

Prospective study of folk literature: Cultural identity

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Abstract

Cultural identity is characterized by many dimensions and being investigated in several studies of culture and many social theories. Folk Literature is a prime scientific area through which a child develops his identity and physiognomy, as it points out the diverse nature of things during the pedagogical process. Educators effectively guide children to find real truth and knowledge and, at the same time, realize their true essence through tradition. Therefore, tradition, which involves the cultural heritage of centuries, has the power to consciously or unconsciously penetrate into the soul of a child, which shapes his identity at an immature stage of development. Our intervention focuses on folk tales, myths and proverbs. Folk literature is not a static phenomenon but transforms through the social environments by the people of every era and the institutions it assimilates. It transfers therefore the historical experience and the common heritage of values and symbols, as there is a vibrant process which engages its creators and relates to specific historic realities and expresses and regulates social relations.

Keywords: folk literature, cultural identity, myths, folk tales, proverb, etc.

Introduction

Cultural identity takes on many dimensions and becomes the subject of investigation from the perspective of both culture and social theories. Each people display some unique identifying features, some characteristic elements of its culture, the assimilation of which constitutes its cultural identity distinguishing them from other people. Cultural identity of a child takes place mostly within the educational process and through the connection of the child to language. Therefore, common and longstanding tradition constitutes the basis upon which cultural identity is formed, and the best time to build upon such are the preschool years and the first years of primary school. Folk Literature is a prime area within which a child realizes his identity and physiognomy, as it brings to the surface the diverse nature of things during the pedagogical process, a reality that should be taken into account by educators so that we can substantially and effectively guide children to find real truth and knowledge and, at the same time, help them see themselves for who they really are through tradition.

Cultural identity

Folk culture comprises national culture; determine the identity of a people. Folk culture is privileged not to be limited to the geographical boundary of a state, but constitutes an identifying element among related groups that may be separated by long distances. The main constituting factors for the creation of the cultural identity of a people include the dominant national group, social structures, history, culture, language, religion, the political-legal system, economic development, education and the media. The four criteria that play a dominant role in the formation of an identity are ideology, historiography, literature and language, which is the main tool of socialization. The development of a child's cultural identity is also directly impacted by the process of socialization of the child within the particular cultural group in which he lives. Thus, a child forms a cultural identity, which depends each time on the group with which the child interacts at any given time, as folk culture –

and culture in general – is that identity which is formed by the structural incorporation of cultural influences of other people, assuming thereby new outlooks. Therefore, folk culture is an important factor for the outline of the concept of cultural identity, which seals and keeps alive the soul of a people.

Examination of cultural identity formation

A child between the ages 6 and 12 years old undergoes many biological and cognitive changes during development. Social changes follow suit in the process as the child moves from the state of being supervised by his parents to the school environment and the broader social context where peers play an increasingly important role in defining his sense of self-identity. Within this social context, the identity of a child develops by his participation in the group. The identity of a child is part of his total personality. The child's cultural identity is part of his identity, which has an ideological or interpersonal character and forms during the child's evolutionary preschool age and is determined during adolescence. A child learns, appropriates and becomes accustomed to his cultural heritage, a process that has a positive effect on his self-esteem and socio-emotional adjustment. Therefore, the completion of the process of the formation of a child's cultural identity is analogous to the process of the formation of his personality.

When the child's imagination is also at play, this way becomes infinitely shorter and the knowledge built becomes established. Emotional ability described by Freud in the concept of the "primary process". This is the logic of religion, poetry and myths in children; it is a primary thought process in which everything is possible. Great spiritual teachers touched the hearts of their followers by communicating with them through the language of emotions, teaching with parables, myths and stories, expressing themselves in the language of the heart, the symbols of which do not have or carry insignificant meaning from a logical point of view.

Myth

Myths offer explanations about life and contribute to the preservation of human statutes, because they can operate at metaphysical, cosmological, sociological and psychological levels, related to the shaping of an individual in accordance with the objectives and ideals of the individual's social group. Myths were born due to many cultural needs; Life's force that is contained in the myths constituted the basis of ancient philology and was shown to be, through its use in literature, the most important means of expression. The channel, through which the myths' usefulness is transmitted to the child, is pride for the accomplishments of the ancestors, as he is led to becoming acquainted with them through the myths. Children's are associates values, virtues, beauty, morality, high morals, as well as the concepts of welfare and death for every living creature through myths. The constituent elements thereof, such as simplicity and allegory, promote good patterns of behavior for the child; they teach moral values like altruism and the right attitude towards nature and the environment in general.

Folk Tales

Folk tales introduce the child to the history of the literary text but also to his personal history and thereby constitute perfect intellectual food, so this catalytic effect of the folktale assists in the socio-emotional development of the child. Therefore, tales help mobilize and operate the symbolic activities of the mind that people use to construct meaning not only of the external world around them but also of themselves, through reflection. A child experiences all these things in his imagination on listening or reading folktales. The struggle against grave hardships of life is an inescapable reality. The final victorious outcome conveys the message that the child, who wants to be himself, reach wholesomeness and secure his identity, must go through these ordeals, face dangers and win battles. These ordeals and face-offs of the child with dangers, imaginative monsters and general personifications of evil are necessary at the level of imagination that is offered in the tale for the child to ultimately grow into a mentally and psychologically mature adult. Tales suggest notions or imply solutions but never name them as they reflect the basic psychological structures of man to a greater extent than other types of folk literature. They allow the child to imagine the way in which he will apply to himself all that is revealed in the tales about life and human nature. The folktale, though seeming at first as completely distant from reality, is often experiential in nature. The magical is clothed continuously with realistic details, and tales ultimately substantiate the lifestyle and the moral codes of the community. They incorporate the past to the present as a source of useful knowledge.

Proverbs

Proverbs is a kind of folk literature that has survived in education due to both its historical reference and its modern functionality. It is usually a brief aphorism in verse of the spontaneous folk wisdom and creativity that conveys a piece of advice given in a figurative, allegoric or literary way; proverbs are used in the present day as much in everyday speech as in the political and scholarly speech. They are characterized by vivid and rich imagery, while, most of the times, are presented in the form of couplets. Proverbs are divided into three categories: main proverbs, maxims and

proverbial expressions. Many of the proverbs have originated from the Bible, historical events, ancient proverbs, maxims and sayings, speeches and aphorisms of historic people, folk myths or the verses of folk songs, and contact with other people, etc. One class of proverbs serves a system of moral and social virtues based on religion. A characteristic of proverbs in general is the fact that they are flexible to adjust to new environments and conditions, usually by the modification of old proverbs, so that they relate to society, acquire the characteristic of timeliness or even assist with advertisements. These are called anti-proverbs.

Analysis of concept

Based on structural analysis, myths are a symbolic communication system analogous to the linguistic system. Both systems represent symbolically an objective reality. Thus, through the analysis of myths we can see the problems of a society, while at the same time; the society itself can resolve these problems.

Jung evaluated the tales and the mythical symbols as sources of wisdom. According to him, the world of the human spirit and the world of impulses have been introduced and expressed in tales. Folktales allow the child to identify with archetypal situations and experiences, such as the conflict between good and evil, the difference between courage and cowardice and the use of information as weapon against force. They help eradicate feelings of isolation and loneliness, to which children are vulnerable, making them feel part of a large group. A folktale's transformations reflect the evolution of morals and lifestyle's trends and are its most important elements. A folktale has the steady ability to adapt the most magical elements, the new narrative data of a society. However, all kinds of folk literature present common or similar elements in the bibliography of all nations, a phenomenon that can be explained on account of the fact that all people are descendants of a deeper collective unconscious, the archetypes. In folk literature, the archetypes are reflected in their simplest, most concise forms, which then in turn produce the "archetypal images" that were found in tales, myths, dreams, the arts, religion and in philosophy of all times and all peoples. Consequently, myths are a direct expression of the collective unconscious and we find them in similar forms and in literary products of all peoples of all times. Our reaction to legends is shaped and expressed in words; this constitutes the form of conscience. But the spirit-creation of the legend includes the expression of feelings and reminds one that a large part of the legend comes from the collective unconscious. In each civilization, myths, legends and folk traditions characterize the crystallization of the moral and mental heritage that is inherited through the artistic, historic and family tradition, thereby creating and developing the branches of the conscience of the spirit of the Race. So, if man loses his fictional capacity, he then loses his contact with the creative forces within himself. Religion, poetry, folk legends and tales exist due to the same capacity.

Conclusion

Therefore, the contribution of folk literature is important to education in general, as a tool of transmission of cultural material that includes elements such as the role of myths of origin, historical memories and cultural differences such as religion, customs, traditions, languages and institutions. From

the standpoint of teaching, folk literature can function as a developed narrative that helps to shape the cultural identity of the child and the development of his written and spoken language. It is also one of the most appropriate fields for the materialization of cultural meetings and the promotion of common cultural elements among Today, these literary genres convey a wisdom that can give meaning to the western way of thinking in a Europe that lacks spiritual and existential meaning. We should keep in mind that the international vision of today, in light of the global community, is the cultural coexistence of people with diverse cultural identities.

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