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Main Objectives of Film Education in Poland: Institutional Context and Developmental Tendencies

What Is Film Education?

Film education [...] is not a taught discipline but rather a process, namely a system of activities, or coordinated educational actions, aimed at transmitting knowledge and developing skills (Nurczyńska-Fidelska, 1989).

Film education: (1) An individual process of learning how to read and analyse films; (2) An educational process coordinated by the schooling system and specialised educational institutions aimed at producing conscious consumers of films (Hendrykowski, 1994).

Film education consists in facilitating access to films for children and young people – in schools and outside them – as well as teaching critical reception of films and discussing both problems tackled by films and the emotions they evoke. In addition, it encourages young people to use film as a means of expression, which entails teaching them different film forms (*A Framework for Film Education in Europe, 2015*).¹

The question posed in the title of this section seems rather trivial, and the answer is seemingly obvious. It is, however, worth paying closer attention to historical changes in defining film education, since they may stem from various reasons, not necessarily connected to the theory and practice of film education itself. The existing definitions of film education – both those produced in Poland and those adapted from European sources – determine different outlooks

¹ As quoted by the Polish Film Institute (Polski Instytut Sztuki Filmowej, PISF), February 2016. The definition, formulated by the British Film Institute, was used by the PISF on their page on film education from circa 2006 until February 2016, when the page underwent modernisation. In the new version, the page devoted to film education was replaced with a link to the website of the Coalition for Film Education (Koalicja dla Edukacji Filmowej), whose mission is defined as: “Acquainting the younger generation and their guardians (working adults) with practical, theoretical and historical issues related to films in an attractive, innovative way – through various complementary activities” (Koalicjafilmowa.pl).

on the subject of film (as an artistic work, a text of culture or an audio-visual message) as well as on the scope of film studies (film history and theory, film narratives, genres, styles, etc.). Significantly, film education may either be treated as a separate phenomenon or perceived as part of media education in general. Moreover, contemporary approaches pay much more attention to orienting theoretical knowledge towards practical skills (critical, such as “reading”, interpreting and evaluating films, as well as creative: script writing, organising film sets, film editing). While teaching critical reception of films became part of official education rather early (or at least this is what the authorities declared), educating students in creative filmmaking is a more recent phenomenon (even if it was postulated as early as in the 1960s) – since it only became possible with the spread of mobile phones with in-built cameras. (Undoubtedly, the definition of film education used by the PISF in 2006–2016 placed emphasis on this practical aspect, hitherto virtually absent from the Polish reflection on the topic. Referring to the definition formulated by the British Film Institute was thus a mark of interest in the newest tendencies in the field of film education.)

Another important aspect is the evolution of the perception of the addressee of film education. Ewelina Nurczyńska-Fidelska stresses that film education is not a “taught discipline”, but she still points to “coordinated educational actions” as its main component, which has traditionally been ascribed to school activities (and such was, after all, the context of the formulation of Nurczyńska-Fidelska’s definition). It is worth pointing out that nowadays film education is viewed in a much broader context and thus it comprises not only extracurricular and outside-school activities addressed at children and teenagers but also promoting film culture and educational initiatives dedicated to adults. This attitude is reflected in the first point of Marek Hendrykowski’s definition: “an individual process of learning how to read and analyse films”, but also in his second point, which stresses the role of cultural institutions outside the schooling system.

Importantly, the present mission declared by the Coalition for Film Education points not only to the younger generation but also to working adults as the addressees of educational activities in terms of “practical, theoretical and historical issues related to films” (Koalicjafilmowa.pl). Stressing the role of teachers and educators is also paramount, given both the specific position of film education within the Polish schooling system and taking into account the approach to education currently promoted in the EU. The chief aim of European cooperation within the field of education (covering formal education, training and self-education) until 2020 is promoting lifelong learning and educational mobility, which was reflected in Poland’s preparations to meet EU financial perspectives for 2014–2020.²

² One of the preliminary conditions for obtaining EU funding for education is the introduction of complex and thorough policies facilitating lifelong learning (Smoczyńska, 2014).

But is this broadening of scope, reflected in the “educational mission”, enough? Does it ensure adherence to the tendencies present in European institutions? Is the Coalition for Film Education directing us towards the right strategies, which are not only answering present needs, but will remain important in the future?

Before I attempt to answer these questions, I would like to make one important comment concerning historical contexts and present-day discussion dominating Polish film studies. The way in which we define film education and identify its goals is conditioned by certain factors determining the researcher/teacher/educator’s choices in terms of promoting, developing and practising educational activities focused on or related to films. Addressing this issue, I would like to propose the following taxonomy:³

Cultural Aspects (the Influence of Films on Culture, the Pressure of the Audiovisual and Television Aesthetic)

Formulated from this perspective, scientific reflection points to the need for developing film education (or, more broadly, media education) against the background of current cultural changes. In Poland, researchers were quick to notice the potential of film as an impulse for social change. Karol Irzykowski commented on the “cultural changes in the human soul”. Significantly, he did not focus on films’ artistic qualities but rather on specific features of the medium which is “as fast as thought” and capable of freeing human perception from the constraints of language: “Film does not necessarily have to be treated as a form of art, especially if this should lead to depriving it of those features that make it a special form of entertainment. In most cases we do not go to the cinema to delve into artistic experiences but, frankly, rather to see something unusual and new” (Irzykowski, 1982, p. 75). Elsewhere in the world, postulates regarding education aimed at preparing learners to participate in the changing culture of new “visibility” have been indicated and supported by works of many film and media theoreticians, such as Béla Balázs and Marshall McLuhan – to name but a distinguished few. Against the background of this rich international tradition, it is possible to position the works of Polish scholars who perceive iconicity as the dominant paradigm (Maryla Hopfinger)⁴ and view film as one of the media present in the culture of participation (Andrzej Gwóźdź)⁵ or direct their attention towards interactive forms of art and new media, accentuating the role of “digital perception” and virtual reality (Ryszard W. Kluszczyński).⁶

³ This taxonomy is an elaboration on the one introduced by Witold Bobiński (2011, p. 17).

⁴ See Hopfinger, 1997; 2003.

⁵ See Gwóźdź, 2003; 2010.

⁶ See Kluszczyński, 2001; 2010.

Cultural studies scholars dealing with current tendencies either celebrate new forms of expression and the potential inherent in participating in audiovisual culture, or focus on potential threats connected to this issue. Though this is a complex matter, it seems worth quoting one opinion: “television aesthetics transforms human nature. [...] And this despite being increasingly aware that our world depends on ‘television children’ – a new kind of humans weaned on television perception, who started watching television before they learnt to read and write” (Sartori, 2007, p. 13).

Notwithstanding the dominant tones in diagnoses of modern culture, film education (though let us bear in mind that the term “film” is becoming increasingly problematic) and media education help us find our place in the “global village”. In this broadly drafted context, the main objective of film education is to teach people to be conscious and critical consumers of audiovisual culture and participants of the multimedia society. Significantly, however, this particular goal is not mentioned among the strategic aims of the Coalition for Film Education, which may seem rather astonishing.

And that is not all, since aside from the problems connected with multimedia, intermedia and hypermedia seen within the broad perspective of cultural diagnoses, there is also the question of local scope and the need for film education within national audiovisual culture. Support programmes for Polish films and those promoting Polish film culture abroad are among the statutory goals of many institutions (such as the Polish Film Repository, Polish Film Institute and Polish Audiovisual Institute) and can be interpreted as part of the important activities aimed at preserving national identity, protecting monuments and audiovisual heritage, as well as promoting Polish audiovisual culture within the country itself as well as abroad. Moreover, many scholars preoccupied with Polish post-war culture point to specific periods in which films played a crucial role in the collective consciousness. They provided an outlet for collective fears and – despite censorship – counterbalanced ideological images of current politics and Polish history. In this respect, it is important that film education should be connected with national language learning (which is the case in many European countries).

Bearing in mind that sustaining the European identity and preserving European heritage is one of the strategic goals of the European Union, it is worth mentioning that working towards this goal involves both funding new film projects (their creation, co-production, distribution and advertising) and promoting film education focused on European cinematography. Multiple projects launched within the Creative Europe⁷ programme (which has two independent

⁷ Creative Europe is an EU programme scheduled for 2014–2020, providing financial support for audiovisual and creative cultural projects, with a seven-year budget of EUR 1.46 billion. The main objectives of the programme are: promoting European cultural diversity and heritage, helping professionals develop their knowledge and skills, and educating audiences to participate in European culture by – among others – facilitating access to audiovisual works. See “Creative Europe (EU programme)”

sections for Media and Culture) have been conducted with these objectives in mind (the Screening Literacy⁸ project is a case in point).

In line with the argumentation presented above, the main aims of film education should be expanded to include the following: conscious participation in both national and European culture. In this context, it is not the “global village” as much as the national identity that provides an important point of reference. We can see that film education is an important part of a state’s audiovisual policy, but it is also an important component in terms of certain strategic actions (such as securing financial support) as well as EU media and cultural policy. Planned cooperation can easily morph into a conflict, depending on the political situation. In Poland, the focus is undoubtedly on promoting national cinematography – this tendency is reflected in the largest educational programmes operating on a national scale (Filmoteka Szkolna [Film Library] and Akademia Polskiego Filmu [Polish Film Academy]).

Genealogical Aspects (Presupposing Mutual Affinity between Literature and Film)

Situating film education in the context of teaching literature has a long tradition in Poland. This way of thinking was introduced by Bolesław Lewicki as early as before World War II and later found its continuation in the works of Lewicki’s student and colleague, Ewelina Nurczyńska-Fidelska. This model was subsequently used as a basis for introducing film education in schools, which of course entailed stressing the role of cultural context. In 1993, Nurczyńska-Fidelska wrote: “Remaining faithful to the ideals of literary training, the school remains blind to the fact that mass media have created a new, alternative mode of communication [...]. The pressure of audiovisual media has proven stronger in this particular moment than the classical ways of self-development through literature, promoted by our schools” (Nurczyńska-Fidelska, 1993, p. 14).⁹

Witold Bobiński attempted to promote a two-way version of this tradition, suggesting that one should “read texts reflected in the mirror provided by the screen”, without any axiological qualifications. Bobiński’s “film-related strategy of literary and cultural education” is based on two crucial premises: (a) using films in teaching makes literature more “accessible”; (b) reading helps understand films better (Bobiński, 2011, p. 13–14).

⁸ Screening Literacy is a 2014–2015 project prepared in response to a European Commission report from 2012. It was prepared by representatives of 20 European countries and it includes diagnoses of education levels in individual countries as well as recommendations for creating a shared vision of film education which would stimulate the “consumption” of films and European cultural heritage. See BFI, 2011.

⁹ It is worth pointing out, however, that according to Nurczyńska-Fidelska’s 1989 taxonomy, there are three different options. The first links film to psychological reflection; the second is focused on aesthetic education, while the third is film studies-oriented (Nurczyńska-Fidelska herself advocated the latter) (Nurczyńska-Fidelska, 1989, p. 94).

The abovementioned premises are in accordance with Marek Hendrykowski's claims and his diagnosis of the situation of all artistic works (literary texts as well as films):

[...] literature and film are in the same situation. Global homogenisation of culture and its messages creates favourable conditions for the media industry, but not for art. Film art, with its dwindling influence over audiences' imagination no longer poses any substantial threat to literature. Both these forms of art are on the defensive [...] (Hendrykowski, 2002, p. 391).

The reasoning outlined above seems symptomatic of this particular approach and educators who subscribe to it. It also seems likely that this rhetoric was a way of placating Polish language teachers, who were often sceptical about film education (Bobiński, 2011, p. 103). Some time had to pass before the next generation started to perceive film education as a necessary goal in their training as Polish language teachers.

This tradition is marked by a strict differentiation between two perspectives of film education: using films for teaching literature (drawing attention to links between film and literary works in terms of adaptation but also creating fictional worlds: narrative, poetic elements, genres, using film fragments to provide contexts for literary works) and education about film, which in this context seems to be of secondary importance (Bobiński, 2004, pp. 151–193).

In the abovementioned context, two main objectives of film education are stressed: educating conscious viewers as a means of promoting higher forms of culture and encouraging teachers to support film education. There are a number of programmes focused on providing training sessions for interested teachers who would like to develop their teaching skills (e.g. Filmoteka Szkolna. Akcja [Film Library. Action], EdukacjaFilmowa.pl, Warsztaty Kultury Filmowej [Film Culture Workshop] and the Forum for Teachers and Filmmakers). Over time, teacher training and motivating teachers to get involved in film education addressed at children and teenagers seem to be more and more appreciated. This does not mean, however, that teacher training systems within universities address film education in a sufficient manner.

Curriculum-Related Aspects (Obligation Imposed by Ministerial Regulations)

The genealogical factors discussed above influenced the way in which the national curriculum was formulated. In Poland, film education is conducted at schools in a so-called “distributed model” – which means that although there is no separate school subject devoted to film education, issues related to films are incorporated into other subjects, mostly Polish language classes (at least this was the case in the most recent curricula). As a result, problems discussed in relation to film education tend to be linked to the issues of film adaptations of literary works.

And even though there were some projects that advocated an autonomous role for film education – e.g. the “concept of teaching the subject called ‘film’ in schools and other educational institutions” according to the “adopted aesthetic, pedagogical and social premises” (Nurczyńska-Fidelska, 1989, p. 75)¹⁰ – none of these ideas has ever come to fruition.

At present, it is mostly media education which performs an important function in the Core Curriculum for all education levels: “every teacher should pay a lot of attention to media education, namely preparing students to be conscious consumers and users of media” (Journal of Laws of 2009, no. 4, item 17); however, film education does not occupy any privileged position in this context. Incorporating elements of film education into lessons is still mostly restricted to Polish language classes. Currently, elements of film education have been included on a larger scale in cultural studies classes in upper-secondary education. Nevertheless, film education is listed both in general requirements and specific guidelines, as part of educational goals and material. The concept of a literary text has been complemented by another – that of a “cultural text”¹¹ and film works have been interpreted as texts (by teaching methods specialists and working teachers alike) ever since (Drabarek, Rowińska, 2004; Fiołek-Lubczyńska, 2004). Anna Janus-Sitarz encourages teachers to “prepare students to experience various cultural texts, from literary works through theatre, film, painting, photographs and music, to controversial avant-garde installations in art galleries and mass culture products” (Janus-Sitarz, 2004, p. 9). In this context, intertextuality, transmediality and intersemiotic poetics (Szczęsna, 2003) become primary categories, as they encourage both researchers and teachers and their students to draw comparisons between “words, images and sounds” (Janus-Sitarz, 2004, p. 9). According to the current curriculum, students should be able to “name and distinguish between elements of films and televised works (such as screenplay, directing, frame, acting) and point to features specific for audiovisual messages” (Polish language, 2nd level of education); recognise selected films of famous Polish directors (e.g. Krzysztof Kieślowski, Andrzej Munk, Andrzej Wajda, Krzysztof Zanussi) – (Polish language, 4th level of education, basic programme) as well as international directors (e.g. Ingmar Bergman, Charles Chaplin, Federico Fellini, Akira Kurosawa, Andrei Tarkovsky, Orson Welles) – Polish language (extended programme) (*Podstawa programowa z komentarzami. Język polski* [Core Curriculum with Comments. Polish Language], 2009, p. 52).

It is worth pointing out, however, that these seemingly optional names of Polish directors are usually the focal point of teachers’ efforts, since they tend to be the

¹⁰ The author gives an account of various disputes and problems accompanying the creation of curricula incorporating film education elements.

¹¹ Significantly, both Lewicki and Nurczyńska-Fidelska insisted that films should be treated as a cultural text rather than a work of art, so in this respect the current curricula look back to their propositions. The main difference, however, lies in the perception of the role performed by films. While both researchers (having affinities with academic “applied film studies”) believe film to be of primary importance as a medium that pervaded and shaped other phenomena of audiovisual culture, the current curriculum does not share this view. (Nurczyńska-Fidelska, 1989, p. 74).

subject of exam questions. It can also be said that these proposed names of international filmmakers are somewhat problematic. Admittedly, the works of Chaplin, Welles and others are milestones in the history of cinema, but it is not history that concerns us here. If we want to encourage young people to watch distinguished works of foreign film industries, shouldn't we pose ourselves the question if the films directed by Bergman, Kurosawa and Tarkovsky are not too difficult for young viewers? Academic teachers know from experience that these artists can present problems even for film studies students, who often watch them only because they are obliged to do so. Narrative style and – especially – tempo have changed immensely in the last few decades, which means that film language represented by these works may put off young viewers as they are archaic, unattractive and obscure, requiring knowledge of historical context. Personally, I very much doubt if these directors' works can seem appealing to contemporary teenagers.

In the new curriculum, significant changes were made as far as cultural studies classes are concerned. General educational goals include the following note: "Students should be able to use cultural texts and decode their messages according to the specific medium [...]. Students can also produce utterances consciously utilising varied media (spoken and written word, painting, photography, *film* [author's emphasis], sound, multimedia)" (*Edukacja artystyczna w szkole podstawowej, gimnazjum i liceum. Podstawa programowa przedmiotu wiedza o kulturze* [Artistic Education in Primary, Lower- and Upper-Secondary Education. Curriculum for Cultural Studies], 2009, p. 47).

The directions for cultural studies outlined above place emphasis on various forms of workshops (including film camps and educational school trips). This is undoubtedly a very attractive form of film education and young people are usually eager to participate in such events, preparing short film etudes or animated films under teachers' supervision. Still, is it not the case that more often than not teachers only assign tasks and students are left to their own devices in fulfilling them?

Of course, the crucial role of Polish language and cultural studies classes can be supplemented by other school subjects, e.g. ethics, knowledge about society or education for family life. In this respect, "films are usually used as supplementary contexts enabling a more thorough understanding of certain social phenomena, historical events or literary works" – this type of film education is the dominant paradigm in primary and secondary schools. But even though, as Danuta Górecka writes, "the current Core Curriculum ascribes a certain role to film education and creates space in which it can be performed, while individual guidelines for many subjects impose the obligation on teachers to use a variety of film materials in their teaching practice" (Górecka, 2014, p. 3), there is still room for improvement. Especially given that as early as in the 1980s Polish film studies specialists made conscious efforts to introduce film education at all education levels. Nowadays, film education can be carried out both in class or during extracurricular and outside-school activities. These are not obligatory, and yet there can be no doubt that film has gained the potential to become a significant component of education,

mostly due to decreasing the importance of extensive literary canon and transferring some of its hitherto obligatory elements into the zone of teachers' individual choice (Bobiński, 2011, p. 102). Nevertheless, existing regulations still make it possible to reduce film education to a few lessons devoted to film adaptations. It seems that there is no use discussing the existing curriculum in more detail, however, since the Ministry of Education promises forthcoming changes. Within the scope of existing guidelines, film should be treated as an attractive tool for achieving educational goals; students should learn how to analyse and interpret films as cultural texts and create their own messages expressed through the medium of film. What changes should we expect? When will they be implemented? At present, all answers remain locked in ministerial drawers.

Significantly, however, the Polish education system (subordinating schools to ministerial regulations and regional education superintendents) leaves some degree of autonomy to individual schools, which enables them to introduce innovative educational techniques and provide a varied educational offer – in this way specialised film, media, journalism and cultural classes are created. This tendency seems interesting and worth our support, given the prominent position they ascribe to film education.

Pedagogical Aspects (Pedagogical and Psychological-Sociological Goals, Cinema Therapy)

Another important aspect of film education is the one linked to pedagogical and psychological goals. In 1913, in his article titled *Jak kinematograf wychowuje młodzież?* [How Cinema Educates Young People], Ludwik Skoczylas wrote:

Educational systems and famous educationalists are these days made redundant by cinemas. [...] What an enjoyment! – wrote the author sarcastically. – To sit pleasantly in your seat with your arms folded and watch other people fight, suffer and kill one another. They are chased, assaulted and tormented while we are safe and comfortable, looking forward to taking a stroll after the film ends! What immense egoism and brutality lies beneath this form of culture (Skoczylas, 1975, p. 82)!

Such a tone of harsh criticism and viewing cinema as a “bad” teacher has now become outdated and it has been replaced with a more level judgement (it seems to have had some influence, however, on creating initial prejudice against films among teachers). In this context (and also taking into consideration the state of education in communist Poland), Henryk Depta presents two main objectives set for teachers who use films in class:

preventative – to neutralise negative influence of films which can foster a specific type of psychological resistance. Film education lessons should enable young people to distinguish between fact and fiction and to understand that films are fictional;

preparatory – training students in conscious, both emotional and intellectual, reception of films (cultivating the so-called “film culture”) and pointing to educational values of film mythology (Depta, 1975).

In this model, the goals of film education would involve shattering the cinematic illusion through drawing students’ attention to various elements of film poetics (technical and formal means applied by filmmakers), which might associate this approach with ideological criticism. The main intention is to prevent viewers from suspending their disbelief; still, it seems that the epigram opening Depta’s book (1975) is symptomatic of those times:

*For you, film is a show,
For me it is almost a standpoint,
Film – a teacher of movement,
Film – a renewer of literatures,
Film – a destroyer of paradigms,
Film – fearlessness,
Film – a sportsperson,
Film – a blossom of ideas.*

Vladimir Mayakovsky

In this context, educational values of films can be discussed both in ideological and pedagogical perspective. According to the first one, the debate in the 1960s and the 1970s was centred around the notion of cinema’s “bad influence”, that is promoting notions inconsistent with the socialist vision of state and society. According to the second one, the negative influence of film plotlines was to lie in the fact that violence and various immoral acts perpetrated by film characters could give young people inappropriate ideas.

Importantly, however, in the late 1980s and early 1990s Ewelina Nurczyńska-Fidelska presented research findings which proved that there was no evidence of films having such a negative effect (although she stipulated that films should be suited to students’ age and their cognitive, emotional and mental development). At the same time, Nurczyńska-Fidelska showed that film education could be motivated by various goals, such as those linked to psychological reflection (see works by Janina Koblewska and Adam Kulik) and those resulting from purely aesthetic interests (Irena Wojnar and Henryk Depta) (Nurczyńska-Fidelska, 1989, p. 94).

The most common approach represented by contemporary film educators is summarised by Justyna Ratajewska: “Film influences one’s emotional sphere and thanks to this it can intensify and broaden cognitive processes as well as develop one’s feelings. Initiating young people into the world of film and broadening their knowledge on the subject, we can raise them to become individuals who find pleasure in experiencing valuable cinematic works” (Ratajewska, Szerzeniewski, 2015).

At present, watching films is valued as an important experience in human development, especially if it is accompanied by the opportunity to discuss issues raised by particular works. Bogusław Skowronek stresses the importance of “the viewer’s readiness to ‘cooperate’ with films, namely to actively participate in them through ‘investing’ their thoughts and affects in the presented narrative” (Skowronek, 2007, p. 183). At present, this particular aspect of film education is aided by many programmes; nevertheless, research into actual links between psychology and film still remains just a postulate for Polish scholars. There seems to be a growing interest in cinema therapy,¹² however, or rather a trend to use this term (as well as “film therapy”), sometimes in unjustified contexts, for marketing purposes. Certainly, this developing area begs more precise terminology: is a group discussion supervised by a psychologist following a screening enough to merit this term? Or should it only be used in reference to work done by therapists and their patients in the contexts of psychological treatment? Prescription films seem like an interesting tool for making therapy more enjoyable but in such a case shouldn’t they be accompanied by proper empirical research conducted according to specific methodology?

The making of a film by students could be another element that can develop teamwork skills – there are many workshops which help channel young people’s spontaneous creativity. In this context, it is important to foster artistic creativity through filmmaking workshops; such activities fulfil objectives for film education as specified by the Polish Film Institute in 2005–2015 – both through funding film debuts as well as financing programmes offered to schools (such as Filmoteka Szkolna. Akademia [Film Library. An Academy] and Spółdzielnia Młodych Twórców [Young Artists’ Cooperative]). There are a handful of other initiatives which also deserve to be mentioned – using filmmaking workshops as art therapy, for instance in the course of therapeutic support for child cancer patients and their parents.¹³

Systemic Aspects (Creating a Unified and Modern System of Film Education)

As Marek Hendrykowski points out, film education implies a process based on a school system and cultural institutions. From a systemic perspective, film education in Poland is based on a cooperation between three ministerial offices: (a) the Ministry of Education (MEN) – responsible for producing the national curriculum for early childhood care and all levels of school education; (b) the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MNiSW) – in respect to all elements of

¹² Cinematherapy. Meetings between the Frames – the Generator Foundation has been organising film-based psychological workshops since 2009. Discussions held among participants with varied backgrounds combine cultural studies and a film studies perspective with a psychological approach. Completed projects include cycles titled: “Film Happy”, “Otherness”, “Relationships” and “Energising Winter Pack”.

¹³ “You Too Can Become a Director” workshop conducted during rehabilitation camps for child cancer patients organised by the Krwinka [Blood Cell] Foundation.

higher education connected to film, television, media and cultural studies as well as supporting research projects focused on film, media and audiovisual culture; (c) the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage – in respect to art schools and academies as well as supporting research on film and media in order to promote Polish humanities.

Film education within the school system can be twofold: on the one hand, it involves education through film (which remains the key domain of incorporating film education into the MEN curricula); on the other hand, it means education on film and about film practice. The latter model prioritises film theory and aims not only to elevate viewers and participants in audiovisual culture, but also to educate future and present film specialists (film critics, educators). This approach is characteristic for higher education; various universities in Poland offer film-oriented courses. Importantly, film theory has traditionally been separated from filmmaking practice. At present, however, this tendency is undergoing changes. BA programmes mostly focus on applied film knowledge which results in a gradual shift in the scope of courses, which are now beginning to open up more to various practical elements (such as film marketing, film criticism, scriptwriting and film education). Considering the fact that in Poland film studies have been the subject of university education since the 1960s and 1970s (University of Lodz – 1959; Jagiellonian University in Cracow – 1973; University of Silesia in Katowice – 1975) and the number of secondary schools offering specialised film and media programmes is growing, we can definitely notice some progress. At the same time, however, it needs to be said that we still lack a unified system: students are seldom offered the opportunity to combine film studies with pedagogical training which would make them eligible for employment in state schools.

Another systemic aspect which still needs to be addressed is incorporating elements of film education into the curriculum of Polish studies. At present, film education is promoted as an important element of supplementary teacher training and not something that can be covered at university before obtaining one's diploma.

Artistic film education in Poland is conducted by state schools as well as independent schools, which have recently expanded their offer in this respect. Students can now select between profiles, teaching modes, choosing the length of particular courses and the way they are organised. But as filmmaking workshops are mostly conducted by students or graduates of art academies, such courses usually cannot be incorporated into school curricula because the instructors (graduates of film editing or directing) lack formal teaching qualifications required by law.

Of course, the goals of film education could hardly be achieved without specialised institutions. The 2005–2015 period in Poland brought huge development in terms of film education, mainly because of the following three factors: the creation of new film education institutions, reorganisation of the existing institutions and the creation of Coalition for Film Education (Koalicja dla Edukacji Filmowej). There can be no doubt that the creation of the Polish Film Institute (PISF) in

2005 (which reports directly to the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage) was a real breakthrough which brought hope for further unification of the entire system. During the first decade of the PISF's existence, its statutory activities including film education were carried out on a large scale through the PISF's own projects as well as supporting others, those implemented by other institutions (operational programmes focused on film promotion and education). The first national programme of film education – Filmoteka Szkolna [Film Library] – was created as a flagship project of the PISF (it was also its first project; the preparations started simultaneously with the creation of the institution) under the patronage of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage – the minister of culture Bogdan Zdrojewski gave it the rank of a strategic venture. In 2009, the first stage of the project was completed – the PISF donated Film Libraries (sets of 26 DVDs) to all secondary schools in Poland (15,000 sets were distributed). The project proved a real breakthrough for a number of reasons: because of its scope, organisational objectives and its virtue of integrating various milieus concerned with the development of film education in Poland. The Programme Board united many people and institutions,¹⁴ similarly to the editing team led by Ewelina Nurczyńska-Fidelska. According to the creators' wishes, the programme “was focused primarily on Polish cinematography” (Kwiatkowska, 2009, p. 5) and was a definitive answer to the postulates formulated for almost a century, stressing insufficient access to films as one of the basic impediments for the creation of a unified film education system. Various accompanying actions propagated the idea of film education and provided help for teachers using films in their teaching practice. At the same time, much emphasis was placed on teacher training conducted by a network of educators and facilitated by additional courses for teachers (also available online). In 2014, an extension of the Film Library film set was made under the patronage of both the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the Ministry of Education, which raised hope for future cooperation.

Shaping the strategy for film education development in Poland, the creators looked for inspiration both in the national tradition and in the existing institutions in other European countries (e.g. the vision promoted by the British Film Institute, as I have already mentioned). Other institutions, previously active in education, attempted to reorganise and broaden the scope of their activities using new technologies available (e.g. the Central Cabinet for Film Education through the website EdukacjaFilmowa.pl). The growing number of institutions, programmes and websites motivated the PISF to create the Coalition for Film Education (2011), whose goal was to create a shared platform for all institutions, NGOs and higher education institutions active within the spheres of cultural education and peda-

¹⁴ The Programme Board included: B. Słomczewska (MKiDN), M. Piasecka-Dzbeńska (MEN), W. Zwinogrodzka (Polish Television), A. Kawecki (Filmoteka Narodowa [National Film Archive]), Professor T. Szczepański (PWSFTviT in Łódź), Dr M. Samoraj (University of Warsaw, Faculty of Pedagogy), Professor R. Kluszczyński and dr K. Klejsa (University of Lodz), Professor T. Lubelski (Jagiellonian University in Cracow, Institute of Audiovisual Arts), Professor A. Werner (Aleksander Zelwerowicz National Academy of Dramatic Art in Warsaw), J. Sosnowski (programme consulting).

gological training. From the outset, the Coalition was an open project. The initial eight organisation members¹⁵ were soon joined by others. It seems clear that film education understood both as a process and a “system of actions”, as it was specified by Nurczyńska-Fidelska in her definition, should focus not only on fulfilling present objectives but also on planning strategies for the future which will ensure its further development.

So the question remains: is the film education system in Poland a stable one? Some changes occurring in the middle of 2016 may be slightly worrying. The Ministry of Education announced its intention to reorganise the system and introduce a new Core Curriculum; at the same time there are no consultations taking place regarding the scope and role of film education in the new curriculum. Until now, it was the PISF that led actions focused on shaping film education in Poland but with the change of its managing director, the institution will still focus on promoting and popularising film culture, but film education ceases to be its priority (as it seems, definitions can be subject to change and depend on current audiovisual policy). The Film Library (as well as the Polish Film Academy [Akademia Polskiego Filmu]) will now report to the National Film Archive. Does this mean that all attempts to expand the offer by adding more European films will be abandoned? It seems that the mission and objectives of film education will now be pursued only by the Coalition for Film Education – as the PISF “education” subpage redirects you to the Coalition’s webpage. Is there a real chance for necessary coordination of actions undertaken by various institutions and programmes? And aside from the shared platform where we can find information on individual institutions dealing with film education, will there be any chance for actual cooperation? Shared goals listed on the website resemble those formerly formulated by the PISF but, not being directly linked to this institution, the initiative has lost its stable source of funding. In these circumstances, is it possible to speak of any modern strategy for film education in Poland, or are we rather witnessing a destabilisation of the previously existing system? So far, it has been impossible to find answers to these questions.

Conclusion

In this article, I have attempted to present an outline of the main tendencies, historical and present determinants, implied objectives and successes of film education in Poland. Even though generally in Polish schools a distributed model of film education is used, there are multiple support programmes which promote and expand knowledge about film both in schools and outside them. It is hard to guess what film education would look like if it was imposed more strictly by ministerial regulations. But what certainly deserves appreciation is the level of commitment on the part of individual teachers who choose to treat film education as their vocation.

¹⁵ Namely: PISF, the Central Cabinet for Film Education, the Centre for Citizenship Education, the New Horizons Association, Warsaw Film Academy, the Generator Foundation, Wajda School and Warsaw Centre for Socio-Educational Innovation and Training.

These grassroots actions merit our attention as they are the reason why in many Polish schools students are educated not only through films but also about films and film practices.

In my view, the passing decade has witnessed a considerable increase in terms of people's interest in film education and brought favourable audiovisual policies on the part of the government. A network of programmes and institutions has contributed to promoting film education and its merits. It seems important to point out, however, that European institutions dealing with film education do not limit their actions to children, teenagers and film educators (as specified in the main goals of the Coalition for Film Education); instead, they stress the importance of film education addressed at parents and senior citizens as well as children in early childhood care. Today, in 2016, in view of oncoming changes, it is important to stress that the main objective of film education in Poland should be creating a stable system, capable of promoting and implementing a modern, long-term strategy, conscious of its traditions as well as anticipating future needs.

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Summary

This paper is focused on problems concerning film education in Poland. It concentrates on the changes in and different ways of defining the goals of film education, the aims or recipients of this type of education. By presenting several definitions provided by Polish experts, it shows the direction of the changes; for example the inclusion of film knowledge into a wider context of essential competencies of each participant of contemporary audiovisual culture. The paper shows that in the 80's and the 90's of the 20th century academics identified the relationship and mutual interdependence between literature and the cinema as the most important part. Now, however, they mostly focus on the role of film in preserving national and European heritage. Moreover, contemporary concepts of film education mainly deal with workshops rather than with theoretical studies. What are the effects of the changes and new tendencies? Film education is present in the curriculums of primary and secondary schools (but constituting only limited elements and playing a marginal role). In Poland there are ministerial programmes, institutional projects, public offerings and also competitive commercial offers. Although we can see positive tendencies in this area, the system of film education in Poland still needs a coherent policy and institutional care.

Keywords: film literacy, film education