

SHADOWS IN THE LIGHT

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Kartasidou Lefkothea:

Please, the speakers should turn on the cameras.

Stavrousi Panagiota:

Yes, Mrs. Kartasidou, if you hear me, it is not possible for me to turn on the camera. The system does not allow me.

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

Logically it allows you now.

Stavrousi Panagiota:

Let me start by welcoming all the participants. Good evening to all who participate in today's meeting. I would also like to welcome the participants in the panel, Mrs. Lailoglou and Mr. Konstantinidis. I would like to start by thanking all those involved in organizing this festival, the fourth International Festival "The Reflection of Disability in Art", for one more year. I would especially like to thank Mrs. Kartasidou, Associate Professor at the Department of Educational and Social Policy of the University of Macedonia, for the invitation to participate in the panel discussion, an invitation I gladly accepted.

I would like to address some issues shortly, taking occasion from the films we watched today. Let me say first of all that, both theoretically and in practice, the support of people with disabilities now reflects accession policies. But it is a fact that there are still many obstacles and certainly understanding the challenges faced by people with disabilities, can be considered, in essence, an important

step towards enhancing positive experiences in an inclusive, without exclusions, environment.

It is especially important to design supportive media that focus on utilizing the capabilities and abilities of each individual such as tools and in general ways of support that are based on dimensions such as self-determination and quality of life, so that people with disabilities can learn through their communities, work in their communities and live fully in their communities, ultimately aiming at improving the quality of life of each individual and his satisfaction with life. But all the efforts that are made or will be made are important to be based on the participation and expression of people with disabilities and people in their immediate environment, so that these efforts are based on the preferences of people with disabilities and their interests and to have substantial value for themselves. By focusing on each individual, each person and especially on what they communicate to us and providing opportunities to them to communicate to us, we have much to learn about each person's capabilities and challenges they face and then act as individuals and as a community without exclusions, aiming to an inclusive society.

For my part, I would not like to say anything more because it is important that we all discuss together. I will now give the floor to Mrs. Lailoglou. Mrs. Lailoglou belongs to the special educational staff of the University of Macedonia. Mrs. Lailoglou, we are listening to you.

Lailoglou Alexandra:

Good evening. All the movies, all of them were really amazing and each of them had a moral lesson, a lesson we should have in our lives. All these lessons from all the movies and to walk with them. Because I believe that in this way there will be a perfect, but completely perfect coexistence of all people, whether they have a disability or not. If we observe carefully, in all the movies the main feature is love, love in any form. But really for all, in all, is the love for life, each film, showing it in its own way.

I was shocked by all of them. Where should I start from; From the first one that had a mother's touch and showed emotions? From the next one, which showed how it is to be a man with depression facing his mental illness and how he will be able to return to his daily life? It shocked me. You really felt, you really felt the music and the notes and the colors at the same time. At the point he said

that black is a warm color you could really feel this thing if you closed your eyes. I still have in my mind the form of the spaniola dancing flamenco with the red smoke on the black background. I was shocked with all. We can have a huge discussion about each one of them. For the power, moving on to the next film, for the power of video and computer screens that are the key to our communication with autistic people, for the syndromes that showed the positive side of life? For the person whose mother had died and who wanted help? What can I say; In other words, they are real messages that you receive and make you say that these people offer us things and we must coexist and live in harmony.

Art offers us all this, really, because I believe that art through all that we have seen is a birth. For me, art is birth. Something is born, something creative, something new. And people with disabilities are really creative and they have to show this and we have to help them show it. Because disability as difficult as it is, I believe that in many cases it can be a source of inexhaustible inspiration for creation. So I believe that people with disabilities and people without disabilities should coexist in art, coexist together and co-create. Because the result that comes out then is perfect. Because art really breaks down obstacles and barriers and unites people. It transcends boundaries and also builds bridges between people, cultures and generations.

So we see in all these films, the need of people with disabilities but also their right to express themselves artistically and at the same time, to feel, to give their feeling, to express it and in addition all of us can see their ability for art and for creation either through verbal communication or through non-verbal communication. Because a person, because in all the movies there was music, at the same time with the music he dissolves and relaxes mentally and physically. You do not have to talk many times to say what is happening. The body speaks many times on its own. We have seen this in many movies.

In addition I would like to refer to the three movies I have not said something yet. I was also shocked by the movie about heroes, that shows us what the bright side of life is, the heroes, the unusual ones. Yes, these people are heroes who try to find their independence through cartoons. Their parents are also heroes. Amazing. The movie with Elli who is frustrated with everyone, everyone that look at their cell phones and their phones and their jobs and through books

finds love, joy, the man of her life. And finally in the last movie with the night of the dance, what does it teach us? That all of us, whatever peculiarity we have, we must face it and at the same time coexist with it and live harmoniously in society as a whole, despite all the difficulties we will face.

Congratulations. Amazing work and I will say it again. People with disabilities are people, I truly believe it, exceptional and creative. And I will close with a line from one of the films that said that "the beginning of every art is the love for light". Amazing words. That's what I wanted to say. So I made an account of my own beliefs and the precepts we got from the movies. Let me now give the floor to Mr. Konstantinidis, to give us his opinion. Please, Mr. Konstantinidis.

Konstantinidis Christos:

Good evening from me too. Thank you for the invitation. The movies were really interesting with content and moral lessons. Based on the title of the festival, the name of the festival, I thought of some things to say about what reflection in art means from the view of the artist. That is what I would like to say. I wrote some things and I would like to say them. These are things that are more or less known and for my part I will talk about the disability which was less predicted through the movies, physical disability. I think we saw only one film about it. They more focused on mental disability. Right. Because I could not see one film. I had problems and had to close. It was with a child with quadriplegia I think.

Anyway, I'm going to speak for myself because I also have a physical disability. I have had paralysis in my right hand for the last five years. I was also a musician. And I will talk about this topic that I know better. Well, disability is reflected in art through nostalgia, loneliness, despair, anger, complaint about the unfulfilled but also in the midst of daydreaming and the creation of substitute or complementary worlds where the artist confronts, tries and often succeeds in overcoming his disability. Thus, a deep sense of inferiority.

These are common reflections, for artists with or without disabilities. All artists talk to us about these things. Nostalgia, loneliness, despair, complaint and on the other hand daydreaming and the creation of substitute and complementary worlds. They have a better outcome. So these are reflections common for artists with or without disabilities, since as it is well known, the artist is fed by

the trauma, in the broader sense of the term. And considering that man, due to mortality, can not experience the feeling of fullness, due to his mortal nature he is unable to experience fullness. He constantly feels the deficit. We can say that an artist with a disability is no different from an artist who does not have a disability because lack, that is the essence of disability, I speak about physical disability, is the feeling of inferiority, the feeling of lack. So this feeling exists in all people. That is the first topic.

A second topic I want to say, for disabled artists in the narrower sense of the word. I want to say that art that aims at social contribution is very testable. As many of our disabled fellow human beings, either due to social exclusion or due to physicality, are unable to find a love partner. That is where art comes in, which gives the possibility of transforming these feelings and impulses [...] by offering through a work always or through whether the artist is a performer, through performance. Offering can be a simple task of a subjective mental state. Offering can also be a generalized critique of becoming.

Also, lastly, there have been many cases where disabled artists, experiencing torturously the feeling of inferiority caused by their disability and the consequent possible social exclusion, try, by creating large works, to renegotiate their position in the community or seek a return to it under better, equal or even higher degree terms. Depending on the offer that will be achieved through their work. There are many such cases. There is Giannis Xenakis [...] there is Frida Kahlo and many more, Borges the blind poet and writer.

These few words from my side by *reading* how it is reflected. Reflection as shaping and as an indirect expression of the artist, of the artist's disability in art.

Stavrousi Panagiota:

Alright. Many thanks to Mrs. Lailoglou and Mr. Konstantinidis and if we have any questions or someone from those who attend would like to make a comment, we are happy to discuss or listen to the comments.

Manousaka Chrysanthi, chat manager:

Good evening. There is only one message in the chat from Mrs. Theodosoglou, who congratulates us.

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

Let me ask a question to Mrs. Stavrousi. Can you hear me, Mrs. Stavrousi?

Stavrousi Panagiota:

Of course, I'm just trying to figure out who this is.

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

I am Mrs. Kartasidou. Simply because I always make the correlation in relation to self-determination and because some students also watch, I would like you from the films we saw because they are all of a different culture, if through these films some elements of self-determination emerge? Characteristics; Or some are missing. I would like them to hear it from you because it is something I have put, in a way, as an essay, to look for such issues.

And I would also like Mr. Konstantinidis to locate, because there were various films and there were some with physical disabilities, the issue of quality of life as depicted through these films, how it was perceived, the concept of quality of life. Thank you.

Stavrousi Panagiota:

To begin, thank you, Mrs. Kartasidou, for giving us a trigger for discussion. For my part, I would say that the main element shows us some aspects of self-determination in what we have seen, in all the films we have seen, I would say that it is primarily the participation of people with disabilities in the films. That they accept and that they want in every way, either in a more metaphorical way or in a more literal presentation of all the possible difficulties they have, to participate and to show what is happening to them or to their environment, that, for me alone is a sign of self-determination.

Beyond that, I think most of the films highlighted the need to further enhance self-determination skills, to enhance the identification of people but I would also say for those around them to understand their need for self-determination. And especially the latter, this emerged quite a bit. That many times the environment itself and I now have in mind one movie, I think it was "Limit", needs to understand what it means that one can and express what one wishes or what one wants or what one needs either emotions or thoughts. These few from me. But I think there is something you asked to Mr. Konstantinidis, so...

Konstantinidis Costas:

If you want, could you ask me the question again. If the question was specific.

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

Yes, in these films, because they all come from a different culture, how do you perceive, how did the concept of quality of life pass to you. It has many different dimensions or what the meaning of quality of life is for you.

Konstantinidis Costas:

How did the concept of quality of life that the protagonists pass to me?

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

Yes, through the movies.

Konstantinidis Costas:

And then experientially for me personally.

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

Yes.

Konstantinidis Costas:

Look, the main thing is that they are people who experience exclusion, loneliness and that is what they said in a movie, they are heroes. Because a person with a disability makes a double and triple effort to do things that others, normal persons, rather persons without disability, do. Loneliness for sure, insecurity and trying to live, to fall in love. They have the right to love. But also exclusion, exclusion and loneliness. These now come to mind more.

Now personally for me. For me it was, because the disability is acquired, maybe it has some difference from those who have it from birth. It was a big shock. I spent two years in depression. I experienced social exclusion. I experienced racism. People are afraid of the unfamiliar, the disability. Stereotypically it may have passed into the collective unconscious that the disabled are also bad. We see either from biblical references or from myths, in the collective unconscious

there are these stereotypes. So yes, it's also racism. Of course the younger generations are more open. They help. And many times they do not treat you as different. I think the point is not to treat people with disabilities as different, not to treat them with pity. This is what people with disabilities want. This means equivalence. And of course...

Stavrousi Panagiota:

I think.... Sorry Mr. Konstantinidis, you have not finished. Because I see there is one more question for you.

Konstantinidis Costas:

Yes, I saw it and I just did not know when to answer and how.

Manousaka Chrysanthi, chat manager:

I'm waiting for you to finish to ask the question.

Konstantinidis Costas:

Yes, I have finished.

Manousaka Chrysanthi, chat manager:

Ok. Well, Mrs. Katsiflia says "Good evening, I would like to ask Mr. Konstantinidis, where do you think an artist aims when he creates a work, according to everything you said?"

Konstantinidis Costas:

It depends on the person. It is subjective. It depends on how torturously one experiences the feeling of inferiority, if he experiences it, if he has overcome it. If, for example, he experiences a sense of inferiority and exclusion, he will attempt something grandiose to show that it is worthwhile to claim in the community a position of a different degree from that which he has had so far. We also said that if he has accepted the facts of his life and the limitations, he can offer, he can transform the desires that he can not realize, transform them into art. So things are different, the strands that can be aimed, the goal of an artist. And that's what I said. There are three parts, the most basic, there is not one.

Manousaka Chrysanthi, chat manager:

Ms. Katsifla continues her question based on the answer you gave and says "So it is essentially aimed at social promotion, his attempt to create a project?".

Konstantinidis Costas:

Not exclusively, but it could. Not social promotion but social redefinition, social reintegration because he experiences exclusion. Because he can say that I offer, I deserve and he really offers. And to claim a place in the community, a place of equal and superior rank. But this in case the artist, an artist with a disability [...] unbearably his disability. He experiences unbearably [...] not always. Some other times he wants to express emotions. They are the same as any artist.

Manousaka Chrysanthi, chat manager:

If you allow me, in my turn, to say first of all, that, Ms. Katsifla thanks you for your answer, and I would like to ask you a question. So do you think that in order to create, to produce a work of art, any art, someone must have gone through a trauma?

Konstantinidis Costas:

Well, let me tell you.

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

Mr. Konstantinidis probably has a problem with the internet.

Konstantinidis Costas:

Can you hear me?

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

Lost... Your image is stable so obviously there is a problem with your connection. Do you hear us?

Konstantinidis Costas:

Yes, I can hear you.

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

We hear you a little bit in fragments. If you turn off the camera, maybe can we make the sound easier for now?

Konstantinidis Costas:

Yes. Do you hear me now?

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

Yes, much better.

Konstantinidis Costas:

Well, let me tell you. I have not met any artists who are not sensitive to trauma. Also, trauma as a concept should not scare us. Whoever lives, gets injured. He who has no trauma is the one who has not lived. He is in a bowl. Beyond that, art is a language of communication, a symbolic language, any kind of art. And for someone to want to speak through this language, he may probably not be able to find a way to express himself in another way and to express things that concern him. To do this, so that he can not find another way, maybe he has something that concerns him. Something has obviously hurt him. But I want to say again, that trauma is something that exists in life for all of us. So yes. And from my personal journey in art I have not met people who do not carry any kind of trauma. Trauma is essentially the feeling of inferiority. That' what it is. Trauma is an open wound that makes us feel lacking and consequently disadvantaged.

Manousaka Chrysanthi, chat manager:

Thank you very much, Mr. Konstantinidis, for your answer. Maybe the other two ladies, Mrs. Stavrousi and Mrs. Lailoglou, would like to say something about this?

About the specific question you asked?

Manousaka Chrysanthi, chat manager:

And the previous ones that Mrs. Katsifla had set, if you want, and the last one.

Stavrousi Panagiota:

Let me say that I am not an artist. I would love to but I am not and I guess through art I will keep this. The fact that one expresses something, in whatever way one expresses it, whatever it is that one wants to express, either starts from a trauma or starts from emotions or ideas in general. And this expression actually comes to show us something and each of us, however, and I would say that is the magic of art, has a way, the means to see what he wants. To recognize oneself there or to recognize some things that one has not thought about before. I think that's what I would like to say more. That art has exactly a magical way, inside and outside quotes, of expressing one or many things to others and inviting them to discuss them. Discussion again, inside and outside quotes. Some times the conversation is personal and some times it is communicative in relation to others. So let us welcome this magic of art and let us discuss it personally or with others. It will definitely have something to tell us.

Lailoglou Alexandra:

I would also like to ask Mr. Konstantinidis. Mr. Konstantinidis, because you have experienced disability, you have had a difficult time, I would like you to tell me, do you believe, because things are happening in our time and all for a good cause, do you believe that we are on the right track?

Konstantinidis Costas:

Yes I can see it. Of course, this is an issue because the circles in which I socialize have more progressive and more sensitive people. Maybe I can not have an objective position on this. But I want to believe that yes. I would also like to say something about what Mrs. Stavrousi said. That is to say, the work of art is said to have a special substance. Because it talks to the recipient, to each recipient separately. However, there is also the work in which the creator-project relationship must be kept unbreakable, in order to be able to [...] the message. [...] It is good to keep the link between the creator and the work

unbreakable so that ... Apart from this, in aesthetic works, yes, there is a personal conversation between the work and the recipient.

Stavrousi Panagiota:

Fine, thank you very much. From what I see there are no more questions or comments from the participants, so thank you to everyone who participated in this meeting today. Thank you Mrs. Lailoglou, thank you Mr. Konstantinidis. Thank you all. Have a good night with health.

Konstantinidis Costas:

Good night.

Lailoglou Alexandra:

Thank you. Good night.