

Aesthetic-Therapeutic Component of the Harmonious Development of a Personality in Ukrainian and Polish Pedagogy in the Late 19th-20th Century

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The article deals with a retrospective analysis of the content of the aesthetic-therapeutic component of the formation of a creative harmonious personality in Ukrainian and Polish pedagogy in the late nineteenth – twentieth century. It is defined the essence of aesthetic therapy as an integrative humanistic technology of activating the emotional sphere of a personality with the aim of providing psychologically comfortable conditions for creative personal fulfilment. The problem of individual creative and spiritual development of a child by means of aesthetic therapy is highlighted in the views of prominent national humanist-educators (A. Makarenko, Ya. Korczak, S. Rusova, V. Sukhomlynskyi). It is proven that the most characteristic features of Ukrainian and Polish folk pedagogy are high aestheticization, Christian-spiritual and extreme nature-based content, that are fully consistent with the basic postulates of the aesthetic-therapeutic concept of personality formation.

Key words: *humanistic pedagogy; aesthetic therapy; emotional sphere of a personality; psychological comfort; pedagogical creativity; music therapy; fairy tale therapy; spiritual development of a person.*

Current priorities for the development of teacher education actualize the issue of a person-centered approach to the formation of a harmonious personality, the education of the younger generation based on universal values, the creation of a fa-

avourable academic environment in educational institutions and the provision of psychologically comfortable conditions for developing the creative potential of actors in the pedagogical process.

One of the effective ways to solve key educational problems is the introduction of highly effective psychological and pedagogical technologies of personality-oriented training and education, focused on activation of the emotional sphere of participants in pedagogical activity by introducing an aesthetic-therapeutic component in the process of personality formation.

Nowadays, in numerous research studies in pedagogy, the term 'aesthetic therapy' is used as an analog for the term 'aesthetics of natural environment', art technologies in art education, an independent function of the system of additional education, the latest rehabilitation system in special pedagogy, or a separate block of the modern complex of aesthetic education with various kinds of art and the like.

We consider aesthetic therapy to be an integrated notion that combines two components: 'aesthetic' (from the Greek *aisthetikos* – sensual) and 'therapy' (from the Greek *therapeia* – treatment)¹. So, aesthetic therapy in psychological and pedagogical sciences should be interpreted as a natural system of integrative psychological and pedagogical therapy with the use of sound, nature, movement, drama, drawing, colour, communication etc., having a therapeutic, psychological and pedagogical stabilizing effect on the emotional sphere of a person and including hidden instructions to keep the integrity of the human personality, her/his spiritual core. We should also pay attention to the fact that the original meaning of the word 'aesthetics' in ancient Greek had a wider semantic circle ('sensual', 'sensitive') in comparison with the traditional modern scientific definition of aesthetics as 'the science of beauty'. Hence, we assume that is spread the aesthetic idea throughout the field of human emotional reactions.

We believe that it necessary to consider the basic aesthetic-therapeutic views of Ukrainian and Polish pedagogues on the personality formation at the level of national ethno and scientific pedagogical knowledge, theory and practice that were created in the difficult historical conditions of the development of these societies.

The characteristics of folk pedagogy and scientific-humanistic pedagogical research in Ukraine and Poland, represented by the works of outstanding national philosophers and educators are high anesthetization, Christian-spiritual and extreme nature-based content. They are fully consistent with the basic postulates of the most personality-oriented humane pedagogy in general, as well as aesthetics. These characteristics are particularly evident in the organizational and informative ideas.

¹ Fedij, O. (2012). *Estetoterapiia*. Kyiv: Tsentri uchbovoi literatury.

Like each national philosophy, Ukrainian philosophy has its distinctive features, formed on the basis of national character, the so-called 'Ukrainian soul'. These features require a clearly defined aesthetic-therapeutic context, as they relate to the idea of existence, spirit, human-centeredness and the profound search for harmony and happiness.

According to contemporary Ukrainian philosophers, the distinctive features of Ukrainian philosophical and pedagogical interpretations of the problems of life creation and human resilience on Earth, include: cordocentrism (from Latin *cordos* – heart) – understanding of reality is not so much by thinking ('head') but by 'heart' – by emotions, feelings, inner voice, 'soul'; anthropocentrism – the focus on the person, awareness of her/his human nature, and in this regard, the possibility of happiness in ordinary life – existentialism, the acute life – feeling of a given moment of existence – the ability to 'transmit' universal values through personal life experience, in order to find the 'truth', meaning, purpose of life; 'sophism', tolerance and dialogueness – the patience, dignified attitude to different manifestations of disagreement with one's own fundamental ideas and the desire to hold a respectful discussion with them².

A great contribution to the development of a national humanistic pedagogy and an aesthetic therapy harmonizing human life and successfully solving life problems was made by a prominent Ukrainian educator, A. Makarenko (1888 – 1939). The idea of the key role of the creative and aesthetic component in the process of the development of a personality was established by A. Makarenko in his formulation of the aim of education already then: 'We must educate a person who is obliged to be happy'³. Beautiful life of 'human-creator', 'human-citizen' should be, according to A. Makarenko, 'related to aesthetics'⁴. It should be noted that although the term 'aesthetic therapy' is not used in A. Makarenko's works, we can find a number of related notions operating, each time emphasizing the need to create a proper pedagogical environment. Indeed, A. Makarenko talks about the 'clear organization of life', a 'clear mode and healthy traditions', 'creation of right-discipline tone', 'right work speed for the team life', the 'creation of a peaceful background for mental wellness of the students by providing the amenities for life', 'optimism of perspective feeling' and suchlike. The idea of transformation (re-education) of a child by developing of special psychological and pedagogical life conditions in which he or she feels free and desires to unleash his or her own individual creative power, constantly sounds in almost all works of the outstanding master of pedagogy. Taking into account the student body, A. Makarenko worked with, the organizational tools

² Kremen, V. – Ilin, V. (2005). *Filosofia: myslyteli, idei, kontseptsii*. Kyiv: Knyha, p. 418.

³ Makarenko, A. (1977). *Yzbrannyye pedahohycheskyye sochyneniya* : v 2-kh, t. T.1, red. V. N. Stoletov. Moskva: Pedahohyka, p. 164.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

for creating the necessary microenvironment were material order, discipline and giving the possibilities for free personal fulfilment.

Among the numerous ‘distracting’ and, at the same time, harmoniously developing a child’s individuality aesthetic-therapeutic technologies of educational system of A. Makarenko, two main groups can be distinguished: aesthetic therapy through art and artistic media and aesthetic therapy of socially organized impact.

For example, in order to provide each educatee with the opportunity of free choice, considering the interests of the child, A. Makarenko recommends introducing about twenty such clubs into the life of a collective body (according to the principle ‘less clubs are better, but with real work’)⁵. The list of clubs represents a wide choice of various types of artistic-aesthetic and research and technical activities. They in their format corresponds to the leading types of modern psychological, pedagogical, rehabilitation-educational methods and psychotherapeutic techniques. The basic task of art clubs is to preoccupy the educatees in their free time, in order to develop creativity with extreme interest and enthusiasm for a competently, pedagogically expedient organized activity. These properties show the presence of an aesthetic-therapeutic component in the artistic and natural study activities of Makarenko’s clubs.

In the educational system of A. Makarenko aesthetic therapy for socially organized impact is of particular interest, since it is associated with the vector features of the entire pedagogical system. The central point of Makarenko’s theory is the concept of parallel action, that is, an organic unity of education and the life of society, community and personality. Parallel actions provide ‘freedom and well-being of the educatee’ who is the creator, rather than the person of pedagogical influence. The first thing that created a common understanding in the activities of A. Makarenko-managed groups, was a full-fledged, unpretentious, democratic relationship between the educator and the educatee. Makarenko was the one who gave the main aesthetic-therapeutic effect to the entire educational system: a special micro-climate for the team/collective body, the sense of security, dignity, self-esteem and respect for others in the system. Almost all researchers of his pedagogical heritage recognize this. A. Makarenko sets the tone with which the teacher should organize his/her disciplinary collision with the team/collective body in a tangible esthetic-therapeutic context: the tone should be ‘serious, simple, accurate, decisive, sometimes decorated with a smile and a joke and always focused on each person’⁶. The leading esthetic-therapeutic facilities in A. Makarenko’s pedagogical system have been universally recognized, communication, team, work, nature, art – and actually ‘Makarenkovski’ (of A. Makarenko) – ‘the system of perspectives’, ‘parallel

⁵ Ibid, pp. 228–229.

⁶ Ibid, p. 203.

pedagogical impact', 'therapy-mode', 'cheerful work style' and others. The esthetic-therapeutic nature of this pedagogical system is confirmed by the synergetic provisions in it. He implemented the most humanistic principle of education – 'the principle of empathy, openness, involvement and participation of a person in social and natural processes' taking place in the 'external environment and reflect certain principles of synergetics: hierarchy, openness, non-linearity'.

An outstanding Polish teacher Ya. Korczak (1878–1942) made a significant contribution to the development of pedagogy of humanism, who emphasized the advisability of using various therapeutic methods to influence the formation and development of the younger generation with the aim of preventing children mental illnesses and disorders of the psychoemotional sphere.

An interesting fact is that Ya. Korczak, a paediatrician by profession, was enthusiastically interested in purely pedagogical and socio-pedagogical issues: theories and practices of educating his little patients and giving them the opportunity to feel themselves full members of society, despite the age.

In the pedagogical works of Ya. Korczak we can notice an aesthetic-therapeutic idea of introducing in educational process such social methods of influence on a personality as communication, laughter, a fairy tale with therapeutic purpose according to the operating objectives and the specific case, taking into account the child's age and individual characteristics. 'An angry look of the tutor, the praise, the remarks, the joke, the advice, the kiss, the fairy tale as a reward, a verbal encouragement – these are therapeutic procedures that is needed to be assigned in less or more doses, more often or less, depending on the case and features of the organism'⁷. One of the main tasks of therapeutic pedagogy according to Ya. Korczak is creating optimal conditions for physical, mental, moral, aesthetic development of a disadvantaged child, the development of emotional sphere of each personality.

S. Rusova (1856-1940) paid attention to the questions of influence of various aesthetic means on personality development, who also stressed the importance of creating such an atmosphere, 'where all the child's skills, all her/his good feelings and inclinations could develop, but not evil and bad ones'⁸. S. Rusova considered the leading aesthetic-therapeutic means of influence on child's personality to be nature in 'all its superior beauty', art, social environment and the like.

According to S. Rusova, the most important aim of the games is self-expression of a child. She considered labour as the best psychological and pedagogical means by which all creative powers of a child can appear freely. S. Rusova defines the following psychological characteristics of child labour that are harmonious with esthetic therapy: 1) labour is an activity; 2) labour causes child's desire, interest,

⁷ Korczak, Ya. (1976). *Yak liubyty dytynu*. Kyiv: Rid. shk., p. 7.

⁸ Rusova, S. (1996). *Vybrani pedahohichni tvory*. Kyiv: Osvita, p. 34.

concern with something; 3) labour must always have specific tasks, achieve real results; 4) labour is pleasant as an independent development of muscles, as a means invented by a child him/herself to achieve the desired goal; 5) work should be easy for a child, not requiring considerable effort; 6) help should be provided only when it is necessary, taking into account the child's personality, mood, type or kind of labour; 7) labour should be diverse⁹.

With all the above mentioned requirements, labour will be useful and, and the main thing is to bring pleasure from the process and to its result.

In the pedagogical works S. Rusova substantiated a powerful influence of fairy tales on the formation and development of a child. The teacher pointed to the relationship with the child, because 'they are fused together so well, as though the teachers do not try to displace fairy from child's home, it would reign there. Because it naturally meets the requirements of children's mind, and those human relationships in fairy tales are so simple and understandable that a child can sincerely sympathize with sorrow and misfortune, enjoy the victory and happiness of fairy tale heroes'¹⁰.

An outstanding example of the integration of aesthetic therapy into theory and practice of national humanistic pedagogy is the activity of a prominent Ukrainian educator of world reputation – V. Sukhomlynskyi (1918 – 1970). In our opinion, aesthetic-therapeutic ideas in the teachings of the famous humanist are explained by both objective factors – the then social conditions, in which V. Sukhomlynskyi had to work, and his subjective feeling of the need to create special pedagogically comfortable educational conditions for a child that are full of warmth, sincerity, joy of communication and endless, joyful openings of life secrets for a child-winner. Hence, we distinguish two-vector nature of the aesthetic-therapeutic concept in the teachings of V. Sukhomlynskyi. Both participants in the process fall under the aesthetic-therapeutic influence of a personality-oriented pedagogical action of the whole system of the teacher: an educator and an educatee.

One of the aesthetic-therapeutic sources of his own pedagogical inspiration was his students. Love for a child becomes the main and defining postulate of the whole pedagogical system of the teacher-humanist. In his work 'How to love children' (1967) he proclaims 'love for a child in our specialty is the flesh and blood of an educator as the force that can influence the spiritual world of another person'. Such love V. Sukhomlynskyi calls 'the top of pedagogical culture, thought and feelings'¹¹. Along with this, a somewhat traditional opinion for all humanistic pedagogy about love for educatees as a necessary feature of teacher's professionalism

⁹ *Khrestomatiia z istorii doshkilnoi pedahohiky*. (2004). Kyiv: Vyshcha shkola, p. 270.

¹⁰ Rusova, S. (1996). *Vybrani pedahohichni tvory*. Kyiv: Osvita, p. 203.

¹¹ Sukhomlinskij, V. (2002). *Pereizdanie*. Moskva: Izdat. Dom Sh. Amonashvili.

V. Sukhomlynskyi emphasizes the purely aesthetic-therapeutic effect for teachers themselves, that love of the students on them provides: 'Love for children inspires an educator, becomes for him a source from which he/she constantly draws new strength'¹². V. Sukhomlynskyi sees love for a child as 'a peculiar kind of mechanism of mental protection' of a teacher who is able to protect him/her from the 'emotional environment' – so it can be called a state that involves a teacher in times of failure and disappointment'¹³. V. Sukhomlynskyi continues to develop a brilliant idea of A. Makarenko about 'optimistic prediction of a personality' and notes: 'I love a child not as she/he is, but as she/he should be ... The art of our profession is to hate evil and not to take it on those who are with wicked spirit. ... I am not addressing the voice of evil, but the voice of the beauty of human being, which is necessary for a child, which cannot be shut out by anything'¹⁴. Another component of the aesthetic-therapeutic technology of 'love for a child', according to V. Sukhomlynskyi, is teacher's attention to the objective child's self-sustaining nature of his/her life optimism. 'Children are optimists by nature. A bright, sunny, cheerful worldview is characteristic of them. To love children is to love childhood, and optimism means for childhood the same as playing of rainbow colours: there is no optimism – no childhood'¹⁵.

In fact, optimism is an emotional and sensual state of positive energy, psychological comfort, protection and happiness that a child must feel in aesthetic-therapeutic space of his/her growth; it is an important requirement of full process of ego development. According V. Sukhomlynskyi, the concept of aesthetic therapy of such a pedagogical love for a child is also in its protective function: to love a child means 'to protect his/her from the evil that still surrounds many children in life'¹⁶. It should be noted that the closest notion in content to the ideas of aesthetic therapy in pedagogical dictionary of the researcher is the notion of '*protective education*'. V. Sukhomlynskyi introduces this notion, emphasizing the need to create an appropriate pedagogical environment for some categories of children, who experience a state of spiritual loneliness that is quite dangerous and psychologically uncomfortable for a young soul. Protective education, according to V. Sukhomlynskyi, is an important component of his whole pedagogical system, 'teacher's deeply individual creativity', which he/she must show in each individual case. The outstanding humanist educator determines the leading directions and means of implementation of the tasks of protective education. For example, the most effective protection is awakening of love in a child, sympathy for a teacher as a human being or for a senior fellow student. V. Sukhomlynskyi recognizes the book, the sincere word of a

¹² Ibid., p. 19.

¹³ Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 21–22.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 27.

teacher, child's care for living creatures (flowers, plants, and animals), the beauty of nature, music, painting, and the like, as an important aesthetic-therapeutic means for protective education.

V. Sukhomlynskyi believes that nature has a sufficiently powerful therapeutic potential. Nature 'educates the ability to feel, perceive the things that they are, shades of things, phenomena, heart movements in the teenage soul'¹⁷. Although 'I wanted to read the first word in syllables before expanding the book, the children read the pages of the world's most beautiful book – the book of nature'¹⁸. According to the teacher, one of the means of harmonious development of a person and formation of his/her culture is music. Its powerful aesthetic-therapeutic influence on a personality is explained by emotional excitement, enrichment of the spiritual world of a child. 'Music is the language of feelings, experience, the most delicate accents of the mood'¹⁹. V. Sukhomlynskyi considers the perception of a piece of music with the use of a 'natural background', that is, music of nature, to be a valuable one. 'A human being became a human person when he/she heard the rustle of leaves and the song of the grasshopper, the voice of the spring flood and the ringing of silver bells of the lark in the boundless summer sky, the rustle of snowflakes and the howling of the snowstorm outside the window, the gentle splash of the waves and the solemn silence of the night. A man heard and, with bated breath, listened to the wonderful music of life for hundreds and thousands of years. And you should know how to listen to this music, how to admire the beauty'²⁰.

A striking example of the use of fairy tale therapeutic technologies in the pedagogical activity of V. Sukhomlynskyi is the designing of the 'Fairy Tale Rooms' in Pavlysh general secondary school, the main purpose of which is to create a fairy tale setting (atmosphere) 'in which children can feel in the world of fairy tale images'. This atmosphere helped to get into the country of fairy tales deeper, children empathized with the heroes and were active participants in this show. The humanist teacher gives a special place to show the inexhaustible possibilities of a fairy tale for the emotional, mental, moral and aesthetic education of primary school students.

The importance of the aesthetic-therapeutic component of the formation of a harmonious personality is explained by the requirement to maintain, strengthen and develop a spiritual base of younger generation in difficult conditions of rapid technological process and informatization of society. Therefore, the task of a modern teacher is to create an emotionally comfortable educational environment, to ensure the spiritual, emotional, psychological, and social development of a personality, to

¹⁷ Sukhomlynskyi, V. (1977). *Vybrani tvory: u 5 t.* Kyiv: Radianska shkola, p. 585.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 583.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 382.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 370.

give each pupil an opportunity to develop creatively and to become self-fulfilled in further professional activity on the basis of a human-centered approach.

The above-mentioned leading ideas of the aesthetic-therapeutic influence on a personality are developed and widely implemented in pedagogical educational institutions by the research school of O. Fediy – Doctor of Education, Professor, Head of the Department of Primary Education, Natural and Mathematical Sciences and Methods of their Teaching in Poltava National Pedagogical University named after V. G. Korolenko.

For the first time, the researcher has explained the methodological foundations of aesthetic therapy as a modern field of scientific knowledge that appeared in the integrative space of pedagogy, aesthetics and psychotherapy. She also has defined the conceptual foundations of the system of teachers training to use aesthetic therapy in professional activity²¹.

For the last fifteen years, the subjects ‘Aesthetic therapy’, ‘Modern technologies of aesthetic therapy’ have been taught in Poltava National Pedagogical University named after V. G. Korolenko for students of educational levels ‘Bachelor’ and ‘Master’ of the specialties 013 Primary education, 016 Special education, 012 Pre-school education, 014 Secondary Education (Fine Arts), 014 Secondary Education (Musical Arts), 014 Secondary Education (Choreography), 024 Choreography. The study of these educational courses is aimed at the formation of aesthetic-therapeutic competence in perspective teachers, that implies awareness of the importance of activating emotional sphere of an aducatee in the pedagogical process, providing aestheticization of educational environment, understanding the content of aesthetic-therapeutic activity of a modern teacher, ability to create psychologically comfortable conditions for creative interaction of participants of the educational process, to use modern psychological and pedagogical technologies of personal development of a child on the basis of humanistic child-centric paradigm.

Students are especially interested in appraisal of practice-oriented technologies of sand therapy (‘Sand literacy’, ‘The magic world of numbers’, ‘The experiments of the sand Queen’), fairy tale therapy (drawing up a fairy tale, making up a conclusion of a parable or fairy tale (‘The parable of the two wolves’, ‘The Good and the evil’, ‘About happiness and goodness’), puppet therapy (creation and revival of a puppet), isotherapy (‘The Magical land of feelings’, ‘Who (what) did Fairy turned me into’, ‘My Family in Images of fairy tale heroes’), phototherapy (creating photo collages on the topics: ‘The Good is...’, ‘Polar feelings’, ‘The happiest day of my life’) etc.

Thus, we can say that the phenomenon of the aesthetic-therapeutic component of the formation of a harmonious personality occupies a prominent place in the

²¹ Fedij, O. (2009). *Pidhotovka pedahohiv do vykorystannia zasobiv estetoterapii: teoriia i praktyka*. Poltava: PNPV imeni V. H. Korolenka.

development of Ukrainian and Polish pedagogy. It is an integral part of the philosophical and historical consciousness of people that reflected the most current processes of socio-historical life of the nations. That is why the aesthetic-therapeutic context of pedagogical ideas in Ukraine and Poland always sound bright, because it meets the acute demands of our times, creating the necessary emotionally favourable conditions that allowed to form a full-fledged, good citizen of his/her country.

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