Abstract

According to the Latin poet Virgil, art is capable of revealing to us what no science can ever reveal to a human mind. Due to a countless number of factors, in the course of history, human beings’ efforts to fully understand their inner and outer reality have been largely unsuccessful. Though timidly, also scientific research has now suggested that the relationship with art can be a powerful instrument in order to attain a deeper and different comprehension of reality. Violence, or, more exactly, unjustified violence, basically rests on an irrational and short-sighted analysis and interpretation of reality. It is here assumed that the experience of art can provide a powerful contribution in order to understand reality much more deeply, to avoid unjustified violence, and to address conflicts constructively. The psychological processes relating to the experience of art and to its connections with violence are described. It is also pointed out that this theoretical perspective does not perfectly coincide with the theoretical theses underpinning art therapy. It is a fact that in this paper art is not considered as a mere instrument, a perspective that might inadvertently and implicitly suggest the idea of an entity from which human beings, poised in a sort of higher hierarchical level, merely draw a greater capacity to understand reality. Instead, a completely different situation is created when you consider this entity as invaluable, infinite, and mysterious. In this context the two components of the situation - art and human beings - are on the same level. Some suggestions are presented aiming to explain why this theoretical approach might be particularly helpful in order to better understand and countervail violence.