adequately, sometimes even overcome the tragedy of their existence, live a full spiritual and social life, and realize their inner potential. Of course, all this requires the proper formation of moral and aesthetic, psychological and pedagogical, and general culture from the social worker. Instead, today the contradiction between man and his culture is becoming more and more obvious. There appeared even the expression "civilization without culture", which testifies to a significant decrease in the importance of the aesthetic in almost all spheres of human life, its gradual descent from the arena of strong social activity and moving to the periphery of public life, the loss of considerable civic attention to it. It is enough to say that the subject "Pedagogical Aesthetics" has not been taught for years in the system of humanitarian education, which includes its fundamental branch - social work. In our deep conviction, this hurts the consciousness of both social workers and their patients, especially in the aspect of aesthetic perception of reality.

Keywords: professional activity, social worker, aesthetic consciousness, perception, aesthetic comprehension, adequate perception, creative perception.

1. INTRODUCTION

An important structural element of the aesthetic consciousness of a social worker is aesthetic perception. Let us reveal its functional essence. Different sciences characterize the concept of "perception" in different ways. The science of psychology proves that perception is a category that reflects in the human mind-objects, and phenomena as integral sensory images with their direct impact on the senses (Sukhomlynsky, 1977, p. 185). Perception includes the awareness of things, which is based on the involvement of each time new impressions in the system of existing knowledge. The basis of perception is the unity of various properties of the object, which acts as a complex stimulus. Perception depends not only on the information of the senses but also on the mood, expectations, life experience of a person, etc. In contrast to sensations, which reflect only individual properties and qualities of objects, perception is always holistic and substantive, it combines sensations coming from several analyzers.

Analyzing various sources, we can trace that some authors distinguish the properties of perception: immediacy, the orderliness of structure, significance, selectivity, and stability (A. Jagiello); others - formulate the laws of perception: objectivity, integrity, structurality, constancy, and meaningfulness (S. Maksymenko); a significant number of psychologists distinguish the peculiarities of perception or limit themselves to the study of mistakes, illusions, distortions in the process of studying this crucial problem. Instead, the role and place of intuition, subconscious and unconscious in the process of perception are still insufficiently studied (Abramov et al., 1989, p. 127). That is why it becomes not completely clear why some people perceive beauty, while others do not. Why do some people feel tragic, while others are apathetic to human grief? Based on the subject of our analysis, let us focus on the essence and content of the concept of "aesthetic perception".

In the dictionary, "Aesthetics" the category of "aesthetic perception" is formulated in the following meaning: it is "a type of aesthetic activity, expressed in the purposeful perception of works of art as aesthetic values, accompanied by experience". And further, it is noted that "the specificity of perception of the phenomena of reality, the aesthetic value that the subject has to discover himself, is more accurately conveyed by the concept of "aesthetic contemplation" (Vasianovych, 2022, p. 49). In our opinion, if we can agree with the first part of this statement, the second part is dubious; at least because the passive aspect of perception (contemplation) dominates here, in fact, in the aesthetic perception of reality there is not only a passive but also an active component. Rather, we can say that aesthetic perception is always a complex mental and spiritual process of the subject's activity, comprehension, and evaluation of both works of art and real phenomena of nature, society, etc. It should be noted that aesthetic perception can be adequate and inadequate, which depends primarily on the general level of culture, artistic education of the subject of perception, and so on. This evokes the association of the previously witnessed dialogue in the Lviv Art Gallery. Two 10th-grade students were looking at the painting "The Lady with an Ermine". Suddenly one asks the other: "Why did she hang that rat on herself"? The other replies: "Heaven knows..." Feeling the awkwardness of the situation, I approach the students, apologize and explain that the girl is not wearing a rat, but an ermine (it is even written on the picture), which symbolizes chastity, and spiritual purity of the girl. After all, an ermine would rather die than get dirty... The girls got blushed at this explanation, but actually, it is not their fault. The fault is found in the system of art education, which still does not give proper knowledge to children in the field of art. The inadequacy of perception is frequently felt not only in the field of different types of art but also in the field of social work.

2. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

As the researcher of the outlined problem, Professor Rudnytska (2005) rightly wrote: "The adequacy of perception reveals the multi-phase, stage formation of the subjective image (percept), its consistent approach to the object of perception, from the general relatively undifferentiated, to a fuller, structured and holistic reflection in the perceiver's mind. Such development of the perception process, which is typical for different branches of cognitive activity, reveals the specifics of comprehension of the artistic phenomenon, the possibility of achieving full adequacy of artistic perception, and even the expediency of using this criterion about art is somewhat debatable, given the subjective-associative nature of artistic creativity..."

In any work, there is an orientation to a certain type of perception, a hypothetical assumption, and a kind of "programming" of the desired effect... It is this functional relationship between the processes of creation and perception that ensures the existence of art as a form of social consciousness and an effective means of aesthetic education" (Trofimov et al., 2003, p. 103).

On the other hand, it is important to take into account that aesthetic perception can be invariable and variable. This means that the content and form of a particular work of art or a particular phenomenon (especially social, or spiritual) can be so complicated and varied that objectively they can be perceived and evaluated by the personality of a social worker and his/her clients in different ways. Moreover, it is necessary to consider not only physiological capabilities (blindness, deafness, etc.) but also the emotional and psychological state of the subject of perception (illness, depression, etc.). Scientists have proven that the same phenomenon, even the same person can perceive the same work of art differently. Therefore, we should keep in view objective and subjective factors of aesthetic perception and their evaluation.

Aesthetic perceptions can be complete and incomplete, deep and superficial, fast (dynamic) and slow, monosensory and polysensory, stereotypical and non-stereotypical, etc.

2.1. Complete and incomplete aesthetic perception

The completeness of aesthetic perception at the neurophysiological level depends on the development and ability of our analyzers (visual, auditory, temperature, sensations of pain, etc.). The more perfectly they have developed the more potential opportunities a person has for perception, and vice versa: a person with poorly developed analyzers is not fully capable of proper perception of the world. This is especially noticeable in children with special needs. Nowadays, scientists studying the neurophysiological mechanisms of perception confirm the assumption of some similarity between the processes of receiving and processing information by humans and modern computer systems, which makes it possible to use the most rational schemes of modeling perception processes than it was until recently.

Perception modeling is based on the principle of systematic information processing by a human and a computer in the case of the perception of familiar objects – the so-called object recognition. The stages of information processing that coincide include the processes of its registration, allocation of properties of objects due to the work of specialized channels or detectors, comparison of the stimulus with the information that was received earlier and stored in long-term memory, decision-making - the choice of the most appropriate code from many updated codes. Modeling of perception processes is of great practical importance, as it helps to solve the problem of rapid input of information using commands or written text, which greatly expands the possibilities of using computer technology. At the same time, it should be kept in mind that a human being exists, acts, and perceives the world not only at the neurophysiological level but also at the spiritual and mental one. The completeness of his feelings and aesthetic perception depends on what kind of spirit, soul, and heart a person has. H. Skovoroda considered the human heart "the living center of his life, the head of everything in a person", "the root of life and the abode of fire and love" (Vasianovych, 2022, pp. 179-180).

Developing this idea, the Ukrainian philosopher Yurkevych (1990) wrote a special treatise with the eloquent title *"The Heart and Its Significance in the Spiritual Life of Man according to the Teachings of the Word of God"* (pp. 69-103). In this work, the author argued that the human heart is not only the center of the body but also the mental and spiritual life of a person. The fullness of the heart determines the fullness of the aesthetic perception of the world: Kindness, Beauty, Truth: "... the determination for certain actions is born in the heart, ... it is the place of will and desires, ... the heart is the center of diverse emotional feelings, excitement, and passions, ... the heart contains all the joys and sorrows of the world" (Yurkevich, 1990, pp. 69-71).

The hearts of all humanist educators were filled with the fullness of aesthetic perception: J. Comenius, M. Montaigne, E. Rotterdam, J. Pestalozzi, K. Ushynsky, S. Rusova, B. Grinchenko, I. Zyazyun, V. Sukhomlynsky, S. Goncharenko, M. Yarmachenko, O. Rudnytska, and many others. A classic example of incompleteness of aesthetic perception is found in the story of V.

Sukhomlynsky. In the article "The Teacher and the Children" V. Sukhomlynsky with sadness tells: a mathematics teacher, who has worked at school for thirty-five years, is being sent off to a well-deserved rest. Even though the mathematician was not very much liked at school for his lack of real cordiality, and kindness, teachers, and students said warm words to him, and presented him with gifts. He was so deeply touched that he could not respond to the kind, sincere wishes, and when the school principal said: "We know, dear friend, how difficult it is to part with what is dear and native..." – the old mathematician cried. Everyone thought: we were wrong to think that he was a "cracker" ... he loves school... And the old teacher bowed his head in thought, as if forgetting that there were thirty of his colleagues in front of him, and said the words that caused deep surprise in everyone. "My dear friends, I do not want to carry in my heart what has been oppressing me for several years. Recently, my mind has comprehended everything that my heart could not feel for three decades. I have never liked children... it was hard for me to enter the classroom, but I overcame the desire to write an application and move to some other job. I know mathematics very well, but students did not like my subject because they did not like me. Only now, working for the last year, I realized that children are the wisest philosophers and the most sensitive psychologists. They felt that I was entering the classroom as if into ice water. Thirty-five years I worked at school... thirty-five years at the teacher's desk... the desk – I now understood – was the fortress from behind the walls of which I attacked the students. But they forced me to defend myself, and I was always under siege. There was a blank wall between us... It hurts to talk about it, it hurts to think about it. But let it become a lesson for the young" (Sukhomlynsky, 1977, pp. 195-196). This belated revelation of the teacher clearly shows that the perception of the children he taught was incomplete, superficial, and therefore inadequate. It brought neither joy to the students nor the teacher.

It should be emphasized that the completeness and adequacy of a social worker's aesthetic perception are constantly changing, acquiring new outlines. This largely depends on their needs, interests, requests, motivation, and lifestyle. Of course, the manifestation of the aesthetic perception of a social worker depends on his professional activity.

2.2. Deep and surface aesthetic perceptions

Spiritual comprehension of the world, cognition, and enjoyment of art, and understanding of the state of mind of a subject with special needs requires a personal social worker to reach the depth of the essence of what is perceived by him, and this, in turn, requires a great strain of mind, feelings, will. The power of the "dominant mind", according to a genius I. Franko, allows a person to look into the most secret corners of the external and internal being. This is especially important when it comes to the processes of self-knowledge of a person with special needs. After all, such individuals often tend to delve into their inner experiences, into themselves. This is where it is revealed how they perceive themselves: dramatize or not dramatize their condition, behave adequately or inadequately, what beauty they see in themselves –internal or external, etc. Let us illustrate this idea with the following real-life examples.

Famous representative of Ukrainian art – Maria Bashkirtseva, who was born in Poltava, and lived only 24 years (1860-1884). She practically did not study at school. But realizing the need for knowledge, she made a program and began to study on her own (9 hours a day!). The girl learned French, German, Italian, English, Greek, and Latin languages without any help. She read in the original language Homer, Plato, Horace, Plutarch, Dante, Shakespeare, Balzac, Flaubert, and others. Having a beautiful voice by nature, she wanted to be a singer. At first, everything was all right. But at the age of 16, Maria got sick with tuberculosis. The disease progressed, and two years later the girl completely lost her voice. Soon the disease also deprived her of hearing. Strong-willed young Bashkirtseva thought about her future. At the age of 17, she came to study in the studio of

the famous French artist – Julian, where she showed an extraordinary ability to draw. Maria realized that her life was too short. Not only did she not despair, but she worked all day long, never leaving the studio. The result of such tremendous work soon made itself felt: the young artist painted several beautiful paintings that were presented at many exhibitions. So, having big health problems, Maria Bashkirtseva perceived herself as an active, creative person.

No less convincing confirmation of the idea of the adequacy of self-perception, in our opinion, is the life of Polina Gorenstein (Lina Poe). The talented dancer and sculptor was born in Dnipro (1899-1948). At the age of 19 Polina became a professional ballet dancer. From 1924 to 1934 Polina Mikhailovna danced, taught, and worked as a choreographer in various theaters. She visited different countries of the world, and successfully performed with her choreographic programs. The trouble came unexpectedly: in 1934 Polina fell ill with encephalitis. She became blind and paralyzed. Later, when she began to move, she began to work as a sculptor. In 1937, her works began to appear at the All-Union Exhibition of Cultural Studies in the Museum of Arts. During the Second World War, the sculptor worked on military themes. She prepared and presented more than 120 sculptural works, which were shown at many art exhibitions. A courageous personality – Lina Poe never complained about her fate, did not perceive herself as a disabled person, but tried to realize her spiritual and mental potential to the maximum and thereby testify to the beauty of her inner world.

The professional activity of a social worker does not allow a superficial attitude not only to himself/herself but also to his patients. This is key to the fact that they will love him, trust him, and open their sincere hearts. Folk wisdom in this regard is simple and clear: "Trusting a person, you end up with one of two things: either a person for life or a lesson for life".

Let us pay attention to this aspect of the problem. Until recently, it was not common to talk about the role of religion, faith in aesthetic perception, and self-perception of a person, as it was dictated by the ideological canons of society. This does not mean that it did not exist at all. A certain part of people, even behind closed doors, remained believers, no matter what. Meanwhile, today the situation is quite different, it allows the educator not to push children away from the church, but to bring them closer to the temple of God, to the beautiful and sublime. Scientists (M. Yevtukh, V. Zhukovsky, V. Onishchenko, O. Romanovsky, M. Savchyn, P. Saukh, G. Shevchenko, etc.) stand on the clear position that the spiritual potential of a person, and his worldview depends on the person's faith.

2.3. Fast (dynamic) and slow aesthetic perceptions

The dynamics of life largely determine the dynamics of aesthetic perception by the personality of a social worker of his patients. This has a greater impact on the quantitative characteristics of what "captures" his consciousness. Reformation challenges often bring unnecessary nonsense into the activities and relationships in social groups, they are formalized, sometimes losing the possibility of their normal comprehension and awareness. But the worst thing is that national achievements are lost behind the avalanche of various "innovations" that are blindly copied from the education systems and social work of other countries. Normal, habitual perception gets lost, while our traditional, life-tested perception is unjustifiably rejected by the leaders of education and science, and social services. Therefore, in our opinion, the expression is appropriate here: "Hurry slowly", or "Haste makes waste"... Therefore, the problem of slow aesthetic perception arises by itself. This does not mean that it is necessary to consciously slow down educational and social progress, no. The point is that any reform should be well thought out, financially provided, and verified from the managerial point of view. Under such conditions, qualitative indicators of social, pedagogical, and aesthetic perception will prevail.

Aesthetic perceptions are also distinguished by the following criteria: language, music; space and spatial relations between objects; time flow of movement of objects, living beings, human body; human perception by a person, etc. In addition, there are stereotypical and non-stereotypical aesthetic perceptions.

Stereotypical aesthetic perception is similar to the use of clichés and phrases established once and for all, approaches to certain phenomena, works of art, and their evaluation. For example, in Soviet times, there was a stereotype of classism, party art, and the principle of socialist realism. According to this approach, even a work of genius, if it does not meet certain criteria, is perceived and evaluated as alien to socialist art and categorically condemned. It could not be distributed in textbooks, manuals, etc. Instead, if it was a low-grade work, but sustained in the spirit of classism, and party, it was widely advertised and popularized.

The effect of stereotypical aesthetic perception is too dangerous, it forms a person's predetermined aesthetic tastes, ideals, and attitudes, which are replicated by the ideologists of a certain system in incredible numbers. Those who did not accept these attitudes were subjected to fierce criticism, and often to physical destruction. That is why such terrible, to put it mildly, unprofessional resolutions of the Central Committee of the CPSU (b) "On the magazines "Zorya" and "Leningrad" of August 14, 1946; "On the repertoire of drama theaters and measures to improve it" of August 26, 1946; "On the film "Big Life" of September 4, 1946, and others became possible. In these resolutions, a verdict was practically passed on to wonderful artists and their highly artistic works (M. Zoshchenko, A. Akhmatova, B. Pasternak, O. Shtein, O. Gladkov, L. Lukov, and others). For example, A. Akhmatova's works were qualified as "low worship" before everything Western"; M. Zoshchenko's works were interpreted as "evil hooliganism", "libel on the beautiful Soviet life", etc. (Pestalozzi, 1981). O. Dovzhenko will not be spared: his film "Ukraine on Fire" will be condemned by the Stalinists. V. Sosyura will be persecuted for his famous poem "Love Ukraine" and on July 2, 1951, it will be banned, branded as "bourgeois nationalism"... Similar facts can be cited many times when insignificant "judges" condemned beautiful works of art.

The stereotypical aesthetic perception of a social worker now remains dangerous. Why? The fact is that a social worker with stereotypical thinking lives more in the past than in the future, for him/her the patient does not have a unique personality, he/she perceives him/her as something "average", therefore, he/she becomes more like an "archivist" than a real specialist in the field of social work. To this is added another (negative). A social worker with a stereotypical aesthetic perception prefers the familiar, traditional, rather than the new; schematic and abstract, rather than real; priority is given not to what makes sense, but to what does not make sense, which is trivial, routine (papers, reports become more important than the patient); the ordinary is inferior to the unusual. Finally, the expected upbringing and education of a person with special needs become more important than the unexpected.

In addition, it should be taken into account that in the case of perception of an unfamiliar, concrete, unexpected, without a name and meaning action, social phenomenon, the social worker is doomed to distort the essence and content of this phenomenon, to give it a certain form to make it similar to a more familiar, abstract, organized. After all, a person tends to perceive events as examples of certain categories, not caring about their uniqueness and originality. In support of this, Japanese scientist S. Hayakawa gives an interesting, in our opinion, the example from the field of painting and pedagogical practice. He writes that an art teacher used to tell his students that they would not be able to draw a particular hand because they think of it as a hand; referring to a hand, they think they know what this hand should look like. Here is another, no less interesting example, but with a specific student – the genius Thomas Edison. Once Thomas's mother received a letter from the school administration. The boy asked his mother to read it. Mom read it and wisely, motherly told her son that it says: your son is a brilliant child, and therefore he cannot study with us, he needs a private teacher who will teach him everything he needs. Years passed, his mother

passed away, and already an adult, famous for numerous discoveries and inventions Edison (he registered more than a thousand of them!) was sorting through the papers and suddenly found the letter that his mother read to him as a child. Thomas's surprise knew no bounds! The letter said that he was not capable of learning, and therefore could not study in the institution where he studied... Tears of gratitude to his mother for believing in his giftedness rolled down Thomas's face. Instead, we contemplate here two opposite approaches of perception, one of them became not only professionally distorted, but also anti-aesthetic (there are more than enough examples – A. Einstein, A. Chekhov, L. Tolstoy...), the other – adequate and real.

A. Maslow from many examples of stereotypical perception singled out the following:

1. Familiar and habitual is more priority to the unfamiliar.
2. Schematics and abstracts are more priority to the real.
3. Organized, structured, and unambiguous a priority to chaotic, and disorganized as having a double meaning.
4. The existing name and the one it can get are more priority than the unnamed one.
5. What has meaning is more priority than what has no meaning.
6. The ordinary is more priority than the unusual.
7. Expected is more priority than unexpected.

A. Maslow further noted that in the case of perception of the unfamiliar, concrete, unexpected, the one that has no name and meaning of the event, we tend to distort it, to give it some form to make it similar to more familiar, abstract, organized. We tend to perceive events as examples of certain categories, not paying attention to their uniqueness and originality (Pestalozzi, 1981a, pp. 259-260).

False, stereotypical perception in the system of "social worker-patient" can have a very negative impact on the relationship between them, even causing rejection of each other, which can lead to fierce conflicts. It is worth remembering those moments in life when we were perceived stereotypically and inadequately, and we feel that we were abused, we were too uncomfortable in such an environment. The same happens with our pupils when they get into such a situation.

Experience has an extremely great influence on the formation of an adequate perception of the personality of a social worker. The genius J. Pestalozzi drew attention to this side of the problem. He wrote: "An excellent means of protecting human development from chaos, incompleteness, and superficiality is based, therefore, mainly on the desire to make for the child, as far as possible, definite, correct and broad first impressions that are received at the first perception of the most important subjects of our knowledge" (Pestalozzi, 1981a, p. 188). Then the pedagogue sublimely said the following: "Everywhere the radiance of truth rises before man. The problem is whether a person can perceive this radiance... The matter is only in the eyes, but people everywhere have them so spoiled and unsuitable for perceiving the light of truth, as the eyes of a mole living underground for perceiving the light of the sun" (Pestalozzi, 1981b, p. 135). So, it is necessary to open the eyes of the child so that he sees and perceives with his eyes and heart not only the light of knowledge but also holistically – himself and others.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the above, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The category of "perception" requires a versatile and at the same time holistic understanding in terms of its theoretical and practical relevance in the professional activity of a social worker.
2. The aesthetic aspect of the problem of perception in the professional activity of a social worker with subjects with special needs should acquire the character of continuity, dynamism, and adequacy. This should take into account the changes that occur not only in the process of the

patient's personality development but also in the whole of society.

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Васянович Григорій, Нагірняк Михайло. Категорія «сприймання» у професійній діяльності соціального працівника (естетичний аспект). *Журнал Прикарпатського університету імені Василя Стефаника*, 10 (1) (2023), 24–32.

Професійна діяльність соціального працівника носить різнобічний характер, у якій естетичний аспект має посідати особливе місце. Це зумовлено тим, що він покликаний розкривати особистості, яка має особливі потреби, красу людського буття, його невичерпні можливості пізнання і самопізнання, розвитку і саморозвитку. Надто важливо, щоби соціальний працівник допоміг такій особистості адекватно сприймати цей світ, а іноді подолати трагедійність свого існування, жити наповненим духовним, суспільним життям, реалізовувати свій внутрішній потенціал. Безумовно, що все це вимагає від соціального працівника належної сформованості морально-естетичної, психолого-

педагогічної, загальної культури. Натомість сьогодні все очевиднішою постає суперечність між людиною та її культурою. З'явився навіть вислів «цивілізація без культури», який засвідчує суттєве зниження значення естетичного практично у всіх сферах життєдіяльності людини, його поступове сходження з арени активної соціальної дії та переміщення на периферію суспільного життя, втрата до нього відчутної громадянської уваги. Достатньо сказати, що предмет «Педагогічна естетика» роками не викладається у системі гуманітарної освіти, до якої належить і її фундаментальний розділ – соціальна робота. На наше глибоке переконання, це негативно впливає на свідомість як соціального працівника, так і його пацієнтів, особливо в аспекті естетичного сприймання дійсності.

Ключові слова: професійна діяльність, соціальний працівник, естетична свідомість, сприймання, естетичне сприймання, адекватне сприймання, творче сприймання.