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## SELECTED CHILDREN'S EMOTIONAL DEFICITS AND FABLE THERAPY

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Children are the future of the world. A healthy and well developing child is the foundation of society's successful future. An anxious and angry child is most often unable to develop properly. This article analyzes the notion of "emotional disorders", their etiology and symptomatology, manifestations in the child's behaviors. It portrays the child's selected, emotional deficits and therapy by fables as a way to counteract various disorders. The author defines the structure and requirements for a fairy tale. He introduces the examples of using fairy tales in the dialogue of teachers with children to increase their self-esteem, imagination and positive emotions.

*Key words:* emotion, emotional deficits and disorders, symptoms of emotional disorders, fable as a form of therapy, self-esteem, scheme of therapeutic fables.

Emotions are defined as a primary psychic function of a human being, like e.g. fear and anger. Emotional disorders have a much wider definition, which covers many development abnormalities, e.g. neurotic reactions, personality disorders, abnormal behavior, as well as psychotic disorder (Oatley, Jenkins 2003).

Children's emotional disorders can be divided into two categories:

- externalizing disorders – refer to emotions such as anger, aggression, enmity, spite, which result in “outside” behaviors like falsehood, theft and
- internalizing disorders –refer to emotions such as sadness, anxiety, melancholy, which result in “inside” behaviors, e.g. withdrawal from social life, alienation.

To properly diagnose emotional disorders in children, a few essential factors should be noted. Firstly, consistency of common symptoms – for how long they sustain. Secondly, the acuteness of the symptoms – what is their number and intensity. Thirdly, frequency of the alarming symptoms – how often they occur. Emotional disorders can be recognized only after numerous amount of signs that exist for a period of time, are strong and frequent. The type of disorder and level of the symptom constitute the resultant of genetic and social predisposition of the child.

Predictors of emotional deficits in children are family environment, school or preschool as also difficult life situations (Kozłowska, 1984; Gerstmann, 1986; Spionek 1975).

Children's emotional problems are most often related to their family environment. Distorted family structure (broken family, large or reconstructed family, etc.) adverse living conditions, bad financial situation, the atmosphere at home, faulty methods of upbringing, rigid parental attitudes, mother's fearful approach, communication problems, emotional rejection of the child, failing to provide child's psychic needs, lack of acceptance and safety, mental sickness of parents, constant criticism, corporal punishment, overprotectiveness, lack of child's independence, shaping reliance attitudes, dysfunctional family relationships – all of this has a negative influence on a child.

Environment outside of the family (preschool, school) also have an essential influence. Negative approach of the teacher towards the pupil, excessive requirements, rivalry, peers rejection, unfavorable relations with colleagues and teachers, perfectionism, can be agents conditioning the origin of emotional deficits.

Traumatic and sub traumatic situations – child's illness or illness of a family member, loss of a close person, experiencing a strong threat, death of a loved one, parents' divorce increase significantly the danger of emotional disorders.

A large number of disorders exist in the emotional sphere of a child. Some children even show a few disorders simultaneously. The most known emotional distortions are neurotic reactions, psychomotor inhibitions, emotional indifference, psychomotor hyperactivity, aggressiveness (Chapman 1973; Vasta, Haith, Miller 2004).

Neurotic reactions consist of pathologically anxious reaction to stress. Constant psychic tension and unexplainable symptoms are the cause of child's inability to adapt to the social requirements and its choice of maladaptive ways of behavior. To develop child's neurosis contribute mainly psychic and traumatic damage, e.g. fire, dog attack, corporal punishment, disputes between parents, death of a loved one, changeability and parents' contradictory requirements. The basic neurotic symptom is fear which is accompanied by a feeling of threat, anxiety, weakness and helplessness. Due to negative emotions a child lunches various defense mechanisms. Neurotic behaviors consist of anxiety, enuresis, tics, stuttering, eating disorders.

Children in the preschool age go through a lot of unrest, including development anxieties like fear of the dark, fear of storm, fear of staying home alone, fear of animals. Very often a child wakes up at night screaming and does not remember this incident in the morning – this is called night terror. Children having night terrors are usually less resistant to stress, are crying a lot, and are passive in social situations, emotionally hypersensitive, showing inability to adapt to new conditions. Anxiety, in opposite to fear, is an uneasiness in circumstances which

from an objective point of view are not threatening. Children show anxiety behaviors due to being scared by parents or older sibling, watch violent television programs or fables that shock with aggression and also because they are beaten by parents or are growing up in an atmosphere of chaos and conflicts. Anxiety children are usually distrustful, unsure, inhibited, shy, avoid social contacts, remain aside, fear of being discredited and rejected as also have low self-esteem.

Enuresis is also a sign of neurosis. This can be divided into primary enuresis (lasts from the day of birth and is a continuation of physiological wetting) and secondary enuresis (occurs at children who have undergone the lesson of cleanness and have mastered the habit of going to the bathroom). Enuresis most often occurs during the night, when the child is asleep, it rarely appear during the day. What is more, enuresis is not an individual sign but is a part of larger group of symptoms of emotional disorder. Enuresis is often accompanied by hyperactivity, mood swings, excessive crying, fears, irritability, bad relations with peers, and reluctance towards studying. Enuresis is a problem of boys and rarely girls. This disorder can be an effect of faulty methods of upbringing, bad contact of parents with the child, birth of a younger sibling, divorce, death of somebody important etc. To properly diagnose enuresis and exclude physiological wetting certain medical examination are advisable.

Children's tics are sudden, involuntary movements of different groups of muscles that are not subject of will. A child can blink, make whims, and toss its shoulders. Tics appear between 5 and 12 years of age. They are characterized by persistency and long duration. Tics are usually a result of severe conflict situations and traumatic experience. Such a behavior requires individual therapy and eliminating emotional tensions.

Stuttering is usually a part of a larger group of sign of child's neurotic behavior. It is also a speech disorder and occurs between 3 and 5 year of age. Jamming is a symptom of stuttering – tonic symptoms, numerous repetitions of the same syllable, phone and word – clonic symptoms, muscular and emotional tension. Pathological stuttering should be differentiated from development stuttering, which is caused by the discrepancy of the level of child's thinking and its relatively low efficiency of articulator apparatus. It is more common with boys than girls. Speech therapy is advisable.

“Neurotic eating disorder” occurs with 2/3 children in the age between 2-5 years. Rejecting food can be the result of the situation where a child is given meals that it does not like. Lack of appetite can also be caused by a newborn in the family – older child fears of losing parents' love and is jealous of the sibling. Eating disorder can be a consequence of a difficult family situation, lack of safety or a way to get somebody's attention and care. With some neurotic children lack of appetite is combined with other disorders like vomiting or anorexia nervosa.

Children with psychomotor inhibition are timid, less active and have difficulties with social communication. Inhibition occurs as a result of criticism, mockery, humiliation, and corporal punishments applied by parents. Such children usually do not cause behavioral problems, stay “in the shadows”, and suffer, alienating themselves from others and suppressing emotions. An inhibited child can be excessively meticulous, unsure, taciturn, quiet, obedient, resigned, apathetic, slow, gloom, with low self-esteem, tearful and restrained.

Emotionally indifferent children have difficulties with making contact with their peers and adults. They cannot empathize joy or sorrow, have low mimic expression; do not socially interact as they fear of being rejected. Such children come from orphanage or families that did not fulfill the need of love and affection. Indifferent children are sad, avoid eye contact and their communication with others is very superficial.

Psychomotor hyperactivity is the result of predominance of stimulation processes over inhibition ones. Emotional reactions are sudden and inadequate to the circumstances. Emotional lability, impulsiveness, irritability, attention deficit disorder, fatigability and lack of patience are the characteristic features of hyperactivity. Children with such a disorder lose easily their focus and get bored with the performed activity.

Aggressive behaviors are more common with boys than with girls and are manifested from the second year of child’s life. Aggression can be divided into verbal (screaming, insults, nicknames, backbiting, arrogance, complaining) and into psychical one (hitting, kicking, scratching, biting, hair pulling). Aggressive behavior is the result of frustration as well as of imitating adults (parents, sibling, peers). Instrumental aggression is a means to reach a certain goal. Enemy aggression is marked by envy and is targeted on causing pain.

Emotional deficits require therapy and treatment. One of the methods of counteracting emotional disorders in children is fable therapy. After many years of pedagogical work with children from dysfunctional families, I am positive that this method is effective and is worth popularizing.

Fables as a form of therapy

Fable is “*a basic kind of verbal folk art, a folk tale known to many different nations across the world*”<sup>1</sup>, as well as shaped in the ancient times and based on the folklore motives, a separate kind of didactic literature; a work of epic written as a prose or poem, having a moral lesson, sometimes satirical.

Fable has different forms: expanded as a narrative tale or tight and brief epigrammatic tale. Fable is a form of a parable about personal traits, human approaches and social situations – reoccurring and popular, where the protagonists are people, animals, plants, objects.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/bajka;3873437.html> (access 10.03.2015)

Short stories and fables do not only entertain, but also help change one's life. "Please, tell me a story!" – can be heard numerous times at school or at home. To tell a story means to present a kind of history and at the same time change the world. Fables teach, entertain and educate. According to Irena Słońska, fables have a multisided influence on the child's development. It is a highly amazing tool of education, teaching and upbringing that cannot be compared to the traditional, sometimes oppressive, ways of teaching (Słońska 1957). The aim of a fable is to develop children's fantasy and imagination. By following the told plot, children learn to create fantastic situations and events. According to Maria Patzer, fables have the biggest influence on children's emotions. It can intrigue, scare or touch them. Storytelling "makes a child hurt and disturbed when the protagonist is fighting the adversities and happy when the good wins in the end" (Patzer, 1973:68). Fables develop children's morality. The positive values (such as: good, working hard, bravery and alike), as opposed to the negative values (such as: avarice, laziness or greed), shown against a background of dramatic events deeply touch children and make them fully support one set of the values (Patzer, 1973:56).

Thanks to the fables, children learn about the human inner world what helps to understand, evaluate and name their emotions as well as to describe their inner emotional states. In this way children develop self-orientation, self-control as well as controlled behaviors. Thanks to fables, the ability to evaluate own and others actions appears. When the fables are retold, children are not passive listeners but react to the fate of the protagonists in an active way. The mixing fate of animals and people as well as the relations of the protagonists with nature help children broaden the horizon of their inner world and feel the bond with the world of nature (Ślusarczyk, 1991:69-70). Fables make one emotionally engaged in the feelings experienced by the protagonists as it sensitizes to the fate of people, animals and even plants or objects. Thanks to fables, children meet their mental expectations with the need to feel loved, accepted and safe. The protagonists undergo different adventures that in most cases end up in a positive way. This solution helps children maintain and strengthen the positive attitude towards the future as it encourages life optimism (Ślusarczyk, 1991:67).

Listening to fables gives children many pieces of information about the issues unknown and not accessible during their daily life experiences. In this way children experience adventures that could not take place in the real life. They present situations that are in general not talked about or the ones that go beyond children's realistic capabilities. They encourage curiosity about the existing world as well as the need to explore it (Ługowska, 1988:36).

Bruno Bettelheim – doctor of medicine, psychologist and humanist – formulated the following thesis on the importance of fables in the development and upbringing of children (Bettelheim 2010)<sup>2</sup>:

1. The process of the reader's identification with the positive protagonist is the background for the influence the fables have on children's psyche.

2. Fables confront children with the basic problems of the inner life, help to understand their difficulties and provide solutions to solve them straight away.

3. Fables entertain children, provide an insight into their psyche and at the same time support the development of children's personality.

4. Fables help in exploring children's identity and making their life meaningful.

5. Fables support children in dealing with the psychological problems of teenagehood and personality integration.

6. Fables encourage active overcoming of difficulties and making friends with the world of nature.

Maria Molicka thinks that the most important role of fables is the reduction of fear (Molicka 2002). Children, by identifying with the protagonists, feel that a good fairy is taking care of them, that it can do magic to change their situation. Fables give support and the feeling of strength, they fulfill the needs and as a result reduce fear and sometimes (mostly periodically) can make it go away. Therapeutic fables as a method of reducing fear is a brand new kind of therapy.

Therapeutic fables are the works addressed at children, mostly aged 4-9, where the world is seen through the eyes of the child and its aim is to calm down, reduce the emotional problems and support through the period of children's personality formation process. The plot of therapeutic fables concerns different situations that evoke fear. All of the therapeutic fables are characterized by the fact that the protagonist finds himself in a difficult situation and is in fear for his life. The introduced fable creatures help to reduce this fear. Children learn different ways of overcoming fear by seeing how the protagonist dealt with his problems. This knowledge leads to a change in experiencing as well as the change in behavior.

The narration of the therapeutic fables uses the following methods of the protagonist affecting the child: specification of the experienced fear, strengthening of self-esteem, repetition of fear-prone stimuli and connecting it with pleasant emotions.

The specification and rationalization of the experienced fear is done through showing to children people, objects or situations that evoke this fear. Realizing the causes and effects influences rational actions. The fable protagonist represents the

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<sup>2</sup> Compare with the original publication: Bettelheim B., [\*The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fables\*](#), Knopf, New York 1976.

patterns of behaviors that enable rational actions. Thanks to it, the reader or the listener learns how to deal with the new and difficult situation.

Strengthening of self-esteem and learning positive thinking is done through rewarding the protagonist for the efficiency of his behavior.

The repetitiveness of fear-prone stimuli (that cause the process of “anti-sensitization”) makes children familiarized with the situations, people or objects that evoke fear. The reduction of fear takes place thanks to the frequent contact with semi-strength stimuli and as a result, the reaction to it disappears.

The connection of fear-prone stimuli with pleasant emotions leads to imagining fear-prone stimuli without experiencing fear and transferring it into the real life situation.

Maria Molicka presents the following scheme of therapeutic fables that can be used for creating your own story:

- the main theme (a situation that evokes fear),
- the main protagonist (a child or an animal the reader will identify with),
- other characters (that help to name the emotions, learn how to react to a difficult situation),
- the background of the story (the place known to a child).

Thanks to the presented scheme, parents or therapists can create other stories, according to the difficulties the child is experiencing. It needs to be remembered that the problem is not solved thanks to the fable itself, but due to the fact a child uses the solutions offered by the fable as its own. When listening to problems similar to the ones a child is experiencing, this child uses the solutions suggested by the fable.

Maria Molicka distinguishes three types of therapeutic fables: relaxation, psycho-educational and psychotherapeutic.

The relaxation fables use the imaginative visualization of the location in order to make children feel relaxed and calmed down. The plot takes place at a location that is well known to a child and perceived as calm, friendly and safe. The fable has a clear scheme: the protagonist observes and experiences the location of his relaxation with all of his senses. The suggestions of the person telling the story should consist of three directives: auditory, visual and sensory. The auditory is aimed at evoking the effects such as “you can hear the trees whispering”, the visual: “you can see the waves slowly moving towards the shore” and the sensory: “you are almost at the top of the mountain”. “It should consist of specific events connected with drinking water from the stream, having a bath in a waterfall. They have a strong purifying effect, free from tensions and other negative emotions” (Molicka, 2002:155). The relaxation is aimed at relaxing the muscles, and the more it works, the easier calming down and better mood come. The problems and fear become suppressed. Before starting the story, the teller should be relaxed, calm and have a positive approach towards life. The relaxation fable needs some practice

because of keeping up the rhythm, having break at appropriate times as well as breathe synchronization. In order to make children relaxed, the fable can start with an introduction: “And now we are going to listen to a fable. Sit as comfortable as you can, listen to your breath, close your eyes, all the sounds fade away” (Molicka, 2002:157). The relaxation music such as the sound of the sea, trees, wind or the birds singing can be an additional element to reading.

*Pszczola Słoduszka*<sup>3</sup> is an example of a relaxation fable

*The summer was coming. The sun was hotter and hotter. Słoduszka's been picking up the sweet flower nectar since the early morning. Suddenly she felt tired. How many flowers do I need to visit? She started to count: one, two, three ... eleven, twelve. She lied down on a big leaf, relaxed her tired tiny arms and legs, closed her eyes. Her belly started to go up and down, very calmly. I feel so good, all I can hear is a beautiful and quiet music – thought Słoduszka.*

*My right arm's becoming heavier, I don't want to raise it up. My left is becoming lazier, I don't want to raise it up. It's only my belly that's moving up and down. My right leg with the honey bag's getting heavy, heavier and heavier. My head's so comfortable. I'm calm, I can hear beautiful music. I can feel the sun warming my legs and arms. I feel warmer every second ... my body's so nicely warm. I am calm, I feel safe. I'll listen to this beautiful music for a bit longer, quietly... (Chrost, Łagosz, 2011: 44-45).*

Psycho-educational fables are aimed at changing children's behavior. The protagonist has a problem similar to the one children are experiencing. Children are experiencing things thanks to the fable world; they learn what behavioral patterns should be used. The psycho-educational fables “show the new ways of thinking about the fear-prone situation in order to present different patterns of emotional reaction and behavior. Their aim is also to sensitize children to the problems of others” (Molicka, 2002:162).

Such types of fables are mainly a form of support for the process of upbringing – aimed at children who are slow, negligent or do not want to go to bed when their time comes. Many fables are addressed at children who do not get on well at school. Then the aim is to show the new way of thinking about the difficult situations and present the right patterns of emotional reaction. Once the psycho-educational fables are read, children should be encouraged to draw, show their emotions, talk about the feelings the protagonists had. Children should interpret the fable themselves as only then it has a personal meaning to them.

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<sup>3</sup> *Pszczola Słoduszka (The Sweetest Bee)* is an example of a fable based on the autogenic training by the German psychiatrist Johannes Heinrich Schultz that was first introduced in 1932.



*Świnka Baryłka w krainie Gula*<sup>4</sup> is an example of a psycho-educational fable that not only entertains but also teaches. Learning to live a healthy life and have control over greed is the educational goal of this fable.

*It was a beautiful, sunny day, when the two travelers, the cat Micia and the dog Morusek saw some buildings after quite a long journey. They felt happy and joyfully toddled towards the buildings. After some time, they found themselves in front of a village gate. "Welcome to the Land of the Foodies", the ornate sign said. They wanted to enter the Town when they got blocked by a giant creature. It was a pig with tiny, fidgety eyes and the belly that big that it dusted the street.*

*- Stop! – the pig shouted – Give me all the sweets that you have.*

*- Why? - asked Micia with a surprise in her voice.*

*- That's the price for entering the town. – the dumpling answered.*

*- All we have is a few candies and a piece of chocolate. - said Morusek and gave the pig the sweets.*

*- It doesn't matter, give it to me and go! – The pig grabbed the sweets and disappeared behind the nearest bush.*

*- What a strange character. – said the cat and they walked to do some sightseeing around the new place. The Land of the Foodies turned out to be a town full of blue candy shops, blue ice cream shops and restaurants that smelled with freshly baked cookies, chocolate and oranges. Our friends decided to sit at one of the blue tables in front of the ice cream shop, have some relax, eat and do some shopping before the journey. After a moment, a goat dressed in a blue hat welcomed them with a smile. They had a piece of blue ice cream and Micia told Morusek:*

*- They have so many shops with sweets that we won't regret giving ours to that fat piglet by the gate.*

*The goat heard this and started to explain with a sour smile:*

*- Ha! I can see that you came across Baryłka. He brings the greatest terror over the Land. An enormously big glutton, have you seen his gigantic belly? To be honest, he eats everything he can but his biggest love is sweets. He doesn't agree upon any diet. Some owners of the shops had extra locks and alarms because Baryłka, raged with hunger, wouldn't stop even if he were to break into a shop. He doesn't listen to us and we don't know what to do with him. He even scares off the tourists by forcing them to give away the sweets before entering the town.*

*Morusek smiled and said:*

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<sup>4</sup> The above fable (*The piglet called Barrel in the land of Gul*) comes from the yet unpublished *Micia i Morus w krainie tęczy* (*Mircia and Morus in the land of the rainbow*) by the author. Everyone who loves children and try to put their time, heart and strength in their upbringing can use it. It is thought to be as a guide to the normal life, full of truth, good, beauty, love, joy and peace. Its aim is to eliminate all things evil and unnecessary as well as to develop the things that create and make us noble.

- Please don't be worried, me and Micia will eat the blue ice cream and come up with an idea to help you with Barylka's hunger-greed.

As they said, so they did. They advised the citizens to organize the Cake Run the next day. The runners started at the gate, ran along the walls and then got back to the gate where the judges waited with the prizes. The winner was supposed to get a five-storey chocolate-strawberry cake full of fruit jelly bears and decorated with blue roses frosting. Barylka, of course, participated in the run as well, certain of his victory. Unfortunately, after a few meters he felt tired and had to sit down. The giant belly was of great discomfort for him. Barylka finished the run as the last one and there was nothing left of the cake. The winner, the dog Morusek, shared his prize with everyone around. Barylka sat by a shaded tree and cried. Suddenly, he heard a soft voice:

- You see Barylka, was it worth eating that much? – It was Micia who decided to keep him company and have a small chat.

- I eat too much! – Barylka got mad, wiping his tears. - I.. I just love the sweets so much! How can I leave it if the town is full of it and the streets smell that good that when I open my eyes in the morning I fell hungry straight away? I don't have too much money and the shop keepers don't even want to give me some samples anymore. I thought I'd win this amazing cake but I couldn't run...

- And what do you think, why was that? – The cat asked.

- Because of... that belly! My giant belly was the problem... I was so tired I had to stop every second... And I could win this beautiful cake! - Barylka started crying again.

- There's only one piece of advice here, Barylka - Micia looked at the devastated pig with love - You need to do something about that giant belly of yours. All you need to do is want to. If you really want it and ask others for help, I'm sure it will work. Eating enormous amounts of food and sweets doesn't do you any good. We organized this run to make you aware of it. You need to change and fight your gluttony.

- Do you really think I can make it? - asked Barylka hopefully.

- I do. It's not going to be easy; it's hard to get rid of this bad habit. But... If you're strong and determined then next year you might win the Cake Run yourself. What do you think about it?

- I'm going on a diet! Today! – said Barylka in a determined voice. It seemed he made his decision and would keep it.

- The others will help you for sure. – said Micia and added: - It's ok, I believe you'll change and this is all we wanted. Now, let us have fun!

Psychotherapeutic fables set a new direction. They are longer and have a complex plot. Their aim is the following:

- to meet needs as an alternative way, to make children who are in a difficult situation feel appreciated;

-- to give support through understanding, acceptance, building of positive emotions, hope, friendship that is given by the fable characters;

-- to give the proper knowledge about the fear-prone situations as well as to show the ways of dealing with them;

Psycho-therapeutic fables are aimed at reducing children's fear. However, it depends on their sensitivity. Some fables go with no interest, others are misunderstood and this should be a sign that the described problems have no importance for a child. In other cases, a child will read or ask for reading of some fables several times. It will be a sign that it is the fable the child needs, which identifies with its protagonists.

The fable therapy is a long-lasting process. One fable is not enough. Not every fable will become important and a breakthrough for a child. Sometimes children come back to their favorite fables. This may be a sign to help understand the problem these children are dealing with. The fable therapy is a cure to different fears, sorrows, and crises. Children remember unpleasant situations for a long time and this may have an impact on their future, their adult lives. The subconscious may hide the fears from the past that may come back after reading the fable.

*Bajka o malej chmurce*<sup>5</sup> is an example of a psychotherapeutic fable.

This fable is aimed at the helping children understanding the divorce of parents. The divorce means a great deal of stress for a child and may have a permanent impact on its view of the world. The fable may help understand the idea of divorce and make it easier to accept it.

*High above the blue sky there lived two clouds. One, white and feathered, loved to move slowly across the open sky. It loved to bathe in the sun and observe the world from the above. People watched it, smiled and thought it looked like a giant, spiky bird. The other one was grey and restless. It preferred the time when the wind blew really hard. It raged across the sky and liked to make angry faces. When people watched it, they said it's going to rain and took out their umbrellas.*

*One day, both clouds met and liked each other from the first sight. The white one was impressed with the grey's courage and firmness. The grey loved how the white was calm and peaceful. They felt good together and wanted to be together forever. After some time they had a baby – a tiny, sweet and wonderful cloud whom they really loved. The whole family – Mom, Dad and the little cloud live very happily. Their little child grew – happy and loved.*

*After some time they started to see some things they didn't notice before. Every time Mom and Dad were close, different tensions, lightning and thunderbolts appeared. People, who watched it, ran home quickly and closed the windows. With the passing of time, these storms became more violent and loud with the enormous*

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<sup>5</sup>The tale of a little cloud <http://bajki-zasypianki.pl/rozwod-dziecko#more-2151> (access 18.03.2015). The website was created by Paweł Księżyk (father of two boys) for parents who have problems with their children and would like to help them through fables.

*amounts of rain. The clouds cried so badly that the Earth was covered with rain and the clouds were drying.*

*It was more and more difficult for them to be together. The storms could be barely stood and the cried tears gave rise to rivers and lakes. The little cloud felt bad. It was afraid of these terrible days when the lightning and the thunderbolts didn't stop. All she wanted to do was to hide and never come out. When she was with her mom or her dad on her own it was all fine. When her parents came close to each other – the storm started.*

*– How can other clouds be together and not cause the rain and thunders? – The little one asked.*

*– I don't know – said Mom. Maybe other clouds are a better match. Dad and I are so different that it's difficult for us to have an agreement. We wanted to be a happy family, but you can see yourself that when we are close to each other, the storm starts.*

*The little cloud felt that the parents love her very much, but it also knew they cannot be together. The sky was filled with storms and thunders almost every day. People were afraid to leave their homes and look at the sky as it was always dark and scary. The clouds cried so many tears that it made them weak and they could completely disappear.*

*Finally, Mom and Dad decided the best way would be to leave and stay away from each other. The little cloud remembers this day really well as it couldn't stop crying. It wanted them to be a family so badly, but as the same time it felt it is no longer possible. It was a long and a dark day and had such a sad ending.*

*However, the next day the sky was bright and sunny. People looked at the sky with surprise and relief, happy that the storm was gone. Dad and Mom were far away from each other. I'm sure you want to know where the little cloud went. It stayed with Mom as it was really tiny back then. Dad missed her very much and wanted them to be together, even from time to time. That's why it sometimes visited him and they spent the day as happy as the clouds can do. It had many happy days with its loving Dad and her caring Mom with no storms or thunders.*

*The little one was very happy as the sky's full of different situations. You know yourself that the wind can be very strong. It can blow so hard that the clouds get lost or it can move Dad very far from his beloved little cloud. He won't find it even if he travels the sky all day long.*

*The next day you are outside and the weather is nice, take a close look at the sky. See how some clouds are very close together and others prefer to stay away. It's sometimes better this way if staying together means constant storms, lightning and thunders.*

*Everyone's looking for a second half to share life together. Maybe even Mom and Dad will find someone to feel good and happy with. With no storms or*

*lightning. The little one would like it very much as well. It could have two loving families.*

#### Conclusion

Emotional deficits require therapy and treatment. One of the methods of counteracting emotional disorders in children is fable therapy.

Fables are a fiction, means to create the unreal reality that moves children to the world of imagination; they are a form of playing with reality in this sense that they assume the manipulation of the world. Fables create a different kind of reality; give a different dimension to children's everyday experiences.

It is a form of narration that plays a key part in children's mental development. Children identify themselves with the main protagonist, they are travelling with him and together they experience joy, sadness, pain. They fight the enemies; children take a stand and transfer their own experiences and needs into the fable world. Thanks to such identification, they are presented with a range of emotions, feelings and approaches towards difficult situations. They learn the accepted behaviors as well as these that are despised. By following the fate of the protagonists, they create their own system of norms and rules by broadening self-consciousness. The good wins in the fables and quite often the poor and the weak win over the strong and the mighty. This makes children feel hopeful and optimistic that there is no situation without a solution. Even the darkest reality does not determine and prejudice future life. They start to understand the rules of the human behavior as well as the consequences of the taken actions.

Thanks to fables, children are presented with such ideas as: good and evil, justice, love and friendship. By listening to fables, children experience negative emotions as well: anger, fury, the need for retaliation or destruction. The fable protagonists help children to cope with their daily social and emotional difficulties.

Fables teach to experience and name different emotional states as well as give the opportunity to show the feelings which children are unable to show on the conscious level. Fables unblock children's emotions and help to deal with them. They sensitize to the feelings of others, teach empathy and help in dealing with different problems. They show the problem in a broader perspective and enable to have some distance to it. Fables teach how someone else dealt with a similar situation and how to deal with it yourself. Thanks to them, children feel strengthened and begin to trust their intuition when it comes to searching for the right path. Fables create patience, concentration and focus, teach thinking and stimulate the brain development.

Fables have an enormous therapeutic power, especially in the case of a child with low self-esteem, socially excluded, at risk of social pathology and living in the pathological environment, shaped and living in a dysfunctional family. A small child cannot imagine its adult life or even its future in a few years. Its image

reflects only the present situation. Fables show the way to the future and clearly say what is important when taking this journey.

I am certain that, after many years of working with children from dysfunctional and pathological families, narrations and fables are valuable methods of children's upbringing and therapy. Narration and fables can lead to positive changes in the emotional, intellectual and volitional sphere of the child.

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## **ДИТЯЧІ ЕМОЦІЙНІ РОЗЛАДИ І КАЗКОТЕРАПІЯ**

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Розглянуто поняття “емоційні розлади”, їхні вияви у поведінці дитини. Визначено два типи емоційних порушень відповідно до механізмів розвитку людини – екстеріоризації та інтеріоризації. Проаналізовано різні види емоційних розладів дитини, причини їхнього виникнення. Висвітлено суть народної казки як форми терапії, протидії емоційним порушенням та її значущість для розвитку дитини. Розкрито структуру й вимоги до побудови казки. Наведено приклади застосування казки у діалозі вчителя з дітьми з метою підвищення їхньої самооцінки, розвитку уяви та позитивних емоцій.

*Ключові слова:* емоція, емоційні порушення й розлади, симптоми емоційних порушень, казка як форма терапії, самооцінка, структура терапевтичної казки.

