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## SHAPING SPIRITUALITY THROUGH CHILDREN'S LITERATURE INTENDED FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL – DISCUSSION OF SELECTED EXAMPLES

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**Abstract.** *The aim is to learn about the spirituality like a part of education. Spirituality is understood as values, attitudes and traditions choosing by man. It also refers to the integral, holistic upbringing of the human being. In this article, attention is paid to the comprehensive, multidimensional pupil development. This objective will be achieved by analyzing selected children's books. Short outline of the research problem and novelty.*

**Keywords:** *spirituality, children's books, reading, reading, reading, values, attitudes, traditions.*

### Introduction

The main goal of this article is to help us learn about the meaning of the integral upbringing for the education, of spirituality of a child and a person. The aim of the text is to explore how children's literature develops and shapes the spirituality of man, namely his attitudes, values and traditions.

The objective will be to present the obligatory reading materials selected by the author for primary school pupils and to conduct own research on the development and shaping of spirituality on the basis of selected children's literature - reading analysis.

### Clarification of the terms 'children's literature' and 'spirituality'

Childhood is one of the periods of life when a child acquires certain skills, when child becomes independent, when child meets the world around himself or herself. During this period it also builds a system of its own knowledge about the world, the other man and its own self (Boyd & Bee, 2008). Children live with adults, but their outlook on the world is different from that of carers (Brith & Malim, 2004). Pedagogues, literary critics and writers call him “the children's world” (Smolińska - Theiss, 2003). Everyone can move to this world even for a moment, using children's literature.

Literature “for children” and literature “for children and young people” has been widely understood as literary. The texts of this type books are intended to be used for only didactic and educational purposes (Bautsz - Sontag, 2013). Pedagogical Encyclopaedia of the 21st Century states that “literature for children and young people is a field of fine literature covering works addressed to young audiences” (Pilch, 2003). This aspect is distinguished by its characteristics. This includes a specific language, adapted to the recipient's skills and competences, a plot equipped with a certain dynamism and content rich in educational values. The heroes have character traits that allow for a clear classification. This literature often serves as teaching material for teachers (Pilch, 2003). Through this form of artism, children and young people can be taught not only linguistics, but also axiology, upbringing to values. We can ask whether school readings shape the spirituality of a person? To answer this question, it is necessary to give a description of what spirituality is.

Spirituality in common sense is understood as a “synonym of man's religion or belief or a special feature that allows him to experience” mystical “experiences (Marshal, 2013). Spirituality is a simple, indefinite term, as P. Socha argues, among others (Socha, 2000) that just as it is impossible to describe all spheres of human spirituality, due to the multitude of processes that lead people to “higher” achievements, it is impossible to grasp the very nature of spirituality.

M. Dziewiecki wrote that “spirituality is the ability of a man to understand himself, to know his own mystery, in other words, spirituality is a sphere in which a person looks for answers to the most important questions: who am I and why I live?” (Dziewiecki, 2005).

Spirituality Expert D. Fleming refers to spirituality in three aspects, such as habits (other translation it is our own traditions) attitudes and values. They give a specific direction of action, a vision of life, a reflective attitude to everyday life, a respectful attitude to the world and the hope for the full discovery of God - immortality (Fleming, 2013). Reflections on the area of spirituality allow us to state that it refers to the attitudes of man in his behavior, to the values he professes, as well as to the traditions to which he has clung and which he creates.

In this article, we will attempt to describe the spirituality described above, written by the Jesuit priest D. Fleming.

### **Reading in early childhood education**

The measure of the 21st century school is the satisfaction of the needs of a person living in a given reality, in a given society. An important issue in the organization of the education system is the emphasis on the development of universal and, at the same time, necessary values and skills for every human being. Education in today's world becomes the most important indicator of human

capital, on which depends economic, political, intellectual and moral success. “(Italy, 2011) Jan Hartman (Hartman, 2011) states that” what kind of society, what kind of school - which school, such a society”.

Primary education in Poland is characterized by integrated education. It has a rich tradition, and in Poland it was implemented to classes I-III with the reform of education in 1999. Integrated education is considered the most important element of the current school system. It provides the foundation and foundation for further stages of education, while ensuring regularity and unity of didactic and educational processes at later stages. He is to equip people with basic learning tools, such as reading and writing skills, speaking, counting, problem solving and basic content to understand the world in which they live. It also aims to facilitate the individual's gradual becoming a citizen of the world, but without losing his national roots; a citizen who actively participates in the life of the planet Earth, but also in the life of his nation, his local community” (Hanisz, 2000).

In our everyday life, we often meet with beautiful speech in content and form, which is an important aspect of our development (Grelowska, 2012). Reading brings many benefits. Because during elementary education a child learns to read slowly, a teacher at school plays an important role as a person who transmits content written in books. The choice of fairy tales read during the lesson requires the teacher to have a good knowledge of his students, because each of them can interpret the situation in a different way. Researchers note that these works play an important role in shaping sensitivity and empathy, social sensitivity and awareness (Grelowska, 2012). The clarity of the characters' characters teaches socially desirable attitudes. Courage, gratitude, respect for animals, love, sacrifice, contempt for avarice or lust for power - these are some of the characteristics of human figures that we pass through reading to children (Grelowska, 2012). Concentration on the fairy tale action also has its role: searching associations, subtexts, certain philosophical thoughts are invaluable for the child and its development, and early school and pre-school age is considered the most optimal for shaping psychological attitudes. The child to acquire simple, simple things that can be imagined, can experience these experiences through fairy tales, fairy tales or other literary works.

On the basis of the above, it can be concluded that reading in didactic-educational processes plays an important role.

Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 14 February 2017 On the core curriculum of pre-school education and the core curriculum of general education for primary school, including students with moderate or significant intellectual disabilities, general education in the first-cycle school, general education for a special school adapted to work and general education for post-secondary schools, it presents a reading canon valid at various stages of education. The list of books should be used as much as possible and appropriate to the needs

of students. Their value is such that prose and poetic works introduce literary works to Polish tradition and contemporary literature. These books can be found in library collections as well as in textbooks for primary education. Some of them will be analyzed in terms of shaping and developing the spirituality of the child.

For the purposes of this article, the most popular children's books in primary schools in Poland were selected. The books presented below are one of the classics of children's literature liked by children. These books are also on the reading list created by the Polish Mistryhood of Education.

### **Spirituality shaped and developed through school reading**

The first reading analyzed is “Children of Bullerbyn”. This book was written by the Swedish writer Astrid Lindgren in 1947. It tells the story of a girl's adventure about Lisa and her friends living in Bullerbyn. This reading is the carrier of certain values. For the protagonist, material value is her siblings, the home in which she lives, as well as friends and acquaintances, as well as her own room. It is also said about grandfather, family member and health as a material value. Also appreciated are everyday objects - “A very clever man invented a bed because he really sleeps better in bed than in a haystack” (Lindgren, 2007). In another place attention is paid to knowledge as something valuable. Children go to school, learn and develop their talents. Elsewhere, reading refers to the value of money. Attention to the beauty of nature. This book also talks about friendship and the value of having fun, sharing time with others. Children spend time together, have fun, get to know each other, make contacts and make friends. The value of human work for others is also shown through the presentation of the competition - “We removed our fingers, sat down and looked at the shoemaker while he was making his shoes” (Lindgren, 2007). Children also value their siblings - “The most important thing is to have siblings at all” (Lindgren, 2007). These situations give the reader a reflection on whether he or she attributes value to certain phenomena, such as the characters of reading. Shaping the posture can also be found in the book “Children of Bullerbyn” by Astrid Lindgren. Mom said I had to keep the room in perfect order. So I try to do my best “(Lindgren, 2007). These words mean an attitude of concern for order and commitment, elsewhere attention is paid to helping children's parents in their daily duties. Principles of good manners, following an important etiquette and care for others, empathy and hospitality are also presented, attention is paid to taking care of and care for the animals, as well as to help the other person and to show cooperation between children, I was sitting in front of the fireplace in a chair on the pipe and I was terribly happy when we arrived “(Lindgren, 2007). These words indicate the joy of meeting the other person. Elsewhere, a description of the event was given, during which the children tried to make others have a good time. This can become

a source of motivation for the student to do something that will make others happy each day. Children also try to share what they want, to comfort others, help them in need, take care of animals and take care of them. Astrid Lindgren also points to some traditions in her book "Children of Bullerbyn". The heroine talks about her birthdays and Christmas. This indicates the importance of these days, the celebration of these family traditions. Another example is the annual celebration of Christmas greetings, where at school "on both sides there are Swedish flags, around a garland of birch twigs with lots of flowers around the world" (Lindgren, 2007). In another place, one speaks of listening to family stories. The book presents a description of the Christmas celebrations, customs prevailing during Christmas - "I do not know when Christmas starts somewhere else, but for us, children from Bullerbyn, Christmas begins on the day we bake gingerbread" (Lindgren, 2007). Waiting for the New Year also has its rituals for children from Bullerbyn. The heroes also visit their family - "The most pleasant thing during Christmas was a visit to Aunt Jenny" (Lindgren, 2007). Celebrating the April Fool's Day, the day when people joke and tempt. On the pages of the book there is also a note about the celebration of Easter in Bullerbyn: "I will tell you about the last Easter in Bullerbyn, grandfather's birthday and holy night, the description of these events allows the reader to discover certain customs prevailing in exceptional, special days for reading heroes, he can think then about your way of celebrating births and holidays.

Another example of reading at the first stage of education is the legend of Wanda Chotomska about Lech, Czechs and Rus. The three heroes are brothers who have lived for centuries. Oaks in their settlement have gained a special value. The oldest and, at the same time, the largest trees of this type were sacred and devoted to God, who guarded their settlement. A white horse grazed beside the tree, which was also a saint. In this legend, we see the spiritual value, which is Transcendence, and also the material value - trees and animals dedicated to it. Another reference to the values are horses, axes and leather pouches, in which there was a secret sign from Świątowit. Each brother received this equipment to start a new settlement in the world, unknown and start an adult life. Lech found a feather (material value) in the case that he got with the sign. He found the same feather in a forest clearing under an oak tree where there was a nest of eagles, which is why Lech read it as a signal from God and established his settlement there, called Gniezno. The items that each brother received, as well as the land they had then, have material value. This legend also teaches tradition. This album allows us to reach certain traditions that allow Poles to identify with the country, with certain traditions and explain why the eagle is the emblem of Poland, Gniezno the first capital and seat of the first rulers of our country, and also refers to the neighbors of Poland - Czechs and Russians whose names were taken from two brothers Lech. The legend about Lech, the Czech Republic and Rus' is also a

source of certain positive attitudes, most of all: the care of three brothers over their horses came from their father - "And everyone had to take care of their own horse. Feel and drink it, comb and arrange it so that the horse is clean and the horse is clean" (Chotomska, 2000), at the same time learning obligatory and working hard because he works with a horse, dealing with it is not a one-off act, but a process that must be performed every day, it also shows heroes who keep their word, and after receiving pockets none of them could admit to what was in them - "<<< I am a pen ... >> - surprised Lech. In silence, without a word, without revealing the secret" (Chotomska, 2000), and also teaching obedience to the other person, keeping the promise.

"Anaruk, a boy from Greenland" is another reading that arises at the first stage of school education. The book was written in 1937 by a Polish traveler and reporter Czesław Centkiewicz. It presents the fate of a twelve-year-old Eskimo, based on the facts observed by the author during his stay on land. The material value is provided by the area of Greenland itself, which is almost seven times larger than Poland, Eskimo clothing, which is adapted to the weather conditions there, houses that are their place of residence, provide shelter, and a tree - "tree is a real treasure" (Centkiewicz, 1988), because they can be used in many ways and, unfortunately, it is difficult to obtain them. The spiritual values of Inuit are, above all, agreement, unity, honesty, respect for the dignity of the other person and property, the ability to share what is. Material value is food, game, hunting and soup - the biggest delicacy. For Tugt, the father of the title character, material value is a gift - a steel knife offered by the narrator. Life is a material value, also valuable for them. This reading is filled with information about the lives of Eskimos. The viewer learns that these people actually lead a difficult, difficult but happy life. They can enjoy what they have to do, choose the right, reject the evil. Anaruk, a boy from Greenland "is a reading that also reveals tradition, especially in relation to the land on which the boy lives, which allows the viewer to get to know another culture and tradition, a different reality and confront it with what is known to him. One of the rituals accompanying people living in the surrounding areas is hunting, on which Anaruk and his dad rode, Tugt, Anaruk, the title character of the book "Anaruk, a boy from Greenland", presents his person with a positive attitude - leadership skills, and despite the young age was strong and courageous, which made him proud, he easily made contact with others and thought about others. The Eskimos are also resourceful - "People from the Far North can somehow manage without a tree: the skin of the tent stretches on the whales' ribs" (Centkiewicz, 1988). one of the features that hunters have when they start looking for food. Children from Eskimos, this one like their parents, they never quarrel or fight, in the case of the Eskimo battles, the Eskimos face each other in front of the entire settlement population, and one on top of each other creates malicious songs. Everyone laughs and likes jokes, and the winner is the

one whose songs are more witty. Eskimos are nice, polite, confident and hospitable. They are very modest, they do not boast, do not lie, do not talk to each other “(Centkiewicz, 1988), they like to share what they have, they are altruists, they believe in superstitions -” Eskimos are very superstitious - they were convinced that this is my their presence brings them happiness “(Centkiewicz, 1988) shows a certain attitude to reality and the search for Transcendence.

The longing for the narrator's family home is a positive attitude that illustrates his relationship with other people, friends, relatives and country of origin. Negative attitude is the behavior of one of the sailors, who “boasted of his skill, said it is not difficult to hunt canoes, Eskimos do not like such people” (Centkiewicz, 1988). Positive ones also include openness. Despite the fact that the inhabitants of the Inuit do not have an easy life on their land, they are hospitable, friendly, generous, living with each other, courageous and ready to help others.

“Sticks and rods” by Jan Twardowski talk about a fire in a house inhabited by many people. Each of them made of flames, which was the greatest value for him. There was something different for everyone. Among the things saved were cages for animals, turtles (material value - animal life and cage), mountain stones and flints, fur, porcelain lamp, hat, hat, cylinder, pants, straw, aunt, aunt, aunt, clubs and sticks. All these values are material values. This story reveals a certain truth that something else is a value, a valuable topic for everyone. Each of us is different and has a different value system. This book in the reader shapes a positive attitude. Heroes of history save the lives of others, animals or bring flames to things that are priceless to them. They do not reach for money, jewelry, credit cards, but objects that are in their subjective assessment valuable for them, and for others - useless. The text refers to tradition, describing the salvation of objects, which is valuable to us, which is necessary for everyday rituals or a kind of souvenir, has a sentimental value, in a crisis situation, here: fire (Twardowski, 1987).

The line “Who you are, a small Pole”, written by Władysław Bełz in 1900, has a simple form, similar to children's rhymes. It consists of questions and answers to basic questions about the national identity of the Pole. The values mentioned in the work are first of all the homeland, the land on which one lives, develops and creates. He already has his own story that deserves respect. It is a material value. Spiritual value is faith in the homeland and love for her. This love is capable of sacrifice, even to give life in the name of your homeland. The white eagle - the symbol of Poland, the history of our country, the nation as a community of people shaping the feeling of belonging, identity with a given culture and customs, helps to find itself as a resident in a given territory, the citizen of a given country is the motive of tradition in this poem. This work also has a different title - “Catechism of the Polish Child”. It is a simple form of patriotic education, it tells

about the characteristics of a Pole. This work also promotes the formation of positive attitudes, such as patriotism, love, respect for the motherland, its history, national heroes, shaping attitudes and the ability to present one's own goodness over the good of the homeland (Bełza, 1912).

## Conclusions

The analysis of reading materials for the first stage of school education allowed us to identify values, attitudes and traditions that are promoted, passed on and developed to students during integrated teaching in grades I-III. You can notice many values that appear in the presented content.

Material and intangible materials promoted in these documents and books serve or relate directly to the heroes of reading. They are their property. These characters, their lives, their actions promote certain values, attitudes and traditions, while the reader, as a recipient, assimilates the content of the book, reads about them, reads about them, reads them, and then with some of them. they can begin to identify themselves and then accept them as their own.

It should also be mentioned that their attention has been paid to transcendental values that may contribute to shaping spirituality, not only in the natural, but also in the religious dimension. Transcendence, God, as a force of higher power, is mentioned several times as good. This applies to the integral development of the person.

The collected and developed research material allows to conclude that the content of reading at the first stage of education shapes and develops the spirituality of the person. This development takes place through spiritual but also material goods and shows that the literature with which children cope during the first stage of school education contributes to forming them as individuals, to shaping the spirituality of the child.

It should be noted that only a few of the most popular school readings for primary schools have been analyzed. In order to show the wider dimension of spirituality in the development of a child, it would be necessary to analyze the remaining books on the Ministry of Education's list.

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