

THE ROLE OF ART IN THE PROCESS OF FORMING THE ECOLOGICAL CULTURE OF A TEACHER

prof. dr Galyna Tarasenko

Akademia Kujawsko-Pomorska

e-mail: g.tarasenko@akp.bydgoszcz.pl, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9394-2600>

Summary: The article is about the formation of ecological culture, which acquires the importance of the most significant competence of a modern person. This process takes place in the context of cultural transmission and enables the sequence of culture, its continuity in time. Ecological culture is analyzed in the aspect of artistic knowledge of nature. The methodological roots of the problem of the relationship between ecology and art in scientific research and cultural practices are considered. A lot of attention is paid to art as a cultural code of a person's attitude to nature.

The article describes the role and mission of artistic images of nature in the educational process. The experience of introducing ecological and pedagogical aesthetics into the educational process is presented. The author's experience of involving teachers in the artistic and creative interpretation of the aesthetics of natural objects and phenomena is described.

Key words: ecological culture, art, ecological aesthetics, ecological education, teacher, artistic and creative interpretation.

1. Introduction

Globalization of all processes and spheres of social life, mediated by large-scale integration processes of a civilizational nature, leads to the search for a new educational paradigm that would most fully reflect not only the national traditions of using nature as a factor of personal influence, but also correspond to socio-historical guidelines for harmonious coexistence with the nature for mankind in general and each person in particular.

In this context, the actual result of educational work is the formation of the ecological culture of young generations as an intellectual, reflective and practical ability to timely and adequately adjust personal and public attitudes towards nature as the highest value of being. Nowadays, ecological culture acquires the importance as a key competence of a modern person. The synthetic nature of environmental culture is caused due to the mastery not of individual sciences, but by a comprehensive integration of various knowledge fields, based on the convergence of natural sciences and humanities, as well as the collaborative efforts of formal and informal

education. This is the socially necessary outcome that ultimately correlates with socially accepted behavioral programs in nature, for the formation of which mere natural knowledge is insufficient. Today, personalized, flexible, creatively variable, and integrated into the global socio-cultural context behavioral programs are needed. They are shaped in a young person throughout the entire educational process and remain its fundamental result even when factual knowledge, acquired during school or college life, is forgotten. It is precisely environmental culture that will help a young person, a future professional, move from a utilitarian attitude towards nature and professional craftsmanship to the level of creative life in the name of harmony between human and the environment.

Cultural transmission is the process when culture is transmitted from previous generations to the next through education. In particular, cultural transmission enables the phenomenon of cultural continuity over time. The inheritance of cultural codes is ensured by the direct contact of living carriers of culture. This includes educational interactions between teachers and students. The teacher serves not only as a transmitter of culture but also as its bearer and heir, preserving what has been created not by us but before us. Otherwise, there is a rupture in the cultural chain.

2. Ecological culture as a result of artistic knowledge of nature

Ecological culture is a person's holistic view of the world, self-awareness, and one's place in the world. On one hand, it represents a unique comprehension of the world structure, based on the generalized knowledge of individuals about the world and their ideal experiences of the valuable (moral and aesthetic) aspects of interacting with nature. On the other hand, these are permanent settings of practical activity that determine the correct behavioral programs regarding the positioning of a person in nature.

What is the role of art in this process? Art is a form that uniquely combines contemplation and creativity, focuses on the expression of attitude to the surrounding world through color, sound, word, motor plasticity, etc. Comprehending the world and expressing one's vision of the world through the means of art is very organic for an ecologically cultured person.

Art, as a result of artistic knowledge of the world, has always been a reliable factor in the formation of ecological culture and occupied an equal place among other forms of social consciousness. Art is a cultural phenomenon that captures and concentratedly expresses the human experience of worldview self-definition. This experience directly enables the concrete realization of this self-definition in cultural forms of understanding nature. Artistic images, as a rule, reproduce those aesthetic ideas that carry a high intellectual and humanistic charge and are consonant with universal human interests. In a specific artistic form, art expresses what is experienced or should be experienced by all representatives of a particular society, and mostly all inhabitants of the planet Earth.

World culture gave birth to very interesting ideas about the "connecting" role of artistic creativity between man and nature. Thinkers of different times and peoples believed that nature chooses art as a "mediator" between itself and humanity in order to teach it wise behavior in the environment. Eastern philosophy, in particular,

interprets art as a way of guiding lower forms by higher ones, aiding simple life forms in their transition to more complex and sophisticated states (Sh. Pandit, O. Tagore). Ukrainian philosophy also sees a certain “cosmic connection” between art and nature. Thus, according to the wandering philosopher H. Skovoroda, there is a mediator - the world of symbols - between the great world of nature (macrocosm) and human (microcosm). The thinker first had the Bible in mind¹. However, in addition to religion, other forms of social consciousness, in particular art, can successfully claim the role of the symbolic world-mediator.

3. The problem of the relationship between ecology and art in scientific research and cultural practices

The problems of artistic understanding of the world are actively studied in philosophical and psycho-pedagogical aspects. Researchers traditionally consider it a higher and at the same time a special form of comprehending the reality. According to the philosophers, artistic understanding of the world willingly uses metaphor as a result of holistic perception of nature (D. Vico, V. Humboldt, O. Potebnia). Psychologists have always deeply studied the influence of artistic images on the formation of personal formations (R. Arnheim, L. Vygotskyi, E. Neumann, V. Romenets, Z. Freud, K. Jung, P. Jacobson, etc.). Some artists considered an artistic symbol to be the most powerful means of transforming a person's mental life (H. Ibsen, A. Rimbaud, F. Solohub). The idea of a cultural dialogue (M. Bakhtin) was born in a timely and justified manner, and on its basis - an artistic dialogue (Y. Lotman, Z. Mints, Y. Tynyanov, T. Tsivyan, A. Shevchenko, etc.). Pedagogical science absolutely organically studies the role of art in the worldview formation of young people. In particular, Ukrainian researchers traditionally attach great importance to the artistic training of teachers (V. Dryapika, I. Zyazyun, N. Myropolska, V. Orlov, O. Otych, O. Rudnytska, H. Sahach, T. Tsvelykh, A. Shcherbo, etc.).

Researchers often interpret the artistic life of society as a relatively independent subsystem of spiritual life, which is guided primarily by artistic needs. We can only partially agree with this. The artistic life of mankind, in our opinion, was born primarily from the needs of a person's worldview self-definition. Art is a manifestation and a spiritual-practical solution to the problems and contradictions of the worldview that appear in the context of a cultural way of life. For a long time, unfortunately, the role of art was underestimated and was narrowed only to illustrating various theoretically expressed worldview principles. Today, it is possible to confidently assert the position of the Ukrainian philosopher V. Malakhov regarding the fact that art is, first of all, a worldview phenomenon, a cultural phenomenology of universal humanity².

Artistic culture supports a permanent, relevant worldview background of social existence, because not only problematic worldview situations, but also stable attitudes can be relevant. Any society necessarily needs the embodiment of its

1 H. Skovoroda, *Catechism or the Initial Gates to Christian Virtues*, Publication of the Ukrainian Evangelical Association in North America, Detroit – Toronto 1963.

2 V. Malakhov, *Art and Human Worldview*, Mistetstvo, Kyiv 1988.

worldview in works of art, which transform worldview meanings into the property of all members of society. The Ukrainian researcher O. Rudnytska quite reasonably defines the artistic worldview as a specific form of emotional and valuable attitude to the surrounding existence, which focuses the meaningful attitudes and orientations of a person, expressed in works of art³. In artistic creativity, with the help of artistic signs produced in the course of cultural development, the practice of experiencing existence is recorded as a person's direct sensory affirmation in the world of nature. The outstanding Ukrainian writer I. Franko rightly noted that we possess an immeasurable stock of meanings, experiences, their combinations within art, as well as sensory reactions of various people and numerous generations⁴.

The connection between ecology and art is actively studied within scientific thought and various artistic practices around the world. In particular, Polish researchers F. Capra, K. Czerwińska, E. Domańska, M. Gołaszewska, A. Kowalewska, A. Romańska, K. Wilkoszewska, F. Znaniecki, as well as cultural and artistic figures T. Byra, T. Bazan. Productive activity of the Polish Foundation "Ecology and Art" (Fundacja Ekologia i Sztuka), headed by E. Charkiewicz, attracts attention, where a kind of space for alternative education and critical interpretation of the world, which we live in, has been successfully created.

Positions of the Polish professor E. Domanska⁵ are exceptionally relevant to our research. In her scholarly works, she actively employs the term "ecological humanistics" (or "ecoposthumanistics") and distinguishes it from social ecology. The author suggests not using the term "ecological humanistics" as a synonym for various environmental movements. We fully endorse E. Domanska's position, considering ecologism a much broader concept that pertains not only to a specific understanding of knowledge/science, its practices, and methods of cognition but primarily involves a shift in people's consciousness.

Thus, artistic activity encodes the age-old experience of the society's interaction with nature and brings individuals closer to the necessity of solving existential concerns. It accentuates the responsibility for moral, aesthetic, ecological, and overall worldview choices. Among various forms of social consciousness, art has consistently adhered to ecological principles. Artistic representations of nature significantly broaden the criteria for approving and appreciating the natural world. This holds significant importance within ecological aesthetics, which considers it unnecessary to evaluate natural objects but declares the need for their complete approval. If nature represents active life-creating forces, then art is a life-creation as an artifact, as it is created by human, the most advanced form of life in nature. Thus, the image of nature, born from human artistic consciousness, forms the cultural layer that serves as the foundation for the noosphere (V. Vernadsky) and, in turn, returns to nature but as an "agent" of the sphere of reason, a regulator in the interaction between humanity and the cosmos.

3 O. Rudnytska, *Pedagogy: General and Artistic*, Navchalna Knyha – Bohdan, Ternopil 2005, p. 57.

4 I. Franko, *Beauty and Secrets of Creativity*, Mistetstvo, Kyiv 1980, p. 372.

5 E. Domańska, *Humanistyka ekologiczna*, „Teksty Drugie” 2013, nr 1-2.

4. Art as a cultural code of a person's attitude towards nature

Art actively interacts with education and successfully fulfills its eco-educational mission thanks to its inherent phenomenon of polyfunctionality. The syncretic nature of art significantly contributes to this, as it consistently pulsates as a means of understanding the world, its evaluation, transformation, and communication. Today, the functions of art regarding nature are already specified. Among them, ethical (formation of value orientations regarding nature), artistic-conceptual (philosophical analysis of human relations to nature), predictive (forecasting the future state of the environment), socially-transformative (artistic reproduction of human activities in nature), and others can be distinguished. We consider it possible to emphasize the priority of those functions of art that, in our opinion, best ensure the functioning of an artistic work in the system of environmental education. These include thegnoseological, artistic-conceptual, artistic-expressive, and value-oriented functions.

Philosophers throughout history have highly appreciated the educational mission of artistic creativity. Art and morality have always been considered forms of value consciousness that share a common goal – the improvement of humanity based on goodness and beauty. Art lives only by the culture it provides for the soul. Therefore, art should be valued not only for the aesthetic pleasure, it brings, but also for its ability to shape the culture of the human soul (I. Kant). Art was considered a decisive educational tool and a kind of “panacea” for moral deafness, a powerful regulator of human actions even in cases where laws and religion prove helpless (F. Schiller). Art acts through lofty ideals and elevates ordinary individuals to their level (J. W. von Goethe). At the same time, philosophers pointed to the unconditional inclination of the moral towards the artistic, as a benevolent person is always an artist (A. Shaftesbury).

Today, researchers in the fields of philosophy, psychology, and education consider art as a cultural code that shapes human attitudes towards nature, as artworks provide individuals with a richer life experience than scientific systems or theories. Artistic experience always has a moral nature. As the Ukrainian philosopher I. Ziazun rightly pointed out, moral content does not exist autonomously in art; instead, it becomes a part of the structure of the image, affirmed by form, and gains significance⁶. Therefore, within the context of artistic form, humanity perceives moral ideas in a more socially flexible manner. For a good reason, L. Vygotsky claimed art as the “social technique of emotions”. Emphasizing the value-oriented nature of art, the psychologist notes that it does not directly dictate the actions that should follow its influence. However, there will inevitably be a certain “aftereffect” if psychological catharsis shifts something in human consciousness. Therefore, this renowned psychologist considered art as the organization of our behavior, a kind of pre-setting for what is to come⁷.

Therefore, art creates its own system of societal values, shaped by moral norms and aesthetic ideals. By reflecting human attitudes toward nature, art precisely expresses what is impossible to see in nature itself. Art not only reproduces but also projects attitudes toward nature, forming a new, ideal reality – a unique model of an individual's engagement with nature.

6 I. Zyazyun, *Aesthetic Experience of the Individual*, Higher School at Kyiv State University, Kyiv 1976, p. 43.

7 L. Vygotsky, *Psychology of Art*, Pedagogy, Moscow 1987, p. 116.

The artistic representation of nature is the result of aesthetically significant and culturally conscious projection of one's evaluative attitude toward existence. The essential forces of humanity, reproduced in the artistic model, constitute a harmonious unity in its optimal expression, which humanity has historically aspired to. Art seems to «construct» genuine human capabilities and needs towards their ideal completion. By presenting humanity with a work of art dedicated to nature, the artist unveils the most intimate aspects – his/her thoughts, preferences, feelings, concerns, and hopes for a better destiny for nature. It is not a lesson, not a sermon, not a shout, but a sincere confession, emotional pain, a bared nerve. A complex system of multi-meaningful organization of metaphors and symbols, which gain powerful encoding of the best value orientations of human attitude towards nature in the process of interaction of aesthetic content.

Artists even propose to humanity their own understanding of the ecological laws of life in nature. Indeed, the renowned Ukrainian writer and futurologist O. Berdnyk, based on the synthesis of scientific knowledge and the intuition of artistic reflection of nature, formulated distinctive ecological principles: 1) unity – everything in everything; 2) Proteus – eternal fluidity; 3) eternal metamorphosis; 4) analogies, identity; 5) correlations – instant interaction in the Universe; 6) saturation – fullness or excess; 7) purpose – everything in existence is «intended» for something⁸.

Thus, art produces a wide range of value orientations regarding the attitude towards nature, which cannot be ignored by cultural and educational systems.

5. The role and mission of artistic images of nature in the educational process

Modern environmental education is obliged to actively employ a specific – artistic – form of exchanging value-based approaches to nature, by methods of interaction with the surrounding world, and forms of its aesthetic transformation. Within art, international assimilation of humanity's artistic comprehension of nature is ensured. This is facilitated by:

- the symbolic nature of art;
- features of artistic language (associativity, metaphorical nature, polysemy);
- common techniques of artistic representation of nature (expression, symbolization, hyperbolization, individualization, etc.);
- the multifunctionality of art, realized as a means of understanding nature, as its imaginative philosophy, as a unique “catalog” of the aesthetic expressiveness of its phenomena and objects, and as a powerful regulator of value orientations regarding its preservation.

Art plays a significant role in preparing teachers for ecological education activities. We present the experience of using artistic images to correct the ecological worldview of educators. At the Vinnytsia Academy of Continuing Education, there has been a multi-year trial of an author's interdisciplinary course called “Ecopedagogical Aesthetics,” developed through problematic integration of knowledge (ecology, philosophy, psychology, and art). Purpose of the course is to

⁸ V. Kucheryavyy, *Ecology*, Svit, Lviv 2000, p. 38.

develop educators' of any specialty the ability to holistically comprehend the issue of nature preservation by understanding the uniqueness of ecosystems through their aesthetic characteristics. Among the specific goals of this special course are the formation of universal skills for appreciating nature. This course has certain advantages over a differentiated study of nature – it deepens the culturological and axiological orientation of environmental education, strengthens socio-cultural accents, utilizes the potential of artistic reflexivity, and provides a philosophical foundation for ecological perspectives.

Environmental aesthetics, in our understanding, holds significant practical value as it is directly geared towards integration into pedagogy. It seems to pave the way for educators to universalize the aesthetic evaluation of the environment and realize its eco-educational potential. Until recently, it was believed that the primary purpose of environmental aesthetics was the organization of the environment. However, there is a growing recognition of a deeper understanding of its essence and functional scope. This discipline is fundamentally based on environmental philosophy and psychology as it explores the interrelationships between various variables of the natural environment, human psychology, and behavior. It investigates human perception, experiences, and behavior within natural contexts. Y. Sepänmaa, a contemporary Finnish eco-philosopher, believes that environmental aesthetics literally teaches us to see the value of natural processes independently of humans. He emphasizes the importance of interpreting nature as an indirect demonstration of its values. According to him, interpretation makes nature understandable. However, interpretation does not occur in a vacuum; it has two foundations – knowledge and image-associations⁹.

We assume that a reliable way of personally interpreting perception is through artistic activity. Therefore, one of the innovative approaches to teaching ecological-pedagogical aesthetics is the utilization of integrative mechanisms of a poly-artistic approach, which involves the universalization of artistic analysis from the perspective of the worldview-psychological impact of artistic images on an individual, aiming to shape a holistic picture of the socio-cultural space in his/her consciousness. The implementation of the poly-artistic approach in the context of teaching such a course involves embedding the experiences and awareness of not just literary, musical, or spatial-plastic images of nature in the professional development of the educator, but also the exemplary aesthetic values related to human attitudes toward nature, deeply embedded in the artistic experience of humanity. This helps interpret artistic images of nature in a completely humanitarian manner, with a direct focus on extracting their worldview content. In the course of our work, educators were provided with materials from the author's website "Eco-Wonderworld. Humanitarian Ecology for Educators" (<https://www.ekodyvosvit-tarassenko.com/>).

9 Y. Sepänmaa, *The Beauty of Environmental. A General Model for Environmental Aesthetics*, Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, Helsinki 1986.

6. How to prepare a future teacher for artistic and creative

interpretation of the aesthetics of natural objects and phenomena?

In the course of our work, we systematically cultivate in future educators and practicing teachers a professional orientation towards eco-creative activities. The renowned Ukrainian psychologist V. Romenets once noted that choosing a profession essentially means choosing a sphere of creativity. According to the psychologist, the development of student's abilities for scientific creativity directly depends on the ability to comprehensively reproduce the picture of a phenomenon with subsequent creative interpretation of specific scientific regularities¹⁰.

We attempted to replicate the experiment proposed by V. Romenets to study the features of developing students' abilities for scientific and creative thinking in the context of our research problem. Future primary school teachers were asked to interpret the following reasoning from a young schoolchild: "Fish is cold and foolish. It exists so that we can catch and eat it."

By the way, it's worth noting that today, a rather early children's pragmatism has become prevalent, primarily manifested in children's assessments. Teachers often remain indifferent to such expressions of students' attitudes toward nature, attributing it to the excessive impulsiveness of children's reactions to the environment. However, a specific study has convinced us of the relentless increase in the relative importance of utilitarian assessments of nature formulated by pupils of the III-IV forms. If in the first grade children still don't separate themselves from nature and perceives it as something mysterious, colorful, and timeless, the formalized natural science education noticeably leads to a more pragmatic worldview¹¹.

Significantly, graduating students interpreted the child's reasoning differently. The majority of respondents (61%) neutrally noted the «excessive cruelty» of such an assessment, which, in their opinion, was caused by a lack of awareness among students about the interesting features of fish biology. Only a third of those surveyed (29%) were able to demonstrate a «sympathetic imagination» at the level of artistic-scientific intuition, ultimately helping them to comprehensively «embrace» the pedagogical perspective of the presented situation. In the interpretations provided by these students, there was an integrative approach to perceiving and interpreting both the fact of fish life and the assessment given by the younger school student. Specifically, the respondents did not rely on a rationalized explanation but provided emotionally expressive commentary, even modeling a future dialogue between a teacher and a child. As a result of studying ecological-pedagogical aesthetics, the students interpreted the presented fact from the perspective of the unity of ecology, philosophy, and art. In the envisioned responses, there is an attempt to provide an accessible explanation to a child about the uniqueness of the mentioned ecosystem through its aesthetic characteristics—both explicit and hidden. For instance, the debates were framed around dilemmas such as: Is the fish foolish or intelligent?

10 V. Romenets, *Psychology of Creativity*, Lybid, Kyiv 2001, p. 243.

11 H. Tarasenko, *Interconnection of Aesthetic and Environmental Training of a Teacher in the System of Professional Education*, Vertical, Cherkasy 2006, p. 35.

Beautiful or ugly? The aesthetics of the behavioral programs of sea inhabitants were emphasized in the debate. Here is an example of a creative interpretation of this dilemma by students:

«Why do people predominantly have a consumption-oriented attitude towards fish? It's tasty and good, of course. People admire decorative fish as well—colorful, graceful, with luxurious tails and fins. But what about the ordinary river crucian carp? Is it destined for the frying pan? No, my consciousness rebels against such pragmatism. I will try to instill a different appreciation for the kingdom of fish in my students.

I will show them the hidden beauty of these creatures, the one not visible to the eyes. Consider, for instance, the harmony of certain biological processes. Can one remain indifferent to the peculiar 'patriotism' of a salmon? This fish, at any cost, strives to return to the waters where it was born, giving life to its offspring only there. The journey to spawning grounds is arduous and perilous, yet the salmon tenaciously swims back to its native waters to continue its lineage, only to perish immediately after. Skeptics may shrug and say, 'Instinct.' Actually. But how much beauty lies in those behavioral programs that nature offers to its creatures!» (Dina L., master's student).

In addition to the remarkable "patriotism" of sturgeon and salmon, students interpreted the no less remarkable altruism of dolphins, who selflessly rescue people at sea; the sacrificial rebellion of whales against water pollution, and more. In the envisioned monologues and dialogues, the students demonstrated an experiential artistic understanding of the aesthetics of the aquatic element through the perception of its artistic images. These are iconic images of fish in the literary works of E. Hemingway; the enthusiastic hymn to intelligent dolphins in the works of R. Clarke; the affectionate attitude toward the Black Sea in the prose of K. Paustovsky; the attentive listening to the energy of the ocean in the music of composer and seafarer M. Rimsky-Korsakov; the admiration of the marvelous world of the aquarium in the music of C. Saint-Saëns and in the paintings of A. Matisse; the introduction to ecological jazz by P. Winter, where the sounds of music intertwine with the cries of whales and dolphins; the touching film by S. Wincer, "Free Willy," and many other compelling artistic expressions of our human love not only for the "gastronomic qualities" of aquatic inhabitants.

7. Conclusion

Environmental culture in society cannot be formed outside educational processes. It is the school and the teacher who act as guides to environmentally acceptable norms of behavior in nature. Therefore, in modern society, fundamentally important positions regarding the educational process should be accumulated. Such as:

- attitude towards the teacher as an intermediary between students and culture, capable of providing support to the child in their individual expression of environmental values;
- attitude towards the student as a subject of life in nature, capable of socio-cultural development and self-change, with the help of artistic activity as well;

- attitude towards education as a socio-cultural process, the driving forces of which are dialogue and cooperation not only among its participants but also through the dialogue in artistic interaction with nature;
- attitude towards the educational institution as a cohesive socio-cultural educational space where the highest values of existence are reproduced, and where the cultivation of cultured individuals takes place.

Thus, the professional education of future teachers should have a personal dimension. Only humanistically colored personal values and a readiness for creative dialogue can become essential indicators of a teacher's professional readiness for ecological education with children and serve as the highest criterion for the orientation of future educators in the educational space. Art, skillfully integrated into the teaching system of normative disciplines and authorial educational courses in the system of professional training and postgraduate education, should become a reliable tool for forming teacher's ecological culture.

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ROLA SZTUKI W KSZTAŁTOWANIU KULTURY EKOLOGICZNEJ PEDAGOGA

Streszczenie: Artykuł wskazuje na niezwłoczność kształtowania kultury ekologicznej, która nabywa znaczenia najważniejszej kompetencji człowieka współczesnego. Ten proces odbywa się w kontekście transmisji kulturalnej i umożliwia dziedziczność kultury, jej ciągłość w czasie. Kultura ekologiczna analizowana w aspekcie poznania artystycznego przyrody. Dokonano analizę korzenie metodologiczne problemu związku wzajemnego ekologii i sztuki w badaniach naukowych i praktykach kulturalnych. Uwaga czołowa jest użyczona sztuce jak kodowi kulturalnemu stosunku człowieka do przyrody.

Artykuł zawiera charakterystyką roli i misji obrazów artystycznych przyrody w procesie oświatowym. Zaprezentowano doświadczenie wprowadzenia do procesu oświatowego estetyki ekologo-pedagogicznej. Opisano autorskie doświadczenie dołączenia pedagogów do interpretacji artystycznie-twórczej estetyki obiektów i zjawisk przyrodniczych.

Słowa kluczowe: kultura ekologiczna, sztuka, estetyka ekologiczna, edukacja ekologiczna, pedagog, interpretacja artystycznie-twórcza.