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ECOLOGICAL AESTHETICS: IMPLEMENTATION IN THE CONDITIONS OF HIGHER PEDAGOGICAL EDUCATION IN UKRAINE

The beginning of the twenty-first century is fairly defined as the era of acute environmental crises, which marks an alarming tendency to lose harmony between a man and nature. Numerous wars, man-made disasters have put humankind on the brink of survival. A man, being under the threat of self-destruction, reflexively began to build a system of prohibitions (taboos) in relations with those objects of nature that were under threat of total destruction. However, the regulation of relations with nature through coercion, control, prohibitions and fines was ineffective.

It becomes increasingly clear that nature and humanity may be saved only with a help of a powerful development of culture and ways of cultural familiarization with the surrounding world. The interconnection between the two elements is evident: nature saturates a culture, making it weighty. The culture uses the possibilities of nature in accordance with its functions. Nature and culture are constantly interacting, as if they help to identify each of its essence. Nature has always been a model for culture, because it personified the norm of a healthy being.

In fact, culture is a human attitude to nature. Culture is the manifestation of humanity in the universal meaning of such an attitude to the world. Contradistinction between nature and culture, in our opinion, is determined by the false concept of culture, which identifies the low effectiveness of interaction with nature. It is about reassessment of material achievements and neglect of spiritual levers of culture. Material achievements of society form a culture only

when they help to improve a man and his relationships with nature. According to Albert Schweitzer, a culture that cares only of material aspects without proper spiritual progress is similar to a ship that has lost control of the steering and is fated to get crashed ¹.

The most important purpose of culture in this sense is that culture can have a powerful effect on the attitude of man towards nature. Spiritual values, cultivated by culture, form the general values of the attitude towards nature. In this context, culture is the world of human values and subjective meanings. Culture itself helps mankind to regulate the enormous and powerful potential of mind in the proper way, in order not to make it destructive and dangerous.

In the context of the humanitarization of environmental knowledge, here objectively appears a tendency to create conceptual foundations of modern environmentalism for the conscious acceptance by the general population. One after another vivid ecological paradigms were born, which nowadays do not lose their weight and may become a solid basis of environmental outlook. Among them, intellectual and humanitarian and spiritual concepts take on a prominent place. This is, first of all, the doctrine of the noosphere (V.Vernadskyi), the ethics of reverence for life (A.Schweitzer), cosmic ethics (K.Tsiolkovskyi), the ethics of the Earth (O.Leopold), Living ethics (M.Roerich), the ethics of love for life (D.Filatov), moral concept of nature (D.Datta), deep ecology (A.Naess), the principle of biophyllism (E.Wilson), the concept of co-evolution (M.Moiseev), the principle of responsibility (H.Jonas), ecophilosophy (B.Norton), the concept of nature in the Japanese culture (M.Watanabe) and others.

In accordance with the conceptual searches, new directions of environmental knowledge are also emerging: environmental ethics (V.Boreyko, M.Zibner, T.Kiefer, D.Kozlovskyi, E.Laszlo, J.Minkivichius, D.Pirs, J.Tinbergen and etc.); ecological psychology (S.Deriabo and V.Yasvin, A.Liovochkina, A.Nazarov, V.Panov, A.Rudomino-Dusiatska, V.Skrebets, Yu.Shvalb, I.Shmeliova and others); ecological aesthetics (H.Husieva, D.Diki, T.Jessop, J.McDermott, L.Liashko, N.Mankovska, Y.Sepänmaa, M.Wallis, N.Filianina, M.Yakovenko, H.Young, etc.)

Modern education should take into account the latest ideas and concepts in the field of ecology. The social dimension of environmental knowledge is gaining strength and significance today. The aim of the article is reasoning

1 Schweitzer, A. (1973): Culture and Ethics. Moscow: Progress; 1973.

and presentation of educational potential of ecological aesthetics and variants of its studying and implementation in the conditions of higher pedagogical education in Ukraine.

Ecological aesthetics is a humanitarian way of solving the tragic antithesis “nature – culture”, namely, it has a pronounced socially meaningful result ². Ecological aesthetics, in our understanding, has a significant applied value, because it is designed for direct “output” in pedagogy. It seems to open to educators the ways of universalizing the aesthetic assessment of the environment and the realization of its eco-educational potential.

Until recently, it was believed that the main purpose of ecological aesthetics is the organization of the environment. However, in time, we may observe a deeper understanding of its essence and functional field. This discipline is based on the environmental philosophy and psychology, because it examines the relationship between different variable items of the natural environment and the psyche and human behaviour. It explores human perception, experience, behaviour in their natural, representative contexts. Ecological aesthetics operates with the latest concepts, which have been introduced neither into the scientific field of life, nor into the everyday life. Such a new concept is “environmental behaviour,” which, according to the canons of ecological aesthetics, should be appropriate, acceptable and timely set in a particular natural situation, which may have its own plot, the situation of the mise en scene, acts of behavioural ecosystems. Y.Sepänmaa – a modern Finnish eco-philosopher – believes that ecological aesthetics literally teaches to see the value of natural processes which are independent of a man. He emphasizes the importance of interpreting nature as an indirect demonstration of its values. Something interpreted, in his opinion, makes nature understandable. Interpretation does not happen in a vacuum. Here a process has two durable war-rants that are knowledge and associations ³.

Contemporary problems posed by the aesthetics of the environment include ecological beauty and harmony, ecological ecumenism, antikallism, ecological and aesthetic know-how ⁴. Their discussion is carried out at the intersection of the humanities and natural sciences, denoting common problems, which in the future are capable of giving rise to scientific knowledge.

2 Yakovenko, M. (2008): Ecological aesthetics as an actual trend of modern culture. URL: http://www.nbuv.gov.ua/portal/Soc_Gum/phd/2008_9/jakovenko.pdf.

3 Sepänmaa, Y. (1993): *The Beauty of Environment: A General Model for Environmental Aesthetics*. (2nd ed.). Denton, Texas: Environmental Ethics Books; 1993.

4 Mankovska, N. (1992): Ecological aesthetics abroad. *Philosophical sciences*. Vol. 2: 16-31.

It refers, in particular, to the theory and practice of environmental and aesthetic education. Overcoming some elements of utopianism, this new area of aesthetic education is experiencing a period of rapid formation, covering general education and higher education. The undisputed positive environmental aesthetics as a whole is its dialogicity. The traditional dialogue between eastern and western aesthetics, aesthetics and ethics, art and science is complemented by search for contacts between aesthetics and technology, economics, sociology and law. Such a scientific search can lead in the future to the emergence of ecological aesthetics as part of the ecology of culture.

Ecological aesthetics is closely connected with the artistic life of a society, which can be considered a kind of barometer, which indicates the level of development of aesthetic thought and its influence on the spiritual and objective and practical orientation of culture. Art is a phenomenon of culture, which the human experience of worldview self-determination is fixed and concentrated in, as well as the experience of the direct objective realization of this self-determination in the cultural forms of the development of nature ⁵.

As a rule, in artistic images those aesthetic ideas are reproduced that carry a high intellectual and humanistic charge and which are in harmony with common human interests. In a specific artistic form, art expresses what defines the spiritual and subject-practical orientation of culture. Art accumulates what is experienced or should be experienced by all representatives of a particular society, and mostly by all the inhabitants of the Earth.

Many public institutes should admit that nowadays art becomes a peculiar aesthetic and ecological know-how. This is a specific (artistic) form of exchange of value approaches to nature, ways of interaction with the world, forms of its aesthetic transformation. Within the bounds of art, international development of achievements in human artistic acquaintance with nature is provided. This is facilitated by:

- the sign nature of art;
- peculiarities of artistic language (associativity, metaphor, polysemy);
- commonly used techniques of artistic representation of nature (expression, symbolization, hyperbolization, individualization, etc.);
- polyfunctionality of art, which is realized as a way of acquaintance with nature, as its imaginative philosophy, as a kind of “catalogue” of aesthetic

5 Huseva, A. (2012): Ecological aesthetics as a transformed form of aesthetics of nature. *Terra Humana*. Vol. 3: 209–213.

expressiveness of its phenomena and objects, as a powerful regulator of value orientations in relation to its preservation.

Ecological aesthetics in this way is closely connected with the artistic practice of society and relies on associative-figurative thinking.

A modern educator needs ecological aesthetics as an updated view upon the philosophy of nature, which, firstly, will help to build a personal attitude to it on the basis of subjection of perceptions and evaluations; secondly, it will ensure personal positioning in nature; thirdly, it will enable the educator to become aware of the genesis of his own ecological consciousness and behaviour at the level of powerful reflection. Nowadays it is a high time to introduce methods of diagnosis into the system of higher pedagogical education, correction and training of environmental consciousness – both individual and group. It is very important to teach future teachers to organize their own and then children's environmental behaviour through their inclusion in various situations with different subject-matter content ⁶.

In the context of purpose of the study, we tried to reproduce the experiment, proposed by the Ukrainian psychologist V.Romenets, to study the peculiarities of forming students' abilities for scientific and creative thinking ⁷. Students of the graduation course at Pedagogical University (104 persons, specialty – elementary school teacher) were offered to interpret the arguments of the junior pupil: "The fish is cold and stupid. She lives to be caught and eaten by us".

The necessity for such work realized by students with children's considerations is determined by the fact that the early childhood pragmatism, which is being tracked, first of all, in children's assessments, has become widespread today. Teachers often remain indifferent to such manifestations of their pupils' attitude to nature, explaining this fact by excessive impulsiveness in children's reaction to the environment.

Graduate students differently interpreted children's thoughts. The majority of respondents (61 %) noted "excessive cruelty" of such an assessment, which in their opinion, was caused by a lack of children's awareness of the interesting features of fish biology.

Only 24 % of the students were able to identify the so-called "sympathetic imagination" at the level of artistic and scientific intuition, which eventually helped them to "cover" the proposed situation with a pedagogical view. In the

6 Tarasenko, H. (1997): Ecological aesthetics in the system of teacher training: methodological aspect. Vinnytsia; 1997

7 Romenets, V.A. (2004): Psychology of creativity. Kyiv: Lybid; 2004.

interpretations of these students, an integrative approach to the perception and interpretation of both the fact of fish life and the assessment by a child of primary school age was felt. In particular, the respondents did not rely on a rationalized explanation, but gave an emotionally-shaped commentary, simulating even the future dialogue between the teacher and the child.

As a result of the study of environmental aesthetics, students interpreted the given fact in terms of the unity of philosophy, ecology and art. In the projected responses, an attempt was made to provide the child with an explanation about the uniqueness of the ecosystem with a help of its aesthetic characteristics – available and hidden.

For instance, as a subject of controversy some dilemmas were offered to students: is a fish stupid or smart? Pretty or nasty? In a polemic, a peculiar aesthetics of the behavioural programs of sea inhabitants was affirmed. Here is an example of a creative interpretation by students of this dilemma:

“Why do people have a predominantly consumer attitude towards fish? It is enough tasty. One adores, of course, decorative fish which are colourful, graceful, with lush tails and fins.

What can an ordinary river crucial expect for? For a frying pan? No, my consciousness refuses to accept such pragmatism. I will try to convey to my pupils a different assessment of a fish kingdom. I will show the hidden beauty of these creatures to them, which is not visible to the eyes. Let's take into consideration, at least, the harmony of certain biological processes. Cannot move, for instance, the strange “patriotism” of a salmon? This fish at all costs aspires to return to those waters where it was born, and only there gives birth to offspring. The way to spawning is heavy and dangerous, but salmon stubbornly floats into “native penates” to prolong its genus and immediately die. Sceptics shrug their shoulders: “Instinct.” Of course. But how much beauty is shown in those behavioural “programs” that nature offers to their creatures! “(Oksana P., 22 years old).

In addition to the amazing “patriotism” of sturgeon and salmon fish, students have interpreted the equally amazing dolphin altruism that saves people in the sea; sacrificial riot of whales against water pollution and others. In the projected monologues and dialogues there was an appreciable experience of artistic comprehension by students of the aesthetics of the water element due to the perception of its artistic images: these are the iconic images of fish in the literary works by Victor Astafiev and Ernest Hemingway; this is an

enthusiastic hymn for wise dolphins in the works by Rene Clark, the obligatory mention of love for the Black Sea by Kostiantyn Paustovskyi, this is a careful listening to the energy of the ocean in the music by a composer and navigator Mykola Rymyskyi-Korsakov, this is an admiring of the wonderful world of the aquarium in the music by Camille Saint-Saens and on paintings by Henri Matisse; this is an acquaintance with Paul Winter's environmental jazz, where the sounds of music are intertwined with shouts of whales and dolphins; this is a moving film by Simon Wincer "Free Willy" and many other convincing artistic testimonies of human love not only for the "gastro-nomic" qualities of the inhabitants of the water world.

The conducted pilot study of creative and interpretive thinking of university students has shown an insufficient level of readiness of the overwhelming majority of the responded future educators for understanding the aesthetics of nature. Only a third of the students who participated in the survey showed a competency in drawing up interpretive ecological and aesthetic characteristics for certain objects of nature or ecosystems. Such a low level of readiness will not allow future professionals in the field of education to convey knowledge about environmental aesthetics to pupils.

One of the reasons for such a state of affairs is the chaotic accumulation of natural knowledge that does not form in the minds of students a coherent, emotionally painted picture of the world. It is a high time for the development and introduction disciplines of the integrative nature in the higher pedagogical education.

In particular, on the basis of the Public Higher Educational Establishment «Vinnytsia Academy of Continuing Education», a multi-year approbation of the authorial interdisciplinary course "Eco-pedagogical aesthetics" is conducted, which was created on the basis of problematic integration of knowledge (philosophy, psychology, art, ecology). The purpose of the course is to develop a holistic approach for future teachers of any specialty, which means to realize the problem of preserving nature by understanding the uniqueness of ecosystems through their aesthetic characteristics. Among the tasks of the special course we can indicate the formation of peculiar meta-skills of the valuable acquaintance with nature. This course has certain advantages over the differentiated study of nature: it is a deepening of cultural and axiological orientation, strengthening of sociocultural accents, using the potential of artistic reflexivity, providing a general philosophical basis of the ecological worldview. In the process of mastering

the interdisciplinary course, students learn to understand the aesthetic dimension of “mathematics of nature” (form, size, symmetry and asymmetry), physics of motion in nature, “music” of the nature sounds (intonation, rhythm), colouring of “painting” of nature, etc.

The results of approbation of the interdisciplinary course “Eco-pedagogical aesthetics” prove that artistic activity is a reliable way of personal interpretation of nature. Therefore, one of the innovative ways of teaching environmental and pedagogical aesthetics is the use of integrated mechanisms of the poly-artistic approach, which involves the universalization of artistic analysis from the point of view of the ideological and psychological influence of artistic images on the person in order to form a holistic picture of the socio-cultural space in one’s consciousness. Implementation of the poly-artistic approach in the context of teaching the interdisciplinary course means that the process of professional growth of the future teacher leads to penetration of feeling and awareness of not only literary, musical or spatial-plastic images of nature, but the standard aesthetic values of the human attitude towards nature, which are strongly perpetuated in the artistic experience of humanity. It helps to interpret the artistic images of nature in the humanitarian way with a direct orientation for decoding of their ideological content.

Environmental aesthetics, having enormous educational potential, should occupy an adequate place in the system of teacher training and become a powerful tool for correction of the environmental outlook and professional positions of future teachers.

Attitude towards nature is a reflexive, integral total, which manifests itself in perception as an image of the world. The image itself is a kind of sublimation of the integrity of cognition and sensation. Without proper inclusion of figurative thinking, in our view, it is impossible to humanitize education in general. This figurative, metaphorical thinking possesses an increased heuristic and provides intuitive comprehension of natural and social connections ⁸.

An upcoming teacher needs ecological aesthetics as an updated view upon the philosophy of nature, which, firstly, will help to build a personal attitude to it on the basis of subjection of perceptions and evaluations; secondly, it will ensure personal positioning in nature; thirdly, it will enable the educator to become aware of the genesis of his own ecological consciousness and behaviour at the

8 Filianina, N. (2015): Artistic comprehension of nature and ecological. Scientific journ. Series «Philosophy». Vol. 44: 94–107.

level of powerful reflection. Nowadays it is a high time to introduce methods of diagnosis into the system of higher pedagogical education, correction and training of environmental consciousness – both individual and group. It is very important to teach future teachers to organize their own and then children's environmental behaviour through their inclusion in various situations with different subject-matter content.

Consequently, educational potential of ecological aesthetics should have the opportunity for implementation in the system of higher pedagogical education. The ecological and aesthetic approach to the integration of educational disciplines at pedagogical university is extremely fruitful. Environmental education of future teachers should have a personal dimension. Only integrative personal values may become an essential indicator of teacher's professional readiness for educational work with children and accomplish the function of higher criterion for orientation of the future teacher in the educational space.

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DISCOVERY LEARNING AS A NEW TYPE OF EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

Today, the most promising and appropriate to socio-economic and psychological conditions is Discovery Learning. It is interpreted as a teaching principle, as a new type of educational process, as a teaching method, and as a new didactic system.

How to motivate students to self-study today? We often encounter uninitiated behavior, unwillingness to complete tasks, or situations where a rule needs to be explained several times. Teachers spend a lot of time searching for new, vivid examples of explaining rules, choosing teaching methods that require more activity from students than acting skills from the teacher.