

## **Let's Go Down to The Holy Well: Children's Literature for Sustainable Living**

Children's literature might be considered the "holy well" providing healing refreshment and a direct path forward for the soul of every child: a troubled youngster, a young person experiencing a life trial, or a student seeking enlightenment. Whether folklore depicting animals congregating at the water hole at their time of need, learning to share and care; or realistic fiction presenting varying "time of drought" scenarios, and the resolution or healing necessary thereto; or even non-fiction revealing humanity's dependence on clean water, and the knowledge necessary to help budding scientists, one-day, protect water sheds, these literary genres sustain children during their formative years and beyond. Without these literary selections, children founder and do not appropriately climb developmental ladders, in fact regress into unhealthy social, emotional or intellectual states of mind.

This paper contemplates three categories of children's literature carrying the theme of spiritual development /healing and/or intellectual enlightenment: folklore, realistic fiction, and non-fiction. Books carrying themes, images, and symbols associated with the healing and life-sustaining qualities of water will especially be highlighted within these categories to reveal how each title selected for interpretation either: 1) quenches a child's thirst for the internationalization of a life lesson or moral; 2) provides a means of resolving a problem or healing a wound; or 3) delivers knowledge necessary to the perpetuation of safe drinking water on our planet.

Titles selected for examination based in this theory of sustainability, this allusion to the Irish concept of a "holy well," will be analyzed with regard to their ability to assist children on spiritual and intellectual levels, in a lasting, long-term fashion, providing wisdom, healing, and learning for the well-being of past, present, and future generations.