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Polish Literature for Children as Support of Children’s Creativity and Polishness

Abstract

Poland has a long history, but unfortunately, this history is also full of battles for independence, to keep the Polish language and culture, and a struggle for Christian values. What was supporting these processes? According to many experts Polish literature has been one important factor. In this article, the role of Polish literature for children, especially poetry, in supporting their creativity and Polishness will be analysed. Subsequently the article will outline the history of Polish literature for children, the importance of patriotic and religious literature, especially during the Partition and Soviet time and the nature of children’s literature.

Keywords

Poland, children’s literature, pedagogy, creativity.

For a long time, children had to learn useful things, rather than wasting their time with entertaining reading. The entertaining dimension was totally lacking: the main purpose of the book was to teach, to educate, never to entertain. Psychological research, educationalists and teachers made an important contribution to change both the understanding of a child and also, their literature. The field of children’s literature retains, in varying degrees, some measure of the revolutionary spirit of those researchers, teachers and writers who pointed out the necessity of children’s access to all varieties of literature. Just as much as children’s literature would be unthinkable without creativity, so it would

be inconceivable without the input of the Educational Sciences. Thus, we start this article with an outline of the history of Polish literature for children, then we will explain the importance of patriotic and religious literature, and in the end we will evaluate children's literature in Poland.

1. Short historical approach

For centuries, a child had been treated as a miniature adult. It was only an intensive development of social sciences, and in particular the recognition of a child's developmental processes, that contributed to a different perception. The 20th century was declared as the century of the child, consequently bringing new literary inspirations and a demand for newer, more interesting and more inspiring works for children. Therefore children's literature has developed rapidly and become indeed thriving industry. In Poland, it was as late as the mid-20th century¹ when authors started to write, bearing in mind the child as the recipient (first the listener and then – the reader). Great merits, in this respect, are owed to S. Jachowicz, whose works were aimed exclusively at learning and education. It was not before the end of the 19th century when a new style of writing was undertaken by M. Konopnicka, overcoming didacticism in texts for children, and thus including laughter, a play and a song. In Poland, many works for children were created dealing with extremely varying subjects.² Owing to the limits of this article, I will address only the main trends, predominantly in poetry for children.

The conventional edifying content of poems was overcome by Maria Konopnicka, who strived to show children in their daily environment. She wrote many beautiful children poems about nature (“Tęcza” (*Rainbow*), “Rzeka” (*River*), “Mrowisko” (*Anthill*), and “W ogrodzie” (*In the Garden*). However, the world

¹ Cf. *Antologia poezji dziecięcej*, ed. Jerzy Cieślowski, Wrocław 1991; E. Balcerzan, *Odbiorca w poezji dla dzieci*, Kraków 1982; J. Cieślowski, *Literatura i podkultura dziecięca*, Wrocław 1975; J. Cieślowski, *Literatura osobna*, Warszawa 1985; S. Frycie, *Literatura dla dzieci i młodzieży w latach 1945-1975*, Warszawa 1978; H. Ratyńska, *Literatura dziecięca w pracy przedszkola*, Warszawa 1991; K. Kuliczowska, *Literatura dla dzieci i młodzieży w latach 1864-1918*, Warszawa 1974; R. Waksmund, *Literatura pokoju dzieciennego*, Warszawa 1986; R. Waksmund, *Od literatury dla dzieci do literatury dziecięcej*, Wrocław 2000; B. Żurkowski, *Literatura. Wartość. Dziecko*, Kraków 1999; B. Żurkowski, *W świecie poezji dla dzieci*, Kraków 1999.

² Cf. R. Waksmund, *Klasyka dziecięca dzisiaj*, in: *Po potopie. Dziecko, książka i biblioteka w XXI wieku*, eds. D. Świerczyńska-Jelonek, G. Leszczyński, M. Zajac Warszawa 2008, p. 29-32.

she was depicting went through a dramatic change due to development of the civilization, hence a lot of her texts are currently incomprehensible for children.³

Works showing the social situation from the perspective of a child appeared in the 19th century. A particularly well-known novel is *Janko the Musician*, about a musically-talented boy who has no opportunity to develop his talent but is cruelly punished for it instead. Janko represents all children from poor families who cannot live a child's life in its totality, are not supported by their parents, whilst their talent is the reason for a reprimand rather than their development and support.

In the 20th century, works for children display a portrait of children's vices. They discipline and sometimes even threaten. In this way, children's literature rather trains than educates them. A motif of corporal, psychological or spiritual punishment that awaits children who do not listen to their parents or guardians was often used.⁴ A new current was not introduced until Janina Porazińska came forward, making references to folk texts in a simple, melodic and funny form that can be often sung.

Similar forms were presented by Hanna Januszewska. Changing texts of folk songs and games into simple children stories, she wrote short anecdotes about historical events, combining fairy tale fantasies with historic realities. Her didactic poems, encouraging everybody to love their homeland, and especially to reconstruct a new Poland after the Second World War. Today they may seem out of date because of their message.

Attention should be given to the contribution of Ewa Szelburg-Zarembina who loved poor, forgotten and abandoned children. She often picked up motifs of a lullaby, a folk song and children games. Simple texts, often enriched with melody, were very popular because, easily remembered, they were used in children's education in nursery schools. Folk works were also used in the artistic production for the youngest by other writers, for example Maria Kownacka, Joanna Kulmowa, Mieczysława Buczkówna and Józef Czechowicz.⁵

³ K. Cukrowska, *Literatura dla dzieci – uczy, bawi, wychowuje*, in: *Wychowanie dzieci w wieku przedszkolnym*, eds. E. Osewska, J. Stala, Tarnów 2005, p. 71-81.

⁴ Cf. J. Białek, *Literatura dla dzieci i młodzieży w latach 1918-1939*, Warszawa 1978; I. Koźmińska, E. Olszewska, *Wychowanie przez czytanie*, Warszawa 2010; *Polish Literature for Children and Young Adults Inspired by Classical Antiquity. A Catalogue*, ed. K. Marciniak, E. Olechowska, J. Kłos, M. Kucharski, Warsaw 2013.

⁵ Cf. K. Cukrowska, *Literatura dla dzieci – uczy, bawi, wychowuje*, in: *Wychowanie dzieci w wieku przedszkolnym*, eds. E. Osewska, J. Stala, Tarnów 2005, p. 71-98; R. Waksmund, *Klasyka*

Introduction of folklore to children's literature has had an important educational contribution: knowledge of tales, myths, legends, folk tales and novels referring to biblical events, folk games, rituals, songs, customs, etc. is a prerequisite for the preparation for taking part in culture.⁶

Gradually, in their works, poets started to show the world from the position of a child (e.g. Julian Tuwim, Jan Brzechwa, Anna Świrszczyńska, Joanna Papużyńska and Wanda Chotomska).⁷ Their texts never age since they, primarily entertain but also imperceptibly educate. These authors created a style of writing that broke existing conventions. The objective of their texts was to diverge from didacticism and moralizing and to introduce laughter, joke and craic (“Kaczka-dziwaczka” (*Oddball Duck*), “Słoń Trąbalski” (*Elephant Trąbalski*), “Figielek” (*Little Trick*)). An exchange of roles also takes place: there are adults who do stupid things whilst children know what to do. From the pedagogical point of view, a text eases a child's complexes and the child finally has the opportunity to notice that adults can also be wrong, whilst observing and drawing important conclusions. In this way the child becomes a partner for a conversation, somebody entitled to their own questions and reflections. Gradually one could find poems which included children's simple statements, weird questions, funny answers but also crucial children's dilemmas, all taken directly from their lives e.g. Why does something hurt me?; Why do I cry?; How would it be if the world looked differently?⁸

Apart from jokes and nature, authors slowly portrayed a world that is close to children, their environment and everyday lives. Influenced by the literature of “**Winnie the Pooh**” by A.A. Milne, in Poland Czesław Janczarski wrote “*Przygody i wędrówki Misia Uszatka*” (*Adventures and Wanderings of Teddy Bear Flop Ear*). They present to children a harmonious, friendly life, interesting

dziecięca dzisiaj, in: *Po potopie. Dziecko, książka i biblioteka w XXI wieku*, eds. D. Świrszczyńska-Jelonek, G. Leszczyński, M. Zajac Warszawa 2008, p. 24-32.

⁶ Cf. H. Ratyńska, *Literatura dziecięca w pracy przedszkola*, Warszawa 1991; J. Cieślowski, *Wielka zabawa. Folklor dziecięcy, wyobrażenia dziecka, wiersze dla dzieci*, Wrocław 1985.

⁷ Cf. A. Ungeheuer-Gołąb, *Literackie inspiracje w rozwoju przedszkolaka*, Warszawa 2012, p. 35-54; G. Lewandowska-Nosal, *Od czterech do sześciu. Książka dla przedszkolaka*, Warszawa 2012, p. 18-24.

⁸ Cf. K. Cukrowska, *Literatura dla dzieci – uczy, bawi, wychowuje*, in: *Wychowanie dzieci w wieku przedszkolnym*, eds. E. Osewska, J. Stala, Tarnów 2005, p. 71-98; G. Leszczyński, *Od aktora do animatora. Od misterium do happeningu. Dziecko i książka w obliczu przemian*: in: *Po potopie. Dziecko, książka i biblioteka w XXI wieku*, eds. D. Świrszczyńska-Jelonek, G. Leszczyński, M. Zajac Warszawa 2008, p. 125-128.

adventures, games, sympathy for friends' errors and vices. The main message was that in an atmosphere of kindness and cheerfulness, friends can correct errors together.⁹

Another Polish children's poet is Anna Kamińska, who emphasises in her poems the moral and philosophical sense, and fantasy creation. Some found it difficult to adapt to the new metrical structure ("Zajęczy pałac" (*Hare's Palace*), "Dębowa kołyska" (*Oak Cradle*) and others). Extremely important questions such as: "Where am I?", "Why am I?", or "Why does the world exist?" become apparent. An avant-garde poet, who was writing for children, was Tadeusz Kubiak. He wrote works such as for example "Niby na niby" (*Perhaps Seemingly*), "W kraju Baj-baju" (*In A Legend Country*), "Wesoły deszcz" (*Jolly Rain*) and others. He depicted in them pictures from children lives, wanderings in distant lands and seas, nature, games and dreams. His poems are written in an avant-garde style.¹⁰

Wanda Chotomska writes for children as a friend, not a moralizer. Therefore, her poems are liked by young readers and their educators. Written in an easy style, friendly for a young reader, her poems stimulate a child's imagination, encourage him/her to go on quests, to look around, asking questions, creating their reality and expressing their reflections.¹¹

2. Patriotic and religious literature

Poland has a long history, but unfortunately, its history is also full of battles for independence, to keep the Polish language and culture, to treasure Christian values against socialism and Soviet domination. They are battles that are still being waged today and that shape the ongoing perception. What this can mean for children's books is that for more than a hundred years, Polish writers were telling the stories at the expense of originality, serving patriotic or moral aims. An important element of the Polish literature for children, especially in the time

⁹ K. Cukrowska, *Literatura dla dzieci – uczy, bawi, wychowuje*, in: *Wychowanie dzieci w wieku przedszkolnym*, eds. E. Osewska, J. Stala, Tarnów 2005, p. 87; Cf. H. Ratyńska, *Literatura dziecięca w pracy przedszkola*, Warszawa 1991.

¹⁰ Cf. Cukrowska, *Literatura dla dzieci – uczy, bawi, wychowuje*, in: *Wychowanie dzieci w wieku przedszkolnym*, eds. E. Osewska, J. Stala, Tarnów 2005, p. 87-89; A. Ungeheuer-Gołąb, *Literackie inspiracje w rozwoju przedszkolaka*, Warszawa 2012, p. 55-68.

¹¹ K. Cukrowska, *Literatura dla dzieci – uczy, bawi, wychowuje*, in: *Wychowanie dzieci w wieku przedszkolnym*, eds. E. Osewska, J. Stala, Tarnów 2005, p. 90.

of the Partitions of Poland,¹² were simple, patriotic, strongly symbolic texts, e.g. “Polak Mały (A Little Pole), “Wyznanie wiary dziecięcia polskiego” (A Polish Child’s Confession of Faith) also known as “Katechizm polskiego dziecka” (The Catechism of A Polish Child). This very well known poem is a series of questions and answers written to inspire patriotism among the youngest generation in Poland. Władysław Bełza, who wrote this poem, was also an author of many other patriotic texts: “Cnoty kardynale” (The Cardinal Virtues), “Legenda o garści ziemi polskiej” (A Legend of a Handful of Polish Soil), “Marsz Skautów” (The Scouts’ March) and “Modlitwa za Ojczyznę” (Prayer for the Fatherland). Most of his work was written in a simple form, on patriotic themes, addressed to kids of Poland, which would not re-emerge for more than a century of the Partition until after the First World War. But the best known poem is “Polak Mały”:

Kto Ty jesteś? (Who are you?)
 Polak mały. (A young Pole)
 Jaki znak twój? (What is your sign?)
 Orzeł biały (The White Eagle)
 Gdzie ty mieszkasz?(Where do you live?)
 Między swemi (Amongst my people)
 W jakim kraju?(In what country?)
 W polskiej ziemi. (On Polish soil)
 Czem ta ziemia? (What is that soil?)
 Mą Ojczyzną. (My fatherland.)
 Czem zdobyta? (How was it gained?)
 Krwią i blizną. (Through blood and scars.)
 Czy ją kochasz? (Do you love it?)
 Kocham szczerze. (I love her sincerely.)
 A w co wierzysz? (And in what do you believe?)
 W Boga/Polskę wierzę! (I believe in God/Poland!)
 Coś ty dla niej? (What are you to her?)
 Wdzięczne dziecko. (A grateful child.)
 Coś jej winien? (What do you owe her?)
 Oddać życie. (The sacrifice of my life.)

Bełza’s poem was often taught and repeated in Polish families also much later in the 20th century as a sign of resistance against the communist regime

¹² There were three partitions of Poland in the end of the 18th century, resulting in the elimination of sovereign Poland for 123 years. The partitions were conducted by three countries: the Russian Empire, Kingdom of Prussia, Habsburg Austria, which divided up the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth lands among themselves progressively in the process of territorial seizures. Poland was formally reconstituted in November 1918 after First World War.

imposed after the Second World War and as a belief that despite the enslavement of the country by the Soviet Union and the allies' (Britain, France and the USA) betrayal, Poland will revive again one day because Poles loved their fatherland and God. This poem was not said in the communist school, hence its value as a work defending an independent fatherland.

An important element in the Polish children's literature were fairy tales and legends that reminded the times of Poland's glory or created a fairy tale atmosphere that helped to survive the difficult time of bondage, both prior to the First and Second World Wars and the communist regime after the Second World War. Perhaps the best known was the legend about Lech, Czech and Rus – the three brothers that were ancestors of three nations: the Polish, the Czechs and the Russians. This simple legend recalled the national emblem – a white eagle – a strong bird that can be tied, but one day will shake off its shackles and fly high above. Polish legends are very exciting and appealing to children. Reading legends is a great way for children to improve their imagination, creativity, comprehension skills, since legends have strong, compelling plots, clear characters, and settings that contain plenty of meaning.¹³

In the communist era in Poland,¹⁴ in many families, a bit in the form of a legend, events connected with the family, the fatherland and the Church were told, yet with a strong emphasis that children would tell nothing about it at school since this was endangered with devastating consequences for adults. In villages, an excellent moment to pass on legends was the time of communal work performed by groups of neighbours, e.g. removing fluff from goose feathers, pickling gherkins or making preserves for winter. Then, most often older women, were telling stories from their childhood, hagiography, particularly of Polish saints, and Polish legends and were passing life wisdom to the young generation. Children in villages and small towns were growing up, being sure that the fatherland and faith are a Pole's fundamental values. Even though we were experiencing the

¹³ Cf. A. Ungeheuer-Gołąb, *Literackie inspiracje w rozwoju przedszkolaka*, Warszawa 2012, p. 80-88; G. Lewandowska-Nosal, *Od czterech do sześciu. Książka dla przedszkolaka*, Warszawa 2012, p. 33-44.

¹⁴ After the Second World War, Poland like many Central and Eastern nations had to endure the presence of Soviet troops on their territories. As a result, Poland was governed by a communist party, which reported directly to the authority of the Soviet government. But the Polish nation did not reconcile itself with the Soviet domination and the alien economic, cultural and anti-Christian system imposed on the Polish population in the process. The communist government applied various measures of suppression directed against the anticommunist opposition as well as against the Roman Catholic Church.

period of the imposed Soviet ideology, deep inside the people there was strength that one day would be awakened again. Histories of individual families were closely tied with the history of the nation, while the figures of the blessed and saints were very dear for the young generation. Particularly frequent references were made to the heroism and piety of young Poles, e.g. St. Stanisław Kostka – the patron saint of the Polish young people – who despite many unfavourable circumstances remained faithful to God and the fatherland.

In the post-war period, when in Poland it was difficult to buy children books, sometimes children took an initiative to make the books themselves. On A4 format sheets of paper, children were writing their own simple texts and colour illustrations. They often wrote down the legends and stories they heard, changing them slightly. At other times, they made up stories about their adventures, fantasy travels or encounters with other children. Colour illustrations made by children added details that were not expressed by words but could be depicted with crayons. Therefore, characters often wore beautiful, decorative clothes that expressed the child's escape from the communist reality in which it was difficult to buy good-looking attire and stores offered only extremely rough-hewn, cut-and-dried, universal garments totally not adjusted to children. On pages of books written by children there appeared beautiful made-up structures or gardens full of weirdest flowers, butterflies and animals that differed from the old and bleak apartment blocks they lived in. I, myself, thanks to my imagination, made my own a booklets in which I could express the desire for parents' closeness (They both worked and in the afternoon were involved in the construction of the family house), security (I drew angels who were protecting me and my siblings), joy (stories about walks, balls and journeys in clouds) and even a simple expectation of tasty meals and desserts (I received cakes only when I was ill, therefore they appeared on pages of the book as sumptuous banquets). When as a very young child, I took responsibility for my younger siblings, I made up various stories that were sometimes expressed only with words and on other occasions, together with my brothers and sisters, I wrote them on paper. Many a time we returned to our booklets together. Interestingly, every time we read them we added something new. When I was seventeen, I went to university to a different city, nearly 300 kilometres from my village. I could visit home only at Christmas, Easter and on other bank holidays. During summer holidays, my younger brothers and sisters were asking me to continue the stories written in our booklets or told by me. From time to time I forgot what exactly my stories were about but they remembered them very well. So I thought

up new adventures of our characters, adding variety with statements or drawings of my younger siblings.

A similar role was (and still is) played by events, celebrations and religious rites. Many customs are related to the seasons of the year and the majority of holidays are arranged according to the Catholic liturgical calendar. The stories are naturally arranged on a month-by-month basis starting with December embracing the whole traditions of Advent and Christmas, up to Easter and the ordinary part of the liturgical year. Very distinctive for Poland is the cult of saints, especially the cult of the Virgin Mary. Therefore, a lot of patriotic stories combined the content concerning the fatherland and religion into one, building the identity of the young generation.¹⁵ The stories often showed that Poland is under special protection of Mary who loves her children and cares about them. There were references made to historical events, for example the defence of Częstochowa against the Swedes in the 17th century, the defence of Warsaw against the Bolsheviks in 1920, being understood as interventions of Mary who cares about the nation that recognizes her as their queen.¹⁶ The stories were strengthened by liturgical celebrations, processions and family rituals, creating a mutually complementary cultural and religious context.

In Poland, Christian education using patriotic and religious literature is directed at the children themselves, but through them – also at their family and society. In the Christian perspective, patriotic and religious education aims to awaken the human being within the person, making him/her more sensitive to the needs of other people, society and nation and leads to a personal encounter with God. Religious literature for children presents a specific project of life based on examples of the blessed and saints. It teaches responsible freedom and judgement of what happens to a person, based on the requirements of truth, good and beauty. Christian education presented this way respects not only the basic and fundamental rights of a human person but it also respects the principle of subsidiarity, the principle of the common good and the universal solidarity.¹⁷

¹⁵ Cf. J. Stala, *Familienkatechese in Polen um die Jahrhundertwende. Probleme und Herausforderungen*, Tarnów 2008.

¹⁶ In 1656 in Lvov, King Jan Kazimierz declared Mary the Queen of Poland, whilst the Feast of Mary the Queen of Poland celebrated on 3 May was included in the liturgical calendar as late as 1920.

¹⁷ Cf. A. Rynio, *The integral education of a person as an opportunity to develop and retain human identity in "liquid modernity"*, in: *World Youth Days. A Testimony to the Hope of Young*

3. Assessment of children's literature

It was long assumed that a child must learn and be busy. Only then will he/she prepare well for the future. Thanks to appropriate children's literature, a child was first of all disciplined. Through works of children's literature, children were provided with knowledge of the surrounding world, their interest was aroused and faith instilled. Individual works introduced a child into the sphere of desirable attitudes and behaviours in different environments: the family, the Church, the nursery school, among peers, acquaintances and strangers. One recognised that a child, also through stories and children's literature, enters into the world of values, is taught to distinguish between good and evil and to choose the good. The world presented in these works was safe, just and friendly for children. Values were often called for and bad action condemned indirectly through satirical pictures.

The forms created by adults for children included such genres as "fairy tale, fable, adage, rhyme, child rhyme, poems, occasional poems (wishes and congratulations) or connected with play, rhymes, and songs."¹⁸ Some genres were determined by the situation, e.g. a counting-out rhyme used for a play, a lullaby for falling asleep and short poems to say wishes.

However, many works of writers of the 19th and the 20th centuries do not appeal to contemporary needs. The moralizing tone and excessive rules make children reject a given text because the rules are too strict. On the other hand, in these texts there has always been a phenomenon of using diminutives, making something bizarre, softening the language that was supposed to be this way, closer to a child's language. However, excessive diminutives brought an opposite effect in children and they rejected the text rather than accepted it. This is why entertaining texts started to be used to convey different contents. Texts were often linked to a child's activity, e.g. acting, drawing, making art forms, and looking for elements of nature. Simple texts were converted into a song or a dance.¹⁹

Children's literature took many new distinctive features. The content of works for younger children are often presented as short, funny texts, even fairy tales

People, eds. J. Stala, A. Porębski, Kraków 2016, pp. 505-520; G. Lewandowska-Nosal, *Od czterech do sześciu. Książka dla przedszkolaka*, Warszawa 2012, p. 44-50.

¹⁸ B. Żurkowski, *W świecie poezji dla dzieci*, Kraków 1999, p. 33.

¹⁹ Cf. A. Ungeheuer-Gołąb, *Literackie inspiracje w rozwoju przedszkolaka*, Warszawa 2012, p. 13-19.

and legends that have the form of a poem, e.g. "Legendy warszawskie" (*Warsaw Legends*). They refer to what is close to a child and to their subculture. Some are full of fantasies, fabrications and defamiliarization that children like and accept. Children quite quickly distinguish the made-up, seeming, fairy tale world from the real world. However, today a difficulty for this distinction are online films and works for children that are sometimes taken as more real than everyday situations.²⁰

An important feature that distinguishes children's literature from other written works is a specific construction of the world presented in the work. The world is often presented in a smaller scale and underspecified: "Once upon a time, far away, behind mountains, seas, woods, etc.," thus animals are similar to toys.²¹

In children's literature, the world is anthropomorphic. Thus, plants, animals, objects and toys speak, perform different activities, dance, run, have their adventures, similar to children's ones. At the same time, authors remember that a small child thinks realistically and to the point and draws up general conclusions from something concrete. While examining the issue of children's literature, one must not forget that the vision of the contemporary world, also the world of values, is shaped by free market economy.²² Therefore, there are publications for children that promote asocial behaviours that "shuffle" the hierarchy of values and support an ever continuous search for new sensations and experiences.

A valuable support for a child's contact with children's literature were "Cała Polska Czyta Dzieciom" (All of Poland Reads to Kids²³) and "Mądra Szkoła Czyta Dzieciom" (Wise School Reads to Children) campaigns, initiated in Poland, within the frames of which parents, guardians and carers were encouraged to read with and to children. The campaign was joined by known Polish actors, journalists and writers who prepared a series of recordings of children's literature, inviting both to play them as well as to read, retell and discuss them

²⁰ Cf. G. Lewandowska-Nosal, *Od czterech do sześciu. Książka dla przedszkolaka*, Warszawa 2012, p. 104-140.

²¹ K. Cukrowska, *Literatura dla dzieci – uczy, bawi, wychowuje*, in: *Wychowanie dzieci w wieku przedszkolnym*, eds. E. Osewska, J. Stala, Tarnów 2005, p. 73.

²² Cf. J. Kowalski, *Etyka katolicka wobec neoliberalizmu*, "Polonia Sacra" 5 (1999), pp. 188-189; J. Mariański, *Kryzys moralny czy transformacja wartości. Studium socjologiczne*, Lublin 2001, pp. 176-177.

²³ Cf. <http://www.allopolandreadstokids.org/home> (21.07.2017).

with children. Likewise, in many Polish nursery and primary schools, various campaigns were organized, inspiring parents to read texts to their children.²⁴

In presenting children's literature in Poland one must add an important note. In order to awaken children's creativity successfully we need to create a cultural environment which would lead to a sensitivity, to beauty, to art and which would enable them to discover what creativity is all about. In the educational processes there could be emphasis not so much on methods which could be applied within the classroom, but more on the use of creative thinking, fantasy, imagination and visual art which trigger off creativity, provoke fresh insights, and search for the truth and goodness. Children's literature is a part of the creative settings, which provide emotional experiences and help children to find the meaning of life.

Children's literature has gone through a dramatic change from disciplinary works, sometimes even training a child to present behaviours that are desirable by carers, to a gradual adjustment to children's development level, allowing them to produce their own stories about their world. Not only did a child become the character of novels and poems but their problems, sorrows, joys and games were incorporated into them. Literary texts began to convey the world of children's sensations and experiences, describing their everyday life.

It is worth adding that a link between religion and children's literature is revealed as a twofold perspective of one educational process. Religion and children's literature participate in the educational process of a child that gets to know the surrounding world, observes, judges and asks questions about the sense of a given phenomenon, its value and purpose. A child's appropriate religious development requires support by children's literature that not only creates favourable conditions for showing a child's world but also gradually supports listening, arguing and passing judgements, directs to values, forms conscience, develops empathy and sensitivity to another person and gives examples of positive activities.

²⁴ Cf. I. Koźmińska, E. Olszewska, *Wychowanie przez czytanie*, Warszawa 2010; A. Ungeheuer-Gołąb, *Literackie inspiracje w rozwoju przedszkolaka*, Warszawa 2012, p. 99-116.

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