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Now us! Animations created by youth and their application in film education

*Animation consists of outlines with a chaotically filled interior,
which are drawn as if in anger felt due to the hardships of everyday life.*

(Majewska 2022)

Introduction

The sentence quoted above comes from a review of the animated film *Inertness*, directed by Jakub Kszyszpin. The review was written by Emilia Majewska, a third-grade secondary school student, and was created as a result of a workshop called *How to Write about Animation* at the 10th National Animation Festival *O!PLA*, conducted by representatives of the Polish Animation Research Group from the University of Łódź. *Inertness*, made by a seventeen-year-old student of the third class of the Fine Art School Complex in Katowice, was awarded first prize in the competition section of the festival *Now Us! – Fine Arts Secondary Schools and Animation Workshops*.

On behalf of the organizers, I was personally responsible for coordinating the event *How to Write about Animation*. First, I recruited participants for the workshops, via an open competition for the best review of the worst film they had ever seen. I was then responsible for organizing workshop supervisors' meetings with the winners of this competition. Finally, I prepared and conducted the process of selecting the best reviews of the films from the competition section *O!PLA*. This commitment gave me an opportunity to take a closer look at the critical texts sent to *O!PLA*, as well as the films submitted to the *Now Us!* section, the latter constituting the subjects of the competitors' reviews. The section *Now Us!* belonged to the three categories included in the competition: it was dedicated to films that were made as part of workshops

or practical classes on creating an animated film.¹ By introducing a separate competition category for these works, which determined the manner of their realization, the organizers indicated their distinctness from other competition films. Therefore, it seems that for this category, both artistic values and the manner of creation are crucial. Why, then, in none of the reviews, created as part of the *How to Write About Animation* workshops, was this issue addressed?² On the one hand, we can say that the films “defended themselves”; on the other, we cannot forget that they were made as a result of educational activities, which distinguishes the process of their creation from professional production. So how to write/create a critical narrative about this type of animation, taking into account – apart from formal issues – its educational dimension? Which elements should be considered in order to assess not only such films’ artistic but also their educational value?

Inspirations

So far, studies and reports concerning film education in Poland have dealt with such issues as the scope and subject matter of acquired and transferred knowledge, acquired audiovisual competences, the possibilities and limitations of conducting classes (Fronczkowska 2019), the conditions of cinema for children, analysis of the conditions of film education for children up to 12 years of age, the place of films for children in Polish cinema, obstacles to the development of children’s cinema and solutions to eliminate them (Gawron-Jaksik, Materska-Samek 2016), and film education in Polish schools (the extent to which film is used in Polish schools, the impediments faced by film education, the competences of teachers and students in the area of using film as an educational tool) (Report 2011). Evidently, there has not been any focus on a more detailed study of the effects of educational activities. The aforementioned analyses concerning film education provide no guidance on how to describe and study the results of this educational activity. From this perspective, it seems interesting to look for solutions that could fill this gap. The starting point for such a quest may be foreign-language publications and Polish researchers’ individual articles in the form of case studies. I decided to refer to such sources in this article.

One of the possible directions of the quest can be found in an article by Bogusław Skowronek: *Edukacja filmowa (i medialna). Ujęcie antropologiczno-pragmatystyczne* [Film (and media) education: A pragmatic anthropological approach] (Skowronek 2017). Skowronek proposes to use workshop participants’ films for the purpose of evaluating educational activities. This approach is part of his proposed new model of film education, called “active pragmatism.” He suggests practical activities that would teach critical thinking about film; the materials for the analysis would consist of films created by children and youth during workshops. Skowronek wants to use the universal potential of film: “Film, like no other audiovisual performance, allows one to create

¹ The contest *Now Us!* held at the 10th National Animation Festival O!PLA consisted of three categories: *Now Young Creators Have a Voice* (age up to 12 years), *Animated Primroses* (12–15 years), *Secondary Fine Arts Schools and Animation Workshops* (15–19 years).

² I refer to three reviews: Federkiewicz (2022), Fudala (2022), and Majewska (2022).

their own life story, intertwined with public and private knowledge along with all the elements that it encompasses... owing to their participation in activities students can realize that every audiovisual creation is not only an individual text of culture, but also a social practice reflecting cultural changes and a tool for shaping both individual awareness and collective ideas" (Skowronek 2017: 20).

The issue of reflection on workshop films, understood as carriers of meanings whose decoding will allow us to learn the history of their creation, is also addressed by researchers gathered around the platform *Film Education: A User's Guide*. The section devoted to evaluation includes the following introduction: "Evaluation and assessment of film education tends to be represented in language – in written reports, exam answers, Powerpoint presentations. But it makes sense if the medium itself could be used to represent and reflect on some of the outcomes of a film education program or activity" (Film Education: A User's Guide 2022).

Similar material for analysis is suggested by Thomas A. Dwyer and Margot D. Critchfield in the text *Film as an Instrument for Evaluation* (Dwyer, Critchfield 1972). The authors indicate that films can be used as tools for educational activities to examine the individual development of students and their scope of knowledge about film techniques (Dwyer, Critchfield 1972: 40–43). Therefore, by placing films at the center of consideration and analyzing their components, I would like to propose a model of their description as an answer to the question of how to write about films that are creative results of film workshops. The method in question, in other words, "evaluation" (as it is referred to by Western researchers), may one day help to create reviews or scenarios of film education classes whose aim will be a critical literary narrative.

Young people have a voice

Three films were used to develop my model: *Winda* (*Elevator*, dir. Filip Szuksztul, 2021); *Reflection* (dir. Eryka Wolna, 2021) and *Dziura* (*Hole*, dir. Piotr Kaźmierczak, 2021).³ Two of them, *Elevator* and *Hole*, were made during the *Animated Film Workshops – Legnica Film Academy*; *Reflection* was made as part of the *International Animated Film Workshops – Fazy/Phase*. The filmmakers were between 14 and 17 years of age and had not yet started higher education. All the films in question were created as a result of animation film workshops conducted by professionals.

In film education, an animation film is a result of educational activity that had as its goals not only the creation of a film, but also the acquisition of specific competences. By analyzing the above examples, I will try to answer the question of the knowledge that must be acquired by workshop participants in order to create an animated film. This, in turn, will help me set a list of goals, the implementation of which I will be able to verify in the evaluation process. It is worth noting, however, that in Poland, apart from *O!PLA*, there are also film festivals dedicated exclusively to films created by children and youth. I will mention only a few here; the ones that make their submitted

³ YouTube channel: Polska Animacja Festiwal O!PLA. 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AM8LbeKhOrI&list=PL13X6fhShYk9KBxudbvTzu4-tzNvL1Kd-&index=4> (accessed 06/19/2022).

videos available online and thus offer potential educational materials. These are the *Oko Kalejdoskopu* (Eye of the Kaleidoscope) *National Review of Animated Films Created by Children*;⁴ the *HALO ECHO* review, held since 2011; and the⁵ *PUNTO Y RAYA JUNIOR* review, organized since 2019, which is devoted to abstract animated films.⁶

FRAMEWORK OF THE MODEL

1. Evaluation

It should be noted that I do not mean “evaluation” in the form of value judgments determining which goals have been achieved in a satisfactory way, and which have not been achieved at all. Since the subject of the study is the effects of creative work, I would like to apply the method proposed by Eliot Eisner, who, in the book *The Arts and the Creation of Mind* (2002), lists three key areas that we can subject to this process:

1. Content and form of the curriculum included in the teaching materials.
1. Quality of teaching and manner of work, determined on the basis of information contained in statements provided by authors, experts’ comments, and teachers’ descriptions of the work included in the overview of completed activities.⁷
2. Knowledge gained by the participants, assessed on the basis of their works (self-reflectiveness of works): paintings, films, photos, sculptures, drawings, musical works.

This study pays particular attention to the third area; that is, what can be evaluated in works developed during a creative activity. This includes:

1. Technical quality of the produced work: the degree of innovative application of an idea or process. According to Eisner, the issue of technology also refers to the way in which the material is adjusted to the expressed content. Eisner is interested, among other things, in whether there is compatibility between a given technique and the content it is to express (e.g., pastels used to show a blurred background visible in the distance) and whether there is any innovation in the work, an element of innovative usage of materials.
3. Invention: does the work say something new, or does it show familiar topics in a new way? In other words, does it reflect the creative usage of an idea or applied process, or is it inventive?

⁴ YouTube channel: OKO KALEJDOSKOPU 2021 – nagrodzone filmy. 2021. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpVpk00WoCQ&list=PLjl47bYR_bTfUTEYYbBkcrA4m8N4cVHEn (accessed 06/14/2022).

⁵ YouTube channel: Halo Echo, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSLMoFSJlTr2DXX-KeEQbegg/videos> (accessed 06/14/2022).

⁶ YouTube channel: Punto y Raya JUNIOR. 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-DOeuwikTWg&list=PLpimwMg5G5jxyEjzLkKBjflZqYLpEUUx-> (accessed 06/14/2022).

⁷ I gained knowledge on the three discussed films from interviews conducted with their authors by Piotr Kardas. All interviews are available on the YouTube channel *O!PLA na żywo, ale w domu*. <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLl3X6fhShYk9KBxudbvTzu4-tzNvL1Kd-> (accessed 07/01/2022).

4. The power of expression of the work, reflected in its form, composition of components, and the skills required by a given technique.

In conclusion, Eisner points out that these are not descriptions according to which it is possible to prepare an operating scheme. He states that “their identification... can serve as criteria to guide our search, not as prespecified features that obey a fixed set of rules” (Eisner 2002: 184).

2. Educational objectives

I would like to extend the areas proposed by Eisner by adding the objectives assigned to educational activities conducted by means of particular methods. These determine the specific range of skills and knowledge transferred during the planned action within film education. The objectives relate to the sphere of *praxis* – that is, how something is to be done; the sphere of knowledge – that is, what concepts are to be transferred; and the sphere of competences – that is, the skills to be acquired by the class participants.

At this point, I will refer to the characteristics of the objectives that can be achieved during practical filmmaking classes, which were discussed in *A Framework for Film Education* (2015).⁸ The proposal described there is universal: it refers not to national core curricula, but to lessons learned from various institutions across Europe. It is also a kind of framework – a set of guidelines that can be applied selectively or in full, and which is useful in the context of the matter that I will examine; that is, educational and film activities carried out by cultural institutions and organizations outside the school system. The objectives of such workshops do not have to be compatible with the core curriculum; they do not even need to refer to it. They may refer to content located outside the system, so in their analysis, it is necessary to relate to broader, more general ideas. *A Framework...* lists three dimensions of film education: creative, critical, and cultural. In the context of the selected films, I will be interested in the first, in which the viewer becomes a creator. In the cited document, this dimension is characterized by the following fields (*A Framework for Film Education* 2015: 7):

1. Areas of learning: specificities of film (film form); social, personal, and collaborative processes.
2. Learning outcomes: participant thinking critically, adventurous creator, confident explorer, informed participant of culture.
3. Experiences: engaging with film in all its forms, experiencing the creative possibilities of filmmaking.
4. Disposition for lifelong learning: curiosity, empathy.
5. Connecting to life and work: personal development.

⁸ This document also constitutes the basis for the education strategy contained in *Alfabetyzm Filmowy. Raport Narodowego Centrum Kultury Filmowej* (Fronczkowska 2019: 47–73). However, *A Framework for Film Education* (2015) is a more universal formula, as *Alfabetyzm filmowy. Raport Narodowego Centrum Kultury Filmowej* is strongly connected with the Polish core curriculum. *A Framework...* refers to the spectrum of experiences related to the implementation of film education in various countries, regardless of their individual core curricula.

3. Practical dimension

In this context, it is worth mentioning the increasingly frequent transfer of film education activities from schools to cultural institutions and other entities dealing with cultural education; this directly translates into the manner of organizing classes and participating in them.⁹ These activities are not carried out in schools by teachers; they are not part of lessons, therefore, not all students take part in them. They are extracurricular activities. Participants must make individual efforts such as filling out an application form, finding funds to cover entry fees, or competing with other candidates during interviews.¹⁰ Such was the case for the authors of the films *Hole*, *Elevator*, and *Reflection*: they volunteered for the workshops themselves in order to train their skills, build a portfolio, and acquire the skills they needed in order to apply for their chosen academic courses. The young people discussed the problem in their interviews. Eryka Wolny, the author of the film *Reflection*, explained: “I will be taking art history at the final exam. I want to study animation in Poznań at the Academy of Fine Arts; if I do not get there, I will try next year... I spend my time at the »Chase« workshops in a strange way, all the time in my room, but there I make the best films... I love doing storyboards” (Wolny 2022). Piotr Kaźmierczak, the author of the film *Hole*, said: “One month before LAF [Legnica Film Academy – AHR], I came up with the subject of the film I would like to make. Whenever I go to LAF I already have an idea. I have participated in the Academy three times; I would like my studies to be connected with cinema... I sent a message to the band *Kapela ze Wsi Warszawa*, and I asked if I could make a music video for them. They agreed, and now I am working on an animation based on sand” (Kaźmierczak 2022). In turn, Filip Szuksztul, the author of the film *Elevator*, recalled: “I came here with an idea; it was a matter of time when this idea would be transferred to animation, two weeks before LAF I tried to write it down... I am experimenting now, I do not like to work only with one thing. I also like music videos; I have made short films, I experiment, 3D animation... I am looking for myself in the world of animation” (Szuksztul 2022).

Workshops outside school often give access to better technical facilities.¹¹ This is mentioned in the introduction to the latest report on film education in Poland

⁹ This process has been going on for a long time, but it is increasingly seen as an opportunity and not an obstacle to the development of film education in Poland. See: *Cele edukacji filmowej w Polsce: konteksty instytucjonalne i tendencje rozwojowe* (Jakubowska 2017: 99–117); *Educational Potential of Animated Films in Poland* (Żebrowski 2017: 106–120); *Film Education in Cinemas – Determinants and Tendencies* (Budzik 2017: 157–178).

¹⁰ The organizers require participants to complete application forms, including a scenario of a film to be made during the event and a declaration of partial or full coverage of the fees for accommodation, meals, and travel.

¹¹ There are also well-equipped school labs, for example *Pracownie Filmoteki Szkolnej* (School Film Library Labs). By 2014, 16 such labs had been established. See: <https://pisf.pl/aktualnosci/pracownia-filmoteki-szkolnej-4/#> (accessed 07/15/2022). They are equipped with a projector, screen, and sound system, as well as an Internet connection. However, these labs lack access to cameras, sound equipment, animation tables, and computers with special software; that is, the equipment needed to produce films. With school labs, there is also the problem of their availability and restrictions imposed by the school’s working time, or the necessary

by Barbara Fronczkowska, head of the Film Education Department at the National Center for Film Culture in Łódź: “a significant role in the education system has been increasingly fulfilled by cultural institutions – museums, competence centers, centers of deposition and dissemination of knowledge... in which participants, using the latest equipment and support of professionals, are able to (re)create the process of making the most diverse film and parafilm forms... developing knowledge about cinema by actively familiarizing the viewer with the process of film production” (Fronczkowska 2019: 10–11, 43).¹² In the ideological sphere, as I have mentioned, this situation allows for formulating the objectives of the activity based on new criteria. In the logistical sphere, it allows for organization of classes and technical equipment to enable involvement of professional creators for a period longer than only a few hours.¹³ The film *Reflection* was made by Eryka Wolna during the nine-day *International Animated Film Workshops – Fazy/Phase*, organized by the *Filmowiec* Foundation from Poznań. In her interview for *O!PLA*, Wolna said that it was there that she had time to lock herself in her room, focus on the film, and work independently on her computer (Wolny 2022). Apart from technical equipment, the organizers also provided her with supervision by a professional director, Paulina Wyrst, who provided support for Wolna’s ideas and project, and who was technically responsible for editing the film. *Hole* and *Elevator* were created in 2021 during the *XXVI Legnica Film Academy*, which aims at the individual author’s production of their own film with the support of an experienced filmmaker. The professionally supervised participants have 10 days to implement their scenario presented during the recruitment process by means of a chosen technique. As in *Phase*, the organizers provide the professional equipment and materials to create an animated film.¹⁴

In such conditions, it is possible to provide the atmosphere Bogusław Skowronek described as follows: “audiovisual competences cannot be transferred unidirectionally, they should be shaped, created through active practice and dialogue conducted at the level of everyday media experiences and individually implemented cultural practices...

presence of a workshop supervisor. In the afternoons or at weekends, school labs are usually closed. Teachers working in such laboratories also struggle with the problems of updating software or making further investments in fast Internet access at school, which should be constantly adapted to modern requirements. See: *Praktyka edukacji filmowej w Polsce – uwarunkowania prawne i organizacyjne* (Mostowska 2017: 131–143).

¹² See, for example, the idea of creating an open film lab to ensure the development of amateur film projects under the supervision of professional filmmakers, as a response to the conclusions contained in *Alfabetizm Filmowy* (Fronczkowska 2019: 10–11, 43).

¹³ On the other hand, without their first film tasks during school classes, some students would never become interested in filmmaking. However, I do not want to develop this thread here. See: *Od edukacji filmowej do edukacji audiowizualnej* (Ciszewska, Klejsa 2017) and *Trudna obecność. Film w edukacji polonistycznej a interpretacja* (Szoska 2019). In the abovementioned texts, the researchers describe the situation of film education in Poland up to 2019. The processes in question have developed and changed, as evidenced by the need to elaborate new film education strategies for cultural institutions. One of the attempts to respond to this need is *Alfabetizm filmowy* (Fronczkowska 2019).

¹⁴ Information about the *Legnica Film Academy*: https://lck.art.pl/index.php?glowna=impreza_szczegoly&numero_imprezy=19 (accessed 07/02/2022).

The culture of participation abolishes the opposition between viewing and acting, modifying the relationship: director-viewer; producer-consumer; teacher-learner... Such classes make everyone learn, shaping a community of activities that is, in turn, derived from common media interests and passions" (Skowronek 2017: 18–19). This also coincides with the assumptions of the educational turn in culture, which in the area discussed in this article concerns transferring the activities of various institutions into the sphere of *praxis* as a method of introducing them into culture. Teachers can also benefit from this option, as mentioned in the article "Pedagogy of Culture" by Katarzyna Michalska: "the second pillar of KAT (Classes of Creative Activity) consists of extracurricular workshops conducted by guest-artists and enthusiasts – practical activities conducive to searching for and discovering passions through contact with extraordinary personalities" (Kosińska, Skórzyńska, Szykowna, Walczyk 2019: 10). Such activities, according to Michalska, allow for supporting participants in their encounter with the world of art and culture, thus initiating meetings that may later inspire creative activities.

Therefore, practical classes provide an opportunity to participate in culture, encounter it, and use the available technical support to develop one's own cultural texts. However, the texts are not created alone, but with the support of an educator, distinguishing this process from independent creative work. Because of this, the role of the person who works with a workshop participant cannot be ignored. Referring to the article "Exploring Co-creation in Practical Film Education from Primary School to Postgraduate Study: Theoretical and Auto-Ethnographic Perspectives upon Teaching Film Practice (Chambers 2019: 27–47), the role of such a person can be associated with the term "producer." They are an entity responsible for organizing the workstation, adjusting equipment, providing technical support, transferring knowledge about the application of a given technique, and discussing formal issues. They conduct discussions and continuous consultations during the creative process, showing possible solutions. This role, therefore, consists of accompanying rather than pushing forward one's vision or ideas.

Film workshops allow for application of theory in practice. Their participants memorize much more information about the formal elements used in a given film than people lacking such experience. This is confirmed by data from the *Alfabetyzm...* report, where we can read that "students who independently edited and made videos were more likely to provide correct answers to questions concerning script, scenography, light, sound in the film or the beginnings of cinema. Therefore, certain links between practical skills and knowledge can be noticed" (Fronczkowska 2019: 26). In the case of the workshops discussed here, this process is further strengthened by a professional's participation at each stage of film creation. In some cases, editing and sound recording are performed by the workshop organizers, but only if the participant decides on this, or the process was originally planned by the organizers.¹⁵

Chambers indicates educators' constant adoption of a dialogic attitude towards the workshop participants' achievements, and their focus on constant supervision

¹⁵ Workshop films created during the *Animator of Tomorrow* event can constitute examples of such an action. Due to the lack of time, editing and sounding are carried out by the organizers. In contrast, in the case of the *Legnica Film Academy* or *Fazy/Phase*, the participants do these tasks themselves or in cooperation, or submit works for post-production.

over the available possibilities of implementing a given material. Such an attitude should always be accompanied by non-evaluative acceptance of the decisions made by the author of the film idea, even if it is contrary to the supervisor's personal preferences. Therefore, not every professional can conduct such classes. On the one hand, such a person must possess their own artistic experience; on the other, they must be a film educator with pedagogical knowledge and skills, or be ready to play the role of a companion of a given person in the process and be constantly aware of the goals to be achieved as a result of the activity.¹⁶ In this approach, the film ceases to be the work of an individual creator and becomes the result of joint, participatory work of two entities, each fulfilling their own specific role. Chambers also emphasizes that in such a relationship, the principle of co-creation is met to a greater or lesser extent, and it cannot be forgotten during the evaluation of the film created as part of a workshop (Chambers 2019: 30).

4. The use of animation in education

When speaking about the process of creating an animated film as a method of workshop activity within film education, researchers¹⁷ distinguish two areas of education. The first is practical and consists of learning by reproducing given activities. This conveys knowledge about the formal means used in film, such as sets, composition, space, and sound. Researchers point to the high potential of animated film for transferring practical skills; they also pay attention to the very technique of creating a film in which movement is not recorded, but generated in the creative process.¹⁸ Animation "does not show" the movement in the phase of image recording; the movement is the result of the use of appropriate techniques. Thus, the person making the film learns in practice the principle of "creating movement." Animation enables explaining this process by means of simple examples that can be developed later. Work on an animated film, unlike work on a live-action film, can be continued independently (Wolny 2022). It requires no additional staff to operate technical equipment such as microphones and cameras, or, subsequently, programs for sounding or editing. It is not only simpler to organize, but also allows for a sufficiently long period of developing and perfecting. Animation also offers a more unrestrained manner of creating the world presented, owing to the use of more abstract, symbolic, and imaginary forms than in the case of live-action film. This translates into a greater possibility of developing artistic skills. The world is not given

¹⁶ While addressing the topic of film education activities, Cary Bazalgette in the article "Teachers and Media Professionals – An Equal Relationship?" (Bazalgette 2007) distinguishes two types of knowledge that can be passed on by the instructor: educators teach social skills, whereas film professionals show knowledge about technology in practice.

¹⁷ See more: Harrison, Hummell (2010), and Munro, Charles (2021).

¹⁸ "Animation also offers a freer representational mode than live action. The continually recording camera captures events moving in real time, and in real places – a Bazinian »ontological« realism. In contrast animation does not capture the movement of object at a distance, independently. Rather, the movement takes place as a result of the image-making process itself. One might counter that in live action film-making, movement does take place as part of the »image making process«: the actor has to move to a mark in the foreground of the frames as set by the director" (Munro, Charles 2021: 73).

and placed in front of the recording camera; it has to be created by means of various techniques, such as drawing, cut-outs, or doll animation.

The second area is ideological in nature.¹⁹ It refers to the “projected” sphere, and concerns shaping attitudes and competences in the following fields:

1. Strengthening independent decision-making when elaborating a topic and translating it into scenes in the phase of creating a storyboard.
2. Cooperating with others during discussions on the selection of scenes to be included in the film.
3. Demonstrating the ability to transform scenes drawn on the storyboard into the means of expression offered by the selected animation technique: three-dimensional objects, cut-out objects, drawn objects.

5. Film form

One more area remains to be defined – the formal side of the film. To analyze this, I propose a model developed by the Danish Film Institute and based on *A Framework for Film Education*. It is, at the same time, a tool that the creators of the platform *Film Education: A User's Guide* recommend for working with students in order to teach them a critical approach to film – which is, according to them, the first of three dimensions of film education.²⁰ This approach is based on three basics of visual storytelling: theme, style (aesthetics) and film form.²¹ Each can be addressed by a list of questions concerning the formal elements constituting the language of a given film. This process may also show the level of students' proficiency in the mastery of technology and their knowledge of filmic means of expression. Sample questions can be found below:

1. Theme: Who? What? Where? How do characters interact with the environment? How do they interact with each other? What is the cultural and social context of the presented events?
2. Style and form: camera movements, film sets, editing, light, colors, props, sound, time, narrative.

Tool

Taking into account the problems presented in this article, I propose that the model of describing animated films created as part of educational activities should be based on a list of six issues: evaluation, goals, practical dimensions, animation, theme, and film form. Each of these areas may be characterized by a list of auxiliary questions,²²

¹⁹ “Thus, in film education it is not possible to determine in advance the expected level (model) of competences achieved” (Skowronek 2017: 18).

²⁰ I used and discussed this model during classes with students of media culture at the University of Silesia in 2022; this confirms its usefulness for conducting film analysis classes even with people without experience in this field.

²¹ <https://filmeducationframework.eu/critical-approaches-film-analysis> (access: 07/03/2022).

²² The BFI model can also be mentioned here. It is proposed in some educational materials by the *Filmoteka Szkolna* (School Film Library), but this model is only used in the field of formal film analysis. In this article, I extend the scope of questions to other areas than only the film form.

further divided into “hot questions” and “cold questions.” “Cold questions” will concern general, less detailed topics and will be used to initiate discussion; “hot questions” will concern details. This method was presented by Ian Wall in the article “Asking the Questions” (Wall 2008); it aims at breaking the “vertical position” in the teacher-student relationship. In such a position, also mentioned by Alain Bergala (2022), the person conducting the class assumes the role of someone who knows everything and passes knowledge to those who listen. The message comes from above. According to Wall, this situation can be reversed by introducing an open discussion, which enables shifting to a “horizontal position.” This is based on the teacher preparing a list of thematically ordered questions which are only a starting point for further analyses. In the course of the discussion, the participants create subsequent, more detailed questions and try to find the answers. Knowledge built in such a way is the result of joint reflections: information appears in the course of a conversation. In this model, the task of educators is to prepare a thematic base, but also to conduct a discussion in order to examine the selected issue as thoroughly as possible. According to Wall, it is also important to ask a given question only once. Using this method while working with the model proposed here, the teacher can first conduct a conversation about a given film, and later, on the basis of workshops, proceed to write critical texts. Or, if it is not possible to conduct discussion classes, the teacher may provide only key questions which later, at the time of writing, can be elaborated on by the students.

I, therefore, propose a list of the following questions, divided according to the given topics. The order of topics in the table maps the order of the issues described in the article. It is structured from general issues (evaluation) to detailed ones (theme, style, and form). However, it is not obligatory to follow it while conducting classes based on the model. I also deliberately do not include here a case study presenting the proposed tool. In this way, I want to avoid imposing any possible solutions and to leave space for various interpretations of the model.

Issue	Cold Questions	Hot Questions
Evaluation		
Technical quality of the produced work	Is the film carefully made? Are the technical errors found in the film relevant to the viewer?	Was the elaboration of any elements of the film, for example, scenography or props, very labor intensive? Are there any errors in the film, for example, film frames with unnecessary shots, bent elements of scenography, music or photographs of low quality?
Ingenuity of work	Have you ever seen a film like this before? What is in it that you already know?	What was interesting for you in this film? What is new in it, different from what you already know (examples)?
Power of expression of the work	Did the film make any impression on you?	What emotions did the film arouse in you?

Goals		
Scope of knowledge on the production of an animated film using the stop-motion animation technique	Did it take a lot of work to make this film?	What did the filmmaker need to know about stop-motion animation in order to make such a work?
Knowledge about the stages of animated film production	What are the stages of making the film? What and how do you need to prepare prior to shooting the photos?	What did the production of this film look like? What were the stages of making the film?
Self-reflection, personal experience, critical thinking	Where did the idea of making the film come from?	Does the filmmaker refer to their own personal experience in the film?
Curiosity, empathy, experiencing creative possibilities resulting from filmmaking		How does the film author speak about the film? (interview)
Personal development, willingness to continue learning	Does the author want to create more films?	How does the author intend to use this film? How did the filmmaking influence the author?
Practice		
Technique of implementing the elements of the world depicted in the film	What animation technique was used to make the film? Does the technique fit the theme?	What materials are used to make the elements of the film, such as characters, backgrounds, props? How were they made? What knowledge was needed to produce the elements of the world depicted in the film?
Practical skills in the scope of technique of making an animated film acquired by the workshop participant	What did the filmmaker need to know or learn in order to make the film using the given technique?	What technical skills did the filmmaker acquire?
Workshops description	Where were the workshops carried out? In which place? What was the process of application? What did the organizers provide?	What were the technical facilities?
Educator	Did anyone help the filmmaker make the film? Who was the person who helped the creator?	How was the cooperation between the educator and the creator? What was the contribution of the educator in the process of creating the film?
Educator's experience	Was the fact that the educator was the animated film's creator important in the joint work on the film?	How did the educator's experience in film animation affect the production of the film?

Description of cooperation	What did they do together, and what did they do separately?	
Theme, style, and film form		
Theme	What is the theme of the film? How can one summarize the film's story? What universal themes does the film refer to?	Are there any characters in the film? Where does the film's action take place? What is the space in the film? Were there any questions posed in the film?
Style and form	What is the film like? What genre is it? What mood prevails in the film? What are the colors in the film? Are there any sounds in the film?	What film sets were used in the film? Are there any closeups? How many shots can the film be divided into? What is the role of light in the film? What camera movements were used? What is the scenography made of? What types of lighting were used? What colors appear in the film? What props are there in it? What is the time of action? Is there a climax in the film? Is there a narrator in the film? What is the role of sound in the film?

Conclusion

When preparing a description of works created during animated film workshops with the support of professional creators, two dimensions should be taken into account:

1. The educational dimension, characterized by topics such as educational goals, manner of conducting classes, involvement of professional filmmakers.
2. The formal dimension: theme, means of expression, style, technique.

This approach will enable the researcher to extract the specificity of the film in two spaces: educational and creative. While describing these dimensions, we can pay attention to issues such as the difference between this process and the process of creating films by professional filmmakers, and the need to create a new language of description which must be different in the cases of professional animations and animations created as a result of educational activities. This must take into account the goals to be achieved by means of animated film workshops intended for children and youth.

Through using the proposed model during film education classes aimed at writing a review, we gain additional opportunities when we describe a film created during educational activities. We can, for example, show the importance of creative activities, appreciate the work of participants' peers, and indicate the development opportunities offered by animated film workshops. In this way, we also incorporate the works of young, non-professional creators into the educational cycle. In turn, when encouraging our students to write a review, we improve the other two of the three dimensions indicated

in *A Framework for Film Education*: the dimension of film culture in the scope of watching and discussing the film, and the critical dimension in conducting film analysis.

In summary, it is worth quoting the statement of Ian Wall, who has many years of experience at the British Film Institute in the field of conducting film analysis classes for young people: "So what is the importance of questioning texts in this way, particularly when it comes to students' creative activities? The most obvious answer is that it makes students realize the constructed nature of a film as well as the decisions that have to be made by a director. Realizing this, the hope is that when they come to create their own films, they will realize the options open to them, the choices that have to be made and the critical approach that they should take when it comes to making these choices. Additionally, it offers the opportunity for students to consider that what they are trying to do is to communicate their ideas to an audience. They need to consider how they will do this with the tools available to them within the language of film. A critical approach, we felt, eventually leads to a better creative process" (Wall 2008: 36).

However, in relation to the effects of film education discussed in this article, the question of determining where an educational task ends and an independent creative activity begins remains open. When (or whether) does the effect of film educational activities begin to function independently, outside the educational context? Questions related to the specificity of the reception of these films are also waiting to be answered. It is still not certain if these works are considered by viewers, especially young people, to be fully fledged cinematic productions, and if they can be perceived in a similar fashion to films made by professionals.

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Abstract

The article is an attempt to answer the question of how to write critical film narratives about films made by adolescents during professional workshops on animation. The author points out that such productions should be considered in two dimensions: the formal, including an analysis from an artistic point of view, and the educational, including a description of the production of a given work. Inspiring clues for answering the question concerning the content of such texts can be found in the works of Polish, English, and French researchers such as Bogusław Skowronek, Eliot Eisner, Cary Bazalgette, Ian Wall, and Alain Bergal, or in materials published on the platform *Film Education: A User's Guide*. On the basis of the analysis of these texts, the author creates her own educational model, intended for people dealing with film education, containing particular stages for individual work in the classroom. The starting point for constructing the model was three films: *Winda*, *Dziura*, and *Reflection*, awarded at the 10th National Animation Festival *O!PLA* in the category *Fine Arts Secondary Schools and Animation Workshops* (15–19 years).

Teraz my! Animacje tworzone przez młodzież i ich zastosowanie w edukacji filmowej

Streszczenie

Przedmiotem artykułu jest próba odpowiedzi na pytanie, jak pisać krytycznofilmowe narracje o filmach tworzonych przez młodzież podczas profesjonalnych warsztatów z animacji? Autorka wskazuje, że takie produkcje powinny być rozpatrywane w dwóch wymiarach: formalnym, który należy analizować pod kątem artystycznym i edukacyjnym, uwzględniającym również opis praktycznej realizacji danej produkcji. Inspirujące kierunki odpowiedzi na pytanie, z czego powinien się składać taki tekst, znajduje w pracach polskich, angielskich i francuskich badaczy i badaczy takich jak: Bogusław Skowronek, Eliot Eisner, Cary Bazalgette, Ian Wall, Alain Bergala, czy w materiałach na platformie *Film Education: A User's Guide*. Na bazie analizy tych tekstów tworzy swój własny, dostępny dla edukatorek i edukatorów edukacji filmowej, autorski model edukacyjny, zawierający poszczególne etapy do indywidualnej pracy na zajęciach. Materiałem

wyjściowym, do którego przykładała znalezione w teorii pojęcia czyni trzy filmy: *Winda*, *Dziura* i *Reflection*, nagrodzone na 10. Ogólnopolskim Festiwalu Animacji O!PLA w kategorii *Licea plastyczne i Warsztaty animacji* (15–19 lat).

Key words: film education, animation workshops, films made by adolescents

Słowa kluczowe: edukacja filmowa, warsztaty animacji, filmy tworzone przez młodzież

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