

Tales and intercultural education

Abstract:

As Florence Windmüller rightfully states in her article on intercultural adaptation of a tale to foreign cultures, recent studies situate the origin of tales in Ancient Egypt. The tales' themes evoke the survival of ancient rites of passage from one season to the other or rites of initiation. They evolve in accordance with customs, behaviours, needs and beliefs or are simply reshaped by the different artistic considerations of each epoch (2008). From an intercultural perspective, the study and exploitation of tales may therefore constitute a very rich source of knowledge.

Interculturality has become a crucial notion in our world and the best way to understand it and put it into practice can be achieved through education. The interest granted to tales in this context is not new. More and more teachers are inclined to use tales in class, but a brief overview on the topic allows us to see that this type of approach is still connected to some specific categories of age. For Bruno Bettelheim this is quite logic since tales serve as an important step in the child's initiation in life.

Introducing notions of interculturality through tales at an early age is also very important and this can of course be achieved through native language classes of literature as well as through SLT. The process is revealing at the level of vocabulary and of the general knowledge as well. Nevertheless, tales do not mainly address to children up to 12 only. Tales may also serve at understanding one's cultural identity, in perpetual transformation from one age to the other, children, adolescents and adults included. Their study should not be limited to linguistic or ethnic approaches, ideologies and socio-cultural implications are included as well.

My intention is to situate the cultural identity of tales in a larger context, with stress on the role of connotations and denotations. The corpus of my analyses is based on fairy tales and mischievous tales taken from the French, German, Spanish/Portuguese/South American and Romanian cultural spaces.

Keywords: *Interculturality; Cultural Identity; Education; Denotations; Connotations; Fairy Tales; Mischievous Tales.*