

## The Green School as an Ecological, Aesthetic, and Moral Folk Experience in Poland

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### Abstract

*This phenomenological study is a search for the essence of the Polish Green School. We explain the Green School, examine its rationale and scope, and give an overview of the history of Poland's environmental exploitation. Then we present a week-long experience in one such school and in that context examine children's reflective drawings. The Green School week-long program consists of a highlander folk music demonstration, several hikes, a hunt to find beauty in nature, and in contrast, a trip to Auschwitz. The children's reflective drawings were mainly mountainscapes that contain a secret cave, human figures, including the highlander blowing his horn, some animals, and stylized trees. What is suggested by our findings is that through aesthetic means, children can learn to become aware, preserve the environment, live in peace, and share. At the root of the Green School experience is aesthetic consciousness without which the spirit may not survive.*

Ecology is "concerned with relationships among living organisms and their surroundings, including human societies and their geographical environments" (Lankford, 1997, p. 49). Lankford calls for ecological stewardship which involves 1) a pledge to promote ideals of right over wrong; 2) recognition that a person's actions concern societal and environmental wellness; and 3) all choices and behaviors must respect people and their habitats. But research on ecologically based art experiences for elementary school children in Poland and the USA is scarce. A review of 50 ERIC articles revealed mostly curriculum and activities dedicated to concern for endangered species and extinct animals. Some art educators recently described results of an ecological program at the elementary level that deal with a neighborhood wetlands preserve (Birt, Krug, & Sheridan; 1997) and a water river environment in California (Anderson, 2000).

The purpose of this study is to search for the essence of the Green School. We first present the rationale and scope of the Green School, its instructional goals, a history of Poland's environmental problems, then document a Green School experience. We follow with a description of how the children react to the experience through informal interviews and their reflective drawings. The drawings reveal what children learned. Finally, we compare the Green School to programs in the United States and summarize its essential qualities. We discuss these questions: What is the Green School? Why is it based on aesthetic education? What are Poland's environmental problems? What is the Green School Experience? How do children react to

the Green School? What can we learn from the Green School experience?

*What is the Green School?* The Poles are determined to protect their environment. The Polish environmental movement (the National Conservation League and the Polski Klub Ekologiczny) started in the late 1970's in Krakow. Since 1989, it forced the closure of the Skawina aluminum plant that dumped its chemicals into Polish rivers (Salter, 1999). The newly formed Green Solidarity Party started a national campaign to publicize ecological problems and to help solve them. Education programs, both televised and experimental, such as the Green Schools followed.

In this context, the Polish government decided to institute Green Schools to educate its young people about their culture and its ecological problems and to instill pride in Polish heritage. After its revolutionary and economic growth phase, Poland has now entered a period of cultural change through mass aesthetic and ecological education. The Green School's instructional goals are to enhance ecological and cultural change in Poland through aesthetic education

Children around Poland now attend different ecological Green Schools, *zielonych szkols*, for approximately a week, throughout the month of May. Mariusz Samoraj, Professor of Humanistic Studies at the University of Warsaw, has taken children to experience different Green School sites around the country for eight years. He also runs a summer scouting program to protect cultural sites. He is deeply concerned with protecting the folk aspects and traditional values of the family in Poland.

*Why is the Green School based on aesthetic education?* Mariusz stated, "Traditional values bring you to humanity and thus the need for aesthetic education. The aim of aesthetic education is to breed an understanding of life and other people through art. Students also learn tolerance of other cultures and communities even within Poland" (M. Samoraj, personal communication, June 5, 2000). Put in this context, "the purpose of aesthetic education is to shape cultural participation; it requires an early and systematic initiation of children into the sphere of artistic values, which, in turn, defines the school's basic responsibilities" as well as developing their participation in culture (Wojnar, 1978, p. 45). Such a model begins with young elementary children and requires their engagement in expressive and interdisciplinary activities, such as art and music and science. The continuation of Polish culture depends on "the intensification of a community of felt experiences" (Wojnar, 1978, p. 52). Aesthetic education strives to educate "multisensual cognition and visual perception, encourage emotional expression through different techniques and media, and stimulate creative thinking" (UNESCO/InSEA, 1999, p. 2). Creativity in Poland generally is seen as "an open and sensitive attitude, a state of mind...including active participation, social behavior, and play" (Wojnar, 1995, p. 137). Children are free to

express their own ideas and control their activities. This freedom to think and do is important for a country trying to discard the shackles of communism, dependence on the state, or even a teacher. Aesthetic education is a condition for greater dialogue and understanding. With such experiences, as the Green School, children can share and reflect on their choices in relation to their culture and their environment.

*What are Poland's environmental problems?* Poland has a history of being exploited by other countries: Mongol Tartars until 1242, German Teutonic Knights from 1260-1410, Ottoman Turks until 1673, and 700 years of offensives and political intervention from the Muscovite Tsars (Russia). The Swedish Deluge in 1655 reduced the population by half and destroyed nearly all of Warsaw. Followed by the partitioning of the country three times, Poland was abolished as a country in 1797. With Napoleon's rise and attempt to capture Moscow, Polish liberators joined his forces and died along with the French. The resulting Congress of Vienna (1814-15) left only Krakow as a "symbolic city state" (Salter, 1999, p. 597). Poland for several decades was a buffer state between Germany, Russia and Austria. The Poles revolted several times. This resulted in a reign of Russian repression.

With World War I and after a few years of fighting and diplomatic activity, Poland arose in 1918 with self-governance. But with Stalin on the east border and Hitler on the west, Poland was in trouble. When Hitler invaded Poland in 1939, millions of Polish civilians, including virtually every Jew, were exterminated in Nazi concentration camps. This included the massacre of Katyn in which 4500 Polish officers were shot (Salter, 1999). Of all countries in Nazi Europe, Poland suffered the most, with a quarter of its population dead, the country in ruins, reduced in size and its borders shifted to the west. With Soviet victories at Stalingrad, the Poles were subsumed under Russia's influence once more. The Russians hauled away over a million Poles in eastern provinces to labor camps all over the Soviet Union (Curtis, 1994; Synowiec-Tobis, 1998). This last Russian occupation left Poland with unrestrained industrialization that caused much environmental pollution both in air and water wastes (M. Samoraj, personal communication, November, 16, 2000).

In fact Poland has long suffered from various environmental abuses. Before the 18th century, people cut and burned trees for fuel and the forests were almost ruined. The Silesian King Stanislaw-August Poniatowski forbade such waste and only certain trees were used for charcoal (Salter, 1999) but the ancient oak trees of 800 years were nearly obliterated. The newer pine forests are only about 200 years old. In the twentieth century, Communist regimes, for over 40 years unreservedly exploited Poland's natural resources such as iron, coal, and mined and smelted zinc and lead ores. In southwest Poland this resulted in the huge polluted area, known as the Black Triangle,

which starts in Northern Bohemia in the Czech Republic, extends to Saxony in eastern Germany and ends in Katowice in Poland. "The pollution is a combination of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, dust and particulate, and smog and ozone" (Salter, 1999, p. 614). Such devastation has led to shortened life expectancy and congenital defects in the people who live there.

In 1990, a government report discovered that some river water was so contaminated that it corroded industrial equipment (Curtis, 1994). Industrial pollution made more than 80% of the rivers unconsumable, especially the Vistula (Wiesla). Even rural health was threatened because of the lack of sewage rules and the countryside was littered with thousands of untreated and unregulated dumps (Salter, 1999). Many power stations in north and south Poland burned brown and black coal. Industries also dumped chemicals into the rivers. Thus, the lakes and rivers were still dirty and unhealthy. All of this resulted in an enormous loss of jobs, the rise of coal and auto pollution, and non-recyclable goods. The Green School experience is designed to raise consciousness about these issues, and to begin to address them through education.

### **Method for the Study**

This study is an exploration of the meaning of an ecological school experience (Creswell, 1998). Its roots are in sociology (Bruyn, 1966), psychology (Merleau-Ponty, 1962), philosophy (Husserl, 1931), and phenomenology (Wojnar, 1978). Since Poland planned to host the European Regional Conference in Warsaw, Stokrocki asked permission to come six weeks earlier to study Polish schools. Karolak recommended Dr. Mariusz Samoraj, Professor at Warsaw University, for observation because he works both at the university and in the elementary school. His knowledge is very practical and realistic. Karolak explained the art education problem in Poland is that art professors are disinterested in working in the schools. Professor Samoraj studied under Professor Wojnar at the University of Warsaw; therefore Stokrocki took a phenomenological stance in harmony with her research methodology. Throughout the study, we refer to Professor Samoraj as Mariusz because the children used his first name. Mariusz suggested that we use this private elementary school which he ran.

Stokrocki took daily notes, and engaged in informal interviews and conversations with children and others as methods. Since she does not speak Polish, she relied on the teacher and two high school students as translators. Two eighth grade boys acted as key informants. Photographic documentation also enlightened the study. A final technique was analysis of children's reflective drawings of their experience. We later chose and transformed evolving events and ideas into clusters of meanings described

in psychological or phenomenological concepts (Moustakas, 1994). Lastly, we linked together ideas to form a description of this experience (Creswell, 1998). The result is a textural description of what was experienced and how it was experienced.

### **A Green School Experience**

Stokrocki observed the Green School experience of the Creativity Activity School of Warsaw on their visit to the city of Wisla--the Pearl of the Beskid Mountains. The experience lasted for five days, three in residence and two travel days, from May 22-25, 2000. Wisla is at the source of the Vistula River, the longest in Poland and about 400-600 miles above sea level. The trip from Warsaw took about six hours, and the children arrived late in the afternoon in the pouring rain. The site is famous for its winter and summer sports. We stayed in a grand hotel, called Sosna, where children and teachers shared small rooms with balconies overlooking the picturesque greenery.

The first night the fog rolled over the mountainside. The rain dropped heavily to the ground. Breezes blew through the windows. Greenery surrounded us all. Brown smoke puffed from the chimney, dampness crept in the windows, and the church bells rang on the hour. Birds chirped and the cock crowed. I rested for awhile. The evening meal was light and consisted of soft white cheese, bread, ham, chocolate bars, and hot tea.

*Highlander folk dress and music.* Approximately 100 Creativity Activity School students participated in the Green School. While the older students (45 students from sixth to eighth grades) went for a hike in the morning, the younger ones (about 55 K-5 children) met the highlander, Joseph the Beard in a large salon. He shared his handmade instruments and natural sounds. He then invited children to try on his wool cape and hat. He said, "See how warm and soft it feels." Joseph also told them that the pyramidal hat and cape were "like a roof" to cover his head and body from rain. His vest was also colorfully embroidered.

Joseph then shared his wooden and bone instruments. He blew on them to create a variety of sounds. He pulled a special leaf out of a jar of water and blew a song on it. The edge of the leaf was like a string, he explained. The children sat entranced. Next, he passed out instruments for children to try. Then he told the children to close their eyes and imagine the old times when women kept the fire and carried it from place to place. He told them not to take pictures with a camera but to take them with their mind, to use their memory, and to concentrate on the lights, sounds, smells, and small details.

He asked a child to come and hold his stomach and count how many times he breathed as he blew on a straw flute. The child answered, "Five

times.” “Very good,” he praised. He further instructed, “It is very difficult to play. You must use your throat, the front and back, and stomach.” Then he made music with his nose and lips by which the children were greatly amused. He also played a tiny string instrument. Later, he brought out other instruments for children to explore, such as different sized metal bells, a cowbell, and a 24-inch trombone.

Joseph asked the children again to close their eyes and to say a prayer. He started a folk song, “I am, I can, I share what is good” in which children slapped their legs, clapped their hands, and then their partner’s hands in rounds of three. He led the group in a circle dance from left to right as he repeated the same rhyme. Joseph was so happy that he kissed the children on their heads!

When asked what they learned, younger children mentioned unique and natural instruments, such as the leaf. Older students said that Joseph was a good and spiritual man. He told them to preserve the land, to know and touch each other, to use their handshake, not their fist. The highlander culture is a mixture of country cultural behaviors that many city and suburban children no longer experience. Mariusz commented on the importance of such aesthetic and value education through art. He reflected, “We need to protect the symbols of nature and the things that we value. The performance was a mixture of theater, dance and therapy.”

*A trip to the mountain.* In the afternoon, even though the rain still drizzled, Mariusz took the K-5 children hiking 1000 meters up a steep mountain trail to the top of the Beskid Mountain in southwestern Poland. At the trailhead stood a cross. Many crosses and shrines stand along mountain trails and highways in Poland. The six-year-old children eagerly climbed the difficult ascent in single file. The grass and mud soaked their feet. A variety of bird sounds echoed in the woods, while leaves rustled gently in the wind. The sun began to peek through the clouds. Children jumped from one ridge to another as they circled around large puddles and fallen trees. Tiny flies buzzed around their heads, pine smells filled the crisp air, and resin oozed from the trees.

At the top, children stopped to rest, eat a snack, and look at the vista. The blue-green colors of the mountains progressively diminished in the distance. This rain was a blessing after three years of drought. The wheat was short and the potatoes were lean this year.

Next, the teachers took the children to see an underground cave that was too steep to climb down into. Each child peeked inside as two teachers held him or her. While some children looked, others climbed around large extracted tree roots.

In this place, the history teacher then gave a lesson about their Polish ancestors, the Slavic Rumanians. He narrated, “They were shepherds who

came through the mountains. They planted potatoes and cabbage and made cheese from goat milk." He explained that some of the pine trees were over 200 years old, so the foresters planted diverse trees for the future. Then he pointed out two sources of the Vistula River down below, the black water that is comprised of slow moving streams and the white water that mainly contained rapids. Later, we stopped by a dam, and he explained its purpose to protect the towns below from the vicious floods, provide energy, and form a lake for sports recreation. The strenuous hike lasted almost three hours during the afternoon.

*Auschwitz.* A part of this Green School experience for older children was a trip to Auschwitz, the largest Nazi Concentration Camp in Europe. The Nazis founded it originally to house Polish political prisoners (Smolen, 1999). The rationale of the visit was to expose students to the realities about what happened, the scope of the holocaust, and the possibility that this devastation could happen again. The students had no idea about the holocaust at all, why these people were killed, or how they were abused. They solemnly walked throughout the stone buildings for two hours. They were serious, asked few questions, and were exhausted at the end. Later, they mentioned the place as terrible, all the wasted bags, shoes, and even human hair (woven in cloth and stuffed in bedding). They felt the place was cold, rough, and dull. They were saddened to hear that the Nazis killed so many people (approximately 1.5 million victims) from many backgrounds -- Poles, Gypsies, French, Slavs, Rumanians, Belgians, Dutch, Norwegians and Lithuanians, but mostly Jews. Such an extreme experience can certainly be a step toward ethical as well as cultural education.

The truth of the holocaust is that it is ever new. Investigators keep on finding new aspects about it, suggesting that every culture should be on watchful of future genocide," according to Fred Greenspan, Holocaust Expert and Professor and Chair of Department of Religion at the University of Denver (Class presentation at University of Denver, February 2, 2000). Little has been written about what happened after World War II, when Stalin deported two million Poles, most of them women and children, to Siberia to forced labor camps (Synowiec-Tobis, 1998). In my own family, my great uncle reports that as a youth he was beaten and nearly starved to death in a freezing Siberian work camp. My great grandmother died in attempting to escape. Every country should provide holocaust education to teach empathy and responsibility (Nahmmacher, 1997).

*Finding something beautiful.* The next day, the weather was gorgeous! The sun peeked through the pines and the air was fresh with pine odors. The grass glistened and birds chirped madly as we hiked through the meadow. Life felt so renewed. Mariusz asked the young children to find something beautiful in the forest. Children discovered assorted wood with

shapes resembling familiar things. Six-year-old Magda found a bark piece that she called "a boar" and Martin held up his stick-shaped deer. Angies discovered a real snail and four girls shared a tiny ladybug, a sign of good luck. Children enjoyed this treasure hunt. This was an example of aesthetic training starting with natural curiosities.

At the top of a hill, the group stopped for sandwiches and drinks. Girls blew dandelion spores and picked bouquets of wild flowers, including buttercups, daisies, and forget-me-nots from the field. Two teachers showed children how to weave a daisy chain, and one teacher laid a crown of daisies on a girl's golden hair. All of nature seemed to gleam with beauty.

Upon the return, Mariusz pointed to the sap dripping from the pine. Then he demonstrated how to hug a tree, listen to its life, and absorb its energy. Throughout the hike back to the bus, children stopped to caress trees. It is a beautiful memory.

### How Did Children React to the Green School Experience?

Mariusz then invited all of the children to draw their experiences of the Green School. Mariusz reviewed what they experienced. As motivation he said, "Remember what Joseph taught you about different instruments, songs, and dance. We were lying in the meadow and looking at the beautiful view. Show him playing his flute near his village hut." Mariusz mimicked the various flute and natural sounds: chirping, cawing, and whistling. The group sang a round and slapped their hands together.

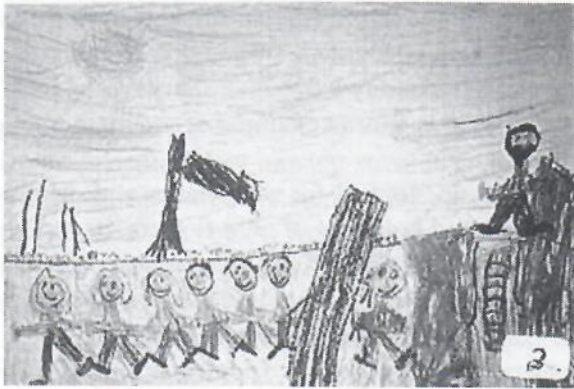
In the following analysis, we concentrate on the six-year-olds' drawings. The analysis includes the children's dominant type of drawing, how they started, their featured attractions, and other subject matter. It also includes how children configured the schema and space relations. The goal is primarily to generate and interpret themes found in the children's work.



**Figure 1.** Most students started drawing mountain base lines and mountain scenes predominated.

*Mountainscapes dominate.* In the first grade class of 20 students, fifteen out of twenty students started their drawings with mountain base lines. Ania, for instance, first drew a large pyramid-shaped mountain outline with an inner line





**Figure 2.** Fascinated by the cave they visited, Magda drew a cave on the right, below the baseline, and colored it gray with a red ladder overlapping it.

Other students made a wavy hill line across the page. Only two students used a simple baseline or the bottom of the page. The trip to the mountains inspired these young students to use multiple base lines and to overlap forms

*The underground cave.* The cave fascinated the young children and five out of twenty depicted it. Magda worked slowly and carefully on her cave drawing. She drew a baseline on the left side in the middle of the page. Then she added a box area, which she called "a cave" on the right and colored it gray with a red ladder overlapping it (Figure 2). When Stokrocki asked her where cave was, she remarked, "Underground." She drew a figure



**Figure 3.** Half of the children drew the highlander with his horn. In this case, the horn was exaggerated to show its importance as a herald of calling people home.

parallel to it (Figure 1). She colored the area in between brown. She then added two hill lines, one to the right and another to the left. Next came repetitive triangle-shaped tree forms, one on top of the other, at different levels on the left hill. She added a smiling sun. Many of the boys also began with large zigzag lines to represent mountains, such as

Max's drawing. Other students made a wavy hill line across the page. Only two students used a simple baseline or the bottom of the page. The trip to the mountains inspired these young students to use multiple base lines and to overlap forms

to the right and said it was her uncle Marek, who was one of the teachers who supported children while they looked into the cave. Finally, she drew the sun and filled in her sky area using the color blue. For his cave, Przemek made a rounded box outline in the middle of his paper and a U-shape at the bottom of it. He lined up round boulders on all sides, except at the bottom in which he drew a



**Figure 4.** Polish children are fond of drawing animals. Przemek included a wolf, three sheep, a bear, a stork, and a donkey in three-quarter view in this picture.

depicted other people in these images in a simple repetitive fashion. Magda, for example, sketched people in a row, outlined eight faces, filled them in with a flesh color, overlapped smiling faces, then added yellow halo hair to represent girls and short brown arched hairdos to represent boys (Figure 2). This tendency to depict ordinary people in a row with recurrent shapes occurred in three drawings. The highlander seemed to have made a strong impression, from this evidence.

*Musical instruments.* Further verifying the highlander's influence, various wind instruments were depicted in nine of the twenty images. Jendrek called his instrument a trombita, a six-foot trumpet that usually needs support (Figure 3). Both Max and Przemek show curved horns. Luka presented one figure blowing his horn in the front and a smaller one in the distance. Mainly, it was the boys who depicted these instruments.



**Figure 5.** Some children draw people and trees perpendicular to the diagonal baselines. Unusual was the anchoring of an arched rain area perpendicular to the mountain's slanting base.

short ladder going straight down.

*The highlander.* Half of the children depicted the highlander. In each drawing, the children featured him with his beard and hat with his arms up and holding a horn (Figure 3). The horn was exaggerated to show its importance possibly as a herald calling people home. In contrast, almost half of the children

*Animal schema.*

Animal drawings from eight of the twenty children included four-legged creatures, birds, and insects. Unusual was Przemek's drawing of animals. From left to right, he included a wolf, three sheep, a bear, a stork, and a donkey in three-quarter view (Figure 4). Some drew the typical M-shaped

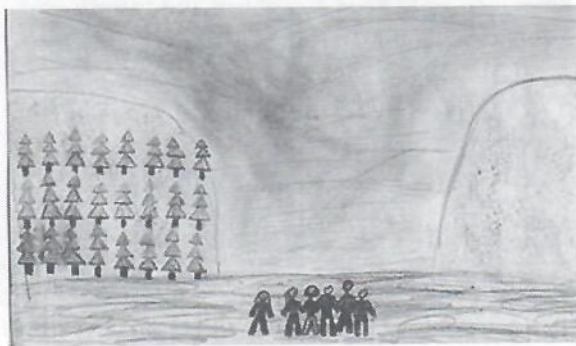


**Figure 6.** Mary mixed her media for a rainy atmospheric effect.

flour-dough goats, bears, and hares during New Years Eve and Twelfth Night (Ogrodowska, 1997).

*Stylized trees and patterns.* Children developed unique tree patterns. Max drew some overlapping zigzag designs along rectangular tree trunks (Figure 5). Mary used stacking triangle tree schema and alternated large and small trees in a row (Figure 6). On the left hill, she made a delicate pattern of pine trees that consisted of three stacked triangles in colored pencils. A team of boys made a remarkable aerial view drawing of extracted tree roots (Figure 7). Direct experience heightened their awareness of a variety of tree forms that included mixtures of aerial and elevation views. Finally, one boy invented an original tree area by repeating dots and outlining them. The outline is perpendicular to the mountainside (Figure 5).

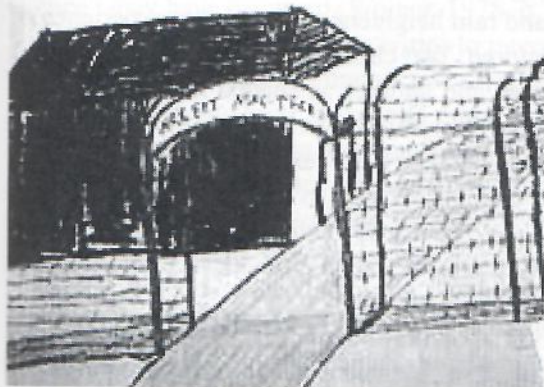
*Reflective drawings and realistic concerns.* Throughout the Green School experience, Mariusz asked children to "build a story." He would inspire them with questions: "What happened? Can you fill the empty space?"



**Figure 7.** A team of boys made a remarkable aerial view drawing of the fallen tree roots in brown and black.

birds, but Ania added rounded eyes, orange beaks, and feathers and called them storks. Storks are endangered birds but are favored in Poland because they are fertility symbols. Ania added a butterfly with a dotted pattern (Figure 1). Polish children seem to have a deep affection for animals that stems from some folk culture rituals, such as making

Explain where it is. Is it a meadow or a mountain picture?" He wanted the children to include more details in the background. At the end of the drawing session, Mariusz invited children to come to the front of the room and talk about their drawings. He directed them to choose



**Figure 8.** Most older students featured scenery (top drawing) but two boys drew the arched entrance at Auschwitz with its deceitful promise "Work Hard and Be Free."

the best and tell the reasons. Most of their concerns centered on verisimilitude. For example, six-year-old Ania chose the figures that were drawn carefully and said, "You can tell what was going on." Agnieszka selected a picture where the grass was drawn well. But there also were technical concerns. These girls, for instance, discovered the crayon resist technique that water and crayon do not mix. Mariusz pointed out

the pictures that told the best stories, such as one that depicted two figures that hiked to the top of a tall triangular mountain with Polish flags. Children soon discovered that painting with crayons could include story telling.

*Older Children and Auschwitz.* Stokrocki asked the older children to draw their experience of Auschwitz. Only two older boys drew the arched entrance at Auschwitz with its deceitful promise "Work Hard and Be Free." In his, Mihal drew an intricate series of parallel lines with hooks to represent barbed wire and a swastika for a sun (Figure 8). Another boy outlined his prison camp in gray and black. Eight other students drew the typical mountain scenery. Two girls drew the carnival rides (Luna Park). They said that they didn't remember images and avoided the Auschwitz subject. This memory block may be a typical survival device for people who cannot deal with certain traumas directly.

### **Conclusion: What Can We Learn From the Green School Experience?**

The Green School experience used an aesthetic framework to teach children many things--historical, perceptual, cognitive, moral, and ecologically, and politically.

*Historically,* the children learned to appreciate their highlander culture with its dedication to nature. Such devotion was widespread among the Slavs, who were the Polish people's first recorded ancestors. They worshipped holly trees, water, and mountains. Such attachment to nature lives on in family love of picnics and gardens. People in the city still keep small public gardens for fresh vegetables, beautiful flowers, and peaceful places to

think. From the roots of history grows the tree of knowledge.

*Perceptually*, the cold and rain heightened the sensory experience of hiking for city and suburban children. Two children featured the rain in their drawings: one as a unique pattern and another as shaded mood. The rainy drizzle and sunny dry spells, musty grass smells, various bird calls, lights and shades of light that beam on the greenery, rough textured woods, sticky tree resin, and the physical strain of walking seemed to impress deep perceptual memories in the children. Even the activity of finding one natural beautiful thing and sharing it was an inspirational aesthetic moment. Perception is the root of both aesthetics and appreciation.

New spatial relationships of natural forms, such as high mountains, underground caves and tree roots, also fascinated the children. Cognition of relationships begins with perceptual awareness as seen in the children's use of multiple baselines. Possibly the heightened experience of the Green School contributed to this knowledge.

*Cognitively*, asking children to reflect both visually and verbally on their experience seemed to strengthen cultural knowledge. They were exposed to regional folk arts--music, dance, and visual art forms. In their drawings, the dominantly depicted character was the folk highlander with some type of exaggerated horn to denote his significance. Children drew a variety of wind instruments: the large trombone, a flute, and ram's horn in their pictures, but only one instrument per picture. Later, I met several children who purchased wooden flutes in the local tourist shop. Clearly, the highlander and his natural instruments comprised the children's most memorable experience. Reflection entailed thinking about the art making process and content. "The ability to reflect on one's goals, decisions, and solutions, as well as about the influences of the works of others and on one's own work, seems to be crucial to cultivate in the service of any artistic endeavor" (Rosenblatt & Winner, 1989, p. 10).

*Morally*, lessons from Auschwitz may teach children to never allow such terrible hatred and persecution to happen again. Children need learn "coexistence not only with nature, but also with other people" (Wieczorek, 1999). Encountering and sharing music and stories with the highlander, someone so unlike themselves, helped expand their tolerance for difference. Teachers should also ask children to reflect on their experiences of the Holocaust Museum, not avoid the issue, and educate children about the different holocausts that took place throughout history and those that reoccur today.

*Ecologically*, children also learned interdisciplinary connections, such as the purpose of dams in science, conservation of water and land, the need for a diversity of trees, music making with natural reeds, and clothes made from sheep's wool. These are characteristics of the regional folk ecol-

ogy. Thus, "a synthesis of personal expression and contemplative experience" may have occurred (Wojnar, 1978, p. 46). The Green School used personal and group reflective activities to intensify understanding of "aspects of the world that might go unnoticed" (Wojnar, 1978, p. 47). Children learned that they can preserve, share, and make a difference.

More reflection however is necessary to understand ecological issues because one experience is not enough. Mariusz (2002) described the school's most recent ethnographic field trip to the Kaszbian Region of Poland as a basis for educating cultural values. This region in northeast Poland includes cities and towns along the Baltic Sea, including the historical ports Gdan'sk and Gdynia, and the Kaszbian heritage Park in Nadole. He reported artistic workshops on the beach: photography, sand building, landscape painting, architectural drawing, clay modeling and drawing faces of the Kaszbian fisherman. Results from a poetry competition titled, "Water as a source of living and recreation of the world," were sent to Stockholm as part of the Globe Tree-Future Vessel Project. He noted, "We encourage children to develop democratic and pluralistic attitudes in respecting other cultures' customs, dialects and religions as the basis for intercultural dialogue within our own country, Europe and on a world scale" (Personal correspondence, Mariusz Samoraj, May, 14, 2002).

*Ecopolitically*, children need to learn to stay alert to political problems in their environment. This begins with awareness of the environment around them. The color green pervaded the children's mountain experience and was seen in their drawings. The older children learned that the opposite of beauty and green is gray and destruction. The heightened experience of the horrors of Auschwitz in contrast, aesthetically may mark their memories forever. Edith King, Professor of Educational Sociology at University of Denver, expressed this concern, "We should not forget the horrendous destruction. Now we need to rebuild and teach the children. The arts can help us remember" (Personal communication, October 10, 2000). Greenpeace christened Poland as the Green Tiger of Europe as it strives to preserve its indigenous cultures, clean up its ecology, maintain its independence, and preserve its peace (Salter, 1999). Krug suggested that "art, culture, and nature can be investigated using cyclical inquiry processes that draw from direct experiences, observation and reflection, critical thinking, and collaborative action" (Birt, Krug, & Sheridan, p. 9).

The school program in Poland can benefit from activities that "identify, study, and solve real-life problems" in their own back yards (Birt et al, p. 10). A critical program should include student discussions, writing, and proactive art activities on ecopolitical themes. Ecopolitical themes include knowledge of material integrity (for example, the great oak trees that were indigenous to Poland), recycling and cleanup of nonbiodegradable materials

(that the Russians dumped into the Polish rivers), the protection of endangered animals (storks and wolves that are becoming extinct), and safeguards against the exploitation of people (through forced labor or extermination due to religious and cultural prejudices). Blandy and Hoffman (1993) suggest that such critical endeavors contribute to an education of place and jagodzinski (1999) argued that art education needs such a socio-ecological aesthetic foundation from which a "green criticism" can evolve. Teachers need to reinforce ways of harmonizing people and natural systems. Samoraj summarized, "As a consequence of recent political and social changes in the world, we need to think about new areas of education, for example education for living in communities, and education for cultural dialogue" (Personal correspondence, Mariusz Samoraj, May, 14, 2002). At the root of the Green School experience is aesthetic consciousness without which the spirit may not survive.

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