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# CILVĒKS, TEHNOLOĢIJAS UN IZGLĪTĪBAS KVALITĀTE

Proceedings of Scientific Papers

Rakstu krājums



UNIVERSITY  
OF LATVIA

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# INCLUDING THE EMOTIONAL POTENTIAL OF LITERATURE IN POST-CRISIS EDUCATION

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## ABSTRACT

Contemporary situational circumstances, with the global Covid-19 pandemic crisis and the ongoing war that has resulted from Russia's invasion of Ukraine, have brought about social, cultural, and psychological transformations that are, as of yet, little understood but already affecting different aspects of the contemporary school learning processes. Rational, analytical, cognitive, reflexive, and emotional experience are needed to ensure that difficulties within the crisis ecosystem do not cause a lessening of the human emotional experience in difficult times. Diverse emotional experiences are especially needed, the supply of which is reduced by both the limitations of interactivity imposed by the specifics of the media information space, which mostly reflects the realities of the crisis and are predominantly negative.

In the face of this protracted crisis and the implications of new communication technologies, the article explores some ways to manage emotional experiences, so as not to lose sight of the diversity of human relations. It looks to address how we can compensate for the minimization of diverse emotional experience in teaching and learning in situations of social crises. The article pays attention to the potential role of literature as a way to build sustainable post-crisis social relationships. It proposes to reevaluate the role of literature in education and explore its use not only as a cognitive source for rational and critical thinking but its potential for cultivating moral emotions that enhance social solidarity and civility. The case studies it presents evaluate the interpretation and misinterpretation of some classical works of Latvian literature in schools and beyond, in the media and society.

**Keywords:** *literary fiction, emotional experience, transformation, crisis, education.*

## Introduction

There are groups of circumstances that mobilise attention for new approaches in the educational process. They are both situationally transient and permanent in character and are mainly linked to the destabilisation of the social ecosystem caused by a crisis, which must be recovered from in the name of post-crisis sustainable development. A crisis is usually referred

to as a set of events that we perceive as a dramatic turn, mostly caused by a negative change that affects the stability and future development of a natural or social ecosystem. The unusualness of the circumstances and the situation that crises cause call for an explanation of the different realities and for new meanings to be given to what is happening. The need for reinterpretation grows, a need which is less prevalent when living under normal conditions. In connection with the world economic crisis of 1933, the Latvian philosopher Teodors Celms described that crisis as “a break in the course of a development, after which this development either goes in a new direction of growth or approaches the abyss of non-existence” (Celms 1933, 3).

Currently, in the background to education are the successive crises of the global health pandemic Covid-19, spanning now two years (2020–2022) and still unresolved, followed by the brutal military crisis that has resulted from Russia’s 24 February 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Each of these two crises of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have their own impact on social ecology, each with its own emotional mood and experience that affects the education system. They each require reflection on the role of education, in terms of both the causes and the consequences of these social crises.

The main properties of the ecological crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic can be seen as the impact of self-isolation, distanced leaning, the course and consequences of the disease, the impact of governmental restrictions on the socio-emotional development of pupils, as well as on the quality of the education system itself. The effects of war, on the other hand, cannot yet be grasped at this early stage. Russia’s February 24, 2022, invasion of Ukraine has been studied much less than these crises of health. The experiences and fears of war, violence and devastation enter schools not only with the media, but also with the recollections of Ukrainian refugees, who are present in many Latvian educational institutions, as well as by support measures for Ukraine and protests against the devastating invasion. By bringing to the forefront emotional experiences uncharacteristic of peaceful everyday life, both crises manifest ignorance, compensatory disinformation and misinformation, the mood of fear, hatred and anger, as well as sentiments of pain and horror.

These changes in education are propelled by the availability and possibilities ensured by information and communication technologies. According to the often quoted media researcher Marshall McLuhan, media technologies are a message in themselves, they have an impact on thinking, perceptions of the world, and on forms of affection (McLuhan, 2012 [1967]). The conditions of a crisis affect the amount and availability of information in the media; when the conditions of survival lead to situational thinking and emotions, they cause volatility and hinder a constant normative experience.

While not denying the possibility of positive emotions in crisis situations, such as mutual support, help, compassion, empathy, and gratitude, research in media and school life is nonetheless dominated by adaptation discourses, such as the effects of distance learning in a pandemic or communication-induced violence in schools, mental health problems, “cyberbullying” etc.

These and other conditions of a crisis call for ways to compensate for emotional changes also brought about by technologies, assuming that some human evolutionary experiences must be preserved in the name of a sustainable social ecosystem, while other situational influences may be allowed to weaken. Realising that the changes caused by modern crises will take time to master, cognitively and reflexively, this article offers insight into a narrow section of the educational process. Namely, attention will be paid to the potential of cultivating diverse human emotional experience through the learning of literature. Given the weakening of emotional resources, especially favourable ones, as a result of crisis conditions, the article will explore **compensatory sources** for the development of a full-fledged emotional life and self, beyond the situational, pragmatic realities of everyday life. Based on an in contemporary academic research, the article will firstly explain the concept of emotions, secondly, describe the transformative possibilities of literature, and, thirdly, present case studies that evaluate the potential for, and misinterpretation of, Latvian literature in maintaining empathy, solidarity, as well as grit and resilience.

## 1. Concepts of emotions and emotional experience

Current crises and technological revolutions call for a review of the present, and the adaptation of future, approaches to education. The strategic goals of education are being discussed (Peters, et al. 2021, Tesar, et al. 2021, Orchard, et al. 2021, Jandrić, et al. 2021 etc.). At the heart of this debate is the orientation of education: how to connect its pragmatic existential orientation with the goals of sustainable development, how to make the school a place “to think deeply about ideas, find and pursue passions, engage in community with others, enjoy leisure, and reckon with our own mortality” (Hyttén, 2021, 1236). At the core of this question is how to make the school a place that helps one attain fulfilment, where “we build a foundation for meaning, not primarily for competition with peers for artificially scarce rewards” (Ibid.). In this trend, towards full existential post-crisis education, emotional experience plays a significant role.

Why exactly does emotional experience need to be addressed? Emotions are recognized as an evolutionarily-attained **affective** mental state, which characterizes a direct reaction to a situation, participates in its evaluation, the forming of an attitude, as well as, accordingly, influences one’s actions. Regarding emotions as a particular mental state Andrew Ortony,

a researcher of emotions, highlights “three features: it must be intentional (i. e., about something), it must be valenced (i.e, positive or negative) and it must be conscious (i. e., experienced) (Ortony, 2022, 51). Emotional experience involves a set of positive and negative effects, and a variety of experiences that are more or less conscious. Although it is difficult to find a sufficiently precise definition of emotions, due to at least three aspects by which they have been studied (biological, psychological, and the semantic aspects of language), there is a certain spectrum of emotions lexically represented in natural language.

The role of emotions in social and moral life has long been perceived and appreciated in history. David Hume (1711–1776) already pointed to the emotional nature of moral evaluation and its connection with the “internal sense of feeling” (Hume, 2017 [1751], 3). Also, in Immanuel Kant’s (1724–1804) concept of rational ethics feelings of dignity play an important role (Kant, 2001 [1788], 258–261). In turn, sociologist Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) acknowledged the role of emotional experience in the ritual, as a basic condition for the establishment of social norms (Durkheim, 2008 [1912]). Emotional experience is recognized as an indispensable way to practically strengthen moral orientation and values in education.

## **2. The transformative role of emotions**

The emotional traces and impressions of the realities of crises in modern school practice are different, and not always favourable. Pedagogical research focuses more on the negative emotional experiences of bullying and cyberbullying, which exist in schools, and anxiously observe their impact on the victims’ mental health. According to Elizabeth Hutson, bullying victimization causes negative “emotional experiences – sadness, decreased self-esteem, embarrassment, fear, suicidal thinking, anger, feeling hurt, loneliness, powerlessness, helplessness, and confusion. Overall, these results were similar to those obtained from quantitative method studies, apart from the feeling of embarrassment” (Hutson, 2018, 51). Particular attention is paid to the anonymity that cyberbullying entails, and its consequences. Given the situational diversity of the emotional experiences of crises, contemporary educational research emphasises the role of emotion management (Lively and Weed, 2014). Not only is emotion researched, and described, but ways to increase socially and humanly significant positive emotions are also being sought. For example, Positive Psychological Interventions (PPI) offer ways to reduce anxiety and stress, as well as to increase favourable experiences, which are not always attainable in real relationships (Moskowitz, et al. 2021).

The significance of positive emotional experiences is evident in the context of transformative pedagogy, the foundations of which were laid

by Jacques Mezirov in the 1970s. While Mezirov's concepts apply mainly to adult education, distinguishing between formative education at an early age and transformative education for adults, in almost half a century of development, the concepts of transformative pedagogy have been extended even to preschools.

Transformative pedagogy is a process of social learning which develops and assists one to apply feelings, rationale, autonomous thinking "in a collaborative context" and emotional attitudes towards the world (Mezirow, 1997, 8). With it, a diversity of possibilities is emphasized; that, there is no one way to see the world, oneself, relationships and situations. At the same time, it encourages a fuller, happier, life through personal transformation. And, reflection, communication and emotional experience play an important role in initiating this transformation.

An explanation of transformation can be found in the dialectics of the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, characterised by the concept of sublation (*Aufheben*, in German). Sublation (*Auheben*) means a different kind of survival in the process of development, which can also be attributed to the process of self-formation in transformative pedagogy. Creation, Hegel explains as being born anew and, at the same time, as remaining. With varying stimulus, in the act of creation, something disappears (*Verschwendensein*), but it does not become completely non-existent; it remains in the following anxious, existent and non-existent, contradictory composition in a subliminal form. Sublation is recognized as one of the main concepts in the philosophy of development, which is strictly inseparable from nothing, from the non-existent. Something of the existence denied in the creation of a new existence remains in its composition, but in a different, indirect, way. It remains as a new formation and experience. From new units, and from the units preserved from that previous state, a new identity is formed – it is the same and, at the same time, different (Hegel, 2008 [1832], 100–101).

Creating, forming and transforming, is particularly stimulated and motivated, as has been emphasised on several occasions, by the changes brought about by a crisis, in which cognition, rational reflection and emotions are involved. Among the many reality factors, literary fiction in education has a transformative function and participates in the socialisation of the self.

### **3. Literary fiction in the formation of emotional experiences**

A literary text, which exists in the form of language, is to be regarded as an ontological phenomenon, and this is a precondition for its interpretation and the deriving of meaning. The literary text is described as an ontological reality in the works of the prominent German literary scholar Hans Ulrich

Gumbrecht: “By ‘ontology of literature’ I mean fundamental stances about how literary texts – as material facts and worlds of meaning – relate to realities outside of works themselves (Gumbrecht, 2012). Related to this reality is a certain atmosphere, a mood (stimmung), which forms the hidden potential of literature and is involved in its expenditure and the making of meaning. The potential of literature allows it to merge with the reader’s development of experiences, thus it becomes an essential part of their existential experience (Gumbrecht, 2012, 18).

As an original ontological reality, a literary text has several qualities in the context of culture and education – cognitive, aesthetic and morally reflexive.

Knowledge of the history of national and world literature, of writers, basic notions of the theory of literary work (genres, language, metaphors, etc.) and more, first, forms a group of cognitive goals. Secondly, literary works are accompanied by a variety of emotional experiences, which are gained in the process of identification and empathy. Third, a poem or narrative is able to provide a reflexive intellectual echo that goes beyond the direct perception of the work of art and expands the horizon of consciousness for the reader. These emotional and reflexive levels usually converge, complementing each, and linking them creates an emotional and intellectual experience for transformation and self-identity formation.

A contemporary affective turn in literary research emphasises the role of empathy. Empathy allows for the explanation of the transfer of emotional experience from the text to the reader in the process of learning that literature. Empathy is usually understood as the echo of each other’s feelings and thoughts; it is associated with sensitivity. Research on the topic covers both psychology and the aesthetics of empathy and moral values. Empathy is a capacity of the brain that modern neuroscience partly explains by the presence of mirror neurons (Heyes and Catmur, 2022). A mirror neuron indicates an innate physiological ability to mirror and mimic the other. Empathy is the ability to place one’s self in the situation of the other and to feel their emotions. Reading, and learning literature, allows one to access the other’s experience and to make it a part of their own (Mar and Oathley, 2008, 181). Other experiences include a variety of cultures, including historical narratives, and a variety of individual stories that are not available to us by living in a close ecological neighbourhood and local situation alone.

Contemporary research focuses on the relationship between empathy and being moved. The complex of emotions labelled as *kama muta* (Sanskrit) or *being moved*, is conceptualised as an emphatic construct to express being elevated, touched, inspired and consists of feelings of sympathy, compassion, tenderness, warmth, and soft-heartedness (Zickfeld, et al. 2019).

Close to empathy and 'being moved' is the concept of emotional contagion, which indicates the transfer of emotion from sender to receiver. Usually contagion is studied for direct contact between sender and receiver, including automatic affect mimicry. Researchers emphasise the dual nature of affective contact -- the automatic response and social appraisal that make up the emotional experience (Wrobel and Imbir, 2019). Emotional contagion, also called the theory of emotional mimicry, refers to a direct and impulsive emotional experience, to a thrill that simultaneously causes social reflection that reinforces the experience of values and norms. Imitation or mimicry and social appraisal are recognized as the main mechanisms for gaining emotional experience, in which boundaries in a recognized or unacceptable culture are established.

Literary works are used in the study of psychological phenomena, trusting them as a form of emotional and imagined life experience: literature, like any discursive formation (text), is not a copy of reality. As Jürgen Habermas puts it, "the world of experience is *aestheticized*, that is, freed from the routine of daily perception and from the conditionality of daily action. Therefore, it is recommended to look at the relationship between morality and beliefs as one part of a more complex interconnection" (Habermas, 2006, 289-290). Literary fiction offers a different, diverse, interdisciplinary experience. It achieves an intensification of, and a compensation for, emotional experience, which has been studied relatively little in the context of literature. While more research has been conducted in relation to the emotional experience of music, such experiences can also be observed in other forms of art, including literature.

This function of literature, to be a source of emotional experiences, is possible due to its communicative nature. Literary researchers Raymond A. Mar and Keith Oatley recognize literature as a simulation (modelation) of social life. The experiences of social life are modelled in the form of abstractions and a simple story, which, encoded in characters and plots, allows it to be perceived emotionally and to be reflected in the context of one's own life experiences. The characters created in the imagination and imaginings of literature, and the arrangement of events in the narrative (fable, plot), reveal actions in the perception of the reader of which appropriate emotions naturally arise. Identification with images allows oneself to be projected "into the represented events" (Mar and Oatley, 173). Identification, co-experience, takes place automatically and effortlessly. Narratives and characters engages in the events described and represent "events as we were part of them" (Mar and Oatley 2008, 183).

The experiences induced by literature have been relatively widely studied in philosophy, psychology, psychoanalysis and practised in psychotherapy and other fields. The *catharsis* of Aristotle (384–322 BC) is

one of the concepts that includes the course and functions of emotional experience, as well as its transformative role. Aristotle assessed this concept in the explanation of the purgation of tragedy in "Poetics:" "Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear affecting the proper purgation of these emotions. By 'language embellished,' I mean language into which rhythm, 'harmony' and song enter. By 'the several kinds in separate parts,' I mean that some parts are rendered through the medium of verse alone, others again with the aid of song" (Aristotle, VI). The mood of mediaeval sacred art and sacred life stories also intensified the experience of holiness and religious faith. Romantic art has contributed to the formation of transcendent, outside of the everyday, experiences of the "starry sky" and of longing for "blue flower." Modern literature also offers a versatile transformative experience. Although it no longer is expressed in such romantic passions and longings, contemporary fiction does portray the diversity of lifestyles and emotions.

#### **4. Interpretation and misinterpretation of the emotional potential of Latvian classics**

"Serious, real, poetry educates people, makes their feelings more acute and, through this, provides the community with a larger number of useful, prudent and sensitive citizens," wrote Latvian poet and publicist Jānis Poruks (1871-1911). (Poruks, 1925, 275). At the same time, along with this educational and transformative potential, Poruks emphasised the role of the aesthetic experience. These findings of a Latvian intellectual greatly help to clarify how to teach literature more effectively in schools: by preserving its artistic value and, at the same time, utilising it to enrich pupils, with those experiences that differ from everyday life and broaden their horizons of consciousness.

In Latvian society, discussions about the functional goals of literature have been held since the 1890s, with Janson's (Brauns) "Thoughts on Modern Literature" (Jansons (Brauns), 1892 and 1893), with the polemics of two writers, Aspazija and Rūdolfs Blaumanis, in 1895 in the newspaper "Dienas Lapa" (Aspazija, Blaumanis, 1895) and other ongoing debates about the role of literature. In recent decades, Poruk's story "Battle at Knipska," abatu the experiences of a fragile and sensitive school boy colliding with the brutal reality and tragic losses of that "battle," has been reinterpreted several times in school curricula and mass media public. In 2011, the periodical "Akadēmiskā Dzīve" published an article by the anthropologist Klāvs Sedlenieks, titled "Was Cibins a Nice Fellow?" (Sedlenieks, 2011).

Looking for an answer to the differences between violent and peaceful societies (communities) and the anthropological characteristics of Latvians in the context of this division, Klāvs Sedlenieks sees a “strange contradiction.” “On the one hand,” he writes, “the value of a peaceful worldview is emphasised and citizens, especially students, are encouraged to learn from the meek and supposedly life-wise, yet weak boys. At the same time, this knowledge is provided in the context of a societal structure that inevitably fosters a spirit of competition and individual achievement, with less emphasis on the ability and need to build a peaceful and/or cooperative society” (Sedlenieks, 2011). The perception of “strange contradictions” contains an important key for explaining the functions of literature. As already mentioned, fiction offers an imaginary reality, created through the means of artistic language, which includes an often idealised reality that differs from the everyday trends and goals. The work of art is not recognized as a direct pragmatic construct, but as an offer of a different, more sensitive reality, which, by expanding the emotional and rational experience, facilitates human orientation in an ecosystem of complex choices. Underestimation of the artistic specificity of literature leads at best to “strange contradictions” that encourage thinking and, at worst, to vulgarisation, which are discussed below.

In 2017, the tabloid “What’s New” (Pjats, 2017) attracted attention to a publication, as well as subsequent conversations, in which Gunta Ancāne, Professor of the Department of Psychosomatics and Psychiatry at Riga Stradins University, expressed his opinion on the inadequacy of several Latvian classics in promoting a life that is “beautiful, good, based on success, achievements and prosperity” (LR1 in October 2017). She placed in her list of “useless educational literature” Jānis Poruks’ “Battle at Knipska,” with its depiction of the death of the already mentioned Cibīņš, a fragile, emotional, wise, but poor, always hungry boy, the poem of Vilis Plūdons “Son of a Widow”, Sudrabu Edžus “Crazy Dauka,” and other works with that depict curious, peculiar, and/or tragic deaths of poor young perspective strivers. According to the professor, the teaching in schools of these and other Latvian classics overly emphasise “inability, a pity for failure, sympathy... the poor one is already the good one, as he has had a hard time” (LR1 ziņas 2017). In opposition, Iveta Ratinika, a teacher of literature, in the radio discussion called such an approach dangerous and “utilitarian dilettantism” (LR1 ziņas 2017). She defended a teacher’s freedom to teach works of art instead of open didactics, as well as recalled the moral value of fragility, vulnerability and sensitivity.

A discussion about the aforementioned literary classic has continued during the current crisis. In a 2021 article, on the website “nra.lv,” journalist Ben Latkovskis wrote on the government’s assessment of Covid-19: “The problem

for Latvians is that both Cibīņš, Gatiņš and Baiba(-iņa) [other characters from Latvian literature, of Rainis (1865–1929) S. L.] are very nice, sincere people (literary characters), but they are completely unfit as leaders. There is no doubt that Buņģis, Uldis and Zane would be much better leaders, but in the eyes of the average Latvian they are not the ones we would like to see as our leaders. Thus, we will have to live with Cibīņš in the role of leaders. They may not be effective, but are calmer for the soul” (Latkovskis 2021). In the same year, an ironic attack on Poruk’s Cibīņš was repeated on Twitter (account: “Eva Mičerevskiene @pepija Feb 1, 2021). The statement read: “The real villain is Cibīņš. An envious, thieving, snitch. Proud, unwilling to ask for help. Buņģis is a normal guy, one who treats buddies to smokes. Cibīņš, out of pure envy, smacked him with a snowball in his eye, because Buņģis had a better life.”

Criticism, of the classics taught in schools, have also focused on Anna Brigadere’s play “Sprīdītis.” The play portrays a young hero, who after having overcome obstacles, achieves a fairy-tale success but, nonetheless, returns to his homeland because he realises that happiness requires a belonging of his own, to his family, home and country. Similarly, French writer Michael Huellebecq in his novel “Serotonin”, has also pointed out that belonging is a problem for modern European society (Velbeks, 2022). He has portrayed an identity in which there is no sense of belonging to a place, a country, a profession and a family. The protagonist ultimately fails in finding a cure for this illness of loneliness. He continues to have nothing of his own, to care for and to share. Here, the tragedy of loneliness and alienation is seen as a lack of a sense of belonging.

Feelings of belonging are intensified in times of crisis, when joint action is required to overcome that crisis and its consequences. This is especially emphasised by the works of two different genres written in the first decades of independent Latvia: Aleksandr Grīn’s novel “The Blizzard of Souls” with its portrayal of the scourge of the First World War, and Alexander Čaks’ emotional poem “Affected by Eternity,” which draws inspiration and life-affirming enthusiasm from those war events (Čaks 1988). Every page and line in Čaks’ poem engages in identification with the severity, endurance and heroism of the Latvian riflemen in their battles. It invites compassion for the deaths of those thousands of young soldiers, but at the same time allows us to experience pride in those “strong souls” (46). It asks its readers to feel gratitude for the sacrifices they made in the name of freedom and victory. Moreover, as expressed in the title, it suggests that it’s the reader’s duty to preserve that memory of sacrifice. Unlike Aleksandra Grīn’s novel on the same historical events of World War One, with its detailed descriptions of the plight of refugees, of domestic scenes of suffering and of realistic representation of battles and losses, Čaks poem can be seen as

a symbolic monument to an emotional experience, oriented in the name of belonging and empathy.

While literature is not the only catalyst for a full-fledged emotional experience, one cannot ignore its direct and indirect role in the formation of a humane social ecosystem. Kate Tsurkan, an American writer living in Ukraine, has shared her thoughts on the role of literature in a severe war crisis (New Yorker, 30.03.2022). At the same time as she upholds the potential of literature to transcend suffering, she points out that the needs of a normal life are not comparable to the ecology of survival in war. Although real experiences of relationships and emotions differ significantly from recordings and literary texts, they serve as a source for cultural values, which can deter or reduce the devastating effects of a barbaric social crisis. While recounting the reality of the war she still highlights the potential for literature to cultivate humanity and civility: “A lot of our belongings are still in the apartment, including my library, which I was once so proud of. Every time I go back to take something, I can’t help but wonder: Do I really need this? If I didn’t take it with me the first time, then why now? What if the Russians come to Chernivtsi tomorrow and I have to run for my life? Is that book of Paul Celan’s poetry going to save me from getting raped or murdered? The answer to all these questions is obvious. There is no going back to what we once thought was normal. None of us will look at our lives in the same way again” (The New Yorker, 30.03.2022).

According to the previously discussed theoretical findings on the functions of literature and their effectiveness in education, works of art are considered to have irreplaceable potential. Likewise, classics of Latvian literature offer a diverse spectrum of meanings and emotional experiences; they contain contradictions, conflicts, and clashes which suggest opportunities for reflection and transformation. In the face of changing reading habits, and when taking into account new communication technologies and pragmatic circumstances, this discussion raises the question of what can and should be the goal of teaching literature.

## Conclusion

Literature has the potential to provide an experience of joy and laughter, an emotional experience of reverence and holiness, and an awareness of compassion, fragility, vulnerability, and the promotion of belonging and resilience. In short, the experiences literature can provide can assist in the formation of a full-fledged, and humane, identity.

Crisis situations increasingly require the ability to cooperate, engaging and often to even sacrifice in order to overcome crisis. The emotions of hatred and pain, belonging, cooperation, compassion and resilience gained

in the adventure of both life and literature are useful for stimulating endurance and prosocial activity. The role of teachers and experts in the selection of works of artistic quality, the reading of which can ensure these higher literary tasks, is a crucial responsibility. By gaining a better view of the field of classics and contemporary literature, experts share this responsibility with teachers; they can share the responsibility of selecting the most appropriate works for an emotionally positive experience, which would allow pupils to learn about the diversity of emotional experiences. No less important than the choice of literature is a deep interpretation and understanding of its context, in the far-sighted moral and existential experiences it may provide.

It is apparent that publishers too are aware of how important it is that they provide quality children's books. This is revealed by Alise Nigale, whose children's publishing house "Liels un mazs" was recognized as the best in Europe at the Bologna International Children's Book Market in 2022. She emphasises the huge responsibility they have in providing quality books as "spiritual food." They must ensure that "children, after reading a book, have a sense for conversation and feel that they are getting further and better as human beings" (Meijere, 2022, 25).

The teaching of literature has a role in the development of language and cognition. Additionally, when emotional aspects are taken into account, education in literature has potential to implement important transformative and self-transformative goals for the post-crisis education.

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